



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

**STATE DEPARTMENT FOR LABOUR**

**THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

**SPEECH BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY DURING THE  
LAUNCH OF THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD  
CELEBRATIONS ON 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020 IN NAIROBI**

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

# **SPEECH BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD CELEBRATIONS ON 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020 IN NAIROBI**

**Our Children,**

**Fellow Kenyans,**

I am delighted to join you today as we launch the celebrations of the Day of the African Child this year. The Day has its roots in the anti-colonial struggle against oppression and injustice in South Africa, particularly the struggle for quality education by children during the Apartheid period in Soweto. It has evolved to embrace and focus on the diverse child rights violations and their underlying causes all over Africa.

This Day gives us an opportunity to take stock of what we have done for our children and reflect on what more needs to be done to ensure that they fully enjoy their rights.

The Day of the African Child was first celebrated in Kenya in June 1991 and has since become an annual event celebrated not only nationally, but in all the Counties and Sub-Counties in the country.

This year's celebrations will vary slightly from the ones we have held previously because of the Corvid-19 pandemic that has forced us to adopt new ways of doing things as guided by His Excellency the President and the Ministry of Health Protocols on Covid-19.

This year the Day is being commemorated under the theme: **“Access to a Child-Friendly Justice System in Africa.”** This

theme underscores the importance of a justice system that guarantees children dignified, expeditious and fair processes of justice.

As a country we take cognizance of the fact that access to justice is a fundamental right and a foundation for the promotion of all other human rights. As such, the Government has put in place measures to ensure that the justice system is as much as possible, accessible and friendly to children.

Kenya has been forefront in the domestication of international and regional instruments with their provisions given to effect in Article 2 of our Constitution. Kenya is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) among other international and regional legal instruments on the rights and welfare of the child. Similarly, the Children Act 2001, entrusts various bodies and actors with the responsibility of securing the said rights and provision of welfare and correctional services. The Act also outlines in detail how children in need of care and protection and those who are in contact with the law should be handled and sets timelines for which this should be done.

It is also worth to note that the Government is in the process of developing a new statute for children that is not only fully aligned with the provisions of the Constitution, but also addresses emerging issues in the children's sector.

There are other laws, regulations, policies and guidelines that are also in place to buttress the provisions of the Constitution and the Children Act in regard to child justice. They include the Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Sexual Offences Act 2006, the Probation of Offenders Act, the Borstal Institutions Act, the Mental

Health Act, the Victim Protection Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Counter Trafficking in Persons Act, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, the National Children Policy, the National Plan of Action for Children in Kenya and the Guidelines for Alternative Care among others.

The responsibility of dispensing children justice in Kenya is undertaken by various institutions that work interdependently. They include: the Kenya Police Service, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Judiciary, Prisons Service, Probation and Aftercare services and the Department of Children's Services. To ensure proper coordination of service delivery including Child Justice to the children of Kenya, the Government in 2002 established the National Council of Children's Services (NCCS). The National Council on the Administration of Justice (NCAJ) was established in 2011 to ensure coordination in the administration of justice and to oversee reforms of the justice system.

We acknowledge the work of every institution in the Children Justice System and especially during this time when we are battling Covid-19. We appreciate the innovative ideas that these institutions have adopted to ensure that they remain operational.

Children justice like other spheres of child welfare requires collaborative effort and we recognize all the Non-Governmental Agencies that have stepped in to boost the efforts of the Government. We appreciate organizations that continue to support and popularize the toll free child help line 116 that provides children with a safe avenue for reporting child rights violations, legal practitioners who provide pro bono legal services to children in the justice system, organizations that provide rescue and

rehabilitation services as well as those that offer psychosocial support.

We realize that there are still many challenges that impede the full realisation of children justice. The commemoration of this Day, therefore, gives us yet another opportunity to consolidate effort towards overcoming these challenges.

In conclusion, allow me to take this opportunity to thank all those working for children and urge them to continue in their commitment and resolve towards ensuring that the children of this Nation enjoy their rights to the fullest even in these unprecedented times of Covid-19 Pandemic.

I now declare the 2020 celebrations of the Day of the African Child officially launched.