THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
Annual Full-Day Meeting on the Rights of the Child
The right of the child to the highest attainable standard of health
Thursday, 7th March 2013

STATEMENT
By the South African Human Rights Commission
Delivered by Commissioner Lindiwe Mokate

Afternoon Panel
Implementation of the right of the child to health and accountability mechanisms

Mr. President

I have the honour to address you today on behalf of the South African Human Rights Commission, a national human rights institution that is fully compliant with the Paris Principles and enjoys "A" status accreditation.

The right to health of children is multi dimensional and intersects with many other rights. In Africa, the challenges faced in realising this right are compounded by poverty, conflict and increasing environmental threats. Too many children continue to die of wholly preventable and treatable diseases.

The South African Human Rights Commission is constitutionally mandated to specifically monitor the realisation of the right to health care. On an annual basis, relevant government departments provide information to the Commission and an Economic and Social Rights Report is produced and tabled in parliament. The Commission has done much work in the area of children's rights that has included the right to health. For example, together with UNICEF, we released a publication entitled "South Africa's Children – A Review of Equity and Child Rights". It included a chapter on the right to life and basic health care, graphically providing an important reference text that assesses the state of South African children to date, assists in identifying gaps in policies and service delivery programmes, and projects the way forward to improve the situation of children.
I wish to pose the following question to participants at this forum:

Are there any specific suggestions that NHRIs should consider when establishing their monitoring mechanisms in order that information that is generated is more relevant and useful in determining the progressive realisation of children's right to health?

*What types of relationships may be established between child rights stakeholders present and NHRIs in order that NHRIs may more actively contribute towards the realisation of the right to health for children?*

NHRIs are being increasingly recognized as the natural partner at a domestic level to international and regional human rights mechanisms. I therefore propose that this meeting makes a recommendation calling for the establishment of strong, independent and adequately resourced NHRIs. This recommendation is needed in order that we can effectively monitor at a domestic level, thereby contributing to holding States accountable.

Thank you