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AFRICA CONFERENCE ON CHILDCARE

20 June 2025
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

CALL TO ACTION

Building Strong Partnership for Inclusive Childcare in Africa

We, the Ministers responsible for Childcare of the African Union (AU) Member States, Development partners and Civil Society Organizations, convened at the Africa Conference on Childcare, held from 18th - 20th June, 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to build partnership and commitment for Accelerating Actions Towards Quality and Inclusive childcare in Africa.

RECALLING Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063, which recognises an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; further emphasising empowerment and the formative impact of early-childhood years on human capital development.

ALSO RECALLING the Executive Council decision EX.CL/Dec.997(XXXI) which adopted Agenda 2040, Africa's Agenda for Children: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children; **NOTING THAT** by nurturing and nourishing Africa's children, the present generation will promote the growth of the continent and secure its future.

FURTHER RECALLING the Declaration of the Rights and Welfare of the African Child (AHG/ST.4 Rev.I) adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Sixteenth Ordinary Session in Liberia in July 1979, which **RECOGNIZED** the need to take appropriate measures to promote and protect the rights and welfare of African Children on the Continent. The Declaration further **NOTED WITH CONCERN** that the situation of most African children, remains critical due to the unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances, natural disasters, armed conflicts, exploitation and hunger, and on account of the child's physical and mental immaturity he/she needs special safeguards and care.

ACKNOWLEDGING the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child (ACRWC/the Charter) that was adopted on 11 July 1990 by the Heads of States and entered into force effectively in November 1999 to address issues of particular interest and importance to children in Africa.

RECOGNIZING the significant challenges faced by Children in Africa and that accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare is fundamental to realizing children's rights, enhancing early development outcomes, and enabling women's economic participation.

ACKNOWLEDGING that the childcare gap particularly affects informal workers, rural populations, and low-income families, perpetuating cycles of poverty and gender inequality, require a comprehensive approach to address the child care development agenda in the continent informed by the context specific evidence and best practices.

NOTING increasing evidence that well-designed childcare systems improve maternal employment, reduce gender gaps, increased involvement of fathers in parenting and advance national productivity.

AWARE that the childcare workforce is the cornerstone of safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate care services and the need for multistakeholder and multisectoral approach to strengthen the services.

MINDFUL of the importance of data and evidence to inform childcare policies, monitor progress, and advocate for long-term investment.

COGNIZANT that financing must come from a combination of public, private, and international sources including innovative and domestic resource mobilization.

CALL UPON:

Member States to;

- Develop and implement supportive policies that promote investment in childcare services, ensuring that quality, accessibility, and affordability are prioritised for all, particularly for marginalised populations, including children with disabilities and those in fragile or humanitarian contexts.
- Enhance multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration across sectors to achieve sustainable improvements in childcare and overall child health outcomes. Additionally, bolster inter-ministerial coordination involving education, health, labour, gender, and finance to reinforce governance and accountability.
- Increase domestic resources and innovative financing mechanisms for integrated childcare programmes and ensure allocation of dedicated budget lines for childcare within national budgets, prioritising informal and rural populations.
- Establish coordination platforms for the private sector, civil society, and childcare givers to foster community-based childcare programmes and services, adopt family-friendly business practices and Invest in holistic childcare innovations and initiatives at the workplace
- Establish national training and accreditation standards to professionalize the childcare workforce and to recognize and support childcare providers through decent work protection, fair remuneration, and access to social protection.
- Strengthen monitoring and reporting systems that incorporate Early Childhood care and development indicators to inform programmes, promote accountability, learning, and decision-making.
- Ensure all legal systems contain an effective and accessible framework for the registration of all births.

- Encourage investment in local research and development to generate evidence for the improvement and scaling up of childcare and early childhood development programmes.
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- **African Union Commission, RECs and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to;**
 - Promote inclusive and integrated multi-sector childcare policies and strategies that incorporate male engagement at regional and continental levels.
 - Raise the profile of childcare at high-level global, continental and regional events and support policy dialogues through convening of a bi-annual childcare conference to share lessons and best practices to advance childcare agenda.
 - Establish a knowledge hub for Africa to share evidence, best practices, and lessons learnt
 - Advocate for increased and sustainable resources to achieve transformational and cost-effective change in child care services.
 - Mobilise parliamentarians to advocate for legislation, budget allocations, and institutional oversight to improve childcare services.

Propose a dedicated AU theme of the year on childcare and early childhood development towards 2027 to strengthen advocacy for a comprehensive investment in early years.
- **Developmental Organizations, Partners and Civil Society to;**
 - Advocate for resource allocation towards childcare development to enhance funding opportunities and support for national and regional initiatives.
 - Raise awareness of the importance of inclusive childcare for child rights, gender equality, and economic empowerment.
 - Support the implementation of national and regional strategies by aligning technical and financial resources with continental priorities.
 - Endorse data systems and mutual accountability efforts at the continental, regional, and national levels.
 - Promote cross-country learning and integrate global evidence into regional adaptation.
 - Prioritise funding for childcare as a high-impact investment in human capital development and women's economic participation.

Done on 20 June, 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia