

CONTENTS

<u>Rule</u>	<u>Page</u>
PART ONE. GENERAL RULES	
I. SESSIONS	
1. Meetings of the African Committee	1
2. Ordinary sessions	1
3. Extraordinary sessions	1
4. Place of sessions	1
5. Notification of dates of sessions.....	1
II. AGENDA	
6. Provisional agenda for ordinary sessions	2
7. Provisional agenda for extraordinary sessions	2
8. Adoption of the agenda	2
9. Revision of the agenda	2
10. Transmission of the provisional agenda and basic documents	2
III. MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE	
11. Composition of the Committee.....	2
12. Term of office	3
13. Beginning of term of office	3
14. Filling of casual vacancies	3
15. Oath of office	4
IV. OFFICERS	
16. Elections	4
17. Term of office	4
18. Position of the Chairperson in relation to the Committee	4
19. Acting Chairperson	4
20. Powers and duties of the Acting Chairperson	4
21. Replacement of officers	5
V. SECRETARIAT	
22. Duties of the Chairperson of the Commission of the AU	5
23. Duties of the Secretary	5
24. Servicing of meetings	5
25. Keeping the members informed	5
26. Budget	5
27. Financial implications of proposals.....	6

VI. LANGUAGES

28. Official and working languages	6
29. Interpretation from a working language	6
30. Interpretation from a non working language	6
31. Languages of decisions and official documents	6

VII. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS

32. Public sessions	6
33. Closed sessions	6
34. Participation in meetings	7

VIII. RECORDS

35. Summary records.....	7
36. Distribution of summary records.....	7

**IX. DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS AND OTHER OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS
OF THE COMMITTEE**

37. Distribution of official documents	7
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X. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

38. Quorum	8
39. Powers of the Chairperson	8
40. Points of order	8
41. Time limitation	8
42. List of speakers	9
43. Suspension or adjournment of meetings	9
44. Adjournment of debate	9
45. Closure of debate	9
46. Order of motions	9
47. Submission of proposals	9
48. Decisions on competence	10
49. Withdrawal of motions	10
50. Reconsideration of proposals	10

XI. VOTING

51. Voting rights	10
52. Adoption of decisions	10
53. Method of voting	10
54. Roll-call votes	10
55. Conduct during voting and explanation of votes	10
56. Division of proposals	11
57. Order of voting on amendments	11

58. Order of voting on proposals	11
XII. ELECTIONS	
59. Method of elections.....	11
60. Conduct of elections when only one elective place is to be filled..	11
61. Conduct of elections when two or more elective places are to be filled.....	12
XIII. SUBSIDIARY BODIES	
62. Establishment of subsidiary bodies.....	12
XIV. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE	
63. Reports to the Assembly of the Union.....	12
64. Other reports	12
PART TWO. MANDATE AND PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE	
XV. REPORTS AND INFORMATION UNDER ARTICLES 42, 43, 44 AND 45 OF THE CHILDREN'S CHARTER	
65. Submission of reports by State parties.....	12
66. Non-submission of reports.....	13
67. Attendance by States parties at the examination of reports	13
68. Request for additional reports or information	13
69. Request for other reports or advice	13
70. Specific provisions for reporting process.	14
71. Suggestions and general recommendations on a State party's report	14
72. Other general recommendations.....	15
73. General comments on the Children's Charter	15
74. Communications and investigations.....	15
75. Transmission of States parties' reports that contain a request or indicate a need for technical advice or assistance ...	15
XVI. GENERAL DISCUSSION	
76. General discussion	15
XVII. REQUEST FOR STUDIES	
77. Studies	15

PART THREE. NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

XVIII. PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

78. Participation of Specialized Institutions.....	16
79. Participation of other Inter-governmental Organizations.....	16
80. Participation of UN Agencies and other International Organizations	16

XIX. CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND REPRESENTATION OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS

81. Representation	17
82. Consultation	17

XX. INTERPRETATION AND AMENDMENTS

83. Headings.....	20
84. Amendments.....	20

PART ONE: GENERAL RULES

I. SESSIONS

Rule 1: Meetings of the African Committee

The African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") shall hold meetings as may be required for the effective performance of its functions in accordance with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (hereinafter referred to as "the Children's Charter").

Rule 2: Ordinary sessions

1. The Committee shall normally hold two ordinary sessions annually not exceeding two weeks.

2. Ordinary sessions of the Committee shall be convened on dates decided by the Chairperson of the Committee in consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (hereinafter referred to as the "Chairperson of the Commission"), taking into account the calendar of conferences approved by the policy organs of the AU.

Rule 3: Extraordinary sessions

1. Extraordinary sessions of the Committee shall be convened by the Chairperson, if the Committee so decides. When the Committee is not in session, the Chairperson may convene extraordinary sessions of the Committee in consultation with the Bureau. The Chairperson of the Committee shall also convene extraordinary sessions:

- (a) At the written request of a simple majority of the members of the Committee;
- (b) At the written request of a State party to the Children's Charter.

2. Extraordinary sessions shall be convened as soon as possible on a date fixed by the Chairperson, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission and with the Bureau of the Committee.

Rule 4: Place of sessions

Sessions of the Committee shall normally be held at the Headquarters of the African Union. The Committee may, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission, decide to hold a session in another place.

Rule 5: Notification of dates of sessions

1. The Secretary of the Committee, hereinafter called "the Secretary", shall, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee, notify the members of the Committee of the date and venue of each session. Such notification shall be sent, in the case of ordinary sessions, at least six weeks in advance and in the case of an extraordinary session, at least three weeks in advance of the session.

2. The Chairperson of the Commission shall have the right to be represented at meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and to participate without voting rights.

II. AGENDA

Rule 6: Provisional agenda for ordinary sessions

The provisional agenda for each ordinary session shall be prepared by the Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Children's Charter, and shall include:

- (a) Any item decided upon by the Committee at a previous session;
- (b) Any item proposed by the Chairperson of the Committee;
- (c) Any item proposed by a member of the Committee;
- (d) Any item proposed by a State party to the Children's Charter;
- (e) Any item proposed by the Chairperson of the Commission relating to his/her functions under the Children's Charter or these rules;
- (f) Any item proposed by the Policy Organs of the AU.

Rule 7: Provisional agenda for extraordinary sessions

The provisional agenda for an extraordinary session of the Committee shall consist only of those items which were proposed for its consideration at the extraordinary session.

Rule 8: Adoption of the Agenda

The first item on the provisional agenda for any session shall be, after the election of the officers, the adoption of the Agenda of the session on the basis of the provisional Agenda referred to in Rule 6.

Rule 9: Revision of the Agenda

During an ordinary session, the Committee may revise the Agenda and may as appropriate, add, defer or delete items. Only urgent or important items may be added to the agenda.

Rule 10: Transmission of the provisional agenda and basic documents

The Secretary shall transmit basic documents relating to items appearing on its Provisional Agenda to the members of the Committee at least one month before the meeting takes place.

III. MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 11: Composition of Committee

1. The Committee is composed of 11 independent members elected by the Assembly of the Union in conformity with Article 33 of the Children's Charter.
2. The position of a member of the Committee is incompatible with any activity that might interfere with the independence or impartiality of such a member or the demands of the office such as working in any intergovernmental organisation, UN Agencies, or a Cabinet Minister or Deputy Minister, member of parliament, Ambassador, or any other politically binding function.
3. In the event of a dispute as to whether an activity is incompatible with the functions of a Member, the Committee shall decide.

Rule 12: Term of office

The members of the Committee shall be elected and shall serve in conformity with Article 37 of the Children's Charter.

Rule 13: Beginning of term of office

The members of the Committee elected at the first election shall begin their term of office from the date of their election namely 10 July 2001. In the case of members elected at subsequent elections, their term of office shall begin on the day following the date of expiry of the term of office of the members whom they replace.

Rule 14: Filling of casual vacancies

1. The members of the Committee shall be present in person and participate effectively during the whole period of the meeting. In the case of legitimate absence they shall inform the Chairperson of the Committee two weeks before the session. In any case, they shall not be absent for two consecutive sessions. In both cases of absence or failure to fully participate in the work of the Committee, the Committee may decide to bring this matter, through its Chairperson, to the Chairperson of the Commission who shall then declare the post vacant and take immediate action for replacement.

2. If a member of the Committee dies or resigns or declares, for any other cause, that he/she can no longer perform his/her duties as member, the Chairperson of the Committee shall notify the Chairperson of the Commission who shall then declare vacant the seat of that member.

3. If, in the unanimous opinion of the other members, a member of the Committee has ceased to carry out his/her functions for any cause other than absence of a temporary nature, the Chairperson of the Committee shall notify the Chairperson of the Commission, who shall then declare vacant the seat of that member.

4. Pursuant to the provisions of Article 39 of the Children's Charter and paragraphs 1 and 2 of this rule, the Chairperson of the Commission shall request the State party which had nominated that member to appoint another expert from among its nationals within two months to serve for the remainder of his/her predecessor's term.

5. The name and the curriculum vitae of the expert so appointed shall be transmitted by the Chairperson of the Commission to the Assembly for approval. Upon approval by the Assembly, the Chairperson of the Commission, who shall notify the States parties to the Children's Charter of the name of the new member of the Committee filling a casual vacancy.

6. In the case of a vacancy arising from a member's death or proven disability or incompatibility, the Chairperson of the Commission and the Committee shall act in accordance with the provisions of Article 39 of the Children's Charter.

Rule 15: Oath of Office

Upon assuming his/her duties, each member of the Committee shall make the following oath of office in an open session of the Committee:

"I solemnly undertake to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience, the functions and responsibilities entrusted to me as a Member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of the African Union and to discharge my functions faithfully and impartially with only the interests of the Child in view."

IV. OFFICERS

Rule 16: Elections

The Committee shall elect from among its members a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons, a Rapporteur and a Deputy Rapporteur.

Rule 17: Term of office

The officers of the Committee shall be elected for a term of two years. They shall be eligible for re-election. None of them, however, may hold office if he/she ceases to be a member of the Committee.

Rule 18: Position of the Chairperson in relation to the Committee

The Chairperson shall perform the functions conferred upon him/her by the Children's Charter and by these Rules of Procedure. In exercising his/her functions, the Chairperson shall remain under the authority of the Committee.

Rule 19: Acting Chairperson

If the Chairperson is unable to be present at a meeting or any part thereof, the first Vice-Chairperson will act as Chairperson in his/her place.

Rule 20: Powers and duties of the Acting Chairperson

A Vice-Chairperson acting as Chairperson shall have the same powers and duties as the Chairperson.

Rule 21: Replacement of officers

If any of the officers of the Committee ceases, or declares his/her inability to continue serving as an officer of the Committee, a new officer shall be elected for the unexpired term of his/her predecessor.

V. SECRETARIAT

Rule 22: Duties of the Chairperson of the Commission

1. The secretariat of the Committee and of such subsidiary bodies, as may be established by it under Rule 62, shall be provided by the Chairperson of the Commission.
2. The Chairperson of the Commission shall appoint a Secretary for the Committee in conformity with Article 40 of the Children's Charter.
3. The Chairperson of the Commission shall provide the Committee with the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of its functions as assigned to it under the Children's Charter.

Rule 23: Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary of the Committee, appointed in terms of Article 40 of the Children's Charter, shall be responsible for the activities of the Secretariat under the general supervision of the Chairperson, and, particularly:

- (a) He/she shall assist the Committee and its members in the exercise of their functions;
- (b) He/she shall serve as an intermediary for all the communications concerning the Committee;
- (c) He/she shall be the custodian of the archives of the Committee.

Rule 24: Servicing of meetings

The Chairperson of the Commission shall be responsible for all the necessary arrangements for meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies.

Rule 25: Keeping the members informed

The Chairperson of the Commission shall be responsible for keeping the members of the Committee informed of any questions which may be brought before it for consideration and/or any other developments that may be of relevance to the Committee.

Rule 26: Budget

The Budget of the Committee shall be provided by the AU. The Committee may accept donations to support its work.

Rule 27: Financial implications of proposals

Before any proposal which involves expenditures is approved by the Committee or by its subsidiary bodies, the Chairperson of the Commission shall prepare and circulate to Members States, as early as possible, an estimate of the cost involved in the proposal. It shall be the duty of the Chairperson to draw the attention of the members to this estimate and to invite discussion on it when the proposal is considered by the Committee or by a subsidiary body.

VI. LANGUAGES

Rule 28: Official and working languages

The official languages of the Committee shall be those of the African Union. The working languages of the Committee shall be English and French.

Rule 29: Interpretation from a working language

Statements made in any of the working languages shall be interpreted into the other working language.

Rule 30: Interpretation from a non-working language

Any person addressing the Committee in a language other than one of the working languages shall provide and bear the expenses of interpretation into one of the working languages. The interpreters of the Secretariat may take the interpretation of the original language as source language for their interpretation in the other working language.

Rule 31: Languages of decisions and official documents

All official decisions and documents of the Committee shall be made available in the working languages.

VII. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS

Rule 32: Public sessions

The sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies shall be public, except for administrative and budgetary matters or where the Committee so

decides. At the end of each public session, the Chairperson of the Committee shall issue a Communiqué and organise a press conference with the media.

Rule 33: Closed sessions

At the beginning of each ordinary session the Committee shall convene a closed pre-session to be attended by only the members of the Committee and selected partners to prepare the next session. At the close of each private meeting, the Committee or its subsidiary bodies may issue a communiqué, through the Chairperson of the Commission, for the use of the media and the general public.

Rule 34: Participation in meetings

Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU, Specialised Agencies, United Nations Organs, NGOs and CSOs shall be entitled to participate in the sessions of the Committee during the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the Children's Charter which fall within the scope of their mandate, under modalities to be established for the purpose.

VIII. RECORDS

Rule 35: Summary records

1. Summary records of the meetings of the Committee shall be written in the working languages of the Committee. The Secretariat shall record and conserve the tapes of the sessions of the Committee. It may also record and conserve the tapes of the sessions of the working groups and sub-committees if the Committee so decides. The Secretariat of the Committee shall also ensure verbatim recording of the sessions of the Committee.

2. Summary records of the public and private meetings of the Committee shall be prepared by the Secretariat. All such participants may submit corrections to the Secretariat in the languages in which the records have been issued within a specified time of the receipt of such records. Corrections to the records of the meetings shall be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued at the end of the session concerned. Any disagreement concerning such corrections shall be decided upon by the Chairperson of the Committee or, in the case of continued disagreement, by decision of the Committee.

Rule 36: Distribution of summary records

1. The summary records of public meetings shall be documents for general distribution.
2. The summary records of private meetings shall be distributed to the members of the Committee and to other participants in the meetings. They may be made available to other interested parties upon decision of the Committee at such time and under such conditions as the Committee may decide.

IX. DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS AND OTHER OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 37: Distribution of official documents

1. Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 36 and subject to paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Rule, reports, decisions and all other official documents of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies shall be documents for general distribution, unless the Committee decides otherwise.
2. Reports and information provided to the Committee by the RECs, AU, Specialised Agencies, United Nations organs, NGOs and CSOs shall be distributed by the secretariat to all members of the Committee and, if so decided by the Committee, to members of its subsidiary bodies, States Parties concerned and other participants at the meetings. Such reports and information shall normally be made available to the Committee in the language in which they have been submitted, unless otherwise decided by the Committee.
3. Reports and additional information submitted by States Parties, pursuant to Article 43 of the Children's Charter and to Rules 65 and 68, shall be documents for general distribution.

X. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Rule 38: Quorum

In conformity with Article 38(3) of the Children's Charter, seven members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Rule 39: Powers of the Chairperson

1. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon the Chairperson by the Children's Charter and elsewhere by these Rules, the Chairperson shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the Committee, direct the discussions, ensure observance of these rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions.

2. The Chairperson, subject to these Rules, shall have control of the proceedings of the Committee and over the maintenance of order at its meetings.

3. In the course of the discussion of an item, the Chairperson may propose to the Committee a limitation on the time to be allowed to speakers and on the number of times each person may speak on any question, and the closure of the list of speakers.

4. The Chairperson shall rule on points of order.

5. The Chairperson may also propose adjournment or closure of the debate or adjournment or suspension of a meeting. Debate shall be confined to the question before the Committee, and the Chairperson may call a speaker to order if his/her remarks are not relevant to the subject matter under discussion.

Rule 40: Points of order

During the discussion of any matter, a member may, at any time, raise a point of order, and such point of order shall immediately be decided upon by the Chairperson in accordance with these Rules of Procedure. Any appeal against the ruling of the Chairperson shall immediately be put to the vote, and the ruling of the Chairperson shall stand unless overruled by a simple majority of the members present. A member raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the subject matter under discussion.

Rule 41: Time limitation

The Chairperson may limit the time allowed to each speaker on any question. When debate is limited and a speaker exceeds his/her allotted time, the Chairperson shall call him/her to order without delay.

Rule 42: List of speakers

During the course of a debate, the Chairperson may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. The Chairperson may, however, accord the right of reply to any speaker if a speech delivered after he/she has declared the list closed makes this desirable. When the debate on an item is concluded because there are no other speakers, the Chairperson shall declare the debate closed.

Rule 43: Suspension or adjournment of meetings

During the discussion of any matter, a member may move for the suspension or adjournment of the meeting. No discussion on such motions shall be permitted, and they shall immediately be put to the vote.

Rule 44: Adjournment of debate

During the discussion of any matter, a member may move for the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the person who proposed the motion, one member may speak in favour and one against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote.

Rule 45: Closure of debate

A member may, at any time, move for the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other member or representative had signified his or her wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded only to two members opposing the closure, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote.

Rule 46: Order of motions

Subject to Rule 40, the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting:

- (a) To suspend the meeting;
- (b) To adjourn the meeting;
- (c) To adjourn the debate on the item under discussion;
- (d) To close the debate on the item under discussion.

Rule 47: Submission of proposals

Unless otherwise decided by the Committee, substantive proposals, amendments and motions submitted by the members shall be introduced in writing and handed to the secretariat and their consideration shall, if so requested by any member, be deferred until the next session on the following day.

Rule 48: Decisions on competence

Subject to Rule 46, any motion by a member calling for a decision on the competence of the Committee to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall

immediately be put to the vote before a vote is taken on the proposal in question.

Rule 49: Withdrawal of motions

A motion may be withdrawn by the member who proposed it at any time before it is put to the vote, on condition that it has not been amended. A motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any member.

Rule 50: Reconsideration of proposals

When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the Committee, by a two-thirds majority of its members present, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to one member in favour of and one member in opposition to the motion, after which it shall immediately be put to the vote.

X. VOTING

Rule 51: Voting rights

Each member of the Committee shall have one vote.

Rule 52: Adoption of decisions

1. Decisions of the Committee shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present.
2. Decisions on procedural matters shall be made by simple majority.
3. In case of equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

Rule 53: Method of voting

Unless otherwise decided by the Committee, and subject to Rules 14, 60 and 61, the Committee shall vote by a show of hands. Any member may request a roll-call, which shall be taken in the alphabetical order of the names of the members of the Committee, beginning with the member whose name is drawn by lot by the Chairperson.

Rule 54: Roll-call votes

The vote of each member participating in any roll-call shall be inserted in the record.

Rule 55: Conduct during voting and explanation of votes

After the voting has commenced, there shall be no interruption of the voting except on a point of order by a member in connection with the actual conduct of the voting.

Rule 56: Division of proposals

Parts of a proposal shall be voted upon separately if a member requests that the proposal be divided. Those parts of the proposal which have been approved shall then be put to the vote as a whole. If all of the operative parts of the proposal have been rejected, the proposal shall be considered to have been rejected as a whole.

Rule 57: Order of voting on amendments

1. When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted upon first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Committee shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed therefrom and so on, until all amendments have been put to the vote. If one or more amendments are adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.
2. A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal.

Rule 58: Order of voting on proposals

1. If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Committee shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote upon the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted.
2. The Committee may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote upon the next proposal.
3. Any motions which do require any decision on the substance of such proposals shall, however, be considered as previous questions and shall be put to the vote before those proposals.

XII. ELECTIONS

Rule 59: Method of elections

In conformity with Article 38 of the Children's Charter, elections shall be held by secret ballot, unless the Committee decides otherwise, in the case of elections to fill a place for which there is only one candidate.

Rule 60: Conduct of elections when only one elective place is to be filled

1. When only one person or member is to be elected and no candidate in the first ballot obtains the two-thirds majority of all members, a second ballot shall be taken, which shall be restricted to the two candidates who obtained the greatest number of votes.

2. If the second ballot is inconclusive, a third ballot shall be taken on the basis of a simple majority in which votes may be cast for any eligible candidate. If the third ballot is inconclusive, the next ballot shall be restricted to the two candidates who obtained the greatest number of votes in the third ballot and so on, with unrestricted and restricted ballots alternating until a person or member is elected.

3. If the second ballot is inconclusive, the balloting shall be continued until one candidate secures the necessary simple majority.

Rule 61: Conduct of elections when two or more elective places are to be filled

When two or more elective positions are to be filled at one time, those candidates obtaining the two-thirds majority in the first ballot shall be elected. If the number of candidates obtaining such majority is less than the number of elective positions, there shall be additional ballots to fill the remaining positions on the basis of a simple majority.

XIII. SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Rule 62: Establishment of subsidiary bodies

1. The Committee may, in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Charter and subject to the provisions of Rule 27 of the present Rules whenever applicable, set up such subcommittees and other ad hoc working groups as it deems necessary and define their composition and mandates.

2. Each working group shall elect its own officers and the present Rules of Procedure shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

XIV. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 63: Reports to the Assembly of the Union

The Committee shall submit to the Assembly of the Union through the Executive Council, every year, its reports on the activities undertaken in the implementation of the Children's Charter and any other such reports as appropriate.

Rule 64: Other reports

The Committee, or its subsidiary bodies, may issue for general distribution other reports on its activities. The Committee may also issue reports for general distribution in order to highlight specific problems in the field of the rights and welfare of the child.

PART TWO. MANDATE AND PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE

XV. REPORTS AND INFORMATION UNDER ARTICLES 42, 43, 44 AND 45 OF THE CHILDREN'S CHARTER

Rule 65: Submission of reports by States parties

1. Each State Party shall submit, through the Chairperson of the Commission, its initial and periodic reports, in conformity with Article 43 of the Children's Charter.
2. States Parties concerned shall submit their initial reports within two years of the entry into force of the Children's Charter for the State Party concerned and thereafter periodic reports every 3 years as well as complementary reports and information requested by the Committee during the period between the two reports.
3. The Committee shall indicate to States Parties, through the Chairperson of the Commission, the format of the reports and other related information to be communicated as contained in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Rule.

Rule 66: Non-submission of reports

1. At each session, the Chairperson of the Commission shall inform the Committee of all cases of non-submission of reports or complementary information in conformity with Article 43 of the Children's Charter. In such cases, the Committee shall address to the State Party concerned, through the Chairperson of the Commission, a reminder regarding the submission of these

reports or complementary information and shall undertake any other measures in a spirit of dialogue between the State concerned and the Committee.

2. If, despite the reminder and other measures referred to in paragraph 1 above, the State Party does not submit the required report or complementary information, the Committee shall consider the situation as it deems necessary and shall include a reference to this effect in its report to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

Rule 67: Attendance by States parties at the examination of reports

The Committee, shall notify the States Parties, as early as possible, through the Chairperson of the Commission, of the opening date, duration and venue of the session at which their respective reports shall be examined. Representatives of the States Parties shall be invited to attend the Committee's session during which their reports shall be examined. The Representatives should be able to answer all questions that may be raised by the Committee and make declarations on reports already presented by their countries. They may also provide complementary information regarding their State.

Rule 68: Request for additional reports or information

If, in the opinion of the Committee, a report submitted by a State Party pursuant to Article 43 of the Children's Charter, does not contain sufficient information, the Committee may request that State to submit an additional report or information, indicating the time limit within which such additional report or information should be supplied.

Rule 69: Request for other reports or advice

1. The Committee may invite the RECs, the AU, Specialised Agencies, the United Nations organs, NGOs and CSOs, in conformity with Article 42 of the Children's Charter, to submit to it reports on the implementation of the Children's Charter and to provide it with expert advice in areas falling within the scope of their activities.

2. The Committee may indicate, as appropriate, the time limit within which such reports or advice should be submitted.

Rule 70: Specific provisions for reporting process

The Committee shall lay down appropriate guidelines in order to avoid repetition between the reports to it and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and in order to encourage governments to fulfil their obligations

towards both Committees while recognizing the specific nature of the specific provisions of the Children's Charter. The following shall be considered:

- a) If a State Party has already submitted an initial report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, whether that report has been reviewed by the UN Committee or not, the State Party may be invited to update the information already submitted and add information on the provisions specific to the Children's Charter.
- b) If a State Party's initial report has been reviewed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the concluding observations and the recommendations may be considered by the Committee when preparing the list of issues for the governments and adopting its own concluding observations and recommendations.
- c) If a State Party has not yet submitted an initial report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the State Party shall be invited to prepare a complete report on all the provisions of the Children's Charter.
- d) For the review of a State Party's report, the Committee shall designate one of its experts as focal point.
- e) The establishment of modalities for cooperation between the Committee and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Rule 71: Suggestions and general recommendations on a State Party's report

1. After its exhaustive consideration of each report of a State Party, together with such reports, information or advice by partners, if any, received in conformity with Article 42 (iii) of the Children's Charter, the Committee shall make such suggestions and general recommendations on the implementation of the Children's Charter by the reporting State, as it may consider appropriate.

2. The Committee shall transmit, through the Chairperson of the Commission, suggestions and general recommendations it has decided upon to the State Party concerned for its comments. The Committee may, where necessary, indicate the time limit within which such comments from States Parties are to be received.

3. The Committee shall include in its reports to the Assembly of the Union suggestions and general recommendations together with comments, if any, received from States Parties.

Rule 72: Other general recommendations

1. The Committee shall make other general recommendations based on information received in conformity with Article 42 of the Children's Charter.

2. The Committee shall include such other general recommendations in its reports to the Assembly of the Union together with comments, if any, received from States Parties.

Rule 73: General comments on the Children's Charter

1. The Committee may prepare general comments on the basis of the Articles and provisions of the Children's Charter with a view to promoting its further implementation and assisting States Parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations.

2. The Committee shall include such general comments in its reports to the Assembly of the Union.

Rule 74: Communications and Investigations

1. The Committee shall develop guidelines relating to the admissibility and consideration of communications pursuant to the provisions of Article 44 of the Children's Charter.

2. The Committee shall develop guidelines relating to the conduct of investigations pursuant to the provisions of Article 45 of the Children's Charter.

Rule 75: Transmission of States Parties' reports that contain a request or indicate a need for technical advice or assistance

1. The Committee shall transmit, as it may consider appropriate, to the RECs, Specialized Agencies, United Nations organs, NGOs, CSOs and other competent bodies, reports and information received from States Parties that contain a request or indicate a need for technical advice or assistance.

2. In accordance with paragraph 1 above, the Committee shall transmit reports and information received from States Parties along with observations and suggestions from the Committee, if any, on these requests or indications

3. The Committee may request, when it considers it appropriate to do so, information on the technical advice or assistance provided and the progress achieved.

XVI. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Rule 76: General discussion

In order to enhance a deeper understanding of the content and implications of the Children's Charter, the Committee may devote one or more meetings of its regular sessions to a general discussion on one specific Article of the Children's Charter or related subject.

XVII. REQUESTS FOR STUDIES

Rule 77: Studies

1. In conformity with Article 42, of the Children's Charter, the Committee may recommend to the Assembly of the Union to request the Chairperson of the Commission to undertake, on its behalf, studies on specific issues relating to the rights and welfare of the child.

2. The Committee may also invite partners and other bodies to undertake studies or to submit available studies on topics of relevance to the Committee.

PART THREE. NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

XVIII. PARTICIPATION OF NON-MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 78: Participation and Consultations with AU Specialized Institutions

1. Pursuant to the agreements concluded between the African Union and the Specialized Institutions, the latter shall have the right to:

- (a) Be represented in the public sessions of the Committee and of its subsidiary bodies;
- (b) Participate, without voting rights, through their representatives in deliberations on issues which shall be of interest to them and to submit, on these issues, proposals which may be put to vote at the request of any member of the Committee or the interested subsidiary body.

2. Before placing in the provisional agenda an issue submitted by a Specialized Institution, the Chairperson of the Commission shall initiate such preliminary consultations as may be necessary, with the Committee.

3. When an issue proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda of a session, contains a proposal requesting the AU to undertake additional activities relating to issues concerning directly one or several specialized institutions, the Chairperson of the Commission may consult with the institutions concerned and inform the Committee of the ways and means of ensuring coordinated utilization of available resources in order to avoid duplication.

4. When at a meeting of the Committee, a proposal calling upon the AU to undertake additional activities relating to issues directly concerning one or several specialized institutions, the Chairperson of the Commission, after consulting as far as possible, the representatives of the interested institutions, shall draw the attention of the Committee to the effects of that proposal.

5. Before taking a decision on the proposals mentioned above, the Committee shall make sure that the institutions concerned have been duly consulted.

Rule 79: Participation of other African Inter-governmental Organizations

Representatives of Inter-governmental Organizations may participate, without voting rights, in the deliberations of the Committee on issues falling within the framework of the activities of these organizations.

Rule 80: Participation of UN Agencies and other International Organizations

Representatives of the United Nations Agencies and other international organizations may participate, without voting rights, in the public sessions of the Committee on issues falling within the framework of their activities.

XIX. CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND REPRESENTATION OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS

Rule 81: Representation

Civil society organizations may apply to the Committee to participate as observers in the public sessions of the Committee and of its subsidiary bodies. The NGOs and CSOS on the list as established by the Committee may send observers to these sessions where issues falling within their area of activity are being considered.

Rule 82: Consultation

1. The Committee may consult non-governmental organizations either directly or through one or several committees set up for this purpose. Such consultations may be held at the invitation of the Committee or at the request of the NGOs.

2. Upon recommendation of the Chairperson of the Commission and at the request of the Committee, organizations on the list referred to in Rule 80 may also be heard by the Committee.

XX. INTERPRETATION AND AMENDMENTS

Rule 83: Headings

For the purpose of the interpretation of these rules, the headings are for reference purposes only and do not form part of the Rules.

Rule 84: Amendments

These Rules of Procedure may be amended by a decision of the Committee in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Children's Charter.