



An orison to the African governments,

Kickstart Kilifi joins the rest of Africa to commemorating the Day of the African Child today, a day that has been celebrated on June 16 every year since 1991, when it was first initiated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU). It honors those who participated in the Soweto Uprising in 1976 on that day. It also raises awareness of the continuing need for improvement of the education provided to African children.

In Soweto, South Africa, on June 16, 1976, about ten thousand black school children marched in a column more than half a mile long, protesting the poor quality of their education and demanding their right to be taught in their own language. Hundreds of young students were shot more than a hundred people were killed in the protests of the following two weeks, and more than a thousand were injured. Therefore on June 16 every year, governments, NGOs, CBOs, international organizations and other stakeholders gather to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the full realization of the rights of children in Africa.

This year's DAC theme ***“Leave No Child Behind for Africa's Development.”*** builds on the momentum created by the DAC 2017 theme “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for Children in Africa: Accelerating Protection, Empowerment and Equal Opportunity.” It does so by emphasizing the need to mainstream children's rights in all (Agenda 2030) developmental programmes implemented by Member States.

This year as children we note with concern the various challenges that are faced broadly by children in Africa as follows:

1. Lack of information on drugs, sexual reproductive health and responsible use of technology, we implore governments to invest more in social education at schools so as to promote the protection of the African Child from all forms of harm including drug abuse, sexual harassment, unwanted pregnancies and physical abuse.

2. Limited access to basic quality education systems and services. We implore governments to subsidize education and ensure that the environment is accessible to all children including those living with disabilities.
3. Poor living conditions that are not child friendly, we implore the state to invest more in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in schools and in our communities. A healthy environment is a prerequisite for a healthy learning and the future of Africa depends on the African children.
4. Although several laws have been passed in a number of countries aimed at ending Child marriages, rape and sexual harassment including our own-Kenya, as children we are concerned that little has been done to the enforcement of these laws, we implore that states to breathe life into these laws with immediate effect.
5. Marginalization of the girl child. Traditional African norms and customs were at the forefront of marginalizing girls in many African communities. We implore governments to be at forefront of eliminating all forms of gender inequality at schools and in communities, give full priority to the needs of the girl child and ensure that the environment is gender sensitive and communities uphold respect and protect girls.
6. Continued child labor especially in the marginalized segments of societies; this continues to deprive children the right to enjoy their fundamental rights as children, including rights to education and protection.
7. Use of children as soldiers and shields. The instability in some parts of Africa has intensified the suffering of African children. The civil wars in the Congo, Central Africa Republic, Southern Cameroon, South Sudan naming just a few, has brought untold suffering both mental and physical. The number of orphans and street children is growing at an alarming rate. It is estimated thirty million of the world's fifty seven million children out of school are in sub-Saharan Africa. Africa governments should move with speed to rescue the future of this continent by saving this generations entrapped in conflicts.

As a bona fide African youth led community based organization and a proponent of child rights (specifically education), Kickstart Kilifi would like to see a paradigm shift from lip service to action in the promotion and upholding of children's rights irrespective of their nationality.

Thank you.

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