



CHILDREN STILL UNEQUAL



CHILD'S RIGHTS MUST BE EXECUTED

EVERY African government has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and most of them have also ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

But the ratification of international and regional instruments does not automatically prove commitment, and unless accompanied by political will and actions by governments, it will not translate into reality, says the African Child Policy forum (ACPF) in its Child-Friendliness Index.

For example, nearly 30 years after most African governments ratified both the convention and the charter, African girls have yet to be given equal treatment in law.

ACPF executive director Assefa Bequele said that although many African governments have become child-friendly over the last 10 years, there are equally many that are locked in the "less" or "least child-friendly" categories for many years.

"Millions of children are therefore not benefiting from the legal protection they deserve and from the quality education, health and nutrition, and minimum levels of social protection they very much need.

"It also draws attention to the widespread prevalence of disturbing levels of undernutrition and poor quality of education – the two major threats to the well-being of Africa's children," Bequele said.

Under the late Nelson Mandela, South Africa's then infant democracy ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on June 16, 1995, the first international treaty ratified by the new government.

It was endorsed by section 28 of the Bill of Rights, which guarantees various children's rights.

NO 1 AFRICAN CITY JOHANNESBURG



ANTOINE DE RAS

AFRICA'S MOST POPULAR CITY

JOHANNESBURG has emerged as the most popular destination city in Africa for the fifth consecutive year, according to the annual Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index.

The City of Gold attracted 4.05 million international overnight visitors in 2017. Close on its heels, Marrakech in Morocco is the second most popular African destination city, welcoming 3.93 million international overnight visitors last year. Polokwane (1.88 million), Cape Town (1.73 million) and Djerba in Tunisia (1.65 million) rounded out the top five African cities ranked in the index.

Joburg also recorded the highest international overnight visitor expenditure among African cities, with travellers spending \$2.14 billion (R29bn) in 2017, well ahead of Marrakech (\$1.64bn). On average, international visitors stayed 10.9 nights and spent \$48 per day in Joburg, with shopping accounting for more than 50% of their total spend.

The Mastercard Global Destination Cities Index ranks the world's top 162 destination cities in terms of visitor volume and spend for the 2017 calendar year. It also provides insight on the fastest growing destination cities, and a deeper understanding of why people travel and how they spend around the world. This year's Index ranks 23 major African cities, including Cairo, Nairobi, Lagos, Casablanca, Durban, Tunis, Dar es Salaam, Accra, Kampala, Maputo and Dakar.

The world's top destination cities: With roughly 20 million international overnight visitors, Bangkok retained the top spot this year. Visitors tend to stay in Bangkok 4.7 nights and spend \$173 per day. London (19.83 million), Paris (17.44 million), Dubai (15.79 million) and Singapore (13.91 million) round out the list

CRISIS

Starved of food and education

EDWIN NAIDU

MILLIONS of children throughout Africa go hungry and receive a sub-standard education, resulting in their finishing school without being able to read, write or count.

This failure to urgently tackle these challenges will impact negatively on society's ability to take part in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), warns University of Johannesburg vice-chancellor Professor Tshilidzi Marwala.

"The issue of the constraints before us is going to prevent us from fully participating; you're not going to get society to take part unless they're able to read, write and have the ability to do basic arithmetic," he said.

He said studies showed that the current teaching methodology in South African schools was not effective. Children needed the ability to think and act logically but the education system was producing learners ill-equipped for university studies, potentially preventing them from contributing or

Millions of children finish school not able to read, write or count

benefiting from the 4IR.

The revolution is premised on disruptive technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI), all of which are changing the way we live, work and study. But the inability to read, write or count threatens South Africa and the continent's ability to harness the benefits. Marwala said few countries in Africa, particularly South Africa and Kenya, are embracing the needs of the new digital age, especially at tertiary level, which can have positive effects on society through technology-based solutions, for example helping rural farming or climate change.

Yehualashet Mekonen, the lead author of Ethiopia's African Child Policy forum (ACPF) Child-Friendliness Index (CFI) on Africa, said one of the shock findings in its continent-wide survey was that more

children are going to school but not learning to read or count. "That is one of the major concerns we felt must be urgently addressed and put higher on the agenda," he said from Addis Ababa.

It is disconcerting that despite this reality we are not investing enough in children of this continent

Graça Machel
ACPF chair, international board of trustees

There have been remarkable achievements in improving the well-being of children across Africa but a report from a Pan-African policy research group rings alarm bells of an unfolding human development crisis

– arising from three major developments, including the intellectual and economic consequences of substandard education that many Africa's children are receiving.

Mekonen said the index painted a gloomy scenario of suffering for children on the continent, many of whom face the twin challenges of under-nutrition and poor education. Mekonen said the poor educational level of Africa's children was a major area of concern that could affect involvement as the future technologies around 4IR unfold. He added, however, that the index found that South Africa has better access to pre-primary education than most African countries.

Writing in the index, Graça Machel said the forum found it unacceptable and "equally unconscionable" that nine out of 10 primary school learners would not have the required skills, knowledge and competencies

they were expected to acquire when they completed this basic stage of education.

"It is disconcerting that, despite knowledge of this reality, we are not investing enough in the children of this continent. This is a toxic combination that does not augur well for Africa's future," she wrote.

Former AU chairperson and Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, agreed that children emerging out of the South African schooling system without the ability to read and write remained a challenge, which the government was committed to addressing.

Minister of Higher Education and Training Naledi Pandor said at a recent BRICS skills indaba that it was crucial for learners to acquire 4IR skills, as two-thirds of the children at primary school were going to end up in jobs that no longer existed. The minister said technical and vocational education and training colleges would get R2.5 billion to prepare for the 4IR.

VOICES

What children say about their rights and needs in Africa



Navdi Naidoo, Grade 3
Parklands College, Bloubergstrand

WHEN I watch the news I hear that adults hurt children, but they also trying to protect us. Adults say we're the future leaders but they're not showing us how to lead. Everyone needs to eat and everyone needs to go to school. My mum says she can love any child. If all mums can do that then no one will be alone. Then we'll be safe, full and loved. Navdi Naidoo for president.



Meagen Modise, Grade 10
Sandown High School, Sandton

IT IS A worry that millions in Africa are not going to school. Education is key to success of the continent. Governments ought to be doing better. In some cases, resources are being misused. This is an insult to children, whose lives would be better because of resources. Governments are not doing enough on the continent.



Zabuya Mgbobhozi, Grade 4, Port Natal Primary, Umbilo

THE GOVERNMENT should try donating some school fees money from all over the schools of South Africa to other countries. I think that the government should have programmes and events to tell people to donate to children without food. At schools so children don't get stolen, the family must always have a password so that you can tell whoever is fetching you.



Mathapelo Matlala, Grade 10
Sandown High School, Sandton

WORLD Children's Day does not seem to offer too much to celebrate, with challenges for children in Africa a growing problem. We see problems, especially for girls, and feel that something has to change for the better. Much more has to be done to make the lives of children on the continent better.



Asande Mgbobhozi, Grade 5
Port Natal Primary, Umbilo, Durban

IT IS very sad and shocking to learn that children like me in Africa go hungry and die from starvation. We can help to fight hunger by growing vegetables in our gardens at home and collecting food and donating to feed the hungry children.



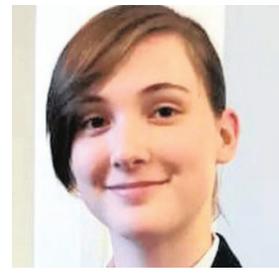
Palesa Ndaba, Grade 11
Sandton, Sandown High School

THE STATE of children on the continent is disturbing. More children are suffering, experiencing gender bias in education, and facing dangers, such as human trafficking or rape. It is appalling that girls throughout Africa are married young. I find it offensive to suggest that women are not able to make up their own minds.



La'Mia Ruby Naidu, Grade 4
Nizamiye Primary, Midrand

THE SITUATION in Africa is very sad that some children get TV, food and clothes and what they want, while other children don't get the basic things like food and education. That is why all poor children should get free food and education.



Nicola Bester, Grade 10
The King's School, Linbro Park

GOVERNMENTS in Africa should put children first. As children, we are the future, not just on this continent but all over the world. And the way things are going, it seems that we're just going to lose more and more children, and even more are going to remain uneducated.



Jahnvi N Krishna, Grade 7
St Anthony's Catholic Primary, Durban

I FEEL that children are disadvantaged just because they are small. Most of the time girls are even more disadvantaged just because they are females. I think that no matter what your gender is, all children should have equal rights. All children should be able to get an education, so they can carry out their dreams.

UK

Driving test results show racial bias

DRIVING examiners have been accused of racism and sexism after official figures revealed black women are far less likely than white men to pass their driving test.

Black female motorists had the lowest pass rate at 32%, while white men had the highest pass rate at 56%, figures released by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency show. Overall, men are significantly more likely to pass their test than women.

According to the DVSA data covering 2008 to last year, 50% of men passed, compared with 43% of women.

And 2016/17 data from the UK's 347 larger test centres showed that black and Asian people had a pass rate of 39%, compared with 54% for white people. The racial gap, highlighted by The Guardian, was biggest in Basingstoke, Essex, where 49% of white applicants and 27% of those from ethnic minorities passed.

Barnsley, York and Worthing have

We know that in other areas of life black and minority ethnic women tend to do the poorest

Jabeer Butt
Race Equality Foundation

the next biggest discrepancies.

Jabeer Butt, head of the Race Equality Foundation, said the figures showed "racism at play".

"Even when a driving test should be an objective test, it's clear that subjective rules are being applied," he said. "We know in other areas of life that black and minority ethnic women tend to do the poorest."

Omar Khan, chief of the Runnymede Trust, a race equality think tank, stressed that caution must be applied when interpreting the data. But he said there appeared to be a bias in favour of white men, who also tended to be the examiners.

The claims were rejected by the industry. Speaking on behalf of the Driving Instructors' Association, Karen Bransgrove said: "The reason people fail their tests has nothing to do with racism or sexism or where they are from. It is down to the way they prepare for their test."

Ian McIntosh, the head of RED Driving School, said: "Our mission is to teach safe driving and this is not affected by gender, religion, ethnicity or any other variable." | DAILY MAIL

UNFESTIVE

Not so jolly council ruling bars woman from being Santa

SANTA Claus must be a man, councillors in England have decided following a vote on whether a woman could step into the role.

A debate was sparked when a woman offered to be Father Christmas in the traditional Santa Claus tour around Newton Aycliffe, County Durham.

Since the 1970s, Santas have toured

the town in a flatbed truck every Christmas Eve, handing out sweets to delighted children.

The Santas have always been male volunteers but it was suggested that a woman could step in this year.

That led to calls of political correctness and a fear of disappointed children who would expect a male voice to be ho-ho-hoing.

At a meeting of Great Aycliffe town council's recreation committee last week, the recommendation from its events subcommittee to allow women volunteers to be Santa was considered – and rejected.

"The recreation committee did not agree with the recommendation and confirmed by resolution that the role of Santa Claus should continue to be

a male role," the council said.

The debate followed worries this year that the tour would have to be scrapped amid concerns about the legality of someone travelling on the back of a moving van, until Chief Constable Mike Barton made an assurance that Father Christmas would not be prosecuted as long as the vehicle was slow. | DAILY MAIL



A PROPOSAL to have a woman Santa has not gone down well. | NOKUTHULA MBATHA African News Agency (ANA)