



**Commissioner
for Children**

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Advisor to the Western Cape Commissioner for Children (WCCC) selected as a chair of the Africa Children's Summit (ACS) 2024 South Africa.

Tara Hendricks, a 15-year-old advisor to the Western Cape Commissioner for Children, will represent WCCC and chair the Africa Children's Summit 2024 in South Africa this August. The summit is a child-led initiative where children from Africa will gather to share and discuss the challenges compromising child well-being in the country. The inaugural summit was held in Kenya last year, and this year South Africa is hosting the four-day event, with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (NMCF) as the lead civil society organisation.

As part of the Child Government Monitors, Tara has been working with the Western Cape Children's Commissioner Christina Nomdo since May 2022. The forum is a platform for children to voice their opinions and influence policies, practices, and laws affecting their rights.

Since joining the office, Tara has demonstrated unwavering dedication and commitment towards advocating for child rights and improving the lives of children.

In November 2023, Tara became the first 14-year-old to present to the Standing Committee on Finance. She presented inputs on the Mid-Term Budget Policy Statement 2023, developed with the Child Government Monitors (CGM). Tara also attended a workshop on 'Children and Climate Justice' hosted by the Centre for Child Law in Pretoria. She played a key role in creating child-friendly posters of the complex Provincial Economic Review and Outlook/ Municipal Economic Review and Outlook. The posters aimed to simplify complex information using tools that are easily understandable for children.

Tara says: "I was taught about government budgets, and my rights as a child, and I've met many other child rights activists as well as members of Parliament. I've also been involved in multiple submissions to the government and have voiced my opinion on

many different topics which include mental health, LGBTQI, child hunger, child abuse and neglect, discrimination, and many more".

This year's summit will bring together children from across the continent to discuss the most significant issues affecting children lives. These issues include:

- Review of the ACS 2023 Outcome Statement and deliberate progress towards recommendations therein being actioned and relevance a year later.
- Share lived experiences and evidence of child rights concerns and challenges in Africa.
- Dialogue on what needs to be done to make the African children want.
- Make policy recommendations that may address child protection challenges.
- Recognise State parties, organisations and individuals contributing to the well-being of children in Africa.
- Document and package key issues, advocacy asks and recommendations into an outcome statement.

Regarding her involvement in the Africa Children's Summit 2024, Tara says: "The ACS is a child-led conference that gives children a platform for participation. Their motto is "Seen, heard and engaged". There was an opportunity to become the children's co-chair for the summit. I decided to be optimistic and apply. I didn't think much of it, but I always had some kind of hope that I'd be able to take this big step and become the voice for those a part of this project as well."

Tara is excited about her journey with ACS and is looking forward to accomplishing more with the summit.

Ends.

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About the Western Cape Commissioner for Children: The Western Cape Commissioner for Children is an independent governance institution in the Western Cape. The Commissioner is mandated to protect and promote the rights, needs and interests of children in the province by working with the departments of Education, Health, Social Development as well as Cultural Affairs and Sport. The Commissioner for Children reports to Provincial Parliament on activities, functions and progress on objectives.