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IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX OF THE COMMUNIQUE PSC/PR/COMM.1262 (2025) ADOPTED BY THE PSC OF THE AU, AT ITS 1262ND MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2025 ON THE FIGHT AGAINST THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS IN AFRICA.						
No	**Task (Specified and Implied)**	**Implementers/Responsibilities**	**Actions to be taken**	**Resource (s)**	**Implementation Timeline**	**Status/Observations**
1.	Strengthen accountability mechanisms to hold perpetrators of child recruitment and exploitation accountable.	AU Member States; RECs/RMs	Reinforce legal frameworks that prevent and criminalize the use of child soldiers; take decisive legal and punitive measures against all perpetrators.	N/A	Long-term	In progress ACERWC continues to promote compliance with IHL and IHRL through its engagement with Member States, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Furthermore, the ACERWC continually urges Member States, through the State Reporting process, to comply with their obligations under IHL and IHRL concerning the protection of children's rights AP-CAAC leadership and AP-CAAC Members continue to engage PSC Members on the implementation of decisions related to accountability for grave violations against children affected by armed conflict. High-level advocacy by SE-CAAC remains underway to strengthen the implementation of child protection frameworks.

2.	Address the root causes and structural drivers that expose children to recruitment and exploitation.	AU Member States; governments; stakeholders	Redouble investment in education, economic opportunities, food security and conflict-prevention measures to tackle poverty, political instability and inequality.	N/A	Long-term	Ongoing Efforts have been made to redouble investment in education, which include the adoption of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2026–2035 and the Decade of Accelerated Action for Education Transformation and Skills Development in Africa 2025–2034. Member States are being supported to align national education systems with CESA 26–35 through the CESA Cluster on Education in Emergencies, which promotes conflict-sensitive policies, education system resilience, continuity of learning, and monitoring of education-in-emergencies commitments, establishment of the Africa Teacher Forum that advocate in integration of education in national emergency response frameworks and promotes emergency planning for education in situations of conflict. The AU- ESTI has established an Education in Emergencies (EiE) Cluster to provide an important mechanism for bringing together Member States Regional Economic Communities, humanitarian and development partners, and relevant AU institutions to strengthen policy coherence, knowledge exchange, advocacy and coordinated action on education in crisis and conflict-affected contexts. The Special Envoy for Children Affected by Armed Conflict is in the process of launching an engagement campaign that advocates for the protection and continuity of education. Efforts by various departments and units are ongoing to support addressing poverty, political instability, and inequality, deploying humanitarian programmes, economic empowerment, and peacebuilding initiatives.

3.	Mainstream child protection into AU institutional responses and Peace Support Operations.	AU Commission	Integrate child protection into AU-mandated, authorized or endorsed Peace Support Operations to prevent violations and promote accountability in mission areas.	N/A	Long-term	Ongoing The AU Policy on Child Protection in AU Peace Support Operations was adopted in 2022, providing the normative framework for mainstreaming child protection across AU-mandated, authorised and endorsed PSOs. The Policy has been disseminated to relevant AU stakeholders, including RECs/RMs and Training Centres of Excellence, to support its implementation. A Child Protection Harmonised Curriculum has been developed and subsequently revised in 2025 to align with the Policy and address emerging child protection concerns, including harmful practices. The revised curriculum has been disseminated to relevant stakeholders and is being used to strengthen the capacity of PSO personnel and training institutions on child protection. Child protection has been integrated into the AU Compliance and Accountability Framework (AUCF), which provides mechanisms for monitoring compliance with applicable AU policies and standards in PSOs.
4.	Integrate child protection into mediation efforts and post-conflict reintegration strategies.	AU Member States; AU Commission; RECs/RMs	Embed child-focused reintegration in PCRD, Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes.	N/A	Long-term	In progress Normative frameworks for mainstreaming child protection in mediation, peace processes and PCRD are substantially in place. The AU Mediation Handbook is under review, with entry points for integrating child protection and CAAC considerations identified, while practical guidelines on child participation in mediation have been developed and validated. Capacity-building of mediation support experts, including through FemWise-Africa and WiseYouth, as well as CSOs, is ongoing to strengthen the integration of child protection into mediation, peace processes and peace agreements. The revised AU PCRD Policy includes a dedicated Child Protection pillar, which the Commission is progressively operationalising, including through QIPs supporting children undergoing DDR and other rehabilitation and reintegration interventions.

5.	Develop a Continental Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Framework for children affected by armed conflict.	AU Commission; relevant stakeholders	Expedite the development of the Framework to address the psychosocial needs of children, including those formerly associated with armed groups.	N/A	Short-term	Started. Stakeholder consultations have commenced to assess existing needs and gaps, and gather stakeholder perspectives on appropriate approaches and priorities to inform the development of a relevant and context-responsive Continental MHPSS Framework for children affected by armed conflict.
6.	Integrate child protection into national, regional and continental early warning systems.	AU Member States; AU Commission; RECs/RMs	Ensure timely identification of risks to children and adopt child-centred responses to mitigate vulnerabilities and prevent violations.	N/A	Long-term	Ongoing Child-sensitive early warning indicators have been jointly developed with RECs/RMs and are continuously being integrated into regional and continental early warning systems to strengthen the identification and analysis of risks and vulnerabilities affecting children in conflict situations. To guide practical implementation, the AU Operational Guidance Note (OGN) on Child-Sensitive Early Warning Systems and its accompanying Action Matrix have been developed, while collaboration with CSOs is being strengthened to facilitate the flow of child-specific risk information from community to early warning mechanisms. Ongoing efforts are focused on further institutionalising these tools and strengthening the generation of accurate and timely thematic, preventive and early action-oriented reports to inform conflict prevention and response.

7.	Prioritize the provision of essential services and tailored reintegration programmes for affected children.	AU Member States; stakeholders	Provide education, healthcare, psychosocial support and social care; design reintegration programmes that restore the dignity and rights of children recruited and exploited.	N/A	Long-term	In progress The Commission is working closely with CSOs as key implementation partners on the ground to strengthen the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict. Multiple capacity-building and training activities have been conducted with CSOs to strengthen their knowledge and practices on child-sensitive rehabilitation and reintegration and to align interventions at national and community levels with continental frameworks and standards, including the AU PCRD Policy. Ongoing collaboration with CSOs is aimed at strengthening coherence between continental policy commitments and practical reintegration support delivered to affected children on the ground.
8.	Facilitate the continuation of education in conflict situations and implement the Safe Schools Declaration.	AU Member States	Ensure continued education for children affected by armed conflict and implement the Safe Schools Declaration.	N/A	Long-term	Ongoing The PSC remains actively seized of the protection and continuity of education for children affected by armed conflict. The AU Special Envoy on CAAC, in collaboration with the AP-CAAC, is actively engaging Member States and advocating for the endorsement, domestication and implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration and its Guidelines. The Special Envoy is also launching a dedicated campaign on the protection and continuity of education, which will focus on translating continental commitments into concrete action on the ground and supporting Member States to strengthen safe, inclusive and continuous learning for conflict-affected children. Progress from these engagements will be consolidated and reported to the PSC.
9.	Provide and allocate substantial funding for child-focused and gender-sensitive programmes.	AU Member States; AU Commission; international community	Mobilize and allocate resources addressing the specific needs of children in conflict and post-conflict settings.	N/A	Long-term	Resource constraints continue to affect the full implementation of child-focused programmes. The Commission is actively addressing financing gaps through strategic partnerships and partner-funded initiatives to sustain and strengthen CAAC programming, while efforts continue to mobilise more predictable and dedicated resources for child protection priorities.

10.	Strengthen advocacy, knowledge-sharing and sustained engagement for the protection and reintegration of affected children.	AP-CAAC; stakeholders; international partners; CSOs; humanitarian agencies	Enhance coordination and awareness; sustain engagement with affected regions and communities to rehabilitate and reintegrate children formerly associated with armed groups and prevent re-recruitment.	N/A	Long-term	Ongoing The Special Envoy on CAAC, in collaboration with the AP-CAAC and other stakeholders, continues sustained advocacy, engagement and knowledge-sharing to strengthen the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict and prevent their re-recruitment.
11.	Promote the ratification, domestication and effective implementation of child protection instruments.	AU Member States	Ratify and domesticate the ACRWC, the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Safe Schools Declaration; implement their provisions effectively.	N/A	Long-term	Ongoing ACERWC through advocacy missions, continues to lobby and encourage Member States that have not yet signed the ACRWC to sign, ratify and transpose into domestic law. In April 2026, Somalia deposited the ratification instrument for the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, marking a significant increase in national commitment to protecting children's rights. Targeted joint advocacy by the AP-CAAC and SE-CAAC is ongoing to support the ratification of the ACRWC by the remaining three Member States.
12.	Enhance regular and continuous monitoring of the situation of children in conflict situations.	AU Commission; relevant stakeholders	Strengthen monitoring and promote a learning and knowledge-generation platform embodying the African reality of child protection.	N/A	Permanent	Ongoing The Banjul Process (scheduled to hold in 2026) provides an important platform for monitoring the situation of children in conflict situations through reporting by Member States and RECs/RMs. The ACERWC also continues to monitor the situation through its two ordinary sessions annually, during which Member States report on children's rights. In parallel, the AU Commission is strengthening child-sensitive early warning through the development and integration of child-sensitive indicators into regional and continental early warning systems, supported by the OGN and Action Matrix. Ongoing efforts focus on strengthening the systematic collection, analysis and use of child-specific information to inform early warning, preventive action and policy responses.

13.	Finalize the comprehensive study on child soldiers and institute annual reporting to the PSC.	ACERWC	Expedite finalization of the comprehensive study for presentation to the Policy Organs; produce an annual Africa Report on Children in Situations of Conflict and present it to the PSC annually.	N/A	Annual	ACERWC to update
14.	Appoint a Special Envoy for Children Affected by Armed Conflicts in Africa.	Chairperson of the AU Commission	Appoint the Special Envoy to facilitate the effective implementation of the AU Child Rights Agenda.	N/A	Short-term	The Special Envoy was appointed in January 2026, marking the operationalisation of the Child Protection Architecture as a subset of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). This development represents an important step in institutionalising continental leadership, reinforcing political oversight, and advancing coordinated implementation of the child rights and children affected by armed conflict (CAAC) agenda in Africa.