



**Friends of the Nation**

## **Update of Friends of the Nation (FoN) Activities Toward Reducing Child Labor and Trafficking in Fisheries in the Central Region**



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## Background

Records from Ghana's Ministry of Gender and Social Protection indicated that Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) practice is prevalence in Ghana and about 2 million children are estimated to be trafficked into child labor. *Child Labour and Trafficking (CLaT) practices in fisheries is one of the blotted areas of Ghana's fisheries sector, Specifically, the practice of trafficking children from the central Region to other destination to engage in fishing and other hazardous activities has been a major concern for stakeholders.*

Also the high incidence of Human trafficking contributed to Ghana spiraling down on the US State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Watch-list in June 2016 after two consecutive years (Ghana was placed on the Tier 2 watch list) which meant the country's authorities were not doing enough in combatting human trafficking, therefore risking sanctions from, especially the U.S Government (USG).

Ghana in 2018 was upgraded from Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Tier 2 Watch-List to Tier 2 by the US State Department; in its recent report indicating acknowledgement of government and stakeholder efforts to reduce Trafficking in Persons including CLaT.

However, human trafficking issues still pose socio-economic challenges to the country with dire implications on national development; particularly Child Trafficking and slavery within the fisheries sector.

## Intervention

Friends of the Nation (FoN) under the USAID funded Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SFMP) **have being implementing anti-child labour and trafficking (CLaT) interventions since 2014. FoN's approach has been to work with stakeholders to contribute to prevention of Child Labour and Trafficking in sourced communities such as the Central region.**

FoN's intervention has contributed to institutional strengthening and awareness raising that is contributing to addressing CLaT in coastal districts of the Central Region. Notably, the milestones achieved include:

- FoN conducted studies on Child Labour and Trafficking and the root causes in coastal communities of the Central region. This study provided the evidence and guide for FoN's intervention strategy on CLaT.
- FoN has catalyzed the formation and Strengthening of District Child Protection Committees/Panels in each of the ten (10) coastal district assemblies in the central region to work to address CLaT Issues in the Districts. These committees have been strengthened to plan and implement anti CLaT interventions in collaboration with partners.
- FoN mobilized, identified and trained community Anti-CLaT Advocates in 25 fishing coastal communities in the Central region. The advocates act as key community

volunteers who assist with the identification of child labour and trafficking cases and intervene or report to authorities for the necessary action.

- FoN has worked with the Ghana police service and the department of social welfare to rescue many children in-transit who were collected from communities in Central region and were being trafficked to destinations as child laborers.
- FoN and SFMP partners worked with Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture development (MOFAD) and the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection to develop a National Fisheries Sector Anti-Child Labour and Trafficking Strategy document. FoN has been working with partners to implement the strategy. The partners include: Fisheries Commission, the Department of Social Welfare, the coastal District Assemblies and other agencies
- FoN provided support to the ten (10) Coastal District of the Central Region to develop anti-CLaT actions in the Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs 2018 - 2021). This was the first time specific actions were drafted as part of the District Medium Term Plan (MDTP 2018 to 2021).
- FoN has and still continue to conduct several behavior change communication campaigns through Radio and media events, community durbars, stakeholder sensitization meetings, film shows, etc. the campaigns have been used to provide targeted messages that contribute to information towards making CLaT practices socially unacceptable.



Pictures of Media interviews on Child Labour and Trafficking

## **Beneficiaries**

The beneficiaries of FoN's interventions on Child labour and Trafficking (CLaT) include, but not limited to, the following ten (10) Coastal districts of the Central region listed below:

1. Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal Assembly (KEEAMA);
2. Cape-Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA);
3. Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District Assembly (AAKDA);
4. Mfantseman Municipal Assembly MMA);
5. Ekumfi District Assembly (EDA);
6. Gomoa-West District Assembly (GWDA);
7. Effutu Municipal Assembly (EMA);
8. Awutu-Senya District Assembly ASDA);
9. Gomoa-East District Assembly (GEDA); and
10. Awutu-Senya East Municipal Assembly (ASEMA).

## **Implementers and Collaborators**

The following agencies listed below are the key collaborators and key implementation partners for FoN's CLaT interventions:

1. Department of Social Welfare.
2. The National Steering Committee Against Child labour and Trafficking
3. Ministry of Gender and Social Protection
4. Fisheries Commission.
5. Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD)
6. Ghana Education Service (GES)
7. Ghana Health Services (Reproductive and Child Health Unit);
8. Ghana Police Service (Anti-Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence and Victim Support Units);
9. National Commission for Civic Education; and
10. Ghana Immigration Service;
11. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
12. Faith-Based Organization (FBOs)
13. Religious Groups
14. Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council (GNCFC)
15. Women fishers (NAFPTA)
16. Traditional leaders and community-based actors.

## **2019 Quarter 1 CLaT Actions (January to March 2019)**

To consolidate the gains made, FoN in 2019 continued to work with partners to make CLaT practices socially unacceptable. In the First Quarter of 2019 FoN organized:

1. Regional and National level stakeholder's workshops in February 2019 in the Central Region to develop strategies and communication messages for the implementation of anti-CLaT actions incorporated in the Medium Term Development Plans (MTDPs 2018 - 2021). Key representatives of the ten (10) Coastal District of the Central Region and relevant agencies also participated in the workshops. The workshops provided the platform for the development of a Region-wide strategy for the implementation of the anti-CLaT actions contained in the MTDPs 2018- 2021. The workshops were also used to design key Anti CLaT communication messages for the implementation anti-CLaT outreach Programs. The workshops provided the space for Assemblies to interact with other agencies to promote collaboration for the prevention of CLaT. Participants at the workshop were guided to identify additional resources and relevant partners who could support the implementation of the anti-CLaT interventions in the MTDPs. Out of the workshops some institutions committed resources, for example:
  - Fisheries Commission committed to support the Assemblies with their information van for use for communication (announcements, jingles playing, video shows, etc) and mobilization for community durbars.
  - Ghana Police Service (Anti-Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence and Victim Support Units) and Ghana Immigration Services also pledged to support the Assemblies implement anti-CLaT activities, they agreed to support with information sharing and communication activities.
  - Ghana Health Services (Reproductive and Child Health Unit); also indicated their availability to partner the Assemblies to for sensitization of stakeholders. They committed to provide resources persons for the communication Campaigns.
  - The Ghana Education Service agreed to work with the Assemblies and the social welfare department to identify school drops outs for follow ups.
2. FoN also organized anti-CLaT communication outreach activities during the 6<sup>th</sup> March parade on Ghana's independence day event. FoN developed placards with key anti-CLaT messages and provided it to the school children and teachers for use for the parade. Over two Thousand placards with key messages were produced and distributed to all ten (10) coastal districts for the parades. The placards made impact and draw more attention to CLaT issues and the need to combat it. Also FoN worked through partners to ensure that the key note addresses delivered at the various parades contained strong anti-CLaT messages. FoN also support media coverage for the events to promote wider information sharing on the relevance to combat CLaT. Below are pictures from the parades.



A picture of placards with Anti-CLaT messages displayed at the parade grounds



Picture of school children Marching with one of the placards



Pictures of a school teacher marching with one of the Placards at the Parade.

### **Key Outputs to date**

FoN's interventions contributed to the improvement of Ghana's rank on the Trafficking in Persons Table (TIP) conducted by the US state department as per the improvement expressed in the ranking by the June 2018 TIP report.

FoN's interventions has supported the ten (10) District Assemblies to develop Anti-CLaT actions Medium Term Development Plans and improved collaboration.

Also key enabling conditions have been created for stakeholder actions to follow which includes, prosecution, arrest and deterrence for CLaT practices.

### **Close of USAID SFMP CLaT Project and implementations**

The USAID SFMP project (which is the main funding stream for FoN anti-CLaT intervention) ended its CLaT interventions on March 31, 2019. The SFMP project was originally planned to closed out in September 2019 however, due to US government shut down and oversees programme changes the project reduced activities and ended son components which included the CLaT Component. Therefore, planned interventions to support the District Assemblies and agencies to make them active in the implementation of Anti-CLaT actions and improve their delivery cannot be done.

There is however the urgent need to further consolidate the gains made, there FoN seeks support and partnership for the implementation of the following urgent actions;

1. Work with agencies to improve prevention, prosecution and deterrence of CLaT in fishing.
2. Conduct more media sensitization and training to contribute to wide-spread information sharing on CLaT to make CLaT practices in fisheries socially unacceptable.
3. Extend FoN's intervention to other destination areas such as the Volta lake and work with partners to conduct sensitization and rescue mission for CLaT victims on the lake.
4. Work with the Districts and the Municipal Assemblies and Social welfare department to improve collaboration for the implementation of Anti CLaT actions.
5. Work with community advocates to identify, report and prevent CLaT practices in all its form in the fisheries sector.
6. Work with Ghana Education service to improve child enrolment in basic schools.
7. Work with traditional and religious bodies to explore tradition, customary and religious approaches to reduce CLaT Practices.
8. Develop strategic partnerships to maximize information sharing on CLaT on all available platforms to contribute to reduce CLaT.