



### **Thematic Session 1b:**

## **Forms and underlying causes of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents: Economic factors and Sexual Exploitation of Children:**

### **Issue and context**

Numerous studies have identified poverty as a key underlying factor that puts children and adolescents at increased risk of sexual exploitation. For example, prostituted children, child domestic workers, trafficked children, and children involved in transactional sex are most often addressing their own survival needs and those of their families. In Africa, children are among the most vulnerable in the world due to the aggregate nature of risks, including poverty, natural disasters, HIV/AIDS and armed conflict that have put significant strains on informal family and community coping mechanisms.

In this context, creating and strengthening social protection systems is becoming an important priority for governments, donors, UN agencies and NGO partners in Africa. Long considered a privilege of developed countries, social protection is now being recognized for the role it can play in addressing poverty and vulnerability in developing countries. Among some development partners, social protection is considered part of the essential package of basic social services that the state ought to provide to its citizens.

Child welfare and protection concerns are often at the heart of these social protection efforts, requiring a new approach that goes beyond the traditional economic focus that often excludes the most vulnerable. While policies to promote broad-based economic growth are fundamental to overall social development, the benefits of growth do not automatically reach the poorest and most marginalized families; direct interventions are still required to reach the socially and economically excluded.

The transformative model of social protection is a set of interventions whose objective is to reduce social and economic risk and vulnerability, and to alleviate extreme poverty and deprivation. This includes four broad sets of interventions: 1) Protective programs that offer relief from economic and social deprivation; 2) Preventive programs to avert deprivation or to mitigate the impact of an adverse shock on families; 3) Promotive programs that enhance assets, human capital and income earning capacity; 4) Transformative interventions aimed at addressing social exclusion that include legal and judicial reform, budgetary analysis and reform, the legislative process, policy review and monitoring, and social and behavioral/attitudinal change.

Recommendations from the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children, presented to the General Assembly in 2006, identifies the need for all States to prioritize preventing violence against children by addressing its underlying causes. It calls for States to allocate adequate resources to address risk factors and prevent violence before it occurs and to focus on economic and social policies that address poverty, gender and other forms of



inequality, income gaps, unemployment, urban overcrowding, and other factors which undermine society.

The African Union (AU) has taken leadership in the process of promoting social protection strategies that reduce poverty and address the most vulnerable families and children in society. This has been demonstrated by a number of regional and continental meetings and commitments. The Livingston Accord (March 2006) was a major landmark when 13 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa committed themselves to developing national social protection strategies, and integrating them into national development plans and budgets. The Yaoundé Call for Action (September 2006) was agreed at an Africa wide workshop hosted by the government of Cameroon. It explicitly calls for governments to implement the Livingstone Call for Action and adopt comprehensive social protection schemes.

The Livingstone conference gave impetus to the organisation of social protection civil society networks in Africa. HAI is a founding member and driver of the civil society network 'Grow up Free from Poverty Coalition' which is supporting civil society engagement in the development of, and dialogue around, social protection frameworks and programmes across Africa.

To reinforce these commitments, the African Union has commissioned a review of its social policy framework to make explicit the linkages with social protection. This framework will be debated at a Conference of Ministers for Social Development (the first of its kind) scheduled for late October 2008 hosted by the Government of Namibia. To support this ministerial conference, 6 national consultations and 3 regional experts meetings have been held to review the progress on social protection action in Africa and feed the findings into the Ministerial debate.

**AU Call for Accelerated Action on the Implementation of the Plan Of Action Towards Africa Fit For Children (2008-2012) calls all States to:**

- Allocate adequate resources to strengthen social protection measures for children, especially the most vulnerable including children with special needs and those who are orphaned;
- Allocate sufficient resources for structures created to address children's issues.
- Develop costed plans within 3 years and to engage in capacity building and experience sharing to support this work.

**UN Study on Violence against Children recommendations:**

Prioritize prevention: All States need to prioritize preventing violence against children by addressing its underlying causes. Just as resources devoted to intervening after violence has occurred are essential, States should allocate adequate resources to address risk factors and prevent violence before it occurs.

**The Yokohama Global Commitment 2001**

Reinforce our efforts against commercial sexual exploitation of children, in particular by addressing root causes that put children at risk of exploitation, such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, persecution [...].] dysfunctional families, the demand factor, criminality, and violations of the rights of the child, through comprehensive measures including improved educational access, especially girls, anti-poverty programmes, social support measures, public awareness raising, physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.



## Key discussion points

How can social protection initiatives reduce the underlying causes of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents?

How can advocates for child protection become involved in the development and implementation of social protection strategies and policies to ensure that they contribute to reduction of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents?

What types of services are needed to compliment cash transfer programmes in order to better address sexual exploitation of children?

What is required to build evidence that social protection initiatives, such as social/cash transfers reduce sexual exploitation of children?

## Session Agenda

### Introduction (15 minutes)

Dr. Abiola Tilley-Gyado, Pan African Relationships Manager, Plan International (TBC)

### Panel presentations (45 minutes)

UNICEF ESARO Regional Social Protection Strategy:

Margie de Monchy, Regional Advisor Child Protection UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa

Kenya Cash Transfer Programmes for OVC: Potential Benefits for Reducing Sexual Exploitation of Children

Elizabeth Mugwanga Mbuka, Chief Children's Officer, Department of Children's Services, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development

Birgithe Lund-Henriksen, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF Kenya

ILO Experience in Social Protection

Vera Lucia Paquete-Perdigão, Specialiste Technique Principal Travail des enfants (Senior Child Labour Specialist) Dakar, Sénégal

### Discussion and formulation of recommendations (60 minutes)

- Most pressing issues
- Actions needed (targets and goals)
- Requirements for monitoring progress

**Facilitator:** Margie de Monchy, Regional Advisor Child Protection UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Region

**Rapporteur:** Mioh Nemoto, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Mozambique