



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

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING POLICY BRIEFS BY THE ACERWC



1. INTRODUCTION

Article 42(a) (i) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the Charter) mandates the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Committee/ACERWC) to collect and document information, commission inter-disciplinary assessment of situations on African problems in the fields of the rights and welfare of the child, organise meetings, encourage national and local institutions concerned with the rights and welfare of the child, and where necessary give its views and make recommendations to Governments. In line with the provisions of article 42 (a) (i) of the Charter, the Committee recognises the pivotal role of policy briefs in gathering and documenting crucial information, assessing the situation of children in Africa and providing Member States and other stakeholders with informed recommendations.

Policy briefs may serve as an indispensable tool in the implementation of the mandate of the Committee. They act as concise and persuasive documents that distil complex child rights and welfare issues into clear problem statements, policy options and recommendations. By effectively communicating evidence-based solutions to Member States and other stakeholders, policy briefs empower the Committee to influence policy decision and promote the realisation of children's rights in the continent. They bridge the gap between research and action, facilitating informed decision-making and catalysing positive changes in laws, regulations, and practices that directly impact the well-being of children in Africa. In essence, policy briefs are essential instruments that can enhance the Committee's capacity to advocate for and ensure the promotion and protection of children's rights, fostering an Africa fit for children.

In light of the above, the Committee has decided to adopt Guidelines for

Developing Policy Briefs (Guidelines) to guide the Committee in developing effective policy briefs that can contribute to meaningful policy changes in children's rights and welfare in Africa. These guidelines will facilitate collaboration for any partner organisation tasked with developing policy briefs for submission to or with the ACERWC, adhering to a structured and clear format that can enhance the effectiveness of these documents.

2. DEFINING POLICY BRIEFS

1. For the purposes of these Guidelines, a policy brief is defined as a concise summary of a particular issue, the policy options to deal with it, and some recommendations on the best option.

3. TYPES OF POLICY BRIEFS

1. The two main types of policy briefs that may be developed by the Committee are advocacy policy briefs which argue in favour of a particular course of action; and objective policy briefs which give balanced information for policy makers to make their decisions.

4. TIMING AND OCCASIONS FOR POLICY BRIEFS

1. The Committee may develop policy briefs on any child rights issue, guided by the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

2. Policy briefs may be adopted under the following situations and contexts;

a) Research findings- the Committee may use policy briefs to communicate key findings and recommendations from its

research and studies.

- b) Stakeholder requests- the Committee may develop policy briefs upon request from its partner organisations.
- c) Emerging issues- the Committee may develop policy briefs when new and pressing issues affecting children in Africa arise.

5. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF POLICY BRIEFS

1. The purpose and objectives of the policy briefs adopted by the Committee shall be:

- a) To advocate for changes in policies, legislation, or practices that promote and protect the rights and welfare of children;
- b) To provide Member States and relevant stakeholders with evidence- based information and recommendations to support decision making on children’s rights and welfare; and
- c) To raise awareness among various stakeholders about specific child rights issues in Africa.

6. AUDIENCE

1. The following stakeholders shall be the targeted audience for policy briefs developed by the Committee;

- a) Member States;
- b) Children’s organisations;
- c) National Human Rights Institutions;

- d) Civil Society Organisations; and
- e) Any other stakeholder deemed necessary by the Committee.

7. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

1. The policy brief should typically include the following sections:
 - a) A title that is relevant to the thematic issue
 - b) Executive Summary
 - c) Introduction and Background
 - d) Main body (Context or Scope of the Problem)
 - e) Policy Options or implications
 - f) Recommendations that are specific and actionable
 - g) Conclusion
 - h) References/ Citations

In addition, photographs, tables, text boxes with key messages, and graphics may be added to the policy brief.

8. WRITING STYLE AND CLARITY

1. Policy briefs developed by the Committee shall;
 - a) Be based on firm evidence;
 - b) Be written in clear language and terminology;
 - c) Be written in any of the official languages of the AU; and
 - d) Not exceed a maximum of 6 pages or 2250 words.

9. PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTING POLICY BRIEFS

1. The Committee shall, during its ordinary sessions, in conformity with the agenda prepared, consider the adoption of policy briefs.
2. The Committee may appoint a Rapporteur for each policy brief developed among its members. Such appointment shall be based on the thematic focus of the policy brief.
3. The Rapporteur designated by the Committee shall examine the draft policy brief and make recommendations.
4. A policy brief shall be adopted by the Committee members.

10. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY BRIEFS

1. Policy briefs developed by the Committee, pursuant to Rule 66 of the Committee's Revised Rules of Procedure, shall be public documents of the Committee.
2. The Committee through its Secretariat shall ensure the dissemination of policy briefs through the use of the following channels;
 - a) Transmitting policy briefs to the targeted stakeholders through email;
 - b) Engaging stakeholders and fostering discussions on the policy briefs' contents during missions, ordinary sessions and any other meetings;
 - c) Distribution of hard copies of the policy briefs during missions, ordinary sessions, AU Summits, STCs, and meetings;and

d) Publication of policy briefs on the Committee's official website and social media platforms.

11. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF POLICY BRIEFS

1. The Committee may monitor the implementation of its recommendations in the adopted policy briefs during missions and consideration of state party reports.

2. The Committee may refer to the policy briefs developed in its concluding observations and recommendations addressed to Member States after the consideration of state party reports on the implementation of the Charter.

12. AMENDMENT

1. These Guidelines may be amended by the Committee when necessary. Any proposal for amendment shall be adopted by the Committee members at a session where the proposed amendments are scheduled to be considered.

13. ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE GUIDELINES

1. The present Guidelines shall enter into force 30 days after their adoption by the Committee members at a session where the Guidelines are scheduled to be adopted.

*Adopted during the 43rd Ordinary Session of the ACERWC
15-25 April 2024*