




LUANDA DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES OF YOUNG AFRICAN WOMEN AND CHILDREN

February 2026

We, the representatives of the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (CCJA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), meeting in Luanda, Republic of Angola, on 2 and 3 February 2026, at the Constitutional Forum on the Rights and Guarantees of Young African Women and Children, with the support of His Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and Current President of the African Union,

Recognizing that the dignity of the human person constitutes the inalienable foundation of all rights, and that young African women and children are bearers of this dignity from birth;
Recalling the commitments undertaken under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Union Agenda 2063, the African Union Convention on Ending Violence against Women and Girls, and other international legal instruments relating to the protection of women and children;

Recognizing the need to promote an in depth, evidence based analysis of the legal challenges faced by young women and children in Africa;
Further recognizing the importance of the exchange of judicial and constitutional experiences among African countries, as well as the identification of good practices and effective mechanisms of constitutional protection;

Taking into account the reflections and discussions held around the four pillars that structured the Constitutional Forum on the Rights and Guarantees of Young African Women and Children, namely:

a) Comparative Constitutional Approaches and Judicial Experiences on Fundamental Rights;
b) Ratification and Implementation of African Union Instruments;
c) Strategies, Public Policies and Case Studies;
d) Voices of Youth and Civil Society.

Considering that:

National Constitutions are supreme instruments for the protection of fundamental rights and for the exercise of constitutional justice;

Africa is home to the youngest population in the world, and that investing in young women and children is an investment in the future and in the consolidation of the sovereignty of the continent;

Violations of the rights of young women and children — including early marriages, female genital mutilation, gender based violence, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, educational exclusion, lack of access to basic healthcare, and inequalities in access to justice and employment — remain persistent problems.

WE SOLEMNLY DECLARE THAT:

a) The rights of young women and children are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, and must be guaranteed without discrimination of any kind, with particular attention to safeguarding the best interests of the child;
b) Young women and children have the right to be heard in all matters that concern them, and their views shall be taken into consideration in accordance with their age and maturity.

The Signatories commit themselves to:

Strengthen constitutional guarantees, ensuring that national Constitutions explicitly enshrine the rights of young women and children, supported by effective and justiciable protection mechanisms;

Eliminate discriminatory norms by repealing or reforming laws, customs and practices that perpetuate discrimination based on gender and age;

Harmonize domestic legislation with regional and international human rights instruments, in particular the Maputo Protocol and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;

Promote the adoption of legislative, judicial, administrative and other appropriate measures to eliminate child marriage, female genital mutilation and all forms of violence against young women and children, including violence and abuse perpetrated in the digital environment;

Promote enhanced protection for young women and children in situations of armed conflict, forced displacement and humanitarian emergencies;

Promote universal and free access to quality education and healthcare, by eliminating economic, social and cultural barriers;

Develop social protection programmes to combat child poverty and support vulnerable families, ensuring that no child is deprived of his or her rights for economic reasons;

Promote female youth entrepreneurship and the removal of barriers to the economic participation of young women;

Promote the integration of human rights education, gender equality and democratic participation into school curricula;

Promote equitable access to information and communication technologies, reducing gender based digital exclusion and ensuring full participation in the digital economy and in the information society;

Promote the establishment and strengthening of national gender observatories with the capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate disaggregated data on the situation of young women and children;

Strengthen cooperation among African Constitutional Jurisdictions for the sharing of good practices and the harmonization of jurisprudence;

Develop jurisprudence that ensures appropriate consideration of the specificities and vulnerabilities of young women and children;

Promote continuous training of Magistrates on human rights, with particular emphasis on regional instruments, gender equality and the rights of the child;

Urge States to assume primary responsibility for the implementation of this Declaration by adopting legislative, administrative, budgetary and other appropriate measures;

Call upon Traditional Communities and Religious Denominations to act as agents of change, promoting the abandonment of practices that undermine the integrity of young women and children and fostering equality;

Call upon national Parliaments to review domestic legislation in order to ensure its alignment with the highest standards of protection established by regional and universal instruments;

Encourage young African women and children to vigorously claim their rights and guarantees, assuming themselves as true protagonists of change.

WE FURTHER DECLARE THAT:

The “Forum on the Rights and Guarantees of Young African Women and Children” shall be institutionalized on a biennial basis, with a view to deepening discussion on these and other issues relating to young women and children.

The organization of the Forum shall be entrusted to the subscribing entities, namely the Conference of Constitutional Jurisdictions of Africa (CCJA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which are hereby constituted for this purpose under the present instrument.

This Declaration is drawn up in three languages — Portuguese, French and English — all texts being equally authentic.

Adopted in Luanda, Republic of Angola, on 3 February 2026.