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**18th SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE
OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND
WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACERWC)
27 NOVEMBER – 1st DECEMBER 2011
ALGIERS (ALGERIA)**

ACERWC/Rpt. (XVIII)

REPORT

REPORT OF THE 18TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ACERWC)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The 18th Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) was held at hotel Safir, Mazafran in Algiers, Algeria from 27 November to 1st December 2011.

II. ATTENDANCE

2. The Meeting was attended by H.E Mr. Abd-el-Kader Messahel, Algerian Minister, Delegate for African and Maghreb Affairs, H.E. Mrs. Nouara Djaafar, Algerian Minister in charge of the Family and Women Affairs, Her Excellency Catherine Bakang Mbock, Cameroon Minister of Social Affairs, Her Excellency Dr. Maikibi Kadidiatou Dandobi, Minister of Population, Promotion of Women and Protection of the Child of the Republic of Niger, H.E. Kibuule Ronald, Minister of State for Youth and Children Affairs of Uganda, H.E. Papa Ousmane Seye, the Ambassador of the Republic of Senegal in Algeria, Nine(9) Members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), as well as the staff of the AU Commission , Representatives of UNICEF, Plan International, Save the Children Southern Africa and western Africa, ICRC- Algeria, African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), Child Helpline International, Sudan CSO Coalition, CONAFE Senegal, Penal Reform International (PRI), Union des Coalitions Ouest Africaines (UCOA), Association Nationale de Soutien à l'enfance en difficulté (Algeria), CIDDEF (Algeria), Réseau Nada-Algérie, Mouvement des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs (MEJT), Samu Social- Congo, Coalition Nigérienne pour la Defence des droits de l'Enfant (CONIDE), the University of Pretoria.

ITEM 1: OPENING CEREMONY

3. Four statements were made during the opening session:

Statement of the Commissioner for Social Affairs, African Union Commission

4. This statement was read by one of the staff of the African Union Commission.
5. The Commissioner presented her apology for not being able to attend the session and she thanked the Government of Algeria for hosting the 18th session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to all participants. She

commended members of the committee, state parties who had come to present their reports, and Partners. She welcomed the CSO outcome and the Sudanese CSO coalition for the shadow report presented. She then highlighted some of the achievements by the AUC in the recent past.

6. She urged all stakeholders to follow through with the commitments that have been made individually and collectively. She concluded her remarks by reassuring the participants of the AU Commission's willingness to continue supporting the Committee's efforts.

Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee

7. The Chairperson of the Committee thanked the Government of Algeria for the warm welcome and the hospitality extended to the members of the Committee and the participants. She commended the efforts devoted by the Algerian Government in promoting and protecting the rights of the child in the country, in particular through the 2008-2015 Plan of Action, referred to as "*An Algeria fit for Children*". She invited the Government of Algeria to present its report on the implementation of the charter.

8. She underscored that the establishment of an autonomous budget for the Committee adopted by the AU Summit of Heads of States and Government, Malabo, July 2011 will facilitate the work of the Committee and the realization of its 2010-2014 Plan of Action. The Chairperson reported on the activities of the Committee during 2011. She commended the Governments of Cameroon, Niger and Senegal and Uganda, CSO and Partners for having responded to the Committee's invitation.

Opening remarks by the Algerian Minister in charge of the Family and the Status of Women

9. The Minister of State in charge of the Family and Women Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria reaffirmed her country's commitment to actions and reflections on the issue of childhood. She explained that Algeria had fulfilled a number of programmes for the benefit of children in order to guarantee and promote their rights, especially the plan of action for the child for the period 2008-2015 and the communication plan on the promotion of the rights of the child.

10. The objective of the plan of action is among others to determine priorities and new issues and possibilities of action for children and to reinvigorate institutional mechanisms for greater awareness of the population. The objective of the communication plan is to provide information on the rights of the child and to popularize them.

Opening Remarks by the Minister Delegate in charge of Maghreb and African Affairs

11. In his opening speech, the Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria reiterated the commitment and interest of Africa in children and the promotion of their rights as enshrined in legal instruments, especially the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the creation of this Committee. He then welcomed the presence of African civil society, which demonstrated its place in the process of building the new Africa.

12. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to protecting, and defending children's rights by providing education, health and social and cultural development. The adoption in 2007 of the National Strategy of Child Protection, which extends to 2015, reflects the Government's will to grant to the family and the child a special place.

13. He mentioned a certain phenomena such as child labor and child soldiers, which hinder the progress of the child. It is the responsibility of the Member States of the African Union to strengthen their collective action to protect children from these particularly serious phenomena.

ITEM 2: CONSULTATION AMONG COMMITTEE MEMBERS (CLOSED SESSION)

Amendment to the Program of Work

14. During a closed session, members of the Committee made several amendments to the Agenda, including cancelling of the presentation on *"Research into Child Mutilation and Trafficking body parts in Southern Africa"* due to the absence of the Presenters.

15. It was agreed that the agenda item on discussion on the priority activities to be undertaken in 2012 would precede the item on preparation of the 2013 ACERWC budget. The item on the adoption of the recommendations and observations issued on State Parties' reports was cancelled and replaced by the discussion on the preparation of the Committee for the 3rd Pan African Forum on Children. The final amendment on the program was to include the discussion on the relocalization of the secretariat of the committee.

ITEM 3: PROCEDURAL MATTERS**(a) Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work**

16. The Agenda and Programme of Work were adopted as amended.

(b) Organization of Work

17. The Committee agreed to conduct its deliberations in open and closed sessions according to the Agenda.

ITEM 4: BRIEF PRESENTATIONS BY PARTNERS

18. **UNICEF Representative** on behalf of the UN family, and on its own behalf, commended the Committee for having hosted for the first time the session in one of its member states. He highlighted some recent activities in the implementation of child rights activities such as the campaign on the ratification of the African Charter, the Day of the African Child, the drought situation in the Horn of Africa, the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework on the Africa Fit for Children and the CARMMA initiative. He also spoke about the positive partnerships and collaboration between the Committee and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as with the AU Commission and the member states.

19. **Plan International Representative** described the objectives of the Organization and highlighted its achievements in the recent past. The Representative mentioned the Collaboration with the African Union Commission, and reassured the Committee of Plan International's intention to honour its commitment made in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the AU Commission. He urged the Committee to consider choosing adopting a theme on universal birth registration for the Day of the African Child.

20. **Penal Reform International Representative** introduced the work of the PRI, focusing on advocacy on issues related with children of imprisoned mothers, abolition of death penalty for children, rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with the law. He also reported on some of the research and publications undertaken.

21. **African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) Representative** introduced the objectives and activities of the organization which focus on research and advocacy for policy reforms. He listed the reports so far produced and what is planned for the near future particularly the 2013 report. He also mentioned the ACPF support to the AU in producing the monitoring and evaluation tool for the Africa fit for children.

22. **Save the Children Southern Africa Representative** recognized the need to sensitize stakeholders to increase accountability of member states as regards child rights. She reported on a regional conference which took place in South Africa to increase awareness on the Charter and of the work of the committee among member states in the region.

23. **Union de Coalition Ouest Africaines (UCOA) Representative** spoke about the organization's objectives and its presence in 13 countries. He reported on the organization's work with regional parliaments and UEMOA. He invited the participants to a meeting to be held in Dakar in December 2011 on child participation.

24. **Réseau NADA-Algeria Representative** informed that, his Organisation is a network for the defence of children's rights in Algeria created in 2004. It works to defend children through activities of advocacy with the authorities to improve the legal and political context and ensure the implementation of the legal protection system.

25. **Centre d'Information et de Documentation sur les Droits de l'Enfant et de la Femme (CIDEF), Algeria** was established with UNICEF support in 2002. Its objective is the amendment and improvement of the legislation for promoting the rights of children. This centre also undertakes popularization, awareness raising, training, and capacity building activities.

26. **ANCEDIE (ALGERIE): The Representative** of this Organization informed the meeting about the activities it undertakes, which include support for children with problems, the situation of migrant children and children victims of violence. This organization also undertakes analyses and studies, in collaboration with other institutions and partners.

27. **Mouvement Africain des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs: The Representative** of this movement introduced this organization, which is present in 22 African countries, and whose purpose is to supervise and empower children and child workers. It also works for the participation of children, and has undertaken several actions for the benefit of the target group.

28. **The Representative of the SAMU social of Pointe Noire (CONGO)** inform the participants that SAMU works for the protection of vulnerable children, including street children with a mechanism on the field and a home care centre with a specialized team. The representative informed the meeting that the staff of this organization work with public bodies, and are available to build a partnership on the children cause.

29. **Coalition des Organisations Nigériennes des Droits de l'Enfant (CONIDE) Representative** informed the meeting that this Organization includes over 60 member bodies working for the promotion of children's rights. Its

objective is to coordinate actions, facilitate the sharing of experiences among actors and to build the capacities of members.

30. **CONAFE Senegal Representative** informed the meeting that they organized a training session to raise awareness among local elected representatives on budgeting for child rights. It produced a shadow report on the Charter, and supports the training of children in the areas of entertainment and communication.

31. **Save the Children West Africa Representative** introduced the activities carried out by the Organization in West Africa and the good collaboration existing between Civil Society Organizations and the authorities. She stressed the need for good governance for child rights.

32. At the end of the presentations, the Chairperson of the Committee responded on the concerns raised by the partners, and ensured them of the constant availability of the Committee to work with them.

ITEM 5: PRESENTATION OF THE CSO FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ACERWC

33. The Representatives of the CSO Forum presented the recommendations of their 5th forum to the Committee and the commitments of CSOs on the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child was shared.

34. They reported that the theme of the forum was 'one voice for children in crises. Also the content of a draft communiqué intended to be submitted to the Summit was shared by the forum. Commitments focused on four issues: Child participation, Cairo+10 (The African Common position on children - An Africa fit for children), Campaign to Stop child imprisonment and on the guidelines on action for children in the justice system in Africa.

35. The communiqué focused on five issues including: improving coordination, resource allocation, decisive action on corruption, CSO's position in monitoring the Cairo+10, & other instruments and the CSO operating environment.

ITEM 6: CONSIDERATION OF STATE PARTY REPORT: CAMEROON

36. The Report of the Republic of Cameroon was presented by H.E. Mrs. Catherine Bakang Mbock, Minister of Social Affairs. She described the structure of policies and programs that govern the rights of the child. Besides the legal framework for the protection of human rights, Cameroon adopted a package of legislative and regulatory measures, including for the implementation of the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the recommendations of the African Committee of Experts. Note should be taken of

the Criminal Code, the Labour Code, the laws of education policy, the provisions on the fight against child trafficking. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning the pending finalization and adoption of the Code of Child Protection.

37. After the presentation of H.E the Minister, the Committee asked questions related inter alia to the positive practice of introducing the Government of children in some schools, the education of children with disabilities, the role of the private sector, measures for Pygmies and other indigenous groups. Other questions were asked in relation to refugee children, the situation of family care for children 0-2 years, the detention of children, orphans and other vulnerable groups, juvenile justice, birth registration, child trafficking and punishment. The Committee expressed concern about the phenomenon of girls' breast ironing.

38. In her response to the Committee, Madam the Minister from Cameroon provided explanations on the process of improving legal frameworks. The draft Code of Child Protection is pegged to the Code of the Family and the Protection of the Person with the aim of combining tradition and modernity.

39. Refugee children have access to health systems, education and childcare. Cameroon is fighting the phenomenon of breast ironing through family education and has strengthened the system 'Tontine' with girls experiencing early pregnancy. The phenomenon of street children is related to classic causes: economic, family, cultural and globalization.

40. At the end of the session, the Chair of the Committee thanked the delegation for their work. She announced that Cameroon would receive the recommendations of the Committee.

ITEM 7: CONSIDERATION OF STATE PARTY REPORT: NIGER

41. H.E. Dr. Maikibi Kadidiatou Dandobi, the Minister of Social Development and Protection of Women and Children presented the report of the Republic of Niger on the implementation of the Charter. She focused her speech on the measures taken, the progress, the problems and prospects.

42. In legal terms, an effort has been made in harmonizing legislation and the adoption of legislation to reform the penal code that provides for violations on FGM, the creation of juvenile courts and juvenile structures, the strengthening of the institutions with the creation of a ministry and a department responsible for the child, a national committee and local committees for survival and protection and child rights. She informed the meeting of the signing of several bilateral and multilateral agreements, including an agreement to combat child trafficking in West Africa. She reported the progress in the implementation of these systems, particularly with respect to the improvement of several indicators of child survival including infant mortality, gross enrollment rate, the proportion of children in preschool and the proportion of working children.

43. Then, she highlighted the difficulties faced by authorities and other stakeholders including legal pluralism with the coexistence of Islamic law, customary, and modern law, and the lack of statistical data. The outlook is focused on reducing the infant mortality rate, the fight against child labor and exploitation of children, the fight against early marriage, raising the gross enrollment rate etc.

44. Niger has ratified several international legal instruments and legislation provides a national framework for protecting the rights of children and a Draft Code of protection of the child is being adopted and several Civil Society Organizations, traditional leaders and religious leaders are committed. She noted that the Policy on Childhood was adopted in June 2011. A framework document for the protection of the child will soon be adopted. It provides for the attainment of national targets and strategies to be implemented. A bill on the protection of girls in schools has been developed. The ECOWAS Protocol on trafficking in children has been ratified. Niger ranks 3rd in terms of progress in child welfare.

45. However, there are still gaps, for instance, the lack of disaggregated statistics, by gender, ethnicity, and area (rural and urban).

46. Following the statement of the Minister, Members of the Committee raised questions among others relating to the definition of a child, marriage age, the integration of Touareg children, the ratification of the Hague Convention on international adoption, criteria for selecting host families, the performance of centers, the share of the budget allocated to the health of children, free care and their impact on the functioning of health system and the high rate of dropout in primary education. The Committee also asked questions on corporal punishment, the efficiency of the fight against child labor, campaigns of dissemination of the Charter, the prevalence of begging, FGM, violence against children, the school situation of pregnant girls/ young mothers, minors in prison, and potential negative effects of measures in promoting girls' education.

47. Members also commented on enrollment indicators that were considered low for girls and boys, but expressed concern also for the advancement of women at the expense of child protection, especially for 0-3 year olds, and the fact that 85% of teachers were contractual.

48. In responding to the questions from the Committee, the Hon. Minister provided clarification on the budget for education, age for marriage, disaggregated statistics, and nutrition, the protection of 0-3 year old children, and FGM. Information was provided on the protection of migrants and their families, trafficking in persons, mutual legal assistance, the ten-year program of education and approaches to prioritization (zones and gender) and the adoption process

based on the best interests of the child. Physical violence is banned at all levels. Juvenile courts have social services in the courts of minors.

49. She said that Niger would complete the questionnaires on monitoring and evaluation of the Call for Accelerated Action and took note of the Committee's comments on the choice of child members of parliament, which had not been assessed.

50. At the end of the session, the Chairperson of the Committee thanked the delegation for their work. She announced that Niger would receive the recommendations of the Committee.

ITEM 8: CONSIDERATION OF STATE PARTY REPORT: SENEGAL

51. His Excellency the Ambassador of Senegal in Algeria who led the delegation of the Republic of Senegal, first apologized on behalf of the Minister who could not attend this meeting, then presented a report stating the progress made in the integrated care of little children with performances on the gross rate of school registration resulting in Small Children's Home and the allocation of 40% of the budget for education. The Gross Rate of school registration was 93% in 2009. Infant mortality dropped sharply. Strategies of prevention from the worst forms of labour, the return of children to their family and sponsorship allowed withdrawing children from work. The Parliament of children was assessed in 2004 and renewed in 2006, and has participated in campaigns of children at risks.

52. These are results of efforts made by the State and the Civil Society Organizations. The constraints include the lack of financial resources and coordination of interventions, the cumbersome social and cultural beliefs, the absence of a centralized national system for a good monitoring and evaluation on the children situation. Development of a national policy on children and the adoption of a child's code will allow the elimination of the above constraints and challenges. A strategy will be targeted at the age group 0-3 years with parental education and community child Care Centers.

53. After the intervention of the Senegal representative, the Committee asked questions on the emotional deprivation of children of imprisoned mothers, statistics on the situation of children, child labour, the causes of school drop-out, the functions and qualifications of new jobs open by Senegal for children care, the place of Koran teaching centers « Daaras » and Small Children's Home in the education and training system, the role of marabouts/religious leaders and the applicability of the law against begging.

54. Questions were raised about section 111 of the Family Code and Article 300 of the penal code, the problem of drug trafficking and narcotics for children, care of disabled children, social transfer programs, lack of information on actors

such as civil society and the private sector. Other concerns were highlighted on the impact of laws on the situation of children, violence against children, the factors that explain performance in terms of FGM, free primary education, civil status and birth registration, as well as care of children in Casamance. A final series of questions concerned the impact of national policy on integrated development of small children, the rate of pre-school enrolment which seems to decline despite the efforts made, the care of orphans of Diola, organ removals and care of children victims of corporal punishment.

55. Observations have been made by the Committee on the general feeling that the texts are numerous but not often implemented, concerns were raised with respect to the creation of several structures involved in the same field with the same risks of duplication and jurisdictional disputes.

56. Responding to questions, the Senegalese delegation explained that « daaras » are Koran schools where children are trained by specialists, called Koran teachers and receive also a vocational training. Studies are under way for a Children Television as requested by the Head of State. The national policy on integrated development of small children was adopted in 2006 by Senegal. Among the achievements of this policy, we may note the programs of Small Children's Home, health and nutrition follow-up, community early learning centres follow-up, project of «savings for babies» and teachers' professionalization. Support for children with disabilities is provided by a variety of specialized structures. Companies and the private sector are committed and measures have been taken to combat school dropping out.

57. For juvenile justice, children under 13 cannot be prosecuted. Children orphans of Diola benefit from a comprehensive financial program and an office for orphans or child victims of disasters. There is still no legal provision on the situation of children with imprisoned mothers but civil society plays a monitoring and early warning role. The Ministry of labor established a unit to combat child labor. Care of child victims of violence is ensured through health facilities and family mediation.

58. Civil Society Organizations are entitled to participate in legal proceedings related to the fight against child trafficking.

59. The establishment of a special adviser for the President in charge of Child issues and the creation of a support unit for child protection demonstrate the great interest in child rights. With the support of UNICEF and partners like CONAFE, Senegal is working to institute a Child Protector.

60. At the end of the session, the Chair of the Committee thanked the delegation for the work undertaken. She announced that Senegal would receive the Committee's recommendations.

ITEM 9: CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED (CLOSED SESSION)

i) Communication on violation of the rights of children in Northern Uganda.

61. The Committee proceeded to the hearing of the parties concerned involved on the communication on the violation of children's rights in Northern Uganda.

ii) Communication on the Decision on the Nubian Children in Kenya:

62. It was reiterated that during its 17th session, the Committee made a Decision on the communication relating to the violation of the right to nationality for Nubian children in Kenya. According to the communication guidelines the Committee should appoint one of its members to follow up on the decision. The Committee after deliberations agreed to designate Mr. Benyam Dawit Mezmur to follow up.

ITEM 10: FOLLOW UP ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ACERWC (CLOSED SESSION)

63. The Committee was informed of the Executive Council Decision on the report of the committee which adopted the theme for the day of the African child, urged the AU commission to implement the autonomous budget for the committee and to involve the members of the committee in missions to post conflict countries whenever relevant. It was agreed that the secretariat should always send the executive council decisions that are relevant to the committee as soon as they are released after every summit.

ITEM 11: DISCUSSION ON THE PRIORITY ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN 2012 (CLOSED SESSION)

64. The Committee was informed that the 2012 Budget had not yet been adopted by the Executive Council but the PRC Sub Committee on Budget had approved 102,000 USD to support the implementation of the Committee's Plan of Action. The committee was also informed that a sum of 79,000 USD for operational budget had been submitted but not yet approved by the PRC and relevant policy organs. Consequently, the Committee agreed to define priorities for 2012 upon the final approval of the budget by the executive council. It was agreed that the activities for 2012 will be finalised online by members of the committee and that they would base on the existing 2010-2014 plan of action.

ITEM 12: PREPARATION OF THE 2013 ACERWC BUDGET (CLOSED SESSION)

65. It was recalled that the autonomous budget would start in 2013 since the related Executive Council Decision had been taken after the submission of the 2012 budget. The Committee then agreed to finalise a draft budget for 2013 by May 2012. A number of clarifications on the procedures and processes of budgeting and mobilizing resources were explained by the Finance Officer and the Legal Adviser of the AU Commission. The Committee members requested for a visit to the Commission to have an experience on all these procedures and to understand how best they can engage in defending the committee's budget.

ITEM 13: CONSIDERATION OF OBSERVER STATUS APPLICATIONS (CLOSED SESSION)

66. Two applications for observer status were presented by two organizations:

Community Law Centre: After deliberations the Committee decided to grant observer status to the Community Law Centre.

RETRAK: After deliberations the committee decided to request Retrak to submit a new application according to the guidelines on observer status particularly addressing the letter to current chair of the Committee.

ITEM 14: FINALIZATION OF THE ACERWC RULES OF PROCEDURES (CLOSED SESSION)

67. The Committee finalized the amendments of the draft rules of procedure starting from article from 95 to 111. A number of issues were raised by members of the committee for which the representative of the legal counsel provided clarifications.

ITEM 15: DISCUSSION ON THE PREPARATION OF THE 3RD PAN AFRICAN FORUM ON CHILDREN

68. The Committee was briefed on the preparation of the 3rd Pan African forum on children for which a technical working group has been set up. It has been decided to request the Department of Social Affairs to include the Committee in the technical working group. Consequently Mr. Benyam Mezmur was designated to represent the Committee.

69. The Committee brainstormed on some of the possible contributions to the event which included a recommendation that a proposal be made to conduct a

panel discussion for active participation and the visibility of the committee. Also a proposal was made to approach Partners for funding.

ITEM 16: ANY OTHER BUSINESS (CLOSED SESSION)

Follow up Mission to Togo

70. It had been agreed during the Committee meeting held in Pretoria that a Note Verbal to Togo should be sent to facilitate an evaluation mission on the recommendations sent on Togo's report on the Charter. The Committee was informed that the Minister of Togo had been consulted and had seemed to be in agreement with the mission. The issue of concern however was the source of funding. The Committee agreed that follow on request for funding from Partners should make or more funds mobilized during Nairobi meeting scheduled for next week. It was also agreed that the Secretariat would have to draft the Note Verbale, clear it with the chairperson and send to Togo. The Committee had during the Pretoria meeting agreed to designate Mr. Cyprien Adebayo Yanclo but he suggested to be accompanied by someone else.

Declaration/Communiqué on the Hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa:

71. The Committee was informed that the term 'Declaration' in the document had been changed to 'communiqué', after discussion the proposed draft was adopted as amended. The Secretariat has been requested to finalize and disseminate the Communiqué.

The Communiqué on children in conflict and post conflict:

72. The working team on this communiqué consisting of Ms. Felicité Muphimpundu and Mr. Benyam Mezmur agreed to continue working on the communiqué using all the available information on the countries in conflict or post conflict situations. The challenge of language was reported. The secretariat will only translate the final document into English or French.

Follow up on State Party Reports that are due by 10 Years

73. The Committee decided to give the mandate to Mr. Benyam Dawit Mezmur to draft individualized tailor made Note Verbal to State Parties whose reports are due particularly but not limited to those that are due by many years to submit their reports. It was agreed that he will do this in collaboration with the secretariat of the Committee.

Relocation of the Secretariat

74. The Committee was informed that some countries (Angola and Burkina Faso) had expressed willingness to host the secretariat but that follow up with these and others was necessary. The necessity to convince the Executive Council to endorse this relocation was emphasized.

75. The Committee was informed that the Chairperson had requested for documents related to the establishment of the African Court on human and people's rights, and the African Commission on human and people's rights . She also reminded the Committee of the working group that had been set up to draft a concept note on the subject.

76. Due to challenges in the initial strategy, a way forward was suggested to have the Chairperson write a letter to the legal Counsel of the AUC requesting for advice on the practicalities of the relocation of the secretariat.

ITEM 17: ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT REPORT

77. The report was examined paragraph by paragraph and adopted with minor amendments.

ITEM 18: CLOSING

78. The closing remarks were made by a representative of the AU Commission and the Chairperson of the Committee.

79. AU Commission representative thanked the Algerian Government for the facilities and hospitality provided. . He thanked the partners for the support, the member States for presenting their initial reports to the Committee to pursue its proceedings especially concerning implementation of the Charter. He also thanked Members of the Committee for their persistent commitment to protect the rights of the children through their work. He concluded by thanking the chairperson for ably conducting the session, Ms Fatema Sebaa for her assistance and the interpreters for their services. He then wished all returning participants a safe journey back to their respective countries.

80. The Chairperson of the Committee also expressed her gratitude on behalf of the entire Committee to the Algerian Government for the exceptional conditions under which the session had been conducted. She also appreciated the presence of the two Ministers at the opening Ceremony which indicated the Government's commitment to the common objectives. The Chairperson acknowledged with thanks the presence of high level representatives including Ministers from countries that presented their reports. She then highlighted the key agenda items that had been examined during the session, including the finalization of the Committee's Document on Rules and Procedures which will need to be submitted to the Office of the Legal Council of the African Union

Commission for coherence with the similar documents on other similar AU Organs.

81. She thanked the Partners, the Department of Social Affairs and the rest of the team that had been supportive during the entire proceedings of the session. She then thanked all the other committee members for the work that had been completed. She expressed special thanks to Ms Fatema Sebaa for her valuable help in the organization of the meeting, which is an honour for both the Government of Algeria and the Committee. She wished all a safe journey.