



RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD PRESENTED TO THE 48TH SESSION OF THE ACERWC

Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho | 13 October 2026 | Kgomotso Montsho – Head of Secretariat I

1. INTRODUCTION

Honourable Chairperson and Members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; representatives of African Union organs and Member States; national human rights institutions; development partners; civil society Organisations; and, most importantly, children of Africa receive our warm greetings. The 29th Civil Society Organizations Forum convened in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho, from 8 to 12 October 2026, under the theme “From Rights to Reality: Advancing Child-Sensitive, Climate-Resilient Water and Sanitation Systems to Achieve Agenda 2063.” We respectfully submit the following recommendations to the 48th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC, informed by our collective deliberations, evidence and the lived experiences of children and communities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS TO STATE PARTIES

Madam Chairperson, we urge State Parties to:

1. Enact and enforce laws prohibiting corporal punishment in all settings; hold perpetrators and responsible institutions accountable; and train teachers and caregivers in positive, non-violent alternatives to discipline.
2. Establish and fund national mechanisms to implement decisions of African human-rights bodies, with clear responsibilities, timelines, budgets, remedies and public progress reports.
3. Develop domestic resource-mobilization strategies for increased public financing of child protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education, menstrual & mental health, early childhood service, research and publish disaggregated data and budget results ensuring that resources reach frontline and community-based services.
4. Promote menstrual dignity through accessible toilets with water, privacy and safe disposal; provide free menstrual products and where possible remove taxes; and deliver menstrual education and comprehensive sexuality education primarily to eliminate humiliation and discrimination against girls, in particular girls with disabilities, refugee or displaced girls.
5. Ensure safe, inclusive and gender-transformative education; enforce school re-entry, retention and completion by pregnant and parenting learners; strengthen safeguarding and confidential, non-retaliatory reporting of school-related violence; and invest in teachers’ training, girl-led safer spaces, climate-resilient, and disability-accessible school infrastructure.
6. Integrate age-appropriate mental-health identification, psychosocial support and referral pathways into health, education and child-protection services, and track whether referrals lead to care. Train frontline workers to respond safely and confidentially to distress and exploitation; ensure survivors, including boys, and establish safe ways for survivors to co-design and review services.



7. Develop clear protocols to support street-connected children to transition, where appropriate and in their best interests, to safe family-based care, with timely case management and follow-up.
8. Strengthen protection from online abuse through trained personnel, confidential reporting, private-sector coordination and accessible child helplines under the harmonized 116 framework. Engage technology, tourism and hospitality actors on safeguarding and online child safety, including AI-generated abuse imagery, and prevention of substance- abuse.
9. Strengthen environmental safeguards and remedies for children affected by pollution, extractive industries, displacement and climate impacts; include child-sensitive indicators in climate laws, policies, financing and reporting.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ACERWC

Madam Chairperson, we urge the Committee to:

1. Strengthen accountability through State reporting and monitoring system to track implementation of African human-rights decisions, child-responsive budgets, school re-entry, harmful-practice prevention, online safety, early childhood service and emerging issues.
2. Promote the Model Law on the Implementation of African Human Rights Bodies' decision and related General Comments as practical tools for domestic implementation including the finalization and dissemination of the African Jurisprudence Database to promote public tracking of compliance.
3. Develop a General Comment or other interpretive guidance on menstrual health and dignity, building on the 2026 Day of the African Child theme, and include measurable State-reporting indicators on facilities, product affordability, education, teacher conduct and menstrual discrimination.
4. Promote African-led child-rights financing, including consideration of an African Children's Fund, and the African Knowledge Hub for Children to consolidate periodic and longitudinal evidence.
5. Strengthen integrated, child-friendly responses to violence and exploitation, including online and AI-related abuse, linking prevention, confidential reporting, justice, health and psychosocial care including safe, accessible and disability-inclusive child participation.
6. Request all State Parties to adopt and operationalize the harmonized 116 child helpline number, supported by sustainable funding and accessible national protection and response systems.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AND RELEVANT AU ORGANS

We call on the African Union Commission and relevant AU organs to:

1. Commission an independent legal and human-rights compatibility review of the proposed African Charter on Family, Values and Sovereignty and reopen the process to meaningful participation by AU Member States, children, civil society and affected communities before it proceeds.
2. We further wish to reemphasize the fact that any regional instrument must uphold the guiding principles of the ACRWC, Maputo Protocol, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Agenda 2063.
2. Strengthen continental coordination on child rights, education, WASH, gender equality, health, climate resilience and digital safety; and make the case to Heads of State for implementation of African human-rights decisions; and raise awareness of Model Laws and General Comments among implementers.
3. Work with African academic institutions to develop a harmonized continental ethical-review framework for any research involving children, safeguarding their dignity, safety, privacy and promote meaningful participation.
4. Advance a long-term African strategy for child-sensitive, climate-resilient and disability-inclusive WASH, prioritizing schools, health facilities and drought-affected communities, and track continental commitments through a shared monitoring mechanism.

5. CONCLUSION

Madam Chairperson, we call on the 48th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC to move from commitments to measurable and tangible change that translates all rights for all children under all circumstance into a reality. Every child must learn safely and inclusively; access water and sanitation with dignity; obtain accurate information and appropriate health and psychosocial support; live free from violence and discrimination; and participate in decisions affecting their lives.

We call for African human-rights decisions to be implemented, monitored and adequately financed, with policies guided by reliable evidence and children's lived experiences. Once again, we reaffirm our support for the Committee's mandate and wish you a fruitful deliberation.

Khotso! Pula! Nala

Presented By: Kgomotso Montsho

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