

AFRICAN UNION

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

الاتحاد الأفريقي



"An Africa Fit for Children"

UNION AFRICAINE

Comité Africain d'Experts sur les
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African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

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

Child Friendly Theme:



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

A. Introduction

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

B. Context of the theme for 2017

4. 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".
5. African countries were active in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were accompanied by 18 targets, and are measured by indicators using 1990 as a baseline, to be mostly reached by 2015. The MDGs managed to focus the efforts of governments and development partners on pressing issues in human development, most of which were also relevant for children. While Africa as a whole did not achieve all the MDGs, significant progress has been achieved in relation to a number of goals. The year 2015 was a milestone as the MDG era came to an end and the new sustainable development agenda was launched.

6. Some of the lessons drawn from the MDGs for the purpose of the rights and well being of children include “that initial conditions influence the pace of progress a country can make on global development agendas”. In this regard the importance of laying necessary foundations early on with a view to make concrete progress by 2030 cannot be overemphasized. Furthermore, lessons have also been drawn that unless a human rights based approach informs the implementation of activities to achieve goals, the possibility of promoting some rights at the cost of others is very real. Breaking the silos between those who work in development, human rights, and humanitarian assistance has also been identified as critical. A number of examples were also drawn that demonstrate that the MDGs were able to mobilize efforts and resources for the achievement of children’s rights- especially economic, social and cultural rights.
7. Currently, there are a number of commonalities between the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and children’s rights. For instance, the guiding principles that inform the SDGs and children’s rights – such as inclusivity, participation, equity, and good governance are critical to both. There are a number of Goals that are directly provided for in children’s rights- such as the one on free and compulsory primary education. The reporting requirements under child rights instruments as well as the SDGs framework are both mainly intended for the purpose of holding governments accountable.
8. In selecting the theme for the 2017 DAC celebration, the Committee is reconfirming the importance of linking the 2030 Agenda with child rights. It is emphasizing that with a view to increase accountability, strengthen coherence and alignment among various stakeholders, prevent inequitable outcomes, and invest in all children, and to stress that the child rights commitments of States need to be made central to the implementation of SDGs. In addition, the Committee, as a treaty body, is seeking to draw attention to the fact that, the so called “priority SDG targets and indicators for children” should be brought closer to the African Charter reporting cycle.

C. Objectives of the concept note

9. 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 realising all children’s rights as provided by the Charter, as a contribution towards accelerating the promotion and protection of all

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.

10. More specifically, the Concept Note underscores the need for States to prioritize the realisation of the socio-economic rights of children, as contained in the Charter, and now targeted and underscored by the SDGs.
11. Further, the celebration of the DAC in 2017 with a focus on the global 2030 Agenda provides a platform to reflect on the African continent's flagship development agenda – Agenda 2063, the Committee's Agenda 2040 and how they apply to children in Africa today.
12. The Concept Note is also aimed at providing guidance to, among others, Member States, National Human Rights Institutions, UN Agencies, NGOs, Faith Based Organizations, the media, and children themselves in the commemoration of the DAC 2017.

D. The Sustainable Development Goals and the African Children's Charter

13. 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.
14. 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).¹
15. The Committee notes that the Charter is a legal instrument for realising the socio-economic and other goals targeted by the SDGs and should be viewed and utilised as such by States. Through the Charter reporting cycle therefore, in addition to monitoring

¹ UNICEF, 'ISSUE BRIEF: The Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda'. January 2016.

the realisation of rights through the reporting clusters under the Charter, the Committee will also follow-up with States in reviewing progress made and challenges encountered on the path of seeking to achieve the SDGs.

16. The relevance of the SDGs to children's rights in Africa is addressed in this Concept Note under two main headings: *Accelerating Protection* and *Accelerating Empowerment and Equal Opportunity*. SDG 17 focusing on partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs is also highlighted.

AGENDA 2030 - GOALS

No.	SDG
1	End Poverty*
2	Zero Hunger*
3	Good Health & Well-being*
4	Quality Education*
5	Gender Equality*
6	Clean Water & Sanitation*
7	Affordable & Clean Energy
8	Decent Work & Economic Growth
9	Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
10	Reduced Inequalities
11	Sustainable Cities & Communities
12	Responsible Consumption & Production
13	Climate Action
14	Life Below Water
15	Life on Land
16	Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions*
17	Partnerships for the Goals*

D. Accelerating Protection

17. 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. The indicators or measures to accelerate the protection of children include the need to reduce all forms of violence and related death rates, including ending abuse, exploitation, torture, and trafficking of children, as well as promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensuring equal access to justice for all.

18. 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. It underscores the direct link between peaceful and inclusive societies and sustainable development; societies that are built on strong pillars of peace and justice have institutions which are effective, accountable and inclusive at all levels. Promoting peace is therefore an important component of sustainable development because development cannot be established or sustained in an unstable society. Agenda 2030 further calls for States to reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime, as well as reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms. Sustainable development is unattainable when trust in State institutions is undermined.
19. 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. Continent-wide evidence reveals that armed conflicts inflict violence on and negatively impact on the lives of children, whether as victims or as (forced) perpetrators of acts of violence. 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.
20. Other forms of violence negatively impacting on children's growth and development occur through customary practices and the administration of corporal punishment in private and public spaces - in the guise of tradition and discipline. 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. The Committee therefore reiterates the important responsibility of States to deal with all forms of violence affecting children including sexual violence and child prostitution, work or labour-related exploitation/abuse, corporal punishment and other forms of violence whether verbal, psychological or otherwise. The Charter's Articles 15, 16, 21, 27, 28 and 29 all highlight the duty to protect children from all forms of violence and abuse.

21. SDG 16 also underscores access to justice as a fundamental right closely linked to the attainment of sustainable development. Thus, societies aspiring for sustainable development must ensure access to justice for all citizens, including children – whether in conflict with the law or in connection to other legal or administrative procedures and systems. 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. Birth registration is particularly important for children living in rural areas where registration services are scarcely readily available.
22. The Committee emphasises access to justice as fundamentally important for the advancement of children's rights and for defending the legitimate interests of children, particularly children in conflict with the law and children who are in need of protection against acts that threaten or effectively violate their rights. States must put in place concrete 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. This is important for psychological and psychosocial development so they are enabled to grow and develop into adulthood, free of fear and unintended irreversible consequences.
23. Access to justice for children in conflict with the law requires abiding by the dictates of Article 17 of the Charter including providing alternative measures to prisons where detention is deemed necessary. The Committee reiterates that imprisonment should only be used as a measure of last resort when other measures are deemed ineffective. States are required to put in place 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. Priority should be given to ensuring rehabilitation and reintegration, including teaching the children appropriate ways of conducting themselves in society.
24. SDG 16 also calls upon States to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and inclusivity are all critical for sustainable development that caters to the needs of children, thereby protecting their best interests. For effectiveness, public and private institutions involved in carrying out activities with or for children need to ensure that they get involved timeously in order to

effectively play their roles and make critical contributions to ensure efficacy in accordance with available resources. This links the notions of effectiveness and efficiency which translates to the idea of institutional capacity and productivity.

25. Whereas accountability promotes transparency in service provision for everyone, and particularly for children, inclusivity requires that everyone is an active participant in the journey towards sustainable development. These elements promote responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. 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. Agenda 2030 is particular about leaving no child behind and taking concrete steps to reach first, as a matter of priority, those that are furthest behind, including the most excluded and most at risk of having their rights denied. All of these promote accelerated protection for all children; ultimately contributing towards more inclusive, peaceful and accountable societies at all levels.

26. States also need to improve public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements. 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. Strengthening institution includes the promotion of a free press and a strong and vibrant civil society. Their roles are important for information dissemination and knowledge sharing for the promotion of human rights towards preventing violence, combating crimes including terrorism, as well as promoting the enforcement of non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

E. Accelerating Empowerment and Equal Opportunity

27. Promoting empowerment and equal opportunity for all children is another cross-cutting theme running through several SDGs, and it intersects with all Charter protected children's rights. The foundation for promoting empowerment and pursuing equal opportunity is the right to non-discrimination which is contained in Article 3 of the Charter, and is one of the core principles of all children's rights. Ensuring empowerment

and equal opportunity requires targeting all social and economic groups in order to ensure that no child is left behind, with a particular focus on prioritizing the rights and needs of the poorest and most marginalized.

28. The Committee particularly notes that the SDGs will serve as a tool to address implementation gaps on children's rights in Africa, particularly the realisation of socio-economic rights, through good governance, targeted policies and adequate provision of the required services. This is significant given that the Charter spells out the general obligations of States (Article 1) without necessarily differentiating between obligation levels required for the implementation of the rights, whether civil, political, social, economic, or cultural.

29. SDG 1 is aimed at ending all forms of poverty everywhere while SDG 2 targets the eradication of hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, as well as promoting sustainable agriculture. Poverty is a direct cause of hunger for many children, and is a condition that ruins children's chances of achieving development in several other areas of life including education, health, housing and life expectancy, among others. 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. With about half of the continent's population comprising children and young adults below 21, poverty and food insecurity raise serious concerns that States need to tackle urgently.

30. Article 20 of the Charter on parental responsibilities (and a subsidiary direct obligation on States) notes that nutrition is one of the areas for which material assistance and support programmes are required for children in need, in order to secure 'conditions of living necessary to the child's development'. Other areas include clothing, housing, education and health. SDGs 1 and 2 are directly linked to the child's right to life, with a focus on the components of survival, protection and development as articulated in Article 5. Survival and development require the direct realisation of socio-economic rights to ensure proper living conditions for children. Again, these include the provision of nutrition, health care, early childhood development services, and education.

31. Closely related to SDGs 1 and 2 on the eradication of poverty and hunger are SDG 3 on good health and well-being and SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation. SDG 3 is to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' (including significantly

reducing newborn, child and maternal mortality, and eradicating preventable deaths) while SDG 6 is to ensure the 'availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all'. These are particularly relevant to children whose survival and development into adulthood requires proper health and sanitation interventions right from the neonatal period. Good health and well-being for children requires adequate attention from early childhood.

32. While early childhood development is a relatively recent area of study and attention, the range of services that are recognised as forming part of the early childhood development package already exist as part of children's rights. These include proper and adequate food and nutrition (in the early days and years of childhood), early education (stimulation in preparation for subsequent formal education), and health (including the provision of health services in the prenatal stage). Among others, articles 5, 11, 14, and 20 of the Charter all envisage these essential services as part of the (socio-economic) rights of the child.
33. Article 14 of the Charter is an extensive provision on the child's right to the highest attainable standard of health which includes the provision of adequate nutrition and safe drinking water, primary health care, knowledge of hygiene and environmental sanitation, among others. Like the Charter, the SDGs require that States prioritize health services, with an immediate focus on primary health services – particularly for children. The right to health including nutrition, sanitation and wellbeing as couched in Article 14 emphasises the need for participation by various stakeholders including the beneficiaries in order to achieve an optimal human rights-based health system. Thus, States need to involve all sectors of society, including children, at all levels, as active participants and partners in planning and managing health care priorities.
34. Further on SDGs 3 and 6, Article 14(2) recognises knowledge on health care as forming part of education and (g) requires the integration of basic health service programmes in national development plans as an implementation measure. The Committee notes that this is crucial not only for health-related rights but for all children's rights. In addition, the Committee considers it necessary for States to adapt the SDGs to local circumstances and include them in their national development plans. Children's rights and the SDGs contain essential elements of any national development agenda and provide the basis for seeking and securing partnerships for implementation, particularly global partners. The Committee also notes that a comprehensive national development plan that takes into account the Charter and the SDGs is consistent with the notion of the indivisibility

and interrelatedness of all human rights. This is the foundation for empowering all children to reach their fullest potential, while leaving none behind.

35. SDG 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, including children. The aims of the right to education as envisaged in Article 11 of the Charter run through all 17 SDGs. Article 11(2) lists them to include: promotion of full development of the child as an individual in preparation for responsible adulthood, fostering respect for human rights, natural resources and the environment, and promoting the child's understanding of primary health care.
36. States have an obligation to take all appropriate measures to provide quality education that is equitable and inclusive by, among others, providing free and compulsory basic education and developing/making increasingly accessible secondary and tertiary education. Particularly, targeted measures must be taken to encourage regular attendance while reducing drop-out rates, and to ensure equal and equitable access to female, gifted and disadvantaged children including children with disabilities, children from indigenous groups and rural areas, etc. (Article 11(3)).
37. The transition of education from the MDGs to the SDGs underscores its validity as an important and urgent goal to pursue. By promoting education as a SDG in line with the Charter standards, States can build on the progress made under the MDGs and bridge existing gaps including lack of parity in the enrolment rates of boys and girls in some countries and communities, and lower completion rates for girls than boys.
38. For children with disabilities, States must take measures to provide inclusive and equitable access to quality and equal education through the provision of assistive education devices and targeted training to promote self-reliance and participation, especially in relation to preparation for gainful employment. Physical accessibility to public spaces including schools, work spaces and others must also be promoted (Article 13).
39. Related to SDG 4 is SDG 5 which is targeted at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Discrimination on the basis of gender provides a pathway for the violation of other rights of the one discriminated against, such as education, expression, participation and violence. Gender inequality has been the bane of poor education outcomes for girls in many African countries and SDG 5 is targeted at halting this trend as a continuing effort from the MDGs. Despite progress made via the MDGs to achieve equality, particularly in relation to access to education, many girls

across Africa still face barriers to entering into and remaining in both primary and secondary schools. Apart from education inequality, girls continue to face discrimination and violence both in public and private spaces. SDG 5 is thus aimed at among others, eradicating violence against girls in both public and private spheres, including sexual violence and child trafficking, harmful practices (female genital mutilation, child marriage, etc.), and enhancing the participation of women and girls in both sectors to further eliminate existing barriers to gender equality.

40. Gender equality is a necessary foundation for the full and free enjoyment of human rights and for securing sustainable peace, prosperity and development in any nation. Equal access for women and girls to education, health care, participation in decision-making processes involving family life, work, economics, politics, etc., has been shown to be beneficial not only to the women and girls but to entire families and society at large. Thus, the particular needs of the girl-child must be addressed in light of these rights in order to achieve gender equality for sustainable development. Gender equality is crucial for achieving all other SDGs including eradicating hunger and poverty.
41. The targets of SDG 5 are also captured in the Charter beginning with Article 3 on non-discrimination. Directly related to non-discrimination is Article 26 on protection against apartheid and discrimination which obliges States to give the “highest priority” to the special needs of children living under various forms of discriminatory regimes and practices. Others include Article 11 (education), Article 15 (child labour and economic exploitation), Article 16 (abuse and torture), Article 1(3), 26 (harmful cultural and social practices), and Article 27 (sexual exploitation).
42. The Committee therefore urges States Parties to the Charter to review their domestic child laws in light of the SDGs, the Charter and past DAC Concept Notes (for example on the right to education and the elimination of child marriage) to ensure child rights-based policies, practices and programmes that do not in any way undermine the equality of children, particularly the girl-child and other vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities and children from indigenous communities. Committee decisions in Communications also highlight the indivisibility of all Charter rights and the need for States to urgently address the socio-economic concerns of the most vulnerable and most at risk children.²

² See *IHRDA and OSJI (on behalf of Children of Nubian Descent in Kenya) v The Government of Kenya* (2011) and *Centre for Human Rights (University of Pretoria) and La Rencontre Africaine pour la Defense des Droits de l'Homme (Senegal) v Senegal* (2012).

F. Partnerships for Implementation

43. SDG 17 targets strengthening the means of implementing 2030 Agenda and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. It is premised on the understanding that the 17 SDGs cannot be successfully pursued and accomplished without inclusive and effective partnerships between various stakeholders coming together to mobilize all available resources for their accomplishment. In other words, achieving the SDGs, like protecting children's Charter rights, is dependent on meaningful engagement between various stakeholders including the duty-bearers (States/Governments at all levels), the rights holders (citizens, including children), monitoring/accountability agencies (treaty bodies like the Committee of Experts) and other partners such as the private sector/businesses, civil society, academic institutions, international/development partners, the United Nations and the African Union systems.
44. Meaningful engagement among various stakeholders goes beyond verbal, virtual or physical collaboration to include resource mobilization efforts. This is particularly important in the context of socio-economic rights which often contend with resource availability constraints. In fact, securing meaningful participation from people especially at the community level requires resources - material, financial, human and otherwise - to make significant impact. States have an obligation to seek partnerships at all levels (local, national or global) that will result in securing the rights and welfare of children under the Charter and the SDGs.
45. The global partnership for sustainable development includes the objective of seeking and promoting support and assistance to developing countries from more developed countries, particularly the least developed countries and/or those that are furthest behind in the goals. Areas of support are not limited to financial aid/contributions or debt relief measures; they include support in technical resources such as information and communications technology (ICT), measures to address trade imbalances, support in human resources, including capacity-building, to ensure equitable levels of progress for all. However, the Committee reiterates that domestic measures need to be optimized, including strengthening of national public institutions and coordination mechanisms, and the prioritization of adequate budgeting and planning for children's rights, among others.
46. Article 1(1) of the Charter requires the adoption by States of legislation and other measures necessary to give effect to its provisions; guided by the knowledge that legislation by itself is incapable of bringing about the desired change in children's lives.

The Committee therefore calls upon States to seek to contextualise the SDGs to each country's circumstances and seek international co-operation and support (financial, technical, etc.) to pursue the SDGs. Strong national oversight mechanisms remain the best means for monitoring and strengthening domestic measures of implementation as well as monitoring the utilization of international co-operation and support.

47. Participation is a critical element of partnerships, and Agenda 2030 defines children as 'agents of change' with the capacities to actively bring about the realization the SDGs. Thus, the achievement of the SDGs by 2030 requires putting children directly at the center of the agenda now, as they grow into adulthood. This will ensure that whatever is done for the achievement of the SDGs for children is done with their full participation, and is not detrimental to their rights in any way. Participation as a core of children's rights is provided for in Articles 4(2), 7 and 12 (free participation in cultural, artistic and recreational activities). States are urged to use the occasion of the DAC 2017 to promote children's freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas about the SDGs as it applies to them.

48. SDG 17 is critical because it embodies all the values underpinning the SDGs and the implementation of children's rights including the principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation, sustainability, transparency, the best interests of the child, international cooperation and accountability, among others.

G. Accountability and Monitoring

49. Accountability, transparency and monitoring are critical tools for galvanizing efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs and ensuring that real and measurable progress is made within the timeframe. Strong national statistical plans and systems are required from each country in order to enhance the collection and dissemination of disaggregated data on the SDGs for all social and economic groups, including children, in real time. The Committee through its engagements with States Parties via the reporting, complaints and other mechanisms is well positioned to monitor progress made on the SDGs for children in Africa.

50. The Charter forms part of the core body of law on human rights in Africa, albeit with specific focus on children. The force of the Charter as a legally enforceable document is evident within both its language and implementation. Article 1 of the Charter establishes the obligation of Member States to give effect to the instrument through domestic

legislative action and other measures. At the regional level, the Committee has asserted the binding force of the Charter through its decisions on communications, notably, *the Nubian Children's Communication* – its first communication decided on the merits.

51. The law remains one of the most effective tools for societal development by providing the context within which the political, social, economic and cultural advancement of any nation is achieved. Thus, the framework of the Charter and subsequent jurisprudence developed by the Committee through communications, concluding observations, General Comments, etc., afford AU Member States, a vital tool for accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunity for children through the SDGs. States are encouraged to draw on the synergies between the Charter and SDGs presented in this Concept Note and other relevant documents and accordingly reform their existing laws and policies or where necessary, initiate new laws and policies.

PART 2

H. Strategic Ways for celebration of the DAC 2017

52. By focusing on the SDGs, DAC 2017 provides an opportunity to highlight the concerns of children in a holistic manner using the medium of a common global agenda. However, it is important to note the opportunities offered by the reflection of the SDGs in the continent's flagship development agenda – Agenda 2063 – adopted in 2015. It represents the boldest attempt by the AU to have a consistent development framework for achieving social and economic development, i.e. “the Africa We Want”, and it was developed in consultation with Africans, relying on a bottom-up approach, in order to best ensure success.

53. Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework for Africa's economic transformation over the next 50 years, thereby serving as an African reflection of the SDGs. It seeks to accelerate past and current initiatives for growth and sustainable development on the continent and is founded on the AU's vision of “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in international arena”.

54. Agenda 2063 is organised around seven aspirations which reflect the ideals of the SDGs,³ including ‘a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development’ and ‘an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights,

³ ‘Agenda 2063 is in harmony with SDGs’ < <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2015/agenda-2063-harmony-sdgs>> (December 2015).

justice and the rule of law'. The initiative is relevant for Africa's children, who will be leading Africa by 2063.

55. Aligned with Agenda 2063, the Committee developed and adopted Agenda 2040 formally known as 'Africa's Agenda for Children 2040: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children'. It centers around Aspiration 6 of the continental Agenda 2063: *An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children*; by focusing on children and youth as the drivers of Africa's sustainable development.⁴

56. It is imperative that States showcase the SDGs vis-à-vis Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2040, on the DAC, and undertake stimulating national and local dialogues, also including children, to brainstorm and develop effective interventions to accelerate protection, empowerment and equal opportunity.⁵

I. Proposed Activities to Commemorate the Day of the African Child 2017

57. In line with the call for States to contextualise the SDGs to their individual circumstances, the following activities are offered only as guidelines. The Committee however strongly recommends the active participation of children in the planning and implementation of these activities:

- a. States can start a process of assessing their national development plans with a view to prioritizing children's rights in line with the Charter, the SDGs, the AU's Agenda 2063 and the Committee's Agenda 2040;
- b. High-level Ministerial Statements expressing firm commitments to the SDGs undergirded by the instruments/documents above;
- c. Organize discussion forums and other advocacy programmes designed and facilitated by children to give them an opportunity to learn about and share their views on the SDGs and how they relate to children's rights;
- d. With a view to strengthening the institutional frameworks relevant for pursuing the SDGs, States should consider undertaking an assessment of the strengths and gaps of the various institutions in order to clearly identify and plan the means and methods of intervention (including support and assistance) required. This includes engaging in data collection and research in order to better understand

⁴ 'AFRICA'S AGENDA FOR CHILDREN 2040' <http://www.acerwc.org/ourevents/africas-agenda-for-children-2040/> (November 2016).

⁵ 'What is Agenda 2063?' < <https://www.au.int/en/agenda2063>>.

- the nature, magnitude, and impact of the problems and better plan the solutions, and facilitate more effective collaborations between various stakeholders;
- e. Work with school authorities at the primary and secondary level to disseminate information about the SDGs to children;
 - f. Use the media to raise awareness about the SDGs and their relevance for children's rights in Africa;
 - g. Introduce or reinforce accessible mechanisms where children (and/or their families) can bring their concern in order to strengthen all areas of service provision (including education, health, well-being, sanitation, access to justice, etc.);
 - h. Establish clear and concerted collaboration plans together with fixed timelines in collaboration with international role players, especially development partners and other SDG donors.

ANNEX

Monitoring Framework for Reporting on Commemoration of the Day of the African Child 2017: Template

Theme:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for Children in Africa: Accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunity

Motivation:

This template is a reporting framework which AU Members States and other stakeholders can use to report on the celebration of the DAC on 16 June 2017 focusing on the sustainable development goals. The report is expected to be submitted in the format below, in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which the theme has been taken forward at country and district level. This will allow the Committee to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the suggested activities and recommendations in the same manner in all African countries.

Country/Organization:

Partners:

Measures and Activities undertaken in compliance with the eight SDGs highlighted in the Concept Note:

- Summary of Legislatives and Administrative Measures, National plans of action taken to align national policies and programmes with the Charter and the SDGs, paying particular attention to the areas of concern outlined in the concept note: child poverty, hunger and food insecurity, good health and well-being, water and sanitation, education, gender equality, peace and justice and participatory partnerships;
- Practical measures taken to promote awareness and advancement of the SDGs for children;
- Data collected to provide statistics to guide State and other stakeholders' interventions

Report on Events Organised on or leading up to 16th June 2017

	Details of the events	No of participants	No of participants rural/no of participants urban	Details of Implementing agency (Politicians, Govt Dept/NGO)	National, regional or district level impact	No of children reached
	Discussion and other forums organized around the SDGs and children's rights in Africa (e.g. conferences, workshops, seminars, parliamentary meetings/sessions, etc.)					
	Measures for assessing relevant institutional frameworks including data collection activities to enhance collaboration and implementation					

<p>Media involvement for mass communication and public enlightenment (print, online, TV, Radio, etc.)</p>						
<p>School-based activities for knowledge sharing and information dissemination to children</p>						
<p>Measures toward securing collaboration with and support from development partners and other stakeholders/role players</p>						

Plans and measures to take forward the programmes and activities around the SDGs and children's rights after the DAC for the rest of 2017 and beyond						
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Please indicate with an * (asterisk) those activities in which children have been involved.

