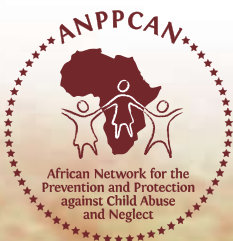


# The Second International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse

Taking Stock of the Status of Child Sexual Abuse in Africa since the First International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse in 2007



12 – 14 March, 2012  
La Palm Royal Beach Hotel, Accra, Ghana



**Save the Children**  
Sweden

# **The Second International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse**

Taking Stock of the Status of Child Sexual Abuse in Africa since  
the First International Conference in Africa on  
Child Sexual Abuse in 2007

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Special gratitude goes to Plan Netherlands for providing resources for the important conference. The resources enabled ANPPCAN to meet conference expenses beyond the usual registration fees, as it enabled many delegates to attend. Many thanks also go to Save the Children Sweden for providing additional funding that supported the translation of conference materials and facilitated some delegates to attend the Conference. Then, there were many international organizations such as UNICEF, Plan International, World Vision, among others, who supported delegates to the conference. We salute you for the support and for facilitating a large number of delegates to come and share their experiences and activities with others.

Special thanks go to all the speakers both in plenary, workshops and seminars and to the delegates, some of whom supported themselves to the Conference. You all demonstrated that child sexual abuse is an area that should be fought from all fronts and that the fight had started by the excellent papers you presented on what you are currently doing and experiences shared at the conference. To all we are grateful.

The President and members of ANPPCAN who were able to attend and staff of AMPCAN Ghana and the Regional Office, we simply thank you for the solidarity and in ensuring that pertinent issues affecting our children in the continent are not overlooked and are exposed in Conferences like this.

Finally, to the Ghanaian children who came to share with the delegates at the Conference, we thank you for making the Conference focused. You came and welcomed us, gave your views, returned and said Good Bye and you left us with recommendations to take home and address. This was most appreciated as you spoke for the majority of children in our continent who suffer in silence.

**Dr. Philista Onyango**  
Regional Director  
ANPPCAN Regional Office

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AFRUCA	Africans Unite Against Child Abuse
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANPPCAN	African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
AMPCAN	African Movement for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection
CP	Child Protection
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CRIDOC	Child Rights Information and Documentation
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSEC	Commercial sexual exploitation of children
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICDI	International Child Development Initiatives
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISPCAN	International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
ISPs	Internet Service Providers
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MoWCYA	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs
MVC	Most Vulnerable Children
NCPS	National Child Protection System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
SA	South Africa
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VAC	Violence against Children

## INTRODUCTION

Several factors worked to ensure that children in traditional African society were protected from child sexual abuse. Parents, the extended family and the community at large played important roles in the care and protection of children from abuse. Society had also created systems that ensured children were protected, such as the stringent taboos that guided interpersonal relationships and living arrangements.

However, most communities in Africa today are faced with many challenges that predispose children to child sexual abuse. These include broken families, unemployment, overcrowding, poverty, pornography, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, armed conflicts, as well as challenges that emanate from recent advances in information and communications technologies, such as the advent of the internet. Some socio-economic challenges have resulted in some parents abdicating their parental responsibilities to friends, care givers, teachers or even to individuals that they know little about. Emerging studies also indicate that some parents even sell their children into prostitution for economic gain. Thus, children in Africa are more vulnerable to child sexual abuse today than ever before.

It was in view of the above that the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) organized and held in Nairobi, Kenya, the First International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse in September 2007.

Several observations and recommendations came out of the conference, including the following:

- There was need to link research with policies and practice;
- It was necessary to provide resources (human and material) to ensure provision of services to children and to enable families protect their children;
- In some areas in Africa, 45% of children diagnosed as having been abused, had been sexually abused;
- In a certain community in Eastern Africa, 49% of sexually active primary school girls had been coerced into sex; and
- Most data on child sexual abuse was under-estimated due to widespread under-reporting.

Four years after the Nairobi Conference, some efforts had been made in research on child sexual abuse and in strengthening child protection systems. However, it was still evident from several sources, including the UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report of 2011, that child sexual abuse was still rampant and that services available to abused children in most African countries were concentrated in the capital cities.

It was for the above reasons that ANPPCAN organized and held the Second International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse in Accra, Ghana, on 12 – 14 March, 2012. The theme of the Conference was Taking Stock of the Status of Child Sexual Abuse in Africa since the First International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse in 2007. The Conference was organized by ANPPCAN through the collaborative efforts of the Regional Office in Nairobi and the African Movement for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (AMPCAN), the ANPPCAN chapter in Ghana, with financial support from Plan Netherlands. The Conference also received valuable support from Save the Children Sweden Regional Office in Nairobi



## Aim

The Conference aimed at offering an opportunity for stakeholders to reflect on what had been done on child sexual abuse in various countries in Africa since the First Conference held in Nairobi in 2007.

## Objectives

The Conference had the following objectives:

1. To assess the progress made so far in the various African countries on the issue of Child Sexual Abuse;
2. To ascertain improvement in research and practice on Child Sexual Abuse in Africa;
3. To identify pertinent issues that hinder or enhance responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Africa;
4. To provide a forum for learning responses on Child Sexual Abuse globally.

## Sub themes

The Conference sub-themes were as follows:

1. Building organizational capacity to manage Child Sexual Abuse in Africa;
2. The role of legislation and policies on Child Sexual Abuse;
3. Strategies on Child Sexual Abuse prevention;
4. Child Sexual Abuse in institutions of care and learning in Africa;
5. Good practices in research and practice on Child Sexual Abuse.

The Conference was attended by more than 200 delegates, representing 30 countries from around the world. It was officially opened on 12 March, 2012 by Hon. Boya Gariba, Ghana's Deputy Minister for Social Affairs, on behalf of the Vice-President, H.E. John Dramani Mahama. It was officially closed on 14 March, 2012 by Ms Hellen A. Menza on behalf of Hon. Juliana Azumah Mensah, the Minister for Women and Children's Affairs. The conference was conducted in English and French. Quality papers were presented in plenaries, workshops and seminars for the 3 days.

## LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENTS

The Second International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse held in Accra, Ghana, on 12 – 14 March, 2012 recorded several landmark achievements, which included the following:

- The conference accomplished all its objectives. It emerged that there were many ongoing programmes on child sexual abuse in most African countries. Many scientific surveys on CSA had also been carried out and many more were on-going as was reflected by presentations at plenaries, workshops and seminars.
- More than the expected 200 delegates attended the Conference, representing more than 30 countries from around the world;
- Several major security agencies in the world which are also active on child sexual abuse, participated at the Conference, namely the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) of USA, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre of the UK police and representation from the Australian police;
- There was meaningful participation by Ghanaian children. The children asked for an end to out-of-court settlements in child sexual abuse cases as is the current practice in some countries in Africa;

- Adult survivors of child sexual abuse spoke out, shared their experiences and made recommendations on appropriate approaches to CSA. Of significance was Madam Onyinye Chukwunyeremwa who shared with the delegates the gross violation she underwent through in her childhood and how she vowed to ensure someone never goes through the same experience again. This sharing was of great importance as it would serve to demolish the culture of silence especially in the continent;
- Delegates received and listened to a special video message from Marta Santos Pais, the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children. The message was clear that time to fight child abuse is now.

## MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

The following were the main highlights of the Conference:

- There was consensus that no child in the world was safe from child sexual abuse;
- Substantial efforts have been and are being made on research, education and advocacy work on child sexual abuse in a significant number of countries in Africa;
- It was acknowledged that child sexual abuse in Africa was still shrouded in a conspiracy of silence;
- It was observed that financial and human resources allocated to child sexual abuse by African governments were inadequate. Hence, most CSA interventions in Africa were driven by civil society organisations and international non-governmental agencies;
- International and regional child protection instruments have an important role to play in preventing child sexual abuse. Therefore, it is necessary to domesticate them into national legislations which then must be implemented;
- Majority of parents and child caregivers were ignorant of the dangers that the new information and communication technologies such as the internet and smart phones, posed to children in relation to CSA;
- The role of parents as primary caregivers and that of professionals in engendering safe environments for children was emphasised;
- Harmful cultural practices and beliefs that perpetuate child sexual abuse abound in the continent; and
- That children who are vulnerable to child sexual abuse are also at a high risk of other forms of abuse, particularly being infected by HIV.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Conference made the following recommendations:

1. There is need to scale up investment in preventive interventions on child sexual abuse since it provides a more sustainable response;
2. Support should be provided to survivors of CSA and their families to facilitate their recovery and reintegration into the society;
3. There is strong need to invest more in research on child sexual abuse so that response programmes could be evidence-based. Evidence-based information would assist in identifying children at risk while informing strategic planning, policy decisions and resource allocation;
4. There is need to support and empower children and CSA survivors to play a more active and meaningful role in the protection of children from CSA and to enable them speak out in order to break the culture of silence.
5. Governments and NGOs should support, build, strengthen and provide resources to national child protection systems;
6. There is need for greater partnerships and collaboration across different professions and sectors, as well as, between governments and non-governmental actors in order to engender a more sustainable response to child sexual abuse;
7. Governments must play a central role in both prevention and response efforts to CSA;
8. All actors in child protection should strive to bring an end to out-of-court settlements on cases of child sexual abuse;
9. CSA actors should work towards a safe environment for children;
10. There is need to ensure that the participation of children in their protection was meaningful;
11. Proactive and deliberate action should be taken at the family, community and national levels to protect all children from CSA;
12. The survivors of CSA should speak out publicly as this brings out the reality of CSA and helps to encourage victims to share with someone or seek help;
13. CSA actors should form coalitions to help establish confidential help lines in all countries in Africa;
14. It is the responsibility of child rights actors to educate children, young people, parents and the general public on child sexual abuse so as to reduce social stigma on victims;
15. There is need to increase work-force in the field of social work, counselling and psychotherapy and to provide adequate and on-going training to teachers, child care givers, police and the judicial staff.

## CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

There was a central and conclusive message from the Conference: No child was safe from child sexual abuse. In view of this, the following was proposed as the way forward.

- Responsibilities should be assigned to key stakeholders on CSA so that appropriate action could be taken;
- The Conference report should be widely circulated so as to raise awareness on child sexual abuse and initiate action;
- More research should be carried out on child sexual abuse so that the findings could be used to inform policy changes and intervention programmes;
- Survivors of child sexual abuse should be supported and encouraged to speak out.

## OPENING SESSION

### WELCOME REMARKS

**Dr Rebecca Nyonyintono, President, ANPPCAN**

*Conference Chair*

Dr Rebecca Nyonyintono, the President of ANPPCAN, welcomed the delegates to the Conference and recognised the presence of the children. Dr Nyonyintono said she trusted the Conference would provide an opportunity for participants to learn and share with others on the various aspects of child sexual abuse, including its prevention and responses. She stated that the Conference provided an opportunity to meet new friends and establish networks and partnerships on child protection. She went further to introduce the key speakers to the Conference.

**Mr Peter Kwaku Nti**

*Chairperson, AMPCAN Ghana*

Mr Peter Kwaku Nti said the Conference was an important milestone in work being done in Africa to protect children from sexual abuse. He noted that children were very trusting, a trait that made them vulnerable to child sexual abuse, the perpetrators of which he referred to as “eaters of innocence”. Mr Nti underscored the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse and its consequences with the Ghanaian saying “When you shove an old woman, you cannot determine how she falls.”

However, Mr Nti noted that child sexual abuse took many forms and its causes were varied. He gave the example of a disciplinary measure in some West African countries that was, in essence, a form of child sexual abuse. The disciplinary measure involved the introduction, by an adult, of pepper or ginger into a child’s private parts as punishment.

### Ghanaian School Children

Ghanaian school children presented several songs and choreographed performances. One of the children then made a speech on their behalf in which the children asked parents, guardians and other actors in child sexual abuse not to accept out-of-court settlements in cases of child sexual abuse. The children’s participation and their demand for no out-of-court settlements in child sexual abuse cases was one of several landmark achievements of the Conference.



**A section of the children who attended the Conference**

## OPENING REMARKS

### **Dr Philista Onyango**

*Regional Director, ANPPCAN Regional Office*

Dr Philista Onyango started by welcoming the delegates, who included children, to the Conference. She then informed the delegates that ANPPCAN held two types of conferences regularly. One was on child abuse and neglect and was held biannually in collaboration with ISPCAN and ANPPCAN Regional Office. The other was on specific issues affecting children, with the issues often being identified by ANPPCAN country chapters. She said that so far, three conferences had been conducted on two specific children issues: One conference was on Family Based Care for Children without Parental Care (in 2009) and the other two were on Child Sexual Abuse (in 2007 and – the current one – in 2012).

Dr Onyango said that the current conference was being held purely to take stock of the status of CSA in Africa since 2007 when the First Conference in Africa on CSA was held. She noted that it was 4 years since that conference was held and many things had been taking place, including research, which revealed that the prevalence rate of CSA on the continent now stood at 34.4 percent. She added that besides, noble efforts to strengthen child protection systems in sub-Saharan Africa were on-going. These efforts, she said, provided an excellent opportunity to improve policies and responses to CSA. She informed delegates that ANPPCAN conferences were often open forums that provided opportunities for those participating to enhance their knowledge; share experiences and latest information on research and practice. She said the conferences often opened debate on issues surrounded by a culture of silence or were not perceived as a priority by states, but which affected children.

Dr Onyango informed the meeting that the conference had attracted participation from many countries and especially from Africa. She said this was a positive sign that showed the issue of child sexual abuse was now getting the attention it deserved. She noted that delegates to the conference were drawn from universities, research institutions, governments, civil society and faith based organizations. She added that individuals with special interests in CSA were also in attendance.

Dr Onyango further noted that the Scientific Committee of the conference had selected very good papers that would be presented both at plenary and at the concurrent workshops. She said the meeting provided an opportunity for networking and forging partnerships to fight CSA from all angles.

Finally, Dr Onyango thanked the organizers of the Conference and the secretariats that were based in Ghana, the Netherlands and in Nairobi for a job well done. She, in particular, thanked Plan Netherlands and saluted Madam Tanja van de Linde, the Senior Advisor, Child Rights, who tirelessly supported ANPPCAN's efforts to ensure that the Conference became a success. She also thanked Save the Children Sweden who made it possible for some delegates to attend the Conference. She extended her gratitude to UNICEF, Plan International, World Vision, AFRUCA and the other organizations that supported delegates to attend the conference. She ended her remarks by saluting the many organizations and individuals who, on their own accord, had seen the conference announcement and sent in their abstracts. She urged the delegates to also take time to tour the city of Accra to sample what it offered and, if staying longer, to visit the many historical sites in Ghana.

**Tanja Van de Linde**

*Senior Advisor Child Rights, Plan Netherlands*

Madam Tanja Van de Linde acknowledged the collaborative efforts that went into the organisation of the Conference from AMPCAN Ghana, ANPPCAN Regional Office, Plan, UNICEF, the government of Ghana and other important actors, such as universities and independent experts. She said the Conference was timely since, as a report by Marta Santos Pais, the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children showed, progress on child sexual abuse was still too slow in most countries of the world and laws against it were still inadequate. More over, she said, the Council of Europe estimated that one in five children worldwide was a victim of sexual abuse. She said this was an unacceptably high number. She noted that cases of child sexual abuse ranged from sexual abuse within the family to sex-for-grades at school, child trafficking, child prostitution, rape and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM).

Madam Van de Linde said the Conference was important for Plan as a child centred community development and child rights organization for several reasons, chief among them being the topic and magnitude of the problem and the need to put CSA issue high on the international agenda. Other reasons were because Plan was part of a child rights coalition that fought against gender-based violence through a programme called Girl Power. The organisation also supported regional initiatives in West Africa on Violence against Children and was also aware that child sexual abuse could not be tackled by a single organization.

She said the Girl Power programme was funded by the Dutch government and aimed to strengthen civil society organisations to ensure the rights of girls and young women were realised and to protect them from violence and abuse. This was done mainly through strengthening of national child protection systems. She concluded with a quote from a Polish child psychologist, Janush Korzack: "Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are the people of today. They have a right to be taken seriously and treated with respect and tenderness. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. The unknown person inside each of them is our hope for the future."

**Mr. Joachim Theis,**

*On behalf of Dr Iyabode Olusanmi, UNICEF Country Representative, Ghana*

Mr Theis said that despite the provision of legal protection of children in Ghana's Constitution, the Children's Act, the Juvenile Justice Act, the Domestic Violence Act and the Trafficking in Persons Act, many Ghanaian children continued to suffer breaches of their rights through varying degrees of violence at home, in school and on the street, some of which include child sexual abuse. He said that since the global study on violence against children in 2006, a great deal of additional country-level research had been carried out and an increasing amount of data was available on violence against children in schools, sexual violence and domestic violence.

Mr Theis said that large-scale household surveys that included questions on violence against children (such as the module on child discipline in multiple indicator cluster surveys - MICS), and recent studies on violence against children in Swaziland and in Tanzania were of particular interest to UNICEF. He noted that collaboration between Child Protection Agencies and Public Health Research Institutions was very important in order to identify the scale of the problem of violence against children – including sexual abuse – and to measure changes in levels of violence over time. However, he said that even with the increased data, there remained significant knowledge gaps on certain forms of violence, such as sexual violence against boys and men, the

scale of which had been highlighted in recent studies in the Eastern Region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Mr Theis said that in 2010 the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service recorded 853 cases of defilement, resulting in 434 arrests. He said there had been a progressive increase in the number of reported cases largely due to the increase in awareness levels on where to report and the services available to survivors. He said UNICEF Ghana was supporting the development of Standard Operating Procedures to ensure consistent and integrated child sensitive and gender appropriate service provision to all child victims of abuse. He noted that while much of the child violence prevention work in Africa was being done by civil society organisations and NGOs, government commitment and support remained vital.

### **Marta Santos Pais**

*UN Special Representative on Violence against Children*

In a video message to the Conference Ms Marta Santos Pais expressed regret that she could not be at the meeting in person. She congratulated the government of Ghana for placing violence against children high on the national agenda and for its support to the Conference. She said freedom from violence was a fundamental human right which the international community had committed itself to safeguarding for all children, everywhere and at all times. Unfortunately, she noted, violence against children remained widespread, hidden and socially condoned. She pointed out that violence knew no geographic or social borders and took place in all contexts, including in places where children were expected to enjoy a secure environment – in schools, care institutions and also within the home.

Ms Pais said child sexual abuse presented enormous challenges as it was still largely perceived as a social taboo, too sensitive to bring into the open and, yet, often too low a priority for society. She said data from Child Helpline International showed that in 2010, child help lines around the world received close to 75,000 calls concerning sexual abuse, with girls being victims in the majority of cases, accounting for more than 70 percent of all reported sexual abuse cases. She said that in 40 percent of the cases, sexual abuse was perpetrated by a member of the victim's immediate or extended family.

Ms Pais noted that, in many communities around the world, parents viewed marriage as an important strategy for the protection of girls from sexual abuse and that, globally, ten million girls under the age of 18 got married every year – one child marriage every three seconds. She pointed out that a third of girls in the developing world married during their childhood – many of them forced into marriage, sometimes at 7 years old. She said that, as soon as such a girl was married, she was expected to become a woman and leave her childhood behind, and that the male spouse in child marriages were usually older, sometimes even twice or three times older. She said that the age difference made such girls powerless, and thus more vulnerable to domestic violence, sexual abuse and exposure to HIV. They also had fewer opportunities to seek information on how to keep safe and to benefit from prevention, treatment and health support services.

Ms Pais said that, as the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence against Children, she travelled around the world and heard from different people, including children, about how violence was present in their lives and communities. She said she believed it was of utmost importance that girls and boys were directly involved in any action or planning that related to their protection.



**Kofi Kumah**

*Chair, Ghana Child Rights NGO Coalition*

Mr Kofi Kumah highlighted the work that the Ghana Child Rights NGO Coalition had done in the past on child sexual abuse, including the organization of protest marches against the vice. The protest marches resulted in increased public awareness on the issue in the country. He said the Coalition also addressed issues of children in situations of armed conflict since such children were particularly vulnerable to child sexual abuse. The Coalition also offered professional assistance to member organizations whenever such a request was received.

**Ms Onyinye N. Chukwunyerenwa**

*Personal Testimony of a CSA Survivor*

“I was only six years when the abuse began, but to this day I remember the pain. The abuse continued for many years. The man told me I was special and that he loved me. He was a respected member of our family. He finally got me pregnant at age 14 and then arranged for me to procure an abortion.

I did not grow up a normal child, neither did I know what being a proper teenager meant. I stayed away from my peers. On more than six occasions I attempted to take my own life. I was very angry with my mother because I felt she was negligent.

When I spoke out about my experiences, I was ostracised. I became an outcast! I received shocking treatment from family members and the community, whom I thought should have given me love and support. I am glad that today I have become strong. I devote my time and energies to campaigning against child sexual abuse since it destroys our children and young people. I am also grateful to my husband for his love and support, without which I couldn't do what I do now.”

## **KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND OFFICIAL OPENING**

***Hon. Boya Gariba, Deputy Minister for Social Affairs***

*On behalf of H.E. John Dramani Mahama, Vice-President, Ghana*

H.E. John Dramani Mahama, who was represented by the Hon Boya Gariba, the Deputy Minister for Social Affairs, started by welcoming everyone present at the Conference to Ghana. He said he was especially happy given that the Conference was taking place at a time when the country was celebrating its 55th Anniversary of independence and nationhood.

The Vice President noted that Africa had experienced tremendous growth in the past few decades as countries gained statehood and began to take their destiny into their own hands. Statehood, he said, had not only given Africans the opportunity to develop themselves through cultural and historical processes of change, but had also helped the countries adopt global conventions and practices to protect, defend and stimulate development. He said issues of poverty, domestic violence, human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation and child labour were some of the pertinent issues suffered mostly by women and children in Africa. Others, he said, included ethnic conflicts, harmful cultural practices, family displacements and irregular migrations.



H.E. John Dramani Mahama shared the following observations as some of the areas of concern for the African child and which needed to be deliberated on at the Conference:

- The fact that worldwide, 40 to 47 percent of sexual assaults were perpetrated against girls aged 15 or younger (UNFPA Report, 2006);
- That the 34.4 percent prevalence rate of child sexual abuse in Africa as was reported in the 2009 edition of Clinical Psychology Review was the highest globally;
- The fact that the threat of social stigma prevented most young women from speaking out about rape and other forms of sexual abuse;
- Both boys and girls were targets for sexual abuse, mainly by teachers, friends, relatives, etc;
- Rape cases were sometimes settled out of court whereby the perpetrator either paid compensation to the girl's parents or paid a bride price and married the girl so as to avoid attracting public attention and shame to the girl and her family;
- Child sexual abuse took place in both urban and rural environments and was perpetrated against children as young as six months by neighbours, acquaintances, strangers, etc;
- Sexual exploitation of young people was frequently facilitated by their lack of economic power and/or job opportunities, and included forced marriages of young girls to older men.

However, H.E. John Dramani Mahama noted that, even though the above statistics were disturbing, there had been some positive responses from various governments, institutions and civil society groups to address CSA. He said most countries in Africa had signed international and regional human rights instruments that guaranteed the rights and welfare of children, even though most of them still experienced challenges in their implementation. He said the government of Ghana had, for instance, not only adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but had also enacted appropriate domestic legislation, such as the Children's Act, the Human Trafficking Act and the Domestic Violence Act, so as to ensure that Ghana, as a country, said a collective No to child abuse and child exploitation. The country had also put in place the Capitation Grant and a school feeding programme to back up the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and domestic legislations.

The Vice President said the government of Ghana was providing the necessary infrastructure and other resources to support efforts to improve child participation, awareness creation, law-enforcement and a framework for pursuing justice and correction. He said it was in this regard that the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs was established in 2001 to promote and ensure gender equality and equity in the country. Several government agencies also collaborated to deal with gender based violence, including the Department of Social Welfare, the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice.

H.E. John Dramani Mahama noted that gender issues were inextricably linked to development and growth of society and that the establishment of international, regional and national institutions that dealt with gender issues served as catalysts for ensuring women's involvement in mainstreaming activities and programmes. He said the agenda set by the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) sought to address the protection of all persons from inequalities, ranging from developmental issues, colonialism, economic, race, class, gender to sexual orientations. He, however, added that the full commitment to challenge the social injustices and marginalization of women and children in society still had a long way to go.

H.E. John Dramani Mahama said there was need to significantly improve the skills and numbers of professionals dealing with child sexual abuse at all levels. There was also need to pay attention to research efforts and data collection so as to provide the necessary data and back up tools to the professionals working in the area of child sexual abuse. He called for increased collaboration and sharing of data and strategies within and between countries so as to facilitate learning from one another. To this end, he said, the government of Ghana pledged to give total support to the efforts of child-focused organizations and would continue to give appropriate budgetary allocations to child protection work.

H.E. John Dramani Mahama congratulated ANPPCAN, PLAN Netherlands, PLAN Ghana, AMPCAN Ghana as well as the Organizing Committees and everyone else who contributed to the efforts to bring child protection stakeholders together at the meeting so that they could discuss the pertinent issue of child sexual abuse. He wished the Conference fruitful deliberations and with a cheerful Akwaaba, declared the Second International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse officially open.

## PART I: PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

### Global Overview of Child Sexual Abuse

Dr Agnes Akosua Aidoo, Member and Rapporteur, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Dr Agnes Akosua Aidoo said that child sexual abuse had for a long time been of concern globally and that the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 ushered in a new, exciting and radical way of perceiving children. The Convention recognized children as human beings with inherent dignity and as individual rights-holders, not simply as the property of their parents or guardians. Children also had concomitant responsibilities appropriate to their age and stage of development. However, Dr Aidoo said the new status of the child created by the Convention was challenged by all forms of violations and exploitation, including sexual exploitation and abuse and added that no region of the world was free from the scourge of child sexual abuse.



**Dr. Agnes Akosua Aidoo**

Dr Aidoo said that in response to the new challenges to children, several measures had been taken at the global level. These included the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2002), the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999), the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and, more recently, the Third World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents that was held in Rio de Janeiro in November, 2008 and attended by over 3,000 adults and 300 children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child had also produced a major General Comment No. 13 on the rights of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, which Dr Aidoo recommended to participants who had not yet read it.

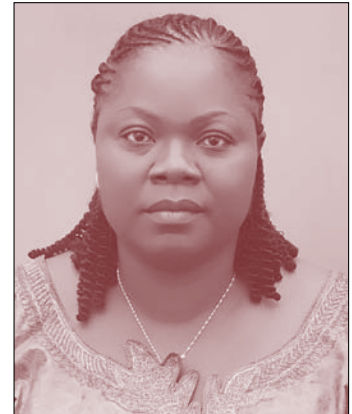
Dr Aidoo noted that the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) played a major role in addressing child sexual abuse in Africa and paid tribute to all researchers and practitioners from around the world at the Conference, saying their participation would strengthen action against child sexual abuse in Africa. She, however, lamented the fact that seven African countries had not yet ratified the Optional Protocols on the CRC that addressed child sexual abuse. She said that the Committee had also noted an increase – in numbers and diversity – of cases of violence against children in the world, prompting it to ask the UN Secretary General to undertake a global study on violence against children, including sexual violence.

Dr Aidoo said several factors had contributed to the rise in incidences of child sexual abuse and exploitation, including the advent of the Internet (child pornography), increased international trade and commerce, sex tourism, the rise in marginalised children (children in the street, children with disabilities, child domestic workers), family set-ups conducive to incest, limited resources and poor government policies, strategies and plans for prevention. Child sexual abuse was also increasingly happening in schools due to inadequacies in government school administrative and management regulations. The Committee had, therefore, made recommendations to State Parties to criminalize child sex tourism, encourage operators in the industry to adopt child-sensitive and rights-based Codes of Conduct and to put in place robust school management systems. She added that under the Convention, prevention of child sexual abuse was primarily the responsibility of governments.

## Child Sexual Abuse: The Perspective of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

*Ms Agnes Kabore Ouattara, Chairperson, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*

Ms Agnes Kabore Ouattara noted that the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was the only continental instrument in the world that served as the reference point for the Committee. She said that reports by State Parties were inadequate in their reporting and did not speak explicitly about child sexual abuse. She cited several factors as major contributors to child sexual abuse in Africa, including adverse economic situations, unfavourable social norms (e.g. in some countries 14 years was the legal age of marriage), armed conflicts, demands from the commercial sex industry as well as the fact that perpetrators of child sexual abuse could be said to be “sick in the mind.”



**Ms. Agnes Kabore Ouattara**

Ms Ouattara said that to effectively address child sexual abuse, African countries did not only have to come up with appropriate legislation but also ensure that it was effectively implemented. However, the prevention of child sexual abuse was even more important as it ensured children were not subjected to trauma. It was also important for child victims to be rehabilitated and integrated into the society so that those who spoke out were not ostracized. This, she said, called for the allocation of adequate resources, which the private sector could also contribute to.

Ms Ouattara called for the appointment of a special rapporteur on child sexual abuse (similar to the one on slavery). She said that for African countries to effectively address child sexual abuse, there was need for them to domesticate relevant Charters and Conventions and to develop and implement appropriate National Plans of Action for the protection of children.

## Building Systems Capacity to Manage Child Sexual Abuse in Africa

*Dr Rebecca Davies, Associate Professor and Director, Centre for International Social Work Studies, North Carolina at Greensboro*

Dr Rebecca Davies said that her presentation would look at the sub-Saharan African Context for Child Protection System Strengthening. She said the presentation was based on an Inter-Agency Working Paper that was designed to:

- Consolidate what was known about child protection system strengthening in Sub-Saharan Africa and suggest a way forward;
- Focus on concrete actions for system strengthening;
- Be disseminated extensively within and outside stakeholder agencies and organizations;
- Serve as a “living” document to be further developed at a forthcoming Child Protection System Strengthening Conference.



**Dr. Rebecca Davies**

Dr Davis said there was an increasing interest in applying a systems approach to strengthening child protection. This, she said, meant working holistically while recognizing the interdependence of the

various components of the systems approach. For example, it was necessary to consider the impact that work on legal and policy reforms had on planning and budgeting; service delivery and capacity building; and on monitoring and information systems. It was also necessary for the approach to be contextualized and entry points adapted to local situations. Positive traditional protective practices also had to be promoted.

Dr Davis noted that different organizations (e.g. UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision) as well as different countries had different definitions for child protection systems. For example, UNICEF, in its 2008 Global Strategy, defined a child protection system as a set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors — especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice — to support preventive and protective responses, inclusive of family strengthening.

She said that child protection systems strengthening work in Africa faced several challenges, including lack of a common definition and language, resource constraints, poor co-ordination (between and within governments, civil society organizations (CSOs), United Nations agencies and other stakeholders), an excessive buy-in from the West, limited capacity to implement, a disconnect in formal and informal systems and the fact that social change took time to happen. She added that currently, most systems strengthening work in sub-Saharan Africa was happening in the following areas:

- Creating political space for systems strengthening – including partnership and advocacy;
- System mapping and assessments;
- Policy and strategy development;
- Community protection initiatives (including child participation);
- Strengthening service delivery models;
- Monitoring and evaluation;
- System strengthening in emergencies.

Dr Davis said a systems approach to child protection was more effective than single-issue based efforts, since it was guided by UNCRC's 3 P's – Provision (Art. 6, 24, 26, 28, 29); Protection (19, 32, 36) and Participation (12-17). She said the approach was also based on global definitions, concepts and principles that had been shown to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families (support families; engage communities). She noted the need for African countries to conduct mapping and assessment exercises as these were important in that their results informed strategy and policy development (piloting of new service models and strategizing for workforce development, etc); resource mobilization and allocation; and the identification of a common agenda for a national child protection system. She said that a range of mapping and assessment methodologies were available, with three standard ones being commonly used for policy and programme decisions. These were the Interagency Global Mapping Tool Kit, a region-specific mapping methodology and the Human Resource Gap Analyses.

Dr Davies said systems strengthening processes required the building of sustainable community-based mechanisms and the translation of broad principles into local action contexts. The system needs to be built on existing mechanisms and practices (community and kin networks, customary and traditional practices, etc) and has to pay close attention to workforce (professionals, paraprofessionals, community actors).



## Addressing the Gap between Policy and Practice in Child Protection

*Prof. Jaap E. Doek, former Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*

Prof. Jaap E. Doek noted that there was no single law that covered all aspects of child sexual abuse and that legislation and policies were of no use unless they were backed by effective reporting mechanism and implementation. He said it was important for governments to make it mandatory for all professionals working with children to report cases of child sexual abuse and for all sexually abusive acts to be criminalized.



**Prof Jaap E. Doek**

Prof. Doek proposed that in cases of child sexual abuse, the child should not be removed from the family or home since doing so amounted to a case of double abuse. He said restraint orders should instead be imposed on the perpetrator to stay away from the child's home. He said appropriate measures should be taken to prevent intimidation, threats and/or harm to the child (and her/his family) by preventing direct contact between the child and the alleged perpetrator at any point in the justice process. This, he noted, could be achieved through use of restraining orders, pre-trial detention, placement of the accused under house arrest, and so on. He called for the setting up of a State Fund to facilitate the payment of child sexual abuse compensations. The legal age of sexual consent and the role of parents in child sexual abuse prosecutions should also be clearly defined. Whether a child can demand non-prosecution of an alleged perpetrator by, for example, stating that she (or he) gave consent also needed to be addressed.

Prof. Doek noted that the prevention of further trauma to a victim of child sexual abuse was the central goal of ECOSOC Resolution 2005/20 and that the Resolution was not limited to sexual abuse of children as it was guided by the general principles of dignity, non-discrimination, right to privacy, best interest and the right to be heard. He said a child's right to privacy required the disclosure of information that could lead to the child's identification to be restricted and for the media to be excluded from a courtroom during a child's testimony. He said there was need for extra-territorial jurisdiction in the prosecution of crimes of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and for the victims of child sexual exploitation not be criminalized. He said there was need for governments to support an effective international system of extradition for cases of child sexual abuse.

## Strategies on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Child Exploitation and Online Protection

*Peter Davies, CEO, Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, UK*

Mr Davies said CEOP sought to stop child abuse offenders from doing harm to children. He said the offenders traditionally targeted South East Asian countries but were now spreading out to South American and African countries. The Centre was thus working with other stakeholders to protect children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The Centre used the following approaches to do this:



- Prevent – by making it more difficult for offenders to exploit children;
- Protect – by identifying and safeguarding children who are at risk, in UK or abroad;
- Pursue – by stopping and disrupting offenders who commit child abuse online or offline, anywhere in the world.

Mr Davies said CEOP offers assistance to foreign countries in the prosecution of child sexual abuse cases. It also seeks to establish a global law enforcement community to fight child sexual abuse. It was also important for African countries to build the capacities of police and other stakeholders to fight child sexual abuse. He noted that online child sexual abusers were sophisticated and manipulative and used several techniques to lure and ensnare their victims, such as online grooming, child abuse imagery (ponorgraphy), enticement to risky behaviour and the amplification and online normalization of human behavioural flaws.

Mr Davies noted that the educational needs of children required that they have access to the internet and other online facilities, but he added that the children could be protected by teaching them how to stay safe online. This, he said, could be achieved by teaching them how to identify the risks involved, how to stay in control and what to do when something goes wrong. He said some victims of online abuse made themselves vulnerable by taking risks such as giving away information that compromised their safety. He invited delegates who needed resources on how to teach children to protect themselves on the internet to download free videos (and other resources) from Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre's (CEOP) website [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) (email: [peter.davies@ceop.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:peter.davies@ceop.gsi.gov.uk))



Mr. Peter Davis

### Discussion

The following observations came out of a discussion that followed the presentation.

- Even in the absence of legislation on online child sexual abuse, child protection work must begin. Friends and partners e.g. internet service providers (ISPs) could contribute to such efforts, if approached.
- Refusal to disclose sexual abuse by child victims was a global problem but online helpline services encouraged children to tell since they were confidential (parents need not know).

### Pre-conditions to Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse

*Dr Lois Engelbrecht, Centre for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse, The Phillipines*

Dr Engelbrecht said a research based framework was the best approach to child sexual abuse prevention as it ensured that relevant laws, policies and prevention interventions were based on sound evidence. She gave the example of the United States of America which she said had many well designed CSA programmes since the country conducted a lot of research work. She said attempting to address child sexual abuse through disjointed work could prove disastrous and

gave the example of a CSA law whose enactment in the Philippines had turned out to be counter-productive. The law prescribed the death penalty for incest and resulted in the child victims refusing to tell or report cases of incest for fear that their fathers would be hanged.

Dr Engelbrecht said the following were the four pre-conditions for the occurrence of child sexual abuse: motivation for sex with children; overcoming internal inhibitors; overcoming external inhibitors and overcoming the child.

Dr Engelbrecht noted that boys who were abused were more likely to become abusers later in life. She said it was important to teach boys about healthy sexual relationships and noted that younger boys were more at risk of sexual abuse than younger girls. She emphasized the need for the enactment of appropriate child protection laws, saying that the death penalty may, for example, be too harsh or inappropriate in some instances. She said it was important for CSA stakeholders to provide training on CSA, encourage interagency collaboration and use the mass media to raise awareness on the issue. It was also important to re-consider the use of traditional modes of speech that seemed to legitimize sex with a child, such as the greeting of a girl child: "How are you, my little wife". She said that an e-work book on CSA was available from her on request.



**Dr. Lois Engelbrecht**

Dr Engelbrecht presented the following CSA Project Conceptual Design which she said was based on Dr David Finkelhor's Four Pre-Conditions to Sexual Abuse.

<p><b>1. Motivation for sex with children:</b> <b>Treatment issues of victims</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role boundaries</li> <li>• Guilt and responsibility</li> <li>• Fear and anger</li> <li>• Secrecy and sharing</li> <li>• Betrayal and building trust</li> <li>• Self esteem</li> <li>• Sexuality</li> <li>• Safety and security</li> <li>• Peer relationships</li> <li>• Stigmatization</li> <li>• Empowerment/Assertiveness</li> <li>• Grieving</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Overcome internal inhibitors:</b> <b>Develop personal inhibitors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Impulse control</li> <li>• Anger management</li> <li>• Decision making</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Overcome external inhibitors:</b> <b>Develop external inhibitors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/family responsibilities</li> <li>• Religious involvement</li> <li>• Awareness of the community</li> <li>• Lobby for laws</li> <li>• School curriculum</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Overcome the child:</b> <b>Develop child inhibitors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of right and wrong</li> <li>• Body awareness</li> <li>• Support systems</li> <li>• Reporting/telling</li> <li>• Decision making</li> <li>• Gender issues</li> <li>• Assertiveness</li> <li>• Self esteem</li> </ul>

## Discussion

The following observations came out of a discussion that followed Dr Lois Engelbrecht's presentation.

- Mass media often send wrong messages to children, e.g. in advertisement that use sex appeal. It was therefore necessary to use research findings to educate media practitioners on harm caused by such practices.
- Reporting child sexual abuse to the police in many African countries was difficult. The police also need to be continuously educated on the issue.

## Culturally Informed Partnering for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention across Continents

*Ms Sarita Hudson, Stop IT Now!, Northampton, USA*

Ms Hudson made a joint presentation on CSA studies conducted in four different countries by herself, Carol A. Plummer of Honolulu, USA, Tom Omwenga of Child Aid Organization, Kenya, Folake Modupe Bankole of Media Concern Initiative for Women and Children, Nigeria and Laura Carolina Baldrich Mejía of Colombia.

Ms Hudson said it was important to find a way to help people who had an urge to have sex with children saying there were many options for preventive action between doing nothing and reporting cases of child sexual abuse. It was also important to identify the various types of risks that pre-dispose children to sexual abuse and to break the secrecy that surrounds the abuse. CSA victims should also be supported to overcome shame and isolation.



Ms. Sarita Hudson

Ms Hudson noted that there were cultural differences in relation to child sexual abuse in the four regions and that government interventions were sometimes counter-productive. The prevention of child sexual abuse was also often given low priority in government programming. She said it was important for efforts to be made to break the secrecy that surrounds child sexual abuse and provide support to victims in order to stop the shame and isolation that they suffer. Ms Hudson said their collaborative efforts had resulted in more CSA referrals being made and changes in attitude in the society. The following observations also emerged from the presentation.

- Several laws on CSA had been enacted in the recent past in the four countries.
- Training was being undertaken.
- There was strong commitment amongst stakeholders.
- Denial and misconceptions on CSA still existed.
- More emphasis was put on prosecution instead of prevention.
- The media still had many biases and sensationalization.

## Children with Special Needs and in Difficult Situations: CSA in Armed Conflict Situations in Africa – Prevention, Detection, Treatment and Punishment Implications

*Kingsley Chigbu, Doctoral Research Fellow, University of Texas, USA*

Mr Chigbu said that, globally, child sexual abuse in situations of armed conflicts was under-researched and that research on the same was almost non-existent in Africa. He said studies on the subject had used retrospective cohort designs, lacked specified trainings, competency in clinical insight, institutional mechanisms and cohesive legal framework. None of the studies had taken time to start from the point of constructs development in order to arrive at empirical ways to test the interactions and mechanisms of perpetration of CSA.



Kingsley Chigbu

Mr Chigbu said CSA in Africa was evidenced by literature and that when it occurred in situations of armed conflict it resulted in victims suffering complex trauma. He noted that CSA occurrences in armed conflicts had been described as both systematic and politically-motivated and that militant groups that lacked a central structure had also played roles in CSA in armed conflicts. He said other perpetrators, such as the police, had also been identified (Longombe & Claude, 2008; Bartels, et al., 2006). He noted that CSA in situations of armed conflict occurred in tents, family households, as a result of abductions and for economic survival.

Mr Chigbu cited “preventive diplomacy” as an approach that could be used in the prevention of armed conflicts in Africa and the resultant child sexual abuse. He pointed out that the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, had declared 2012 the “Year of Prevention.” He said “preventive diplomacy” could be used in the reduction of customary international legal and political barriers and proposed the following concepts for the prevention of armed conflicts in Africa:

- NGOs to work in partnership with governments;
- Create an agenda for armed conflict prevention that focused on children;
- Advocate for the provision of research-based institutions to monitor and identify early-warning signs and to collect data in order to draw the attention of the ICC in a timely manner;
- Provide clear goals and strategies on how to prevent armed conflicts in Africa by enhancing the preventive diplomacy regime to create individual accountability; and
- Advocate for preemptive indictment to run concurrent with mediation with the parties to prevent potential or actual armed conflicts.

Mr Chigbu said CSA in armed conflict situations could be stopped by preventing armed conflicts. He said this could be realized through collaborations that would see the UN Security Council work with a central agency in identifying early warning signs for armed conflicts and providing readily-available structures to address preventive diplomacy. He said the collaborations would also provide a legal framework for assigning pre-emptive international responsibility to key individuals who incited large-scale violence.

## Discussion

The following observations came out of a discussion that followed the presentation.

- Joseph Kony, the rebel leader of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army used CSA as a weapon of war. Preventive diplomacy could be used in such cases to pre-emptily indict the perpetrator, but it was not the only possible approach.
- UN decisions and declarations could be used to fight CSA by using them to influence governments on CSA prevention policy.

## Impact of Witchcraft Branding on Child Sexual Abuse

*Debbie Ariyo (OBE), Founder, Africans Unite Against Child Abuse, UK*

Ms Debbie Ariyo's presentation sought to highlight the link between witchcraft, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of African children. It also served to raise awareness on the fact that witchcraft was a powerful weapon of coercion, deception for exploitation and abuse and sought to bring about a better understanding of the phenomenon of witchcraft branding.

Ms Ariyo defined witchcraft as "the exercise or invocation of alleged supernatural powers to control people or events, typically involving sorcery or magic" and spirit possession as "the takeover of a persons being, both mind and body, by an external non-physical force called spirit". She defined deliverance and exorcism as the "expelling or attempt to expel through prayers, adjurations and religious rites, one or more evil spirits from a person or place believed to be possessed or haunted". She said it was AFRUCA's position that there was no justification for diagnosing or branding children as witches since doing so comprised a violation of their rights. The organisation was also of the position that culture and religion should never be a reason for child abuse. She said the branding of a child as a witch and the performance of exorcism rites on him or her led to physical, emotional and mental abuse.



Ms. Debbie Ariyo

Ms Ariyo said it was saddening that a child's entire life could be ruined by just being branded a witch. She said children who were at risk of witchcraft branding were also vulnerable to other forms of abuse, which included the following: children living away from home (in foster care, domestic servitude, orphans, etc), children with disabilities (autistics, epileptics, downs syndrom and dyslexia suffers, etc.), children whose parents were branded as witches, children who were difficult or "noughty", child prodigies and "geniuses" and children living in broken families. She said it was crucial that such vulnerable children were protected from further abuse through accusations of witchcraft.

Ms Ariyo said belief in witchcraft and spirit possessions manifested itself in various ways. She said some people in Africa or in African emigrant communities in the UK believed one could be possessed by the spirits of a dead relative, with the possession occurring through an incision, a religious ceremony or as an involuntary acquisition. She said spirit possession was believed to manifest itself through one going into a trance, speaking in tongues and so on. She cited two cases in which religious leaders in the UK were accused of sexually abusing underage girls: that of Prophet Alain Batupa who was alleged to have sexually abused women/girls and of Pastor Nyembwe Morya, a Congolese pastor who allegedly claimed he could exorcise a man of withcraft by sleeping with the man's under-age daughter.



Ms Ariyo gave the following as examples of cases of child abuse in the UK that were related to belief in witchcraft:

- Kristy Bamu was tortured and killed in 2010 following allegations of witchcraft;
- A pastor was convicted in 2008 for slitting his sons' mouths and putting safety pins through their tongues as a means of protecting them from the devil;
- A 2006 study by Eleanor Stobbart identified 38 out of 74 child abuse cases as witchcraft related;
- In 2005, an eight year old girl was found and rescued from a laundry bag on a street in the UK
- In 2000, an eight year old Ivorian girl, Victoria Climbié, was found tortured to death, with 123 scars on her body.

Ms Ariyo said witchcraft did not only contribute to child sexual abuse but also to other forms of child abuse and exploitation, including child trafficking. She said witchcraft-based child trafficking was difficult to put to an end since the child victims did not speak out even when rescued. She added that such trafficking resulted in several forms of child abuse and exploitation, including child pornography, child prostitution, online sexual abuse, forced marriages, illegal adoptions, slavery, domestic servitude, etc. She urged delegates at the Conference to contribute to efforts being made to have the practice of branding children as witches declared a harmful traditional practice.

### **Discussion**

The following observations came out of a discussion that followed the presentation.

- A link existed between witch-branding and CSA since many “deliverance” and exorcise rituals involve sex with a child.
- Branding of children as witches in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had been documented in an Al Jazeera television documentary.
- It was inappropriate to refer to the process that precedes the branding of a child a witch as “diagnosis”. It might be better to refer to it as “identification” or “determination”.
- A possible approach to address witch-branding could be for children vulnerable to it to make petitions to law makers (as it happened in the case of Uganda).
- Some witch-doctors kill children on behalf of their parents (child sacrifice).

## **Sexual Violence in the Lives of Street Children in Ghana**

*Prof. Sheryl Buske, Charlotte School of Law, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA*

Prof. Sheryl Buske made a presentation from a study that focused on sexual and other forms of violence experienced by street girls, known as “kayeyes”, in the city of Kumasi, Ghana. She described kayeyes as young girls, some as young as six, who normally earned a living by transporting market goods on their heads in the streets of Kumasi during the day. She said most of the street girls were from communities in the Northern Region of Ghana. She added that the study found out that, in the past, the girls used to come to the major cities at certain seasons of the year and then go back home at the end of the season, but today they came to work and live in the city permanently.



Prof. Buske said some of the girls identified their mothers and peers as the push factors that led them to move to town. She said the girls attributed their mother's action to economic factors and past experiences. She said some of the girls' mothers in the villages had, for example, witnessed girls who had gone to the city and returned home better off economically. This, she said, had led to some of the mothers requiring their daughters to follow suit. She said the girls indicated they never felt safe at any time. They were constantly in fear of being raped or robbed, given that sexual assault and robberies were very high, especially where they slept. Some of the street girls spent the night in the open while others shared rented shacks, some of which were behind bars or next to public toilets. She said the girls also identified vehicular traffic and the surrounding community as sources of danger. She added that the girls said many of their colleagues had been hit by cars and that the community looked down upon them and mistreated them.



Prof Sheryl Buske

Prof. Buske said the community in and around where the street girls operated and lived did not empathise with them, even when they were in stressful situations. This, she said, was due to a general view in the community that the girls brought their situation upon themselves and could change it if they were to go back home. She said going home was not a viable option for most of the street girls since some of them indicated they would not be welcomed back in the village. She said some of the girls said they would wish to go back to school or for vocational job training but would only do so in the city, not back home.

Prof. Buske said society seemed to have given up on the street girls, a view that she said was re-inforced by a response she got from a sister-in-charge at a religious institution. She said that when she mentioned to the sister that her study had found out that the street girls wished to go back to school, the sister just looked at her and asked: "So what?" Sister explained her frustration with "more research," which is helpful in the abstract, but does little to actually improve the girls' lives. She then asked "Now what?" as a challenge to the international community to actually do something useful with the research.

Prof. Buske said the study found that the street girls became ostracized when they got pregnant and bore children and that the girls rarely used condoms in their sexual interactions. She said she had also found little drug and alcohol use or abuse among the girls, which she attributed to the fact that most of the street girls came from the Northern Region of the country, which was predominantly conservative Muslim.

## **Child Sexual Abuse in Institutions of Care and Learning in Africa**

*Laura Mayers, Center for Aids Development, Research and Evalution, South Africa*

Ms Laura Mayers' presentation was based on a national study that explored the links between HIV infection and child sexual abuse in South Africa. She said the study aimed to understand the contexts of risk that made children vulnerable to HIV infection as a result of sexual abuse and to develop resources, communication strategies and materials to mitigate the impacts of such abuse. The study also reviewed sub-Saharan literature on CSA.

Ms Mayers said approximately 50,000 rapes were reported each year in South Africa but said the true figure was closer to 500,000 since 9 out of 10 cases were not reported. She said 40 percent of all rape cases were perpetrated against children under the age of 18 and 15 percent of the total on children under the age of 11. She added that up to 80 percent of rape and sexual abuse victims that were attended to at sexual abuse centres in South Africa were children. She noted

that the country had an extremely low rate of convictions for rape and sexual abuse cases, which stood at 7 percent. She said that although not all instances of CSA involved HIV risk, the risk could not be dismissed given the high HIV prevalence rate in South Africa (SA). She added that the high likelihood of bleeding and injury from violent, forced intercourse also increased the risk of infection, as did cases of repeated exposure from hidden, on-going abuse and the fact that CSA was often not reported or was reported too late for post-exposure prophylaxis intervention.



**Ms. Laura Mayers**

Ms Mayers said South Africa had a high number of orphaned children who stood at 3.95 million in 2008 or 21 percent of all SA children. She said studies had found orphans to be more vulnerable to psychological distress and to be less likely to complete school, both of which were risk factors for HIV infection. She said orphanhood was also associated with early sexual debut and transactional sex, with transactional (commercial) sex increasing the risk of infection by a factor of 5. She said other factors that put orphans at a higher risk included having an older partner, having multiple partners, sexual coercion, testing positive for herpes-2 and other STIs and teenage pregnancy.

Ms Mayers said children of infected parents faced similar vulnerabilities as other orphans and this increased risks of sexual abuse and the likelihood of early sexual debut. She noted that only 35 percent of SA children lived with both parents and that the resultant lack of protection, guidance and economic stability were likely to increase the children's risk of sexual exploitation. She said some categories of children were especially vulnerable to CSA because of their living circumstances, and these included children from single-parent households, children living in alternative care, children living without adults, street children, HIV-positive children, children of HIV-positive parents, juvenile offenders and children with physical or learning disabilities. She said children in alternative care environments were more vulnerable since such environments were often less protective due to the absence or lessened quality of adult supervision, a lessened concern for a child's wellbeing and the children were often perceived as 'easy targets'.

Ms Mayers said a majority of orphans in South Africa lived in a relative's household and thus benefited from a sense of belonging and from sharing the same culture and community. She said CSA risks in such arrangements included possibility of abuse by a variety of perpetrators within the household. She said even when sexually abused, such orphans may feel unable to resist the abuser, lest they lost their precarious place in the household. She noted that sometimes orphans were taken in by elderly carers, such as grandparents, who sometimes neglected them, misused grants meant to help such children or abused alcohol. She said poor treatment in relatives' homes was a major reason why orphaned children often preferred to live alone but noted that the lack of close adult supervision made such children vulnerable to CSA, transactional relationships with older partners or neighbours. Elder siblings also acquired 'adult' roles before maturity and the children's economic dependency placed them in a poor position to negotiate condom use, avoid unplanned pregnancy or HIV infection.

Ms Mayers said orphaned children who lived in residential facilities, such as children's homes, would be in a safe environment if the facilities were registered, well-resourced, monitored and provided therapeutic services. She noted that poorly monitored or resourced residential facilities were risky options since they were prone to over-crowding, neglect, sexual activity between young people and abuse by adults. She pointed out that all efforts to re-unite children with their relatives or other foster parents should always be carried out in consultation with the children, saying children who were involved in decisions about their care were more likely to end up in protective environments.

Ms Mayers said children with disabilities were particularly vulnerable to CSA as they were often specifically targeted due to their physical or mental disability. She said some perpetrators took advantage of the fact that some of the children were not in a position to defend themselves physically. Some of the children could also be easily intimidated, may not know they were being harmed or thought they will not be believed if they reported the abuse. She said the fact that the mother of a child with a disability was in a weakened social standing for taking care of the child made the child even more vulnerable.

### ***Discussion***

The following observations emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation.

- Grandmother-headed households in South Africa qualified to receive foster funds but many of the households were not able to access it, resulting in frustrations.
- Opinion was divided on whether or not to discuss homosexuality in institutions of care, but Ms Meyers said it was important to address the issue as this was one way to ensure work on the issue receives better funding, children and adults became knowledgeable hence more use of condoms and thus better prevention of transmission.
- It was acknowledged that CSOs had done a lot of work on CSA but concerns were raised at the low government representation at the Conference. It was clarified that the conference was an open forum for sharing ideas and provoking thought. Among its outcomes could be that a stakeholder would organize a Conference for government representatives, say on the issue of children and homosexuality, and so on.
- Mentally challenged children in institutions of care in South Africa were at high risk of CSA from all adults, not only care givers. Thus, the need for better screening of adults who come into contact with such children.
- It was acknowledged that involving children under five years in decision making was a big challenge, but it was important to consult them anyway, e.g. by asking them such questions as, “what is a good body touch and what is a bad body touch?”



**The Conference in session** - It was attended by 204 participants drawn from 30 countries from all over the world

## PART II: WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS

A total of twelve (12) workshops on seven (7) sub-themes were held during the Second International Conference in Africa on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) held on 13 – 14 March, 2012 in Accra, Ghana. The key highlights and recommendations from the workshops have been incorporated in the Main Highlights and Recommendations section of this Conference report. Below is a summary of proceedings at the workshops.

### The State of Research on Child Sexual Abuse in Africa

**Ms Ravaozanany Noroarisoa** made a presentation titled “Tradition, Culture and Child Sexual Abuse – the Case of the South West Region of Madagascar” that was based on a study that looked at how socio-cultural factors impacted the sexuality of children aged 10 to 19 years in the Atsimo Andrefana region of Madagascar. She said the study, which was carried out between June and December 2011, revealed that traditional values and practices associated with sexuality had been suppressed and sex-for-pleasure given precedence. She said this had put girls in a vulnerable situation sexually since many people in the region considered sex “inevitable” once a girl attained sexual maturity as it was an “integral part of procreation”.

**Dr David Doku** noted in a presentation titled “Inequalities in Risky Sexual Behaviour and Aggregation of Health Damaging Behaviours among the Sexually Experienced Ghanaian Youth” that sexually active youth were also more likely to use drugs such as tobacco, alcohol and marijuana. He said “heterosexual relationships” were found to be the most common means by which the youths engaged in sexual activity. He said sexually active adolescents were at high risk of HIV and other STD infection as well as unwanted pregnancies since contraceptive use was found to be low. He said efforts made to promote sexual health in sexually active Ghanaian youths should not only lay emphasis on abstinence but also on the use of contraceptives, including condoms.

**Ms Catherine Maternowska** made a presentation titled “Child Sexual Abuse in Selected Countries in Africa” in which she noted that relatives and teachers were highest in number as perpetrators in all reported cases of physical violence. Ms Maternowska pointed out that girls were sexually abused at an earlier age than boys. She said touching (groping) was the highest of all incidences of sexual abuse. She said the three most common venues of sexual abuse were inside a house, on a road and at school. She noted that fifty percent of the victims of sexual violence did not speak out but the highest number of those who did talked to friends, followed by parents. Ms Maternowska made the following recommendations:

- Studies on sexual violence should also incorporate physical and emotional violence;
- Boys should be included in studies on sexual violence, most of which focused on girls only;
- There should be proper follow-up on referred respondents;
- It is important to involve governments in multi-sectoral task forces from the very beginning.



## Building Organisational Capacity to Manage Child Sexual Abuse

**Ms Beatrice Arionget Ekallam** made a presentation titled “Raising the Issue of Child Sexual Abuse and Dialogue on How Children Can be Better Protected” in which she said child sexual abuse in Uganda was often linked to separation of children from their families because of war or insecurity, domestic violence, divorce and so on. She said in 2003 the government of Uganda started a disarmament campaign of the Karamojong community of Eastern Uganda, which resulted in an unintended exodus of children from the region into Ugandan cities, especially Kampala. She said this was because men left their families in fear of the military forces, which led to famine and insecurity and saw poorly clothed, dirty and often malnourished children, sometimes in the company of their mothers begging for food and money in Kampala and other urban centres. She noted that the children faced constant physical, verbal and, worse still, sexual abuse.

Ms Ekallam said in response to the above, the government started a resettlement programme that saw the children and their families either sent back to their homes or to rehabilitation centres. She, however, noted that the resettlement options did not offer a solution to the cause of the migration. She said there was therefore need to come up with a creative approach with long term measures to prevent and manage the resettlement of the street children in order to reduce their exposure to continued child sexual abuse. She said the approach required the undertaking of a study that would provide a clear understanding and appreciation of the complexity of the situation in Karamoja region. She said the study was then followed by building of capacity of relevant government ministries, resource mobilization, raising public awareness on the causes, meaning and effects of child separation from their families and sexual abuse. She said in the long run, this helps create the right platform for resettlement, the necessary political will, changed attitudes and adequate resources to deal with the situation.

**Ms Naomi Hill** spoke on “Building the Capacity of Community Care Giver Organizations to Manage Early Intervention and Prevention Services in South Africa – Thogomelo Project” in which she gave an overview of service providers’ work at Thogomelo Project and the lessons learnt. She said services at the Project were provided by both the government and civil society in a holistic and integrated manner and added that the bulk of the work was carried out by volunteers and community care givers (CCGs). She pointed out that CCGs played a critical role that professionals could but were unable to. She said the role of CCGs was critical because child abuse did not necessarily happen between 8am and 4pm, the official working hours of a professional care giver. She noted that early prevention was important economically, too. She noted that the Children’s Act started with prevention and early intervention followed by statutory services and after care services and said that it was in prevention that CCGs played their most important role.

Ms Hill said most CCGs at Thogomelo Project were female (90 percent), aged 26 – 40 ((50 percent) and single (57 percent). Most of them were also school leavers (89 percent) who started work on volunteer basis but now received a small monthly stipend. She cited several challenges faced by the CCGs, including incidences of over-identification with particular clients, stigma around HIV/AIDS, lack of social support, vulnerability to burnout, frustration with government processes in responding to cases of child abuse and neglect and limited capacity and skills on how best to deal with identified cases of abuse. She noted that CCGs participated in a skills development programme that enabled them develop professional credits that facilitated their entry into recognized career fields in the social welfare. She said the programme placed emphasis on the management of vulnerable and abused children. This, she said, was because it was very important for a care giver to know how to manage sexual abuse disclosure so as not do further harm to the victim.

## Discussion

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation:

- Community care givers in urban areas lived in the communities they worked in but CCGs in rural areas did not.
- On average, CCGs were stable in their jobs but training opportunities for career development were being developed.
- Psychological maturity, motivation to help abused children and a strong spiritual foundation were important elements for one to successfully work as a CCG.

**Dr Rebecca Davis** spoke on “Strengthening National Child Protection Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa: Promising Practices, Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward” and noted that there was an increasing interest in applying a systems approach to strengthening child protection in sub-Saharan Africa. This, she said, meant working holistically while recognizing the interdependence of the various components of the systems approach. For example, it was necessary to consider the impact that work on legal and policy reforms had on planning and budgeting; service delivery and capacity building; and on monitoring and information systems. It was also necessary for the approach to be contextualized and entry points adapted to local situations. Positive traditional protective practices also had to be promoted.

Dr Davis said that child protection systems strengthening work in sub-Saharan Africa faced several challenges, including lack of a common definition and language, resource constraints, poor coordination (between and within governments, CSO’s, UN agencies and other stakeholders), an excessive buy-in from the West, limited capacity to implement, a disconnect in formal and informal systems and the fact that social change took time to happen. She added that currently, most systems strengthening work in sub-Saharan Africa was happening in the following areas:

- Creating political space for systems strengthening – including partnership and advocacy;
- System mapping and assessments;
- Policy and strategy development;
- Community protection initiatives (including child participation);
- Strengthening service delivery models;
- Monitoring and evaluation;
- System strengthening in emergencies.

## Role of Legislation and Policies on Child Sexual Abuse

**Ms Chinyere C. Nnorom** made a presentation titled “Ridiculing the Child Rights Act - the Continued Preponderance of Child Sexual Abuse” in which she noted that 18 out of many more cases of rape and defilement were awaiting prosecution in the offices of the Deputy Public Prosecution in Nigeria. She noted that the age of the victims ranged from 2 years to 16 years. She said in one of the cases which involved a child of 3 years, the culprit denied committing the offence but medical reports proved that the child was defiled. She said in another case that involved a pastor, the father of the victim allegedly took his daughter to church for fasting and



prayers where she was raped by the pastor. She said that according to the girl, the pastor locked her in the house, then put her on a chair and forcefully had sex with her. However, she said the pastor denied inserting his penis into her vagina and said he only used his hand to 'insert anointing oil for spiritual cleansing'.

Ms Nnorom said many other cases of child sexual abuse were reported in Nigeria since the Child Rights Act was signed into law. She said records from the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Social Development (MYSSD), which had compiled cases of rape/sexual/indecent assault/sexual exploitation and incest from January to December 2011 showed a total of 19 cases of incest and 181 cases of rape/sexual/indecent assault. She said legislation alone was not a sufficient deterrent to child sexual abuse and made the following recommendations.

- The need to empower children, especially girl children, with education on sexuality.
- Stigmatization should not be used to discourage victims from speaking out.
- The need for all states in Nigeria to domesticate the Child Rights Act and to avail translated versions to the public.
- That only prosecutors of proven integrity should handle CSA cases.
- Traditional rulers should help to prevent CSA and enforce its legislation.
- The media should censure programmes that convey inappropriate sexual messages.

**Ms Ravi R. Prasad** noted in a presentation titled "Child Helpline Data to Support Legislation and Policy Reforms on Child Sexual Abuse" that contacts made with child helplines around the world indicated that an increasing number of children were affected by violence and abuse each year. She pointed out that in 2010 the 16 child helplines that operated in different countries in Africa received nearly 54,800 contacts regarding violence and abuse from children or on behalf of them. She said that 33 percent female and 10 percent male children contacted child helplines seeking help and advice for reasons of sexual abuse. She stated that Child Helpline International (CHI) carried out an indepth analysis of the contacts made with the helpline in 2010. The analysis suggested, among others, that slightly more girls contacted the helplines which was attributed to under-reporting for male children.

Ms Prasad said in reality, the above numbers represented just the tip of the iceberg since sexual abuse of children was at a much larger scale. She noted that in most cases, sexual abuse was part of the physical abuse and domestic violence was 'accepted' in society. She said if data collected by child helplines on physical abuse and domestic violence was included in the statistics, the numbers and percentages would be much higher. She pointed out that Child helpline International published relevant data from member child helplines in an annual report titled Connecting to Children and said the data was useful in advocating for more awareness and recognition of child sexual abuse and for better legislation and policies on its prevention.

**Ms Violet Odala** spoke on "Harmonisation of Laws on Children in Africa - a Case for a Holistic Approach to Legal Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse" and noted that the exact rate of child sexual abuse in Africa was not known due to under-reporting, which she partly attributed to cultural inhibitions. She said many countries in Africa had provided for legal protection against abuse of children, including sexual abuse, in their penal systems and that, generally, in combating child sexual abuse, the importance of having all incidences reported either by the children themselves or society in general could not be over-emphasized. She said the major question

was what needed to be done to ensure that society, including children, took advantage of the legal provisions. She said that a criminal justice approach to child sexual abuse was not enough and noted that it needed to be complimented with a rights-based approach. She proposed for the adoption of a holistic approach to child sexual abuse through the harmonisation of laws on children and the use of accountability mechanisms that were available under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Prof Carol Plummer** made a presentation on “Re-thinking the Legal Remedy: Why Family Violence Needs Additional Solutions in Indigenous Communities” in which she noted that child sexual abuse and other forms of family violence flourished under family and community secrecy, silence, and cover-up. She said in spite of this fact, the primary means of addressing the problem had been the passing of strict laws, a demand that people make reports of cases, and the education of the public, including professionals, on how and when to make such reports to the police or child protection agencies. She noted that while an accountability and recognition of the horrors of child sexual abuse was appropriate, an over-emphasis on legal remedies might not serve children, their families or society in all cases. She added that it might also do little to change the conditions that supported the sexual abuse of children and other forms of family violence.

Prof Plummer said a combined knowledge and experience of approximately 50 years of work in prevention of child abuse and neglect, not only in the United States mainland, but also in indigenous and immigrant communities in Hawaii, the slums of Nairobi, cities in India, and numerous consultations in other countries had shown the assumption that legislation and incarceration as solutions to child sexual abuse to be questionable. She said difficulties encountered and mistakes made in responding to child sexual abuse in global settings should be used to inform the search for more effective ways to prevent child sexual abuse in community-based work.

## Strategies on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

**Motlalepule Nathane-Taulela** made a presentation titled “Strategies on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention – A Case Study of Ivory Park Informal Settlement” in which he noted that in its interventions on child sexual abuse, the programme at Ivory Park Informal Settlement incorporated community-based interventions, community education, empowerment of children to say no to inappropriate touches of their private parts. He said the success of the programme was partly due to the involvement of churches and traditional leaders in its implementation. He however acknowledged some gaps in the evaluation of the project, including the fact that the impact of the various interventions was not measured. He also noted that the involvement of men in the programme was low, including that of male teachers, and said that, in general, most men in South Africa took a back seat on child protection.

## Discussion

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation.

- A high number of children in white communities in South Africa were sexually abused.
- The Traditional Relations Act served as a safeguard against ethnic-based intimidation of children.

**Madam Tanja Van de Linde** made a presentation titled “A Collective No to Child Sex Tourism in the Northeast of Brazil” in which she noted that tourism was a significant source of income for many developing countries and emerging markets. She, however, pointed out that the influx of foreign visitors also increased the vulnerability of young girls and boys. She said child sex tourism was a major threat to the physical and mental well-being of children and youth living in or nearby popular tourist destinations. She noted that poverty was an unmistakable push factor that drove young girls and boys into the hands of those who exploit that vulnerability. She noted that a project known as “A Collective NO to Child Sex Tourism” addressed child sex tourism in the Northeast of Brazil by working at community level with children and their families and by strengthening formal response mechanisms by public and private stakeholders. The project also involved the Brazilian and Dutch tourism sectors in raising public awareness in efforts to dissuade prospective offenders.

Madam Van de Linde said the project had achieved the following:

- Vocational training provided to 400 youth in Pernambuco, including lessons that improved their self-esteem, language skills, awareness on child sex tourism, reporting of abuses and ability to thwart advances from sex tourists.
- Some 7,500 children and youth from low income families were educated on how to protect themselves from sexual exploitation.
- Training of management and staff of 60 hotels on sexual exploitation of children.
- Improvement in capacity to monitor implementation of the Code of Conduct in tourism.

### ***Discussion***

The following emerged from a discussion that followed.

- The tourists’ Code of Conduct worked in big hotels but it protected children from sexual exploitation in small hotels through community involvement.
- Poverty was the root cause of children’s involvement in sex tourism but such children could be helped if sent back to school and older children provided with vocational training.
- Challenges posed by local adults who seek sex with small girls could be addressed through community involvement, education and awareness raising on CSA.

**Ms Francesca Adeola Abiola** made a presentation titled “Engaging Young People in Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse through the Use of Multi-media Tools” which she said was based on a project that saw sixty six (66) adolescents from 10 secondary schools volunteer to participate in training on the use of multi-media tools to address pertinent challenges, including child sexual abuse. She said the children participated in the project with the consent of their parents and were trained by MediaCon educators on the use of such tools as Adobe software, Flipshare and Digital Cameras. She said the youths also received training on scriptwriting, video recording, the making of storyboards, photography, the production of music as well as photo and video editing. She said the participants were then able to make videos, photo collages, music, documentaries and to compose poems that highlighted various aspects of child sexual abuse, child neglect, domestic violence and other social issues. She said these were then uploaded online to the Adobe Youth Voices Global Community and shared with other young persons from around the world.

**Discussion**

The following emerged from a discussion that followed.

- The youth used their own creativity to develop their ideas on CSA using the multi-media tools.
- Children were identified to participate in the programme through their schools.
- Participants were briefed on relevant sensitive issues which they needed to protect themselves from as they engaged with mass media.

**Mr Kwaku Owusu Afriyie** made a presentation titled “Using Children and Youth Networks to Fight Violence against Children – the Case of WARO VAC Programme” which he said was based on a programme that was launched by PLAN in response to recommendations of the 2006 UN Study on Violence against Children in francophone West Africa. He said the programme, covering Ghana, Togo, Mali, Guinea Conakry and Benin, sought to improve co-ordination amongst various agencies that worked to empower children to fight violence perpetrated against them. He said the programme employed a child participation approach that looked at children as leaders and worked to strengthen their knowledge and to build their capacity. He said this was done by working with children and youth networks and by helping to promote their social and economic status. Some of the activities that children were involved in included participation in radio-shows that discussed how different types of violence against children could be addressed.

Mr Afriyie cited the following as some of the programme’s achievements: strengthened capacity of duty bearers; increased commitment of duty bearers; holding of meetings with local authorities and increased reporting on cases of violence. He cited the following as some of the challenges faced by the programme: difficulties in partnering with government departments; deficits in realization of children’s rights; inability to reach some marginalized children and time constraints that hinder children’s full participation in the programme. Mr Afriyie said as part of its way forward, the programme planned to raise to 14 the number of countries it covered, to ensure that at least 50 percent of direct beneficiaries were girls.

**Discussion**

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation:

- The programme initially focused on children in schools but it soon became evident the approach left out a big proportion of beneficiaries, including children with disabilities. These would be integrated in the second phase of the programme.
- An evaluation of the programme had shown a decrease in the number of cases of corporal punishment in participating schools.

**Mr Sofiane Boudhiba’s** presentation was titled “Sexual Tourism and Child Abuse in North Africa” and focused on the three North African countries of Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. He said the bulk of tourists to all the three countries originated from Europe. He noted that although there was little documented evidence on sexual violence in Muslim countries due to strong social taboos, statistics from the National Monitoring Centre for Child Rights in Rabat, Morocco showed foreign abusers accounted for 43 percent of all distress calls. He said children in Morocco often preferred to enter the tourism sex industry instead of local prostitution because of its better remuneration. He noted that boys who worked as tourist guides were often arrested and fined while girls were prosecuted even if they had been abused.

Mr Boudhiba said in Tunisia, girls were often ridiculed by being referred to as ‘petites bonnes’ due to their poverty levels, rural origin and lack of education. Family breakdowns resulted in some children becoming homeless. He said in Egypt there were between 200,000 and one million street children, a majority of whom were involved in sex trade. He pointed out that it was important for the countries of origin of sex offenders to play a key role in the fight against child sex crimes for instance through the enforcement of extra-territorial laws. He pointed out that this could be done in collaboration with the many international associations, organizations, networks, etc in child protection. He recommended that child sex tourism should be talked about openly so as to break the silence that surrounds it due to religious considerations. He noted that the Arab Spring had changed the situation of sex tourism due to a reduction in the number of tourists and the rise to political power of moderate Islamist parties.

**Ms Laura Myers** presented on “Participatory Learning and Action as a Way to Mobilize Communities to Reflect and Take Action on Child Sexual Abuse” and noted that participatory methodologies and community dialogues were crucial tools for mobilizing communities to take action against child sexual abuse. She said the tools enabled an interactive process to occur that achieved critical awareness, ownership and analysis of the problem and allowed for opportunities for action. She said such methods disrupted dominant power dynamics and allowed less-literate groups to engage service providers on an equal level. She said four participatory community dialogues were conducted in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and in Gauteng in South Africa to disseminate research findings to the research participants and other relevant stakeholders.

Ms Myers said a participatory process was facilitated in which participants engaged in critical dialogues around the underlying causes of CSA and how they had been addressed. She added the exercise included group work in which story telling-groups of like-minded people analyzed stories and then presented them to the whole group. She said the drawing of problem trees in order to find out underlying problems was also used as well as matrix charts, ranking and prioritizing. The groups then sought to find out what they could do on their own to address child sexual abuse. She said in the end the exercise helped to build crucial networks between communities and service providers and to initiate action-planning processes aimed at achieving structural change and improved utilization of resources.

### **Discussion**

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation:

- PLA had its challenges, but it could be used even in the Ugandan case where a 6-year old child was defiled by a 46-year old man and some politicians wanted him not to be prosecuted since it only required a single person to set things in motion to realize a critical number of like-minded people for action to be taken.

**Dr Princess Olufemi-Kayode** made a presentation titled “Partnerships for Effective Crisis Response Management for Cases of Child Sexual Abuse” in which she noted that Nigeria ratified the UNCRC in 2003 and a Child Rights Act was signed into law. However, she said that enforcers of the law continued to face challenges in the implementation of provisions of the new legal instrument, including those on child sexual abuse. She noted that Media Concern Initiative worked in the field of sexual violence prevention and operated the only rape crisis centre in Nigeria. She said the centre offered a 24-hour helpline service, provided counseling services, HIV counseling and testing (HCT), post emergency prophylaxis (PEP), referrals to access pro bono or state legal support as well as medical, social welfare and psycho-social support.



Dr Olufemi-Kayode noted that in 2010, a strategy was developed to enhance partnership amongst the criminal justice sector (the police, social welfare, medical and the judiciary), civil society, education sector, media, faith based organizations and other stakeholders. She said the initiative resulted in a 35 percent increase in the number of children and families that accessed crisis response assistance and support. She observed that the partnership with the criminal justice sector allowed for seamless referrals and coordinated follow-ups by stakeholders. She noted that the Crisis Response Centre recorded a total of 3,997 cases, 25 percent of which were prosecuted. She said ten (10) children received protective custody from the State and two (2) fathers were convicted. She added that one (1) widow and her daughter were resettled. She said the coordinated and seamless referral systems needed to be developed further and the roles and capacities of stakeholders defined so as to enable child sexual abuse victims receive quality services that did not re-traumatize or hinder the realization of justice.

**Ms Jaonosy Philibert Razafimbahiny** made a presentation titled ‘Allo fanantenana’ Crisis Line: A Free and Anonymous Tool for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children” and started by noting that Madagascar was an island that was classified among the poor countries of the world. She pointed out that most people in the island had limited access to social services, majority of which did not adequately respond to their needs. She said there was low access to social activity and the media in the country. She added that there were many instances of early marriages and that the rights of adolescents were very limited. She said Hello Fanantenana operated direct telephone helplines that provided help on sexuality and reproductive health to adolescents. She said confidentiality was very important at Hello Fanantenana because sexuality was a taboo subject in Madagascar. She said that Hello Fanantenana helplines were managed by ten young counselors with financial and capacity building support from UNICEF.

Ms Razafimbahiny said Hello Fanantenana activities included the following:

- Listening to and answering callers’ queries.
- Campaigning on CSA and adolescent reproductive health.
- Producing IEC materials on CSA.
- Partnering with the police and the education sector.

### ***Discussion***

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation.

- Hello Fanantenana had the national coverage and received calls on various topics including substance abuse, sexual health, etc.
- Ghana used to have child helplines, but they no longer worked.

### ***Recommendations***

The following recommendations emerged from the workshop:

- There is need for CSA stakeholders to work together;
- The sharing of experiences need to be encouraged;
- Everyone should be involved in CSA work so as to develop a sense of ownership;
- The link between HIV and child sexual abuse should be investigated further;
- There is need to understand the contexts in which CSA occurs and to identify necessary resources to address them;
- It is important to involve parents who were sexually abused as children in CSA work.

## Good Practices in Research and Practice on Child Sexual Abuse

**Mr Chinedu Oraka** spoke on “Cross-cultural Exemplars of Risk and Resilience among Youth - the Perspective of Children and Adolescents from Different Backgrounds” and noted that Nigerian children lacked good health facilities in comparison to their counterparts in Malaysia. He added that several cultural factors affected the reporting of CSA in Nigeria. He noted that in China and Malaysia 38 percent of CSA cases were reported compared to 29 percent in Nigeria. He said shame was the main hindrance to reporting in Nigeria and that although the Nigerian child seemed to be better adjusted, Malaysia had more structures for offering help to CSA victims.

Mr Oraka made the following recommendations:

- There should be clarity on CSA operational definitions (with due cultural considerations);
- The formation of victims support groups should be encouraged;
- Enforcement modalities on CSA legal provisions should be well defined;
- There should be parental control in how youth use the internet.

**Mr Alexander Dressler** and **Ms Sally Warren** made a joint presentation titled “Children Participation in Safeguarding Children from Abuse” in which they noted that one should not presume that going into the NGOs world automatically made children safe. They noted that “safeguarding children” was different from “child protection”. They said safeguarding children worked on the premise that the child was his/her own expert about abuse and laid emphasis on the child participation component. They said there was need for children to participate in programme/tool development processes otherwise the whole exercise ceased being child participation and became child manipulation. They noted that unempowerment of children sometimes happened due to class ethnicity and that it was important to encourage children to report abuse as it was one way to engage children. They noted that the development of tools for creating capacity for adults needed to involve children as well. They emphasized the need for organizational policies on child protection and the use of systems approach to child protection.

**Florence Mueni** spoke on “Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Kenya” in which she pointed out that immediate family members accounted for 33 percent of CSA perpetration in Kenya and extended family members and strangers for 22 percent. She cited the following as some of what a child can use/do to cope with abuse given their lack of exhaustive words to express feeling: trauma narration; in vivo exposure; personal safety skills to avoid revictimization. She said in situations where there was no evidence of CSA, forensic interviews were conducted to ascertain its occurrence. And that various forms of support were provided to victims and their families, including medical treatment and provision of prophylaxis. Empathy was exercised in dealing with the insensitivity of first responders.

Ms Mueni said for the therapy process to succeed, various strategies were used, including working with partners in the criminal justice sector and the building of capacity of the police and the judiciary. She said the capacity building included an introduction to child rights laws and an understanding of CSA. She said IEC materials were also developed in different languages. She said the approach enabled the care giver to be empowered alongside the child victim. She said the trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy programme resulted in referrals beginning to work, a reduction in fear of the police, an increase in the number of reported CSA cases, an increase in the number of prosecuted cases, an increase in the number of victim advocates and in more families accessing the crisis response centre. She said the following challenges were

encountered during implementation:

- Frequent movement of trained police officers from one station to another;
- Medical doctors who were unwilling to testify in court;
- Evidence-based challenges, such as evidence admissibility in court;
- Difficulties in provision of therapy for family members.

### **Discussion**

The following emerged from a discussion that followed.

- Getting a child victim to tell what happened in the presence of all concerned professionals ensured the child's evidence was admissible in court.
- A crisis response centre should attend to all cases of gender-based violence and compile necessary evidence to sustain a prosecution.
- It is important to develop partnerships with mass media and to hold media forums to help journalists understand and report issues of child sexual abuse.

**Ms Francesca Adeola Abiola** made a presentation titled “Peer Education – a Prevention Tool for Child Sexual Abuse” in which she noted that Media Concern Initiative – for Women and Children had worked for over eight years on prevention and response to sexual violence. She said the organization had carried out sensitization, peer education and training of adolescent boys and girls in secondary schools to empower them to become agents of change within and outside of their school communities. She said the programme addressed issues of lack of information on adolescence, sexuality as well as sexual abuse prevention and response. She said culturally appropriate and age-specific IEC materials and booklets were produced and provided to the group. She added that a manual was produced to serve as reference material for peer educators.

Ms Abiola noted that a total of 125 peer educators were trained in the prevention and response to sexual violence amongst adolescents at school. She said that at the end of the training 91 percent of the participants said they felt the training had provided them with the correct information to give to their peers. She added that 96 percent of them said they felt confident talking to their peers about child sexual abuse. She said after the training, participants were able to identify more consequences of child sexual abuse, including depression, fear, pregnancy and the possibility of imprisonment for the perpetrator. They were also able to identify other sources, apart from the school guidance counsellor, from where they could get help in case of sexual abuse. She said participants also demonstrated a clear understanding of what peer education was and the role and characteristics of a good peer educator. She noted that peer education was a strategy that could multiply the reach of sexual abuse prevention and the provision of crisis response messages.

**Dr Kofi E. Boakye** made a presentation titled “Predictors of Adolescent Sexual Violence in Ghana – a Need for Evidence-based Prevention” in which he noted that there was not enough research that focused on why child sexual abuse happened or on the perpetrators. He said most of the studies focused on the victims of abuse. He noted that words such as “force” when used in CSA work were sometimes vague and ambiguous and that in some instances a juvenile offender would be convicted for impregnating a “girlfriend”. He said there were several types of correlates of CSA identified in previous studies. These include family factors (poverty, poor supervision, parental neglect); societal or cultural factors (patriarchy, myths on sexuality, etc); and situational factors

(walking alone in the dark, visiting a male friend, leaving children in care of male relative or kin, friend, or acquaintance). The main risk indicators found in his study included negative attitude to school, truancy, smoking, inconsistent discipline and parental neglect and/or abuse. He noted that parental neglect was a very significant contributing factor to child sexual abuse.

Dr Boakye pointed out that not all adolescent males engaged in sexual violence but added that it was possible to identify characteristics or conditions that increased the likelihood (probability, not causal) that certain male juveniles would engage in sexual violence. He said identifying and targeting such factors in prevention and advocacy programmes could be a more effective and efficient way of utilising scarce resources to make meaningful impact than the current overwhelming focus on victims and macro-level factors that sought to explain a phenomenon that occurred at the individual level. He made the following recommendations for future research work.

- There was need for careful consideration of definitions of key words and their cultural context in child sexual abuse work.
- There was need for prospective longitudinal studies that involved large community samples and explored multilevel factors for sexual abuse.
- It was important to integrate macro- and micro-level explanations in adolescent sexual violence (individual, family, culture/societal, situational) and to examine mechanisms/processes and situational factors.
- It was vital to distinguish and compare predictors of male sexual violence with predictors of non-sexual serious violence and non-violent offences.

### **Discussion**

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation.

- Although Ghanaian legal provisions make consent to sex irrelevant in cases involving children of age 16 years and below the law is vague and somewhat discriminatory against boys between ages 12 years and 17 years who engage in sexual activity with a girl below age 16.

**Mr Leon Muwoni** made a presentation titled “Using Sexual Violence Research as a Catalyst for Improving Service Delivery for Child Survivors, a case of Zimbabwe” but which he said did not represent the findings of a study it was based on since the findings of the particular study were yet to be officially published. He noted that base-line studies that yielded national prevalence data on sexual violence against children and young people were sensitive and notoriously difficult to ethically collect. He however said several government ministries partnered with the National Zimbabwe Statistics Agency to conduct a study whose findings, however sensitive, would be formally recognised as official government data. He said the preparation stage of the survey was critical and demanded extensive collaboration across multiple sectors. He said a lot of importance was also attached to the development of a response mechanism for children who reported sexual or other forms of abuse in a country where social welfare and child justice services were highly constrained.

Mr Muwoni said the Department of Social Services, UNICEF and the other partners developed a response protocol to ensure that trained enumerators could easily identify vulnerable respondents and ensure a standardized referral to government social welfare services. He added that the referral and case management approach adopted during the survey had since been replicated

and made more widely available to statutory child protection workers. He added that 100 per cent of the children who sought assistance from social services as a result of the survey had received it and that the study would be used to inform the design of a national case management system. He pointed out that the study sought verbal consent from participating households as well as the participants and that parental consent was sought for participants below the age of 18. He said that follow up on a number of the referral cases found that some of the victims had finished with the services while some were still being attended to and noted that the study had led to a number of improvements in service delivery to child survivors of sexual violence in Zimbabwe.

**Dr Sudip Chakraborty** presented on “Preventing Sexual Exploitation of Girls in Northeast India – Childline Foundation Intervention as a Good Practice” and noted that Childline operated a 24-hour emergency toll free telephone service that provided services to distressed children through proper and timely intervention. He said sensitization was a core component of Childline’s outreach programme where volunteers organized regular sensitization camps with the help of community leaders in areas with abandoned tea gardens. He said Childline targeted these areas due to the economic hardships that face the people living there. He said Childline collaborated with the local police to organize child justice camps. He said the camps were used to appraise the police on the Juvenile Justice Act that was adopted in India in 2000. He noted that although the Immoral Traffic Act was a potent legal instrument, few cases were prosecuted under it. He said the situation improved remarkably following intervention by Childline, resulting in the arrest of twenty (20) traffickers under the Act. He said 35 girl child labourers were also rescued from a circus company, 25 of whom were reunited with their families.

Dr Chakraborty said Childline collaborated with the police to launch a Child Register system that monitored the movement of vulnerable children and added that the organisation was now lobbying the local administrative authority in the affected tea areas to maintain similar records. He said regular spot checks to verify a child’s actual presence in households vulnerable to child trafficking, coupled with timely updates of records, could go a long way in stopping child trafficking. He said Childline intended to run audio-visual shows on the plight of trafficked teenage girls in brothels but noted that the ultimate solution to child trafficking lay in economic empowerment.

### **Discussion**

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation.

- Child helplines were an important entry point for the reporting of child sexual abuse, provision of counseling services, data collection, etc. They also provided space for victims to share their stories without exposing their identity.

**Sika-Bright Solomon** made a presentation titled “The Perception of Children on Child Sexual Abuse: The Case of Children in Selected Primary Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana” that she said was based on a study that used a proportional sample of 256 children selected from five public basic schools. She said the study found a high preference of sexual experience among school children, with high incidences in those who lived in townships. She said sexual abuse happened to both male and female children and that, generally, there was high incidence of abuse involving a show of sex organs, touching and fondling. She added that in most cases the perpetrator was known to the victim – and was often a friend, relative or acquaintance. She said the perpetrator was usually older in cases of girls and that for boys the perpetrator was usually a



peer. She said more males reported abuse than females probably due to pressure being brought to bear on female victims (bribery, threats of physical harm, etc). She said several factors were found to influence a child's perception of child sexual abuse and included parenting styles, the child's age, educational level and sex. She said the cultural belief of "sex as a secret" was also found to be integrally related to a child's perception on sexual abuse.

Ms Solomon made the following recommendations:

- The Ghana Education Service should intensify sex education in the primary schools to enable school children identify and report sexual abuse cases.
- There is need to ensure victims feel free to report abuse by ensuring confidentiality;
- There is need for psycho-social research on CSA;
- More counselors should be trained to help identify and deal with cases of CSA;
- School teachers should be trained on how to identify and deal with cases of CSA.

**Christianah Abosede Akindolie** spoke on "Preventing Child Sexual Abuse – Educate a Parent, Protect Three Children" in which she said it was in an effort to make positive impact in the prevention of child sexual abuse in her community in Lagos, Nigeria. The Christianah Fate Foundation, which she founded, embarked on a project called "The Free Child Workshop". She said the objective of the project was to create awareness and educate the community on the existence of child sexual abuse. She said separate workshops on the issue were organised for parents, children, teachers, pastors and caregivers and covered topics such as the hidden epidemic of child sexual abuse, the medical implications of CSA, the legal rights of abused children and keeping children safe on the internet. She said that since the workshop started in 2010 about 3,000 parents and over 2,000 children had been trained adding that the Foundation believed educating parents was key to preventing child sexual abuse. She noted that many parents who previously did not know of the existence of CSA were now aware of it and were better equipped to recognize its signs. She added the parents also now knew how to deal with cases of CSA as well as where to seek help whenever their children reported an abuse.

**Prof. Carol A. Plummer** made a presentation titled "Culturally Informed Partnering for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention across Continents" on behalf of four other partners that she collaborated with on a CSA programme, namely: Sarita Hudson (USA), Tom Omwenga (Kenya), Folake Modupe Bankole (Nigeria) and Laura Carolina Baldrich Mejía (Colombia). She said programmes from the four countries worked collaboratively over the past two years in improving their efforts toward child sexual abuse prevention. She said the co-ordination of the programmes was provided by Stop It Now!, a US based organization with nearly 20 years of experience in working with individuals, families, communities and organizations to prevent the sexual abuse of children. She said the four participating partner organisations were Child Aid Organization Kenya, Media Concern Initiative for Women and Children of Nigeria, Corporación para la Atención Integral de la Niñez of Colombia and Stop It Now! of USA.



Delegates following proceedings in one of the workshop sessions

Prof Plummer said the collaboration was facilitated through extensive email and web conferencing as well as through a training conference in Trinidad. She said the collaborative effort enabled participating organizations to expand capacity for child sexual abuse prevention programming. She said the process included guided self-analysis, focus group discussions, adaptation of Stop It Now! materials, evaluation and sustainability planning and the development and presentation of trainings. She said the process enabled all participating organizations to undergo a guided self-analysis of their activities on child sexual abuse in their communities/countries that included prevention efforts, identified gaps in service delivery, cultural and community strengths, cultural and community risk factors, the role of the media, allies and stakeholders, organizational strengths and responses to secondary trauma.

Prof Plummer said an analysis of agencies' results showed similarities in the development of laws, awareness-raising, training efforts and collaboration while differences were found in cultural factors and dynamics requiring distinctive approaches, varying levels of support for sex education, helpfulness of governmental interventions and the priority given to addressing child sexual abuse. She pointed out the implications for the collaboration including the need to build on existing coalitions, utilizing the media more effectively, building capacity in a variety of areas and assisting in moving beyond prosecution and punishment to focus on victims and prevention.

## Child Sexual Abuse in Institutions of Care and Learning

**Ms Dra Arlynn Revell** made a presentation titled "The Assessment of Unwanted Early Sexual Experiences among University Students and the Importance of Increasing Awareness at Tertiary Institutions" and which she said was based on a study that focused on unwanted early sexual experiences (UESE) of university students. She said that given the extent of the problem of child sexual abuse (CSA) in South Africa, there was need for more international comparative research to facilitate international awareness of the problem. She said the study therefore compared the UESE of 2,608 Belgian and 1,081 South African first-year male and female university students. She said the Early Sexual Experience Checklist (ESEC) was administered to consenting first-year university students attending an orientation programme at a Belgian and a South African University.

Ms Revell said permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Human Ethics Committee of each university and noted that 21 percent of respondents indicated that they had had UESE before their 16th birthday (39.2 percent South Africans and 13.5 percent Belgians). She said most respondents indicated that the UESE happened only once (66 percent of Belgians and 59 percent of South Africans). She said the study found significant differences in UESE between students who were confronted with UESE before the age of 12 compared to those who experienced UESE between ages 12 until 16. She said it was therefore important to increase awareness of CSA and to implement CSA policy at the universities.

### Discussion

The following emerged from a discussion that followed the presentation.

- Both the Belgian and South African universities in the study did not have CSA awareness programmes but the study recommendations would be shared with them to help victims seek redress.
- The study did not address the role of gang members who were responsible for many peer sexual abuse cases in Nigerian universities.

**Ms Ezinwanne Christiana AzFredrick** made a presentation titled “Sexual Abuse among Female Secondary School Students in Nigeria” which she said was based on a study that examined the prevalence and forms of sexual abuse among female secondary school students in Nigeria as well as the characteristics of perpetrators of sexual abuse. She said the study collected data from 1,855 female secondary school adolescents aged 14 – 19 years in Imo state which showed that 742 or 40 percent of the respondents had experienced some form of sexual abuse.

Ms AzFredrick said the major types of sexual abuse reported included fondling (19.5 percent), forceful look at genitals (11.7 percent) and penetrative abuse (10.2 percent). She said among those who reported penetrative sexual abuse, 7.3 percent (136) reported being subjected to full sexual intercourse while 4.5 percent (83) had fingers or objects introduced into their private parts. She noted that the study found sexual abuse was most likely to occur before age 6 years and that some of the respondents had been abused more than once. She said 8.4 percent of them were still being subjected to abuse. She added that majority of the perpetrators were identified as peers between 14 and 19 years, 28.6 percent (163) were females. She pointed out that only 11 or 0.6 percent of the victims disclosed the sexual abuse to a doctor.

Ms AzFredrick said there was need for secondary school authorities to encourage disclosure of sexual abuse by victims and to provide them with counseling and healthcare services. She added there was also need to mete out appropriate punishment to perpetrators as it would not only curb the abuse but would also enhance the welfare of the students. She said the ministry of education should also provide schools with trained security personnel to make them safer environments for students.

**Ms Debbie Ariyo OBE** made a presentation on the “Impact of Witchcraft and Child Sexual Abuse” in which she noted that in many countries, including in the UK where her organization, the Africans Unite against Child Abuse (AFRUCA) was based, child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation had been linked to the issue of witchcraft and *juju*. She said AFRUCA’s major argument against the branding of children as witches was the fact that it often led to child neglect and isolation, thereby putting such children at risk of sexual abuse. She said human traffickers, who were also involved in sexual exploitation of children, often used witchcraft and *juju* as a coercive and control strategy on their victims who were predisposed to these traditional beliefs. She added that besides, there was the belief in some parts of Africa that sleeping with a child or a virgin could cure AIDS. She said AFRUCA had initiated educational and training programmes to educate faith leaders and community members on the issue of witchcraft branding which she said made children highly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.

## **Sexual Abuse Affecting Children with Special Needs**

**Mr Isaac Muema Kiema** noted in a presentation titled “Identifying and Engaging Deaf Children and Their Families” that Deaf Child Worldwide was a partner in the programme on which his presentation was based and added that the programme targeted families of deaf children in Kenya. He said that based on previous studies on child sexual abuse, children with disabilities faced a lot of CSA problems. He added that the perpetrators of CSA on deaf children were usually known to the victims. He said families with disabled children rarely engaged their children in developing mechanisms of reporting any form of sexual advances on them. What was more, one in eight parents of deaf children did not identify relatives as potential abusers of their children.

Mr Kiema said the following approaches were employed to address the problem of CSA in deaf children:

- Putting family members of deaf children in support groups to train them in sign language so that they could understand any CSA complaint from a deaf child.
- Raising awareness on CSA among disabled children.
- Training families on sign language and on causes and consequences of deafness in order to enable parents and deaf children communicate effectively.
- Teaching parenting roles on both deaf children and their siblings.

Mr Kiema said the programme had resulted in increased knowledge and awareness of CSA and also increased reporting of cases which led to legal action on the perpetrators. He noted that educating parents of deaf children on the sign language had made a positive impact on the entire society. He made the following recommendations.

- Deaf children should be educated on their rights;
- Law enforcers should be trained on sign language;
- Interpreters of sign language should be trained on legal options and actions for CSA;
- Parents should be able to communicate with their deaf children in sign language;
- Deaf children should know where to go for help when abused;
- To effectively cover disability gaps and reach all children with disabilities, all CSA in the other forms of disabilities should also be addressed;
- There was need for CSA counselors to be taught sign language.

**Mr Odor King** made a presentation titled “African Traditional Sexual Violence against Widows – an Impediment to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women in Africa” in which he said sexual violence against widows was an impediment to sexual and reproductive health and rights of women. He said the harmful widowhood practice known as “sexual cleansing” in which a widow had sex with another man following the death of her spouse in order to “purge the husband’s spirit” was an obnoxious form of sexual exploitation, inhuman treatment and violence against women. He said the practice was a common traditional practice in many African countries, including Nigeria, where it was predominantly practiced by the Igbo community.

Mr King said the study on which his presentation was based examined traditional sexual violence against widows and its impediment to sexual and reproductive health and rights of women in Nigeria. He pointed out that the study adopted a qualitative method and a validated and structured interview guide for data collection. He said 241 widows were identified in the 5 communities of Owerri Municipal Council and were randomly selected and interviewed for the study. He said the findings of the study revealed that harmful widowhood practices and sexual exploitation persisted in the communities of Owerri Municipal Council. He said the same possibly applied to other communities in Nigeria due to the majority Igbo’s perceptions on death, causes of death, marriage and culture.



## ***Discussion***

The following emerged from a discussion that followed.

- Inheritance of widows perpetuated the act of traditional sexual violence against widows;
- The involvement of research institutions in various parts of Africa on issues of traditional sexual violence against widows would be useful since their findings could be used in drafting relevant legislations and in seeking solutions to the problem.



**Workshop session in progress during the Conference**



## PART III: SEMINAR AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS

### Seminars

Two seminar presentations were made, the first one titled ‘Making Sense of Evidence and Impact’ by Catherine Maternoeska, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Nairobi); and the second one titled ‘Strategies Initiated by the Child Dignity Foundation (CDF) to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse in Nigeria (Amaka Awogu, Child Dignity Foundation, Nigeria).

**Ms Awogu** observed that the prevalence rate of child sexual abuse in Nigeria had been on the increase with victims ranging from ages 6 months to 14 years of both sexes, but with most incidents happening to the girl child. She said that this prompted CDF to initiate strategies in preventing the recurring and the prevalence of child sexual abuse. The idea was to study the behavioural patterns of child sexual molesters and understand the family, social and environmental factors that help in aiding the prevalence rate of child sexual abuse with a view of coming up with strategies to tackle the problem.

Ms Awogu pointed out some challenges faced in reducing CSA including the long duration it takes for a case to go through the judicial system, interference from the family, unprofessional handling of reported cases by the law enforcement agents, the police, social stigma and inadequate co-operation of medical institutions. Ms Awogu outlined some of the initiatives implemented by CDF to prevent CSA which included education, perpetual vigilance and prompt punishment of offenders.

The following recommendations emerged from the seminar.

- There is need to educate people to speak out once an abuse occurred on a child.
- Parents should always remain vigilant and pay particular attention to what their children tell them as anyone can be an abuser.
- Reporting of CSA cases should be done as soon as possible to enable the victims to receive medical attention.
- Prompt punishment for CSA offenders should be ensured by law enforcement agencies and the judiciary.

### Poster Presentations

Poster presentations were made on the themes of Preventing Child Sexual Abuse through Education by Christiana Akindolie, the founder and project coordinator of the Christiana Fate Foundation in Lagos, Nigeria; and The Incest Monologue by Alolade Hector-Fowobaje, a psychiatrist and author, and the chief executive officer of O5 Centre for Children, Nigeria.



International Needs Ghana showcasing their work at the Conference

## Adult Survivors Space

The adult survivors space was on the theme Creating a Shift in Society through Massive Healing, Recovery, Awareness and Raising Adult Advocates in the Fight against Child Sexual Abuse by Dr Princess Olufemi-Kayode, an Ashoka Fellow and executive director of Media Concern Initiative for Women and Children in Lagos, Nigeria.

The following recommendations emerged from the adult survivors' space:

- CSA survivors should go out and encourage African women survivors to speak out;
- Survivors should come together as a united voice;
- Survivor groups should be established in each African country but with collaborative efforts between groups in the different countries;
- There is need for trauma-specific CSA survivor counseling services;
- The media should not be encouraged to publish the names or pictures of CSA victims and survivors.
- There is need for more experts on issues of CSA survivors;
- There is need to have a forum for all CSA survivors on Facebook.

## PART IV: CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

### Summary of Proceedings

*Yiga Deogratius, Co-Rapporteur*

Mr Yiga Deogratius delivered a concise summary of proceedings at the three-day conference in which he reiterated the conference's achievements, key highlights, recommendations, conclusions and the way forward. Of particular note was the fact that there had been meaningful participation by children delegates at the Conference and the fact that the children demanded an end to out-of-court settlements in child sexual abuse cases. It was also strongly emphasized that no child was safe from child sexual abuse.

### Vote of Thanks

*Peter Kwaku Nti, Chair of Board, AMPCAN Ghana*

In a vote of thanks, Mr Peter Kwaku Nti, the chair of the board of AMPCAN Ghana, acknowledged the heartfelt contributions of children at the conference and said children were so trusting that they were often taken advantage of. He also extended thanks to the sponsors of the conference: Plan-Netherlands; the organizers of the conference - ANPPCAN Regional Office, AMPCAN Ghana, all the delegates and to everyone who contributed to the success of the Conference.

### Closing Remarks

*Dr Philista Onyango, Regional Director, ANPPCAN*

In her closing speech, Dr Philista Onyango presented to the meeting the members of the Organizing Committees of the conference: from Ghana, the Netherlands and Nairobi. She thanked them and noted that although they were a small team, they had for two years worked tirelessly behind the scenes. She said the results of their efforts were demonstrated by the high quality presentations and discussions that had taken place in the 3 days of the Conference. She thanked the children participants who had earlier during the opening session welcomed delegates and made very important presentations. She asked the delegates to take the recommendations made by the children back home and disseminate them widely. The children, she noted, had made it clear that they did not want behind-the-scenes negotiations when it came to CSA as they, the children, were indeed the sufferers. All cases of sexual abuse had to go to court and the perpetrators punished. She said that children must also be involved in the fight against CSA, which, she noted, was the worst form of child abuse.

Dr Onyango informed the delegates that apart from producing the conference reports, many papers presented at the conference were so good that they would be used to launch ANPPCAN's child protection journal which was in the making. She thanked the rapporteurs for giving a brilliant summary of the conference and urged the delegates to take the summarized issues and recommendations home for sharing and action. She wished each delegate a safe journey home and urged them to widely share the deliberations of the conference in their respective countries.

## Official Closing

**Ms Hellen A. Menza**

**On Behalf of Hon. Juliana Azumah Mensah, Minister for Women and Children's Affairs, Ghana**

Hon. Juliana Azumah Mensah called on delegates to work in networks as this was an effective means of accomplishing a given task. She urged the delegates to work for the setting up of child friendly schools, more effective reporting mechanisms and for better support to survivors of child sexual abuse and their families.

Hon. Mensah also reminded delegates to rally parents to adopt positive parenting approaches to child rearing and for age-appropriate sex education to be introduced in schools. She called on the governments to adopt and domesticate international laws and conventions and also ensure an effective enforcement of laws and policies on child sexual abuse. Hon. Mensah concluded by stating that child protection should be mainstreamed in all children's programmes.

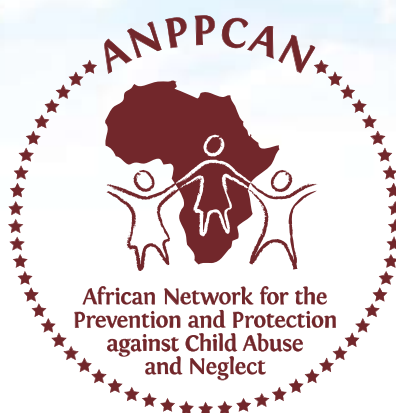


**Ms. Hellen A. Menza (left) presiding over the closure of the Conference**









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