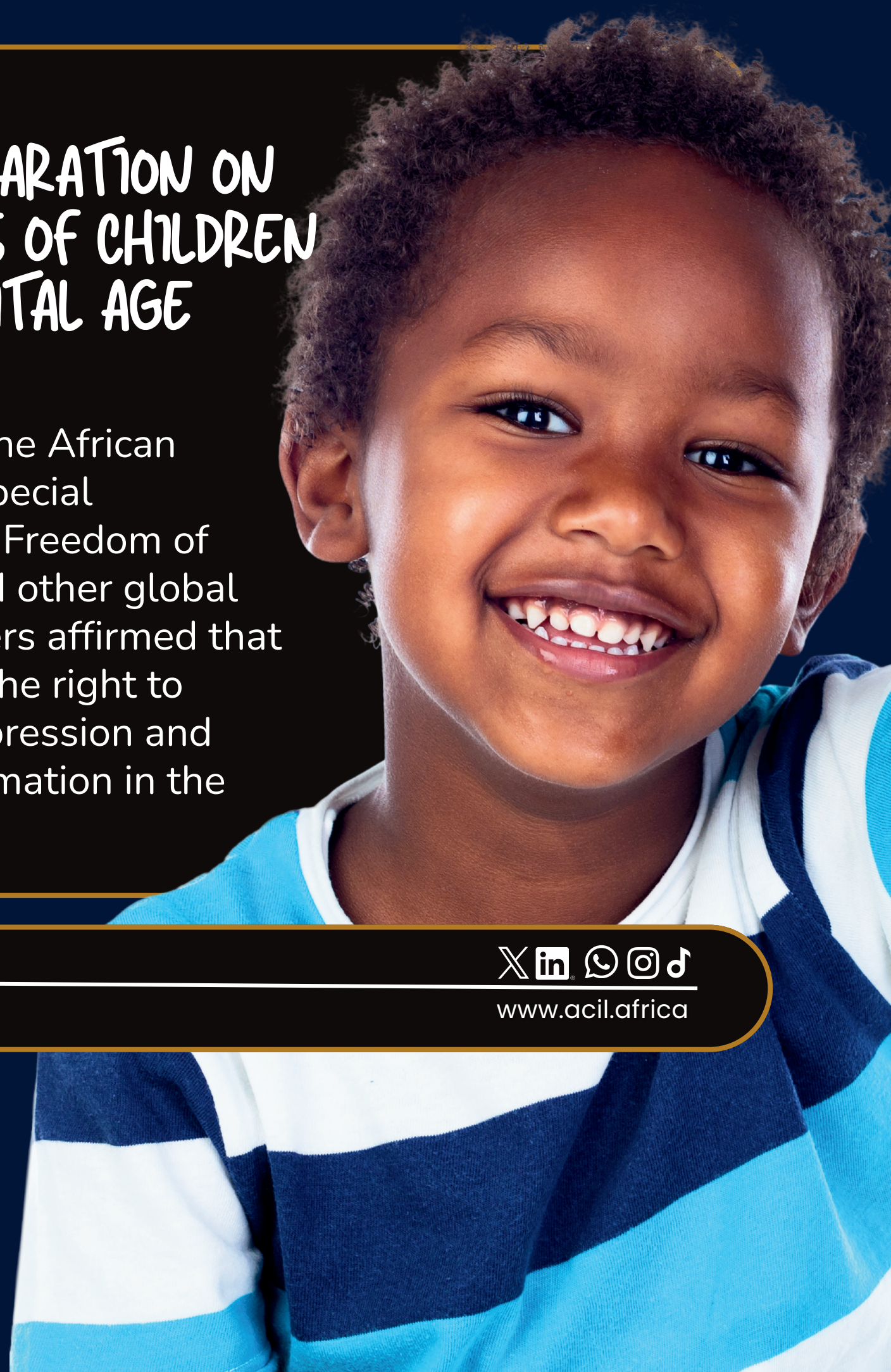
ACIL

JOINT DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In May 2026, the African Commission Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and other global mandate holders affirmed that children have the right to freedom of expression and access to information in the digital age.





THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

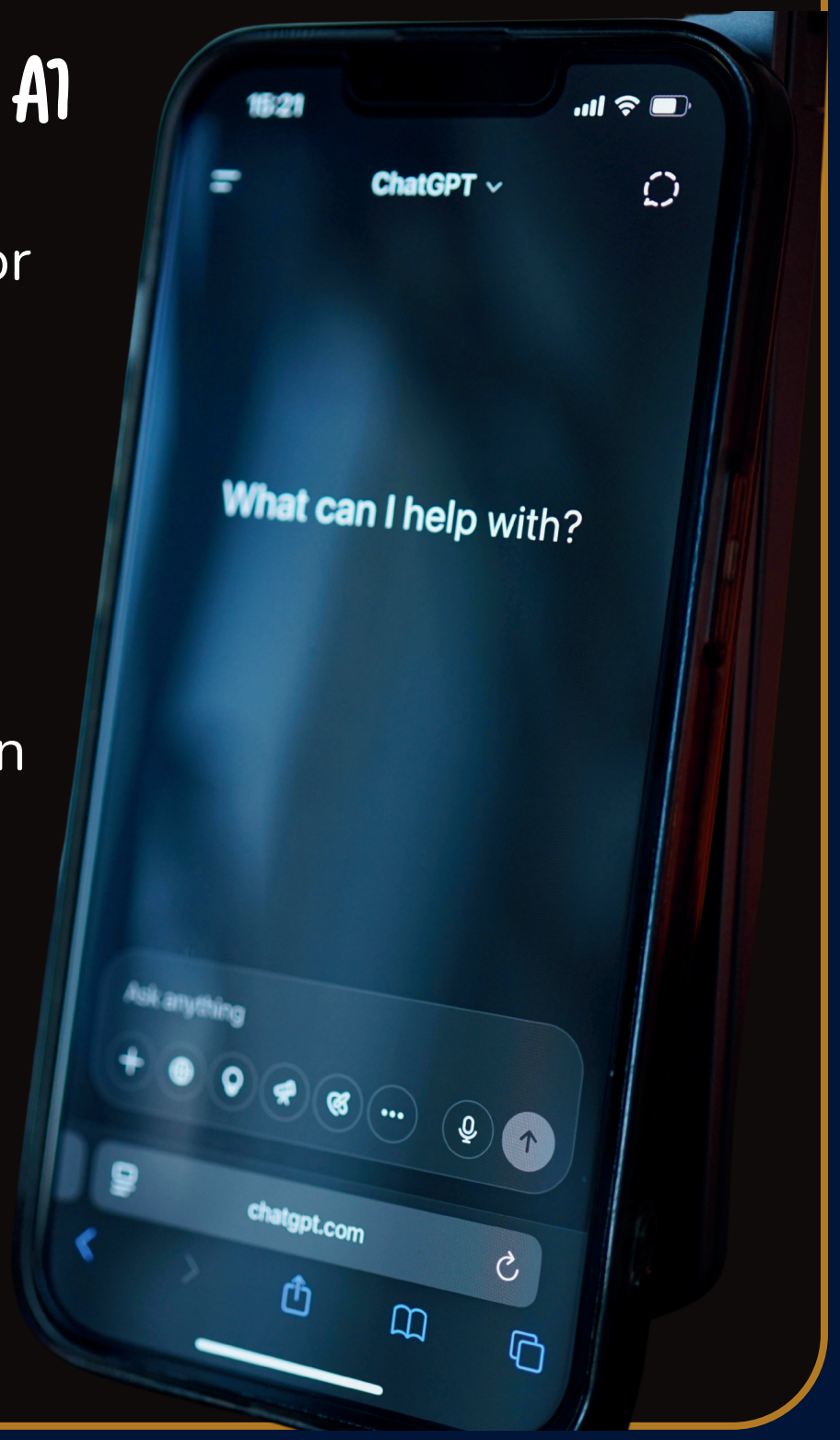
The Declaration is built on the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, survival and development, and respect for children's views.

Any restriction on children's online expression must be lawful, legitimate, necessary, and proportionate.

SAFETY, ACCESS AND AI

The Declaration calls for safety and privacy by design, digital literacy, child rights impact assessments, and data protection safeguards.

It also warns that AI can create serious risks for children, including harmful chatbots, addictive systems and other unsafe systems.





WHY THIS MATTERS

For Africa, children's digital rights are also about inequality. Issues of cost, infrastructure, disability, poverty, and language shape whether children can participate safely online.

States and private actors must protect children, include them, and make the digital environment safer and fairer.