

# CHILDREN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE: CHILD PARTICIPATION AS A TOOL TO ALLAY THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON CHILDREN'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS IN AFRICA

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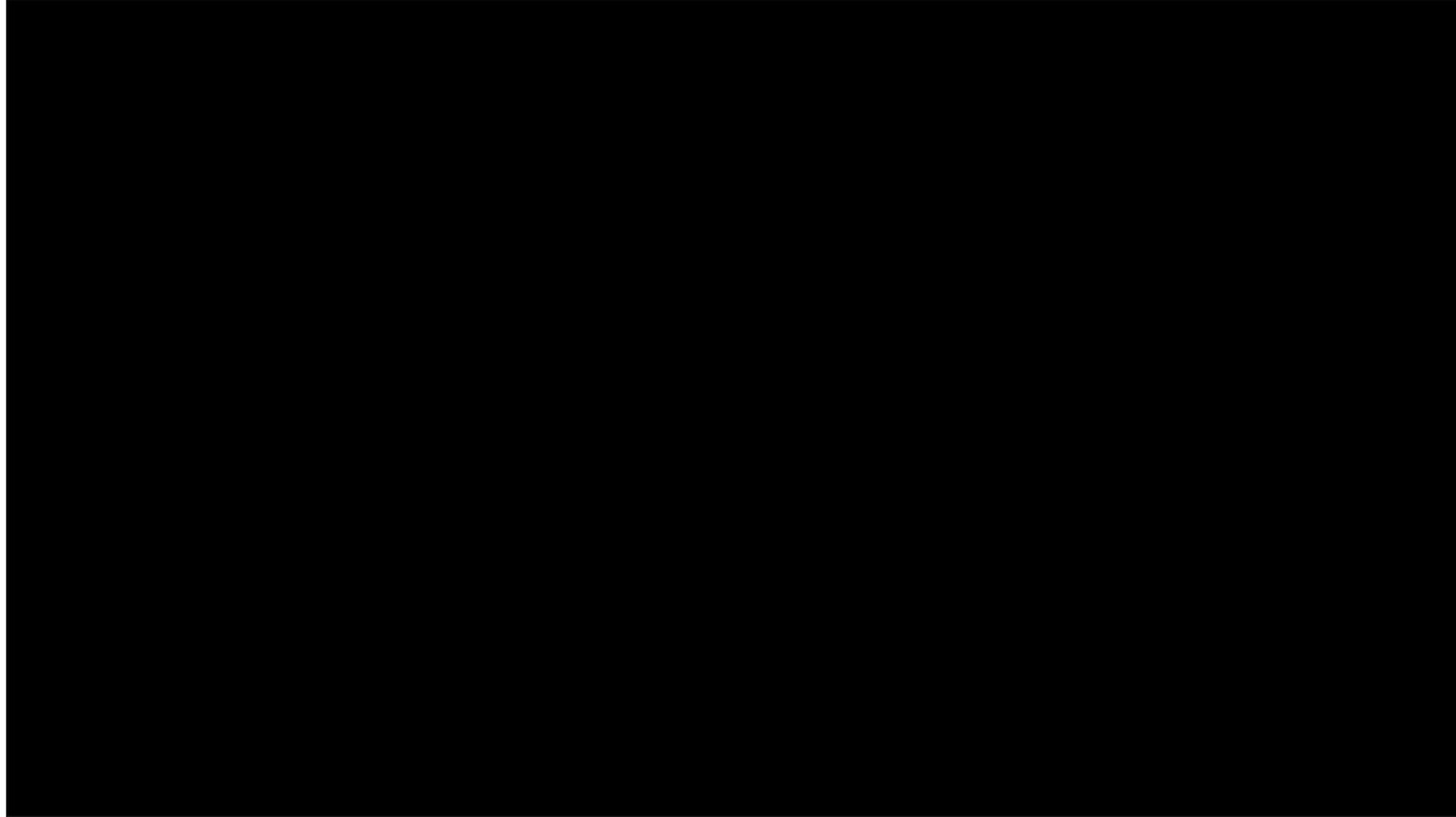
# Climate change in Africa – A regional perspective

Areas most at risk from climate change in Africa



- The impact of climate change on children in Africa is already significant than it's reported
- Climate variability, extreme weather and climate events, exacerbated by ongoing conflicts in (Chad, Cameroon, Mozambique, Libya, Nigeria, Benin etc.), and economic crises on food security and, COVID-19 (lethargic vaccine roll-outs)- etc. - are among the key drivers of the precarious situation that an African Child finds itself in 2021.
- According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), about 60 per cent (Most of whom are children) of all internal displacements in the East Africa subregion in 2019 were due to climate-induced disasters.

# Climate change: As children saw it 10 years ago – by UNICEF



# Climate Governance and Policy Frameworks in Africa

- **Regional development agendas**
  - African Union agenda 2063 for *the Africa we want*
  - African Children's Committee agenda 2040 an *Africa fit for children*
    - AU policy on climate change
    - ACERWC strategic policy on climate change as it relates to children (Non-existent)
- National climate frameworks (Selected)
  - [South Africa](#)
  - [Nigeria](#)
  - [Cameroon](#)
  - [Egypt](#)
  - [Kenya](#)
- All these policies on climate change acknowledge the impact of Climate it has on Children's SERs – Currently, none of these frameworks harness the views, voices of children in their mitigating approaches to impact the climate change in Africa.

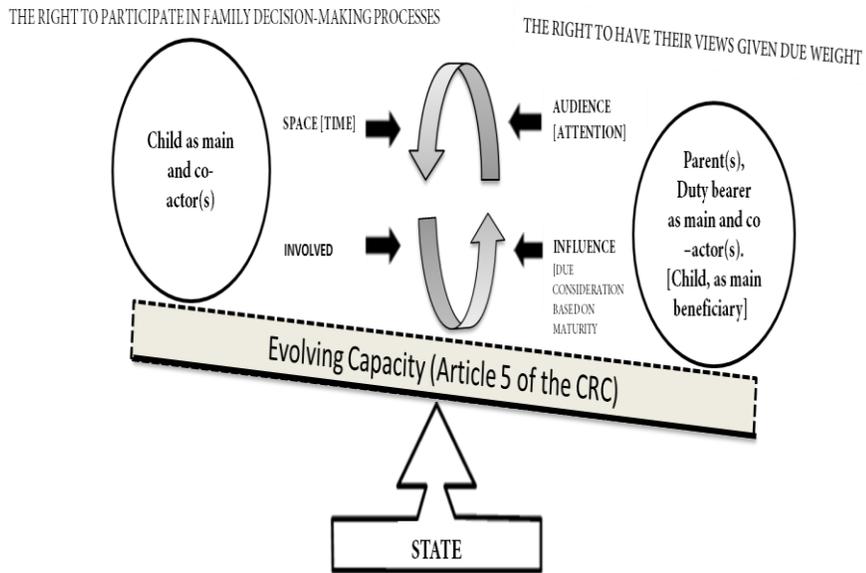
# The Focus – Climate Change through the lens of Children’s Socio-economics Rights in Africa

- The Right to Education – art 11 ACRWC
- The Right to Health (including a conducive environment) – art 14 of the ACRWC
- The right to water and sanitation, food and nutrition and housing,
- The Right to adequate standard of living
- The right to Leisure, Recreation and Cultural activities
- This is the scope within Children’s SERs which guide the analyses in this paper and further guide the suggested approach of child participation to enable children to be involved in the process of finding mitigating strategies to curb the impact of climate change in Africa.



*Photo by DARLA SHELDEN*

# Children's right to participate



- The right to participate was first presented as a legally-binding right in article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to secure (adult) citizens' participation in the politics of a member state.
- Conventionally, this right was not fashioned for the benefit of children.
- However, after the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Children's Charter), it is broadly accepted that children also have a right to participate, albeit in different contexts.
- The analysis in this presentation specifically focuses on the position of children and their ability to meaningfully participate in finding strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change in Africa

# Child participation - the missing piece of the Jigsaw



- **Proposed model of child participation in Africa's response to Climate change**
  - A user of rights-based approach to strengthen climate change governance in Africa.
  - The user of rights-based approach is critical because it enables children connect their realities and ability to propose mitigating solutions
  - The scope of child participation contained in both in the UNCRC and ACRWC do not indicate an age restriction to a child's right to participate in any matter that concerns them.
  - An age indicator is necessary in such processes – 12 as medium, and below 12 based on the strength of a child's maturity. The reason why it is important to consider age and not maturity at the point of involving a child in a climate change strategic process is because a child's ability to meaningfully engage in climate change related discussions often is a function of intellectual reach that matures with age.
  - The user of rights-based approach presupposes an understanding of the complex processes which provide a basis for distinguishing between children who are able to meaningfully participate and fulfil their stipulated responsibilities and children who cannot.
  - Ultimately, the approach seeks to justify why children in Africa should be given a chance to contribute and suggest a succinct guide how children should be involved in finding solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change as they know it.

# Why adopt/include a child's opinion/voice in mitigating climate change in Africa

- Guiding principles of children's jurisprudence:
  - A child's right to participate (art 4(2) and 7) -
  - A child's best interest (article 4(1)) –
  - Child's survival, development and life (article 5) -
- Article 31 of the ACRWC – Children have legitimate responsibilities in Africa to their family and community
- With children, the impact of climate change will have irreversible consequences because they are and will be the most affected - from childhood to adulthood – Multi-generational effect

# Thank you!!!

- To conclude, let me invite you, particularly, those who have not, to watch this movie available on several streaming channels including Netflix – which supports the argument that our children have potential and should be taken seriously in climate change mitigating strategies in Africa.
- The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind - [Netflix](#)