



## **Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development**

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### **STAKEHOLDERS SYMPOSIUM, DAC 2018**

Venue: **Golf Course Hotel, Kampala**

#### ***Opening Remarks by***

*Mr James Ebitu*

Director Social Protection,  
Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social  
Development

June 13, 2018

The UN Resident Coordinator

The Country Representative UNICEF Uganda

Officials from Government

The Country Director World Vision Uganda,

Other Development Partners Present

Representatives of Civil Society Organisations Present

Friends of Children

Ladies and Gentlemen

1.0 For quite some time, Uganda Government has enjoyed good working relationship with you many partners present here including World Vision Uganda the official sponsor of this symposium. This relationship is especially anchored in a number of children programs that you have supported over the years. They are quite many that I cannot mention all.

2.0 I want thank all of you who are involved in this year's DAC 2018 celebrations; for the collaboration and partnership you have exhibited throughout. I want to encourage you to continue with this collaboration in all initiatives aimed at ending violence against children in Uganda. Please note that transforming the lives of our children is not only a mandate of Government but also for all its stakeholders. This is why we are already working with the Private

sector to develop a Public Private Partnership Policy on investing in child wellbeing and we are doing this through the Child Protection Working Group.

3.0 I wish to inform you that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development did develop a Sector Development Plan. The existence of this plan means there is an entry platform for all stakeholders that would wish to support the sector realize its goals and objectives. What does this mean to us? The Sector development plan coordinates all actors in the social development arena and seeks to realize economic, social, cultural and civic rights as well as improved livelihoods of people of Uganda with particular focus on protection of the poor and vulnerable groups like children. Therefore whatever initiatives we put in place to end violence against children must be complimenting the implementation of the Sector Development Plan.

4.0 As for Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, we are happy to report to you that Uganda has successfully conducted the first ever National Violence against Children Survey (VACs) ever conducted in Uganda and also that Uganda is the first VACs country with more sub-national (Central, Northern, Eastern and Western Region) estimates of violence against children in addition to national level data. And as I speak now the report is 95% ready just awaiting the approval of the Ministry's Top Management. The VACs report and Action Plan should be used to bring a meaningful positive

change to the life of the Ugandan Child because it measures the prevalence, nature, and consequences of physical, emotional and sexual violence against children since the report stipulates clear practical recommendations.

- 5.0 I however would like to encourage that in all endeavors to end violence against children, please get the right definition and interpretation of the VAC in the African context not the Western style. Remember that Uganda is a culturally enriched country with good positive social norms, beliefs and cultures which we must not dismantle but work towards strengthening and positively upholding. For instance correcting and guiding a child especially when she/he is in a wrong is accepted here. However this should be done in a non-violent manner.
- 6.0 The VACs findings serve as a baseline for where we are as a country regarding VAC, I therefore take with keen interest the following statistics which call for our immediate intervention:
- i. Uganda has the highest prevalence of sexual abuse among female children in African countries that have so far conducted VACs (Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Nigeria and Zambia) at 35.5% and the second to Kenya among male children at 16.5%.

- ii. The first incidence of sexual abuse among children is highest at home (female 46.9% and male at 31.6%) and at the perpetrators home (female 25.7% and male 14.1%).
- iii. Highest perpetrators of sexual abuse among females were neighbors (28.7% and among males are friends 34.7%).
- iv. Physical violence is rampant in Uganda at 59% for the girls and 68% for the boys with the most common violence in Eastern region at 75%.
- v. Emotional violence is equally high at 35% and 34% for girls and boys respectively. This is even higher in central region here at 46% where most of the National NGOs and Development Partners head offices are based.

So let's concentrate towards addressing the above challenges i.e. neighbors, classmates, friends and relatives that make us the number one most prevalent country in terms of sexual violence.

The report makes good recommendations which if well implemented will make Violence against children in Uganda a matter of history.

As a Ministry, we would also like to see interventions aimed at resettling street children and recommendations on how they can be completely got off streets and supported to integrate into their families. I want to see this clearly come out in the report.

- 7.0 My dear partners, it's also my prayer that you physically participate in the celebrations to mark the Day of the African Child which have been organized in Kibaale District at St Kiriggwajjo Secondary School under the theme **'Leave no Child Behind in Uganda's Development'**. Just yesterday we got the official confirmation of the First Lady to officiate at this Year's celebrations.
- 8.0 In conclusion, on behalf of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, we commit to further take the lead in the Violence against Children Survey (VACS) including the implementation of the recommendations towards response and prevention. We also commit to continue to coordinate all our stakeholders to commit to putting the children at the center of sustainable development through investments in quality services.
- 9.0 I want to end it here by encouraging all of you to break the silence, start a new conversation and stimulate action to end violence against children.

**FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY**