AFRICA HEALTH ORGANISATION

2020-2030
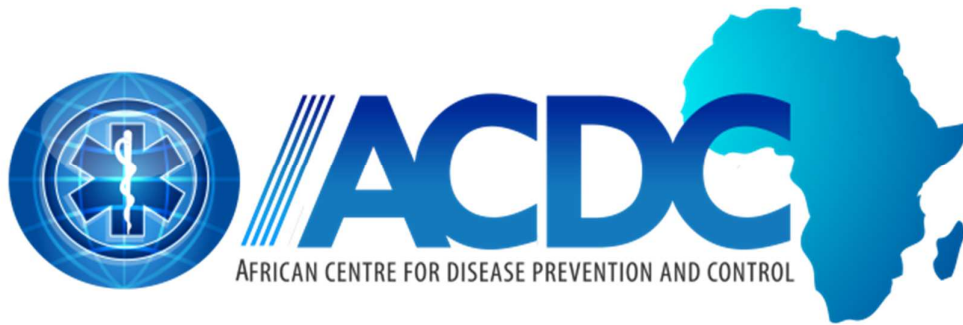
Africa Health Organisation (AHO)

AHO Policy on Child Protection

Strategic Plan and Objectives

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Introduction

Herbert Hoover, former President of the United States, famously referred to children as "our most valuable natural resource[1]". This viewpoint is also reflected in international society's recognition of children's human rights and the need to address their specific circumstances when looking at strategies on international concerns and sustainable development. Today, the World Health Organisation is amongst international bodies making reference to "children and young people—our most precious resource[2]" and recognising the importance of incorporating child wellbeing and protection in health goals. Nonetheless, there remains a gap between international commitments and national practices impacting child abuse (including neglect) and exploitation.

Research in East Asia and the Pacific[3] and the United States[4] shows links between economic, educational, cognitive and behavioural problems and child abuse and neglect. The future society to which we aspire is dependent on the children of today - and how we promote and safeguard their welfare. Policies, strategies and action plans that assist this goal underpin every other objective we seek to implement around health, sustainable development and human rights. Consequently, Africa Health Organisation's (AHO's) strategies include child protection.

This document outlines a strategic approach to child protection in general for AHO. It is based firmly on the goals and principles that determine the focus of AHO's work. It places child protection in a health and development context, with related information on international legal protection, the nature of child protection issues identified in African countries and challenges to be addressed, ranging from stakeholder engagement to data availability and consistency.

The suggested strategy in this document recognises the interrelated nature of child protection issues and the multi-sectoral approach required to address challenges. The goals suggested in the related action plan are overarching. Separate action plans relevant to specific areas of child protection are being developed currently, to address immediate and unique contextual considerations. As an area in which there is constant motion and development, particularly in the light of political and economic issues – and most recently, issues arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic - it is expected that the suggested goals in this strategic policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure a flexible, adaptable approach rather than a fixed response[5].

There is nothing we can say to the world's children that can convince them the world needs to be the way it is. That means we must do everything we can to close the gap between the world as it is, and the world as it should be.

Former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon

I The importance of child protection

1.1 Child protection meaning:

Available reports and research indicate varying definitions of child protection and "child" is not uniformly accepted as an individual below eighteen years old[6].

> **Child protection**
>
> For the purposes of this strategy document (Strategy):
> - the definition of a child is taken from Article 2 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
> - child protection refers to the protection of individuals under eighteen years old, from abuse and exploitation

The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of abuse includes physical and emotional abuse, exploitation, ill treatment and neglect. Its strategies to reduce violence against children (INSPIRE) indicates that violence against children can vary at different ages[7] (see table below[8]).
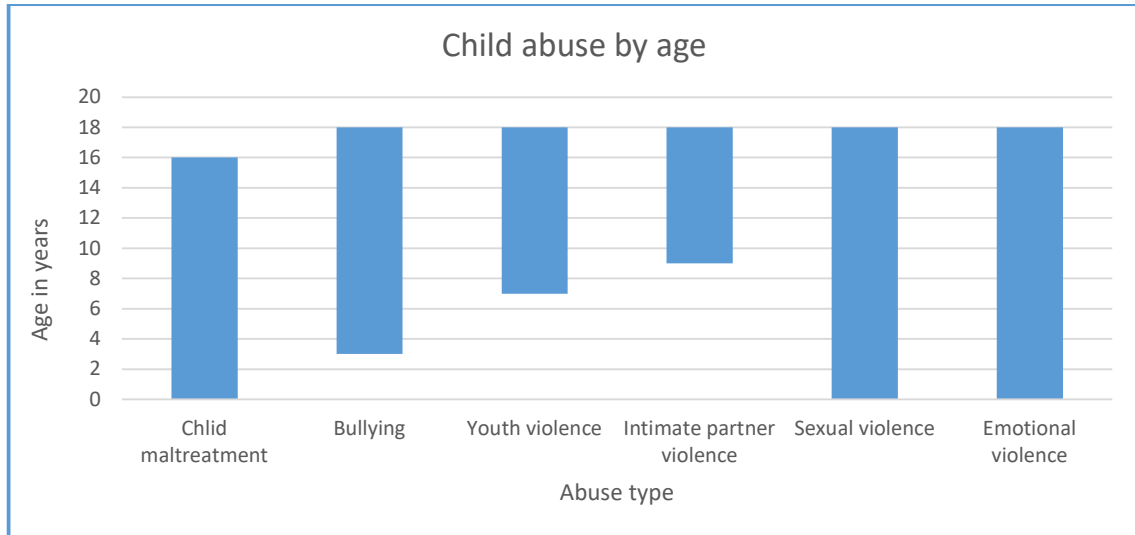
Abuse can arise in different forms, such as physical violence (including sexual assault and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, breast ironing), mental abuse (emotional and psychological) and neglect (in areas such as physical care, emotional care, education). Exploitation can occur through child labour, armed conflict or bonded labour contexts and sexual exploitation for some type of gain (for example, sexual trafficking and sexual slavery).

This Strategy considers child protection issues generally. It should be read in conjunction with AHO's other, existing strategies that include children and which focus on specific, individual areas of child protection.

1.2 Child protection and health issues:

Child abuse and exploitation raise concerns that cut across many sectors - including the health sector, with the health effects of abuse and the health sector's ability to respond to survivors and assist with preventative measures. WHO has recognised the importance of the health sector's role in its health sector guidelines on child mistreatment[9], aimed at health sector responders with whom abused children come into contact.

The behavioural and psychological effects of child abuse and exploitation are long-term and can lead to physical ailments. When survivors of abuse and exploitation become adults, there is the risk that those with ongoing behavioural or psychological issues might adversely affect the children in their care, perpetuating the negative effects of the survivors' experiences.

Sustainable development goals, which aim to improve the world economically, environmentally and socially[10], recognise the importance of children and of health in achieving development, with the inclusion of Goal 3 on promoting health and wellbeing. AHO's focus is on promoting a high quality, equitable health service and collaboration among countries in Africa to improve the quality of life. Child protection is an area of key relevance in achieving these aims, relevant to *AHO Strategic Plan 2020/2025* categories 2 (non-communicable diseases), 3 (determinants of health and promoting health throughout the life course) and 4 (achieving people-centred health services).

1.3 Child protection and development:

The sustainable development goals aim to eradicate poverty, foster peaceful, just societies and achieve development in a sustainable way[11]. Agenda 2030 (United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1), which establishes the sustainable development goals, specifically recognises the importance of children and young

Specific sustainable development goals arising from Agenda 2030 that incorporate child protection and empowerment goals are:

- ➢ Goal 1 (reducing poverty)
- ➢ Goal 3 (ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages)
- ➢ Goal 4 (inclusive and equitable quality education, including free primary and secondary education in Goal 4.1, quality childcare and pre-primary education in Goal 4.2 and the equal access to education in Goal 4.5)
- ➢ Goal 5 (gender equality, including references in Goals 5.2 and 5.3 to eliminating trafficking, exploitation and harmful practices such as early/ forced marriage and female genital mutilation)
- ➢ Goal 8 (sustained and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work, with Goal 8.7 referring to elimination of slavery, child labour, forced labour, child soldiers, slavery and trafficking)
- ➢ Goal 11 (making cities and settlements safe and sustainable, with references to safe transport for children in Goal 11.2 and safe public spaces in Goal 11.7)
- ➢ **Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies** is particularly relevant to child protection and Goal 16.2 specifically refers to ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

adults as agents for future change (paragraphs 51 and 53). Agenda 2030 incorporates child protection and empowerment in its Vision (paragraph 8), its Agenda (paragraph 23, 25, 26, 27) and the goals mentioned in the text box above (page 6 of this Strategy) which are specific to children.

The sustainable development goals are interrelated. Thus, progress in one area can impact positively on another area. Without the protection and empowerment of children, the overall aim of Agenda 2030 in eradicating poverty and achieving peace and justice together with sustainable development will be difficult to achieve. This is because the welfare of children is affected by issues that the sustainable development goals seek to address and some goals are specific to child protection concerns. Thus, the sustainable development goals are underpinned by the need to ensure child protection and achieve child empowerment.

1.4 International legal provisions relevant to the rights of the child:

Laws around child protection issues are important from both a preventative and protective perspective. They indicate a state's official stance on its duties to protect children, which can lend support to efforts to strengthen and improve child protection.

International instruments that focus solely on children's rights date back almost 100 years. As early as 1924, the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child containing social and economic entitlements [12] was adopted by the League of Nations. This was succeeded by the 1959 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child (UNDRC), which includes the principle of the best interests of the child being paramount and lays out

> **Key international legal instruments on child protection in Africa**
> ➢ 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
> ➢ 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

ten principles, including the rights to love, a name and nationality, adequate nutrition, housing and medical services, special education if physically or mentally disabled, special protection for physical, mental and social development and the right to protection from neglect, cruelty and exploitation[13]. The Geneva Declaration and UNDRC do not specify the age range of children.

Later the 1966 Covenants (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) included general references to children[14] but did not define children. International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions afford specific child protection in the areas of work[15]. ILO Convention 182 has been clear in defining children as being under eighteen years old. It has been ratified universally (as of 2020)[16].

A Convention addressing children's human rights generally came in the form of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It indicates areas relevant to child protection and the contexts in which child protection can be offered. A child here is either under eighteen years old or under local law, "attains majority earlier" (Article 1 – although a later Optional Protocol addresses the conscription of children under eighteen years of age and their involvement in armed conflict[17]). The best interests of the child as a primary consideration and the need for states to protect children are stated clearly (Article 3). Article 19 specifically addresses protection from violence, abuse and neglect[18]. The UNCRC also covers child protection or child abuse issues publicised frequently, such as sexual trafficking (Articles 34 on sexual exploitation and 35 on trafficking), sexual assault (Articles 19 on abuse and 34 on sexual exploitation), child soldiers (Article 38 – applicable to children under fifteen years of age) and child labour (Article 32). Concerns such as female genital mutilation and child marriage would apply to a number of provisions under the Convention, including freedom

from discrimination on any grounds (Article 2), acting in the bests interests of the child (Article 3), maximum support for survival and development of the child (Article 6), the child's right to express views freely on all matters affecting him or her individually in accordance with age and maturity (Article 12) and the right to be protected from harmful traditional practices (Article 24 (3)).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) came into force into 1999, shortly after the adoption of the UNCRC[19]. The ACRWC is applicable to African states and places the rights in the UNCRC in an African context (this is made clear in the Preamble). It addresses issues specific to Africa - a relevant consideration for countries on the continent due to the absence of a number of African states in the drafting process of the UNCRC[20].

The ACRWC makes it clear that the interests of the child is the main consideration (rather than one of many considerations when looking at children). The ACRWC also has provisions specific to the prohibition of child marriage and the registration of all marriages (Articles 1, 5 and 12 of UNCRC leaves room for marriage below the age of eighteen years, although the Committee on the Rights of the child has recommended eighteen years as the minimum age of marriage[21]), a prohibition on armed forces and hostilities recruitment of children, education provisions that include a recognition of children who might be disadvantaged for range of reasons, specific provisions on protection against apartheid and provisions on sentencing and detention considerations for expectant mothers or mothers of very young children (relevant to the wellbeing of the children involved), including ensuring that mothers are not detained with their children. The ACRWC has obligations for children too, regarding responsibilities of children towards their families and society. Like the UNCRC, the ACRWC offers protection from sexual exploitation (Article 27), trafficking (Article 29), sexual assault (Articles 16 and 27), abuse (Articles 11 and 20 on discipline and Article 16 on abuse), discrimination (Article 3 with additional protection against apartheid (Article 26) and protection for disabled children (Article 13)), harmful social and cultural practices (Article 21) and any customs, traditions or religious practices that are inconsistent with the rights in the ACRWC (Article 1)[22].

The legal protection for children outlined above reflects a growing acknowledgement of children as a group requiring specific protection and the general range of circumstances that might give rise to child protection measures. In ratifying the ACRWC, a treaty specific to nations in Africa, governments recognise an obligation to extend protection to children in their states.

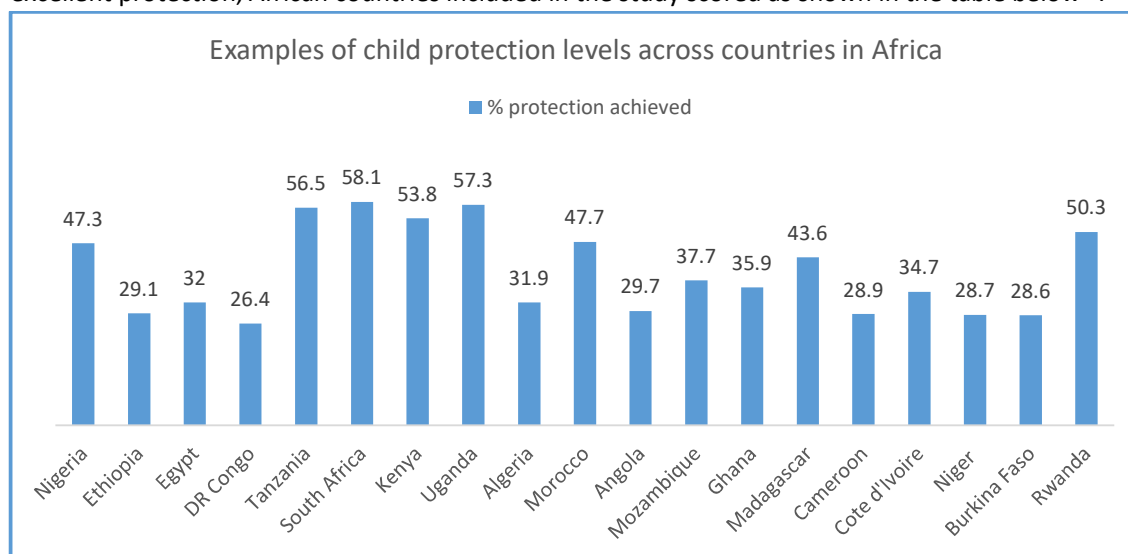## II Child protection in countries across the African continent
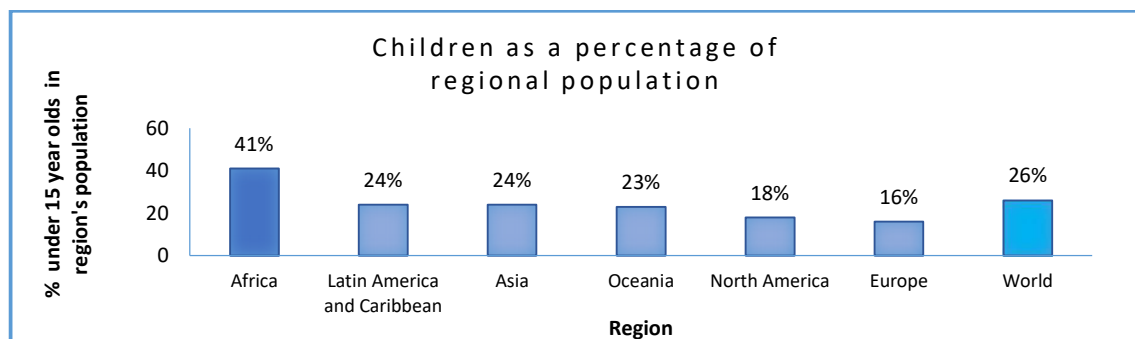
UNICEF estimates that the child population in Africa is the largest among all continents and will reach one billion by 2055[23]. In 2010, children under fifteen years of age accounted for forty-one percent of the continent's population[24] (see table above, with Africa represented as one region[25]).

Given the significance of children as a group across Africa, securing their welfare is not simply a matter of formal rights to be observed and protected but of wellbeing that is essential to the future and development of countries in the continent.

2.1 Child protection issues relevant to African countries:

Data on child protection is not easily available for all countries and where it is available, it varies in detail, consistency and areas of reporting across countries.
In a study of child sexual abuse and exploitation across selected countries, with 100 percent reflecting excellent protection, African countries included in the study scored as shown in the table below[26]:

Examples of child protection levels across countries in Africa

■ % protection achieved

Country	%
Nigeria	47.3
Ethiopia	29.1
Egypt	32
DR Congo	26.4
Tanzania	56.5
South Africa	58.1
Kenya	53.8
Uganda	57.3
Algeria	31.9
Morocco	47.7
Angola	29.7
Mozambique	37.7
Ghana	35.9
Madagascar	43.6
Cameroon	28.9
Cote d'Ivoire	34.7
Niger	28.7
Burkina Faso	28.6
Rwanda	50.3

On the basis of available information, the following have been identified as child protection issues relevant to African continent generally[27]:

Abuse:

Abuse in states across the continent includes physical abuse as a form of discipline, sexual abuse or rape in domestic and armed conflict settings, abuse while children are in the process of migration and violence against children who are disabled or albino. From available data, WHO estimated that 95 million children experience abuse annually, with the highest rates reported in the WHO African regions[28].

Other practices that might be classified as abuse include breast ironing, witch hunting and honour killings. These are explained below.

Breast ironing or flattening uses stones or a hot iron to prevent development of a girl's body, in the hope of avoiding male attention and the risk of sexual assault and pregnancy.

Witch hunting and witch burning are a risk to children who are vulnerable due to disease, disability, being orphaned, being twins, were born prematurely or in what is considered an

unusual way (such as a breach birth), or children who are perceived as having a social stigma (such as being born out of wedlock or being the victim of rape). Albino children can also be vulnerable to witch hunting due to beliefs that their body parts can be used for magical purposes. A 2010 UNICEF report points to an increasing number of children in African countries being accused each year of witchcraft and the fact that a belief in witchcraft is part of everyday life[29].

Honour killings against children usually target girls, to alleviate perceived shame they have brought to the family in the context of romantic relationships. Although honour killings result in death, they are included here as abuse since they involve an extreme level of violence.

Child marriage and related practices:

Child marriage affects both boys and girls – but affects girls disproportionately.   UNICEF estimates just over forty percent of girls in Africa marry before they are eighteen years old[30] and that African countries account for seventy-five percent of countries with the highest rates of child marriage[31].

Related to child marriage is the overfeeding of girls to make them appear larger (and more mature, thereby increasing early marriage prospects) and virginity testing (to confirm purity and the reduced risk of HIV transmission). Female genital mutilation is another practice that is sometimes linked to marriageability and the wish to preserve chastity and hygiene.

Economic and sexual exploitation:

Economic and sexual exploitation take the form of religious sexual slavery (where girls are sent to shrines to compensate for a family's sin for as long as a priest determines, sometimes for more than one generation of girls), bonded labour (to repay family debt), being forced to beg for adults, trafficking and recruitment into armed conflict.   The International Labour Organisation estimated in 2016 that about twenty percent of children in Africa are engaged in child labour, most of these children unpaid and most being young children. The child labour estimates for African regions were twice as high as for other regions and indicated that African countries had the highest regional percentage of children involved in hazardous work (nine percent)[32]. 2017 global estimates for modern slavery indicated that one million children had been victims of commercial sexual exploitation in 2016, with eight percent of these in Africa (the third highest regional percentage after the Asian Region and the European and Central Asian region). The majority of these children were girls[33].

Birth registration:
Related to child protection concerns is the issue of declining birth registrations. In many countries in Africa, registration is less than fifty present for children under five years of age. The causes of declining registrations include circumstances that make it difficult to produce required documents (for example, families fleeing due to emergencies) and distance from registration centres. The absence of birth registration affects children's access to protection services.

2.2 Causes of child protection issues and challenges for states on the African continent:

The causes of child protection issues in regions across the across the African continent are varied and include[34] cultural, traditional or religious beliefs; gender-based discrimination; beliefs about particular groups of children, such as those who ae disabled, albino, premature or specially gifted; poverty, or shame, or concerns about other risks leading to situations such as early marriage and customary laws which contradict national laws that might offer protection to children.

Despite states acknowledging the rights of children in international instruments, challenges in addressing child protection issues in African states have included inconsistent regulation and implementation of legal protection. This has been due to[35] the level of or knowledge of child protection skills, knowledge and resources of the police, judiciary, traditional leaders and traditional judges involved in cases with child protection issues; insufficient resources generally (outside of the legal environment) to enable consistent implementation of legal measures; lack of community awareness about child protection issues (including why some practices may be seen as harmful), an absence of "buy-in" (due to an absence of debate, information and literacy or education) when states adopt standards that might clash with cultural norms and the strength of traditional beliefs, sometimes supported by customary legal systems that contradict national protection for children.

III Child protection strategy

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with AHO's existing strategies that encompass aspects of child protection, such as girls and women empowerment, child marriage, children in emergencies and disasters, ending female genital mutilation, girls' education and adolescent and youth health. It is recommended that as far as possible, efforts be made to coordinate approaches within those strategies and to build on strategies already underway in related areas.

Measures to achieve child protection typically involve multiple sectors due to the varying causes and contexts of child protection issues. Research and input from policymakers in sub-Saharan Africa has recognised the importance of a multisectoral, holistic approach in addressing child protection issues[36]. This requires coordination between sectors and services that can impact on child welfare, such as social affairs, health, education and justice and religious groups.

There are already inter-governmental partnerships with NGOs to map existing child protection measures[37], so the focus of this Strategy's objectives is on avoiding duplication of efforts and identifying areas where resources can be used most efficiently. In meeting those objectives, it is understood that given the number of states and regions across the African continent, this Strategy will vary not only from country to country but potentially, within countries, depending on the individual characteristics of communities with which AHO and its partners are engaging.

The context of suggested stakeholders are AHO's existing programmes which include children, or partner programmes engaging with relevant stakeholders. Suggested stakeholders are shown in the diagram below:
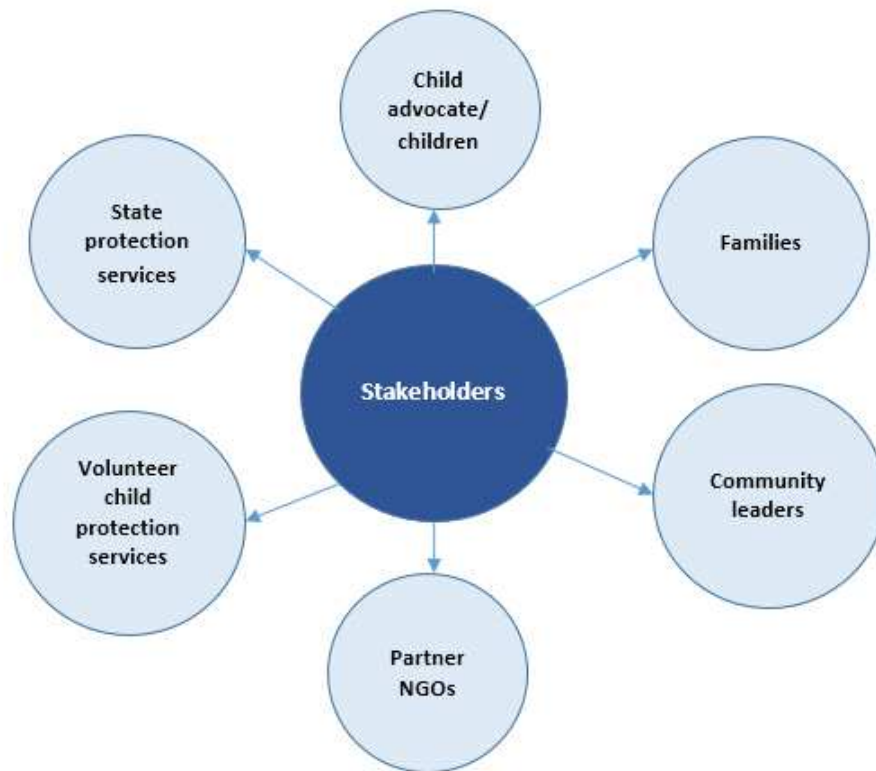
3.2 Strategy goals:

The key Strategy goals with related objectives and indicators are set out in the tables that follow.

Goal	Objective	Indicators	Method of delivery
1. Contribute to increasing awareness of child protection issues in communities.	Implement community awareness programmes focused on child wellbeing (in the context of child protection), with the aim of encouraging change from within local communities themselves.	i. Number of community awareness workshops (by country) targeting i) community (including religious) leaders, ii) parents and iii) children that consider the meaning of child wellbeing (in the context of child protection) and its positive impact on the community's future and development.	Workshop by partner or AHO member in the relevant community.
		ii. Percentage of community leaders who have received training on child protection issues (including the adverse effects of child abuse and exploitation).	Survey (based on workshops).
		iii. Percentage of community members who believe in maintaining existing traditions and cultural practices (disaggregated by type of cultural practice) that contradict child protective approaches, after taking part in a community awareness programme.	Workshop follow-up survey by partner or AHO member in the relevant community.

Goal	Objective	Indicators	Method of delivery
2. Contribute to efforts on effective data gathering through coordination and monitoring of existing data gathering efforts.	Build partnerships with NGOs and inter-governmental agencies to support and enhance existing data collection efforts, as a basis for evidence to support desired changes.	i. Number of countries across the African continent in which partners have been identified.	AHO research and telephone/ virtual calls.
		ii. Number of partners with whom data documenting and sharing processes have been agreed.	AHO agreement and separate project plan.
		iii. Number of child protection areas for data collection that have been agreed with partners.	AHO agreement and separate project plan.
		iv. Percentage of partners providing data in a consistent format.	AHO review analysis.

Goal	Objective	Indicators	Method of delivery
3. Strengthen the capacity of the community to provide support to children and families as part of child protection.	Determine the resources and ability of communities to respond to child protection issues.	i. Number of countries that have a budget for child protection partnerships with non-governmental organisations.	Research and telephone interviews with relevant country offices/ departments.
		ii. Number of states with formal requirements for child protection professionals engaging in social work.	Research and telephone interviews with relevant country offices/ departments.
		iii. Number of state response services (disaggregated by service type) per district to respond to child protection concerns.	Surveys (shared with or conducted by AHO in the context of current programmes such as gender or children in emergency initiatives).
		iv. Ratio of public sector staff (by country) responsible for child protection per capita of the child population.	Surveys (shared with or conducted by AHO in the context of current programmes such as gender or children in emergency initiatives).

3.3 Potential partners:

Potential partnerships for achieving this Strategy's goals are:
- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (Kenya)
- Network of African National Human Rights Institutions - as a member or observer (Kenya)
- African Child Policy Forum (Ethiopia)
- African Religious Health Assets Programme (South Africa)
- The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (New York)
- Better Care Network - Global Movement for Children (New York)

IV Funding

Although this Strategy involves partnerships and collaboration through other existing, overlapping strategies at AHO, the following areas will require funding:
- workshops (materials, space, facilitator)
- research
- surveys
- coordination and collaboration efforts with identified partners

V Monitoring, evaluation and review

Given the early stages of proposed collaboration and information gathering, a progress report and review of this Strategy is recommended at the end of 2021, to determine adjustments and to perform a gap analysis on the basis of information received. Additionally, since countries within the African continent vary and do not necessarily encounter identical challenges, there may be a wish to consider in more detail whether further country specific information is required (or required in a modified form for consistency) once basic information is more readily available to AHO.

VI Summary

The Strategy proposed aims to increase community awareness so that communities can change from within and improve the effectiveness of any child protection policies. Engagement with communities will include consultations and information oriented programs, potentially leading to collaborative efforts as AHO identifies programmes relevant to specific communities and reviews its Strategy in the light of updated information. This Strategy also seeks to improve data availability to assist with focused programmes, an understanding of community resources for child protection and to monitor outcomes. Since there are existing efforts on gathering child protection data and the immediate data issues are of consistency and availability, the Strategy proposal is that AHO should work within existing programs and with partners already engaging with communities and government bodies to further data availability efforts.

VII References

[1] *The New York Times* (October 21, 1964) - https://www.nytimes.com/1964/10/21/archives/children-melted-hoovers-shyness-his-correspondence-with-them-was.html.

[2] Helen Clark, Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Anshu Banerjee, Stefan Peterson, Sarah L Dalglish, Shanthi Ameratunga, Dina Balabanova, Maharaj Kishan Bhan, Zulfiqar A Bhutta, John Borrazzo, Mariam Claeson, Tanya Doherty, Fadi El-Jardali, Asha S George, Angela Gichaga, Lu Gram, David B Hipgrave, Aku Kwamie, Qingyue Meng, Raúl Mercer, Sunita Narain, Jesca Nsungwa-Sabiiti, Adesola O Olumide, David Osrin, Timothy Powell-Jackson, Kumanan Rasanathan, Imran Rasul, Papaarangi Reid, Jennifer Requejo, Sarah S Rohde, Nigel Rollins, Magali Romedenne, Harshpal Singh Sachdev, Rana Saleh, Yusra R Shawar, Jeremy Shiffman, Jonathon Simon, Peter D Sly, Karin Stenberg, Mark Tomlinson, Rajani R Ved, Anthony Costello - *A future for the world's children? A WHO–UNICEF–Lancet Commission (The Lancet Commission,* Vol 395 February 22, 2020, p 609.

[3] Alex Whiting of The Thomson Reuters Foundation for World Economic Forum: *The economic impact of child abuse* (2 June 2015) - https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/06/the-economic-impact-of-child-abuse.

[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect Rival Other Major Public Health Problems* - https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/EconomicCost.html.

[5] Quote by Former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, taken from his opening message to the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 2015 - https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2015-09-28/address-general-assembly.

[6] Osifunke Ekundayo notes in his analysis of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) that in a traditional African setting, the number of childhood years is not the only indicator of age. See Osifunke Ekundayo - *Does the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) only Underline and Repeat the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)'s Provisions?: Examining the Similarities and the Differences between the ACRWC and the CRC - International Journal of Humanities and Social Science (Vol. 5, No. 7(1); July 2015)* - http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_5_No_7_1_July_2015/17.pdf.

[7] Better Care Network - Violence Against Children and Care in Africa: A Discussion Paper (July 2017)

[8] Ibid. Data sourced from World Health Organisation - INSPIRE: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children (2016).

[9] World Health Organisation guidelines for the health sector response to child maltreatment - https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-guidelines-for-the-health-sector-response-to-child-maltreatment.

[10] United Nations Economic and Social Council Sustainable Development factsheet - https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/sustainable-development#:~:text=ECOSOC%20operates%20at%20the%20centre,%E2%80%94economic%2C%20social%20and%20environmental.

[11] The Preamble to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda.

[12] G Van Bueren - *The International Law on the Rights of the Child (International Studies in Human Rights,* 35*)*; Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, adopted Sept. 26, 1924, League of Nations O.J. Spec. Supp. 21, at 43 (1924) - http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/childrights.html.

[13] Declaration of the Rights of the Child, G.A. res. 1386 (XIV), 14 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 19, U.N. Doc. A/4354 (1959) - http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/k1drc.htm.

[14] Article 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and Article 10 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) recognise that children are entitled to protection.

[15] They include Convention 138 (1973),which sets out minimum working ages for different types of work (light to hazardous) in different types of states (developing versus developed) and Convention 182 (1999), which aims to protect children from the worst forms of child labour, including areas such as trafficking and slavery.

[16] ILO news 4 August 2020 - https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_749858/lang--en/index.htm.

[17] Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement

of children in armed conflict - https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/opaccrc.aspx.

[18] Other key provisions include non-discrimination (Article 2), the right of the child to life - encompassing survival and development (Article 6), the right to be heard (Article 12) and the right to the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24).

[19] It has not been ratified by Morocco, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Somalia, South Sudan and Tunisia (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Children Charter factsheet and recent news updates December 2020 - https://www.acerwc.africa).

[20] Ekundayo, *Examining the Similarities and the Differences between the ACRWC and the CRC - International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (Vol. 5, No. 7(1)), page 5.

[21] Committee on the Rights of the Child *(2003) General Comment No. 4 on Adolescent Health and Development in the Context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC/GC/2003/4).

[22] For an analysis of the ACRWC, see Ekundayo, *Examining the Similarities and the Differences between the ACRWC and the CRC - International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (Vol. 5, No. 7(1)).

[23] UNICEF data - Children in Africa: Key statistics on child survival and population (January 2019), https://data.unicef.org/resources/children-in-africa-child-survival-brochure.

[24] SOS Children's Villages – USA's fact sheet on the effect of hunger, disease and wars on children in Africa - https://www.sos-usa.org/about-us/where-we-work/africa/children-in-africa.

[25] Source: Statista July 2020 (based on multiple sources) - https://www.statista.com/statistics/265759/world-population-by-age-and-region

[26] Data source – world data statistics from the Economist Intelligence Unit – *Out of the Shadows* (2019). Not all countries had available data and the following African states were excluded - Sudan, Mali, Malawi, Zambia, Senegal, Chad, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Guinea, Benin, Burundi, Tunisia, South Sudan, Togo, Sierra Leone, Libya, Congo, Liberia, Central African Republic, Mauritania, Eritrea, Namibia. Child protection indicators considered the political environment, migrant population, public safety, poverty levels, social support, education, drug use, legal protection for children regarding sexual abuse and exploitation, data collection and reporting, government commitment as reflected in legal commitments, policies and resources and the engagement of industry, civil society and the media.

[27] Sources: UNICEF - Child Protection factsheet for West and Central Africa December 2020, https://www.unicef.org/wca/what-we-do/child-protection; UNICEF *Handbook for Parliamentarians* (2004); Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children and Plan International – *Protecting children from harmful practices in plural legal systems with a special emphasis on Africa* (2012); Paul O. Bello and Adewale A. Olutola - *The Conundrum of Human Trafficking in Africa* (2020), https://www.intechopen.com/online-first/the-conundrum-of-human-trafficking-in-africa; Eben Badoe - *A critical review of child abuse and its management in Africa* (*African Journal of Emergency Medicine 7,* 2017).

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[36] *Strengthening Child Protection Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: A working paper* (2012) by the Training Resources Group and Play Therapy Africa.

[37] Ibid.