



16th June 2026

AACC Message Commemorating the Day of the Child 2026

“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.” Mark 9:37 (NIV)

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) joins the African Union, governments, churches, civil society organizations, and millions of people across the continent in commemorating the International Day of the African Child 2026. On this day, we remember the courage and sacrifice of the children of Soweto who, on 16 June 1976, stood up for their right to education, dignity, and a better future. Their legacy continues to inspire our collective commitment to protect, nurture, and uphold the rights of every child in Africa.

This year's theme, *“Ensuring Universal Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Every Child in Africa,”* draws our attention to one of the most pressing challenges facing children across the continent. Access to clean water, adequate sanitation, and proper hygiene is not merely a development issue; it is a matter of justice, human dignity, health, education, and child protection.

Millions of African children, especially those living in rural and marginalized communities, continue to face daily challenges in accessing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Many children, particularly girls, spend long hours collecting water instead of attending school, studying, or enjoying their childhood. The lack of adequate water and sanitation services exposes children to preventable diseases, increases their vulnerability to exploitation, and undermines their overall well-being.

As people of faith, we affirm that every child is created in the image of God and deserves to grow in an environment that safeguards their health, dignity, and future. Access to clean water, safe sanitation, and hygiene is not a privilege but a right, and foundational to health, dignity and a secure future.

It is impossible to commemorate this day without acknowledging the painful developments unfolding in South Africa, where recent xenophobic violence and attacks against fellow Africans have displaced families and placed many children in fear and uncertainty. We must always remember that the African child does not stop being African because of nationality, language, migration status, or place of birth. On this day, therefore, we reject violence, exclusion, and hatred and reaffirm the African spirit of Ubuntu for the safety, holistic wellbeing and development of every African Child.

We encourage churches to remain safe spaces that protect children and to recommit to building an Africa where every child can access clean water, learns in dignity, grows in safety, and belongs without fear.

May God guide and strengthen our efforts as we work together for the well-being and future of Africa's children.

Africa: My home. My future.

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