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# SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

## Communication on Child Labor and Trafficking Report on Press Engagement



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THE  
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Friends of the Nation

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## ACRONYMS

AHTU	Anti-Human Trafficking Unit
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
CEDECOM	Central Region Development Commission
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
CR	Central Region
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DAs	District Assemblies
DAA	Development Action Association
DCPCs	District Child Protection Committees
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence Support Unit
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
FoN	Friends of the Nation
FtF	Feed the Future
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHS	Ghana Health Service
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GPS	Ghana Police Service
MCPCs	Metropolitan/Municipal Child Protection Committee
HTMB	Human Trafficking Management Board
ICFG	Integrated Coastal Fisheries Governance Project
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MTDPs	Medium Term Development Plans
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
SFMP	Sustainable Fisheries Management Project
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
URI	University of Rhode Island
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

Human trafficking including Child Trafficking in fisheries has been a long existing challenge for Ghana. The country was listed for three continuous years on the US Tier Two for Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Watch List. The TIP ranking was unprecedented; as the third continuous listing on Tier Two would have automatically relegated the country to Tier Three with its ominous consequences. Downgrading to tier three meant that Ghana would have suffered sanctions (restrictions of US donor/budget support) that would have severely affect several sectors of the Ghanaian economy including Agriculture, Education, Health, the Millennium Challenge Compact (MCC), etc. Such sanctions would have had dire implications for the economy and also the ordinary Ghanaian citizen, who are beneficiaries of such US Government support.

To contribute to address the issue, FoN and partners under the SFMP project, rolled out a behavior change communication campaign and worked with stakeholders to build local community networks of advocates, including strengthened capacity of local government agencies and media on addressing Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) issues in the Central region.

As part of the behavior change communication campaign a press engagement event was organized on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 at CEDECOM House in Cape-Coast by FoN.

The press engagement aimed at improving media awareness and also media reportage on Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) issues in especially Central Region fishing communities.

The press engagement was therefore used to share the collaborative activities between SFMP and government agencies and other local institutions (e.g. community structures and advocates).

Also key issues of CLaT discussed at the press engagement included; the negative psychological, emotional, physical and sociological impacts of CLaT on Children and the community. The root causes of CLaT and the Impact of CLaT on the Nation as a whole was discussed.

The engagement provided that platform for the State agencies to share with the journalist, the effort by Government in combating Human Trafficking including Child Trafficking. The event also provided the space for the representatives of the agencies to also shared the various activities they are implementing within their mandate; as service providers or as law enforcement, in combating Trafficking in Humans including child trafficking in fishing communities.

This report narrates the detail discussions of the press engagement and provides the background on CLaT, the focus of SFMP and the key expected impacts of the behavioural change communication campaign.

## **SECTION 2: BACKGROUND**

The goal of the five-year USAID-Ghana SFMP is to rebuild targeted marine fisheries stocks through the *adoption of sustainable fishing practices* and exploitation levels. With a focus on *small pelagic fisheries* management along the entire coastal stretch of Ghana, SFMP seeks to rebuild a fishery, which is near collapse. More than 100,000 metric tons of high quality low-cost animal protein that was traditionally available to poor and vulnerable coastal and inland households has been lost. SFMP is also contributing to the GOG's agriculture and fisheries development goals and the USAID's Feed the Future (ftf) development objectives to reduce poverty and hunger.

Also SFMP is working with partners to contribute to make CLaT Practices socially unacceptable.

The history, and magnitude of Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) in fisheries within the coastal fishing communities in the Central Region was determined by FoN through community interactions and studies conducted as part of the SFMP project. The findings from the study revealed that CLaT is clearly linked to fishery.

Children from the coastal fishing communities are relatively better swimmers compared to children from other areas of the country. Culturally, these are communities that are already steeped deep into fishing and everything revolved around fisheries. Therefore, taking children from poor families (who hardly are able to put food on the table on daily basis) because are good swimmers or conversant with fish processing, or both to go and do same in other geographical areas for perceived rewards was a matter of course. Poverty and deprivation are the main causes of CLaT in the coastal communities in the Central Region. Declining fish harvest has seriously deepened poverty in the coastal fishing communities where there are hardly any other viable forms of livelihood activities. Large family sizes due to high level of teenage pregnancies, illiteracy levels, poor parenting, etc are some of the additional factors that contributes to high level of CLaT practices in coastal communities in the Central region

Child labour and Trafficking and other forms of human trafficking and forced labour exist in several forms in Ghana. It is therefore, critical that government agencies and stakeholders stand up to tackle the issues head on, to ensure human dignity and social protection for the vulnerable. The role of the media (journalist, etc) are crucial for the raising of voices to sensitize stakeholders and also to advocate for pro-poor policy reforms that addresses some of the root causes on CLaT.

Media platforms could provide space for strategic discussions to shape public discourse and opinion on CLaT to contribute to make CLaT practices socially unacceptable.

Against this background, SFMP seeks to build informed constituencies with journalist and media houses with the aim of creating media space to increase awareness on CLaT. The aim for the press engagements is also to activate local actions to support the behavioural change campaign that is urgently needed to contribute to make CLaT practices socially unacceptable.

## **SECTION 3: OBJECTIVE OF PRESS ENGAGEMENT**

FoN organized the press engagement to contribute to communication and awareness raising toward combating CLaT. Also the Press engagement was to contribute to improving media participation as a matter of improving Ghana's standing of combating human Trafficking including Child Trafficking.



The media engagement was designed to inform the public (through the media) USAID-SFMP support of FoN's engagement with the District Assemblies and other state agencies in combating CLaT through;

- Awareness raising (using local FM radio stations – in Winneba, Salt pond, Elmina)
- Capacity enhancement for District Child Protection Committees
- Facilitation of incorporation of anti-Child Labor and Trafficking initiatives in the designing of the Medium-Term Development Plans (2018-2021) to enhance allocation of resources by state agencies to combat the menace, etc.

The event was also aimed at contributing to increased tempo of media reportage on issues of CLaT in the Central Region to contribute to making the practice socially unacceptable.

State agencies have the primary responsibility in addressing the needs of the citizenry. It therefore behooves on these institutions to let the public understand and appreciate their roles in availing to vulnerable families and individual their services which help in assuaging the plight of poor families.

Though the SFMP is about contributing to resuscitating Ghana's fisheries, managing the fisheries is actually about managing people efforts. The issue of poverty and dwindling households' income in the coastal-fishing areas of the Central Region has contributed immensely, or is even the major driving factor of Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT) in the area. FoN and partners within the SFMP are implementing activities geared towards making CLaT socially unacceptable through a Behavior Change Communication (BCC) initiative.

The media being a strategic avenue for information dissemination is regularly brought on board to highlight the efforts of the project, and also to improve the quality of reportage.

In Ghana, law enforcement agencies do not themselves "normally" go on the media to project what they are doing but tag along when pulled along by civil society partners as a matter of answering to the public and rendering account of their stewardship or the mandate for which the public purse is expended on them to provide services.

Institutional weaknesses need to be addressed in order to establish efficient enforcement and support programs and structures. The gaps in law enforcement and assistance through social intervention programs need to be enhanced. Towards this, FoN has been assiduously engaging the Ten (10) District Assemblies along the coast of the Central Region of Ghana to incorporate anti-CLaT issues into the designing of their Medium –Term Development Programs (2018-2021). This effort seeks to facilitate resource mobilization actions by the Assemblies to assist the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and the District Child Protection Committees – DCPCs (*otherwise referred to as Child Panels*) to effectively prevent and also reduce the incidence of CLaT in especially the Central Region.

Since FoN has had several collaborative programs with the government agencies since October 2014; and particularly between October 2016 and September 2017, it was an opportune time to bring together the state agencies, the media and CSOs together to highlight the achievements so far, and also share the challenges for more efficient approaches in terms of media coverage as a critical contribution in reducing, and eventually eliminating CLaT in the coastal-fishing areas.

The media engagement event was therefore designed to update the journalist and stakeholders on the work of anti-human trafficking state agencies and their roles in combating CLaT in the Central Region.

## 1.1 Stakeholder (Agencies, Institutions, CSOs, etc)

Key stakeholder institutions who participated in the press engagement included but not limited to the following:

- Department of Social Welfare (Regional Office; CCMA and KEEA);
- Ghana Police Service (Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Unit; and Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit);
- Ghana Immigration Service (Regional Office; and Ekumfi District and Mfantseman Municipal Assembly Offices);
- Cape-Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA);
- Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal Assembly (KEEA);
- Community Anti-CLaT Advocates (from Abandze in Mfantseman Municipal Assembly);
- Central Regional Development Commission (CEDECOM); and
- SFMP anti-CLaT partners (CEWEFIA and FoN)



**Figure 1. Panel members at the high table (consisting of officials from the Police, Immigration and Social Welfare**

## 1.2 Media Houses That Participated on The Program.

Journalist from about nineteen (19) media organizations including; *print media and electronic (radio, TV, on line, etc)* participated in the press engagement event held on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 at CEDECOM House in Cape-Coast.

The media houses that participated in the press engagement were;

- Ghana News Agency;
- Daily Graphic;
- Ghana Times;
- Radio Central,
- GBC Radio and
- GTV

- The Chronicle;
- Joy FM,
- Joy TV,
- Adom FM
- Adom TV);
- Atlantic FM (Cape-Coast);
- YES FM (Cape-Coast);
- Ahomka FM (Elmina);
- Peace FM (Accra);
- TV3 Network
- Onua FM
- Metro TV; and
- Ghana web internet portal.

## **SECTION 4: DETAIL SESSIONS OF PRESS ENGAGEMENT**

The detail sessions of the press engagement included the following

- Power-point presentation on FoN Anti-CLaT interventions under SFMP. This presentation provided participants with the overview of SFMP on CLaT, the background of CLaT, the root cause of CLaT, etc. the presentation prepared participants to appreciate the CLaT issues and why the need to contribute to make it socially unacceptable.
- Discussions of US State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) watch list tier two listing issues and the implications for Ghana. This discussion provided information on the TIP ranking and the implications for Ghana. The discussion explained in broad perspective the global significance of inactions on human trafficking including child trafficking.
- Open forum; (interactive session with question and answers). The open forum provided the platform for reach interaction and sharing of ideas on how to address CLaT issues and contribute to make the practice socially unacceptable.

### **4.1 Power-Point Presentation on FoN's Anti-CLaT interventions under SFMP**

Mr. Kwesi Randolph Johnson (FoN, Anti-CLaT Advocacy Officer) made the presentation on the FoN's anti CLaT under SFMP. In his presentation he said the SFMP intervention is mainly geared towards prevention and the focus has been on the adults (parents, guideline, caretakers, et) who are involved in engaging the children in child labour and or trafficking. He explained that the Central Region has been established as sources area where children are trafficked to other areas.

His presentation also explained the following key points:

- The definition of "Child Labor and Child Trafficking" (CLaT)
- How Does CLaT Resonate Nationally and Internationally?
- Work that Children Are Not Allowed to Engage In.
- Child Labor and Child Work

### **4.2 Definition of Child Labour?**

Mr. Johnson explained that according to the ILO, child labour is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity. Child labour to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging

them to leave school prematurely, or; requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. He noted that child labour is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children.



**Figure 2. Mr. Johson presenting**

#### Summary of Finding from Survey and Community Interactions

Mr. Johnson noted that the findings from the survey conducted by FoN in the year 2015 covered a total of thirty-eight (38) coastal-fishing communities in the Central Region of Ghana showed that CLaT is rooted in access to cheap labour, deep poverty, and the near-collapse of the artisanal fishing industry, with poor and vulnerable homes being easy targets for perpetrators.

He added that stakeholders from the Regional and National levels and, communities have all indicated the urgent need to support children. Children also are exploited of their natural naivety to make them work efficiently but in hazardous situations in very exploitative manner. Coming from the coastal communities, they also already have the skills of swimming and how to process fish. He explained that the survey showed that single-parent female-headed families were very susceptible especially where the female head has no sustainable income. Homes where the fathers do not honor their responsibilities of catering for the children, this includes providing them with the basic necessities of life. He explained that inadequacy of social amenities in the coastal fishing areas and deprivation make life elsewhere appear better therefore, parents give out their children hoping for better life for them.

He added that some families migrate and ensemble as workers and sometimes the whole family are engaged as laborer including the children. Large family where the parents are unable to provide and control the children makes the children in the family susceptible to CLaT. Large family size (they feel assured there will be adult-children supporting them in

their old age). The desire to have particular sex of child and when this did not happen leads to large number of children. He explained that the survey also showed that non-access to, or inadequate access and use of reproductive health services (family planning), coupled with the prevalence of teenage pregnancy which is higher than the national average of 2.2 has compounded the issue of poverty, poor household incomes; thus CLaT. He explained the summary Root Causes as follow.

#### **4.3 Summary of Root Causes of CLaT in Coastal-Fishing C/R**

- Large family sizes
- Illiteracy
- Poor parenting
- Weak community leadership
- Poverty and deprivation
- Institutional and regulatory inadequacies (capacities, logistics, motivation, etc.)
- Inadequate service provision (e.g. GHS, GES, law enforcement).
- Depleting fish harvests (poverty)

He indicated that reports also indicate increased of corruption and bribery in the judicial system, which hindered anti-trafficking measures.

#### **4.4 Question and Comments from the Journalist**

After the presentation the Journalist asked some questions. The following are the key questions asked;

- How does CLaT resonate nationally and internationally?
- Work that children are not allowed to engage in?
- What is the difference between Child Labor and Child Work?
- What effort is being made by Ghana at reducing and eliminating CLaT?
- What other local actions are in place to combat CLaT and implications of breaking the law?
- What are the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Watch List 2016 Report issues?



Figure 3. Media person posing a question to the high table

#### 4.5 How Does CLaT Resonate Nationally and Internationally?

Mr. Johson explained that the concept of child labour is based on the International Labor Organization (ILO) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), which represents the most comprehensive and authoritative international definition of minimum age for admission to employment or work. It however synchronizes with Ghana's laws. It is therefore not a foreign imposition on the country (**Mr. Johson clarified as answer to a question from the media**). Ghana was indeed the first country worldwide to ratify the International Convention on the Child in 1985. Under the Ghana Children Act 1998, minimum age for admission of children into employment is fifteen (15). However, children may be employed at the age of thirteen (13) to do light work. The minimum age for engagement of persons in hazardous work is eighteen (18).

Whilst child labour by both boys and girls takes many different forms, the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) as defined by Article 3 of the ILO Convention No. 182 is a priority. The convention calls for immediate prohibition of the WFCL, enacting laws, regulations and standards. Secondly, it requires ratifying states to take urgent and effective measures to eliminate these worst forms through programmes of action.

Mr. Johson explained that the President of the Republic of Ghana recently spoke about Child labour. The President said quote "to the sad issue of child labour, and especially its manifestation in some key sectors of our economy must be paid attention to. It is a shameful phenomenon and an indictment on all of us, and it is time to stop hiding under a so-called cultural practice to find excuses. Children are children; they are our most important asset and deserve to be protected from being exploited in the labour field."

#### 4.6 Work that Children Are Not Allowed to Engage In.

Mr. Johson explained that the laws of Ghana do not permit any one to engage children in exploitative labour which deprives children of education, healthcare and development including any form of night work.

He explained the children's Act says that under no circumstances are children allowed to do the following hazardous work:

- Going to sea
- Mining and quarrying
- Porterage of heavy loads
- Working at manufacturing industries where chemicals are produced
- Working in places where machines are used
- Working in places such as bars, hotels and places of entertainment where a person may be exposed to immoral behaviour.

#### **4.7 Child Labor and Child Work**

Mr. Johnson explained the differences between the many kinds of work children do. He noted that some of the work are categorised as difficult and demanding. Others are categorised as more hazardous and even morally reprehensible.

He explained that children carry out a very wide range of tasks and activities when they work. And noted that not all work done by children should be classified as child labour, for example, Children's or adolescents' participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling or training is generally regarded as being something positive. He noted that such works included helping their parents around the home, assisting in a non-demanding and non-hazardous family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. He noted that these kinds of activities could be very positive and could contribute to children's development. He also said such works could contribute to the welfare of their families; whilst providing children with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

Mr. Johnson explained that the most extreme forms of child labour and trafficking involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries.

#### **4.8 Effort Made in Ghana at Reducing and Eliminating CLaT**

The representative from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) explained that in 2015, Ghana made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of Child Labor. The Government issued a legislative instrument to implement the Human Trafficking Act, which includes provisions for establishing care centers and providing social services to victims.

She explained the DSW also launched five new social programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor and announced a Child and Family Welfare Policy that aims to improve child protection.

She lamented that children in Ghana continue to engage in the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL), including fishing. She explained that additionally, resource constraints severely limited the Government's ability to fully implement policies and social programs during the reporting period. She explained that however, according to the U.S State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Watch List 2016 Report indicated that the Government of Ghana has not “demonstrated adequate evidence in combating human trafficking” (i.e. non-provision

funds for anti-trafficking enforcement efforts or programs to protect victims. This has not been different from the reports of 2014 and 2015.

The Assistant Superintendent of Police, Mrs. Irene Oppong, who is also the Head of Public Affairs of the Central Regional Police Command, explained that though the Government of Ghana is cited as “not fully meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking”, Ghana is making some effort to combat human trafficking and other related issues including CLaT. She said the government has been investigating and prosecuting human trafficking and trafficking-related crimes, including allegedly fraudulent labor recruiters (especially to the Middle Eastern Countries). She added that suspected child traffickers have also been apprehended. She noted that the issue of shelter for Children and where to keep them during cases was a challenge for the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) of the Police service.

She explained that the police have been corroborating with relevant institutions including the DSW, CSOs, the media and other partners to combat Human Trafficking.

Superintendent Kenneth Arhinful of the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) in the Central Region also mentioned that GIS also collaborates with CSOs like FoN under the aegis of the USAID-SFMP to conduct stakeholder engagements. He also explained that GIS work with partners and the media to sensitize people on human trafficking and the related crime. He noted that other CSO notably Challenging Heights have been supporting the government to rescue trafficked children from the Volta Lake area.

#### **4.9 Actions to Combat CLaT & Implications of Breaking the Law.**

Mr. Kwesi Johnson said the predominant vocation in the coastal communities of the Central Region is fishing. He explained that fishing is the main source of livelihood, and a cultural activity. He noted that most parents naturally want their children to learn the livelihood of the family. He explained that the Assemblies and the communities are teaming up with NGOs like FoN to educate the communities on CLaT and also sustainable fisheries to revamp the fisheries sector as this will contribute to the betterment of economic fortunes of coastal dwellers as was in the past. He explained that FoN is assisting the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) in the ten (10) coastal local government areas (District Assemblies) to facilitate incorporation of anti-CLaT intervention into the designing of their respective Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs 2018-2021). He explained that the exercise is intended to boost resource mobilization for relevant state institutions especially the DSW and the Ghana Police Service in combatting and prosecution CLaT offences.

He explained that through the USAID-SFMP funded activities, FoN and sister organizations have created awareness through BCC programs on the issue of Human Trafficking, Child rights, child labour, Child Trafficking, etc.

Nana Kweigya, a community anti-CLaT advocate based in Abandze added that the indulgence of illegal fishing activities by fishers has triggered a decrease in fish catch and poverty in coastal communities. He noted the resultant poverty is one of the root causes on CLaT in coastal fishing communities. He noted that to address the CLaT issues the Coastal District Assemblies in the Central Region drew action plans as part of their 2018-2021 MTDP which some of Assemblies were implementing. He also explained that community leaders and the Child Protection Panel (CPC) in the Mfantseman Municipality and the Ekumfi District Assembly (EDA) have stepped up activities to educate the inhabitants on the negative effects of CLaT. He noted that there were some constraints and hostilities at the community meetings, but he said those constraints have not deterred the initiatives to spread information. He added that there was need to continuing with the education, sensitization to



inform stakeholders to contribute to make CLaT socially unacceptable. He recommended the need for enforcement activities deter CLaT practices. He concluded that children are the future insurance and there is the need to protect them.

## **5.0 Presidential Anti-CLaT Pronouncement**

Mr. Kenneth Arhinful of the GIS explained the President's Anti-CLaT speech and explained that on World Labor Day 2017, His Excellency the President Nana Akufo-Addo made a monumental speech which inter-alia said

“... the sad issue of child labor, and especially its manifestation in some key sectors of our economy needs to be critically looked at. It is a shameful phenomenon and an indictment on all of us, and it is time to stop hiding under a so-called cultural practice to find excuses. Children are children; they are our most important asset and deserve to be protected from being exploited in the labour field. If we do not stop these shameful practices, there are global agencies that have determined to institute punitive measures against us in some critical industries, which would lead to the loss of markets for our goods and the loss of jobs. Under my watch, government will work with all partners towards the goal of eliminating child labour. We will work to ensure that our children do not work under hazardous conditions to support themselves and their families. We will work to eliminate, in particular, the disgraceful practice of forcing children into fishing and illegal mining activities.”

Mr. Arhinful applauded the President for his Speech and said it is important to keep reminding ourselves that child labour and child trafficking are not only crimes, but also now pose veritable threats to our national security. He said all stakeholder have a responsibility to protect the children from the criminality of child labour”.

Mr. Kenneth Arhinful also acknowledged the efforts of the First Lady, Mrs. Rebecca Akufo-Addo, for the determined manner in which she is speaking out against the evil of CLaT and for the memorandum she has signed with her Ivorian counterpart that effect.

## **5.1 Ministerial Pronouncement**

The representative of the DSW also added that the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) also conducted public awareness activities aimed at informing the public about the risks of human trafficking, and provided funding support facilitating two meetings of the Human Trafficking Management Board (HTMB).

She said the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Madam Otiko Afisa Djaba, also made public pronouncements calling on parents to make the welfare of children their priority. She explained that the sector Minister made this charge when she gave the keynote address during the celebration of African Union (AU) Day of the African Child in Accra on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, 2017. She explained that the themed for the AU day was: *‘The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for Children in Africa: Accelerating protection, empowerment, and equal opportunity’*. She said the Minister spoke on child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child labour, child abuse, child trafficking and child commercial sex work among others as some of the challenges affecting the development of the Ghanaian children. She added that the Minister explained that those challenges are outcomes of negative socio-cultural practices, poverty, poor parenting and disparities in national development; however, she acknowledged that the Ministry in collaboration with some partners, was investing heavily to address issues the society faces, which hinder the development of children.

The representative of the DSW noted that DSW is implementing the Child and Family Welfare and Justice for Children policies and the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program is also to address poverty issues. She said it was important for the media to

support the campaign against child marriage as stated in the five-year strategic plan to end teenage pregnancy, among others and make Ghana a safer place for the development of the child.

The representative of the DSW concluded that the DSW will continue stakeholder dialogues on issues of child abuse, child prostitution and child labour so that stakeholders will appreciate the gravity of harm these cause children; and make communities protectors of their own children,” she affirmed.

## **5.2 Discussions of US State Department Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Watch List Tier Two Listing Issues**

Mr. Johnson explained that human trafficking including Child Trafficking in fisheries has been a long existing challenge for Ghana. The country was listed for three continuous years on the US Tier Two for Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Watch List. He noted that according to the TIP Report (2016) the Government did not fully demonstrate overall increasing anti-trafficking efforts though there are signs of improvement albeit not enough. Therefore, Ghana was placed on Tier 2 Watch List for the third consecutive and unprecedented time.

Mr. Johnson added that Ghana currently benefits from U.S. Assistance in areas of law enforcement; capacity building for state prosecutors; security and military assistance; and increasing the capacity of the Electoral Commission, Health, Education; Agriculture etc. would all be subject to restrictions. This brings total annual US Government support to Ghana to around \$800 million. He explained that Ghana could have been subjected to an automatic downgrade to Tier 3 in the 2016 TIP Report. If Ghana is downgraded to Tier 3 in 2017, it will become subject to restrictions on U.S. assistance, including development aid and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact. He noted that the US currently provides more than \$140 million per year in development aid to Ghana while the MCC Compact is worth more than \$498 million. He concluded that the nation has up to December 2017 to redeem itself and encouraged the journalists to support efforts to reduce Human trafficking including Child Trafficking.

The representative from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) also explained that the failure to provide adequate and timely operating funds for law enforcement and protection agencies continued to hamper the government’s anti-trafficking efforts. As a result, this did not increase prosecution efforts or assistance to victims. This meant that the government did not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of TIP and failed to provide evidence of increased efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in the 3 years. Any country ranked on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years is downgraded to Tier 3 in the third year unless it shows sufficient progress to warrant a Tier 2 or Tier 1 ranking. A Tier 3 ranking indicates a government does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons and is not making significant efforts to do so.

## **SECTION 5 CONCLUSION**

Participants observed that media coverage on child rights, child welfare and CLaT were very low. They agreed that those important child welfare issues had not been given the priority it deserved. Participants therefore suggested the need to work with stakeholders to improve media reports and coverage on child oriented stories.

Participants also stressed that provision of reliable data is needed to encourage journalists to do good stories on CLaT. They also recommended the need for more local actions in the communities to identify, report and prevent CLaT issues at the source.

The representative from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) recommended the need for increase child rights awareness. She suggested that media and CSOs should support the DSW to raise awareness and create the momentum needed to spark public policy debate on child rights. The DSW rep said the prevention of CLaT was the best approach. She explained that prevention of CLaT involves partnership with stakeholders to enable the reduction of the percentage of occurrence. She encouraged the journalists to produce accurate story Child welfare issues without sensationalism. She explained that the Ghanaian media should attempt to include proper child rights content as part of its programmes and actions. She pledged that the DSW will support the media with stories on child rights and other related topics.

The District Assemblies reps also explained that poverty, deprivation and lack of development has been one of the cause of CLaT. They explained that the District Assemblies have laid emphasis on special economic development programs in their MDTPs. They said the MDTPs developed by the assemblies also have special communications and interventions that will contribute to prevention of CLaT.

The representative from the Ghana Police Service advised that the Media should pay more attention to child rights issues and also support the enforcement mechanism by reporting key issues to the police. He said the media can play a key role through investigative journalism to help identify CLaT cases for prosecution. He explained that stakeholders must support enforcement agencies to develop and implement widely accepted guidelines for reporting on child rights as part of an enforcement mechanisms. He noted that the lack of specialisation in child rights reporting could be addressed by media training and working with editors and reporters to assign particular reporters to child rights stories.

The rep of the Ghana Immigration Service explained that they could work with reporters and editors who were willing to undergo training, mentorship and capacity building on reporting on child rights and child programming. He noted that this would increase the quantity and quality of child rights news stories. He explained that child rights-based media projects could also support bring the gap between agencies and media and strengthen the professional networking. He noted that this could be achieved through trust-building workshops, forums and other forms of professional exchange, including the development of a joint calendar of activities. He said partnerships between the media and decision/policy-makers could be enhanced by increased professional networking, policy briefs and roundtable events.

The Journalist requested that the law enforcement agencies should bring down the barriers that hamper communications between them and the Media; or find ways of facilitating interactions between them. So that there will be enhancement of enforcement activities to combat CLaT and human trafficking in General.

The journalists also noted that there was low recognition for reporting on child rights. They therefore suggested that Journalist awards schemes on child rights reporting could be established to encourage and or support reporters in this wise.

Mr. Johnson recommended that the agencies could use social media platforms like facebook, whatsapp, etc. To share and influence the public especially the youth to be more sensitive to child rights issues. He also expressed that usaid-sfmp partners including fon and other csos would continue to work with the media, dsw, the police, the district assemblies, the traditional leaders, relevant government agencies and community structures to prevent child labour and trafficking.