

**AFRICAN UNION**

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



**UNION AFRICAINE**

**Comité Africain d'Experts sur les Droits et  
le Bien-être de l'Enfant**

**الاتحاد الأفريقي**

*"An Africa Fit for Children"*

**UNIÃO AFRICANA**

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***"Conflict and Crisis in Africa: Protecting  
all Children's Rights"***

**Gambella, 16 June, 2016.** The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) in collaboration with the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and its partners commemorates the 16<sup>th</sup> Day of the African Child (DAC) on the theme *"Conflict and crisis in Africa: Protecting all children's Rights"*. Along side UN agencies and international organizations, the Day is marked with various activities organized with children, and aims to shed light on the plight of children that are subjected to the consequences of conflicts including armed conflicts, and crises, as they are one of the most vulnerable groups of society.

Children born today are generally better off in terms of security and protection as compared to children born 26 years ago before the African Children's Charter was adopted. However, the continued challenges that children in conflict and crisis face – in particular those that are affected by armed conflict, subject to interpersonal conflict

as well as violence against children, children on the move, children from disadvantaged communities, children with disabilities and girls.

The theme emphasizes that fact that children should not be victims of violence, and it emphasizes the role that child protection systems should play in creating a conducive environment that promotes an atmosphere of love happiness and understanding. It also underscores that policies, laws and programmes that are aimed at preventing and addressing conflict and violence would be incomplete efforts unless they place children's best interests at their centre.

In part linked to the recently concluded ACERWC Continental study on the impact of armed conflict on children in Africa, the DAC 2016 theme seeks to elevate child protection agenda in conflict and crisis situation on the continent as well as to guarantee the protection and preservation of life, survival and development of children in Africa.

Over and above the recruitment and the use of children in armed conflicts, sexual violence committed against children during armed conflicts, as well as the negative effect of conflict on the right to education, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, family environment, and development are critical.

*"Every child is free from the impact of armed conflicts"* is a vow expressed by the Committee in the Africa's Agenda for Children Rights to be adopted in the months to come, while the AU Agenda 2063 aims at a *"Peaceful and Secure Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children"*. The DAC 2016 offers an opportune time to emphasize the urgent need protect children's rights in time of peace and more importantly during conflict situations as 2016 has been declared by the African Union as the Year of Human Rights with a special focus on the rights of Women.

The devastating effect that conflict and crisis continue to have on children in Africa is enormous. In fact- there is no crisis that is child rights neutral- ranging from security crisis, to health crisis such as Ebola, to financial crisis, and climate change induced crisis – often putting the rights to life, survival and development of children at great

risk. Creating an Africa fit for children starts with preventing the preventable, and giving children's best interests paramount considerations.