



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

**STATE DEPARTMENT FOR LABOUR**

**COMMEMORATION OF THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

**SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, MR. SIMON  
CHELUGUI, DURING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE  
DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD ON 16TH JUNE 2020 IN  
NAIROBI**

**16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020**

**Governments Officials Present,  
Representatives of Development Partners,  
Parents,  
Children,  
Distinguished guests,  
Members of the Fourth Estate**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Good morning,**

It is with great appreciation that I join you all today to celebrate this year's "**Day of the African Child**". This day is a culmination of events that were launched on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020. We would have all loved to celebrate this day differently, however because of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, we are all required to observe the prevention protocols especially social distancing, hence the numbers you can see here today.

The Day of the African Child is celebrated on 16th June every year to commemorate the killing of hundreds of black children in South Africa in 1976 who held a peaceful march to protest against the poor-quality of education they were receiving and also demanded the right to be taught in their own language. Today this day presents us with an opportunity to take stock of the gains and

the gaps in the realization of the rights and welfare of our children.

This year's theme is "**Access to a Child -Friendly Justice System in Africa**". This theme emphasizes the need for children to be treated with dignity and their matters handled timely and fairly within the justice system. This year's celebrations also signifies the important milestone of thirty years of "**The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**".

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

The results of the 2019 Kenya Housing and Population Census has revealed that the population of children and young persons 0-18 years was **22,855, 913** accounting for **48.1** percent of our population. This is a very large population which therefore calls for a special attention in national planning.

Children hold our present and future because they are mirror image of the society. As a country, we have embraced a value system that cherish a holistic Child right based approach. This is demonstrated by the number of international and regional human rights legal instruments that we have ratified and domensticated with provisions that relates to Children.

These includes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) among others. Beside the International and regional legal instruments, we have also progressively passed legislation that gives protection to our Children such as; The Children Act 2002, Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, The Sexual Offences Act and The Borstal

Institutions Act .These laws and policies which address the rights of children has earned our country recognition as one of the most progressive and child-friendly countries in the world.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

In line with this year's theme, let me briefly mention the actors in the children justice system in Kenya. These include; the Kenya Police; the Department for Children's Services; Courts; Probation officers; Prisons; Office of Public Prosecutions; the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) which coordinates and provides oversight in the children sector and ;the National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ)

Cognizant of the significance of collaboration, the responsibility of dispensing the rights and welfare of children is undertaken by diverse stakeholders under the leadership of the Government mandated Agencies. These stakeholders include; the local communities; Civil Society Organizations; Religious Institutions and; the Private Sector. I convey My sincere appreciation to all actors and partners for their great support

### **Distinguished Guests,**

Over the years, our country has witnessed growth in facilities catering for the welfare of children. Some are managed by my Ministry while others are managed by other Agencies. Under My Ministry, we have a Child Protection Units, **5** Child Rescue Centres, **14** Children Remand Homes, **9** Children Rehabilitation

Schools and **2** Reception/classification Centres for Children. Currently after releasing most Children due to the outbreak of Covid-19, we still have **992 Children** within the institutions managed by My Ministry.

Other institutions include Probations Hostels, Borstal Institutions and Charitable Children's Institutions which are managed by our partners.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Our government is concerned with the welfare of our Children. Some of the initiatives that the government has implemented to spearhead children rights include; establishment of the Social Protection/ Safety Net Cash Transfer Programs, Scholarships for Public Boarding Schools, Street Families Rehabilitation Trust Fund, CDF Education Bursary and National Government Affirmative Fund (NGAF) Education Bursary.

Similarly, to advance the Principle of Child Participation, the government supports The Kenya Children Assembly (KCA) which has chapters in all the 47 counties. This structure affords children their own platform to influence decisions affecting their destiny under their own leadership.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Government commends actors in the Child Justice System for devising innovative, child friendly and safe mechanisms of processing children who are either in conflict with the law or are in need of care and protection as we battle to contain the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Under the leadership of the National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) and the Department for Children's Services (DCS), My Ministry has coordinated partners' concerted efforts to come up with Child friendly key messages on Covid-19 Pandemic which was done to ensure that children understand issues around Covid-19.

Similarly, My Ministry coordinated collection and analysis of first level and second level data on children living in institutions and developed strategies to address the challenges facing them. We Coordinated development of strategies to re-integrate institutionalized children with their families and guardians and linked them to various social protection programs both Governmental and Non-Governmental. My Ministry also Coordinated online training for all Child protection practitioners in the context of Covid-19 particularly on how to respond and handle Child protection issues during this pandemic.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We appreciate the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in the sector aimed at bolstering Government efforts in child justice. These efforts include; support towards **the 24-hour toll free helpline 116** for reporting child rights violations, funding towards construction and furnishing of Child Protection Units (CPUs) in Police stations, free legal services to children, rescue

and rehabilitation services as well as the much needed psychosocial support services.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have made great strides in ensuring that our children access child-friendly justice, nevertheless, we are still faced with challenges that frustrate our efforts towards the envisioned justice system. I therefore, call upon all of us to renew our efforts and rededicate ourselves to serve children in the justice system better.

Towards this, let us expedite the finalization of the Children Bill 2020 and implement the call to Action by the National Council on the Administration of Justice as detailed in their report “**The Status of Child Justice in Kenya**”.

I wish to reaffirm the Government’s commitment to using a multi-sectoral approach in collaborating with stakeholders to safeguard the rights and welfare of children.

As part of the Government’s initiatives to improve the “Access of Children to Child Friendly Justice in our Country.” We shall:

Endeavour to boost investments in the children sector through adequate allocation of resources ; fast tract the finalisation of the Children Bill 2020 ; continue collaboration with all stakeholders and strengthen partnership in the Children Sector ; undertake the implementation of National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) report ; continue to promote the global shift from institutional care for children to strengthening families and communities to take care of their children and ; last but not the

least, launch the Survey report of the National Violence Against Children.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The late Nelson Mandela once said that, “**History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children**”. I want to Challenge all of us to collectively purpose to make a positive influence in the lives of our Children.

Taking care of children is a noble calling as depicted in Mathew 19 verse 14, where Jesus told his disciples ‘**Let the Children come to me ,and do not hinder them**’ For all those who are closely working in the children sector across the country in whichever capacities, Please continue doing the good work

It is now my honour and duty to declare these celebrations officially opened.