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

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COMMUNIQUÉ of the 48th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)

Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho
13–20 October 2026

1. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) successfully convened its 48th Ordinary Session in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho, from 13th to 20th October 2026.
2. The Session was attended by eleven (11) Members of the Committee, fourteen (14) External Experts of the Working Groups of the Committee, ten (10) representatives of children, twenty one (21) Member States, seven (7) National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), over 40 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), representatives from African Union Commission, the Network of National Human Rights Institutions; Regional Economic Communities (RECs), United Nations Mechanisms and Agencies, Development Partners, Council of Europe, Representatives from the CSO Forum and other stakeholders.
3. The Opening Ceremony featured statements delivered by representatives of children, civil society, the Network of African National Human Rights Institution (NANHRI), the United Nations system, African Union Commission, and partners; namely:
   - Miss Thato Sello, Children's Representatives from Lesotho
   - Miss Joyce Conceição, Children's Representative from Angola
   - Mr Benedict Omillo, Representative of the CSO Forum
   - Dr Daniel Bekele, Executive Director of the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF)
   - Ms Ashenefech Abebe, Commissioner for Women and Children's Rights at the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission on behalf of NANHRI
   - Dr Laila Omar Gad, UNICEF Representative to the African Union
   - H. E Maria José Castello Branco, Chairperson of the Lanzarote Committee
   - H. E Taija Kontinen-Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator – Lesotho
   - H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Khaled, Permanent Representative of Algeria to the African Union and Chair of the PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance (HRDG)
   - Dr Olubusayo Akinola, Head of Social Welfare, Drug Control & Crime Prevention Division in the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development on behalf of H.E. Amb. Amma Twum-Amoah Commissioner of

Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union Commission (HHS)
- Hon Sabrina Gahar, Chairperson of the ACERWC
- Hon Pitso Lesaoana, Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development- the Kingdom of Lesotho

4. The Session was officially opened by Honorable Justice Nthomeng Majara, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho
5. During the Session, the Committee undertook the following activities and decisions:
   i. Received updates and briefings from Member States, NHRIs with affiliate status, CSOs with observer status, UN agencies, and international partners.
   ii. Held a Day of General Discussion on *Violence Against Children and Harmful Practices: Navigating the Digital Frontier* and along with the participants adopted as amended the Outcome Statement capturing the main recommendations from the Discussions.
   iii. Considered the following State Party reports:
      - The First Periodic Report of the Arab Republic of Egypt
      - The Initial Report of The Republic of The Gambia
      - The Initial Report of The State of Libya and
      - The First Periodic Report of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
   iv. Considered Complementary Reports from CSOs on the Initial Report of The Republic of Cabo Verde, the Second Periodic Report of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, First Periodic Report of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
   v. Considered Alternative Reports from NHRIs on the Initial Report of The Republic of Cabo Verde, the Second Periodic Report of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, and First Periodic Report of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
   vi. Considered the outcome of the Day of the African Child 2026 commemorated with the theme 'Ensuring universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene for every child in Africa' based on the reports received from Member States.
   vii. Considered the draft General Comment on Article 13 of the Charter on the rights of children with disabilities
   viii. Considered the preliminary findings of the ongoing Study on Recruitment of Children by Armed Forces and Armed Groups in Africa
   ix. Considered its Study on Children on the Move and its main findings assessing the implementation of the recommendations of the ACERWC previous study
   x. Considered presentations on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), Children's Rights, and the Right to a Healthy Environment from ACPF and Leiden University; and on Responding to Orphanage Trafficking in Africa from Africhild.
   xi. Considered communications brought before the Committee and deliberated on decisions relating to their merits and admissibility; namely:

- Communication N°. 0029/Com/001/2026 submitted by the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and others against the Republic of Zambia
- Communication N° 019/Com/001/2022 submitted by Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Mr. Solomon Joojo Cobbinah (on behalf of schoolgirls living in villages along the River Offin in the Ashanti Region of Ghana) against the Republic of Ghana.

xii. Examined applications for observer status from Civil Society Organizations and namely: Child Witness Institute, L'Association pour le Développement Intégré du Guidimakha (ADIG), Youth Volunteers Chad, Zambia National Traditional Counselors, Society to Heighten Awareness of Women and Children Abuse (SOTHAWACA), Association Mauritanienne pour la Santé de la Mère et de l'Enfant (AMSME), l'Assistance aux Femmes et Enfants en Difficultés, Brave Movement, Health Development Initiative (HDI).

xiii. Adopted the following key documents:
- Assessment of the Second Phase of Implementation of Agenda 2040
- General Comment on Article 28 of the Chater on Drug Abuse subject to incorporation of the comments
- Assessment Study on Children on the Move in Africa
- Outcome of the Day of General Discussion on Violence Against Children and Harmful Practices: Navigating the Digital Frontier

xiv. Considered further documents being developed through its Working Groups and adopted as amended the below documents developed through its Working Group on Implementation of Decisions:
- Guidance Note on the Designation of National Focal Points within Governments to Support the Implementation of the ACERWC's Decisions and Recommendations
- Reporting Template on the Implementation of the ACERWC's Decisions and Recommendations
- Implementation Matrix and Status of Implementation of the ACERWC's Decisions.

xv. Resolved to develop Guiding note on reporting on Business and Children's Rights through the Working Group on Children's Rights and Business; and Policy Brief to Strengthen Finance and Gender-Responsive Budgeting to End Child Marriage in Africa through its Special Rapporteur on Ending Child Marriage and Other Harmful Practices.

xvi. Considered the various requests from Participants on the development of normative standards and decided that such requests must be accompanied by concept notes explaining the rationale for the request and commitment to support the process.

xvii. Decided to consider the First Periodic Report of the Republic of Seychelles without complementary reports at the 49th Ordinary Session.

xviii. Proposed the theme of the Day of the African Child 2027 to be adopted by the African Union Policy Organs as '***An Integrated Africa for Every Child: Advancing Safe Mobility, Inclusion and the Realisation of Children's Rights***'.

xix. Decided to hold its 49th Ordinary Session from 14 to 24 April 2027 and invited all Members States to consider hosting the ACERWC upcoming sessions.

xx. The Committee adopted as amended the report of its 48th Session.

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the successful hosting of the Session and the hospitality extended to all participants.

Done in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho, on 20 October 2026.