African Consortium for Children's Rights (CADE) Forum

June 2026 - Tunis - Tunisia

Concept note

1. Context

Despite progress made in promoting and protecting children's rights in Africa, many children there face persistent challenges: poverty, armed conflict, violence, female genital mutilation, early marriage, child labor, malnutrition, and lack of access to education.

According to UNICEF data (2025), Africa is home to more than three-quarters of the world's children living in extreme monetary poverty—approximately 412 to 417 million children suffering from severe deprivation in at least two essential areas such as sanitation, nutrition, or housing.

Regarding harmful practices, approximately 130 million girls and women in Africa were married before the age of 18, with West and Central Africa having the highest prevalence in the world, affecting nearly 4 in 10 girls. Furthermore, more than 230 million girls and women worldwide have undergone female genital mutilation, including approximately 144 million on the African continent, according to joint estimates by UNICEF and UNFPA (2025).

Child labor is also a cause for concern: Africa remains the most affected region, with approximately 86.6 million children affected—nearly one in four—a figure on the rise due to recent economic and climate crises, according to the International Labour Organization and UNICEF (2025).

Finally, UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (2024/2025) highlights that, of the 251 million children and youth not in school worldwide, more than half are in Africa, where approximately one in five children of primary school age is excluded from the school system.

These factors constitute a serious violation of children's fundamental rights, jeopardizing their health, education, autonomy, and future.

In this context, the creation of the African Consortium for Children's Rights (CADE), dedicated to the protection and promotion of children's rights, aims to strengthen efforts in awareness-raising, advocacy, and collective action to help eliminate these factors. Today, CADE brings together 12 African countries and 51 civil society organizations (CSOs). (Complete list of member CSOs by country in the participants section).

The Consortium grounds its work in the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and recognized as the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history—with all African countries having ratified it—and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its approach is particularly aligned with SDG 5 on gender equality, notably through Target 5.3, which aims to eliminate all harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation. It contributes to the achievement of SDG 3 on

health and well-being by aligning with the African Union's 2026 theme, which highlights the importance of sustainable access to water and sanitation as essential determinants of health and dignity. It also aligns with SDG 16, which specifically targets protection from all forms of violence and access to a legal identity. By integrating the goals of SDG 4 for inclusive education and SDG 8.7 aimed at eliminating child labor, the Consortium reinforces a systemic approach in which the protection of fundamental rights—particularly those of girls—becomes the indispensable lever for sustainable and equitable human development on the continent.

2. Objectives of the event

This launch event aims to:

- Create a space for dialogue and reflection on female genital mutilation and child marriage,
- Mobilize institutional, business, scientific, and civil society partners,
- Collectively define priority areas of action for the Consortium's first year of operation,
- Align the Consortium's actions with the African Union's 2026 theme: "Ensuring the sustainable availability of water and safe sanitation systems to achieve the goals of Agenda 2063," by highlighting the links between health, hygiene, dignity, and the protection of girls' rights, particularly in the context of FGM and early marriage.

3. Format

The event will take place **June 16**,

Launch Forum and Strategic Discussion

Part one: official launch

This session will include:

- Official announcement of the Consortium's establishment,
- Presentation of the first year's priority theme: fighting female genital mutilation and child marriage,
- Intervention by institutional representatives, partners, and organizations committed to protecting children's rights,
- Intervention by experts and representatives from the scientific and medical communities, particularly from specialized organizations and professional networks.

Part two: workshops

The second part of the day will be devoted to participatory workshops bringing together experts, nonprofit representatives, healthcare professionals, legal experts, and civil society representatives.

The objectives of these workshops are:

- **Strategic networking and multi-stakeholder partnerships**:
  This space aims to foster the creation of sustainable synergies among stakeholders in the entrepreneurial and financial sectors, scientific experts, and civil society organizations. Beyond simply connecting people, the goal is to lay the groundwork for structured and committed collaboration, enabling the mobilization of resources, the sharing of expertise, and the co-creation of innovative solutions to protect children's

rights, particularly those of girls.

This initiative is part of a long-term vision aimed at fostering an ecosystem of committed stakeholders capable of supporting, funding, and facilitating high-impact actions.

- Work on advocacy,
- Identify concrete lines of action, define a roadmap and areas of focus,
- Define a medium- and long-term strategy for CADE.

4. Expected outcomes

At the end of the event, the following results are:

- The mobilization of institutional and scientific partners,
- Advocacy for the fight against female genital mutilation and early marriage, and the development of a strategic roadmap,
- Strengthen dialogue among stakeholders committed to protecting girls' rights in Africa,
- Increased visibility of the Consortium among institutional partners, the media, and the general public.

5. Participants

The event will bring together:

- Representatives from public institutions; the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.
- Diplomatic representatives from African countries,
- Representatives from UN agencies: UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA,
- A representative from the African Union (AU),
- A representative from the African Development Bank (AfDB),
- Civil Society Organizations,
- CSOs that are members of CADE **Cameroun**: APRODROFE, APVUD, COHEB, ARDHU, IP.S, RAPEES, ACOV • **Togo**: 2AEC, ONG ATPC, ONG ADA, IYAWO Association, CJET-AOC, ONG ATPDC, Enfant Surdité Avenir (ESA – Togo), ONG Les Idées Génies, ONG Canaan Village • **Tunisia:** ATDDE, IBSAR, SOS Villages d'Enfants (Tunisie) • **Ivoru Coast**: Eco Verte, AFECOS, ADAFPH, ONG DOVE CHILDREN • **Mali**: COMADE, APDEJ, GRADEM, SOS Villages d'Enfants (Mali), MRC MILOLO ONGD • **Burkina Faso**: Action Educ Plus, Association Tié, HRF, AFRICAN CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, ASEJ, APROSED, CASGV, Association Buaminyaba • **Mauritania**: AMDEO, Association El Moustaghbel, ADVEM • **Bénin**: MADEB, ONG ASEED, ONG ONASOV, ONG Enfant Épanouie, PEA-ONG • **RDC**: FONEST ASBL, LVM, EPF, MRC MILOLO ONGD • **Senegal**: APE, ONG PDEF, CONAFE • **Burundi**: ABUSED UMWANA SI UWUMWE, FENADEB,
- Experts and members of the scientific and medical community; the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), the African Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics (SAGO), Federation of Midwives' Associations of Africa (FASFA),
- Partners in the business community; Tunisia Africa Business Council (TABC), Confederation of Tunisian Corporate Citizens (CONECT),
- Representative of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF),
- Representative of CAWTER (Center of Arab Women for Training and Research).