

Human Rights Council, 43rd session
Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children
3 March 2020

Thank you, Mr. President,

The Girls Advocacy Alliance¹ congratulates the Special Rapporteur at the end of her tenure, and thanks her for her valuable work.

We are pleased our submission supported her recognition that child, early, and forced marriage may amount to the sale of children for the purpose of forced labour.

As recognised by the General Assembly resolution on ‘The Girl Child’, girls are most affected by sale and sexual exploitation of children, but the extent to which boys are victims is underreported. Children who identify as LGBTIQ face particular risks, as do migrants and children who are caught in conflict or crisis.

These children, in all their diversity, are not merely victims. They are survivors with agency and must be empowered to speak out and defend their right to be safe from violence and exploitation.

We encourage specific mention of the role of men and boys in future. Men are a significant stakeholder group; they make up the majority of perpetrators, but they also hold much of the power to make positive change.

If we are to better protect girls and boys from the significant risks they face, we must invest in strategies that challenge discriminatory attitudes and harmful social norms. Crucial means of protection include access to education for all, and to decent work opportunities for young people.

Sale and sexual exploitation of children – both on- and offline – must be combatted through comprehensive, rights-based prevention strategies which include legislation and policy implementation. Impunity for these crimes must end.

We call on all Member States:

- To fulfil their human rights obligations to protect children from sale and sexual exploitation;
- To systematically collect data that is disaggregated by age, gender, diversity, and other relevant criteria;
- To identify, define, and address the root causes of specific vulnerabilities of girls and boys to sexual exploitation, including gender inequality, patriarchal social norms, and unbalanced power relations;
- To include girls and boys in the design and implementation of prevention strategies;
- To actively engage men and boys in awareness-raising, prevention, and norm change;

¹ Launched in 2016, the Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) is a joint initiative which aims at eliminating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Economic Exclusion (EE) of girls and young women through strategic lobby and advocacy. The goal of the Girls Advocacy Alliance is to ensure that governments and private sector actors make changes in their agendas, policies, and practice to end GBV and EE of girls and young women. We aim to achieve this by building the capacity of civil society organizations to hold their governments and private sector actors accountable, and by mobilising key decision-makers to address social norms and values. To this end, the GAA has an international component that conducts advocacy at the international level and provides support to local partners in ten countries in Africa and Asia. The International Programme of GAA is implemented in Geneva and New York by Plan International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, Defence for Children International, and ECPAT International.

- To pursue accountability efforts in order to challenge systemic impunity for the crimes, and provide reparation to victims; and
- To support the renewal of this crucial mandate.

Thank you.