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**36th SESSION OF THE AFRICAN
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND
WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACERWC)
23 November– 04 December 2020
VIRTUAL**

**ACERWC/RPT (XXXIII)
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REPORT

THIRTY- SIX ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACERWC)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 36th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was held virtually from 23 November to 04 December 2020. The Session was held in the context of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The first week of the Session, from 23-27 November 2020, was dedicated for a series of regional workshops where Member States, RECs, NHRIs and CSOs in the five regions of the African Union came together and deliberated on the status of children rights in Africa 30 years after the ratification of the Charter and five years after the adoption of Agenda 2040. In addition to the current report, the ACERWC issued outcome statements which summarises the findings and highlights recommendations of the Committee on the status of children's rights in the respective regions.

II. ATTENDANCE

2. The Session was attended by The Right Honourable the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Representatives of Member States, the Commissioner of Social Affairs of the African Union Commission, Children's Representatives, Representatives of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, UNICEF, the Networks of African National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society Organisations, International and Local Non-Governmental Organisations.

ITEM 1: OPENING CEREMONY

Remarks by the Chairperson of the ACERWC

3. The Chairperson of the Committee, Hon Joseph Ndayisenga, welcomed participants and indicated that the session is special as it coincided with the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Charter. He thanked the Kingdom of Lesotho for availing the Right Honourable Prime Minister for this Session and for the continuous support in ensuring the relocation of the Secretariat of the Committee. The Chairperson highlighted the main achievements and activities of Committee in the past 30 years including the fact that the Committee was setup in 2001 and its first Secretary, Mme Mariama Cisse was recruited in 2007. He expressed his gratitude to Mme Cisse for her tremendous contribution in expanding the work of the Committee. Hon Ndayisenga informed that the 30th anniversary also coincided with the review of the implementation of Agenda 2040 which was developed at the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Charter. The Chairperson indicated that in collaboration with the African Child Policy Forum, the Committee has developed a study on the harmonization of laws on children in Africa. He further highlighted that in the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of

the Charter, the Committee organized regional workshops on the status of the implementation of the Charter where representatives of Member States, Regional Economic Communities, and civil society networks participated. The Chairperson mentioned that the Committee devised outcome documents for the workshop in each region highlighting the main achievements as well as challenges that need the attention of all stakeholders. Moreover, the Chairperson announced that the long-awaited relocation is going to materialize in the coming week and informed that the relocation will increase the visibility of the Committee as intended and thereby enhance its capacity. He also called upon partners to continue working with the Committee with stronger ties as the relocation happens. Hon Ndayisenga recalled the guiding note that the Committee had sent to Member States on the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Charter which provides for action points that should be taken by States in celebrating the 30th anniversary. He encouraged Member States to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Charter at national level as there is still time with a view to popularize the Charter among all actors and children. The Chairperson urged States that have not yet ratified the Charter to ratify it and encouraged State Parties whose initial and periodic reports are due, to submit their reports to the Committee using the occasion of the 30th Anniversary. Furthermore, he expressed the position of the Committee that the celebration of the 30th anniversary does not end as a celebration but is used as a milestone to deliver numerous child rights issues such as adoption of pending child related laws, amending outdated laws to align them with the Charter, increase the budget allocated for child rights issues, strengthen institutional structures that deal with child rights, and take other measures to enhance the protection and promotion of children's rights, among others. Finally, he called upon civil societies to take active part in the organization and celebration of the 30th anniversary at domestic level, assist States in taking concrete actions, continue their support to the mandate of the Committee and ensure that complementary reports are submitted on time.

Remarks by Representative of Children

4. The Child Representative Master Thabang Ramaipato assisted by Miss Thatho Haufi in addressing the Committee, mentioned that over 100 children met on the 21 November 2020 and during the meeting discussions were held on how the Charter has impacted their lives. The child representative informed that during the discussions, all children agreed that the continent did well in having the Charter and Member States did well in signing the Charter as well as having laws, and benefiting children from their programs. He further stated that the children agreed that parents are doing well in taking care of their children, teachers are educating them, social workers are guiding them, nurses and doctors help them when they are sick and immunize them, and the police protect them. The child representative informed that the children further agreed that

despite the good things, there are children living in areas where people kill each other which affects their education, health and play. Other challenges raised by the children include food shortage, lack of proper shelter, shortage of books and classrooms, limited teachers, lack of water, and abuse by elders. The child representative further alluded to their agreement that covid-19 and measures taken to address the pandemic affect their play time, education, health, availability of food as parents have lost jobs. It was also mentioned that the measures taken to tackle Covid-19 have resulted in abuse, girls' pregnancies, and girls' being forced to get married. The child representative forwarded the plea of children that the Committee should encourage governments to abide by the Charter, teach children about the Charter, ensure that parents have job security, and stop war. The Committee was also requested to participate in the next child forum. The Child representative also forwarded the message of children to governments and highlighted that governments should implement the Charter and their national laws, punish those who abuse children, make courts friendly, build more schools as well as clinics, give parents land where they can grow food on, and create space to talk to children. Moreover, the Child representative requested civil society organizations to continue giving children space to talk, work with governments to ensure they keep their promises, push for punishment of abusers, and protect children in publications. The Child representative concluded by welcoming the Committee to Lesotho.

Remarks by the CSO Forum

5. Ms Felistus Motimedi, representative of the CSO Forum, commended the Committee for its various activities throughout the year despite the impact of the pandemic and specifically she thanked the Committee for its participation in the activities of the Forum. Ms Motimedi reiterated the support of the Forum in monitoring the implementation of the Charter and she indicated that the Forum remains proud of its contribution from advocacy to service provision and promoting accountability that comes from complementary reports and communications. She highlighted that the Forum realizes that implementation of children's rights needs more stakeholders and hence the Forum is adding new partnership and strengthening existing ones. Ms Motimedi expressed the concern of the CSO Forum that African Children still face various challenges which are further exacerbated by covid-19 including the closure of schools which has escalated gender based violence, child pregnancies, as well as other issues such as lack of recognition of ECD as continental priority, intergenerational poverty, lack of meaningful child participation, conflict situations which have recently occurred in Cameroon, Mozambique, and Ethiopia which have led to killings of children, compromised the rights of children, and forced them to flee. She also indicated that there are inadequate laws on online protection of children and this situation is further exacerbated by covid-19 due to increase in online education.

In her remarks, Ms Motimedi, presented few recommendations of the Forum to the Committee such as developing guidelines on handling teenage pregnancy by States; conduct research on the state of teenage pregnancy; consider developing general comment on article 29 of the Charter to clarify how children can be protected from all forms of exploitation ; develop guidelines on ECD to assist states better report on the issue and also consider developing general Comment on ECD issues. She also indicated that the CSO Forum recommends that the Committee develops a regional child score card to assist in monitoring progress by States; and emphasize synergy between child rights and socio-economic apparatus by ensuring that decisions take child rights issues into account. In concluding her remarks, Ms Motimedi stated that the CSO Forum looks forward to the outcome of the study on children without parental care and the outcome statements of the regional workshops organized in the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Charter.

Remarks by Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRIs)

6. Represented by Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo, NANHRIs underlined that the 30th anniversary is a platform to celebrate the success of the Committee, including its efforts in promoting ratification of the Charter and achieving 49 ratifications. Mr Sebihogo urged NHRIs to spare efforts for the ratification and implementation of the Charter. While noting the various progress made, Mr Sebihogo highlighted few challenges that compromise the implementation of the Charter such as the non-binding nature of international mechanisms, the limited number of CSOs and NHRIs working with the Committee, and limited number of civil society organizations with observer status before the Committee. Mr Sebihogo assured the Committee that NANHRIs is committed to working with the Committee to address these challenges and urged the Committee to strengthen its collaboration with NHRIs. In his remarks, Mr Sebihogo alluded to the fact that the current pandemic has posed various challenges on child rights including the increase in economic insecurity, teenage pregnancies, child marriage, child labour and violence against children in homes. He also mentioned that the increase in the death toll due to covid-19 results in child orphan-hood. Noting that all stakeholders have the ingenuity to overcome today's children's challenges, Mr Sebihogo called for collective action to address the challenges. He forwarded the call of NHRIs to Member States to be guided by Aspiration 9 of Agenda 2040 on the situation of children in armed conflict and expressed appreciation to the Committee for the swift action taken by the Committee for calling the Government of Ethiopia to address the ongoing conflict situation. Mr Sebihogo welcomed the draft model law on children in armed conflict, the effort of the Committee in developing General Comment on article 22 and article 27 to guide policy design by States.

Remarks by UNICEF

7. Mr Jephthe Mve Mvondo, Representative of UNICEF indicated that the celebration of the 30th anniversary has reminded us of the immense progresses achieved and also the task that is ahead of us. He particularly made reference to the ravages of Covid-19 which has exposed the shortfalls of systems setup to protect the rights of children. He highlighted that covid-19 has a trifecta threat namely, direct consequences of the disease itself, disruption of essential services and increasing poverty. Mr Mvondo informed that new age disaggregated data from 87 countries reveals that children and adolescents account for 11% of reported cases of Covid-19. He also alluded to the fact that measures taken to contain the virus have harmed children by increasing cases of abuse, violence and maltreatment as well as resulting in economic regression, loss of jobs and inaccessibility of services. Mr Mvondo mentioned that last year more than 400 children shared their views about child rights in Africa and raised issues of limited training, favouritism, nepotism, corruption, and political instability as areas of concern and they called upon governments to work on equity, accountability, efficient investment. Finally, Mr Mvondo raised few points which UNICEF office to the AU would like to see integrated in the work of the Committee and responses of State Parties: Ensure all children learn including by closing the digital divide; guarantee access to health and nutrition services including affordable vaccinations; support the mental health of children and bring an end to abuse, and gender based violence; increase access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene and address climate change; reverse the rise in child poverty and promote inclusive recovery; protect and support children and parents living in conflict and displacement; and increase youth development by providing youth with skill and employment opportunities.

Remarks by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

8. Hon Justice Sylvian Ore, President of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights indicated that the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was supported by almost all Member States of the AU and has achieved a high number of ratifications. Underlining that collective responsibility is important in the realization of children's rights, the President of the Court outlined few achievements in implementing the Charter such as strengthening national frameworks as various countries have adopted laws on children, laws on child marriage, improvement of access to education, intensification of protection of children from trafficking, reduction of the rate of child mortality, increased levels of immunization, and better enrollment of girls in schools. However, Hon Justice Ore, stressed that we cannot lose sight that many challenges remain such as poverty, hunger, social conflict, violence against children, exploitation of children for economic and sexual purposes, as well as discrimination and exclusion. While

amplifying that Africa more than ever before needs to strengthen its collective effort to cater for its children, the President of the Court stated that the institutional capacity of organs of the AU like the Court should strive on the promotion of children's rights. He indicated that the Court is going to implement its Protocol so that it is able to provide its opinion to the Committee on children's rights and it will also ensure the enforcement of the decisions of the Committee. He called on NHRIs and CSOs to join their efforts with AU organs to achieve the full implementation human rights in general and decisions of the Committee in particular.

Remarks by the Commissioner of Social Affairs of the AU

9. H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil Mohammed, Commissioner of Social Affairs commended the Committee for being able to organize its second virtual session despite the outbreak of the pandemic. Noting that the impact of the pandemic on children's rights is still a challenge, H.E Mrs Amira Elfadil informed that her Department is undertaking various activities to address the challenge. She indicated that Africa CDC continues to undertake awareness creation and monitoring the spread of the outbreak in Member States, to support response measures by Member States, and has thrived to establish the African Union Covid-19 response fund along with developing various guidelines on the prevention and treatment of the virus. The Commissioner stressed that there is a need to gather data on the rate of infection among children at a continental and country levels in order to enable informed interventions. Moreover, the Commissioner informed that the AU Campaign to end child marriage has been extended up to 2023 and the Department has developed a holistic Strategic Plan Document to enhance the campaign. She highlighted that as Member States continue to place mandatory lockdown there has been an increase of child marriage and other harmful practices. The Commissioner indicated that considering the alarming increase of gender-based violence due to the pandemic, the Commission of the African Union considered it necessary to conduct a thorough assessment of the situation and propose guidelines for AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Furthermore, the Commissioner congratulated the Committee for organizing workshops centered on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Agenda 2040 in commemoration of the 30th Anniversary. She underlined that the workshops provided an invaluable platform to examine the journey of child rights implementation in the Continent and to have a holistic view of where we stand as a continent in fulfilling our promise to children. H.E. Mrs Amira Elfadil acknowledged that the Commission has benefited tremendously from hosting the Committee since its establishment and further indicated that the relocation of the Committee to the Kingdom of Lesotho will bring an invaluable opportunity of growth and transformation to the Committee and its work. She finally humbly

called upon the Kingdom of Lesotho to warmly welcome the Committee and to ensure the existence of a favorable environment for the Committee to execute its mandate.

Key note speech by the Right Honourable, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho

10. H.E. Dr. Moeketsi Majoro, the Right Honorable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho commended the Committee for its relentless work in monitoring the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and paving the way for an Africa fit for children. Recalling that the Secretariat of the Committee will be relocated to the Kingdom of Lesotho before the end of this year, the Right Honorable Prime Minister indicated that the Kingdom of Lesotho looks forward to playing a key role in enhancing the work and visibility of the Committee. H.E. the Prime Minister highlighted that thirty years ago African Countries made the noble decision of adopting the first ever-regional treaty on child protection, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which has transformed how we see and interact with children as individuals, societies and Governments. H.E. the Right Honorable Prime Minister mentioned that when the Charter was adopted 30 years ago, key concerns in the continent included the issue of children affected by armed conflict, harmful practices and apartheid, among others. He underlined that while these challenges remain pertinent today, emerging challenges have surfaced child protection in the continent and further Speaking of emerging challenges, the Right Honorable Prime Minister mentioned the impact of Covid-19 which is making children pay the highest price, poverty that is leading to many other devastating situations such as conflict, trafficking and exploitation, food insecurity, and climate change. He also alluded to the need to take a coordinated response for sustainable solution, establish permanent social protection systems, and make sure that responses are child rights-based response. He further indicated that Africa must be vigilant and flexible in addressing emerging challenges and highlighted that Agenda 2040, Africa's Agenda for children, is indeed an expedient instrument to ensure a targeted and time bound implementation of the rights contained in the African Children's Charter, that have been enveloped in prioritized thematic areas and he welcomed the study on the assessment of the implementation of the Agenda. Moreover, the Right Honorable Prime Minister assured that the Kingdom is committed in galvanizing action towards combating malnutrition, through ensuring the implementation of the Malabo Declaration on Nutrition Security for Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Development in Africa under the leadership of H.M Letsie III, King of kingdom of Lesotho who is the African Union Champion on Nutrition.

11. Following the remarks, the Chairperson of the Committee, Hon Joseph Ndayisenga officially opened the 36th Ordinary Session.

ITEM 2: Briefing by partners

12. The following partners submitted brief statements during the Session informing the Committee about the various initiatives they are undertaking, child rights issues in the continent and forwarding possible areas of collaboration with the Committee:

- Plan International;
- Save the Children;
- Institute for Human Rights Development in Africa (IHRDA);
- Graca Machel Trust (GMT);
- African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY);
- Defense for Children International; and
- Initiative for Social and Economic Rights.

ITEM 3: SWEARING IN OF THE NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

13. Hon Moushira Khattab was sworn in as a new Member of the Committee in replacement of the late Hon Azza Al Ashmaweey who passed away on 16 April 2020.

ITEM 4: LAUNCH- ACERWC'S DATABASE ON CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND STATE PARTY REPORTS

14. The ACERWC, in collaboration with Plan International, has developed a database on State Party Reporting procedures. The database serves as a resource center where state party reports and concluding observations are uploaded structurally. It also enhances transparency and improve follow up on implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations of the ACERWC. During the Session, the ACERWC in collaboration with Plan International, has launched the database.

ITEM 5: PRESENTATION ON THE INCEPTION REPORT OF THE STUDY ON CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE

15. The presentation was done by Sifiso Chikandi of Primson Consultancy Group, the team that will be conducting the continental study on children without parental care. Mr Chikandi started his presentation by noting that Article 32 of the ACRWC mandates the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) to promote and protect the rights of the child. One indispensable condition is for the children to grow up in an enabling environment where they can realize their full potential. He noted that notwithstanding this

recognition, the Africa is faced with a challenge where many children are without parental care and increasingly a significant number are at the risk of losing parental care. The limited availability of data and the magnitude of the challenge prompted the Committee to address the issue. At its 34th Ordinary Session, the ACERWC - together with partners issued a call for a study on Children Without Parental Care (CWPC). The purpose of the study is to generate information on the nature, scope, and current status of CWPC.

16. Mr Chikandi noted that the study aims to provide information across the RECs and all countries on the continent. He further noted that the study will strike a balance between statistical and descriptive information that is continent-wide and more detailed exposition and analysis of issues in selected countries. The detailed country level work will not be exhaustive. Rather, the focus will be on bringing out key issues that will inform knowledge and responses to CWPC. The study will address five objectives as follows:

- i. To establish evidence on the nature and magnitude of CWPC in Africa to provide a guide and formulate a continental normative and programmatic response.
- ii. To build an evidence-based foundation for addressing the root causes and drivers of CWPC in Africa.
- iii. To conduct a critical analysis of the current normative frameworks and their mutual interaction with the African conceptual understanding of CWPC.
- iv. To map out alternative care options and programmatic responses that are in the best interest of the child and meant to address the issue of CWPC in Africa - identify policy frameworks and practices in terms of necessity and suitability.
- v. To recommend ways in which the ACERWC, RECs, and Member States can work more effectively in responding to CWPC and the impact thereof.

17. The Committee welcomed the study and its importance as it will be a baseline. The consultants were encouraged to extend their research to learn from other continents on how the issue is dealt with. There was a call also to use a global study on children deprived of their liberty which was recently issued by the United Nations. It was agreed that the Committee will give direction to the consultants on the selection of countries for case studies.

ITEM 6: PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT MODEL LAW ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

18. The presentation was done by Dr Robert Nanima of Dullah Oumar Institute located at the University of Western Cape. He started by setting the context that armed conflict has a number of adverse effects on people and communities. However, in the case of children, the adverse effects of armed conflict are more severe and long-lasting. He further noted that while the issue of armed conflict is serious, communities regrettably do not have access to the type of protection and assistance they need. Furthermore, children, in particular, suffer the consequences of armed conflict and do not have access to the special assistance

they may need during the time of armed conflict as well as after. Dr Nanima underscored that armed conflict has a psychological impact on children; in addition to this, children also lose their lives, are maimed, sexually abused, abducted, trafficked as well as displaced from their families and communities. Thus, children's civil and political and socio-economic rights are affected by armed conflict. Moreover, the aftermath of armed conflict also affects the children and their rights. Thus, children need to be assisted with a number of interventions to ensure that their rights do not continue to be violated. For example, children need assistance with tracing their families, social reintegration, different forms of rehabilitation, and trauma counselling. However, in the current status quo, these needs of children are often trivialized and one of the reasons for this is that there is rarely a legal framework which enumerates the obligations of different state stakeholders.

19. In view of the foregoing, Dr Nanima noted that while some countries have promulgated some progressive legislation in order to deal with the issue of armed conflict and its consequences, the issue of grave child rights violations still persists. Thus, especially because children's rights invoke urgency in implementation in order to avoid violations which continue into adulthood, there remains a need to ensure that efforts are doubled to protect children during and after periods of armed conflicts hence the need for the Committee to draft a Model Law on Children in Conflict Situations in Africa. He noted that the model law will serve as a yardstick for dealing with children in situations of conflict on the continent. It also will be an advocacy tool for legislators to have such a law in Member States. Further, it will provide best practice language, and will be impeccable for ease of adoption or adaption by Member States in their laws dealing with the children affected by armed conflict. Because of its supposed dynamism, it will be possible or easy for member states to transpose or transplant its contents without much effort as it describes and explains its adoption or adapting process. As such, the Model Law will assist policy makers and legislative drafters to address all the relevant areas in need of legislative reform without usurping the authority of national legislatures to determine the content, extent, style and form of their national laws. Dr Nanima posited that the main objective of this Law is to uphold the rights of the child in the context of armed conflict. It specifically aims to –

- (a) Give effect to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and other relevant international and regional treaties to which the State is a party;
- (b) Provide specific guidance to national legislators in Africa on the content and provisions of effective laws that would be binding at the national level to uphold the rights of children in the context of armed conflict;
- (c) Provide as clear definitions of terms as possible;
- (d) Underscore a human rights-based approach to addressing the challenges children face in the context of conflict;
- (e) Serve as a standard for national legislators and policy makers and promote accountability;

- (f) Make it possible to transplant its contents into national legislation by lawmakers in Africa to fully or partially domesticate its content into one or several national laws.
- (g) Foster and advance a culture of good practices in relation to the development of and implementation of laws for the protection of the rights of child in the context of conflict more broadly;
- (h) Define different acts and omissions that amount to an offence in the context of children and armed conflict and provide clarity and direction to stakeholders in the interpretation and application of provisions to effectively address crimes against or affecting children in the context of armed conflict ;
- (i) Ensure that stakeholders, especially professionals that interact with children- such as those that provide medical, psychological, and legal assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration services - do so sensitively and with due respect for their best interests and rights under international law;
- (j) Provide for the respective obligations, and roles of State institutions and other stakeholders; and
- (k) Provide a basis for the development of policies, strategies and implementation plans on armed conflict and its consequences on children.

20. In response to the presentation, concerns were raised to ensure that the threshold of child protection should not be lower than what the Charter provides, especially in sentencing the children. The Committee stressed that there is a need for guidance on the scope of the model law especially in dealing with internally displaced children, child refugees accused of war crimes, in view of the fact that they may be denied of refugee status for their participation in armed conflicts. The Committee advised that the principles should not be extended to five, to include non-refoulement to avoid confusion. It was then agreed that non-refoulement will be integrated into the principles so that the substance it brings does not get lost.

ITEM 7: PRESENTATION ON POLICY BRIEF ON ASPIRATION 9 OF AGENDA 2040

21. The presentation of the Policy Brief was done by Dr Musa Chibwana. He noted that the purpose of the policy brief was to provide granular detail on how States Parties and Member States can use the various tools which the Committee has developed recently, especially the General Comment on Children in Situations of Conflict. He further noted that the policy brief is meant for enhancing accountability on child rights violations by referring to the prevention and remedy of violations committed against children in situations of armed conflict, tension and strife. This includes judicial and nonjudicial measures adopted mainly by States and key actors such as RECs, where relevant. As set out in the GC,

enhancing accountability requires both preventive and remedial actions across four interrelated areas, namely: assigning responsibility, enforcing laws and norms, reforming systems, and empowering children, in order to enhance accountability as elucidated below.

22. He stated that the key messages of the policy brief are the following:

- i. Unequivocally adopt 18 as the minimum age for recruitment into armed forces or groups and adopt a zero tolerance approach towards child soldiers.
- ii. Adopt birth registration and age verification procedures to prevent recruitment of children, enable their access to immunisations and enhance family reunification.
- iii. Treat children in conflict situations as victims first, even if they commit crimes resulting from their association with armed forces or groups.
- iv. Establish accountability mechanisms to expedite justice and end impunity against perpetrators of child-rights violations.
- v. Monitor violations of rights contained in Article 22 of the ACRWC and to report to the ACERWC on steps taken to: protect children in situations of armed conflict, tension and strife; enhance accountability against perpetrators, and extend basic services to children.

23. Following the presentation, Members of the Committee appreciated the content of the Policy Brief and stressed that it should be revised in a way it doesn't overlap with other documents on matters related to children in conflict situation, including the General Comment on Article 22 of the Charter

ITEM 8: BRIEFING BY UN SRSG-VAC

24. Dr Najat Maalla M'jid, UN SRSG on Violence Against Children, addressed the ACERWC on matters related to her mandate and areas of common interest. She started her presentation by reflecting on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children worldwide, and how the poorest and most vulnerable children are hit hardest. Citing the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' policy brief on COVID 19 she noted that what began as a health crisis risks evolving into a broader child-rights crisis. In the last three decades, African continent has made significant strides to fulfil their international legal obligations under CRC and ACRWC. She noted that there are now more laws, policies and institutions and many good practices and lessons learnt on safeguarding the human rights of children, including their protection from all forms of violence. More children have access to health services, education and birth registration. People and societies are more aware about the human rights of children and more and more children are empowered about their rights.

25. Dr Najat Maalla M'jid averred that despite progress made, reality confirms that there is no time for complacency. Weak implementation of legal and policy frameworks, lack of adequate budget for child rights, prevalence of harmful practices, lack of access to justice for children combined with "unknown" numbers of children deprived of liberty, children living in war and in humanitarian emergencies, widespread prevalence of gender based violence combined with

weak social and child protection, impunity and poor governance continue to leave millions of children unprotected. She further posited that while Africa may not have been deeply impacted by COVID 19 – in comparison with other regions in terms of COVID cases the continent is however facing a much bigger and pervasive pandemic which is gender-based violence interconnected with violence against children.

26. In joining in the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the ACRWC, Dr Najat Maalla M'jid noted the recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic provided extraordinary opportunities to ensure sustainable development for African countries which is anchored on the investment on Africa's children. In a post COVID world marked by fiscal austerity, it is imperative to ensure resources optimization through the alignment of services offered, for example is crucial to align the responses to violence against women and violence against children. In doing this, Governments should strengthen a child multisectoral approach anchored in strong social and child protections systems ensuring that every child has a life with dignity and free of violence, leaving no one behind. We are only 9 years away from 2030. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity to stress that the SDGs provide an historic opportunity to unite all global stakeholders, to keep our promise to end all forms of violence against children, she said .

27. In conclusion, she noted that *Building back better* cannot be just another mantra. It must have a real, positive impact on people's lives, especially children and communities around them. We must use the development of building back better after the pandemic, as an opportunity to reassess priorities to advance human development and reduce inequalities, especially for women and children. Building back better is an opportunity to seize for a strong mobilization of all key stakeholders, including children, at global, regional and national levels, to keep the promise of the 2030 Agenda to end the pandemic of violence against children, leaving no one behind.

28. Following her presentation, the Committee welcomed the collaboration with the UNSRSG-VAC noting that it will go a long way in achieving desired results for children. It was noted that there should be collaboration on data collection as well as implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 16.2 on violence against children. In response, Dr Najat Maalla M'jid reinforced that it is imperative to use the current opportunity of rebuilding after COVID-19 Pandemic in making sure that recovery plans include child and social protection.

ITEM 9: REPORT ON THE CHARTER @ 30: TAKING STOCK, REKINDLING COMMITMENT-ACPF

29. The Committee welcomed Dr Joan Nyanyuki to present on behalf of ACPF the key findings of the report named African children's charter @ 30: taking stock, rekindling commitment. Before starting her presentation, Dr Joan Nyanyuki thanked the Committee for allowing her to share the findings of the study. Dr Nyanyuki started by indicating that the report was published to join the Committee in the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the Charter. By

taking stock, the report provides a moment of reflection and an opportunity to assess what measures have the African States taken in the last 3 decades to advance child rights in the continent. It also assesses the role played by the Committee by driving the domestication and implementation of the Charter. She also highlighted that the report has evaluated progress and has found significant improvement. The report has further identified specific areas that demand accelerated action by States, the Committee and key actors.

30. During her presentation, Dr Nyanyuki indicated that the report draws a connection between taking stock and General Comment No 5 on 'State party obligations under the ACRWC and systems strengthening for child protection'. She further indicated that this report seeks to improve the implementation of child rights, examines the elements and general measures required to improve the implementation of the Charter around 10 parameters such as the legislative and policy measures; policy framework strengthening; child protection systems; coordination mechanisms; budgeting for children; data collection; child participation; training, capacity building and awareness-raising; collaboration with non-State actors; Independent Child Rights Monitoring and Promotion of Positive Practices.
31. Dr Nyanyuki highlighted that by taking stock, the report seeks to evaluate progress and it has found better national law and policy frameworks; harmonization of laws and policies to ensure the protection of children in Africa; an increase in guaranteeing and facilitating child participation in public governance and policy spaces and significant achievements in the promotion and protection of children's rights in the continent. She also indicated that by taking stock the report has examined the challenges and has found data gaps; low budgetary investment in children and lack of effective coordination which has caused weak child rights systems in Africa. The report has further found that specific groups of vulnerable children remain grossly neglected in the continent.
32. The report has also highlighted the role of the ACERWC as a driver of the Charter's implementation, as the Committee has contributed immensely to improving the implementation of the rights of the child enshrined in the African Children's Charter. Moreover, the report suggests a call to action to the ACERWC by calling the Committee to further strengthen its commitment to the ACRWC in 3 ways first by ensuring universal ratification, withdrawal of reservations, timely submissions of State party reports; secondly, the Committee was encouraged to continue to adopt General Comments, in line with its mandate to interpret the provisions of the ACRWC which is beneficial in providing clarity to State Parties on their obligations enshrined in the Charter and in holding governments to account and lastly, the Committee was encouraged to assist States in need of technical support by drafting model laws which align with specific provisions of the Charter. The report suggests further a call to action to States to ensure active, sustained and systematic participation of children in governance; strengthen the enforcement of laws to further the protection of children in the continent; strengthen independent child rights' monitoring; strengthen systematic data collection; accelerate efforts to implement recommendations issued by the Committee; collaborate with CSOs and the

private sector to develop and implement laws and policies, child-friendly budgets and services that benefit children. The report also draws a call to action: to CSO to continue its advocacy for the children's agenda; undertake relevant and contextual research and support States in the timely preparation of their State reports to the ACERWC; develop strategies for State Parties to consider in mitigating threats to child rights, document and share best practices in this regard; support and monitor efforts to implement recommendations and Concluding Observations issued by the Committee; support the Committee in its country, promotional or investigative visits.

33. After her presentation, the Committee thanked Dr Nyanyuki and ACPF for the constructive presentation. The Committee suggested that ACPF cooperates with the Committee in encouraging the Member States to report regularly. However, the Committee emphasized that it is important to recognize that there is a structural problem which is the burden of reporting. The Committee suggested to harmonize the Guidelines for reporting between the African Committee and the UN CRC Committee. The Committee further stated that harmonizing the clustering will help the States to ease the burden of reporting. Thus, their periodicity of reporting cannot be harmonized because it requires amendment of the Convention or the Charter. In this regard, the Committee suggested to develop a modality of cooperation. The Committee also suggested to use another description with regards to investigative visits to encourage States to welcome the investigation missions in their territories. States may not be willing to receive the Committee to investigate by insinuating that there is a suspicion of child abuse in their countries.

34. Dr Nyanyuki thanked the Committee for its positive reception of the report. She responded to the issues raised by the Committee by highlighting that the call to action about the State Party reporting should similarly be included in the call to action to CSO. She further stated that she agreed that ACPF and CSO sectors can support States to report to the Committee and ease the burden of reporting which is heavy on States. She indicated that ACPF is very committed to working with States in two ways; firstly, by providing them with information and building the body of evidence so that they include it in their reports if they find it useful. Secondly, by building their capacity to be able to report. Concerning the wording investigation visits; Dr Nyanyuki indicated that the description/language would make a bit difference in encouraging States to invite the Committee to such visits. She then invited the Committee to participate in the launch of the report which will be sharing in detail the findings, common threats and good practices that the report has identified; watching the documentary that ACPF has produced to celebrate the 30th anniversary in words, in videos and pictures. She concluded by wishing the Committee to have a great continuation in the commemoration of 30 years of the Charter.

ITEM 10: UNICEF STUDY: REIMAGINE AFRICA, POST COVID-19: LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES; A CONSULTATION ON THIRTY YEARS OF CHILD RIGHTS IN AFRICA

35. The Committee welcomed Mr. Jephthe Mve Mvondo to present on the UNICEF study: Reimagine Africa, Post COVID-19: Listening to Young People's Perspectives. Jephthe Mve Mvondo started by thanking the Committee for allowing him to present on behalf of UNICEF. He further indicated that it is within the ambit of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Charter that young peoples are given the floor through the presentation of this study to share their perspective in terms of child rights in the continent as well as looking into the years to come. Before presenting the content of the study, Mr Jephthe shared the methodology which has been used to collect the views of the African Child population. Young peoples between 15 and 24 years have been reached out through social media, person-to-person contact, an online survey using the Microsoft Form platform where they shared their opinions about children's rights in Africa, and the actions that they would like to see taken by national governments, the African Union, and the United Nations to strengthen implementation of the rights of the child in the continent. He indicated that children were requested to provide their opinions on the following subjects: exposure to child rights instruments; fears about the future; perceived barriers to the full enjoyment of child rights; government accomplishments for children; scope for further progress for children and the role of the African Union and the United Nations in supporting child rights in Africa.
36. Mr Mvondo highlighted that after sharing their opinions on the above-mentioned topics, young peoples recommended the Governments to commit to child rights in three principal areas: Equity- by developing programmes that reach every child, including children with disabilities and the most marginalized; Accountability- by committing to meaningful child participation, and report regularly on the implementation of their commitments to children; and Investment in child development and secure budgets for children. He stated, young people further recommended the African Union and the United Nations to offer technical and financial support to countries struggling with the implementation of child rights laws; prioritize development assistance for social infrastructure; hold governments accountable for their commitments to children and young people by ensuring effective monitoring of the State Party obligation to submit timely reports on the implementation of the CRC and the ACRWC. Mr Mvondo concluded by stating that in the next 30 years of the child rights in the continent, an awareness campaign on the rights of the child among children is necessary.
37. After his presentation, the Committee congratulated UNICEF for undertaking this important study which is very helpful to the Committee. The Committee further indicated that in 30 years, children of the continent should know the rights that are enshrined in the Charter and the CRC. However, the Committee requested UNICEF to provide technical support in countries where they have difficulties in reporting to the Committee. On the comment related to prioritizing assistance for social infrastructure, the Committee suggested to add the word 'sustainable'. The Committee stated that the infrastructure that is sustainable values equity (when we talked about providing a classroom in a remote area, it should be the same type of classroom that we can provide in a town). The Committee further indicated that holding governments accountable can only be achieved if its

Partners like UNICEF can provide technical support to the Member States to report to the Committee.

38. The Committee also commented on the recommendation made by children regarding the need for a real commitment by governments to protect children's rights. The Committee called for States to make sustainable investments over time and invest in people/human resources. The Committee suggested to reverse the order of priority of investments in our countries and prioritize the investment in human capital.
39. Mr. Mvondo thanked the Committee for its comments which were interesting and constructive. On the comment regarding UNICEF's support for State accountability and reporting, Jephthe Mve Mvondo reassured the Committee that UNICEF is working with the Secretariat of the Committee to ensure that next year there will be a slightly higher rate of reporting. He indicated that there are structural obstacles related to timing and format. He also indicated that UNICEF will continue to support States, to work with the Committee in the promotion of children's rights.
40. The Committee concluded by thanking Jephthe Mve Mvondo and UNICEF for their constructive discussions and recalled that the Committee is willing to collaborate with UNICEF to support States in the implementation of the Charter.

ITEM 11: BRIEFING ON THE ABIDJAN PRINCIPLES ON THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION-GI-ESCR

41. Representatives from the East African Centre for Human Rights and the Global Initiatives for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights made a presentation on the Abidjan Principles on the rights to education. Prior to the presentation, Honourable Member Benyam Mezmur, who took part in the development of the Principles, welcomed the presenters and made an introductory remark on the ACERWC's engagement with States regarding the right to education. He highlighted that the Abidjan principles provide guidance in terms of what needs to be done to address the distinction between what often happens in the conversations in policy debate, particularly education policy debate between providing education as a State on one hand but also allowing some space for the private sector on the other. Hence, it responds to the question of how to address the concern of privatization and commercialization of education. Honourable Benyam Mezmur indicated that there is a lot of experience that the Abidjan Principles on the right to education draw from the African Continent and he believes that the 10 principles that are incorporated in there will help to push the boundaries in the realization of the rights to education not just within the African Charter but also within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He concluded his brief remarks by welcoming this presentation of the Abidjan Principles on the right to education.
42. After the introductory remarks, Margaret Wawira from the East African Centre for Human Rights presented the context of privatization of education and why it

needs proper regulation. She stated that proper policies need to be put in place to regulate the involvement in the provision of the rights to education. In her presentation, she listed the forms of privatization such as the elite private schools; low fee private schools; the community schools; the Public-Private Partnership (PPPs); Omega schools and bridge international academy. The presenter stressed that these international academies have over 500 schools in the world, and most of them are based in Africa. The bridge international academies have many issues such as the labour condition, proper regulation which has led actors to wonder about their operation, registration status, and there is an issue of proper regulation to make sure that they are respecting the laws of the countries where they operate and they are not infringing on the right to education of children who go to these schools.

43. Sylvain Aubry from the Global Initiatives for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights indicated that big international companies, American; British or other companies see education in Africa and African children as a market to be exploited. This has been noted over the years in many of the reports written by organizations working with the Global Initiatives for Economic, Social and Cultural rights. He also presented on the Abidjan Principles Development Process. He indicated that these principles have been developed from several sources. The Abidjan Principles is an interpretation of all existing texts. Research has been done on certain themes and topics at the country level. To understand the context of many countries, research was done in Mauritania, Kenya and Uganda. Several consultations were also conducted closer to the populations most affected by these problems of access to education. Based on this research and consultations, a group of experts drafted the Abidjan Principle. The presenter indicated that several examples were presented to demonstrate that the principles apply directly to States. The Committee on the Rights of the Child can also use them in their work.
44. Nakulima Saphina from the East African Centre for Human Rights presented the content of the Abuja Principles. She indicated that the 10 Principles have to be read in line with the 97 guiding principles. She further stated that the litigation has been part of the jurisprudence on the issues related to the right to education, discrimination of a particular category of children in some African countries. Before ending her presentation, she highlighted the recommendations that have been brought to the attention of the Committee firstly to consider recognizing the Abidjan Principles; secondly, to consider a General Comment of the ACERWC on the right to education and privatization; and lastly, mainstream issues related to privatization and the right to public education in all State reviews that can be included in the reporting guidelines.
45. The Committee thanked the presenters for the very illuminating presentation. The Committee also raised questions related to cultural appropriateness; i.e., the extent the culture and context or challenges within which African children are facing are addressed, and whether the principles address the specificities of the African perspective.

46. The presenters thanked the Committee for the questions that have been raised, and explained the background of the development of the Principles including the role of African experts in drafting the principles. They further stated that many studies and consultation meetings were held in Africa where voices of the African communities were taken into consideration to reflect on the African context, culture and background.
47. The Committee noted the recommendations made by the presenters and informed that it will deliberate in its closed session, and inform the presenters on the outcome. The Committee stated that it has a great interest in addressing all education issues affecting children in the continent. The Committee further indicated that it is willing to cooperate with other Experts in advocating, advancing and implementing the rights of children on the Continent.

ITEM 12: MATTERS DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION

48. Starting from 02 December to 04 December, the Committee resorted to a closed session where it considered the following agenda items:
- I. The draft General Comment on Article 27 of the Charter on sexual abuse and exploitation of children;
 - II. The draft report on the continental assessment of the implementation of Agenda 2040;
 - III. The draft report on the study on assessing AU's response to children in conflict situation;
 - IV. Briefing on adolescents' sexual and reproductive rights- Centre for Reproductive Rights and Plan International;
 - V. Updates on African Children's Charter Project (ACCP);
 - VI. Consideration of the Complementary Report of CSOs on the Initial Report of the Republic of Guinea;
 - VII. Briefing by UN Special rapporteur on trafficking in persons;
 - VIII. Briefing by the UN Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children;
 - IX. Briefing by the Chair of PRC Subcommittee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance;
 - X. Presentation on a Child friendly version of the Children's Charter- Plan International and SCI
 - XI. Updates on the study on harmonisation of laws;
 - XII. Selection of theme for the Day of African Child- 2022;
 - XIII. Updates on Communications pending before the ACERWC;
 - XIV. Joint General Comment on FGM
 - XV. Report on Online Course on Communication;
 - XVI. Discussions on 2020 budget absorption, 2021 approved and framework of 2022 budget
 - XVII. Establishment of Working Groups and appointment of Special Rapporteurs;
 - XVIII. Consideration of the activity report of the ACERWC to the Executive Council
 - XIX. Consideration of the outcome statements of the regional workshops
 - XX. Requests from the CSO Forum

- XXI. Requests from Center for Reproductive Rights and Plan International
- XXII. Requests regarding the Abidjan Principles on education

ITEM 13: ADOPTION OF DECISIONS

I. Selection of theme for Day of African Child 2022

- 49. The ACERWC decided the theme for the Day of African Child for the year 2022 to be *Eliminating Harmful Practices Affecting Children: Progress on Policy and Practice since 2013*.
- 50. The Theme will have a special focus on analyzing the progress made on various initiatives and campaigns around ending child marriage and FGM.

II. Presentation and adoption of the DAC 2021 Concept Note

- 51. The members of the Committee commended the drafting of the concept note and adopted it for further dissemination to Member States.

III. Adoption of the General Comment on Article 27 of the Charter

- 52. The Committee deferred the adoption of the General Comment on article 27 of the Charter to the upcoming session with a view to ensure the document benefits from the discussions and insights that may come out from the Day of General Discussion on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights of Adolescents, which will be held at its 37th Ordinary Session.

IV. Adoption of the Report on the continental assessment of the implementation of Agenda 2040

- 53. The Committee decided to adopt the report on the continental assessment of the implementation of Agenda 2040

V. Adoption of the continental study on harmonisation of laws

- 54. The Secretariat of the ACERWC presented amendments made on the report of the study on Harmonization of Laws on Children in Africa. It was recalled that the draft report of the study, which was done jointly with ACPF, was presented to the Committee during the last two Ordinary Sessions and inputs have been collected from the Members of the Committee and partner organizations to ameliorate the report. It was decided that the final report will be circulated to the Committee and a two weeks deadline is given for its adoption.

VI. Adoption of the study on assessing AU's response to children in conflict situation

- 55. The Committee decided to adopt the report on the study on assessing the African Union's response to children in conflict situation.

VII. Adoption of the Policy Brief on Aspiration 9 of Agenda 2040

56. The Committee decided to adopt the Policy Brief on Aspiration 9 of Agenda 2040 on children in conflict situation.

VIII. Appointment of Country and Special Rapporteurs

57. The Committee appointed Special Rapporteurs on thematic areas and Country Rapporteurs from among its members. Accordingly, the following Members are appointed as Country and Thematic Rapporteurs:

- a) Hon. Moushira Khattab- was appointed as Special Rapporteur on Education, and Country Rapporteur for Republic of Somalia, Republic of Cape Verde and State of Eritrea
- b) Hon Joseph Ndayisenga- In addition to his prior appointment, was appointed as Country Rapporteur for Equatorial Guinea and Sao tome and Principe;
- c) Hon Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing was appointed as Special Rapporteur on the Right to Name, Birth Registration, and Nationality and as Country Rapporteur on Burkina Faso, Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Gambia, Republic of Ghana and Republic of Niger; and
- d) Hon Aboubekrine El Jera was appointed as Country rapporteur for Kingdom of Morocco, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Union of the Comoros, Arab Republic of Egypt, Libya, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, and Republic of Tunisia.

IX. Adoption of Resolution for the establishment of a Working Group on children with disabilities and matters of Working Groups

58. The Committee decided to establish a Working Group on the Rights of Children with Disabilities, and appointed, Hon. Maria Mapani-Kawimbe, Hon. Aboubekrine El Jera, Hon. Dikere Marie Christine Bocoum and Hon Moushira Khattab as Members of the Working Group.

59. The Committee has further decided to appoint external experts to three of its Working Groups; Working Group on children's rights and business, Working Group on Children's rights and Climate Change and Working Group on Children with Disabilities. The External Experts will be appointed after a public advertisement calling for applications.

60. The Committee deliberated on a proposal to establish a Working Group on Children Affected by Armed Conflict composed of Regional Economic Communities, the proposal was welcome and the Committee mandated the Secretariat to draft terms of reference for approval during the next Ordinary Session.

X. Discussions on 2020 budget absorption, 2021 approved and framework of 2022 budget

61. The Secretariat of the Committee presented the Committee's budget absorption for 2020, approved budget for 2021 and framework of 2022 budget, where the Members discussed the challenges and proposed the way forward.

XI. Update on the Relocation of the Secretariat to the Kingdom of Lesotho

62. The Committee was updated on the status of relocation of the Secretariat of the ACERWC to the Kingdom of Lesotho. It was noted that the Chairperson of the AUC has approved the relocation of the secretariat to Maseru. The relocation of a number of the staff is expected to take place within December 2020.

XII. Matters of Communications

1. Communication N^o: 0011/Com/001/2018 Against the Republic of the Sudan (amicable settlement)

63. The Committee was briefed on the process of amicable settlement of Communication No 11/Com/001/2018 Project Expedite Justice et al Against the Republic of Sudan. It was noted that a series of discussions were facilitated by Hon Benyam Dawit Mezmur and Hon Hermine Kembo Takam Gatsing. As a result, the parties have agreed to a draft Agreement that is to be circulated among Committee Members for approval before signature by the parties.

2. Communication No: 0013/Com/001/2020 against the Republic of Mali

64. The Committee, after noting various requests sent to the Republic of Mali to submit its arguments on admissibility on the above-mentioned Communication and the lack of response from the Government, has decided to proceed with determination of admissibility of the Communication without the submission of the Respondent State in accordance with Section IX of its Revised Communication Guidelines.

3. Communication No: 0014/Com/002/2020 against the Republic of South Africa

65. The Committee, considering a request of the Republic of South Africa, has decided to grant final extension for the Government to submit its arguments on admissibility of the above-mentioned Communication. It was further decided that after the expiry of the deadline the Committee will proceed to consider the admissibility of the Communication in accordance with Section IX of its Revised Communication Guidelines.

4. Communication No: 0015/Com/003/2020 against the Republic of the Sudan

66. The Committee has decided to proceed with determination of admissibility of the above-mentioned Communication, in accordance with Section IX of its Revised Communication Guidelines, noting the lack of response from the Government of the Sudan despite multiple requests to submit arguments on admissibility.

5. Communication No: 0016/Com/004/2020 against the Republic of the Sudan.

67. The Committee, considering a request of the Republic of the Sudan, has decided to grant final extension for the Government to submit its arguments on admissibility of the above-mentioned Communication. It was further decided that after the expiry of the deadline the Committee will proceed to determine the admissibility of the Communication in accordance with Section IX of its Revised Communication Guidelines.

XIII. Decision's on Partners Requests

68. Following the request made by the CSO Forum, the Committee decided to undertake an assessment study on the situation of teenage pregnancy in African countries.

69. Following the request made by Centre for Reproductive Rights and Plan International, the Committee further decided to hold a Day of General Discussion on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights of Adolescents during its upcoming Session.

XIV. Adoption of outcome statements from the Workshops on Charter @30

70. The Committee adopted the outcome statements on the regional workshops on the status of children's rights in Member States of the African Union.

XV. Dates of the 37th Session

71. The Committee decided to hold its 37th Ordinary Session on 15-26 March 2021.

ITEM 14: ADOPTION OF SESSION REPORT

72. The Committee has adopted the draft Session report as amended.

ITEM 15: CLOSING REMARKS

73. Hon Joseph Ndayisenga, Chairperson of the Committee, thanked the various persons who participated in the Session and addressing the Committee including the Guest of Honour the Right Honorable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Commissioner of Social Affairs, President of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, Representative of the child, Representatives of CSOs and NHRIs. The Chairperson also expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador of Senegal to the African Union who is also the Chairperson of the PRC sub-committee on Human Rights, Democracy, and Governance for addressing the Committee. He also thanked the SRSG-VAC, UN Special Rapporteurs on Trafficking in Persons especially in women and children and on

the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children for interacting with the Committee. Hon Ndayisenga congratulated Hon Moushira Khattab for being appointed as a new Committee member replacing the late Hon Azza Al Ashmaaweey. Highlighting the various presentations, the Committee received, the various reports and documents it considered, and the various decisions it adopted including the theme of DAC 2022, the Chairperson indicated that the Session was fruitful. Using the opportunity of the 30th anniversary, he reiterated his call to the six Member States that have not ratified the Charter to ratify it, States that have reservations to withdraw the same, and to all State Parties to implement the Charter and abide by the recommendations of the Committee. In conclusion, the Chairperson thanked Members of the Committee for their hard work, the Secretariat and the interpreters. The Chairperson then officially declared the 36th Ordinary Session closed.