

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Regional Conference for National Human Rights Institutions- Child Rights Conference at its meeting held at Bingu International Convention Centre.

24TH TO 27TH JULY 2023.



Save the Children



Determined to ensure effective and inclusive child participation, protection, prevention, prosecution and partnerships in the Southern Africa Region, adherence by all stakeholders, with national, regional and international legal frameworks on the rights of the African child; (craft something that will include children)

Being deeply concerned by the continued prevalence of egregious violations of children's rights in their various manifestations in the Southern Africa Region, which continue to adversely undermine the fundamental rights and welfare of children; and,

Noting the opening remarks by the Solicitor General- Ministry of Justice Malawi, the Country Director Save the Children Malawi, Commissioner for the Human Rights-Commission, as well as the Member for the Children Reference Group- Malawi;

Further acknowledging the statements by the representatives of the Eswatini Commission on Human Rights, Public Administration and Integrity, Mozambique National Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Commission of Malawi, Save the Children- Malawi, Children's Parliament-Malawi, Children Reference Group Malawi, NGO Coalition on Child Rights, and Malawi Council for the Handicapped; Ministry of Justice-Malawi, Ministry of Education-Malawi, Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare-Malawi, 3R Platform-Mozambique and SADC Youth Parliament.

Delegates of the Regional Conference for National Human Rights Institutions- Child Rights Conference:

1. Strongly urges Governments to ensure adequate funding to NHRIs to enable the fulfilment of their mandate including monitoring child rights;
2. Further, urges Governments to allocate adequate funding for district and national children's parliament in the local/district and National/ annual budgets respectively;
3. Governments, stakeholders and development partners are strongly urged to provide financial and technical support for programming to child participation platforms and services at national, district and community level;

4. Urges Governments to adequately provide for other alternative shelters rather than the use of education facilities to ensure the continued realisation of the right to education, health and safety for all children in all humanitarian crisis and any other situations;
5. Calls on governments to implement free and compulsory education and ensure there are no user fees or hidden fees on children's access to education.
6. Calls on governments to provide for a protected budget and therefore allocate a special percentage of resources under School Improvement Grants and other hidden disability related costs towards children with disabilities.
7. Further urges Governments to respect the rights of children, including refugee children, internally displaced children and asylum seekers and their relocation to refugee camps or resettlement shelters, as well as the enjoyment of their fundamental rights;
8. Calls on the Government of Malawi to gazette the National Children's Commission Act.
9. Urges the Government of Malawi to operationalize the National Child Participation Guidelines and its Strategy, and ensure that these policy instruments are practically adopted by all Ministries, Department and Agencies including non state actors;
10. Calls upon the Government of Malawi to enact a law to regulate traditional healers' practice(s) and practitioners to align with legal and policy frameworks on the protection of child rights.
11. NHRIs agree to develop and implement mechanisms to ensure accessibility by all children;
12. Reiterates the key role of Governments, all stakeholders, and the general public in the implementation of protection measures to address abuses against children;
13. Urges Governments to respect the independence of NHRIs;
14. Urges concerted efforts by law enforcement agencies and stakeholders to ensure children's access to justice including child friendly procedures, the speedy prosecution and timely conclusion of child related cases and imposition of deterrent sentences including cases of high-profile officials;

15. Reiterates the need to mainstream and ensure multiple vulnerabilities in child participation including decision making in preparedness, response and recovery in humanitarian situations and during electoral processes;
16. Calls upon all Governments to establish and provide support to scale up the Children's Parliament, Children's Reference Group;
17. Further, Governments in the Southern African region should establish a Regional Children's Reference Group;
18. Government should develop and implement a work plan on the implementation of recommendations of ratified child related international human rights instruments.
19. Calls upon governments and other stakeholders to ensure inclusive children's participation in reporting to regional and international human rights mechanisms including their physical participation at all relevant sessions at national, regional and international levels;
20. Calls on governments to effectively address the human rights underlying and emerging concerns of children in marginalised and vulnerable situations for inclusive child rights protection and safeguarding.
21. Stresses the need for Governments to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure from 19 December 2011; and,
22. Further, that the Governments of Mozambique and Malawi should ratify the Optional Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on a communications procedure.

This communique has been developed by Malawi Human Rights Commission on behalf of the following contributing bodies;

- Children Reference Group
- The Children Parliament
- 3R-Platform
- The Government of Malawi
- Save the Children Malawi
- NGO Coalition on Child Rights
- Malawi Council for the Handicapped
- Eswatini Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration
- National Human Rights Commission of Mozambique

**ADOPTED IN LILONGWE, MALAWI.
27TH JULY 2023.**



Ms. Habiba Osman

Malawi Human Rights Commission Executive Secretary

Malawi Human Rights Commission

H.B. House
Off Paul Kagame Road
Private Bag 378
Lilongwe 3
Malawi.

Web: www.mhrcmw.org
Email: info@mhrcmw.org