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ALTERNATIVE REPORT TO THE THIRD PERIODIC REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD.

Prepared and Submitted by the Rwanda Child Rights Coalition "Umwana ku Isonga"

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INTRODUCTION

The Rwanda Civil Society Child Rights Coalition “Umwana ku Isonga (CUI) herein referred to as “the Coalition *Umwana ku Isonga*” is a Non-Governmental Organization created in November 2010. It is registered under n° 219/RGB/NGO/LP/04/2018. CUI has been created with the purposes of networking and alliance building with a mandate to assess and report on the implementation of the United Nations Child Rights Convention (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) on one hand, and to coordinate all activities carried out by individual member organizations within the parameters of advocacy, implementing and reporting on mentioned treaty bodies on the other hand.

The Coalition *Umwana Ku Isonga* also aims at undertaking advocacy around the implementation of the aforementioned child rights instruments in order to improve the situation of the rights of a child in Rwanda. The Coalition *Umwana ku Isonga* is composed of 23 national organizations operating in the area of child rights.

This Alternative Report on the Third¹ Periodic Report of Rwanda on ACRWC constitutes the contributions of the member organisations of the Coalition Umwana Ku Isonga towards the improvement of the child rights situation in Rwanda. The report provides potential grounds for legal reforms, policy changes and other measures aimed at improving the situation of children’s rights in Rwanda. The report covers also the existing challenges in child protection that are based on consequences of global challenges including Covid-19, climate change, increase of prices at the market aligned to the Ukrainian and Russian War.

The preparation of this report followed a participatory approach through wide stakeholders’ consultation especially the member organisations of the Coalition Umwana Ku Isonga. The drafting of the report was based on analysis of data collected from studies, national reports and other documents such as laws, policies and strategic plans. This report benefited from stakeholders’ consultations, with special attention given to the findings from a quick and abridged assessment on the implementation of the Concluding Observations and Recommendations given to the Government of Rwanda in September 2019 by the ACERWC. The report further benefited from the children views collected through child-led consultations. They provided their inputs in consultative meeting held on 22 February 2020 in Kigali/Rwanda. These children were organized by the Coalition member organizations and represent different categories of children namely children living in rural and urban areas, children with disabilities and children of different ages. This report was validated by 19 member organizations of the Coalition Umwana Ku Isonga after fruitful deliberations and final inputs from members on March 20th, 2020 in Kigali

This report is divided into five major parts in respect of the five thematic clusters of child rights, in line with the ACERWC’s Guidelines on the form and content of periodic state party reports to be submitted pursuant to the Article 43 (1) (b) of the ACRWC. Under each of the clusters, the report takes notes of progress made by the Government of Rwanda in the implementation of the last concluding observations and of the Charter at large, and then raises concerns and lastly, where applicable, recommends the Committee the next step to take when engaging with the Government of Rwanda.

¹ We consider the State Report as Third Periodic Report following the considerations of the ACRWC of the last report as the Second Periodic Report of Rwanda.

A. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Paragraph 4: The Committee notes that the previous concluding observations of the Committee were made available on the website of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion. While appreciating that, the Committee recommends that the current recommendations are translated and widely disseminated among various Government organs and other stakeholders.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ Though the concluding observations have been made available on the website of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion ([see link here](#)), little has been done to their translation and wide dissemination to the ordinary citizens, local government officials, judges, law enforcement officials and others at the community level

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government should take necessary measures to ensure that the user-friendly concluding recommendations are available to the large population and other relevant officials (Gender and Family Promotion Officers and NCDA staff at different levels).
- ✓ We call upon the GoR to always translate ACRWC concluding recommendations into the local language, distribute them and integrate into Districts performance contracts (Imihigo).

Paragraph 5: The Committee notes with great satisfaction that the State Party has employed commendable effort to implement the recommendations of the Committee on fast-tracking the law reform process including the revision of the Constitution in 2015; the adoption of Law N°71/2018 of 3 August 2018 relating to the Protection of the Child which repeals Law N°54/2011 related to the Rights and Protection of the Child; inheritance; and the adoption of Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family which facilitates the submission of cases to courts by children over 16 and representation of children by CSOs in court cases. The Committee, while commending the law reform processes, encourages that efforts are also employed for the implementation of the revised and new laws.

Actions taken

- ✓ We commend the adoption of the Ministerial Order No 001/19.20 of 17/03/2020 relating to Labor Inspection as well as the adoption of the law N° 012/2020 of 28/08/2020 repealing Law No 22/2011 of 28/06/2011 establishing the national commission for Children and determining its mission, organization and functioning.
- ✓ We note with great satisfaction the adoption of the Law No 001/2020 of 02/02/2020 amending law no 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family.
- ✓ We commend the adoption of the Ministerial Order No 001/MIGEPROF/2023 of 12/01/2023 relating to the child well-being

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned by the low level of awareness in the community about the new and revised laws and policies related to child rights.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government should put much efforts in the mobilization of the general public including law enforcers, local leaders about the laws and policies related to child rights.

Paragraph 6: In terms of institutional framework, the Committee notes with appreciation the increased financial and human resources availed for the National Commission for Children (NCC), the establishment of the National Early Childhood Development Program (NECDP) in 2017, and the introduction of the Gender and Family Cluster which has components of child protection and early childhood development. While recognizing the role such frameworks could play in supporting the mandate of NCC in protecting and promoting children's rights; the Committee encourages the State Party to be cautious of avoiding the risk of duplication of mandates and overlapping activities.

Actions taken

- ✓ We applaud the government for recognizing children's rights and taking measures to protect them.
- ✓ We appreciate the government's efforts in bringing NCC and NECDP together to form National Child Development Agency (NCDA).

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned that the NCDA lacks sufficient financial and human resources to carry out its reformed mandate. For instance, there is no sufficient staff of NCDA at Local level (District, Sectors,...)

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government ensures there is increased financial and human resources availed for NCDA to effectively carry out the institutional mandate and timely monitor the implementation of the legal, policy and programmatic frameworks.

Paragraph 7: Though the Committee appreciates the increase in budget for the child rights sector in the State Party, it notes with concern that there is still a need for greater investment by the State Party particularly to address issues of health, education and other basic services. The Committee particularly notes that the investment on social programs declined in comparison to the total budget increment of the country. Hence, the Committee recommends that the State Party employs its greatest effort to continue increasing its budget for child rights and welfare issues which now stands at 7.3% of the GDP.

Actions taken

- ✓ We appreciate that the government established the inclusive education system, and improved disability friendly infrastructures.
- ✓ We commend the Government for increasing the national budget allocations to the sectors of education, health and others.²
- ✓ We note with satisfaction the established universal health coverage 'Mutuelle de Sante' that facilitates children from the poorest quintile to access basic health services without facing financial hardship.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ Lack of strong specialized education system accessible for all children with disabilities
- ✓ We are concerned that there is no specific budget line allocated to children with disabilities' education, health, and other basics services.
- ✓ We are also concerned that special health services and medicine cannot be accessed with *Mutuelle de Sante*³.

² <https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/media/2851/file/Education-Budget-Brief-2020-2021.pdf>

³ <https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Social-Protection-and-Disability-in-Rwanda-Report-.pdf> P10

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the Government should take necessary measures to build more specialized schools and ease access to education for children with disabilities.
- ✓ We call on the Government to allocate enough budget for education, health and other basics services for children with disabilities.
- ✓ We recommend the Government to ease access to the special health services and special medications for children ensured with *Mituelle de Sante*

Paragraph 10: The Committee, while appreciating all the measures undertaken by the State Party for enhanced protection of children's rights, notes with concern the regression recorded in the State Party's ranking on the child friendliness index of African Countries for 2017, which stands at 20; while its ranking for 2013 stood at 6. This is an indication that the State Party has not progressed in terms of protection and provision of children's rights. Therefore, the Committee strongly recommends that the State Party exerts additional effort to improve its budgeting and child protection mechanisms to ensure that it improves in its child friendliness and keep up its previous records

Actions taken

- ✓ We commend the Government for the adoption of Ministerial Order No 001/MIGEPROF/2023 of 12/01/2023 relating to the child well-being.
- ✓ We commend the establishment of the National Child Development Agency (NCDA) which has a mandate to ensure the implementation of child protection mechanisms.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ The budget allocated to child protection is little and not specified among other national line budgets, it is always combined with social protection.

Proposed recommendations by CUI

- ✓ We call on the government to increase and allocate specific budget to child protection.

Paragraph 11: As the Committee alluded during the consideration of the State Party Report, it is concerned about the limited space available for CSOs in the protection of children's rights; hence recommends that the State Party creates a conducive environment for the participation of CSOs in the protection and promotion of children's rights as well as implementation of the Charter and the recommendations of the Committee.

Actions taken

- ✓ We commend the Government for the initiation of the law regulating CSOs, especially the provisions on the right of assembly and the right of expression among CSOs.
- ✓ We appreciate the establishment of the national mechanism against torture and other ill treatment, a joint mechanism composed by representatives from Government and CSOs.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned that the CSO policy and related laws are not yet adopted, despite the good will to enact them.

Proposed recommendations by CUI

We recommend the Government of Rwanda the adoption of CSO policy and related laws.

Paragraph 12: The Committee encourages the State Party to continue celebrating the Day of the African Child and ensure the meaningful participation of children in the celebrations, particularly by providing them with the opportunity to reflect their views on the theme selected by the African Union (AU).

Actions taken

- ✓ We appreciate the Government of Rwanda for the attention paid to the celebration of the Day of the African Child in Rwanda.
- ✓ We commend the Government's efforts to ensure the meaningful participation of children through children committees from village to the national level.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned by the limited number of children who participate in the celebration of the Day of African Child.

Proposed recommendations by CUI

- ✓ We recommend that the government enhances its efforts to ensure meaningful participation of all categories of children in the celebration of the Day of the African Child.

B. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

B.1. Non-Discrimination

Paragraph 14: In addressing issues of discrimination, the Committee notes from the State Party report that much effort has been employed to protect and cater for children with disabilities. While this is commendable, the Committee is still concerned about the urban-rural disparity that exists in terms of accessing basic services as well as the discrimination of marginalized and vulnerable children which the Committee raised on its previous recommendations. The Committee recommends that its budget allocation and various efforts are targeted towards increasing service coverage in rural and remote areas where service is not accessible. Moreover, efforts to eradicate discrimination against children should focus on all groups that are disadvantaged/discriminated by all kinds of groups including society and the private sector, in addition to children with disabilities. The Committee also encourages the State Party to educate and sensitize communities about non-discrimination of children with disabilities, and other vulnerable children.

Actions taken

- ✓ We appreciate the Government of Rwanda for the efforts undertaken against non-discrimination such as equipping public buildings with tools of accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- ✓ We commend the Government for the efforts undertaken by amending the national policy and legal framework with focus of enabling disability environment.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned that the budget reserved to the disability and vulnerability related issues are still limited.
- ✓ We are concerned that some buildings across country are not accessible to people with disabilities.

Proposed recommendations by CUI

- ✓ We recommend the Government of Rwanda to increase the budget reserved to the disability and vulnerability in national budgeting.
- ✓ We recommend the Government to control all the infrastructures (existing buildings) to make them accessible to people with disabilities.

B.2. Best Interest of the Child

Paragraph 15: The Committee commends that the State Party has taken note of the recommendation of the Committee to provide systematic mechanism for ensuring the best interests of the child by mainstreaming child rights issues in its action plans and by providing trainings for the judiciary and the law enforcement sector. The Committee further encourages the State Party to ensure that laws, policies, and guidelines provide for clear procedures on how to protect the best interests of the child in judicial, administrative and law-making procedures. The Committee also encourages the State Party to continue providing trainings and reach out more judges and law enforcement officers.

Actions taken

- ✓ We commend the Government for its collaborative efforts to strengthen the capacity of a number of officers in justice sector (judges, lawyers) on child rights.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned that the capacity building on child rights does not extend more judges and law enforcement officers across the country.
- ✓ We are concerned that children are not visited by their relatives after being sent to transit facilities, which may result in psychological problems.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government should continue providing trainings and reach out more judges and law enforcement officers.
- ✓ We recommend the Government to increase the number of psychologists in the rehabilitation and transit centers

B.3. Right to life, survival and development

Paragraph 16. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State Party has successfully reduced child mortality rate, has recorded a high rate of measles immunization, launched the 1000 days campaign on nutrition, and improved coverage of sanitation and skilled birth attendants. Moreover, the Committee, in its previous recommendations and list of issues sent to the State Party raised the issue of access to clean drinking water as a concern that needed to be addressed. The State Party Report highlights that Integrated Household Living Condition Survey (EICV4) for 2014/2015 showed significant increase in access to improved water both in urban and rural areas. However, the Committee notes with concern about the high rate of chronic malnutrition whereby one in three children under the age of five are malnourished. Despite the positive progress, child and maternal mortality as well as access to water, sanitation, and hygiene need to be further addressed. The Committee is also concerned that there is lack of positive attitude towards accessing health centers in cases of illness of children which has been attested by UNICEF statistics, for instance only 28% of children with diarrhea received oral re-hydration salts.

Actions taken:

- ✓ We applaud the government for its various initiatives aimed at preventing stunting in children by supplying them with food and milk, such as “Gikuriro kuri Bose” program and others.
- ✓ We commend the Government’s efforts to improve the coverage and quality of childcare, feeding and hygiene practices across the country, leading to the dropping in the percentage of stunted children under the age of 5 from 38 per cent to 33 per cent in 2020.

Gaps or Challenges:

- ✓ The 6th Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey shows that stunting – chronic malnutrition – rates are still highest in poorest households and those in rural areas.
- ✓ We are concerned that the prevalence of stunting generally increases from 16% among children less than age 6 months to a peak of 40% among children aged 24-35 months. This represents the impact of under-nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life.

- ✓ We are concerned by the increase of prices of basic needs including food, non food items, scholastic materials, water, electricity that are affecting the well being of children at home and at school.

Proposed recommendation by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend the government to increase efforts in the strategies to eradicate stunting among children under 3 years
- ✓ We recommend the government to act on regulation of prices of all basic needs including food, non food items, scholastic materials, water, electricity, etc to facilitate the well being of children at home and at school.

B.4. The views of the child

Paragraph 18: The Committee appreciates that the National Children’s Summit takes place every year, and the Children Forum Committees are established to provide an opportunity for all children including children with disabilities and refugee children to express their views. The Committee also commends that that these platforms are representative of wide range of children from all districts and the views of children expressed in such platforms are considered in decision making processes. The State Party shared cases where the views of children duly considered in decision making processes, such as in budget allocation for provision of safe water, electricity and education, which is commendable. The Committee recommends that the State Party provides more support to the children who participate in the Summit as well as the Children Forum Committees so as to empower them to have meaningful engagement.

Actions taken

- ✓ Capacity building of children’s forum committees on children’s rights at local level
- ✓ The government initiated the development of the guidelines on child participation

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ The insufficient budget allocated to the operationalization of children’s forum committees.
- ✓ The guidelines on child participation have not been completed and adopted.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government should invest more budget in child participation and make sure children are using provided participation space.

C. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

C.1. Right to name, nationality and birth registration

Paragraph 20. The Committee welcomes the adoption of Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family which addresses some of the concerns that the Committee has pointed out in its previous recommendations. Particularly, the law extends the period for birth registration from 15 days to 30 days, and it has removed the fine that was previously imposed on late birth registration as affirmed by the State Party during the constructive dialogue. The Committee further notes with appreciation that birth registration is being provided in health services and sensitization campaigns are undertaken to increase the rate of birth registration. Following the recommendations of the Committee, the State Party has provided procedures where one parent can register a child without barriers, which the Committee appreciates. However, the Committee notes that the rate of birth registration remains very low where birth notification stands at 58%, and birth registration at civil registry and certification are even lower. The Committee is also concerned that birth registration is not accessible in some areas; birth certification is not immediate as provided by law; and people have to travel long distances to obtain the birth certificate.

Actions taken

- ✓ We commend the improvement done through the amendment of the Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family which provides 30 days of birth registration to the children that are born out of the health facilities.
- ✓ We note with satisfaction the establishment of registration system for the children born at health facilities and the adoption of the law n° 001/2020 of 02/02/2020 amending law n° 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing persons and family.

Paragraph 21. The Committee would like emphasize the fact that birth certificate is an essential element of Article 6 of the African Children's Charter as it is required to prove registration of one's birth. As the Committee, in its General Comment No 2 on Article 6 of the African Children's Charter, clearly prescribes, States should ensure that a birth certificate is issued immediately after registration and the first copy should be provided for free. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the State Party work towards increasing access to birth registration for all children born in all areas of the country, including in remote and rural areas particularly by establishing mobile birth registration centers, among others. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State Party decentralizes birth certification services so that it is issued at the same time with birth registration. In addition, the Committee encourages the State Party to continue the ongoing extensive sensitization to achieve universal birth registration and certification of all children born in its territory.

Actions taken

- ✓ We commend the Government's efforts to raise awareness on the importance of birth registration and the endeavor to decentralize the registration process.
- ✓ We note with satisfaction that the birth certificates are easily issued to parents who request for them.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned that the birth certificate is still paid for and this constitutes a financial constraint to poor parents who cannot afford it.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government should ensure that a birth certificate is issued immediately after registration and the first copy should be provided for free.

C.2. Freedom of expression, access to appropriate information, freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Paragraph 22. In addition to the forums where children participate through representation in the child parliaments and child forum committees, the Committee is of the view that all children have the right to fundamental freedoms. The Committee acknowledges that the State Party has a legal framework that provides for freedom of expression and freedom of assembly including the Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child. The Committee recommends that the State Party couples the legal framework with sensitization of communities so that children have the freedom to embrace their rights. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State Party establish additional platforms for children to express their views in schools and on media. In relation to children's right to access information, the Committee encourages the State Party to provide child-friendly sources particularly designated for children to ensure their protection and safety in accessing information. The Committee also recalls its recommendation for the State Party to ensure the protection of the right to privacy of child victims and child witnesses. Protection against abuse and child witnesses.

Actions taken

- ✓ We commend the establishment of children's clubs in the schools.
- ✓ We commend the Government's collaboration with child rights CSOs that play a big role in producing child-friendly resources (e.g. Children's Voice Magazine, Child-friendly budget version) for children and creating space for children in media.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned about the limited child-friendly way for children to access information.
- ✓ We are concerned that, in court, the names of the children are still appearing publicly, compromising the privacy for the children.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government should increase the efforts/investment in the operations of clubs and the children's committees, and avail child-friendly documents (budget allocation for their operations/ activities).
- ✓ We recommend the government to ensure the privacy of child victims and child witnesses in court is guaranteed

C.3. Protection against abuse and torture

Paragraph 23, 24: *The Committee commends that the State Party has implemented the previous recommendation of the Committee concerning parental right to correct children, a regressive provision provided under the Civil Code, which is now repealed by Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 Governing Persons and Family where no such right of parents is accepted. Additionally, the Committee welcomes the adoption of Ministerial Instructions No 001 of 10 May 2017 of the Ministry of Education that prohibits corporal punishment. Despite the legislative framework that bans corporal punishment, the Committee observes from the constructive dialogue that corporal punishment is highly practiced. The Committee is also concerned that no information was provided by the State Party as to banning corporal punishment in all settings including in alternative care facilities.*

In view of the foregoing, the Committee encourages the State Party to undertake the following measures: (i) Ensure that corporal punishment is explicitly prohibited in all settings including residential care facilities, correction centers, and other facilities; (ii) Provide training for teachers, parents, and police on positive discipline and preferably provide guidelines on positive disciplining measures; (iii) Investigate and prosecute cases of corporal punishment specifically in schools, and alternative care facilities; and (iv) Engage traditional and religious leaders in sensitizing communities about the negative impact of corporal punishment and establish community-based prevention and protection mechanisms.

Actions taken

- ✓ We applaud the Government's efforts towards investigation and prosecution of cases of corporal punishments from the school and within the community.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned that corporal punishment is not fully prohibited in all settings.
- ✓ We are also concerned by low capacity of community-based child protection committees on positive discipline.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the government should continue to capacitate community-based child protection committees on positive discipline/parenting.

D. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE

Paragraph 35. The Committee highlights that child pregnancy is one of the causes for maternal mortality and adversely affects the teenage bearing the baby in terms of education, economy, and social stigma. The Committee would like to stress that teenage pregnancy can be prevented if sexual reproductive health services are made available to adolescent girls. The Committee recommends that the State Party sensitizes adolescent girls on contraception options including emergency contraception pills and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. While schools are one of the most important places to raise awareness on such issues, the Committee recommends that sensitization program also target out of school and economically disadvantaged girls as they are the most vulnerable when it comes to teenage pregnancy. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State Party makes contraception available for adolescent girls.

Actions taken

- ✓ We appreciate the government for the operationalization of youth centers where adolescents and youth get Sexual reproductive health services

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ Because of the inadequate number of personnel in some sectors youth centers are closed during the weekend where adolescents and young people need more assistance.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- We recommend the government to avail sufficient staff including psychologists at the youth centers.

Paragraph 36. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State Party employs its continued efforts to ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of children with disabilities. The Committee recommends that children with disabilities are not excluded from health services such as immunizations and nutrition supplements. Health facilities should also be accessible to children with disabilities; and health workers should be trained to provide disability friendly services that can cater for the special needs of children with disabilities.

Actions taken

- We welcome the government's efforts to construct modernized health facilities with areas for people with disabilities to pass through.

Gaps or Challenges

- There are still health facilities with limited accessibility to children with disabilities.
- The persisting needs to train health workers on special needs of children with disabilities and provision of disability friendly services.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- We urge that the government renovate old health-care facilities where there are no areas for people with disabilities to pass.
- We urge the Government to provide all health workers with training on provision of disability friendly services that can cater for the special needs of children with disabilities.

E. EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Paragraph 37: The Committee welcomes that the State Party has undertaken various measures including the training of teachers, school feeding programmes, one cup of milk per child program in schools, introducing girls' rooms in schools where girls can access sanitary pads and hygiene materials, and implementing the previous recommendations of the Committee to assess causes of dropout and repetition by commissioning a study. Nevertheless, the Committee notes with concern the decline in the percentage of the budget allocated for the education sector; the low pre-primary education enrolment at 13%; the very low completion rate of primary education which stands at 54%; low secondary education enrolment rate with enrolment at lower secondary education being 30% and higher secondary education being 15%; and high pupil to teacher ratio. Moreover, the Committee notes with concern that article 26(4) of the Ministerial Instruction No 001 of 10 May 2017 establishing guidelines for setting up general or TVET, Nursery, Primary or Secondary School's internal rules and regulations provides prostitution as a ground of expulsion from schools. The Committee recommends that the State Party undertakes the following measures to ensure a better protection of the right to education for all children:

a. Finalize the study that assesses dropout and repetition trends as soon as possible and based on the outcome develop action plans and programs that address the causes of dropouts and repetitions

Actions taken:

- ✓ Various studies have been conducted to assess the causes of dropouts and repetition in Rwanda. (By NGOs and UNICEF, in collaboration with MINEDUC)
- ✓ Radio Campaigns that mobilize parents and children to go back to school.
- ✓ We commend the efforts made in fighting against child labor as a contributing factor to school dropout.
- ✓ We commend the Government' efforts to provide the E-learning during Covid-19

Gaps and Challenges:

- ✓ Lack of national coordinated mechanism to follow up on the education of children from the grassroots levels.
- ✓ School feeding is still a burden for schools due to the delay in payment of government and parents contribution which affect the supplying of meals to schools.

Proposed recommendation by CUI:

- ✓ We recommend that the Government undertakes child friendly community campaigns to mobilize children and their parents to value the importance of education.
- ✓ We call on the Government to establish a national coordination mechanism to fight against drop out and to conduct a national study on the root causes of the school drop outs in Rwanda and to develop an improved action plan for overcoming it.

b. Increase the budget allocated for the education sector proportionally with the increase of the total budget of the Country as there are various remaining issues that need to be addressed

Actions taken:

- ✓ The budget for the education sector increased to 57% (2019-2020) to increase the number of classrooms, teachers and provide ICT services. (UNICEF, 2020)

Gaps and Challenges:

- ✓ The budget is not proportional to the needs in the education sector

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ Proportional and proper allocation of the budget depending on the needs in education sector

Paragraph 38: In relation to inclusive education, the Committee commends that the State Party developed a national strategy for inclusive education and adopted a Ministerial Order requiring newly built schools to provide facilities to accommodate children with disabilities. The Committee recommends that already existing schools should also be renovated to become child friendly by putting the necessary infrastructure and facilities. Moreover, the Committee recommends that teachers are trained with special needs education and schools should be provided with teaching and learning materials that are accessible to children with all forms of disabilities to translate inclusive education strategy to reality.

Action Taken:

- ✓ The infrastructure has been renovated to become more disability friendly.
- ✓ NGOs provide the facilities to the children with disabilities to achieve their rights to education.
- ✓ A number of teachers have been trained on inclusive education

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ Limited facilities(teaching and learning materials) that hinder the education of children with disabilities.
- ✓ Limited specialization of teachers in teaching children with disabilities.
- ✓ Limited number of inclusive education schools for students with disabilities
- ✓ Some schools are inclusive but the way to school at some points are not inclusive.

Proposed recommendations from CUI

- ✓ We recommend the Government to avail facilities for students with disabilities including infrastructures from school to their homes.
- ✓ We recommend the government to increase the number of specialists who follow up on the education of children with disabilities.
- ✓ Financing the inclusive education to improve the school materials and facilities for children with disabilities.

Paragraph 38. The Committee encourages the State Party to continue the good work it is undertaking to have playgrounds in schools and communities and to make sports and leisure a habit in the community. The Committee encourages the State Party to ensure that basic facilities are provided in schools and youth centers for play and leisure and to ensure that such playgrounds are also accessible for children with disabilities.

Actions taken

- ✓ We appreciate that the playgrounds have been established in schools and in communities to ensure that children are achieving their rights to play in and outside schools.

Gaps or Challenges

- ✓ We are concerned that there are limited public playgrounds for children as well as limited facilities at the playgrounds.

Proposed recommendations by CUI:

- ✓ We call on the Government to establish the facilitated playgrounds more specifically for children including children with disabilities at school and in the community.

F. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

Child labor

46. *The Committee Commends the adoption of Ministerial Instructions No 01/2017 of 17/11/17 on the prevention and fight against child labor which applies both in the formal and informal sector and which imposes penalty on businesses that employ children below the minimum age of employment as well as on works not permitted for children. The Committee, however, notes that according to UNICEF's 2016 report on the State of the World's Children 29% of children are victims of child labor; the number of labor inspectors does not match the workforce; and there is low conviction rate against those who perpetrate child labor. The Committee recommends that the State Party recruits more labor inspectors and train them how to identify child labor in all sectors; shows due diligence to prosecute and convict perpetrators; provide rehabilitation and reintegration for children withdrawn; and strengthens its social programs to prevent child labor.*

Actions taken

We commend the government of Rwanda for adopting different laws and policies with provisions of fighting child labor.

Gaps or challenges

There are persisting child labor activities, including carrying heavy loads (lifting luggage, goods, and food crops), domestic work (cutting and hawking firewood for sell, cooking, washing clothes; and taking care of children) mostly in cities, market and bus stations.

Recommendations

- ✓ We call on the government to ensure effective implementation of the Law N° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labor in Rwanda, and prosecute individuals, families and companies who still engage children in unlawful labor.
- ✓ We urge the Government to ensure that law enforcers take the lead in stopping the employment of children, specifically domestic workers, and report any child labor incident to the concerned authorities.
- ✓ We recommend the government to finalize and adopt the national strategies for the elimination of child labor.

G. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Coalition calls upon the Committee to recommend to the Government to:

- ✓ Ensure effective implementation, evaluation and reporting on the National Human Rights Commission's recommendation to end child labor in Rwanda as comprehensively described in the Commission's research on "Analysis of Child Labor and its impact on child rights in Rwanda".
- ✓ Closely monitor the implementation of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP), which contributes to the creation of an environment in which "child's development, survival, protection and participation are ensured through a well-coordinated and multi sectoral approach where the welfare and dignity of children are ensured to reach their full potential and their responsibilities".
- ✓ Adopt an action plan for the implementation of the next concluding observations.

END