

**Joint statement by the Consortium for Street Children<sup>1</sup> to the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child on the commemoration of the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of the Day of the African Child on 16 June 2011 under the theme: ‘All together for urgent actions in favour of street children’.**

The Consortium for Street Children (CSC) is the leading international network dedicated to the rights of street children<sup>2</sup> worldwide. Through our network of 60 organisations operating in over 130 countries worldwide, we are Louder Together. CSC welcomes and supports the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child’s (ACERWC) decision to dedicate the 2011 Day of the African Child to street children.

Background:

For almost two decades the issue of street children has been confined to the margins of international policy debates, and subsumed into broader categories of concern. Street children are some of the most resourceful children, yet their rights are continually violated and denied often at the hands of those that are mandated to protect them. However, recently there has been recognition that street children need to be distinguished, but not isolated, from other children in policy debates and strategies if we are to ensure that their rights are realised.

Two most recent events highlight this shift in consciousness:

- The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) dedicated a day to specifically discuss street children in March 2011 and unanimously adopted the accompanying resolution on street children’s rights - the first since 1994 (A/HRC/RES/16/12);
- On 12<sup>th</sup> April the International Day for Street Children was launched, and celebrated in over 33 locations worldwide by street children, policy makers (including the UN), NGOs, corporates, schools and celebrities.

Looking ahead:

It is vital that urgent action is taken to build on recent successes so that street children are not confined to the margins of relevant policy discussions again. CSC commends the ACERWC for dedicating the 21<sup>st</sup> commemoration of the Day of the African Child to street children. In doing so the ACERWC has recognised the urgent need for multi-stakeholder engagement and the responsibility of African governments to uphold the rights of street children. CSC therefore:

- *Commends* the ACERWC for committing to make an overall assessment report following the commemoration, and *encourages* the ACERWC to make this report publicly available as soon as possible;
- *Calls on* all State Parties to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) to actively support the 21<sup>st</sup> commemoration of the Day of the African Child. State Parties must implement the objectives and recommendations set out in the concept paper,

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<sup>1</sup> The Consortium for Street Children is a Company Limited by Guarantee and Registered in England Company No: 3040697 Registered charity: 1046579. [www.streetchildren.org.uk](http://www.streetchildren.org.uk).

<sup>2</sup> CSC defines street children as children at risk of going onto the streets, children who work on the street, and children who live and work on the streets.

in particular by forwarding a report to the ACERWC on the commemoration activities, which includes information about the actual situation of street children in their country;

- *Recommends* that the ACERWC take into account recent research on street children commissioned by CSC<sup>3</sup> when putting together the overall assessment report. CSC furthermore *invites* the ACERWC's comments and insights into the research's findings and recommendations at this pre-publication stage. A copy of the research is attached;
- *Urges* the ACERWC to take into consideration the lack of data and research around street children, including the lack of data collection guidelines as set out in the recent UNHRC Resolution. It is vital that investment is secured towards building a foundation of expertise and high-quality evidence-based knowledge of street children;
- *Urges* State Parties to act on the recommendations and findings in the ACERWC overall assessment report, and *urges* the ACERWC to commit to revisit the issue of street children in 3-5 years to assess overall progress made;
- *Urges* the ACERWC to encourage State Parties to work in partnership with NGOs supporting street children through the exchange of good practices, lessons learned and challenges encountered, and ensure that these NGOs form an integral part of State Parties' child protection mandates. Furthermore, State Parties should avoid prescriptive donor-led conditions which do not take into account the specific challenges of working with street children, including respecting each child's right to be on the street;
- *Requests* the ACERWC to support the official recognition of the International Day for Street Children, and use its mandate to urge State Parties to do the same;
- *Encourages* the ACERWC to consider street children as a specific area of concern when receiving State Party reports and in the subsequent issuing of general recommendations to State Parties. Furthermore, the ACERWC should ensure that State Parties implement the recommendations set out in the recent UNHRC Resolution on street children;
- *Request* the ACERWC to issue a General Comment on street children in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to support State Parties to determine strategic guidelines and innovative strategies for street children;
- Finally, the ACERWC must demand from State Parties both accountability and an end to impunity of those which are found to violate the rights of street children. The ACERWC must ensure State Parties take responsibility for the children under their care and protection.

*This statement is supported by CSC's network, including the 35 organisations working specifically on the ground in Africa:*

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<sup>3</sup> The as yet unpublished research entitled 'Street Children: A Mapping and Gapping Review of the Literature 2000-2010' aims to improve understanding of street children by identifying recent advances in an academic scholarship which began in the 1970s; and to identify priority areas for academic research on street children, in order to build a stronger strategic base for the development of advocacy, policy and programme design initiatives. This study was commissioned with the support from Aviva plc.

Action for Brazil's Children (ABC) Trust	Keeping Children Safe Coalition
Action for Children in Conflict	Latin American Foundation for the Future (LAFF)
Action International Ministries	Mkombozi Centre for Street Children
Africa Foundation Stone	Moroccan Children's Trust
Amazing Children Uganda	Msizi Africa
Amnesty International (Children's Human Rights Network)	Plan International UK
Amos Trust	Railway Children
Calcutta Hope	Retrak
Caretakers of the Environment Tanzania	Sathi Bangalore
Cheka Sana Children's Trust	Save the Children UK
Child Welfare Scheme	Sharpe's Children Foundation
Children in Crisis	SKCV Children's Trust
Children in Hunger	SOS Children's Villages (UK)
Childs i Foundation	SOWED Kenya
Child-to-child trust	Stepping Stones Nigeria
Congo Children Trust	Street Action
Depaul Foundation	Street Child Africa
Doctors to Children	Street Child of Sierra Leone
Edith Wilkins Street Children Foundation	Street Kids Direct
Focus Ireland	Street Kids International
Frishta Children's Village	StreetInvest
Fundacion Ministerios Asociados Mi Arca	Students Supporting Street Kids
Glads House	Task Brasil Trust
Hope for Children	The Esther Benjamins Trust
Hope Foundation	The Mandala Trust
ICT- UK	Toybox
International Children's Trust	Trust in Children
International HIV/AIDS Alliance	ViaNiños UK
IUT de Mulhouse	Walou
Jubilee Action	Widows & Orphans International