

AFRICAN UNION

**African Committee of Experts on the
Rights and Welfare of the Child**

الاتحاد الأفريقي



"An Africa Fit for Children"

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AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

**Guidelines for Reporting by Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)
and Association with Observer Status**

Final Draft
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A INTRODUCTION

1. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the Committee) is mandated under article 42(iii) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (the Charter) to “cooperate with other African, international and regional institutions and organisations concerned with the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of the child”. The framework of cooperation between the Committee and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) is outlined in the Committee’s Rules of Procedure (sections 34, 37, 81 and 82) and the Criteria for Granting Observer Status to Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Associations (the Criteria).
2. Pursuant to section V(2) of the Criteria, the Committee requires all NGOs and associations with observer status before it to submit to the Committee analytical reports on their activities every two (2) years. The submission of these reports presents an opportunity for NGOs to inform the Committee about the activities they have undertaken to promote the implementation of the Charter and in support of the Committee.
3. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clear instructions to NGOs on the content and format of their reports. NGOs should submit their initial reports two years after been granted observer status, and thereafter, every two years.

B CONTENT OF THE REPORT

I Introduction to the organisation

4. The organisation should provide information describing itself, including the following information:
 - a) The aims and purposes of the organisation, and how the organisation works to achieve these aims and purposes;
 - b) The geographical coverage of the work of the organisation;
 - c) The legal status of the organisation, including changes to its registration status, constitution, or by-laws;
 - d) The organisational structure, including names of the management office bearers and how they were elected or appointed to office; and
 - e) Membership in coalitions or networks.

II Operational environment

5. The organisation should briefly provide information about the general political, economic,

social, cultural, and legal environment in which it operates. It should particularly highlight any significant developments that have positively or negatively impacted its work during the reporting period.

III Financial status and viability of the organisation

6. The organisation should provide information about its financial status, including:
 - a) Sources of funding, with each source presented as a proportion of its contribution to the whole budget of the organisation.
 - b) The total budget and actual expenditure of the organisation during the reporting period, disaggregated to reflect expenditure on programmes vis-à-vis administrative operations (e.g. salaries, rent and overhead costs), as well as the budget allocated for each activity.

IV Activities undertaken to promote the implementation of the Charter

7. The organisation should provide information on the activities it has undertaken during the reporting period to promote the implementation of the Charter, including but not limited to the following:
 - a) activities aimed at direct realization of the rights enshrined in the Charter, including lessons learnt during the implementation of those activities;
 - b) activities at the domestic or national level aimed at monitoring implementation of the Charter by a state party;
 - c) activities undertaken to ensure or facilitate the implementation of concluding observations or other recommendations of the Committee;
 - d) activities undertaken to celebrate the Day of the African Child (June 16); and
 - e) activities undertaken to disseminate the Charter.

V Contribution to the work of the Committee

8. The organisation should provide information about its contribution to the work of the Committee, including contribution relating to the following mandate areas of the Committee:
 - a) collection and documentation of information, assessment of situations of African problems in the fields of the rights and welfare of the child, and organisation of meetings;
 - b) formulation of principles and rules aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of children in Africa (e.g. contribution to formulation of general comments);

- c) consideration of state party reports submitted to the Committee pursuant to article 43 of the Charter (e.g. submission of shadow reports and country briefings);
- d) determination of communications received by the Committee pursuant to article 44 of the Charter (e.g. submission of communications or filing of amicus briefs); and
- e) investigations conducted by the Committee pursuant to article 45 of the Charter.

VI Participation in the activities of the Committee

9. The organisation should provide information about its participation in the activities of the Committee, including participation in the following activities:
- a) ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the Committee - . Information about participation in sessions may include oral or written statements made during these sessions and parallel or side events organised;
 - b) closed or private meetings of the Committee; and
 - c) meetings or events organised by the Committee during the inter-session period, including those organised during country visits.

VII Support of the relevant work of the African Union

10. The organisation should provide information on the activities it has undertaken during the reporting period to support specific programmes of the African Union (AU) that concern the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of the child, such as:
- a) Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality in Africa (CARMA);
 - b) Call for Accelerated Action on the Implementation of the Plan of Action Towards Africa Fit for Children;
 - c) Abuja Call for Accelerated Action Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services in Africa.
 - d) Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa; and
 - e) Campaign on Combating Human Trafficking.
11. The organisation should also provide information about its participation in AU activities, including:
- a) participation in relevant events during AU summits and other relevant meetings such as sessions or meetings of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.; and
 - b) collaboration or partnership with the Department of Social Affairs of the AU Commission or any other relevant organs or institutions of the AU.

VII Challenges

12. The organisation should describe the challenges that it faced during the reporting in:
- a) Promoting the implementation of the Charter;
 - b) Participating in the activities of the Committee and of the African Union;

IX Additional information

13. The organisation may provide any other important additional information that it would wish to share with the Committee such as judicial decisions on child rights issues.

C FORMAT OF THE REPORT

14. The report should be presented in a simple and concise language. It should be written in the third person, avoiding the use of proper names and titles of individuals affiliated to the organisation.

15. The report should not exceed 10 pages or 4,500 words. It should not include footnotes or endnotes. In order to conform to the content requirements of these guidelines, the report should be structured in the following order:

- a) Introduction
- b) Operational environment
- c) Financial status and viability of the organisation
- d) Activities undertaken to promote the implementation of the Charter
- e) Contribution to the work of the Committee
- f) Participation in the activities of the Committee
- g) Support of the relevant work of the African
- h) Additional information

16. The report should include a table of contents and a list indicating the meaning of all abbreviations used in the report.

AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

Guidelines for Reporting by Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Association with Observer Status

INFORMATION NOTE

The purpose of this Information Note is to provide guidance to the Committee on the general approach to reports submitted to the Committee by NGO pursuant to section V(2) of the Committee's Criteria for Granting Observer Status to Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Associations. The Information Note is a strictly internal document for use by the members of the Committee and its Secretariat. It covers the following aspects: nature of the review; working group on NGOs; reporting cycle; and the outcome of the review process. It also provides brief explanations on specific provisions contained in the Guidelines.

Nature of the review: The review should be viewed as a process that benefits both the Committee and NGOs with observer status. As such, the guidelines have been formulated to ensure that through the reports the Committee will gather information that will enable it to assess, including statistically, trends across the continent on the promotion and protection of child rights.

In order to ensure that the review process does not take considerable time and resources of the Committee, it should be confined to textual analysis of the reports. Only in rare and exceptional circumstances should an NGO be invited to present its report orally before the Committee.

Working Group on NGOs: It is recommended that the Committee creates a working group that will be responsible for reviewing reports and making recommendations to the entire Committee for consideration. This Committee may be comprised of selected members of the Committee and the Secretariat.

Reporting cycle: The Committee should provide on its website the reporting cycle, setting out dates when reports are due and when they will be considered. The reporting cycle for each NGO should be based on the year in which the NGO received observer status. The Committee should also provide a deadline on when reports should be submitted.

Outcome of the review process: After the conclusion of every review process, the Committee should communicate to the concerned NGO the outcome of the process, including providing an official acknowledgment of the specific contribution of the NGO to the work of the Committee.

EXPLANATORY NOTES ON SPECIFIC GUIDELINES:

| | Guideline | Explanatory Note |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Operational environment | Information provided under this heading will help gathering information that will assist the Committee to assess, across space and time, the environment in which NGOs that work on child rights operate. In recent years, several African governments have enacted laws and policies whose net effect is to reduce the space for civil society operations including those working on child rights. The Committee may use such information when reviewing a state party report submitted pursuant to section 43 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. When gathered over a substantive period of time, such information could form the basis of formulating a policy document such as a general comment. |
| 2 | Financial status and viability of the organisation | The emphasis for information provided under this heading should be on determining what proportion of organisations' actual expenditure go directly into the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of children. With this information, it will be possible for the Committee to statistically determine trends on spending on child rights by NGOs. |
| 3 | Activities undertaken to promote the implementation of the Charter | From information submitted by NGOs under this heading, the Committee should be in a position to collect data on best practices in the promotion and protecting of child rights from various parts of the continent. This information may also be useful for the Committee when considering state party reports submitted pursuant to article 43 of the Charter. |
| 4 | Contribution to the work of the Committee Participation in the work of the Committee | These guidelines are meant to encourage NGOs to actively contribute to and participate in the work of the Committee. |
| 5 | Support of the relevant work of the African Union | The AU programmes listed under this sub-heading are presented only as examples and the list should not be treated as conclusive. Where new programmes relating to child rights are introduced by the AU, the Committee should require NGOs to also report on their activities targeted towards these new programmes. |
| 6 | Challenges | Information provided under this heading should especially assist the Committee to get feedback on challenges that NGOs that engage with it and the AU face in the process. This information should then be used to address those challenges. |