



*"Accelerating protection, empowerment
and equal opportunities for children
in Africa by 2030"*

Concept Note for the Commemoration of the Day of the African Child (DAC) 2017

**Theme: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development for Children in Africa: Accelerating
Protection, Empowerment and Equal Opportunity**

Introduction and Background

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children’s Charter/Charter) was adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 11 July 1990 and entered into force on 29 November 1999. The Charter establishes the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Committee/Committee), consisting of 11 members of high moral standing, integrity, impartiality and competence in matters of the rights and welfare of the child.

In 1991, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the then OAU instituted the Day of the African Child (DAC) for the first time in memory of the 16th June 1976 student uprising in Soweto, South Africa. During that time students marched in protest against the poor quality of education they received and demanded to be taught in their own languages.

Since then, the OAU and its successor, the AU, have used the DAC to remember these children, to celebrate children in Africa as well as to inspire a sober reflection and action towards addressing the plethora of challenges that children in Africa face on a daily basis. The African Committee selects the theme for the DAC every year.

DAC 2017

The theme selected by the African Committee for the celebration of the DAC in 2017 is **“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for children in Africa: Accelerating protection, empowerment, and equal opportunity”**. The child friendly version of the theme is simply “Accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunities for children in Africa by 2030”

The general objective of the celebration of the DAC in 2017 is to call attention to the linkages between the SDGs and the African Children’s Charter, with the goal of inspiring States Parties to accelerate efforts towards realizing all children’s rights as provided by the Charter, as a contribution towards accelerating the promotion and protection of all 3 children’s rights in Africa. It aims to set out the relevance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for children in Africa for all countries on the African continent.

There are 17 main goals (with 169 targets) that altogether make up the SDGs, with several targets and indicators for each goal. The Committee affirms that all 17 SDGs are relevant for children, and not just those containing specific references to children, as they all reinforce one another, with the aim of progressively facilitating the proper development of children from childhood to adulthood. States are therefore enjoined to adopt this holistic approach when dealing with the SDGs in relation to children.

The Committee is however mindful of the fact that some of the goals are more urgent or immediate for securing the rights of children now in preparation for more responsibilities in adulthood. Thus, particular attention is here paid to eight SDGs with clear linkages to the Charter. These are SDGs 1 (end poverty), 2 (eradicate hunger), 3 (promote health), 4 (secure education), 5 (effect gender equality), 6 (access to water and sanitation), 16 (peace/justice/strong institutions) & 17 (partnerships/participation).

Kenya commemoration

The government of Kenya is adopting the AU committee of experts theme “**The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for children in Africa: Accelerating protection, empowerment, and equal opportunity**”. The theme is in line with Kenya government Vision 2030 and National Plan of Action (2015-2022) which emphasizes protection, empowerment and equal opportunities for Kenyan children.

The theme will give the government an opportunity to advocate for a number of challenges that Kenyan children face for instance, a weak social workforce, poor coordination children sector, violence against children and child poverty.

The commemoration will start on 1st June, 2017 with physical and virtual build up activities towards the commemoration of the Day of the African Child. This will be a collaborative activity between the government and child focused organizations.

The activity will also involve online engagement throughout the month, with tweet chats, Facebook live and thunderclaps to commemorate the different UN children days in June.

The commemorative event will take place on 16th June, 2017 Bungoma County. Bungoma was chosen because of the geographic location of the county, harmful cultural practices, high rate of teenage pregnancies and child marriage, which has resulted to unequal opportunity for children in this area and compromising of the rights and protection of children.

During the event the following activities will take place

- A round table between children and policy makers
- A special presentation by Kenya Children Assembly President on SDGs and children
- A special presentation by the PS Social protection

Other activities to commemorate the day include

- County level events in all counties
- The Children Congress by Ministry of Education

The main messages to be passed during the event

The protection of children from all forms of violence is integrated into all 17 SDGs ranging from gender equality to protection from economic exploitation. SDG 16 is particularly significant as it represents the first time children’s protection from violence is a global target in the development agenda.

SDG 16 calls on States to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, to provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Agenda 2030 envisions for children, ‘a world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation’ with a particular focus on those in most vulnerable situations.

Given the negative impacts of armed conflict on the growth and development of children (loss of parents/orphan hood, emotional and psychological trauma, physical injuries, and even death, etc.), States are enjoined to live up to their obligations under Articles 22 and 23 of the Charter to protect children in war time, and to ensure that they build societies that are just and peaceful for all, especially children

Children make up about half the population in many African countries; as such all of society suffers the consequences of violence against children and other children's rights violations. In the same vein, the protection of children's rights contributes to the wellbeing, security and progress of the larger society

Ensuring access to justice for children begins with the crucial first step of ensuring the registration of their birth and vital statistics to secure their recognition before the law and ease access to justice via strong and credible institutions at various levels.

Safeguards to protect these children and ensure that they are given a fair opportunity to navigate the (child) criminal justice system without impairing their dignity particularly in those formative years.

Child-friendly legal and judicial mechanisms, including infrastructure, procedures, processes and standards to enhance access to justice for children. In other words, child specific needs must inform the processes including means and measures allowing for children to express themselves and have their voices heard when engaging with the applicable justice system.

Child participation is a core principle of children's rights which demands that the 'forgotten ones' must also be taken into account, including participation and provision for children with disabilities, children of incarcerated mothers, street children, children affected by poverty, children of minority groups, and other vulnerable groups of children

Relevant national institutions must be strengthened, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels thus contributing towards broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

Children are one of the most vulnerable groups to poverty and food insecurity in Africa; despite the knowledge that the availability and provision of food secures the foundation for ensuring the survival and healthy development of children, malnutrition remains a leading cause of infant and child mortality across the continent