



SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SFMP)

Radio Campaigns on Child Labor and Trafficking



SEPTEMBER, 2017

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SNV: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/ghana>

ACRONYMS

AHTU	Anti-Human Trafficking Unit
CEWEFIA	Central and Western Region Fishmongers Improvement Association
CLaT	Child Labor and Trafficking
DAA	Development Action Association
DCPC	District Child Protection Committee
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
ICFG	Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance
MCPC	Metropolitan/Municipal Child Protection Committee
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
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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1. FORWARD

Awareness creation of the consequences of CLaT has become very critical for the whole nation in the period under report as Ghana as a country, has been listed for three (3) consecutive years (2014, 2015 and 2016) on the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons (TIP) worldwide Watch List as not doing enough to combat human trafficking. Magnanimously, the country has been given a grace period to redeem itself by December 2017.

Should Ghana remain on Tier Two, or slip to Tier Three at the end of December 2017 (findings will be published in June 2018), the country is likely to lose millions of dollars in development assistance which forebodes a dire situation for the country's socio-economic aspirations. It is therefore critical that government agencies stand up and let their voices be heard on their activities, educate the public, and solicit their assistance in combating child and human trafficking.

The history, and magnitude of Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT) in fisheries within the coastal fishing communities in the Central Region has been determined through community interactions and studies clearly as a fishing activity linked issue. 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.

It is important to note, in every country and every culture, children are made to carry out work in one form or the other. It is however the magnitude of work which is too heavy and bad for a child's welfare that is the subject under discussion here. While it is clear that the local authorities are committed to counter CLaT, there is still much to be done to eradicate this crime. The multifaceted and clandestine nature of CLaT 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.

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, the 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.

Lastly though the SFMP is about contributing to resuscitating Ghana's fisheries, managing the fisheries is actually about managing people efforts by Friends of the Nation (FoN) and partners to bring to fore the drivers of CLaT and propose actions that will contribute to a clean, and sustainable fisheries for now and the upcoming generations.

It is evident that either law enforcement agencies are overwhelmed with the task of dealing with criminals who seem to be a shade up in front of the arm of the law, or they are just playing into the hands of traffickers who may induce them to turn their attention to "more serious things". Ignorance is however no excuse and complicity is a crime. Children's rights are human rights and should be treated as such.

Institutional weaknesses need to be addressed in order to establish efficient enforcement and support programs and structures. The gaps in law enforcement should be plugged to

contribute to reducing the expenses made in rescuing and rehabilitating victims. The fact that some police post are just besides embarking points in communities is disturbing.

The SFMP seeks to build on gains and lessons learned by the USAID/Ghana Integrated Coastal Fisheries Governance initiative (ICFG) to scale up the latter's successful model for improving law enforcement effectiveness; and extend the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) capacities from the Western to the Central Region (CR) Coordinating Council (RCC), and nine district assemblies (DAs) in the CR.

Scientific evidence has repeatedly pointed to the fact that Ghana's fisheries are in crisis. Declining volume of fish landed, coupled with increasing demand for fish for the increasing population growth, and had compelled Ghana to become a net importer of fish consumed.

In Ghana, fish has always had far-reaching implications for food security. Fish supplies naturally augment food availability and ensuring good nutritional outcomes particularly for the poor and rural populations. The vast number of people engaged in the fishing industry earns incomes that improve upon their access to food. **However, child labor and trafficking in fisheries has increased over the years and has become a serious issue in Ghana.**

2. OBJECTIVE

Coastal communities in the Central Region have been identified as a source area for child trafficking for purposes of fisheries in Ghana. This situation has been linked to poverty that has been partly induced by dwindling fishery livelihoods. Children from especially Central region fishing community and 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. Therefore, taking them to go do same in other geographical areas for perceived rewards was a matter of course.

Poverty and deprivation are the main causes. Declining fish harvest has seriously deepened poverty in the coastal fishing communities where there are hardly any other viable forms of livelihood activities. For several years, many children from the central region have been given out or sold into slavery to work for masters who use them in fishing and other activities which are sometime illegal ventures.

It was therefore important to intensify outreach on CLaT and its ominous implications for the country for both citizens and duty-bearers to sit up to contribute to making.

As part of the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (USAID-SFMP) anti-Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT) program in the Central Region of Ghana, Friends of the Nation (FoN) organized a series of ten (10) radio advocacy outreach programs between October 2016 and September 2017 aimed at:

- Increasing public awareness on issues (reasons and implications) of the problem.
- Contributing to making the issue socially unacceptable.
- Improving public awareness on the works of government agencies in local and national efforts to combat CLaT, especially as it affects the fishing industry and also Human Trafficking activities in the country.

Key Outputs of the Radio Programs

The radio programs created the platform to update the public and stakeholders on the negative effects of CLaT and the need to make such practices socially unacceptable. The radio programs also were used to create the platform for anti-human trafficking state agencies to share their their roles in combating Child Labor and Trafficking (CLaT). The programs facilitated an interface between the listening public and the agencies working on CLaT related issues such as the Department of social welfare, Police, etc. The aspirations of SFMP-FoN and also the implications of CLaT on the individual, families, community/society, the nation at large; and what the law says about it were also discussed.

In general awareness on CLaT has increased as more callers into the radio programmes expressed that their knowledge and understanding of the CLaT issues had increased.

3. STANDARD INFORMATION DISSEMINATED DURING SESSIONS

In all the radio programs, an overview of the USAID-SFMP was provided, noting that it is an initiative that seeks to contribute to rebuilding targeted marine fisheries stocks and support the livelihood of fishers through the adoption of sustainable practices and exploitation levels. The nine implementing partners were also mentioned as

1. University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Centre Graduate School of Oceanography (CRC-URI).
2. Hen Mpoano.
3. Friends of the Nation (FoN).
4. Netherlands Development Organization (SNV).
5. SSG Advisors.
6. Development Action Association (DAA).
7. Daasgift Quality Foundation (DQF).
8. Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA).
9. Spatial Solutions.

Listeners were informed that the USAID-SFMP which is a collaboration between the US Government and its Ghanaian counterpart (through the Fisheries Commission of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development), it is a follow-up to a previous fisheries program - the Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Governance (ICFG) Initiative, which was implemented in the Western Region. The current USAID-SFMP in contrast is national in scope (covering the whole coast of Ghana).

It is estimated that, the country's total annual fish requirement is about 820,000 metric tons (mt) while annual production averages 400,000 mt. The annual deficit of 420,000 mt, the balance is made up through the importation of over US\$200 million worth of fish into the country yearly. On the average, each Ghanaian consumes about 60% of his or her animal protein needs from fish (Department of Fisheries, 2004).

A major and legitimate concern therefore is the decline in fish stock, resulting in high prices of fish that affect protein intake, job losses in the fisheries industry and worsening poverty, especially in fisheries communities. The sector also provide livelihood for about 2.4 million people or 10 per cent of the population and accounted for 10 per cent of the animal protein consumed in Ghana.

These international standards make provisions for a broad statistical definition of child labor encompassing children between 5 and 17 years who had been engaged in any activity within the general production boundary as defined by the System of National Accounts (SNA). These are referred to as children in productive activities.

Section 90 of the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560), sets the minimum age for light work at 13 years. However, the Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework for Ghana (HAF) and the National Plan of Action (NPA) for the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, while acknowledging this Act, recommends a minimum age of 12 years.

Practices such as pelagic drift net fishing, which involves the use of large fishing nets tugged between two fishing vessels (pair trawling) to catch fishes that drift along their path, have been a major factor to the depletion of fish stock; and was cited as a critical link that has to be eliminated else the sector will continue to be lawless.

Scientific evidence has repeatedly pointed to the fact that Ghana's fisheries are in crisis. Declining volume of fish landed, coupled with increasing demand for fish for the increasing population growth, and had compelled Ghana to become a net importer of fish consumed.

Flowing from the above, fish has always had far-reaching implications for food security in Ghana. Fish supplies naturally augment food availability and ensuring good nutritional outcomes particularly for the poor and rural populations. The vast number of people engaged in the fishing industry earns incomes that improve upon their access to food.

To address this challenge, the collaboration and support from the Government and people of the United States through USAID-SFMP Coastal Resources Centre, University of Rhode Island, Graduate School of Oceanography and partners has come at an opportune time towards ensuring the sustainability of our fisheries resources; particularly, so the small pelagic fisheries could recover quickly within a few years once the right management measures are put in place.

The above information was always disseminated by the FoN Anti-CLaT Advocacy Officer or a relevant affiliate (Community Anti-CLaT Advocate) where necessary.

Language used is always Fante so that the generality of the listening public in the targeted areas could understand. However, there were some few programs when the officer (resource person) from a government agency (Ghana Immigration Service) was not a speaker of the Akan-Fante language and thus spoke in English which was always expertly translated to listeners through the radio host or hostess as the case was.

Scenarios in relation to the subject were cited to deepen the understanding of listeners to appreciate the issues discussed. There was phone-in session for listeners to contribute their concerns (comments, questions and seeking clarification) to the issues discussed were

1. Incidences of CLaT in the coastal-fishing areas of the Central Region and reasons for its prevalence.
2. Initiatives to facilitate prevention and ultimate elimination of CLaT.
3. Activities by law enforcement agencies.
4. Services available for communities to help reduce vulnerability of families were topically treated.

For its anti-CLaT initiative, FoN operates with the ILO's definition of Child Labor, and Child Trafficking. It states that:

'Any work by a person who has not attained the legal working age of 18, that is hazardous and inimical to the persons health and or well-being and that is to benefit another; with the child is denied education, the right to play and the basic necessities of life. The child is not directly or may not be paid at all, or another person may take the reward for that child's work.'

According to the ILO, "Child Trafficking" is "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, and or receipt or both of a child for the purpose of exploitation".

It is with the above definition that the SFMP works in its anti-CLaT initiatives.

Achievements

Numbers reached were conservatively put at 3,000 per program (12 programs held which totals 36,000 listenership reached). Gender segregation of the listenership was difficult to determine but it was concluded with the advice of the radio stations staff that more men than women tune in to radio (whilst women watch soap operas on TV). Clear percentages therefore could not be determined.

Communities were much in sync with the outreach on radio and openly disapproved of the attitude of their co-inhabitants within the communities who indulge in acts of CLaT.

They requested for state social intervention programs to reach vulnerable households to reduce families' susceptibility to succumb to the machinations of traffickers.

The programs accorded state agencies (e.g. the Ghana Police, Immigration, Health, Education, Department of Social Welfare and the District Assemblies) the opportunity to engage the public. The roles and duty of the institutions to the public which inure to the combat of CLaT was pointed out. The police as already indicated gave out their contact numbers in case of emergency and how the public can go about disclosing sensitive information.

As all the radio the programs ended with the strong statement that declining fish stocks has brought about poverty in the coastal-fishing communities in the Central Region, it has a direct impact on the lives of inhabitants. Access to and utilization of other social services in terms of health (reproductive health and family birth spacing) and access to quality education for children will play a critical role in halting the perpetration of CLaT in fisheries in Ghana.

4. LIST OF PARTICIPANT-RESOURCE PERSONS, VENUES & DATES

Table 1. Participating resource persons

Program	Resource persons/panelists	Venue	Date
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson (FoN) ▪ Ms. Esi Harrison (Ghana Education Service - GES, Winneba) ▪ Isaac Nana Kweigyah (GES, Elmina/Abandze) 	Radio Peace, Winneba	5 th Dec, 2016
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson, FoN ▪ Mr. (Supt.) George Appiah-Sakyi, - Ghana Police Service - DOVVSU, C/Coast. ▪ Mr. (Chief Superintendent) Ahmed Musah – (Ghana Immigration. Service - GIS; C/Coast). ▪ Nana Kweigyah (GES, Elmina/Abandze) 	Ahomka FM, Elmina	5 th May, 2017
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson, FoN ▪ Ms. Esi Harrison (GES, Winneba) ▪ Mr. (Supt.) George Appiah-Sakyi, DOVVSU, C/Coast. ▪ Mr. (Chief Supt.) Ahmed Musah - GIS. ▪ Nana Kweigyah (GES/Fisherman) 	Radio Peace, Winneba	8 th May, 2017
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson, FoN ▪ Ms. Esi Harrison (GES, Winneba) ▪ Mr. (Supt.) George Appiah-Sakyi, DOVVSU, C/Coast. ▪ Mr. (Chief Supt.) Ahmed Musah – GIS. ▪ Nana Kweigyah (GES/Fisherman) 	Radio Peace, Winneba	24 th May, 2017
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Kwesi Johnson, FoN ▪ Mr. (Supt.) George Appiah-Sakyi, (DOVVSU, C/Coast). ▪ Ms. Beatrice Essilfie – (Regional Directorate of Public Health; Ghana Health Service - GHS), C/Coast ▪ Nana Kweigyah, (GES/Fisherman). 	Ahomka FM, Elmina	25 th May, 2017
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson (FoN) ▪ Ms. Esi Harrison (GES, Winneba) ▪ Mrs. Henrietta A. Tenkorang (Municipal Directorate, GHS, Efutu-Municipal Assembly; Winneba) 	Windy Bay Radio, (University of Education), Winneba.	6 th Jun, 2017
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson (FoN) ▪ Mrs. Claudia Neizer (GHS, Mankessim). ▪ Nana Kweigyah (GES/Fisherman) 	Coastal FM, Mankessim	13 th Jun, 2017
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson, FoN. ▪ Mr. Randy Amandi (Case Officer, DSW, Ekumi District Assembly (Essakyir); 	Coastal FM	18 th July, 2017

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. (Hon) Fred John Nyan (Anti-CLaT Advocate & Assembly member – Narkwa) ▪ Nana Kweigyah (GES/Fisherman) 		
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson, (FoN) ▪ Mr. (Hon.) Kofi Dodoo – Chairman; Social Services Sub-Committee, Efutu Municipal Assembly, Winneba; & member of Municipal Child Protection Committee;- (MCPC) ▪ Mr. (Alhaji) Osman Pinto – District Child Protection Committee, Awutu-Senya District;- Awutu-Beraku. ▪ Ms. Esi Harrison, GES, Winneba 	Windy Bay Radio, (University of Education), Winneba.	18 th July, 2017
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kwesi Johnson, (FoN) ▪ Nana Kweigyah (GES/Fisherman) ▪ Ben Narh (District Director; DSW, Gomoa-West District, Apam). ▪ Mr. Thomas Yeboah, Case Officer, DSW, Mfantseman Municipal Assembly, Saltpond. 	Coastal FM, Mankessim	24 th July, 2017

Table 2. Detailed background of resource persons

Details of resource persons
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Esi Harrisson -Teacher / Women’s Empowerment Activist/ Child Rights’ Advocate. 2. Mr. Nana Kweigyah – Teacher / Fisherman and anti-CLaT Community Advocate. 3. Mrs. Henrietta Amponsah Tenkorang - Senior Midwife, Ghana Health Service (Winneba). 4. Ms. Claudia Neizer - Senior State Registered Nurse/Midwife - Ghana Health Service; (Mankessim). 5. Mr. George Appiah-Sakyi, Deputy Superintendent of Police <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. (Regional Coordinator - DOVVSU; Ghana Police Service, Central Region). 6. Mr. (Chief Superintendent) Ahmed Musah, (2nd in Command, Ghana Immigration Service, C/Region). 7. Ms. Beatrice Essilfie, Reg. Directorate of Public Health - Ghana Health Service, (C/Region). 8. Mr. Ben Narh, District Director – Department of Social Welfare, (Gomoa-West District), Apam. 9. Mr. Thomas Yeboah, Case Officer, Dept. of Social Welfare, Mfantseman Municipal, Saltpond. 10. Kwesi Johnson (Anti-CLaT Advocacy Officer, FoN)

5. OVERVIEW OF CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING

The gist of information that was availed listeners during all the radio programs centred on the history and magnitude of Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) in fisheries within the coastal fishing communities in the Central Region; and was clearly attributed to fishing activities.

Children from the coast-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 do same in other geographical areas for perceived rewards was a matter of course.

Poverty and deprivation are the main causes. Declining fish harvest has seriously deepened poverty in the coastal fishing communities where there are hardly any other viable forms of livelihood activities. Many single-parent female-headed households who are among the lowest rungs of the poor send their children away to assist others for a fee, thinking they are helping both themselves and the trafficked child. Therefore the issue of CLaT has profound gender dimensions that should be paid attention to by the appropriate authorities with adequate interventions.

The gaps in law enforcement should be plugged to contribute to reducing the expenses made in rescuing and rehabilitating victims. The fact that some police post are just besides embarking points in communities is disturbing. This shows that either the law enforcement agencies are not conversant with that aspect of the law, or they are just playing into the hands of traffickers who may induce them to turn their attention to ‘more serious things’. Ignorance is however no excuse and complicity is a crime. Children’s rights are human rights and should be treated as such.

The SFMP, though about contributing to resuscitating Ghana’s fisheries, managing fisheries is actually about managing people. Efforts by FoN and partners to bring to fore the drivers of CLaT and propose actions to contribute to a clean and sustainable fishery for now and upcoming generations was highlighted.

It was intoned that the project has the objective of advocating making CLaT a **“socially unacceptable practice in the coastal-fishing source communities - to eliminate or reduce the incidences of exploitation of children by individuals therefore hindering the development of the child.**

5.1 Methodology

The discussions took the form of interview with the use of Fante language (however, with the inclusion of Mr. Ahmed Musah of the Ghana Immigration Service, he spoke in English which was summarised by the host in Ahomka FM in Elmina, and Radio Peace in Winneba respectively.

Collectively, panelists intimated to the listening public that CLaT can be eliminated or reduced to its barest minimum through behavioral or attitudinal change. The first step is individuals in communities changing their behavior and attitude towards CLaT. The “behavior” of communities could improve for the better through the establishment of by-laws to tackle some of these issues and rigorous enforcement.

The communities need to encourage individual who will voluntarily help in curbing this menace by rewarding or giving them motivational packages. When individuals change without communities putting measures to eradicate such problems, it makes elimination

CLaT from our fishing communities very difficult. This is because the few who want to do the right thing will be discouraged by the many that are doing the wrong thing.

There is also the need to educate and sensitize community members to understand the issue pertaining to CLaT. Various stakeholders are contributing their quota to children development in the communities as independent bodies.

The strength of the individual agencies (for example District Assemblies, Department of Social Welfare, Fisheries Commission, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service) needs to be channeled into a formidable collaboration (formation of synergies) to increase the quality of effort put into the fight against CLaT. Also the laws of the country need to be enforced to ensure the eradication of CLaT.

Ghana has for the second year in a row been ranked on the Tier 2 Watch List Countries in the 2016 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report released by the US State Department and could be subjected to an automatic downgrade to Tier 3 in 2017 (June). This position means government is not fully meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking of persons (TIP) and failed to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in the past year. It also meant that the country might be subjected to restrictions on US development aid should it be downgraded to Tier 3 in 2017.

This is a worrying trend, hence the need for special efforts and attention to be put in place to address the underlying problems, which make children in most fishing communities vulnerable to exploitation.

The Government especially, which is represented at the Regional and Local level by the Agencies (with the Regional Security Council etc.); and District Assemblies respectively go beyond the mere endorsement of the child rights convention and enact laws to ensure that children are protected against abuses and perpetrators severely punished when found culpable. This are however hardly noticed by the general public and the international community to which the government draws its mandate from, and also bilateral and development support respectively.



Figure 1. Panelists on Coastal FM in Mankessim



Figure 2. Panelists on Radio Peace in Winneba

6. IMPLICATIONS OF CLaT ON THE VICTIM, FAMILY, SOCIETY AND NATION

The radio programs highlighted the immense effect of CLaT on society (i.e. the individual, family, society/community and the nation).

6.1 The victim/survivor (individual)

If the victim is deprived of education or any work his future will bleak, he shared. He further shared that fishing is not a bad business but children who are deprived of formal education and are taken to the sea might not some better to their future; they might be able to feed themselves today but will find it hellacious to fend for themselves in the future. “Many of these children who work at the sea do not even grow to become boat owners”, it was mentioned.

6.2 The family

Most families said they give their children out in order to get money to cater for the rest of the family. These families after giving off their children away still are not able to solve their problems because they only get a pittance and within a short time complain again of poverty. Such families end up not solving their problems but rather aggravating it as they had lost their wards. The families therefore end up poorer.

6.3 The community and the nation

Communities lose when children therein are sent into slavery. In all the ten (10) radio programs panelists at various interjections gave instances where the late President John Evan Atta-Mills who hailed from a coastal-fishing community grew to be of benefit to his community by building a Secondary School for them and the entire nation for sharing his leadership skill with us. Furthermore, cited were the examples of the former Vice President Mr. Paa Kwesi Amisshah-Arthur and the flagbearer of the Progressive People’s Party and also founder of Ahomka FM – Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom. These people were born and raised along the coast but were not given out into slavery and has grown to be of importance to the communities and the nation.

“The nation would have lost such prominent people if they were sold into slavery”, he concluded.

Ignorance of the law was mentioned in all the programs as being not an excuse. It was shared with listeners that taking persons less than eighteen years to sea is hazardous and therefore contrary to the law. Parents may be ignorant of the law thinking that they have every right to treat their children anyhow but that is wrong because the state also owns the child and hence will not be callous to watch children go through abuse and denial of right and dignity.

Research has revealed that children taken to Yeji do some specific work that adults cannot, or are reluctant to do. Whilst diving under water to perform these chores, accidents do occur. Children are unable to fight for their rights and are mostly allowed to work from dawn till dusk.

Listeners were also made aware that some female children are exploited as sex workers and this can be bad for their health and against their human rights.

Ghana has been listed for the third consecutive year (2014, 2015 and 2016) on the US State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Watch List which indicates that the Government of Ghana does not fully comply with the minimum standard for the elimination of Human Trafficking. If the country is downgraded to Tier 3 in 2017 it will become subject to restrictions on U.S Government assistance.

It was clarified on all the programs that that victims are usually traumatized and may often need psychological rehabilitation. Families who sell or give off their children claiming poverty hardly come out of it. They even are worse off because they have lost their kinsman who had potential to have become a productive person in the family. Thirdly, the community is also a loser as inhabitants needed for community development have been sold off cheaply.

The nation is also a loser when children or humans are trafficked. For the unprecedented third year in a row that the country has been classified as a Tier 2 Watch List country by the US Department of State have dire implications. Any country ranked on the Tier 2 Watch List for two consecutive years must be 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. Ghana could be subject to an automatic downgrade to Tier 3 in the 2017 TIP Report (to be published in June 2018).

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. 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. Other U.S. programs, including assistance in the areas of law enforcement; capacity building for state prosecutors; security and military assistance; and increasing the capacity of the Electoral Commission, health, education etc would all be subject to restrictions.

The “Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report recognizes the trafficking problems we all know exist in Ghana as **(a)**; forced labor, and **(b)**; child labor and sex trafficking of children (and even adults).

It is important to note, in every country and every culture, children are made to carry out work in one form or the other. It is however the magnitude of work which is too heavy and bad for a child’s welfare that is the subject under discussion here.

“Unfortunately, despite some investigations and awareness campaigns, the government of Ghana (District Assemblies inclusive and relevant Government Agencies and Institutions – e.g. the Ghana Police and Immigration Services and others) did not demonstrate adequate commitment to anti-trafficking efforts in 2015. As such, Ghana has remained on the Tier 2 Watch List for the third consecutive year. Ghana (that is the Government Agencies like the enforcement authorities) must increase the resources it invests in anti-trafficking and protection activities; track and report the results of its efforts.

7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE LISTENING PUBLIC

These are linked to questions and comments listeners and callers who wanted to know what CLaT exactly was, and how it is linked to the work of SFMP. Routinely, the highlights of SFMP-FoN's anti CLaT advocacy operational definition, and findings from its pre-implementation field survey were recounted.

One critical question was

“does it mean that Ghana as a nation is not doing much to combat this menace, especially in the outfit of the Ghana Immigration Service”?

This fell directly in the line of duty of the GIS and Mr. Ahmed Musah took up the mantle to address it. According to him, “the GIS, for that matter government is doing a lot but the case of Human Trafficking is very complex in Sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana in particular”, he stated. He said that parents and other family members try to hinder investigations even when the GIS try to pick signals. He further said that the GIS is in collaboration with the Ghana Police Service (GPS) play a paramount role to combat this menace and that the collaboration has been successful so far as they have started arresting traffickers.

He gave the example of a recent arrest of an Alhaji and the wife in Swedru in the Central Region and rescue of about 12 persons (mainly females) who were being trafficked to the Gulf. He stated that the human trafficking business has been recorded to be the next most lucrative business aside drugs but because of improved technology, the drug trafficking business is near collapsing and criminals are now moving to the human trafficking.

“Criminals are now involving in the human trafficking business because they are no technologies or machines that can detect or determine that children are being trafficked. On the other hand, there are machines that are able to detect drugs and drug traffickers” he added.

He further urged listeners to collaborate with the security agencies to be able to help identify perpetrators. He concluded by saying that much information is needed before there can be an arrest and that the GIS has engaged most of their officers in training to detect organised crimes.

7.1 What Ghanaian law says about CLaT?

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 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 (694) 2005

The act says *inter alia* “Placement for sale, bonded placement, temporary placement, placement as service where exploitation by someone else is the motivating factor shall also constitute trafficking.

Where children are trafficked, the consent of the child, parents or guardian of the child cannot be used as a defence 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”.

Prohibition of trafficking

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”.

8. MANDATE AND WORK OF STATE AGENCIES COMBATING CLAT

8.1 Summary of Department of Social Welfare's Work

Panelists from the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) on the radio programs cited the work of the agency to the listening public as having **three core programs which are:**

Table 3. Social Welfare's roles

1. Justice Administration	2. Child Rights Protection and Promotion	3. Community Care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probation/ voluntary Supervision; ▪ Court work; ▪ Prison aftercare; and ▪ Adoption and related issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family welfare; ▪ Day care centers; ▪ Approve residential homes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Education; ▪ Medical Social Work (facilitating access to health services for the needy); ▪ Work with Persons With Disabilities (PWDs); ▪ Provide monitoring the activities of NGO's

Key Roles of Social Worker –

He/she is an (1) enabler; (2) Coordinator; (3) Teacher.

It should be noted that the DSW works as a decentralized department under the District Assembly System (Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) yet it is under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP). This brings in some challenges in the allocation of resources. Therefore, it is usually operating a shoestring budget.

The Department's role in combatting CLaT

The DSW does not work in isolation. It partners other agencies or departments in the execution of

Its mandate (e.g. the Police, Immigration Service and NGOs).

According to the Children's Act, the main roles of DSW in the identification process are

- To advise and help the child and his/ her family.
- Take the necessary and reasonable steps to ensure that the child is not neglected or harmed.
- Plan for the future of the child.

The Ekumfi District Assembly which was represented by the Case Officer of the DSW (Mr. Roland Amandi) intimated that CLaT is endemic in the area because of poverty issues. The area has been blessed by the presence of anti-CLaT and pro-child rights civil society organizations (like the Free the Slaves, International Organization for Migration and **Friends of the Nation**) who are all implementing anti-CLaT initiatives within the district.

Since the training in February and the follow-up monitoring activities by FoN, the seven participants have briefed the top officials of the training and the issues in the District. It has

been decided by the Assembly that the District Child Protection Committee (DCPC) has to be reconstituted and hopefully continue to receive support from civil society partners like the FoN and also the USAID to be functional and effective.

Mr. Fred John Nyan, Assemblyman of Ekumfi-Narkwa said he together with other anti-CLaT advocates as part of the collective effort of the Assembly has been going round the communities and educating religious congregations on the illegality and socio-economic implications of CLaT. He said they targeted the pre-vacation period of schools in the communities as that is the time that many children are taken out of the community ostensibly to join their parents elsewhere (especially in the Half-Assini area of the Jomoro District (Western Region) whilst many do not return after the holidays.

He intimated that many of those who do not return are girls in their early teens that become pregnant, give birth to children who are also likely to be trafficked in future because the potential of not having a commensurate and requisite upbringing is high (won't get quality family support and highly susceptible to trafficking) and thus perpetuate the menace generation after generation.

8.2 Role of Ghana Immigration Service In Combatting CLaT

Mr. (Deputy Superintendent of Immigration) Ahmed Musah (Central Region Second-in-Command of the GIS) represented the service throughout the programs. He mentioned that the GIS do not just tackle child trafficking but human trafficking and smuggling as well. There is however much emphasis on child trafficking because children are vulnerable and they are the future of every country.

Mr. Musah stressed on the fact that, without the prosecution of perpetrators of CLaT, there is no way it will be stopped. He took listeners through the definition of human trafficking as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring /receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation by means of threat, force, coercion abduction, fraud or deception.

He threw light on the fact that, exploitation being the main issue with trafficking is when one is denied or paid less for their labor or sweat. Factors pushing human trafficking are poverty whereby people think they are so poor that they will give their children out to go and stay with others; and the issue of demand for cheap labor as well which a driving force is also for CLaT since children are a source of labor and it takes nothing or less to use a child as labor. He also touched on corruption among government agencies as a factor thus making it difficult to combat the vice.

Mr. Musah said there is a policy that seeks to curb child labor but inadequate resources and lack of cooperation from the public help in perpetuating the criminality. The International Labor Office reports that children work the longest hours and are the worst paid of all laborers. In Ghana, the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) **Children's Act 560 (1998)**; **Human Trafficking Act 694 (2005)** and other regulations state that no child shall be employed or permitted to work in hazardous work.

Trafficking of persons is a criminal offense and involves several actors at different stages beyond "victims" and "traffickers." It includes both groups of individuals who are aware of the crime and those who unknowingly participate. For example, it is likely that document forgers and brothel owners belong to the first group while bus drivers or canoe operators belong to the latter.

Other actors include investors who finance the operations, corrupt officials who accept bribes and corrupt law enforcement officers who may or may not be aware of the trafficking act.

Anti-Human Trafficking Laws

Mr. Ahmed Musah said the UN Convention, ECOWAS Protocol, Human Trafficking Act of Ghana –Act 2005 (Act 694) is all against Human Trafficking. He then stated three key factors underlying Human Trafficking which are (1) the Act itself; (2) the means of trafficking; and (3) the purpose of trafficking.

The Act

Under the Act, he shared that, recruitment is a driving force and hence perpetrators try to have power (undue influence) over children for the purpose of exploitation.

The means of trafficking

“Perpetrators use threat, force, deception and fraud to procure children”, he clarified.

The purpose of trafficking

Mr. Ahmed Musah mentioned exploitation as the underlying factor why people involve themselves in human trafficking. He said the world has now advanced and as such moved from manufacturing to the service sector. Every businessman and woman need to make higher profit and one of the factors of production is labour and if you are able to cut down the cost of labour you are likely to make huge profit.

Children are trafficked for the purpose of cheap labour and are not paid or paid properly because they are under-aged, cannot fight for their right, and cannot demand for accurate wages. Hence employers decide to pay them less so that they can make maximum profit from them.

The law is against such exploitation. Trafficked children are going through a whole lot of abuse, domestic servitude; deprivation of education which poses a major effect on their lives in future.



Figure 3. Panelists addressing the listening public on Ahomka FM – Elmina on CLaT in May



Figure 4. Additional view of panelists addressing the listening public on Ahomka FM – Elmina on CLaT in May

8.3 The Role of the Ghana Police Service in Combating CLaT

Mr. (Superintendent of Police) George Appiah-Sakyi who is the Central Regional Coordinator of the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service (DOVVSU) gave an overview of Ghana Police Service's activities CLaT led to the formation of the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) as a unit in the Service.

Ghana is a country of origin, transit and destination especially for trafficking of women and children. There are criminal activities of recruiters, transporters and intermediaries and in some cases, ignorant or plain wicked parents and guardians are also involved. Globally CLaT and human trafficking are amongst the biggest profit churning businesses comparable to drugs and arms trafficking. The risk of arrest is low but the reward is high therefore making it attractive to criminals.

Human trafficking (for that matter CLaT) is an injustice perpetrated against men, women and children in inhumane forms which amounts to modern-day slavery.

According to the police, so far in 2017, there have been a number of arrests of culprits in human trafficking in the Central Region, specifically in the Swedru and in Biriwa areas.

Also, in 2016 over 360 girls were rescued out of slavery from the Gulf States and brought back to their parents; likewise 22 boys who had been trafficked to South Africa.

Locally, the Volta and Western Regions are places where children engaged in the sex trade while fishing (especially on the Volta Lake), domestic service, begging, street hawking, pottering, *galamsey*, stone quarrying and agriculture are sectors many young boys and girls are areas forced to work in.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit educates and sensitizes the public on the dangers of CLaT and hence the police look forward to working with everyone all the time.

Mr. Appiah-Sakyi enlightened listeners on Section 20 of the Criminal Offences Act, Act 29 1969 which provides for the offences of aiding and abetting in crime. He said whoever has an idea about any crime happening somewhere is free from issues of being handed over to the law.

CLaT perpetrators operate more as a cartel. It is organized in such a way that traffickers themselves do not attend targeted areas but rather send other people to procure children for them. He admonished listeners to report crimes; and crime scenes to the police so that perpetrators can be brought to book. He assured listeners that the police will under no circumstance unmask informants who help identify traffickers but rather give them the maximum protection. “People who happen to report cases to the police should be with us from the start of our investigation till the end so that we can get enough evidence for our operation”, he added.

He gave out the numbers that the public should call in case of any suspected case: **191** or **18555**. “**Say No to Child Labor and Trafficking**”, he concluded.

8.4 The Role of Ghana Health Service in Combating CLAT

Research and interactions with community people has shown that access to, or acceptance of family planning services is not very popular in coastal-fishing communities. The issue of large family size is a matter of pride for many women and even some men. Teenage pregnancy and school dropout rate is high. It is not uncommon to see children who are children in the coastal-fishing communities.

All these clearly contribute to CLaT as children having children, cannot feed or cater for them but to sell them.

What is the Ghana Health Service say about the situation?

- What will it do, or is doing to make are birth control and family planning services more popular and acceptable to the population?
- Would it not be wise to make both children and adults have access to birth control items/products?
- After all despite all the religious issues and what we are told day in day out, aren't children and teenage having sex out of marriage and producing children who become a burden on society and are likely to be sold off by the parents and families?
- Another issue is that people are of the notion that birth control items can hurt their health because it was not good for another person.
- How does the GHS go about educating the communities to understand the implications and the benefits?

Accessing Birth Control Services

According to Madam Beatrice Essilfie (Head of Reproductive Health of Public Health Unit, C/R); the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has initiated interventions to get people to patronize family planning (birth control) initiatives. But the acceptor rate for the programs has been erratic she added (see table below). This position has been corroborated by Mrs. Claudia Neizer (midwife at the GHS-run Mankessim Polyclinic) and also, Mrs. Henrietta Tenkorang (Midwife at the GHS in Winneba).

The GHS) has interventions to get people to patronize family planning (birth control) initiatives. **It also has youth-friendly health** facilities where young people can walk in and access reproductive health services.

Table 4. Access of birth control services in the Central Region

	Year	Acceptor rate (%) in C/R	National target	Comment
1.	2013	26.6%	30.0%	
2.	2014	27.3%	30.0%	Increased acceptors
3.	2015	25%	30.0%	Decreased acceptors
4.	2016	29.7%	30.0%	Increased acceptors

The figures in the table show access of birth control services in the Central Region is close to the national targets. However this could be deceptive as they are the regional-wide figures and not exclusive to the coast.

Family Planning as the term depicts, is for couples to determine how many children they should have and how to space the births. It is mainly for married couples. The GHS has however initiated interventions for the youth – married or not.

According to the three (3) GHS officials who were panel members of the radio programs at Ahomka FM (in Elmina); Radio Peace and Windy Bay Radio (in Winneba); and Coastal FM (in Mankessim), family planning is not always about contraceptive use. There are the natural methods (e.g. menstrual cycle or rhythm method and even abstinence over a certain period of time). It also encompasses natural processes. Interventions for youths and teenagers are served in “adolescent-friendly” facilities. The GHS is also putting into place plans to establish Youth Counselling Sections within all their facilities in twenty districts (to be sited within health centres, clinics, hospitals and CHPS Zones within the Central Region which will all be adolescent-friendly. When these centres are adolescent-friendly, young persons can walk in and access the services without hindrance.

Some parents rightly think that young persons of child-bearing age have a right to access contraceptives if they are sexually active. Others are of contrary opinion. However it is an open secret that children under eighteen years are actively having sex and having children. Practically, many cannot wait till marriage before having sex therefore it is judicious to avail those services of “family planning” to them.

In spite of all the moral-suasion (religious and traditional persuasions), teenagers and even some younger ones are getting pregnant at alarming rates thereby contributing to CLaT as they are usually not economically-productive (dependence on already poor families and increased vulnerability).

There is no law preventing children of child-bearing age to employ legal birth or pregnancy prevention item methods. However the law is against adults and minors having sex. Male adults having sex with female minors (under 18) is the cause for majority of teenage pregnancies according to the GHS survey.



Figure 6. Henrietta Tenkorang of GHS and Esi Harrison of GES on Radio Peace



Figure 5. Henrietta Tenkorang of GHS and Esi Harrison of GES on d Windy Bay Radio

Teenage pregnancy

From January to April 2017, teenage pregnancy rates in the Central Region (see table below)

Table 5. Teenage pregnancy rates

	Age bracket	No. of recorded cases of pregnancy	Comment
1.	10-14	108	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very serious health and social implications for the victims and families.• Children borne out of such situations are likely to be trafficked in future.
2.	15-19	4,021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alarming.• These are usually unmarried and results in dropping out of school.• Has health and social implications for victims and families.• Children borne out of such situations are likely to be trafficked in future.

A recent survey conducted the GHS from July-December 2016 shows that those who make teenage girls pregnant are

- Galamseyers - 19%
- Drivers - 13.2%
- Teachers - 5.9%
- Fishermen - 5.7%
- Traders - 3.3%
- Carpenters - 1.8%

The above proves that teenagers are mostly impregnated by adult- males in the Ghanaian society but not their peers. And it is for financial reasons that teenagers give themselves to adult men who are mostly already married with families.

Traditionally, children under 18 are not supposed to be giving birth. They are rather supposed to be in school or under-going training in a vocation. Now that we as a country are almost in a crisis situation, it is better to reconsider our values that are inimical to our national aspirations.

Research and interactions with community people has shown that access to, or acceptance of family planning services is not very popular in coastal-fishing communities. The issue of large family size is a matter of pride for many women and even some men.

Teenage pregnancy and school dropout rate is high. It is not uncommon to see children who are children in the coastal-fishing communities.

All these clearly contribute to CLaT as children having children, cannot feed or cater for them but to sell them.

8.5 The Role of the Ghana Education Service in Combating CLaT

The mandate of the service is to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them to acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential to be productive, to facilitate **poverty reduction and to promote socio-economic growth and national development**. The second part of its mission is to formulate and implement policies to accelerate Youth and Sports Development for the welfare of Ghanaians to achieve human development, good health, **poverty reduction**, national integration and international recognition.

Many of the volunteer Community anti-CLaT Advocates are working as staff of the GES and as a contribution to SFMP's efforts always avail their services for related programs and events. The Children's ACT (1998) stipulates that an educationist must be part of the District Assembly Child Protection Committee (DCPC) – otherwise referred to as Child Panels.

The GES collaborates with NGOs and other stakeholders in combating CLaT by allowing school children and teachers to participate in relevant events (e.g. the commemoration of World Day Against Child Labor – WDAACL); inter-schools' quiz competition etc).

The GES works with NGOs to provide education for rescued "survivors" of CLaT.

Reasons for not attending school are usually a household decision which is taken after the consideration of several factors. As such, in discussing child labour, it is important to find out the reasons why children were not attending school. The main reasons cited for children not attending school were that there were however money matters (poverty).

9. CONCERNS FROM THE LISTENING PUBLIC

Question

Why is it that sometimes the police give out names of people who report issues to them? This for sure discourages community members to collaborate with the law enforcement authorities.

Answer

The police never ever blow off the cover of informants. Unfortunately, some informants go about bragging in their communities just to make them appear “influential”. This is mostly the cause of informants lending themselves to harassment by their antagonistic community members.

The Police made listeners aware during the programs that it has Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) in all the regional capitals of the nation. He urged listeners to feed the police with more information because that is the only way the police can operate effectively and also report all perpetrators for apprehension. He called for unity of purpose in combating the menace. “People who dispense information to the police should make sure they help till the last stage of the investigation and should not pull out because of the fear of being betrayed by the police”, he pleaded. He finally admonished the listening public (i.e. individuals) not to go about bragging about their “liaison” with the police just to “appear important” in their communities. This rather unfortunately exposes informants as “collaborators” with the police making them targets for criminals.

Question

Listeners wanted to know what exactly the work of DSW was.

Answer

In summary, the DSW organizes rescue operations in collaboration with security agencies. It operates shelters to provide care and protection for rescued victims, and facilitates reintegration of rescued victims/survivors - to look for the family or, offer counselling and resettling them back in their communities. It also provides rehabilitation services (e.g. re-enroll victim in school or skill or vocational training. Counseling services are offered throughout the processes of engaging a victim/survivor.

9.1 The law and CLaT

DSP George Appiah-Sakyi talking about anti-child labor laws cited that Ghana is source, destination and transit point in human trafficking activities. The country receives as well as give out trafficked children. He made listeners aware that the police are on the tail of people who involve in illegal activities and have the power to either apprehend such people or take them to the law court.

Quoting from the Children’s Act, he said any work that is hazardous to children or can cause the death of children should not be given to them to do. He listed children (below 18 years) taken to the sea to fish and also those involved in ‘galamsey’ as works that contravenes the Children’s Act. “Children who have attained 13 years can indulge in light work such as washing utensils and those at age 15 can work but not a hazardous condition”, he added. In concluding the point, he said perpetrators will either be fined or apprehended for some number of years (5-25).

9.2 Expatriation on CLaT in fisheries

Hammering on why it is rampant on the coast, Nana Kweigyia said “child labour is very common in the coastal communities of the country because children living there are already

exposed to the sea and fishing activities and as such do not find it arduous when they are trafficked to other fisheries zones, notably Yeji to work”, he said.

Children are employed in both formal and informal sectors. Among the occupations wherein children are engaged in work are construction work, domestic work and small-scale mining, and fisheries industries. Fishing is not only the mainstay economic activity in the coastal-fishing communities in the Central Region but actually a cultural activity where children from a fishing family hardly go into another vocation. This situation therefore contributes to disguising CLaT activities as “normal” training for offsprings and dependent youngsters.

9.3 Consequences of CLaT

The negative impact on the physiological and psychological levels of children includes specific concerns of child labor and its consequences on mental health. It is worth noting that a large number (estimated at 60%-70%) of children of the coastal-fishing areas in the Central Region are not very interested in school, and failing to complete even 9 years of basic education. The analysis of factors leading to engagement of children in hazardous factors elucidated socioeconomic factors as one of the important determinants. Poverty is considered as one of the contributory factors to child labor.

Yet parents and families should note that education is one key way of getting out of poverty.

Mr. Kwesi Johnson added that each and every child is supposed to be given the right to formal education or training and as such parents should not deny their wards of a better future. If you give a better future to your child you are safe because a time may come where parents of such children will be enervated due to old age and it will be the onus of the children to look after their parents. Children who are given a better future will not only be pivotal to their parents but also to the society and the nation as whole. Likewise if they are prone to social vices the society and the nation as a whole will endure the peril they cause.

10. CONCLUSION: IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMS

Numbers reached

Numbers reached were conservatively put at 3,000 per program (12 programs held). Gender segregation of the listening or reached public was difficult to determine though it was concluded with the advice of the radio station staff that more men than women listen to the program – ascertained by the fact that even more men call in to the programs. Clear percentages could however not be determined.

Communities and stakeholders response

Questions and inputs in the phone-in segments during the radio programs indicated strong community agreement to the call for clamp down on CLaT in fisheries activities. This was demonstrated by the fact that callers criticised the attitude of their co-inhabitants within the communities who indulges in acts of CLaT.

They also requested for state social intervention programs to reach vulnerable households to reduce families' susceptibility to succumb to the machinations of traffickers.

Building bridges

The radio programs accorded state agencies (e.g. the Ghana Police, Immigration, Health, Education, Department of Social Welfare and the District Assemblies) the opportunity to engage the public. The roles and duty of the institutions to the public which inure to the combat of CLaT was pointed out. The police as already indicated gave out their contact numbers in case of emergency and how the public can go about disclosing sensitive information.

Socio-economic awareness creation

All the radio the programs ended with the firm pronouncement that dwindling fish stocks induced poverty in the coastal-fishing communities in the Central Region has a direct impact on the lives of inhabitants. Access to and utilization of other social services in terms of health (reproductive health and family birth spacing) and access to quality education for children will play a critical role in halting the perpetration of CLaT in fisheries in Ghana.

The CLaT menace is well-known (though denied in a lot of instances) as it occurs in many sectors of the Ghanaian economy. Its prevalence in the fishing sector, especially fishing along the lake Volta has been of concern to government and stakeholders, development partners and civil society.

Children play immeasurable roles in supplementing household incomes, are also often exposed to great deal of risks – dangers, hazards and injuries. Some combine schooling with fishing whilst others totally drop out of school to, or trafficked into slavery to engage in full-time fishing.

As they work, they receive little or no wages and yet safety measures are appalling as employers do not provide any meaningful safety gears. The situation is pretty disturbing that if conscious effort is not made to curb the menace, CLaT will persist and generational poverty will be entrenched in those communities.

It is against the backdrop of these concerns that recommendations in form of strategic interventions that FoN works with the Districts Assemblies and the Department of Social Welfare to facilitate capacity strengthening, resource mobilization and sensitization; and also, incorporation of CLaT issues into the designing of the Districts Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDPs 2018-2021).

The quality of upbringing of children is important than the number of children that a parent bring to existence. If children are not cared for by communities and parents, development will stall. In addition, the future of every community and nation is determined by their children. The fishing industry can only be sustained if the children attain some level of formal education and also are not trafficked to other communities or countries to be exploited.

The law is clear on the illegality and criminality of CLaT therefore communities should stop using poverty as an excuse whilst government and its supporters should increase targeting social intervention programs.

Flowing from the above, fish has always had far-reaching implications for food security in Ghana. Fish supplies naturally augment food availability and ensuring good nutritional outcomes particularly for the poor and rural populations. The vast number of people engaged in the fishing industry earns incomes that improve upon their access to food. **Poverty is the bottom-line reason that pushes people into sending their children and young relatives into slavery.**

Poverty is one of the important factors in the vortex of this problem. Hence, enforcement alone cannot help solve it. The Government and District Assemblies must lay a lot of emphasis on the prevention rather than rescue and rehabilitation of individuals, families and communities by improving the economic conditions of the vulnerable populations. It is in this context that FoN within the SFMP initiative seeks to empower relevant District Assemblies' structures, enforcement agencies and community structures to function effectively and efficiently. It should be noted that Child Rights are Human Rights and Ghana cannot afford to lag behind amongst the committee of nations in attaining sustainable welfare for its children, and development for the nation as a whole. Successful implementation of empowerment programs for the District Assembly structures, support from national agencies and institutions and development partners would certainly go a long way in reducing, and eventually eradicating child labor in Ghana.

FoN and other NGOs and agencies (CEWEFIA, Challenging Heights, DAA, Cheerful Hearts, District and Community anti-CLaT advocates, etc) are all working to reduce the incidence of CLaT in the Central Region and make it a socially unacceptable behavior. Child labor can be stopped when

The resilience of young children is high and they cannot protest against discrimination. Their own strength is therefore their vulnerability. Focusing on grassroots strategies to mobilize communities against CLaT and prevention of the practice into the communities and schools will be crucial to breaking the cycle of child labor. A multi-disciplinary approach involving specialists with enforcement, education, medical, psychological and socio-anthropological level is needed to curb this evil. All the work by civil society and NGOs is to compliment the work of Government.

It is crucial now more than ever for actors at the local and district (and even regional and cross-boundary) levels to cooperate coordinate and share responsibility in the fight against CLaT. Law enforcers, local and national governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations are among the key actors at the forefront of this fight. However, it was realized that local formal structures are inadequately resourced though they 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 national developmental aspirations.

Children are future citizens of the nation and their adequate development is utmost priority of the country. Unfortunately, child labor engulfs children across the coastal-fishing communities of the Central Region of Ghana. They are trafficked within the country into forced labor in fishing. Several studies have proven that children (aged 5-17) are victims.

However, despite its menace in various forms, data shows variation in prevalence of child labor across the country. Rapid Rural Appraisal activity carried out in November 2016 showed that eight out of ten District Assemblies are handicapped in many ways in dealing with the situation which is a serious developmental challenge to the nation. Child labor can be stopped when

- District Assemblies CPCs or Child Panels (and community anti CLaT advocates) are empowered and resourced;
- Knowledge is translated into legislation and action; and
- Putting good intention and ideas into practice to yield positive results for the welfare of the children and families.

Mr. Ahmed Musah of the GIS said there should be a collective approach in fighting the menace. “The Ghana Immigration Service also has an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit in all the Regional offices and at the district level where the GIS has trained officers that give the best knowledge and information in tackling human trafficking”, he added. He stated that the most paramount thing in combating CLaT is creating awareness to help educate people who are not aware of the tricks used by traffickers and that the radio programs and community durbars should be able to encourage people to be able to identify human traffickers or provide information to security agencies about the occurrences of such menace. “We need all the citizens to participate in this fight”, he concluded.

Nana Kweigyia entreated each and every one to engage in fighting CLaT. “Traditional leaders, chief fishermen, family heads, teachers, assembly members should all help in the fight because the consequences are not only to the individual but affects the entire nation” he said. He used the opportunity to urge pastors to inform their congregations about the effects of this menace and also pleaded to his colleague teachers to educate students on the consequences of CLaT; and also trace who by some means absent themselves from school because such absentees might be trafficked to some other places.

Stating that leadership is not ceremonial, Nana Kweigyia concluded by encouraging the public to be keenly involved in the fight against this infraction and should debunk the adage “each one for himself, God for us all”.

Mr. Kwesi Johnson stated that the fight needs a collective effort. The Police, the Immigration Service, Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service NGO’s etc. are all working towards one goal which is the betterment of the society and hence we must find what is ours in it, and common grounds to operate in he said. He further implored authorities to let schools also serve as a source of entertainment to children to be able to keep them in school; organised sports and also showing documentaries about marine and environment in general to school children and community youth.

He said research has proven that too much birth results in such a menace. “Ghana Health Service operatives should make themselves “accessible” to help propagate the essence of “family planning and birth spacing services”, he added. He urged all nurses to be friendly with patients just as their colleagues in the Community Health System (brown uniforms) so that patients can be at ease in sharing their health concerns with them.

Education is a very important part of development. Children who are drawn to child labor are basically driven because of economic deprivation, lack of schooling and engagement of family for daily needs. Studies have found low enrollment with increased rates of child employment. Schools are the platform for early intervention against child labor, as it restricts their participation in menial jobs. Hurdles in this approach are economic reasons. Unless economic change is brought about, the children will not be able to attend the school. Child labor can be controlled by economic development, increased awareness, making education affordable at all levels, and anti-child labor laws enforcement.

The Government (and District Assemblies) has taken certain initiatives to control CLaT. The DCPCs or Child Panels are mandated through the sub-committees to deal with CLaT issues within the local government jurisdiction. However, these initiatives are not functioning efficiently due to logistics, programmatic, financial and human resource constraints amongst others. The communities' level of appreciation or understanding of the implications of perpetrating of CLaT is another big issue. For them, it is usually a matter of surviving – starving to death, or taking the gamble.