

FACTSHEET – UPR 2017, GHANA

3rd CYCLE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSEC) and Child Sex Tourism (CST)

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES FROM PREVIOUS UPR CYCLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE

In reference to UPR recommendations 125.29, 125.46-48, 123.1-3, 125.1-2, 123.5

As part of the recommendation from the 2nd cycle issues Ghana was tasked to intensify efforts to address gender disparities and combat violence against women including through the strengthening of law enforcement in accordance with its Domestic Violence Act, as well as media and education programmes aimed at increasing public awareness and sensitivities on the rights of women.

Also, Ghana needed to step up its efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and protect and assist trafficked victims by protecting victims internal and cross boarder and ensuring their access to medical, social, legal and counselling services. This by ensuring adequate conditions for the victims to make complaints; and by conducting investigations and bringing those responsible to justice.

Ghana also received recommendations on expedite action on international protocols. Specifically, to expedite action on the ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the child (CRC) and consider ratifying the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Likewise, States recommended to take measures to ensure a proper legal framework for the Affirmative Action Policy.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Child sex tourism (CST), as a form of commercial sexual exploitation of children, is an increasing threat for children in Ghana. Stakeholders classify CST only a subcategory of commercial sexual abuse of children and do not priorities it as a special issue that requires attention for deliberate and specific actions to combat it. CST occurs in tourism destinations, towns and cities. The common manifestation of CST in these cities is child prostitution. Currently, issues related to CSE and CST are either addressed as child labour issue or as a sexual abuse or violation issue.

Ghana is one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recently cabinet gave approval for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography to be laid before Parliament for ratification.

The country is also a signatory to other international and regional conventions such as the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child among others. These conventions seek to guarantee the rights of the child and protect the child from all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. Consequently, Ghana embarked on a series of law reforms aimed at protecting the rights of the child and strengthening the legal and policy framework concerning children. These included the promulgation of the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560), Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653), Child Rights Regulations 2003 (LI1705), Human Trafficking Act 2005 (Act 694), Domestic Violence Act 2007 (Act 732) among others.

CHALLENGES	IMPACT
<p>Low level of awareness</p> <p>1. There is low level of knowledge on the menace. Many individuals and organisations do not understand the issues related to CST/CSEC. Because of the challenges with level of knowledge, majority of individuals and donors have also not prioritised these issues, which is affecting the development of girls in society.</p> <p>Inadequate Legislative provision</p> <p>2. Existing child protection laws and policies do not adequately address specifically CST/CSEC and other child protection on-line issues including molestation, bullying etc. Also, law enforcement agencies need the full knowledge and logistics to effectively address the challenge relating to CST/CSEC.</p> <p>Ineffective coordination</p> <p>3. There are still challenges relating to the working relationship of critical stakeholders in the handling of CST/CSEC issues. Because, there is no framework or national plan of action to support the process, stakeholders are unable to bring their resources (human, logistical and material) resources together to join forces. This makes the fight on the CST/CSEC a challenging one. Because of the challenges related to the coordination other critical actors like the traditional and religious groups or leaders are unable to contribute to the process.</p>	<p>1. Individual knowledge on the menace is still a major concern and this has contributed to the low programme design and implementation on the menace. This has created a programme intervention gap and many organisations are not prioritizing the issues relating to CST/CSEC within the country.</p> <p>2. Due to the inadequacy of the laws to protect victims or potential victims, stakeholders are not able to address the issue using the applicable laws and legal stand point. This makes prosecution a bit difficult to adhere to.</p> <p>3. The issue of CST/CSEC is not an individual or specific set of groups' responsibilities. A few of the stakeholders are involved in the process and therefore expanding the scope invention and the involvement of critical actors are very much of a value to the collective efforts. Since it involves behavioural changes there is the need to involved all sectors in address the menace of weak coordination.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Awareness raising and sensitisation on CST should be intensified among key stakeholders including parents. Besides, the government should prioritise CST related activities and channel resources including funding to local actors to help direct focus to combat the CST threat.
2. Existing child protection laws and policies need to be amended to make specific references to CST. There is also the need for government to adequately resource the law enforcement agencies to fully protect children from sexual exploitation by tourists and travellers.
3. Social services for victims should be scaled up and improved across the country. For example, shelter to accommodate children rescued from commercial sex by DSW, DOVVSU.
4. On-going collaboration by key stakeholders should be strengthened to enhance all aspects of child protection. A national secretariat for CST needs to be set up to plan strategies and logistics support to local actors to enable them to combat the CST menace.
5. Traditional authorities should be involved in the fight against child sex tourism since they wield a great amount of power in formulating rules and regulations and command a high level of respect in their communities.

ABOUT THIS FACT SHEET: This information sheet was coordinated by child rights partners including Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (GNCRC), Defence for Children - Ghana and Plan International Ghana.

REFERENCES Mapping and Analysis of Ghana's Child Protection System, UNICEF Ghana 2011 25. Ghana Statistical Service, Ghana Living Standards Survey 6, First Quarter Labour Report, Government of Ghana, Accra, 2013. 26. Country Report: Travel and Tourism in Ghana (2014). Accessed on 2nd April 2015 at: <http://www.euromonitor.com/travel-and-tourism-in-ghana/report>.

