

GAP ANALYSIS REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 2025

STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY COMMITMENTS ON
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN ZAMBIA







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CERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CCA	Children's Code Act (No. 12 of 2022, Zambia)
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEC	Drug Enforcement Commission (Zambia)
ECE	Early Childhood Education
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IT	Information Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education (Zambia)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	National Registration Card
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

Foreword

Children are the foundation of any nation's future, and safeguarding their rights is not just a legal obligation but a moral imperative. Zambia, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), has demonstrated its commitment to creating an environment where every child can thrive, free from discrimination, violence, and deprivation.

This Gap Analysis Report serves as a critical assessment of Zambia's progress in fulfilling its commitments to children's rights, while also identifying the persistent challenges that hinder full implementation. The report highlights key legislative and policy advancements, such as the Children's Code Act (2022), which consolidates domestic and international child rights frameworks.

It also underscores the government's efforts in education, healthcare, social protection, and child safeguarding. However, significant gaps remain—ranging from inadequate infrastructure and resource disparities to cultural barriers and weak enforcement mechanisms—that demand urgent attention.

The findings in this report are drawn from the insights of civil society stakeholders, child rights experts, and frontline practitioners who witness the realities faced by Zambian children daily. Their contributions provide a grounded perspective on where progress has been made and where systemic failures persist.

As we look ahead, this report is not merely a critique but a call to action. It urges the government, development partners, civil society, and communities to collaborate in bridging these gaps through targeted interventions, stronger accountability mechanisms, and sustained investment in child-centered policies. Every child in Zambia deserves the opportunity to grow, learn, and develop in a safe and nurturing environment.

We hope this document serves as a catalyst for renewed commitment and collective effort toward realizing the full spectrum of children's rights in Zambia.

Isabel Mutembo Mukelabai
Executive Director

Introduction



Zambia became a State party and signed the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990. Under the Convention, State Parties are expected to report on their situation and progress on the rights of the child in their States. These reports are submitted within two years after the ratification and every five years thereafter. The reports usually outline the prevailing situation of children's rights and what the respective State Party is doing to ensure realisation of those rights. Ratification of the Convention on the Right of the Child entails that Zambia as a state party undertakes to align all its appropriate legislation, policies, administrative and other interventions towards the full realisation of the rights of the child. Zambia's most recent report on the rights of the Child was done in 2022; the next report will likely be made in 2028.

Under the regional child rights State accountability mechanisms, Zambia ratified the African Charter on the Rights and

Welfare of the Child in 2008 (ACRWC). This means Zambia has also committed to reflecting the rights of the child as mirrored in this Charter. The Charter outlines several rights reflecting both regional values and global commitments towards the rights and welfare of the child. Zambia recently made its State Party to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). The report reflected the period between 2019 to 2023. State Parties under this Charter are required to make their reports within two years after ratification and after three years thereafter.

At national level, Zambia has codified the rights applicable to the Child under the Constitution of Zambia (as amended by Act 2 of 2016) and a consolidated Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022. The Children's Code Act is both a source of identifying national recognition of children's rights and a legislative implementation of both the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

Given this three-layered commitment towards child rights in Zambia, the gap analysis report is a tool for highlighting key commitments on children rights; reflecting desired state of affairs, key progress and interventions towards that desired status and, the gaps that can be observed as Zambia makes strides towards implementation of children's rights. The gap analysis report focuses on key rights discussed by civil society stakeholders working in the child rights space in Zambia, sharing their experiences and observations on the implementation of various children's rights through a focus group discussion led by Child rights experts.

1

Right to Education



This right is recognised under article 28 of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) and article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). Zambia has made steps towards implementation and realisation of the right to education for the child. This has been done through both legislative and policy reforms, programme administration and implementation among other measures. Under legislative reforms, the Education Act No. 23 of 2011 under part IV makes progressive steps towards cementing the right to education, including early childhood education. Section 15 of the Act provides that a child has the right to free basic education. The Act also punishes wilful failure to enrol a child of school-going age in school. It also goes on to prohibit the contracting of marriages by learners, punishing anyone who enables learners to get into a marriage. Other matters provided under the Act are the provisions for the creation of an accessible environment for learners with disabilities (inclusion).

Other than the many legislative interventions which attempt to codify the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and, the UN Convention on the Right of a Child, government has made administrative measures such as school feeding programmes in schools to incentivise learners who come from vulnerable households; progressive implementation of school health services in various schools to ensure illnesses or poor health does not interfere with children’s education; distribution of menstrual pads for female learners; Inclusive Education Guidelines (2016); adoption of a re-entry policy for girls who get pregnant while in school; introduction of secondary school boarding bursaries to enable vulnerable children access boarding schools; increase in Constituency Development Funds to accommodate school infrastructure expansion and procurement of classroom desks among others.

While this progress is commendable, there exists observable gaps that need to be addressed by the government to realise the right to education for every child in Zambia. These gaps are:

- a.** Inadequate classroom infrastructure, making classrooms overcrowded in highly populated communities.
- b.** Lack of compliance to inclusive infrastructure requirements to ensure accessibility of school infrastructure for children with disabilities.
- c.** Geographical disparities in distribution of interventions such as school feeding, health room construction, WASH services, creating inequalities in access to quality education.
- d.** Inadequate infrastructure resulting in overcrowded spaces affecting the quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE).

- e. Few Early Childhood Education centres run by the government across the country, while those run by the private sector are costly.
- f. Inadequate human resources that are trained in Early Childhood Education, care and development.

2

Right to Life, Survival and Development

The right to life, survival and development is recognised through the provisions of article 12 of the Constitution of Zambia, which protects the right to life of every person in Zambia. Article 12(2) of the Constitution protects the right to life of the unborn child. Zambia's legislative implementation also includes the Termination of Pregnancy Act, Chapter 304 of the Laws of Zambia, which further protects the right to life of an unborn child from losing its life unless certain circumstances are present such as the viability of the pregnancy itself or potential danger to the life of the mother.

The government has prioritised the construction of maternity annexes at health facilities and ensuring that newly constructed facilities on government plans and budgets have a maternity annex and mother shelter. This has been listed as Presidential Delivery Unit Presidential priority area for fast-tracking progress.

With regards to Child Development, Zambia introduced Early Childhood Education (ECE) Policy in 2014 which has helped to increase access and facilities for Early Childhood Education for children below the school age and promote positive parenting skills. The introduction of various feeding and nutritional interventions in schools has further contributed to the implementation of child development.

Socio-economic interventions through the Constituency Development Fund are also another attempt at increasing household income and in turn enable families in low-income settings to ably provide for their children and families.

Despite this progress, there still exist gaps in implementation which include;

- a. High infant mortality.
- b. Very few maternity annexes.

3

Right to Express

This right is expression is provided for under articles 12 and 13 of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) and under article 7 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). There is legislative progress in implementing the right to expression for the Child in Zambia, paving way for administrative and other interventions. Section 4(e) of the Children's Code Act provides for child participation and respect for the views of the child in all spheres of life. Section 6 of the Children's Code Act also provides for the right to expression while Section 21 of the same Act provides that a child is entitled to rest, leisure, play and participate in cultural and artistic activities appropriate to the age of that child, all capture the means and manner in which children express themselves and must be respected while upholding the principle of 'best interest of the child' ensuring age-appropriate realisation of the rights. Zambia also has a National Child Participation framework which aims to provide procedures and practices for child participation, focusing on promoting and advocating for child rights and well-being.

Despite these legislative and policy steps, there are still gaps in making administrative interventions to ensure the rights of children are fully realised and understood in Zambia. These gaps are outlined below:

- a.** There is a limited availability of publicly accessible, age-appropriate play and leisure spaces for children across the country. While some facilities exist, particularly those provided by the private sector, they are often commercialised and unaffordable for many children, especially those from low-income households.
- b.** Town and city planning by Local Authorities has generally failed to adequately integrate designated play and leisure spaces for children.
- c.** Children are often included in participatory processes in a symbolic manner, where their input is solicited but not meaningfully incorporated into final decisions or policy outcomes. This limits genuine child participation and undermines the intent of child-inclusive governance frameworks.

4

Right to Name and Nationality

This right is codified under article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and article 6 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child.

Zambia has been able to record steps in implementing article 7 of the CRC and article 6 of the African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child, through the provisions of section 8 of the Children’s Code Act which provide that a child has a right to a name and nationality, at birth, and where that is deprived, the State shall appropriate assistance to ensure the identity of the child is established.

Administratively, the government has accelerated decentralised efforts for birth registration in line with section 8 of the Children’s Code Act. The government has also intensified national registration interventions to ensure national identity cards are acquired by most children attaining the age of 16, with the aid of mobile centres to bridge the gaps of long distances to physical centres.

Despite this, there still remains gaps in actualising this right through administrative. The gaps identified include;

- a.** Long and complicated process of acquiring a birth certificate.
- b.** Long distances to registration centres.

5

Prohibition of Discrimination Against a Child

There are legislative interventions on the implementation of this right under section 7 of the Children’s Code Act, which domesticated both international and regional child rights instruments. There are some gaps still hindering the full enjoyment of this right including;

- a.** Stigma surrounding children that fall pregnant and children with disabilities.
- b.** Children from vulnerable backgrounds face barriers in accessing education and health services.
- c.** Children are also discriminated against on the basis of age from participating in decisions affecting them.
- d.** Children with disabilities face stigma, limiting their access to inclusive education, healthcare and recreational facilities.
- e.** Limited awareness of children’s rights among communities and service providers.

6

Right to Parental Care

Other than legislative interventions, stakeholders observed that administrative interventions have been put in place, leaning towards breaking away from institutionalised care of children to fostering where biological parents are not present due to death or otherwise to provide parental care. This notwithstanding, the situation in the country still presents some gaps;

- a.** There is a lack of accurate, real-time data on the prevalence and dynamics of street-connected children in Zambia. This data gap makes it difficult to assess the true scale of streetism and to design effective, targeted interventions, despite the existence of the Street Outreach Guidelines introduced by the government.
- b.** Parental neglect of children still prevalent in Zambia.
- c.** Government currently lacks investment in places of safety, largely relying on private services providers who lack training of child protection protocols, lack adequate infrastructure and operational support to effectively offer care for children in institutional care



7

Right to Healthcare

This right is recognised under article 24 of the CRC and article 14 of the ACRWC. Zambia has made legislative interventions to implement the child's right to healthcare, bridging the gap between international, regional and national legal frameworks. Administratively, the government has over the years increased the presence of rural healthcare facilities. During its reporting to the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Zambia indicated that the number of health facilities increased from 1,080 in 2017 to 1,161 in 2023. Many other programs and institutionalised interventions such as school feeding and school health services in Schools, aim to promote child health and disease prevention in schools. The government has also put in place adolescent and child health strategic plans that aim at addressing disease burden, health behaviour and health promotion among children in schools and out of school. The Government through the Ministry of Education has established a School Health and Nutrition directorate responsible for attending to the health and wellbeing of learners and cooperating with line ministries and other stakeholders to achieve this.

Stakeholders also observed several gaps in the implementation of this right, the gaps included the following among others;

- a.** Inadequate maternity annexes
- b.** Drug shortages in health facilities.
- c.** Few health facilities with specialised paediatric care units.
- d.** Harmful cultural and religious practices preventing access to health by children of parents belonging to radical cultural or religious groups.

- e. few maternity annexes at healthcare facilities to address child health at birth.
- f. Low and donor dependent healthcare financing.

8 Right to Social Protection and Social Services

Right to social protection and social services
 This right is recognised under article 27 of the CRC. In addition to legislative interventions under the Children’s Code Act, Zambia has an updated National Social Protection Policy (2025), which addresses social protection from birth up to old age, addressing poor and vulnerable people including children. Despite this, there are observable gaps which hinder the full of enjoyment of this right by children in Zambia, which include;

- a. Limited awareness levels on the existence of such policies and laws, hindering the most vulnerable and poor children from accessing.
- b. Lack of prioritisation of social protection programmes and projects using CDF.
- c. Heavily donor dependent social protection and social services programs.
- d. Social protection programmes often suffer from weak targeting mechanisms, resulting in the exclusion of some of the most vulnerable children while inadvertently benefiting less needy households. This misalignment reduces the overall impact and efficiency of interventions intended to support poor and at-risk children.

9

Protection from Child Labour

The government has made some progress in the area of legislative, policy and administrative interventions to realise this right. Some of the notable interventions the Children’s Code Act which serves as codified domestic law against child labour, the Employment Code Act, the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour 2020-2025 and the commemoration of World Day Against Child Labour to raise awareness and sensitise citizens around child labour. Despite this, stakeholders have observed the following gaps;

- a. There have been limited sensitisation and awareness-raising efforts by government agencies, local authorities and civil society organisations on the dangers and legal implications of child labour. As a result, many communities, particularly in rural and informal sectors remain unaware of child labour laws and the harmful effects of involving children in exploitative work.
- b. Ignorance among children, informal employment sector and society on available labour laws and policies prohibiting their actions.
- c. High levels of child labour in informal sector, which may be wilful and at times ignorance.
- d. There is a lack of targeted empowerment initiatives for households with vulnerable children engaged in child labour, limiting the effectiveness of prevention and withdrawal strategies.

10

Protection from Armed Conflict

Though Zambia has not experienced the evils of armed conflict and involved children as child soldiers or recruited in any manner, the government has still provided for protection of children from armed conflict or recruitment in such comprehensively through the Children's Code Act. The provision is the only known intervention so far with regards to this right. Stakeholders observed gaps that may make implementation of these provisions challenging;

- a.** No guidelines have been put in place to guide how such provisions can be administratively acted on.
- b.** No shelters and rehabilitation centres for purposes of safeguarding children that are victims of such vices.



11

Rights of the Child with Disabilities



This right is provided for under article 23 of the CRC and article 13 of the ACRWC. Zambia has made some progress in ensuring children living with disabilities are protected and face no discrimination. From a legislative point, the Children's Code Act, Persons With Disabilities Act, National Disability Policy, all these laws supplement the fundamental rights under the Constitution of Zambia providing for non-discrimination.

Despite these legislative and numerous policy pronouncements to give effect to these rights, gaps still exist which can hinder the enjoyment of this right for many children in Zambia.

- a.** Most public and private facilities such as schools, health facilities, shopping areas, recreational facilities are not disability friendly.
- b.** There are a lot of harmful cultural practices against living with albinism.

12

Protection of Children on the Move



This right is recognised under article 22 of the CRC and article 23 of the ACRWC. The government has put in place various legislative interventions to protect children on the move and guarantee their rights in Zambia. The Children’s Code Act is the pillar of this right and is supplemented by other pieces of legislation such as the Anti-Human Trafficking Act and the Refugees Act. Despite this, there are some gaps observed by stakeholders.

- a. Limited transit facilities for trafficked individuals with children.
- b. Poor integration mechanisms for children on the move to support them success in the host country where they come from a foreign nation.

13

Protection from Maltreatment and Other Forms of Exploitation

This right is provided for under article 19 of the CRC and article 16 of the ACRWC. Other than the Children’s Code Act, the government through the National Prosecution Authority has in place a Prosecutor’s handbook on sexual violence which provides for various forms of exploitation and how Prosecutors can handle such cases to protect child victims. However, gaps still exist as we continue to implement this, particularly the issue to do with public sensitisation and awareness on the various forms of exploitation and how citizens can proactively intervene when such a violation comes to their knowledge.



Protection from Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage



The Children’s Code Act has set the tone for the protection of this right. The Marriage Act (Amendment) has also provided for protection of children from entering into marriages and extends this protection and prohibition to customary law settings. However, despite these legal advances, enforcement remains weak and harmful practices continue in some parts of the country. Several administrative and systemic challenges were identified that hinder effective enforcement of these laws.

a. A key issue is the limited capacity and training of law enforcement officers and local authorities, particularly in rural areas, to detect, report and respond appropriately to cases of FGM and child marriage.

b. Weak birth and marriage registration systems also pose a major barrier. Without proper documentation, it becomes difficult to verify the age of individuals, allowing underage marriages to occur undetected.

In many communities, child marriage and FGM cases go unreported due to fear of stigma, community backlash, or lack of trust in formal justice systems.

c. Sensitisation on the legal provisions and harmful consequences of these practices remains limited, especially in remote and traditional areas.

d. There is also a lack of consistent prosecution and legal follow-through for perpetrators. This not only undermines deterrence but also erodes public confidence in the justice system. As a result, the continued practice of child marriage and FGM points not to gaps in legislation, but to serious administrative and implementation shortcomings that need urgent attention.



15 Protection from Sexual Exploitation

The government has made bold steps in protecting children from sexual exploitation and prosecuting offenders by putting in place both legislative and other interventions such as the National Child Safeguarding Framework with accompanying guidelines; establishment of a child protection unit, increased awareness efforts in partnership with civil society, guidelines for protecting child victims and witnesses, the Anti-Gender based violence Act and the Children's Code Act itself and a Prosecutors handbook in prosecuting gender based violence.

There are still observable gaps that stakeholders identified as needing to be closed;



- a. Weak coordination between child welfare institutions
- b. A lot of unreported cases (especially when relatives are involved).
- c. Lack of safe houses for victims and witnesses (child victims go back to the environment where their sexual exploitation happened).
- d. Insufficient training on child rights for people handling child matters.

16 Protection from Hallucinogens, Alcohol, Tobacco Products, Drugs, and Precursor Chemicals

This protection is guaranteed under article 33 of the CRC and article 28 of the ACWRC. The government of Zambia has put in place several legislative interventions to address this right and ensure children are fully protected. The 2023 National Policy on Drug and Alcohol Control, the Liquor Licensing Act of 2011, the National Alcohol Policy of 2018, the Compulsory Standards Act of 2017, the Zambia National Public Health Act No. 19 of 2020 are among the policy and legislative implementation steps. There is also collaboration with multi-sectoral actors such the collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Drug Enforcement Commission on sensitisation and counselling on substance abuse



17

Right to Leisure and Recreation



This right is recognised under article 31 of the CRC and article 12 of the ACRWC. Section 21 of the Children’s Code Act provides for a child’s right to rest, leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities which are age appropriate as an entitlement. This legislative step is commendable and shapes the realisation of article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (1989) which joins State Parties to the recognition of the child’s right to rest and leisure, including participation in the cultural and artistic activities appropriate for a child’s age and maturity. These legislative steps cannot alone ensure full realisation of these rights without curing the following identified gaps:

- a.** Limited government owned recreational facilities appropriate for children and in some districts no such facilities at all.
- b.** Lack of proper, publicly available blueprint development plans for statutory and customary lands to reflect play parks or child friendly entertainment centres.

18

Protection from Corporal Punishment

Stakeholders revealed that though the realisation of this right has been difficult in our society, the government has made steps towards its recognition through the Children’s Code Act and other administrative interventions by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services which has in place positive parenting manuals to assist with sensitisation on positive parenting. There are gaps that stakeholders identified needing both government and civil society interventions;

- a.** Corporal punishment is still administered in some schools, communities, people in authority and homes.
- b.** Children and adults are not aware that corporal punishment is wrong
- c.** Unreported cases of corporal punishment still keep the violation hidden.



19

Protection from Torture and Deprivation of Liberty



This right is provided for under article 16 of the ACRWC. Stakeholders acknowledge the recognition of this right under the Children's Code Act, which is commendable in supplementing the Constitutional protection against torture, degrading and inhumane treatment. They however bemoaned a number of gaps which included;

- a. Children are still being remanded in custody for long periods.
- b. Limited understanding by Law Enforcement Officers of their role in implementing diversion as a matter of first instance.



20

Right to Privacy

The country has made several legislative interventions to safeguard a child's right to privacy through the Children's Code Act. Section 24 of the Act guarantees this right, appropriate to the age and maturity of the child. More laws such as the Data protection Act No.3 of 2021 which protects children as data subjects. There is also a National Child Protection Policy, Street Outreach Guidelines, National Child Safeguarding Framework among other administrative interventions in place to protect children's right to privacy.

There are however a number of gaps which include;

- a. Limited sensitisation on the meaning and implication on this right to parents, guardians, public and private institutions as well as what their duty and responsibilities are. Without comprehensive guidelines, this remains text on paper and nothing more.
- b. Lack of enforcement of the Data Protection Act on non-complying companies and organisations handling data relating to children and data generally.
- c. Children's right to privacy being undervalued especially in homes, communities, media and schools etc.

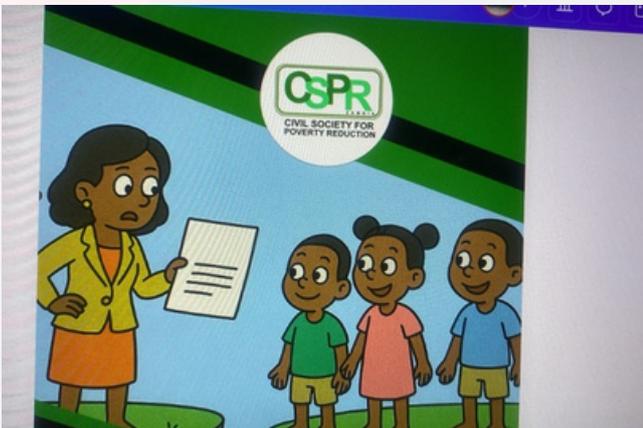


Rights of Child Witness or Victim



The Children’s Code Act provides for this right, making it a positive legislative step in the implementation status on this right. Stakeholders also expressed that there are Guidelines on protection of child witnesses and victims. Despite this, there are still some notable gaps in the country’s implementation status;

- a. Lack of protective custody during legal proceedings
- b. Limited psycho social support for child witnesses and victims
- c. Lack of technological and IT materials in rural areas for court proceedings to be more child sensitive.



22

Conclusion

This Gap Analysis Report highlights both the progress and persistent challenges in Zambia's implementation of key commitments to children's rights. Legislative and policy advancements, such as the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022 and targeted interventions in education, healthcare and social protection, reflect the government's dedication to upholding international and regional obligations. However, significant gaps remain, ranging from inadequate infrastructure and resource disparities to cultural barriers and weak enforcement mechanisms, highlighting the urgent need for systemic reforms.

The findings reveal critical shortcomings, including limited access to inclusive education, high infant mortality, insufficient child participation mechanisms and enduring harmful practices like child marriage and corporal punishment. These gaps are worsened by uneven service delivery, donor dependency and low public awareness of children's rights.

To realise the full spectrum of children's rights, Zambia must prioritise collaborative action. This includes strengthening accountability frameworks, increasing budgetary allocations for child-centred programmes and promoting partnerships between government, civil society and communities. Every child deserves a safe, nurturing environment to thrive, a goal that demands sustained commitment and targeted investment. This report serves as both a reflection of the current state and a call to action for all stakeholders to bridge these gaps and secure a brighter future for Zambia's children.

23

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this Gap Analysis Report, the following actionable recommendations are proposed to address the identified gaps and accelerate progress towards fulfilling children's rights in Zambia:

1. Legislative and Policy Enforcement

Strengthen implementation of the Children's Code Act No. 12 of 2022 and harmonise customary laws with statutory frameworks, particularly regarding child marriage, corporal punishment and discrimination.

Develop clear guidelines for law enforcement, social workers and local authorities to operationalise child protection laws, including diversion programmes for children in conflict with the law.

2. Education and Early Childhood Development

Expand infrastructure to reduce overcrowding, particularly in rural schools and enforce disability-inclusive design standards.

Scale up government-funded Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres and train more ECE teachers to improve accessibility and quality. Ensure equitable distribution of interventions (e.g., school feeding programmes, WASH facilities) to bridge geographical disparities.

3. Healthcare and Child Welfare

Increase investment in maternal and paediatric healthcare, including the construction of maternity annexes and specialised paediatric units.

Address drug shortages by boosting domestic healthcare financing and reducing donor dependency.

Combat harmful cultural practices through community sensitisation, working with traditional leaders to promote child health rights.

4. Social Protection and Child Safeguarding
Improve targeting mechanisms for social protection programmes (e.g., cash transfers) to reach the most vulnerable children.

Establish state-owned safe houses for victims of abuse, trafficking and exploitation, with psychosocial support services.

Enhance birth registration systems by deploying mobile units to remote areas and simplifying application processes.

5. Awareness and Capacity Building
Launch nationwide campaigns to educate communities, parents and children on rights under the Children’s Code Act.

Train professionals (teachers, police, judiciary) on child-friendly procedures, particularly for handling cases involving child witnesses or victims.

Promote meaningful child participation by decentralising platforms like school councils and youth parliaments to rural areas.

Protection from torture and deprivation of liberty

Desired state:
Timely and child-appropriate interventions for children in conflict with the law, including use of diversion as the first response.

Root cause:
Although the Children’s Code Act provides for protection, its practical implementation is still evolving.



RIGHT	CURRENT STATUS	DESIRED STATE	GAP	ROOT CAUSES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Right to Survival and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The constitution provides for the right to life Termination of pregnancy Act Nutritional programs that support child development Early childhood development Disease prevention programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced infant mortality rate. Increased access to early childhood development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High infant mortality Poor nutrition Few children have access to early childhood development. Inadequate human resource that are trained in early childhood Very few maternity annexes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government has a few early childhood centres (access) Few colleges offer early childhood training The fees for private owned early childhood centres are high Little to no access to health services Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build more maternity annexes for easy access Strengthen the child feeding programs in schools and communities. Train more early childhood teachers. Establishment of more government owned early childhood centres that are affordable. Raise awareness for parents to know the importance of the child's formative years. Introduce incentives for community-based volunteers. Sensitise parents on nutritional values
Right to expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is provided for in the CCA We have the National child participation framework Structures in place that promote child participation (Junior mayors, councillors, School councils). National Child Policy is in place which speaks to child participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation of children's views in decision making platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited opportunities and spaces for child participation Children in the rural areas are disadvantaged in decision making spaces Participation of children in most settings is not meaningful Lack of mentorship programs to help children participate in decision making programs. Cultural norms and practices hinder child participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is an assumption that children do not know anything. lack of decentralisation of opportunities for children in rural areas. Lack of mentorship programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have child friendly governance structures. Increase mentorship and capacity building programmes to promote meaningful child participation. Harmonisation of Awareness raising among traditional leaders on child participation
Prohibition of discrimination against a child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is provided for in the CCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero discrimination of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a stigma surrounding children that fall pregnant and children with disabilities. Children from vulnerable backgrounds face barriers in accessing education and health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ignorance around the right prohibiting discrimination against children Harmful cultural practices against children living with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have more programs that promote inclusion of children. Awareness raising on the non-discrimination principle Safe homes for children suffering from disabilities.

<p>Right to name and nationality</p>	<p>-Decentralisation program to intensify birth registration. -On going National registration of citizens</p>	<p>-National registration of every child.</p>	<p>-Long complicated process of acquiring birth certificates. -Complicated process of obtaining National registration cards -Limited registration offices.</p>	<p>-Administrative issues -Failure to interpret the right to identity and nationality -Lack of awareness of the importance of birth and national registration</p>	<p>-Easy access to acquiring birth certificates. - Birth certificates should be given within 2 weeks of birth -Govt must effect mobile NRC and birth registration centres to support the decentralisation process. -Raise awareness on the importance of national and birth registration</p>
<p>Right to parental care</p>	<p>-Manual on parenting by the ministry of community development</p>	<p>-Positive parenting -All children grow up in a safe, loving and nurturing environment.</p>	<p>-Some children are being raised by people other than biological parents. -Parental neglect</p>	<p>-A lot of child mothers with inexperience of providing childcare -Poverty, unemployment, incarceration of parents -Absent parents -Harmful traditional parenting methods that are not in tandem with children's rights.</p>	<p>-Effective implementation of foster care programme for homeless children. -Govt should enhance collaboration with of key stakeholders (religious actors, traditional leaders, parents, guardians,)</p>

<p>Right to Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Education for all policy -Re-entry policy -School feeding programmes -CCA -School health programmes -CDF Secondary school boarding bursaries, school infrastructure (desks, building) -Introduction of early childhood education facilities across the country -Govt/NGO collaboration to construct more schools in areas without schools to reduce walking distances. -Keeping girls in school programmes, e.g free distribution of menstrual hygiene products. -Govt is now training early childhood teachers. Involvement of traditional leaders in advocating for children's education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased number of teachers deployed. -equal distribution of feeding programs -Increased enrollment of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -High pupil-teacher ratio. -Inadequate school materials. -Non-compliant institutions with disability friendly infrastructure -disparities in the distribution of intervention e.g school feeding programmes, WASH services, creating inequalities in access to education. -Sexual and physical abuse of children in schools. -Lack of preparedness in times of pandemics and disasters. -Desk procurement goes beyond the capacity of school classrooms in some schools. -Lack of sufficient needs assessment prior to implementing the new curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited classroom spaces and schools to accommodate the pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase the number of teachers deployed yearly. -Strengthen cooperation with CSO's on feeding programs. -Building of more infrastructures. -Orientation of teachers on the new curriculum. -Build schools that are easily accessible to children with disabilities. - Govt should come up with a standardised blueprint for school infrastructure.
<p>Right to health care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Government has put in place an adolescent and child health strategic plan -School health and nutrition guidelines. -Mass drug administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -All children have access to quality health care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Long distances to health facilities -Inadequate maternity annexes -drug shortages -Few health facilities with specialised pediatric services -High infant mortality rate -Inconsistent mass drug administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -bad consumption habits by children caregivers -Harmful cultural and religious practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Consistent mass drug administration -Construction of more health centres within reach - Deployment of qualified health/specialised health workers in rural areas. -Strengthened awareness programmes on different health care services for children. -Build more maternity annexes -Increased budgetary allocation towards procurement of drugs. -Increased investment on research to improve health care services.

<p>Right to social protection and social services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social cash transfer -Loans and grants under CDF for improved livelihood -Cash for work -National social protection policy 2025 -Food for work -National street outreach guidelines 	<p>-Equal distribution of social cash transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited levels of awareness on these policies laws and interventions -We are heavily donor dependant for social protection interventions -The social protection programs do not reach deserving children in rural areas. -lengthy applications processes for CDF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Poverty -Increase in child led homes 	<p>-Increased domestic resource mobilisation towards social protection and social services.</p>
<p>Protection from child labour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour 2020-2025. -Employment Code Act -Commemoration of World Day Against Child Labour 	<p>-Zero child labour cases in Zambia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited sensitisation on dangers of child labour. -High levels of child labour in informal sector -Ignorance of the existence of the laws against child labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -High poverty levels -High demand for cheap labour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthen sensitisation and awareness programs on child labour. -Increase reach for social protection programs -Increase penalties of perpetrators of the worst forms of child labour. -Strengthen labour inspections. -Increase staffing for labour inspection.
<p>Protection from armed conflict</p>	<p>-Provision is provided for in the CCA</p>	<p>-No child involved in armed conflict</p>	<p>-Lack of guidelines.</p>	<p>-Political instability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop guidelines for protection of children from armed conflict. -Govt must ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the rights of the child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
<p>Rights of the child with disabilities</p>	<p>The disability Act provides for this provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Zero discrimination of children with disabilities -Zero discrimination of all children. 	<p>Most facilities are not disability friendly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -People keep children with severe disabilities at home rather than taking them to special institutions. -There are a lot of harmful cultural practices against children living with albinism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ignorance around how children with disabilities and special needs should be treated -Harmful cultural practices against children with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased awareness of the special needs and rights of children living with disabilities. -Have more disability friendly structures.

<p>Right to social protection and social services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social cash transfer -Loans and grants under CDF for improved livelihood -Cash for work -National social protection policy 2025 -Food for work -National street outreach guidelines 	<p>-Equal distribution of social cash transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited levels of awareness on these policies laws and interventions -We are heavily donor dependant for social protection interventions -The social protection programs do not reach deserving children in rural areas. -lengthy applications processes for CDF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Poverty -Increase in child led homes - 	<p>-Increased domestic resource mobilisation towards social protection and social services.</p>
<p>Protection of children on the move</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -CCA provides for this. -The Anti-Human Trafficking Act -The Refugee Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Zero child trafficking cases. -Increased protection mechanisms for children with refugees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Limited transit facilities for trafficked individuals with children. -Poor integration mechanisms for children on the move. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Civil instability in countries of origin. -Porous border controls. -Labour migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create more transit facilities for trafficked individuals with children. -strengthen integration mechanisms for children on the move.
<p>Protection from maltreatment and other forms of exploitation</p>	<p>-Prosecutor's handbook on sexual violence provides for various forms of exploitation.</p>	<p>-Comprehensive child protection and safeguarding.</p>	<p>-Lack of awareness by the public of the various forms of exploitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - harmful cultural and religious practices -Unrestricted exposure to age inappropriate online content. -Lack of parental care -Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Raise awareness on the various forms of exploitation. -Aggressively implement safeguarding and child protection policies in organisations working with children.
<p>Protection from female genital mutilation, child marriage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National strategy on ending child marriage 2025-2029 -Implementation plan and monitoring and evaluation framework on ending child marriage. -Marriage amendment Act of 2023 	<p>-Zero child marriage, female genital mutilation cases.</p>	<p>-weak enforcement of the laws relating to child marriages.</p>	<p>-Harmful cultural practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthened collaboration between traditional leaders and the government in ending child marriage. -harmonisation of customary laws and statutory laws governing marriage. -Increased awareness campaigns on the dangers of child marriages. -Increased enforcements in rural areas

<p>Protection from sexual exploitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National Child Safeguarding Framework is in place with accompanying guidelines. -CCA is in place that is expressly providing for this right -Establishment of child protection unit -Increased civic space for advocacy against sexual exploitation -There are efforts towards punishing child offenders -Anti GBV Act is in place -Guidelines in place for child victims and witnesses. -Prosecutor's handbook on child sexual violence. 	<p>-Reduced cases of child sexual exploitation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Weak coordination between child welfare institutions -A lot of unreported cases (especially when relatives are involved). -Lack of safe houses -insufficient training on child rights for people handling child matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fear of witchcraft -Lack of government owned safe houses -cultural teachings. -religious practices. -pro-longed legal proceedings when handling cases involving sexual abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -stakeholders handling children should undergo training on child rights and child safeguarding -Creation of more state-owned safe houses -Increase child friendly spaces for children to report sexual exploitation and abuse. -Avoid prolonged trials for victims of sexual exploitation. -increase structures to fast track sexual exploitation cases
<p>Protection from hallucinogens, alcohol, tobacco products, drugs, and precursor chemicals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There is policy and legal framework; -2023 National Policy on Drug and Alcohol Control -The Liquor Licensing Act of 2011 -The National Alcohol Policy of 2018 -The Compulsory Standards Act of 2017 -The Zambia National Public Health Act No. 19 of 2020. -Collaboration between the MoE and DEC on sensitisation and counselling on substance abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Holistic implementation of the existing policies and laws. -Enforcement of strict punishment for non-compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Weak implementation/enforcement of the existing policies and laws. -Limited awareness and sensitisation and legal consequences drug abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Easy access to drugs compromised ethics from the people who sale drugs unresolved mental health issues peer pressure parental neglect Adult influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strengthen monitoring of local authorities for compliance and enforcement of punitive measures strengthened sensitization and awareness programs(Children, Parents and the community) Strong collaboration efforts between different stakeholders. -Fast tracking the enactment of the

<p>Right to leisure and recreation</p>	<p>UNICEF in conjunction with Ministry of Community Service are trying to promote playing with children</p>	<p>-A state where this right is recognised (Actual play parks and recreational centres that can be accessed by all children)</p>	<p>-Limited government owned play parks or recreation facilities They are not conducive for children Few government schools have play parks Lack of recognising leisure and recreation as right.</p>	<p>-Inadequate resources allocated to play parks in schools. -Lack of prioritisation towards play and recreation</p>	<p>-Government to create more play parks raise awareness of this right. -Government should put in place proper guidelines on the running of play park -Increased budget allocation to recreational facilities -Have disability friendly play parks</p>
<p>Protection from corporal punishment</p>	<p>It is prohibited in the CCA -The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services has a manual on positive parenting.</p>	<p>-Children are free from corporal punishment at community, school and household levels.</p>	<p>-Corporal punishment is still administered in some schools, communities, people in authority and homes. -Children and adults are not aware that corporal punishment is wrong -Un reported cases of corporal punishment</p>	<p>-It is still seen as a measure of discipline -Ignorance of alternative measures of discipline - Ignorance of the mental, physical and emotional harm of corporal punishment.</p>	<p>-Heighten awareness raising on abolishment of corporal punishment. -Raise awareness on the effects of corporal punishment on the child. -Translate the positive parenting manual in various local languages. -Align the customary law with the CCA.</p>
<p>Protection from torture and deprivation of liberty</p>	<p>-We have a legal framework for this right</p>		<p>-Children are still being tortured -Children are still being remanded in custody for long periods - Limited understanding by Law Enforcement Officers of their role in implementing diversion as a matter of first instance.</p>		<p>-Capacity building of law enforcement officers on the CCA provisions against torture and deprivation of liberty. - Capacity building for law enforcement officers.</p>
<p>Right to privacy</p>	<p>Cyber Crimes Act, Data Protection Act, National Child Protection Policy, Street Outreach Guidelines, National Child Safeguarding Framework, Children's Code Act etc are in place to protect children's right to privacy.</p>	<p>-Children's right to privacy is protected and respected. -Sanctioning of people that violate children's right to privacy. -Companies and organisations have safeguarding and child protection policies.</p>	<p>-Children's right to privacy is undervalued esp. in homes, communities, media and schools etc. - Limited sensitisation of what children's right to privacy is.</p>	<p>-Limited levels of awareness of what children's right to privacy is. -Cultural norms which give authority to adults to invade children's privacy.</p>	<p>-Increase awareness on the children's right to privacy. - Training of people dealing with children on child rights to privacy (caregivers, teachers, social welfare officers, parents, guardians etc)</p>
<p>Rights of child witness or child victim</p>	<p>-It is expressly provided for by the law - Guidelines on protection of child witnesses and victims</p>	<p>Child witnesses and victims comprehensively protected</p>	<p>-Lack of protective custody during legal proceedings -Limited psycho social support for child witnesses and victims - Lack of technological and IT materials in rural areas</p>	<p>-Lack of human and financial resources -There is no proper integrated coordination between different stakeholders.</p>	<p>-Government to collaborate with various CSO's to effectively support child witnesses and victims. -Government to provide safe house for child witnesses and victims.</p>



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