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Special points of interest:

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls our collective responsibility
- An inclusive and participatory process for developing the National Social Policy needed to secure collective ownership
- The local chapter of Transparency International, has held its meeting in Accra, Ghana in December 2014.

ENDING THE VIOLENCE NOW: OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY!

To mark this years International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls, the Gender Desk of the African Development Programme sought to campaign for a collective responsibility in curbing the menace.

The incidence of violence against women and girls is on the rise in Ghana. Not a single day goes by without media reportage on women and girl-child. Notwithstanding frantic efforts by government through the passing of legislations as well as establishing institutions such as the Domestic Violence & Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), violence against women and girls goes on unabated.

Violence takes different forms such as rape, defilement, indecent assault, incest, physical abuse, harmful traditional practices, forced marriage, exposing child to harm among others. However, for the purpose of this article violence would be limited to sexual violence. Sexual violence is on the ascendancy in Ghana. In view of the fact that cultural practices impedes people coming out to report abused cases, figures of reported cases of sexual violence at DOVVSU as at the end of 2013 stood at 312 for rape, defilement (1228) and incest (26). Comparing these figures to that of 2012 shows an increase in reported cases. Figures as at the end of

2012 stood at rape (290), defilement (1111), incest (18). Although 2014 has not ended yet, figures reaching the media on a number of rape cases from DOVVSU as at October 2014 stands at 406. This calls for concern and action.

Sexual violence against women and children would stop if we all get involved in fighting it. The fight must begin from you and me in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities. Law enforcement agencies cannot help us, if we keep on treating abuse cases as problems to be settled at home, by not reporting timely on abused cases and doing away with evidence.

Women and girls are our future and out of them life is begat. Sexually abusing women and girls have a negative effect not only on those involved but the entire community and the nation as a whole. Currently the population of Ghana has a representation of 12,633,978 females which makes women 51% of Ghana's population (Population and Housing Census, 2010). Thus the contribution of women to the development of our country cannot be underestimated. If our girl child

cannot feel safe at school, at home, in her community, how then would she develop all her abilities to contribute fully to the growth and development of our country?

The time to act is now! Let's stop raping our future! The responsibility is ours. If we all would stop perpetrating violence in our own small ways, if mothers and caregivers would act on seeing signs of children being abused, if girls and mothers would report immediately on abused cases, if families would allow the laws of Ghana to take its full rigors on perpetrators and stop out-of-courts settlements our home, our society would be a better one. Sexual violence against women and girls would end.



Insert above: Elsie Odonkor, Education & Gender Specialist



MAIDEN NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION CONFERENCE HELD

African Development Programme (ADP) together with representatives of civil society organizations, academia, government agencies and development partners participated in the maiden National Social Protection Conference in November 2014 in Accra, Ghana.

The event was jointly organized by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the World Bank Ghana office. The conference was on the theme: “Social Protection: a Strategic Tool for Poverty Reduction and Bridging the Inequality Gap in Ghana”. Speakers at the conference included Nana Oye Lithur (Minister, Gender, Children and Social Protection), Yusupha Crookes (Country Director, World Bank), Dr. Nii Moi Thompson (Director-General, National Development Planning Commission), and former Brazilian Minister for Social Development, Marcia Helena Carvalho Lopes.



Insert above: A cross section of Presenters at the Social Protection Conference

The conference brought to the fore the strategic role social protection can play in a developing economy such as Ghana to reduce poverty and inequality. It was noted that about 6million Ghanaians (representing 25% of the country’s population) live in absolute poverty whereby they cannot afford to spend Ghc3.60 (equivalent of \$1.25) on food and non-essentials. Out of this number, 2.2million Ghanaians live in extreme poverty and thereby spend Ghc2.70 per day on food and non-food items. These that for Ghana to spread evenly the gains from having achieved the MDG I on statistics at the

national level showed worse results when disaggregated. It was pointed out by the World Bank Ghana office that at least half of the population in the Upper East and West Regions of Ghana lived in absolute poverty. In this regard, the conference highlighted poverty ahead of 2015, it was imperative to deal with the widening inequality gaps through a comprehensive national social protection system.

ADP joined other participants to encourage the government of Ghana to fast-track the development of the national social protection policy in order to create a legal framework that affirms the constitutional provisions on the directive principles of state policy. This would help secure social protection as a human right and create an acceptable minimum coverage of social protection across a citizen’s lifecycle. Not only would it affirm the International Labor Organization Recommendation 202 on the Social Protection Floor concept, but also use social protection as a tool for inclusive and equitable growth and development.

In sharing Brazil’s experiences, Minister Marica Lopes hinted that the Da Silva government started off with an annual \$5billion budget to promote inclusive development which currently stood at \$34billion. Thus, for Ghana to reach out to more citizens with its 44 social protection programmes with total average spending of \$13million dollars, political commitment of leadership is required. These sentiments echoed with ADP’s earlier call during its national sensitization workshop for media on social protection in June 2014 in Accra.

At the end of the conference, participants reaffirmed the need for an inclusive and participatory process for developing the National Social Policy so as to secure collective ownership, multi-stakeholder and bi-partisan support for national growth and development.



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The African Development Programme is an NGO that has been in existence since 1993. In collaboration with national and international partners, it has been actively engaged in Social Protection Issues with core specialization in Education, Health, Social Development, Vulnerable and Excluded Group and the Physically Challenged in Society. Governance and Gender Issues are cross-cutting programme areas.

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING OF GHANA INTEGRITY INITIATIVE HELD

The annual general meeting of members of the Ghana Integrity Initiative, local chapter of Transparency International, has been held in Accra, Ghana in December 2014. The end of year meeting brought together the Board, top management and general members of the body to deliberate on matters of concern to the organization.

The Chairman of the Board, Mr. Kwame Gyasi, presented the report of the Board to the members after which deliberations ensued. Mr. Vitus Azeem highlighted the achievements and challenges of the organization in the Executive Director's report to members. Other issues tackled by members during the AGM were the renewal of the 3-year mandate of the Kwame Gyasi-led Board and appointment of 2 new members unto the Board. The auditors also presented the audited accounts for the 2013 financial year. Members therefore authorized the Board to negotiate the fees of the auditors for the next assignment.

The Head of Programs, Charles Othniel Abbey, represented ADP at the members meeting. ADP has been a member of the GII since 2013 as it considers governance and anti-corruption issues imperative in promoting social development.

SOCIAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY FORUM

The Social Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (SPEFA) project aimed at helping citizens understand public financial management has caught momentum in the Ga East Municipal Assembly. The project which was launched in July, 2014 has held two SPEFA for a and one town hall meeting. The programs so far had been well attended by Municipal executives, Assembly members as well as citizens groups.

A community member, who happens to be visually impaired has taken it upon himself to spread the good news of SPEFA and why we need to support and promote accountability. Mr. Boateng Kodua has thus composed a song and a poem on accountability and SPEFA.

The quarterly SPEFA review meeting which was held in Tamale on 26th November saw him showcase his song and poem to participating CSOs. Participating CSOs, representatives from SNV and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development were impressed with his initiative. Accountability calls for a collective responsibility. Mr. Boateng Kodua would soon launch a music album which would have the song for SPEFA as part of the songs on the album.

Let's all join in the demand for accountability and make Ghana a better place.



Mr Kodua, performing the SPEFA Poem and Song

*Seasons Greetings!!!
Merry Christmas and a
Happy New year.*