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SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Media Awareness and Advocacy On Clat Policies and Laws: - Journalist Orientation Workshops



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Friends of the Nation

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ACRONYMS

AHTU	Anti-Human Trafficking Unit
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FoN	Friends of the Nation
GPS	Ghana Police Service
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

Human trafficking is a worldwide epidemic that deprives women, men and children of their basic rights each day. It has been recognized as one of the fastest growing crimes in the world that profits from the exploitation and victimization of human beings and undermines national economies and human safety. Virtually all countries are affected (source, transit, destination or a combination) thereof and Ghana is no exception. Specifically, on Ghana, the challenge (and crime) is steeped deep in poverty and ignorance with the powerful and greedy exploiting the vulnerabilities of the poor and the ignorant.

It is clear that the global community is committed to counter human trafficking, there is still much to be done to eradicate this crime. Until very recently, Ghana has for an “unprecedented” three (3) years consecutively (2014 to 2016) put on the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) global Tier Two Watchlist (**as not doing enough to combat human trafficking – i.e. prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of human trafficking and modern day slavery**). The country moved from the Watch List to “Tier Two” in the June 2018 Report which is an indicator of improvement over the last three years. Had the Ghana slipped to Tier Three as at the end of December 2017 (findings which was published in the June 2018 report), Ghana would have lost millions of dollars in development assistance which foreshadows a disadvantageous situation for the Ghana’s socio-economic aspirations.

It is therefore critical that state agencies’ and other stakeholder’s voices are heard on their activities in combating child and human trafficking. The 2018 TIP Report acknowledged the important role played by Civil Society (CSOs) including the media and support government (Department of Social Welfare –DSW), District Assemblies and the Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP).

The multifaceted and clandestine nature of human trafficking poses a challenge for effective prevention, victim protection and prosecution related measures and policies. Its linkages with illegal migration, labor issues and health problems underline the complexity of the problem and demand different approaches from all actors.

It is crucial now more than ever for actors amongst Civil Society including the media to cooperate, coordinate and share responsibility in the fight against human trafficking. Law enforcers, local and national governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are among the key actors at the forefront of this fight. In particular, local governments play a significant role in reducing the vulnerability of potential victims, providing support and assistance to presumed and current victims and implementing development strategies that address the root causes of trafficking, all in alignment with international human rights standards. And that is the rationale for FoN working assiduously with the Assemblies and the DCPCs.

However as alluded earlier, if all these efforts continue to be rendered on the silent side of the public domain, the abuses of people will persist and we all will suffer for it as crime affects all of us in one way or the other. The media must therefore be a serious partner in the fight against CLaT in Ghana; inadequate information sharing and low knowledge of the role of the media was also identified as key communication challenges.

It is therefore against this background that Friend of the Nation (FoN) under the auspices of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (USAID-SFMP), organized an orientation program for the media from the four (4) administrative regions bordering the coast of Ghana (as the SFMP) intervention is targeted primarily at marine fisheries sector. The program

which took place at Pempamsie Hotel **on Thursday 30th August, 2018, was participated in by a total of 22 participants (male 19, female 3)** from the below-listed media entities.

1. Ghana News Agency (Cape-Coast and Takoradi);
2. Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (Radio and TV);
3. Graphic Communications Group;
4. New Times Corporation (Cape-Coast and Takoradi);
5. Multi-Media Group (represented by Joy News, Adom),
6. Jubilee FM, Keta;
7. Hogbe Radio, Anloga;
8. Kpando Radio, Kpando;
9. Peace FM, Accra;
10. Skyy Media Group, Takoradi;
11. Radio 360, Takoradi;
12. Coastal FM; Mankessim;
13. Radio Peace, Winneba;
14. Ahomka FM, Elmina

1.1 Objective

The objective of the media orientation program was to situate the seriousness of the local and global Human Trafficking situation for the media to appreciate how critical it is as a developmental challenge to Ghana in terms of livelihood, food and human securities.

It was also intended to increase the media's interest in investigating and covering issues of Child Trafficking and Trafficking (CLaT) as a developmental issue and shape public opinion and discourse in advocating for resourcing of law enforcement agencies to adequately combat the criminality.

Inadequate access to information is on record as a cause of ignorance. The capacity enhancement program was designed to update the media on human trafficking activities, issues and *modus operandi* of perpetrators; and promote networking in reporting CLaT and Human Trafficking issues in Ghana.

SECTION 2: DETAILED SESSION

2.1 Methodology and Approached for the Workshop

A participatory approach was used at the workshop. An interactive PowerPoint was made. The presentation shows simple chart, pictures and audio visuals to communicate key messages to the participants. Participants were provided the platform to interact with the resource person and other stakeholder from the ten coastal districts in central region. Addition open forum session was used to facilitate discussions among the participants.

Key questions, comments were discussed and the process was used to collate practical solutions to improve media coverage on information sharing on ClaT as part of effort of contributing to make ClaT Practice socially unacceptable.

2.2 Setting of Context

After welcoming participants and after all present went through the "customary" self-introductions, Kwesi Johnson situated the program within the fisheries context as earlier engagements showed that certain sections of the media were finding it hard to differentiate between the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (USAID-SFMP) as fisheries project or an anti-human Trafficking one. He explained that the dwindling fish catch induced poverty in the coastal-fishing communities in the Central Region, vulnerability of families to issues

social-exclusion has heightened and that poverty is the bottom-line reason that pushes people into sending their children and young relatives into slavery.

2.3 Presentation on Overview of Global Human Trafficking situation

Mr. Johnson explained that Human Trafficking is a low-risk criminal activity when it comes to detection, prosecution and arrest compared to other transnational crimes. While the legal controls are state-based, the crime groups are transnational which creates difficulties for law enforcement to combat effectively.

He did mention that, that trafficking of persons is a pressing problem, at both the global and local level, with an urgent need for action. However, the issue was not recognized internationally until the year 2000 with the adoption of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* by the General Assembly of the United Nations, supplementing the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*.

Mr. Johnson said, it is one of the three Palermo Protocols, the others being the *Protocol against Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air* and the *Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition*.



Figure 1. FoN staff addressing the media

Mr. Johnson explained that the UN Trafficking Protocol encourages states to enact national laws to prevent exploitative recruitment and treatment of migrant workers, provide protection to the victims and prosecution to the offenders (*coming into force on 25th December 2003 with 117 signatories and 159 parties as of June 2014*). However, this does not imply that the international community took no interest in countering human trafficking until the year 2000. The main challenge was reaching a consensus among member states concerning the definition of human trafficking. The criminal enterprise is the fastest growing criminal businesses in the world due to its high profitability of **\$5 – 7 billion annually (according to the U.S. Department of State - 2005)**.

Article 3 of the UN Trafficking Protocol defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”

He talked about the protocol which provides a special case for children under Article 3, subparagraph (c), in which the “means” is removed from the original definition of human trafficking. The use of threat, force and other forms of coercion is not necessary for children to be constituted as trafficked victims if the act and purpose still apply. Mr. Johnson gave an example of a parent who arranges for a child to be transported into a situation of forced work, it may still be recognized as trafficking even with the child’s consent.

According to Mr. Johnson, Under Article 3, subparagraph (d), a child is defined as a person under the age of eighteen years old. In addition to the definition, Article 5 of the Protocol highlights the obligations of states to criminalize trafficking in order to ensure legal effects in domestic criminal law. States shall adopt legislative or take other measures necessary in order to establish “the conduct set forth in Article 3” as a criminal offense.

2.4 Presentation: What Ghanaian Law Says About Clat

Participants were taken through, the Ghanaian law which is against CLaT as shown by the examples: The Children's Act (1998)

- **Section 1:** Definition of child - For purposes of this Act, a child is a person below the age of eighteen years.
- **Section 2:** - Welfare principle - (1) the best interest of the child shall be paramount in any matter concerning a child.
- **Section 5:** - Right to grow up with parents. No person shall deny a child the right to live with his/her parents, family and grow up in a caring and peaceful environment; unless it is proved in court that living with his parents would be inimical to the child’s welfare).

The Human Trafficking Act (2005)

Section 2: - (1) A person shall not traffic another within the meaning of section 1 or act as an intermediary for the trafficking of a person.

A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years.

Section 3: - Placement for sale, bonded placement, temporary placement, placement as service where exploitation by someone else is the motivating factor shall also constitute trafficking.

Section 4: - Where children are trafficked, the consent of the child, parents or guardian of the child cannot be used as a defense in prosecution under this Act, regardless of whether or not there is evidence of abuse of power, fraud or deception on the part of the trafficker or whether the vulnerability of the child was taken advantage of.

With the above highlights, though it was brief, participants became aware that both Ghanaian and International law is against Human Trafficking, and for that matter, CLaT.

2.5 Presentation on CLaT situation in the Central Region

Participants were briefed on the CLaT situation in central Region. Mr. Johnson explained that academic work, and interactions with coastal fishing communities in the Central Region since 2014 has shown that the area (central region) is the “source area” for child laborers who are

enslaved in “hazardous work” on the Volta Lake, the Western Region and outside the country in places like La Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Togo, Benin and Nigeria (*the international dimension was clearly situated for the participants*).

According to Mr. Johnson other areas within in Ghana that are recipient areas (destination communities) are the Volta Lake and Western Region; whilst places like Kasoa, Swedru and Makessim all in the Central Region and not far from the coastal areas are “transit points” for both outbound trafficked, and inbound victims especially from neighboring countries.

SECTION 3: COMMENTS – QUESTIONS - CLARIFICATIONS FROM THE PRESS

- Question: Most of the questions asked were on cultural practice for children to learn the family vocation, whether that is classified as child labour.

Answer: It is a normal cultural practice for children to learn the family vocations from their parents or work to support the home when necessary. This statement is made to debunk the “argument” that the “concept of Child Labor” is a Western ideal that has no place in Ghanaian tradition. An operational definition was therefore adopted for FoN’s anti-CLaT work.

- Questions; Participants also asked questions about what the District Assembly especially the social welfare department is doing in combating Child Labor and Trafficking in Central Region.



Figure 2. A media personnel sharing asking a question

Answer: All the Ten Coastal District with assistance from Friends of the Nation has incorporated ClaT issues into their MTDP 2018-2021 and most of these awareness raising and livelihood interventions support the most vulnerable persons within their respective district.

- One of the media personnel suggested that Friends of the Nation should organise and orientation workshop for the Producers to enable the producers to appreciate CLaT stories and published them.
- Question: What is the District Assembly doing about Child Labour and Trafficking issues in Immuna.
 - Answer: Ekumfi District Assembly in collaboration with Friends of the Nation has organised a series of awareness raising campaign using drama to educate all coastal communities in the District on the impact of it. During the awareness raising campaigns, survivors were given opportunity to explain the effect of them being trafficked on their physical wellbeing.
- Question: Will the USAID-SFMP consider putting serialized write-ups in the papers regularly?
 - Answer: It is actually a plan and we need to discuss that further and draw the Term of Reference (ToR) for these types of activity.
- Comments: Women of child-bearing age should be advised to give birth to only the number of kids they can cater for economically. The media needs to work in an integrated manner to contribute to combatting CLaT.



Figure 3. A media personnel sharing his comments

- Question: What is the Friends of the Nation doing about the decline in Fish stock
 - Answer: Friends of the Nation together with other partners under the SFMP is working with Fisheries Commission to implement sustainable that will rebuild the fish stocks.

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

Media involvement (reporting, exposure) in combatting CLaT should be one of the topmost priorities of all institutions as crime thrives “under the cloak of darkness”. The producers and editors of media houses should also be engaged and trained in CLaT issues for them to better understand issues when stories are brought to them for publishing.

The media should take the issue up as they as the “fourth estate” are the mouthpiece of the “powerless” as well as the public agenda setters.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

With the media’s primary role of dissemination information, it is a natural ally in shaping and directing public opinion against this criminality of modern day slavery and gross human rights abuse.