



DRAFT roundtable session

**The private sector and collaboration strategies
for protecting children in Africa**

Defining the issue and context

The convergence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and human rights activism has created new opportunities for NGOs to work internationally with the private sector on the prevention of child exploitation. Corporate social responsibility is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. Through CSR, enterprises of all sizes, in cooperation with their stakeholders, can help to reconcile economic, social and environmental ambitions.

Corporate social responsibility is still far from having grown firm roots in Africa, where it was introduced primarily by transnational corporations (TNCs) after the year 2000. As such, it is facing difficulties in terms of acceptance by the local corporate sector and in being properly defined. Cases mentioned as CSR have generally been philanthropic initiatives providing funds to charities and NGOs for their projects.

A further boost to the spread of CSR in Africa has been as a result of initiatives launched under the UN Global Compact, e.g. "Growing Sustainable Business for Poverty Reduction", with the gradual transition to an idea of a company that is instead part of the societal fabric and collaborates with society, by sharing common targets with the surrounding communities, while pursuing its own profit goals at the same time.

The overall CSR situation in the continent, however, appears to be very uneven, varying greatly from country to country, and with a long way to cover even where the industry has been exposed to the concept for a longer while (i.e. countries such as Kenya, South Africa and Zambia – and their more developed industrial sectors – come to mind in this respect). Also, the few cases of mainstreamed CSR policies implemented have mainly focused (as is the case in other parts of the world) on the environment and on human rights in terms of labour conditions within individual companies. The approach to issues that do not fall within the immediate responsibility of companies, such as HIV/AIDS, has generally been sporadic.



A frequently debated form of sexual exploitation of children in Africa is child-sex tourism, whereby the exploiter moves from their area of origin – whether in the same, or in a different country – in order to have sexual contact with underage persons. Examples of CSR policies in this field are few and far between, continent-wide. It is worth mentioning the inroads made in Africa by the *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* (the Code), a tool initiated by the industry itself in close collaboration with ECPAT. As the sole tool that has so far been adopted in Africa to engage tourism companies in the fight against child-sex tourism, the Code had made slow progress in just a few countries until 2007. Kenya was for some time the only country where individual companies along the Indian Ocean coast adopted the Code. At the same time, the Gambian Government proceeded to draft and introduce its own version of a Code of Conduct for the private sector, based on the Code of Ethics issued by the World Tourism Organization. This type of governmental support would be a welcome element in other [African] countries. Similar examples can be found in just a few other countries outside Africa, mainly in Latin America, such as Argentina, Costa Rica and Guatemala.

There is a need for stronger involvement of more sectors of the corporate world and for ensuring impact of the private sector responses at the local level. Cooperation and collaboration strategies at various levels and among the different stakeholders are strongly needed and should be encouraged.

Recommendations from the Expert Consultation Meeting in Preparation for World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. Florence, April 2008

- Integrate child protection, including child sexual exploitation, into existing corporate social responsibility policies of companies, ensure appropriate implementation of corporate social responsibility policies by shareholders and ensure widespread public awareness;
- Integrate child protection, including child sexual exploitation, in human resource policies - codes of conduct for employees and throughout the supply chain;
- Ensure zero tolerance for child labour within supply chains;
- Invest percentage of profits or donate long-term assistance to sustainable child protection activities, such as life skills training;
- Establish business advisory councils in the private sector; and
- Develop business advisory councils and online information clearinghouses where businesses can list the resources they have to offer and child protection NGOs can list their most pressing needs in an effort to better develop partnerships among the private sector/business and civil society.



Africa Technical Regional Preparatory Meeting

for the World Congress III against
**Sexual Exploitation of
Children and Adolescents**

Guiding questions for roundtable discussion:

- What is the current status and nature of private sector strategies and goals for child protection in the region?
- What are the promising good practices implemented by the private sector to promote child protection?
- What strategies can be used to engage the private sector, government and civil society in collaborative efforts to combat the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents?
- Who are the key players within the private sector in Africa that can intervene to make a greater impact?
- What are the key recommendations (specific goals and targets) and related key actions required to strengthen strategies and goals for ensuring private sector initiatives that have an impact on child protection at the local level?
- What would be signs of progress (indicators) that would indicate the growth of corporate social responsibility throughout the Africa region?

Resource Persons:

ACCOR (to be confirmed)

By the start of 2008, the French hotel chain Accor single-handedly enlarged the gamut of countries where the *Code of Conduct* signatories are based by adding to the list all of their properties in 17 Sub-Saharan countries and proceeding to the required implementation steps there.

Mr. Christopher Davis, Head of Global Campaigns, THE BODY SHOP INTERNATIONAL

The Body Shop social values and campaigns go far beyond fundraising and cause-related marketing. The Body Shop philosophy focuses on inspiring long term change. While The Body Shop will raise funds to support immediate intervention, their priority is to focus on mobilising customers to inspire decision makers to take steps to deliver permanent solutions, which benefit humanity today and tomorrow, long after their campaign has ended. The Body Shop campaigns have recently focused on domestic violence and HIV/AIDS prevention. Many child-focused projects in Africa have also been supported by The Body Shop funds.

Dr. Sheila Mokoboto-Zwane, Head of the Southern Africa Office, UBS

Founded by the United Bank of Switzerland (UBS), the UBS Optimus Foundation is a non-profit foundation that gives clients the opportunity to become involved in a wide variety of humanitarian projects. They focus all their efforts on children and their right to education and to grow up in a safe, non-violent environment. One-hundred per cent of all donations go to the



projects. UBS bears all administrative costs related to the UBS Optimus Foundation. UBS Optimus Foundation has just opened an office to cover Southern Africa.

Ms Shahinoor M. Visram, Managing Trustee, SUN AND SAND TRUST (MOMBASA, KENYA)
The Sun and Sand Trust is a charitable organisation set up by the Sun'n'Sand Beach Resort on the Kenyan Coast in 2006 to promote sustainable development through helping the surrounding community satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality life. The mission of the Trust is reflected in its commitment towards promoting Sustainable and Responsible Tourism through various initiatives that can be summarily grouped into the categories of poverty eradication; eco-tourism development; and the provision of social services.

Facilitator/Chair: *Mr. Mark Capaldi, Deputy Director ECPAT International*

Rapporteur/Note Taker: *Mr. Hindowa Lebbie, Regional Officer for Africa, ECPAT International*