

DULLAH OMAR INSTITUTE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS,

FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

**STATEMENT AT THE 46TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE
RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD, MANTHABISENG NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE,
MASERU, LESOTHO, 27 NOVEMBER 2025**

Honourable Chairperson and Members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen...

As an organisation, the Dullah Omar Institute remains proud of our partnership with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in advancing the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Committee's mandate through education, teaching and learning, research and advocacy, among others. I would like to single out two of such engagements in this year so far. First is the Children and Business Stakeholders' Forum on 6 and 7 November in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in partnership with the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) and Save the Child International (SCI). Second is the litigation symposium, also in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in September 2025, which is particularly relevant for our joint initiative 'the online course on the communications procedure of the committee.' The symposium has contributed to the curriculum review of the course ahead of its resumption in 2026. These initiatives are within the framework of the African Children's Charter Project (ACCP).

Honourable Chairperson and distinguished guests, given the challenges that the year 2025 has brought upon us within the human and children's rights spaces, not only in Africa, but globally, it is auspicious and telling that we are gathered for this 46th ordinary session at a time that coincides with the 35th anniversary of the African Children's Charter under the theme: "***Reflect, Renew, Recommit.***"

Reflect: What are we reflecting upon?

We are reflecting on how far the Charter has come, and how far the Committee has come in bringing the realisation of children's rights into manifestation, and how far we – all other stakeholders - have come in contributing towards the implementation of the Charter and the realisation of the rights and welfare of children across our beautiful continent of Africa.

We have moved from being merely on paper to actively bringing about change, both gradually and exponentially – whether in terms of tangible child participation, providing a model for the CRC in the

adoption of an optional protocol allowing for communications, and the harmonisation of laws in many states across Africa, among others.

We are reflecting on the Committee's role in providing practical recommendations to address matters on the ground, whether via the communications procedure, the state reporting process, investigative missions, research and advocacy outputs, among others.

While there is still a long way to go, we have taken great strides from where we started 35 years ago.

Renew: What are we renewing?

Among others, we are renewing:

- Our collective ownership of what the Charter and our frameworks have to offer not just the continent (Africa), but the world at large;
- Our commitment to advancing the realisation of the rights of the African child and an Africa fit for children via the various resources, platforms, networks, tools, collaborations, and relationships at our disposal; and
- Our shared understanding that placing children at the centre of our work and investments is the key to moving Africa from the level of potential to the level of actualisation. 'Africa rising' must become 'Africa standing' – firmly and permanently. It begins now.

What are we recommitting to?

Recommitting demands that we return to the very beginning, which, in this case, is Article 1 of the African Children's Charter. Article 1(1) of the Charter calls on states (and other stakeholders) to adopt both legislative and other measures necessary to give effect to the provisions of the Charter.

While we have made significant progress in adopting legislative measures in the last 35 years, we must recommit, in the next 35 years and beyond, to strategically, intentionally, and intelligently adopting those 'other measures' that will indeed build a sustainable future for Africa's children from today, and bring closer home the dream, the hope, and the goal of 'An Africa Fit For Children.'

I thank you.

[UM Assim, DOI-UWC]