

# **AfECN Report on Children's Right to Play: Highlights**

**Slides for RtP Webinar set for 25-10-20**

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# Introduction to RtP

- UNICEF describes play as one of the most important ways in which young children gain essential knowledge and skills.
- Play is therefore considered critical in the brain development from as early as pregnancy.

# Understanding RtP

- Play is active engagement on the part of Children in voluntary, pleasurable and learning activities
- Learning through play (LtP) helps children make sense of the world around them as they engage in play.
- Learning through play involves child interaction with the environment through speaking to one self & to others

# Why RtP is Important

- Through Play children learn in ways most natural and engaging to them:
- Children have natural ability to learn about the world around them through play
- Vital life & workforce skills e.g. communication, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving expertise
- Global learning crisis has much to do how children learn – not what is taught

## Why RtP is Important.....contd.....

- Playful experiences offer a unique context for supportive and rich learning experiences in early childhood
- Play forms the foundation of intellectual, social, physical and emotional skills necessary for the success in school and life

# IPA Declaration, 2014

- Play is important to the lives of children in that it gives them pleasure, is essential to their healthy physical and mental growth, and enhances their ability to function in the culture and society in which they are born

# ACRWC

- Article 12 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), recognizes the critical role of play in the growth and development of the child and appreciates that play may differ depending on the socio-cultural and economic environment of the child.
- ACERWC monitoring compliance by State Parties

# UN CRC

- Enshrined in Article 31&32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which compels State Parties to recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities that are age appropriate and also to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- UN Committee on CRC in of its general comments asserts that through play, children both enjoy and challenge their current capacities, whether they are playing alone or with others



# CRC General Comment No.7

- UN Committee on CRC notes that insufficient attention has been given by State Parties and others to the implementation of the provisions of article 31 of the Convention, which guarantees;
  - “the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”

# AU'S AGENDA 2063 & CESA 2016-2025

- Places emphasis on improved skills development, albeit only with a focus on TVET & STEM
- Room to for AU to support Member States to adjust their education policies and systems towards a greater focus on 21st-century skills
- And to redefine how our children learn and to empower them for the future, we must stop overlooking a powerful part of the solution: learning through play

# RtP is not a Foreign Concept

- Literature exists on African proverbs that directly emphasize the right to play and learning through play
- Nobody shows heaven to a child (because the child sees it him/herself) – West Africa
- A child becomes an adult by himself not by others – Central Africa
- It is during growing that a cock breaks its wings - Southern Africa
- When lions have gone, hyenas dance – East Africa

# Compliance to ACERWC

- Out of 55 AU Member States, 12 have never filed either initial or periodic reports - *Botswana, Cape Verde, CAR, Djibouti, DRC, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Libya, Tunisia, Sao Tome/Principe and Seychelles*
- 30 are yet to file any periodic reports as a follow up to their initial reports - *Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Cote D'voire, Comoros, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mazambique, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Eswatini, Togo, Uganda, Zambia & Zimbabwe*

# Compliance.....

- Only 9 are fully compliant having filed both initial and periodic status reports - *Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania*
- 6 countries have not ratified the Charter - *DRC, Morocco, Sahraoui Arab Republic, Somalia, South Sudan and Tunisia.*

# Issues & Gaps in Reporting

- Inconsistency in reporting – e.g. Kenya
- A good number of reports don't give serious attention to RtP and LtP in their initial and periodic reports
- The reports which offer any coverage to RtP often highlight school based activities normally undertaken for leisure and recreation such as physical education (PE), sports, drama, music, clubs, school educational tours/trips, exchange programs and site visits

## Issues & Gaps.....

- Interventions and activities not costed hence most reports don't talk about financing and budget allocation
- Recurring challenges & constraints without any mitigation measures
- the importance of play is not widely recognized
- Many countries tend to focus on formal learning activities and on teachers to deliver more academic results

# Recommendations to AU Member States

- Supporting research to enhance play based learning and ensure data on play based learning is available
- Develop Skillful & Play-Based Curriculum for children
- Make play affordable and Play facilities accessible to children and promote making of dolls and play items made from locally available materials and including using appropriate technologies
- Enforce the Local Laws that provides for children play areas
- Increase funding & budget allocation for children & play activities



# Recommendations to CSOs

- CSOs should advocate for every child's right to play, for accessible, high-quality early learning and ECD opportunities, and for vibrant, safe, and child-friendly public play spaces
- Collaborating with others to pioneer ways of improving access to quality play for all and leading and supporting campaigns for all children to have freedom and space to play throughout childhood;
- Empowering families, communities and educators to consider, promote and plan for play.

# Recommendations for Families & Communities

- Families and community members should allow children to direct their own play but provide accessibility to better play environments and required play materials.
- Families and community members ought to understand the impact of play and directing of play into meaningful learning.
- The presence of care givers, community assistants or local teachers in the community is one major step that a community can undertake in the promotion of learning through play