



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

ACERWC Secretariat

E-mail: acerwc-secretariat@africa-union.org

Tel: +266 52 01 00 18 | P.O.Box: 13460,

Address: Nala House, Balfour Road Maseru
Kingdom of Lesotho

STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES 2026

The Special Rapporteur on Children Without Parental Care of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC/the Committee), Hon. Anne Musiwa, joins the global community in marking International Day of the Family 2026, under the theme, '**Families, Inequalities and Child Wellbeing**'.

This theme carries particular resonance for the Committee's mandate. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child recognises the family as the natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of every child, and places on States the obligation to support families in fulfilling their responsibilities. Africa's extended family systems and kinship networks are among the continent's most resilient social assets which must be supported.

This year's theme draws attention to a critical reality, namely that the principal cause of family separation across the African continent is not neglect, abuse, or abandonment but poverty and inequality. Inequality compounds across intersecting dimensions. Children from the poorest households face the greatest risk of separation. Children with disabilities are disproportionately institutionalised when families lack access to inclusive support services. Girls face heightened risks of violence and forced marriage. Children from rural, refugee, migrant, and minority communities carry specific vulnerabilities that national systems have consistently failed to address. The obligation to protect these children begins with addressing the inequalities that drive their separation from family in the first place.

Article 25 of the Charter on Children Without Parental Care and the General Comment N°. 10 places family preservation and family reunification at the apex of the care continuum, prohibits the separation of children from their families because of poverty or material deprivation, and requires States to develop preventive family support systems before any removal is considered. It is the continent's normative answer to the inequalities that this day asks us to confront.



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

ACERWC Secretariat

E-mail: acerwc-secretariat@africa-union.org

Tel: +266 52 01 00 18 | P.O.Box: 13460,

Address: Nala House, Balfour Road Maseru
Kingdom of Lesotho

On the occasion of International Day of the Family 2026, the Committee calls upon all African Union Member States to:

1. Fully implement Article 25 of the Charter on Children Without Parental Care and the General Comment N^o. 10 by enacting or amending national legislation to prohibit family separation on the grounds of poverty, establish preventive family support systems, and adopt time-bound roadmaps that redirect resources to family and community-based alternatives;
2. Establish sovereign, multi-year financing commitments for children without parental care and their families in national budgets, and ensure that social protection systems are extended to the most marginalised and economically vulnerable households;
3. Ensure that children in all categories of alternative care, including children with disabilities, girls, unaccompanied and separated children in migration and conflict settings, and children from minority and indigenous communities, receive equal protection, with services that are inclusive, gender-responsive, and culturally appropriate; and
4. Strengthen partnerships with development partners, international organisations, and civil society to redirect development assistance toward family preservation, kinship care, and community-based support.

**Done in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho
15 May 2026**