



INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

Inaugural Statement by the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) at the 30th Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC)

06 -16 December 2017, Khartoum, Sudan

Chairperson, the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) was granted Observer Status (Ref: OBS/019/2016) during the 28th Ordinary session held in Banjul, the Gambia. ISER is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which seeks to promote the effective understanding, monitoring, implementation, accountability, and full realization of Economic and Social Rights (ESRs) in Uganda and the region. Under its key thematic areas - the Right to Education, Right to Health and Business and Human Rights, ISER focuses on the child as a primary beneficiary of ESRs and one of the vulnerable groups which requires special protection from abuses.

ISER commends the efforts of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to promote and protect the human rights, fundamental freedoms and welfare of the African child. We hope to work with the Committee to ensure implementation of ESRs guaranteed under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

In Uganda, ESRs including the rights to health, food and water are accorded weak legal protection which has affected their realization especially amongst poor and vulnerable communities. The State continues to approach socio-economic issues as development goals, and the best interests of the child are hardly taken into account in policy design and implementation. Consequently children are susceptible to widespread, multiple and, systematic ESRs violations in Uganda.

Due to concentration on average national statistics without disaggregation, in assessing the State's socio-economic progress, special needs of vulnerable children continue to fall through the cracks. It is estimated that 10% of children of school going age in Uganda have disabilities and require special needs education yet only 5% access inclusive education and 10% are enrolled in special needs schools. In the health sector, only 10% of children with disabilities benefit from rehabilitation services. Although the State committed to invest 10% of the annual education budget to special needs education and provide supportive services to children with special needs in 2006, this is yet to be realized. There is need to move beyond the general statistics and address the barriers to access to education and healthcare for all children.

Currently, there is increased private sector involvement in service delivery with minimal State regulation and supervision. This has directly impacted on the quality of services offered as observed in the education sector. Child labour in business activities is also on the rise with minimal action from the State. ISER calls upon the Committee to develop a strong regulatory framework on Business and Human Rights and encourage its implementation by State parties to ensure that private actors respect human rights of children.

ISER's flagship effort in relation to the Committee is following up on Uganda's submission of its periodic State Report to the Committee which is long overdue. Once the State Report is submitted, we pledge to work with other Civil Society Organizations to prepare alternative reports and thereafter, continuously monitor and advocate for implementation of the Concluding Observations and Recommendations made by the Committee.