

RESOLUTION NO 22/2024 OF THE ACERWC WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ON HARMFUL PRACTICES AGAINST CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Working Group on Children with Disabilities of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC/the Committee), during its sixth meeting held on 13 April 2024 in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho;

GUIDED by the purposes and principles of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC/the Charter);

RECALLING Article 38(1) of the ACRWC and Rule 58 of the revised Rules of Procedure, which mandate the Committee to establish its own rules of procedures and establish special mechanisms, including working groups;

GUIDED by the Resolution establishing the Working Group on Children with Disabilities in Africa (Working Group), adopted during the Committee's 36th Ordinary Session, held virtually from 23 November to 04 December 2020;

MINDFUL of the goal of the Working Group which is to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in all spheres of life through a child rights-based approach that ensures the protection of their rights and welfare as enshrined in the Charter and other regional and international human rights instruments;

CONCERNED by the persistent and harmful practices specifically affecting children with disabilities in Africa, including their concealment, exclusion from education, targeted violence and attacks against children with albinism, and the abandonment and infanticide of children with disabilities, among others, which constitute a violation of their rights and welfare under the Charter

NOTING the obligation of States Parties to the Charter to ensure the protection of the rights of all children without discrimination based on disability;

REAFFIRMING the commitment of the Working Group to the rights and welfare of children with disabilities in Africa

HEREBY AGREE AND CALL UPON

STATES PARTIES TO:

- i. Ratify and/or domesticate the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa and other international and regional child rights instruments,

- ii. Harmonize domestic laws, religious and cultural practices with international and regional standards prohibiting harmful practices and intersectional discrimination to protect children with disabilities;
- iii. Report to the ACERWC on measures to protect children with disabilities from harmful practices and track the implementation of ACERWC's Concluding Observations and Recommendations.
- iv. Collect accurate data on the prevalence of disabilities and improve birth registration rates to facilitate planning and intervention programs.
 - v. Conduct research, document harmful practices, and devise specific intervention programs with relevant ministries;
 - vi. Establish and operationalize effective, autonomous, national institutional mechanisms with clear referral pathways to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of disability-related laws or policies;
- vii. Implement oversight mechanisms for traditional healers and communities, including defined rules and standards to prevent and remedy harmful traditional practices;
- viii. Create opportunities for the media to raise awareness of extreme forms of violence against children with disabilities, while partnering with the private sector, African Union agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders in the disability and child rights sectors to document and widely disseminate normative guidelines and good practices

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO AND ORGANIZATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:

- i. Collect data on the experiences of children with disabilities, share good practices and document risks and offending patterns from harmful practices to create a strong evidence base to inform action in African countries;
- ii. Design educational, awareness-raising and parenting programs that assist parents and caregivers in providing guidance on how to care for children with disabilities in an age-appropriate and disability-sensitive manner;
- iii. Cooperate and engage in dialogue with the private sector, National Human Rights Institutions, government institutions and academia to devise joint strategies and action plans to implement child-friendly and disability-inclusive approaches to harmful practices against children with disabilities at all levels.
- iv. Foster partnerships among non-governmental, civil society, and governmental bodies to design and implement effective strategies against harmful practices.

PRIVATE SECTOR, BUSINESSES AND THE MEDIA TO:

- i. Engage media in awareness campaigns about harmful practices, ensuring the messaging is inclusive, child-friendly, and sensitive to children with disabilities.

- ii. Raise public awareness about harmful cultural practices in an age-appropriate, disability-inclusive, child-friendly and gender-sensitive manner to reduce social stigma and change attitudes about children with disabilities in Africa;
- iii. Work with governments to address disability stigma and discrimination, institutional barriers, and exclusionary practices at all levels of society and eliminate harmful practices against children with disabilities.

Done on 25 April 2024 during the 43rd Ordinary Session of the ACERWC held from 15 to 25 April 2024 in Maseru, Kingdom of Lesotho