Status – Update on Break the Silence:
A Regional Initiative to End Child Sexual Abuse
The Situation

- In the Caribbean, 47.6% of girls and 31.9% of boys have reported that their first intercourse was forced or coerced by family members or family acquaintances (WHO; 2000).
Findings of research to specifically understand CSA in the Eastern Caribbean

- Males were the main perpetrators
- Mothers seldom believed their children and often did not report the abuse
- Girls were the main victims
- Incidents of boys being abused were also becoming evident

- Stranger abuse was rare
- Views varied about what constituted child sexual abuse
  - Views varied about who is a child
GENESIS OF BTS IDEA AS A REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING CSA
• In 2011, UNICEF and UWI, Trinidad launched the Break the Silence Initiative with the Blue Teddy Bear as the symbol for social change.

• Concept was presented at the Meeting to follow-up on the UN Study on Violence against Children (Jamaica, 2012).

• Endorsed by the Secretary-General Special Representative on Violence against Children.

• CARICOM called for a regional strategy to end VAC -23th meeting – CARICOM/COHSOD.
• Unite Regional Conference on Child Sexual Abuse in Barbados November 2012
  – Adoption of Bridgetown Declaration calling for action from the legislative dimensions, strengthening of services, preventative actions to a mobilization of society across the Caribbean
  – Declaration endorsed by Ministries and stakeholders

  – Opportunity was also used by Regional Office to launch the Break the Silence Initiative

  – Regional Heads pledged to launch this initiative in their countries
So what is the BTS initiative
BTS Initiative is about

- Making services available and/or strengthening existing services for the protection of Children
- Mobilizing stakeholders (inc. children) to report cases of CSA
- Mobilizing a wide-range of civic and other partners to prevent and to protect children from sexual abuse.
- Advocacy with national governments to allocate more resources for addressing CSA and for implementing national CSA protocol
- Community mobilization
- Awareness and sensitization through various media
- Building capacity to prevent and respond to CSA
WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE
Concept note for Communication campaign on the theme BTS shared with CP Departments in all OECS countries

with key messages for:

General Public

Women

Men

Children

Religious leaders

Some communication materials have been developed targeting identified groups
As a result of UNICEF’s advocacy the BTS Initiative has been launched in

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Nevis
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Virgin Islands UK
- Turks and Caicos Islands
Under the theme of Breaking the Silence on CSA

Public Sensitization and Awareness on CSA through various media inc. Social media

Sensitization, and building capacity of key stakeholders (coaches, religious leaders, media) to prevent and better respond

Community mobilisation
(Ant, SVG, VI UK)
Follow-up Sub-regional meeting on BTS was held in Antigua to:

Reach consensus on common messages for reaching

- Internal duty bearers (key to mandatory reporting of CSA in national protocols – health, education, legal professionals)

- external duty bearers (parents, caregivers, persons who interact with children in the community)

- Parliamentarians

- children

Enhance counterpart skills for mobilizing Communities in the fight against CSA

Enhance counterpart skills for monitoring interventions to address CSA
Challenges

• Capacity (human and technical) issue in country

• Addressing incest

• Mobilising males

• Understanding and addressing the moral and social norms and other barriers that prevent reporting by internal duty-bearers
Next Steps 2013-2016

Launches of BTS in all EC countries by mid-2014

Enhanced Social media campaign in all countries

At least 2 countries will pilot the community mobilization tool kit in vulnerable communities (2013-2014)

More visible Public Awareness campaign in all countries

Key advocacy opportunities such Nov 19th and 20th; EAC-Commission on Evangelism and Missions CONECAR in SKN (October 2013); regional sporting events (eg CPL)

Concerted efforts to strategize to reach our internal audience inc. KAP to understand barriers to reporting (health, education, legal professional)

Bottleneck analysis to understand issue of incest
Next Steps

• Implementation of a monitoring framework to evaluate if interventions are changing attitudes, behaviours
THANK YOU