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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ACERWC CONCLUDES ITS ADVOCACY MISSION ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD BY IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA (30-31 July, 2018)**

**Mogadishu, 31 July 2018.** - The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) has concluded a two day Advocacy Mission in the Federal Republic of Somalia from 30-31 July, 2018 on the practical steps to be taken for the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and the deposition of the ratification instrument at the African Union.

Led by Honorable Marie Christine BOCOUM, Vice Chairperson of the Committee and AU Special Rapporteur on Child Marriage, the Committee delegation held a high level discussion with the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, H.E. Deeqa Yasin Hajji, as well as consultations with Civil Society Organizations, local and International Non-governmental Organizations to identify the challenges of the ratification and the status of children rights in the country. H.E. Deeqa Yasin Hajji assured the Committee that the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia is willing to uphold the rights and welfare of children, the recent ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child being an eloquent commitment of the willingness of the State to promote and protect children's rights. Honorable Bocoum commended the government of Somalia for signing the Charter in 1991 shortly after its adoption, and for the ongoing efforts in

protecting children's rights such as the development of a Child Rights Bill, and the continuous collaboration with the Committee during its previous missions in the country. She reaffirmed the Committee support to engage with the Federal Republic of Somalia and other relevant actors to collaborate on the identified reasons behind the non-ratification of the ACRWC and provide recommendations on how to address the identified challenges.

On 31 July, a workshop was organised on the added values of the African Charter and the procedures of ratification of the OAU/AU Treaties. The workshop was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AMISOM, INGOs and Local NGOs. Participants discussed, among others the contents of the African Children's Charter and the role of the ACERWC could play in protecting and promoting the rights of the Child in Somalia. Presentations were also made on the status of children's rights in Somalia where participants identified the worrying trends of child rights violations in the country. At the end of the Workshop, the Representatives of the Government of Somalia pledged that the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development will play a vital role in taking the process forward and puts its greatest efforts in taking the process forward and table ratification as an agenda before the Cabinet in a foreseeable future. Participants from various CSOs have also expressed their readiness technically and financially support the Government of Somalia with a view to ensuring that ratification of the African Charter becomes a reality. The ACERWC sincerely appreciates the positive gesture extended to its Delegation by the Government of Somalia and all stakeholders and hopes that the Federal Republic of Somalia will soon join the family of the African Children's Charter'

### **Notes to the editor:**

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) is a regional child rights instruments which is peculiar to Africa that encompasses provisions on the rights and welfare of the child giving due regard to African values and context. It was adopted in 1990 by the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU) and entered into force in 1999. To date, the ACRWC has been ratified by 48 African

Union Member States and Somalia is among the 7 who are yet to ratify with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tomé & Príncipe, South Sudan, and Tunisia.

The ACRWC establishes the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) as a monitoring organ which promotes and protects the rights of the child enshrined in the ACRWC. The ACERWC is accordingly tasked with various mandates such as receiving and considering State Party Reports and complaints submitted against a State Party on alleged violations of the provisions of the ACRWC. The ACERWC also has the mandate to undertake investigations in Member States, to formulate and lay down principles, to develop General Comments to expound the provisions of the ACRWC.

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