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Directorate of Information and Communication

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AFRICAN EXPERTS MEET TO DISCUSS RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

Addis Ababa, 26 March 2012 – The nineteenth session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) kicked off Monday 26 March 2012 at the headquarters of the African Union, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The meeting of experts is focusing on raising awareness on the obligations of the state parties regarding the implementation of Article 21 of the African charter on the rights and welfare of the child that states “Protection against Harmful Social and Cultural Practices”. It will also make recommendations on a strategy for the implementation of this charter.

During the opening ceremony, the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Adv. Bience Gawanas, commended the committee members for the increasingly complex role they play in protecting Africa’s children. “It is almost hard to imagine how much has happened in the last three years. The committee has considered more than fifteen states parties’ reports on the implementation of the charter”, she said.

“Although the African Union Commission and the committee are making efforts to ensure the promotion, protection, and wellbeing of our children, more needs to be done so that African children will no longer continue to suffer from illness, lack of basic education and healthcare services, Gawanas added.

In this regard, she urged that governments, communities and partners should put in place policies and strategies, and allocate sufficient resources, to ensure that basic human and legal rights of children are safeguarded and become a common feature of the African socio-economic landscape.

Addressing the meeting, Ms. Agnes Kabore, Chairperson of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, stated that the past decade was that of theoretical rights and the following decade should guarantee the enjoyment of those rights by handicapped people in general and children living with a handicap in particular.

The African charter on the rights and welfare of the child promotes, among others, the right to health, prohibits violence against children as well as social and cultural harmful practices and attitudes which have a negative effect on the life of the child.

The nineteenth session of ACERWC will end on Friday 30 March 2012.

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