



STATEMENT ON THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD 2024

On this Day of the African Child, we unite to honour the resilience, strength, and potential of children across the African continent. This year's theme, *"Education for All Children in Africa: The Time is Now,"* calls for immediate and decisive action to ensure every child has access to quality education, recognizing it as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for a just and equitable society. This theme is derived from the theme of the African Union for the year 2024; *"Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa."* That was adopted at the 36th Ordinary Session in February 2023.

Education is the key to unlocking the full potential of every child. It is a powerful tool for breaking the cycles of poverty, inequality, and injustice that have hindered the progress of too many African nations. Yet, millions of children in Africa are still denied this basic right due to barriers such as poverty, conflict, gender discrimination, and inadequate infrastructure. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child under Article 11(1) states, *'Every child shall have the right to education'*. Education is the right of all children in Africa equally despite their location, race, parental status, disability, gender, and any other status.

NANHRI calls on African NHRIs to uphold their mandate and hold governments accountable and to collaboratively work with national, regional, and international human rights stakeholders to remove all barriers to education. As stipulated in The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child under Article 11(3)(e), *'States Parties to the present Charter shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realization of this right and shall in particular: take special measures in respect of female, gifted and disadvantaged children, to ensure equal access to education for all sections of the community.'* Every child,

regardless of their socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, or geographic location, must have access to quality education.

There must be a significant increase in investment in educational infrastructure. This includes building safe and inclusive schools, providing essential learning materials, and ensuring access to technology that supports modern learning environments.

Education policies must be inclusive and address the needs of the most marginalized children, including those with disabilities, girls, and children in conflict-affected regions. Special attention should be given to creating learning environments that are safe and free from violence and discrimination.

Communities and parents play a crucial role in supporting children's education. We urge for the implementation of programs that engage and empower them to participate actively in their children's learning journey.

Governments must enact and rigorously implement policies that support education for all children. Transparency and accountability mechanisms should be in place to monitor progress and ensure that resources are used effectively.

The time for transformative action is now. We must prioritize education as a critical element of development and human rights. By doing so, we can ensure that every child in Africa has the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to the prosperity and stability of their communities and nations.

On this Day of the African Child 2024, let us reaffirm our commitment to the rights of every African child. Let us act with urgency and determination to provide the education that every child deserves. Together, we can create a future where every child in Africa is empowered through education to achieve their dreams and drive the continent towards a brighter, more equitable future.

Education for all children in Africa: The time is now.