

**Statement of the Co-Chairs of the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP-CAAC) on the occasion of the Day of the African Child, 2024**

**Addis Ababa, 16 June 2024** - The co-conveners of the AP-CAAC, H.E. Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the Africa Union Commission and H.E Jainaba Jagne, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the African Union on this occasion of the Day of the African Child, wish to emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive and inclusive education for all children across the continent.

Education is not just a fundamental right; it is the key that unlocks a child’s potential and paves the way for a brighter future. It is through education that we can break the cycle of violence and conflict, empower children, and build prosperous and peaceful societies.

Unfortunately, in many conflict-affected areas in Africa, children are denied this basic right, depriving them of the opportunities they deserve. There is a significant relationship between educational attainment among children and the occurrences of conflicts. An increase in education attainment is correlated with a decrease in the occurrences of conflicts.

Education, as the foundation upon which the values, skills, and social awareness of young people are built, can promote intercultural understanding, responsible citizenship, tolerance, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Thus, through educational systems that celebrate cultural diversity, education can assume a significant preventive role by mitigating tensions and the root causes of conflicts.

The theme for this year’s Day of the African Child, “Education for All Children in Africa: The Time is Now,” resonates deeply within the AU’s priorities on child protection. It serves as a clarion call to action, reminding us that we can not afford to wait any longer. The time has come for us to prioritise quality education to be accessible and affordable for every child in Africa, regardless of their circumstances.

We recognise the challenges that lie ahead. However, we firmly believe that with political will, individual and especially collective efforts, and strategic partnerships, we can overcome these challenges and ensure that no child is left behind.

We call upon governments, civil society organizations, regional bodies, and the international community to combine their efforts and invest in education. We urge governments to allocate adequate resources to education, ensuring that schools are safe spaces where children can learn, grow, and thrive. Accordingly, we call on Member States who are yet to do so to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.

Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of prioritising the needs of children in conflict situations. These children are among the most vulnerable, and it is our duty to provide them with the necessary support and protection. We advocate for the inclusion of child protection measures in education systems, ensuring that children are shielded from violence, exploitation, and recruitment into armed groups.

Today, as we commemorate the Day of the African Child, let us recommit ourselves to the cause of quality education, including peace education, for all children in Africa. Let us seize this moment to

build a continent where every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to society. Together, we can create a brighter future for Africa, where education is a right, not a privilege. The time is now.

**For further information, please contact:**

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