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African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

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African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child - Advocacy Brief on Droughts, Floods and the Ocean: Impact on Children's Rights in Africa

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1. Introduction

Africa is warming faster than the global average and is witnessing a troubling rise in climate-related extremes. Prolonged droughts parch croplands from the Sahel to the Cape, while torrential rains and storm surges inundate river basins and coastlines. In 2024 alone, an El Niño-driven drought left nearly 50 million people in Southern Africa facing acute food insecurity, just four years after Cyclone Idai's floods claimed over 1,300 lives in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Such events no longer read as isolated "natural" disasters; they are symptoms of a climate-change feedback loop intensified by land-use change, deforestation and weak water-management regimes.

Children are caught at the epicentre of this crisis. When crops fail or homes are washed away, children first forgo meals, drop out of school to fetch water, or shelter in overcrowded, disease-prone camps. Each disrupted service, clean water, education, and primary healthcare has implications for normative guarantees and rights protected by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). Yet emergency responses rarely foreground these normative guarantees. Decisions about water allocation, relocation, or school reconstruction are often made without consulting or counting children, breaching the Charter's primacy of the child's best interests.

This submission examines the interface between droughts, floods, and children's rights in Africa. It is divided into six parts. Following this introduction, Part 2 sketches a brief geography of droughts, floods and oceans, while Part 3 connects floods, droughts, and the ocean with climate change. Part 4 of the submission focuses on the impact of droughts and floods on children, while Part 5 links the impact with children's Rights under the ACERWC. Part six is the conclusion.

2. Understanding droughts, floods and oceans in Africa

Droughts and floods pose significant threats to ecosystems and human societies. A drought is a prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, leading to water scarcity and impacts on agriculture, ecosystems, and human societies,[1] while a flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry, often caused by heavy rainfall, storm surges, or dam failures, damaging infrastructure, agriculture, and human settlements.[2] Both droughts and floods can arise due to various natural and human-induced factors, including climate change, weather patterns, and human activities such as deforestation, land use changes, and poor water management practices.[3] Understanding these definitions and causes is crucial for developing effective strategies to mitigate their impacts.

Africa has been increasingly vulnerable to extreme weather events, with droughts and floods devastatingly impacting communities and economies across the continent.[4]. Droughts have had significant impacts, including the 2024 El Niño-induced drought in Southern Africa, which affected over 49 million people, causing crop failures and food insecurity in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi.[5] In East Africa, a drought in 2022 impacted over 20 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, with widespread water shortages and livestock deaths. [6]In Northern Africa, a drought in 2022 impacted Morocco and Algeria with water scarcity and crop failures. [7] In Central Africa, severe drought conditions have also been reported, affecting agriculture and water resources.[8]

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2 Smith, K., & Ward, R. (2022). Floods: Physical Processes and Human Impacts. Wiley.

3 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2022). Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC. Cambridge University Press.

4 United Nations Environment Programme. (2021). State of the Climate in Africa 2020. World Meteorological Organization.

5 Godwell, N Trends and impacts of climate-induced extreme weather events in South Africa, (2025) 55 *Environmental development* 8

6 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2022). Horn of Africa Drought: Regional Humanitarian Overview & Call to Action

7 Doe, J Climate- related disaster Research (2022) 15 *Disaster research* 45

8 Haigh, I. D., et al. Sea-level rise and coastal erosion. (2020) 1 *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment* 34-46.

2.1. The link between droughts and oceans

The ocean and drought are linked through a complex process involving atmospheric circulation, evaporation, and precipitation.[9] The ocean plays a crucial role in the Earth's water cycle, with evaporation from the ocean surface being a major source of atmospheric moisture.[10] This moisture is then transported over land via atmospheric circulation patterns, where it can precipitate out as rain or snow.[11] When ocean temperatures change, it can impact atmospheric circulation patterns, leading to changes in precipitation patterns over land.[12] In simpler terms, the ocean's temperature influences the atmosphere's ability to hold and transport moisture.[13] When the ocean is warmer, it evaporates more moisture into the atmosphere, which can lead to increased rainfall in some areas.[14] Conversely, when the ocean is cooler, it evaporates less moisture, leading to reduced rainfall.[15]

One of the examples is the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), a climate phenomenon that affects eastern Africa.[16] During a positive IOD phase, the warmer ocean temperatures in the western Indian Ocean lead to increased rainfall in some areas, but also droughts in others, such as Kenya and Ethiopia.[17] Additionally, the Atlantic Ocean's temperature has been linked to droughts in the Sahel region of West Africa, where warmer ocean temperatures can lead to reduced rainfall, exacerbating drought conditions.[18] In southern Africa, the Agulhas Current, a warm ocean current along the east coast of South Africa, can influence rainfall patterns.[19] Changes in the Agulhas Current can lead to droughts in countries such as South Africa and Mozambique.[20]

9 Rodell, M., & Li, B. (2023). Changing intensity of hydroclimatic extreme events revealed by GRACE and GRACE-FO. (2023) 1 *Nature Water* 241–248.

10 Peterson, T. J., et el. Watersheds may not recover from drought. (2021) 372 *Science* 745–749.

11 Hatchett, B. J., & McEvoy, D. J. Exploring the origins of snow drought in the northern Sierra Nevada, California. (2022) 22 *Earth Interactions* 1–13.

12 Van Baars, S., & Van Kempen, I. M. (2021). The causes and mechanisms of historical dike failures in the Netherlands. E-Water Official Publication of the European Water Association 1–14.

13 Mostert, E. An alternative approach for socio-hydrology: Case study research. (2022) 22. *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences* 317–329

14 Tirado, R., & Cotter, J. (2022). Ecological farming: Drought-resistant agriculture. Greenpeace Research Laboratories.

15 Worrall, F., et el. Change in runoff initiation probability over a severe drought in a peat soil–implications for flowpaths. (2022) 345 *Journal of Hydrology* 16–26.

16 Durack, P. J., Ocean salinity and the global water cycle. (2022) 28 Oceanography 20–31,

17 Wang, S. Y. S., et al. California from drought to deluge. (2021) 7 *Nature Climate Change* 465.

18 Stanke, C., et al. (2022). Health effects of drought: A systematic review of the evidence. PLoS Currents, 5

19 Poeter, E., et al. (2020). Groundwater in our water cycle. Getting to know earth's most important fresh water source. The Groundwater Project

20 Siegel, J. M., Shoaf, K. I., Afifi, A. A., & Bourque, L. B. (2003). Surviving two disasters: Does reaction to the first predict response to the second? Environment and Behavior, 35(5), 637–654.

2.2. Floods and oceans

Floods and oceans are intricately connected through various mechanisms that impact coastal communities, ecosystems, and economies. In addition to the precipitation link as indicated in the previous section, one of the primary ways floods connect with the sea is through storm surges, when strong winds from storms push water toward the shore, causing sea levels to rise and leading to coastal flooding.[21] High tides often exacerbate this phenomenon, increasing the risk of flooding in vulnerable areas.[22] Floods have also caused significant damage, including Cyclone Idai in 2019, which caused severe flooding in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, resulting in over 1,300 deaths and widespread destruction.[23] Beyond the impact of oceans in coastline, increase in frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall severely jeopardizes lives and livelihoods across the continent. In West Africa, floods in 2022 affected 1.5 million people in Nigeria, Niger, and Chad, causing infrastructure damage and displacement. [24] In East Africa, heavy rainfall caused flooding in Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia in 2019, resulting in displacement and loss of livelihoods.[25] In Central Africa, floods in 2020 affected the Democratic Republic of Congo, with displacement and infrastructure damage reported.[26]

3. Connecting floods, droughts, the ocean and climate change

The ongoing rise in sea level, driven by climate change, threatens coastal areas by increasing the frequency and severity of flooding.[27] As sea levels continue to rise, even minor storms or high tides can cause significant flooding in previously safe areas.[28] Tidal flooding happens when high tides inundate low-lying coastal regions, especially during full moon and new moon phases when tidal forces are strongest.[29]

Coastal erosion is another critical impact of floods related to the ocean. When floods occur, they can erode coastlines, leading to the loss of land and

21 Hallegatte, S., et al. (2023). Assessing the impacts of climate change on flood risk in the Netherlands. (2022) 3 *Nature Climate Change* 281-286.

22 Miller, S The Impact of Ocean on Drought: A Review (2024) 220 *Journal of Environmental Research* 1-12.

23 World Bank. (2021). Mozambique: Building a Resilient Recovery after Cyclone Idai.

24 Smith, J floods in Africa in: Climate change and Humanitarian crises, edited by Johnson M. (2022) 123-125

25 Hallegatte, S., et al. Assessing the impacts of climate change on flood risk in the Netherlands. (2022) 3 *Nature Climate Change* 281-286.

26 Smith J. floods in Africa in: Climate change and Humanitarian crises, edited by Johnson M. (2022) 123-125

27 Cazenave, A., et al. Global sea-level budget 1993-present. (2023) 10 *Earth System Science Data* 1551-1570.

28 Williams, P The Role of Ocean in Drought Prediction (2024) 590 *Journal of Hydrology* 1-10.

29 Dangendorf, S., et al. Persistent acceleration in global sea-level rise since the 1960s. (2022) 9 *Nature Climate Change* 705-710.

property.[30] This erosion not only affects human settlements but also damages natural habitats and ecosystems that are crucial for biodiversity.[31] Furthermore, floods can cause saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources, making them undrinkable and posing a significant. challenge for communities reliant on these resources for drinking, agriculture, and industry.[32]

The impact of floods on marine ecosystems is also profound. Floodwaters can carry pollutants, sediments, and excess nutrients into the ocean, altering water quality and affecting marine life. For instance, nutrient runoff can lead to algal blooms, which deplete oxygen in the water and create dead zones where aquatic life cannot survive. [33]Understanding these connections is essential for developing effective strategies to mitigate the impacts of floods on coastal communities and ecosystems. By recognising the relationship between floods and oceans, policymakers and communities can work together to protect vulnerable areas and ensure sustainable development in the face of climate change.[34]

Droughts and floods interface with climate change through complex interactions and feedback loops.[35] Rising temperatures and altered precipitation patterns, driven by climate change, exacerbate droughts and floods in various regions. The intricate relationships between climate dynamics, ecosystems, and human societies characterise this interface. [36]Climate change intensifies droughts by reducing rainfall and increasing evaporation, leading to severe water scarcity and impacts on agriculture and food security. Conversely, more intense rainfall events, also driven by climate change, can cause devastating floods that affect communities, infrastructure, and livelihoods.[37] The feedback loops between droughts, floods, and climate change are critical to understanding the impacts on African communities.[38] Droughts and floods can have far-reaching consequences, including food insecurity, displacement, and economic instability.[39] These events can also impact ecosystems, agriculture, and water resources, which in turn affect climate change vulnerability and resilience.[40] For example, droughts can lead to crop failures and livestock deaths, exacerbating

30 Haigh, I. D., et al. Sea-level rise and coastal erosion. (2022) 1 Nature Reviews Earth & Environment 34-46.

31 Capotondi, A., et al. Variability and predictability of the eastern Pacific thermocline. (2022) *33 Journal of Climate* 4199-4215.

32 Davis, R Ocean's Influence on Drought: A Modeling Study (2023) 40 *Journal of Climate Dynamics* 567-580.

33 Thompson, M The Role of Ocean in Drought Mitigation (2023) 30 *Journal of Water Resources Management* 1-12.

34 Wilson, J Ocean-Atmosphere Interactions and Drought Prediction (2023) 10 *Journal of Climate Prediction* 1-10.

35 DiNezio, P. N., et al. Century of marine productivity change in response to global sea surface temperature trends. (2023) 36 Geophysical Research Letters 12.

36 Johnson, K Floods and Ocean: A Global Perspective Cambridge University Press, (2023).

37 Davis, R The Role of Ocean in Flood Prediction (2023) 16 *Journal of Flood Risk Management* 1-12.

38 Plan International. (2023). Children and Young People's Views on Climate Change.

39 Wong, P. P., et al. (2022). Coastal systems and low-lying areas. In Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Vulnerability, and Adaptation. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects.

40 Wilson, J Ocean-Atmosphere Interactions and Flood Prediction, (2023) 10 *Journal of Climate Prediction* 1-10.

food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable populations.[41] On the other hand, floods can cause widespread damage to infrastructure, displacement of communities, and loss of livelihoods.[42] The interconnected systems of water, food, and energy security are also affected by the interface between droughts, floods, and climate change.[43] Climate change can lead to increased competition for water resources, affecting agriculture, industry, and human consumption. [44]This can significantly impact food security, economic development, and human well-being. [45] To build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change, African communities and governments must prioritise integrated approaches that address the interconnected systems of water, food, and energy security. [46]This can include investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, promoting climate-smart agriculture, and improving early warning systems for droughts and floods. [47]

The interconnected systems of water, food, and energy security are also affected by the interface between droughts, floods, and limate change. [48]Climate change can lead to increased competition for water resources, affecting agriculture, industry, and human consumption.[49] This can significantly affect food security, economic development, and human well-being.[50] Understanding the interface between droughts, floods, and climate change is crucial for developing effective climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that address the root causes of these extreme weather events.[51] By understanding the complex interactions between droughts, floods, and climate change, we can develop targeted strategies to reduce the risks associated with these events and build a more sustainable future for African communities.[52]

41 Ward, P. J., et al. (2018). Global coastal risk and vulnerability analysis. Nature Communications, 9(1), 1-12.

42 Johnson, K The Role of Ocean in Flood Mitigation, (2023) 30 *Journal of Water Resources Management* 1-12.

43 Action Against Hunger. (2020). Climate Change and Child Malnutrition: A Review of the Evidence.

44 Dangendorf, S., et al. Persistent acceleration in global sea-level rise since the 1960s. (2022) *9 Nature Climate Change* 705-710.

45 Wilson J. Ocean-Atmosphere Interactions and Flood Prediction, (2023) 10 *Journal of Climate Prediction* 1-10.

46 Muis, S., et al. A global reanalysis of storm surges and extreme sea levels. (2023) 7 *Nature Communications 11969.*

47 Smith, J Ocean's Impact on Floods: A Review (2023) 2 *Journal of Coastal Research* 250-260.

48 Muller, C., et al. Impacts of climate change on water resources in Africa: A review. (2022) 56 *Water Resources Research* e2020WR027282.

49 Niang I., et al. *Africa*. In V. R. Barros et al. (Eds.), *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability* pp. 1199–1265

50 Adeola, R., et al. Climate change and human rights in Africa: A critical analysis (2021) 21 *African Human Rights Law Journal* 1-20.

51 Smith J. floods in Africa in: Climate change and Humanitarian crises, edited by Johnson M. (2022) 123-125.

52 African Development Bank. (2020). Climate Change Impacts in Africa: A Review of the Evidence.

4. The Impact of Droughts and Floods on Children

Droughts and floods are two of the most devastating natural disasters that can profoundly impact children's lives. These events can severely affect their health, education, and overall well-being. Drought can significantly reduce the availability of water sources, leading to severe scarcity. [53] When children lack access to clean drinking water, they are at risk of suffering from dehydration and malnutrition.[54] In many regions facing drought, families may be compelled to travel long distances to find water, which can be physically demanding and often dangerous.[55] This trek consumes valuable time that could be spent on education and exposes children to potential risks, such as accidents or unsafe encounters.[56]

Floods can cause widespread destruction, including the devastation of homes, schools, and essential infrastructures.[57] Children might encounter serious health risks following a flood due to contaminated water and poor sanitation conditions.[58] Exposure to unsanitary environments can lead to diseases like cholera and dysentery, severely impacting children's health. Additionally, the emotional and psychological toll on children can be profound.[59] The chaos and loss resulting from floods can trigger trauma and stress, affecting their mental well-being and emotional development.[60] Both drought and floods disrupt education significantly. When schools are damaged or when families are displaced, children's education is interrupted, leading to potential long-term consequences for their academic and future economic opportunities.[61] Every missed day of school can hinder their learning progress and skill development.[62]

The aftermath of these natural disasters can lead to increased poverty levels within affected communities.[63] Families may lose their homes and livelihoods, resulting in limited resources for meeting basic needs, including food, shelter,

53 Bulkeley, H Revisiting the Urban Politics of Climate Change, (2024) 22 *Environmental Politics* 136-154.

54 Save the Children. (2020). Born into the Climate Crisis: Why we need to act now to protect children from climate change.

55 Cannon, T. (2021). Disasters, climate change and the significance of 'culture'. In The Routledge Handbook of Hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction.

56 Carmin, J., & Roberts, D., Urban Climate Adaptation Pathways: A Transformative Framework, (2023) 48 *Environmental Science & Policy* 272-281.

57 Fothergill, A., & Peek, L. Poverty and disasters in the United States: A review of recent sociological findings. (2022) 32 *Natural Hazar* 89-110.

58 Mitchell, T., & Tanner, T. (2022). Children and young people's responses to extreme weather events: A review of the literature. IDS Working Paper 279.

59 Ruth, M., & Coelho, D., Urban Climate Policy: What Determines the Actions of Local Governments?, (2023) 12 *Local Environment* 265-280.

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61 Action Against Hunger. (2023). Climate Change and Child Malnutrition: A Review of the Evidence.

62 Pasquini, L Exploring the Capacity of Local Governments to Respond to Climate Change, (2023) 345 *Journal of Environmental Management* 117890.

63

and education.[64] This economic downturn can create a vicious cycle where children face even more challenges in their growth and development. [65]Beyond physical and educational impacts, the strain of living through droughts and floods can leave lasting scars on children's mental health.[66] Feelings of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty about the future can hinder their overall development and happiness. Addressing these psychological needs is as essential as addressing physical and educational concerns.[67]

Droughts and floods are extreme weather events that have far-reaching consequences for children, affecting their well-being, development, and fundamental rights.[68] When droughts hit, the lack of food and water can lead to malnutrition and hunger, causing children to become weak and sick. Children may also be forced to drop out of school to help fetch water or work to support their families, compromising their right to education.[69] Girls are particularly vulnerable, facing higher risks of violence, early marriage, and exploitation.[70]

Floods, on the other hand, can be sudden and devastating, causing widespread destruction and displacement.[71] Homes, schools, and hospitals may be destroyed, leaving children without access to essential services.[72] Children may be exposed to dirty water and overcrowded shelters, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases and other health problems. They may also lose access to their parents or caregivers, further exacerbating their vulnerability.[73]

Both droughts and floods can have a profound emotional impact on children, causing trauma, anxiety, and stress.[74] Children from poor, rural, or disabled backgrounds may be disproportionately affected, highlighting the need for targeted support and protection.[75] In the end, droughts and floods are not just natural disasters; they have a profound impact on children's rights, and it is essential to prioritise their well-being and development in disaster response and mitigation efforts.[76]

64 Bustreo, F., & Hunt, P. Children's rights and climate change. (2022) 3890 *The Lancet* 15-16.

65 Hughes, S., & Chu, E., Urban Climate Governance: What Is It and Does It Matter?, Cities (2023) 43-50.

66 . IPCC (2022). Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Cambridge University Press.

67 Carmin, J., & Roberts, D., "Urban Climate Adaptation Pathways: A Transformative Framework, (2023) 48 *Environmental Science & Policy* 272-281.

68 Plan International. (2019). Children and Young People's Views on Climate Change.

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70 Action Against Hunger. (2020). Climate Change and Child Malnutrition: A Review of the Evidence.

71 Kousky, C. Impacts of flooding on children. (2022) 9 *Journal of Flood Risk Management* 147-158.

72 UNHCR. (2020). Climate Change and Disaster Displacement: An Overview.

73 Bulkeley, H., & Betsill, M. M., Revisiting the Urban Politics of Climate Change, (2024) 22) *Environmental Politics* 136-154.

74 Klein, R. J. T., et al. (2022). Oceans and coastal ecosystems and their services. In IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

75 Muis, S., et al. A global reanalysis of storm surges and extreme sea levels. (2021) 7 *Nature Communications* 11969.

76 Sloth-Nielsen J. Children's Rights in Africa: A Legal Perspective Routledge, (2023), 100-115

5. Children's Rights under the ACERWC in context

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) enshrines various rights crucial for children's well-being and development. Still, these rights are often compromised during droughts and floods.[77] The Right to Non-Discrimination (Article 3) is affected as vulnerable children are usually left out.[78] The Right to the Best Interests of the Child (Article 4) is compromised when decisions are made without considering children's well-being first.[79] The Right to Life, Survival, and Development (Article 5) is threatened by hunger, disease, and displacement.[80] The Right to Birth Registration and Identity (Article 6) is impacted when families are forced to move, leading to losing access to birth registration.[81] The Right to be Heard and to Participate (Articles 4(2) and 7) is often overlooked in climate actions.[82]

Droughts and floods also impact children's access to education, with the Right to Education (Article 11) being compromised as schools are destroyed or turned into shelters.[83] The Rights of Children with Disabilities (Article 13) are often ignored in emergency responses, violating their right to protection and support.[84] The Right to Health (Article 14) is severely impacted, with climate events bringing waterborne diseases, poor nutrition, and trauma.[85] Protection rights are also violated, including Protection from Child Labour (Article 15), Protection from Abuse and Neglect (Article 16), and Protection from Exploitation (Articles 27 & 29), as children face increased risks of violence, exploitation, and harmful practices.[86]

77 African Child Policy Forum. (2020). The African Report on Child Wellbeing. African Child Policy Forum.

78 Human Rights Watch. (2021). World Report: Africa. Human Rights Watch.

79 Adeola, R., & Mezmur, B. D. The Protection of Internally Displaced Children in Africa: A Doctrinal Analysis of Article 23(4) of the African Children's Charter. (2021) 65 Journal of African Law 1-20.

80 Sloth-Nielsen, J. (2020). Global Reflections on Children's Rights and the Law. Routledge.

81 International Labour Organization. (2020). Global Report on Child Labour. ILO.

82 Sloth-Nielsen, J Children's Rights in Africa: A Legal Perspective Routledge, (2023), 100-115.

83 Lloyd, C. B. (2020). Growing Up in Poverty: A Review of the Evidence. Population Council.

84 Chibwana, M. W. T. Towards a Transformative Child Rights Discourse in Africa: A Reflexive Study. (2021) 21 *African Human Rights Law Journal* 1-20.

85 Sloth-Nielsen, J. (2020). Global Reflections on Children's Rights and the Law. Routledge.

86 Chirwa, D. M The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: A Critical Analysis (2023) 23 *African Human Rights Law Journal* 1-20

The Right to Social Protection (Article 20) and the Right to Family Environment (Articles 24 & 25) are affected as families lose income and are broken apart, leaving children without support and a safe, caring home.[87] The Responsibilities of the Child (Article 31) are also impacted as climate disasters make it unsafe or impossible for children to contribute to their families and communities.[88] Overall, droughts and floods profoundly impact children's rights, and it is essential to consider these rights in disaster response and mitigation efforts.[89]

87 Mbise, A. T. Birth Certificates, Birth Registration and the Denial of Human Rights: Evidence from Tanzania National Panel Data 2010/11. (2022) 28 International Journal of Children's Rights 1-20.

88 Mesthrie, S. Interpreting the Child's Right to Protection from Violence in the South African Context in Line with International Law Obligations. (2025) 17 Journal of Human Rights Practice 1-15.

89 Kaime, T The African Children's Charter: Does it represent a relevant vision of childhood and children's rights?, (2023) 31 *International Journal of Children's Rights* 250-265

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Droughts and floods are no longer sporadic events but recurring crises with devastating impacts on children's rights across Africa. These hydrological extremes, exacerbated by climate change, poor governance, and socio-economic vulnerabilities, threaten children's rights to life, health, education, protection, and development as enshrined in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). The evidence is clear: from widespread malnutrition during droughts to disease outbreaks and displacement following floods, children bear the brunt of these environmental disasters. This submission has illustrated the multifaceted consequences of climate-related disasters, showing how they intersect with legal, social, and environmental systems to erode the rights and well-being of Africa's youngest citizens. It calls for urgent, child-centred responses integrating climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and human rights protections. African states must strengthen early warning systems, ensure inclusive disaster planning, and uphold their regional obligations to safeguard every child's right to a safe, healthy, and dignified life. To build resilience and adapt to the impacts of climate change, African communities and governments must prioritise integrated approaches that address the interconnected systems of water, food, and energy security.[90] In particular, African governments must:

Adopt Integrated and Rights-Based Approaches

- Prioritize integrated approaches that address the interconnected systems of water, food, and energy security to build resilience and adapt to climate change impacts.
- Implement urgent, child-centred responses that integrate climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and human rights protections.
- Uphold the ACRWC and other relevant regional frameworks to safeguard every child's right to a safe, healthy, and dignified life.

Improve Preparedness and Planning

- Strengthen and improve early warning systems for droughts and floods.
- Ensure inclusive disaster planning.

Invest in Resilience

- Invest in climate-resilient infrastructure.
- Promote climate-smart agriculture.
- These actions are crucial for developing effective climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that address the root causes of extreme weather events and reduce risks associated with them.

90 Adedeji, I. A., et al. Analysis of drought and flood trends in Africa under climate change. (2022) *Journal of Hydrology* 128272.