

MALAWI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



PRESS STATEMENT COMMEMORATION OF THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD “AN FRICA FIT FOR CHILDREN”

The Malawi Human Rights Commission (the Commission) joins the African region and Malawians in commemorating the Day of the African Child that falls on 16 June annually. The Day of the African Child reminds government and stakeholders in the child rights sector, on the need to create an enabling environment for the protection, development and survival of all children. This is also a good time to reflect on efforts being made to ensure that children are accorded a decent life that builds them into responsible and productive citizens.

The Commemoration this year is under the theme *“30 years after the adoption of the charter: accelerating implementation of Agenda 2040 for an Africa fit for Children”*. The agenda 2040 pictures a world that: has a child-friendly justice system; rolled out child registration program, functioning health service that reduces child death by eliminating preventable deaths; offers quality education; protects children from violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse; and where children’s views are taken into consideration in policy, legal, administrative and practical decisions.

As such, the Commission notes and also calls upon the public to join in the fight against child sexual abuse including defilement, child marriage, teenage pregnancies and recent reported sexual violence perpetrated by some duty bearers in police cells and in general, noncompliance with the Child Care Protection and Justice Act (CCPJA). As some children, have also been highly hit by Covid-19 confinement measures, which have increased their vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse. It is important that protection mechanisms are strengthened. Government’s failure, to designate safety homes for children in need of care and protection since the enactment of the CCPJA is a major concern. Many families have also lost stable income which to some extent has compromised the quality of care for children and enjoyment of critical rights.

In this regard, the Commission strongly recommends that coordination and collaboration by all stakeholders with the public/individuals, is key in creating a safe and protective environment, for the Malawian child. Such an environment should support the survival and development of every child and recognize children as key players, with the potential to contribute towards their bright future.

On behalf of the Commission

**Scader Louis
Chairperson**

Dated this 16th Day of June 2021