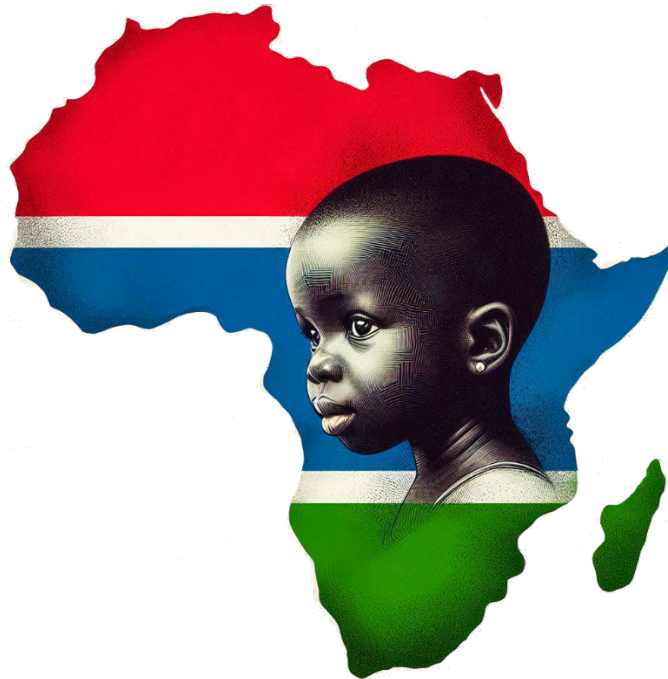


# NHRC STATEMENT ON THE DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD



As we commemorate the Day of the African Child today, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) joins the African Union and all member States in honouring the memory of the children who participated in the 1976 Soweto Uprising in South Africa, where thousands of students marched in protest against the poor quality of education under the apartheid regime. The courage and sacrifice of those children, hundreds of whom were shot and killed laid the foundation for continued advocacy for the rights of the African child.

This year's theme, **'Planning and Budgeting for Children's Rights: Progress Since 2010,'** is a call upon all Member States to reflect on the commitments made to our children and the actions taken in allocating resources towards upholding their rights and welfare over the past 15 years.

Since 2010, significant strides have been made in aligning national development plans and budgetary allocations with the principles of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The NHRC recognizes the steps taken by the Government of The Gambia to integrate children's rights into legislative frameworks, policy planning, investments in education, child protection, health and social services, and the progress they have yielded. The NHRC commends the government and stakeholders who have championed reforms in child-centered budgeting and continue to advocate for inclusive, transparent, and accountable resource allocation. However, we must also acknowledge the persistent gaps, especially towards the

welfare of children with disabilities and in rural and marginalized communities where access to quality services remain unequal and underfunded.

Budget allocation continues to significantly fall short of regional and international standards, due to public finance systems, limited participation of children and communities during planning and budgeting processes.

Significant progress in promoting the rights and welfare of children requires collaborative and complementary efforts and commitment amongst all stakeholders. Government as the primary duty bearer must lead policy developments, financing and implementation of child rights commitments. civil society must monitor progress, advocate for reform and build community awareness; children and youth must be empowered to be active participants and agents of change in budget planning processes; while international partners support through the provision of technical assistance, funding and sharing best practices across the continent.

As we mark this important day, the NHRC urges all duty bearers to strengthen institutional frameworks to monitor and evaluate child-related expenditures, ensure that planning and allocation of national budgets are participatory, rights-based and responsive to the specific needs of children and prioritise investment in child welfare and protection.

The voices of African children continue to call for justice, dignity and opportunity. We need to listen, and most importantly need to act now, as the future of our continent depends on the well-being of our children today.

The 2025 Day of the African Child is a moment to celebrate progress, but also a call to recommit to empowering children to participate and lead in planning and implementing every policy, every plan, and every budget that is for and about them.

A continent that invests wisely and fairly in its children is a continent securing a better and more equitable future.

**Happy Day of the African Child!**