

The Role of International Organizations in Fighting Child Trafficking  
in West and Central Africa

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Hend Irhiam

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This thesis titled  
The Role of International Organizations in Fighting Child Trafficking  
in West and Central Africa

by  
HEND IRHIAM

has been approved for  
the Center for International Studies by

---

Ann R. Tickamyer  
Professor of Sociology and Anthropology

---

Jie-Li Li  
Director, International Development Studies

---

Daniel Weiner  
Executive Director, Center for International Studies

## **ABSTRACT**

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This study uses document analysis to examine approaches adopted by three international organizations – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Anti-Slavery International in fighting child trafficking in three African countries, Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. This study investigates what these organizations do, what techniques they employ, and the degree of cooperation between these organizations and the governments of the three study countries. The thesis concludes with weaknesses and lessons learned from UNODC, IOM, and Anti-Slavery International, in addition, to recommendations to strengthen the fight against trafficking.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Ann R. Tickamyer

Professor of Sociology and Anthropology

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	4
LIST OF TABLES .....	6
LIST OF FIGURES .....	7
LIST OF MAPS .....	8
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	9
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	11
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY .....	17
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	29
CHAPTER FOUR: WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION: PREVENTION AND PROSECUTION .....	55
CHAPTER FIVE: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS’ RESPONSES TO CHILD TRAFFICKING .....	84
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	105
REFERENCES .....	116

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Selection of documents.....	28
Table 2: Convention on the Rights of Child .....	58
Table 3: Legislation of Gabon .....	66
Table 4: Legislation of Ghana.....	71
Table 5: Legislation of Nigeria .....	77
Table 6: Legislative comparison.....	82
Table 7: Comparison of the three organizations' efforts.....	103
Table 8: Comparison of the weaknesses of the three international organizations.....	106

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Timeline of Major International Legal Instruments.....	35
Figure 2: Timeline of Major Child International Legal Instruments.....	55
Figure 3: Timeline of Major Regional Legal Instruments.....	60

## **LIST OF MAPS**

Map 1: Child Trafficking Flow in West and Central Africa.....	43
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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ACEEF- Action Contre L'Exploitation des Enfants et des Femmes

ASI – Anti-Slavery International

ALTEN - Association pour la Lutte contre le Travail des Enfants au Niger

AU – African Union

CATW – Coalition Against Trafficking in Women

CAST – Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking

CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

ESAM – Enfants Solidaires d'Afrique et du Monde

GAATW – Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

GAO – Government Accountability Office

GAPT - Global Program Against Trafficking in Human Beings

GRADE- Groupe de Recherche - Action pour un Développement Endogène de la Femme  
Rural du Burkina

ICEM – Intergovernmental Committee for Migration

ICP – International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights

ILO – International Labor Organization

IOM – International Organization for Migration

NAPTIP – National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficking Persons

NGO – Nongovernmental Organization

OAU – Organization of African Unity

OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OPTEN – Organisation pour la Prévention du Travail des Enfants au Niger

PICMME – Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants  
from Europe

ROEA – Regional Office of East Africa

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN.GIFT – United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

UNICRI – United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

It has been 202 years since the abolition of slavery in the United Kingdom, 144 years since the abolition of slavery in the U.S.A, and 61 years since the United Nations declared through its Universal Declaration of Human Rights “*No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms*” (UN, nd, p. nd) .Yet, slavery still exists today. Some activists estimate that 27 million people live as slaves (Bales, 2004).

Human Trafficking is considered a form of slavery. Its victims are mainly children and women but it also includes men. Sources estimate that every year at least 800,000 victims are trafficked (U.S. State Department, 2008). Purposes for trafficking vary from sexual exploitation to forced labor. Trafficking usually involves the role of organized crime but sometimes it is the result of traditions and values in response to harsh economic conditions and starvation.

This research will explore the role of Anti-Slavery International, Intentional Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in fighting child trafficking in West and Central Africa. Africa as many other developing regions witnesses a lot of migration movement within the continent and to developed countries. This study examines approaches adopted by these organizations in fighting child trafficking in three countries, Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. It looks into what these organizations do, what techniques they employ and the degree of cooperation between these organizations and governments of Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. This paper also examines awareness campaigns of the selected organizations in the fight against

child trafficking. It looks into these organizations efforts and, in addition, to existing legislation on trafficking in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria.

This study consists of six chapters, the second chapter (Methodology), discusses the rationale in conducting document analysis. The subjects of the study are victims and traffickers who are considered “hidden populations” therefore, conducting interviews are almost impossible. In this chapter, I present the three reasons in selecting these three organizations, which are first, the scope of their research and hands-on field experience; second, their degree of cooperation with governments; and third, the unique approach that these organizations take in combating child trafficking. I also explain thoroughly the selection of documents, which was based on the region and focus of the study, and among other factors how frequent, the term child trafficking (CT), trafficked children (TC) and the selected countries (Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria) are repeated in the sample documents. I also present my research questions and how I will look into answering them, which consists of the following:

1. To what extent is child trafficking a domestic problem in West and Central Africa? In addition, in which region is it a significant challenge?
2. How do Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC differ in their approaches to fighting child trafficking?
3. How can we improve the international organizations’ efforts and what did we learn from the various international efforts?

I attempt to answer the first question by looking into documents produced by Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC. These documents provide information on

the social and cultural context, which may have contributed to the spread of child trafficking. For example, poverty, HIV/AIDS, traditional practices, armed conflict, and other factors may increase child trafficking in the region. I answer the second question by looking into the differences between these three organizations' efforts. The three organizations take different approaches. UNODC is more focused on supporting countries to meet their international legal obligations in fighting trafficking. The IOM focuses on the humanitarian aspect of trafficking and supports efforts that are geared towards protection and rehabilitation of victims, while the Anti-Slavery International's approach is a human-rights based one. Though there are differences, their activities regularly overlap in terms of their focus and their frameworks of action.

I answer the third question by identifying gaps in each of these organizations' effort. I look at the duration of their projects and the size of the target groups they managed to reach. In addition, I look into the availability and accessibility of data to the public on the results and methods of these organizations' activities and studies in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. I highlight the common challenges and recommendations raised by these three organizations in fighting child trafficking. In this chapter, I also note the significance of this study and attempt to identify best practices for other organizations to follow.

In the third chapter (Literature Review), I look into the emergence of the term "trafficking" and how it developed from one international instrument to another leading to the latest definition of trafficking adopted by the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, And Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. This review will highlight how the scope of the legal instruments expanded from focusing on

prostitution of white women to include all persons and all forms of exploitation. The latest definition shows the difference between smuggling of migrants and trafficking in using three specific criteria: the victims' consent, the nature of the exploitation, and source of financial gain. I also highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the definition. For example, the definition helped define child trafficking, and showed the forms in which victims are trafficked. In this chapter, I also lay out an overview of the issue of trafficking in the African region by reviewing the dimensions of trafficking. I present the two main patterns of trafficking in West and Central Africa, which are internal trafficking and cross-border trafficking. I also lay out the trafficking routes in these areas. For example, victims from Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Togo are trafficked to Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, and Nigeria. I also introduce the factors that make children vulnerable to traffickers, such as poverty, lack of institutional capacity, HIV/AIDS, and traditional practices. I also present the impact of trafficking on the individual and on the country as a whole.

In the fourth chapter (West and Central Africa Legislation: Prevention and Prosecution), I highlight some of the main international legal pillars that developed practices for countries to protect and save children from being trafficked. I also present initiatives in the African region to tackle trafficking, among them the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which stressed the importance of freedom, dignity, and justice to all people. In addition, I look into the situation of trafficking and the governments' efforts in the three selected countries. In each of these countries, I provide an overview of the child trafficking situation, the active legislation on trafficking, international, and nongovernmental organizations' efforts in these countries, and

multilateral cooperation between Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria and Anti-Slavery International, IOM and UNODC as well as with neighboring countries. I also present the U.S. criticism of the three selected countries for their limited actions to meet the minimum standards to eliminate human trafficking.

In the Fifth chapter (International Organizations' Response to Child Trafficking), I give an overview of the efforts of the Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. I discuss these three organizations' approaches. UNODC approaches human trafficking mainly from a legal perspective. IOM examines migration of the people from a more humanitarian perspective. The Anti-Slavery International's approach to trafficking stems from its historical human rights based stances. Despite the differences, these organizations work at curbing trafficking within a similar framework of prevention, protection, and prosecution through projects implemented in different regions of the world. The three organizations' efforts include projects implemented in the region that vary in their target groups. Moreover, all three organizations have projects and studies focused on drawing out the challenges and coming up with recommendations that could help end trafficking. Even though each organization approached the issue from a different aspect, they all have pinned down similar challenges and recommendations about those involved in trafficking. The challenges include the lack of the following: expertise and specialization within criminal justice personnel; coordination and collaboration among agencies; adequate resources and personnel to monitor borders; facilities for victims of trafficking; and legislation on human trafficking.

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC set several recommendations directed to governments, law enforcement agencies, criminal justice institutes, NGOs and

the public in general. They recommended action to improve data collection, create systematic databases, increase level of knowledge, coordinate and collaborate between various stakeholders, adopt and implement legislation on trafficking, ensure prosecution of traffickers, allocate resources and manpower to fighting trafficking, and implement local development projects to strengthen young people's roots in their communities.

In Chapter Six (Discussion and Conclusion), I discuss weaknesses that were identified from evaluating how Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC implement their projects and what issues were the focus of their interventions. Mainly, these weaknesses were that the period of their studies was short, the size of the samples examined was small, and there are limited studies on evaluating these organizations projects' impact on trafficking. In this chapter, I discuss the lessons learned from this study that could be transferred to other regions. For example, the importance of adopting and enforcing legislation on trafficking, targeting all stakeholders and other lessons. In addition, I highlight future research areas in the issue of child trafficking in West and Central Africa.



## **CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology that was adopted to conduct this research and I will present the rationale of the geographical and time scope of the research. I will also identify the methods I used to conduct the research including the sources of the information analyzed here.

Specifically, this chapter will attempt to answer these general questions.

- Why the research is on the topic “child trafficking” and what are its objectives?
- Why the research focuses on West and Central Africa and specifically Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria?
- Why the organizations Anti-slavery International, IOM, and UNODC were chosen as the focus of this study?
- What sources of information are used?
- What is the time frame of this study?
- What does this study hope to contribute?

To answer these questions, this chapter will be organized as follow:

1. Research aims and objectives
2. Significance of the study
3. Structure of this study
4. Selection of time frame of the research
5. Selection of topic
6. Selection of the region and the countries
7. Selection of legislation
8. Selection of the organization
9. Research methodology
10. Selection of documents
11. Challenges of the research
12. Definition used in this study

### **Research aims and objectives**

This study looks into the role of Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC in fighting child trafficking in West and Central Africa, especially in Gabon, Ghana, and

Nigeria. The study examines these organizations approaches to the issue of child trafficking in the region and examines these three organizations' projects in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. It looks into the challenges these organizations face in fighting child trafficking in the region and the recommendations set by Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC to tackle the issue of trafficking.

The below listed questions were raised to assess the role of these three organizations in fighting child trafficking in the region:

1. To what extent is child trafficking a domestic problem in West and Central Africa? In addition, in which region is it a significant challenge?

I attempted to answer the first question by looking into documents produced by Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC. These documents provide information of the social and cultural context that may have contributed to the spread of child trafficking. For example, poverty, HIV/AIDS, traditional practices, armed conflict, and other factors may increase child trafficking in the region. However, it was not possible to identify the region where child trafficking occurs the most as until today, the global community cannot estimate the exact number of trafficked children. This is due to several reasons that I discuss in detail in my conclusion chapter.

2. How do Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC differ in their approaches to fighting child trafficking?

To answer this question, I looked into the differences between these three organizations' efforts. The three organizations take different approaches. UNODC is

more focused on supporting countries to meet their international legal obligations in fighting trafficking. IOM mainly focuses on the humanitarian aspect of the trafficking and supports efforts that are geared towards protection and rehabilitation of victims while the Anti-Slavery International's approach is a human-rights based one. Though there are differences, their activities regularly overlap in terms of their focus and their frameworks of action. They adopt the same framework, which consists of Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution. This approach will be discussed in Chapter Five.

I also looked into the target audience for the publications of these three organizations- whether these publications are tailored for governments, NGOs, or the public. In addition, I compared the messages of these organizations and I compared how these messages are delivered, either in the publications or through their visual campaigns.

3. How can we improve the international organizations' efforts and what did we learn from the selected organizations' efforts?

To answer the third question, I identified gaps in each of these organizations' efforts. I look at the duration of their projects and the size of the target groups they managed to reach. In addition, I examined the availability and accessibility of data to the public by these organizations on the results and methods of these organizations' activities and studies in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. Moreover, I highlighted the challenges and recommendations raised by these three organizations in fighting child trafficking. Furthermore, I presented my recommendations and identified future research areas in fighting child trafficking in the region.

### **Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is identifying lessons learned from these organizations that could be tailored for other interventions in different regions.

### **Structure of this study**

I will commence the research by conducting in Chapter Three a literature review. This review covers the development of the definition of trafficking and its context. I will then proceed to review the research conducted on trafficking in the African region. I will review the magnitude of the issue and then review the factors that affect it. I also briefly discuss the impact of trafficking on the development process of Africa. In Chapter Four, I look into the international and regional instruments regarding child and human rights that shaped the countries and the international organizations' intervention in combating trafficking. I also look into the situation of trafficking and the governments' efforts in the three selected countries: Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria.

Chapter Five will focus on the efforts and the common challenges of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Anti-Slavery International (ASI) in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. I will conclude this study with Chapter Six by presenting my observations and recommendations and identifying future research areas.

### **Selection of Time frame of the research**

The study examines documents published by the selected organizations from 2000 to 2008. I chose to examine documents starting in 2000 because that was the year trafficking was last defined under the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized

Crime, along with its protocols. I chose to include publications up until 2008 to include the publications of the UN Global Initiative in Fighting Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), which was initiated in 2007. This initiative is important because both the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are part of this global effort.

### **Selection of topic**

I chose to focus on child trafficking because of the global common consent that trafficking in children is a violation to children's right. The global fight against trafficking of women is hindered by the on-going debates over the inclusions of the terms "sex work" and "prostitutes" in the definition of trafficking victims. Trafficking of men was also excluded due to the very limited information in comparison to the information on child and women trafficking. In addition, I chose to look into child trafficking because many countries in West and Central Africa have adopted legislation that protect children's rights and that creates a common ground for countries to identify violations against children.

### **Selection of the region and the countries**

I was interested in looking into child trafficking in West and Central Africa for a number of reasons. Large numbers of African immigrants in Europe are from this region. There is also a diversity of economic and social conditions among the countries, which meant that the various factors that contribute to trafficking exist in the region. Another reason is that the region has countries that are origin, transit, and destination of trafficking.

Specifically, I chose Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria for two reasons. First, these three countries are considered a human trafficking triangle where these countries are origin, transit, and destination countries of trafficking. Second, these countries are relatively rich countries and classified as a point of migration destination for other African countries. Another reason is that these countries have been the focus of much research by the three organizations especially Nigeria.

### **Organizations selection**

The rationale behind choosing the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Anti-Slavery International is based on three factors: first, the scope of their research and hands-on field experience; second, their degree of cooperation with governments; and third, the unique approach that these organizations take in combating child trafficking. These approaches were explained earlier in this chapter.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) focuses on the criminality of child trafficking. UNODC is the designated U.N. entity that focuses on the criminality of human trafficking and how to affect change through the criminal justice system. It works on establishing adequate, functional, legal, and institutional frameworks for its mandates through effective implementation of international treaties and the development of domestic legislation.

The second international organization is the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which looks into monitoring trafficking through the assessment of migration patterns. IOM cooperates with its partners in the international community to

assist in the challenges of migration management. It works in four broad areas of migration management: migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration and forced migration. IOM promotes international cooperation on migration issues and assists in the search for practical solutions to migration problems.

The third organization is the Anti-Slavery International, which focuses on child trafficking on the grounds that it is a fundamental violation of human rights. It is the world's oldest human rights organizations and works exclusively against slavery and related abuses. The Anti-Slavery International works with governments, intergovernmental agencies, and local organizations in countries with a history of slavery to develop and implement measures to end it. It advocates awareness and supports research to end slavery.

Other factors in choosing these organizations are the recognition they have received from the international community for their efforts.

Although local organizations to combat child trafficking exist, I did not choose local organization to study, as I had to consider the unavailability of information about local organizations. These organizations are WAO-AFRIQUE, Enfants Solidaires d'Afrique et du Monde (ESAM), and the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN). My attempts to communicate with these local organizations went unanswered and there was limited information on their websites.

**Analysis of legislation**

I looked into the legislation of these countries, as I am interested to know if local legislation exists in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria, which creates an environment for organizations to collaborate with governments and whether these countries adopt and implement legislation that protects children's rights. I also was interested to see if these organizations' efforts were successful in bringing governments to implement international instruments that protect children's rights.

**Research Methodology**

My research is based on document analysis of the role of Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC in fighting child trafficking in West and Central Africa. I chose to conduct a document analysis for a number of reasons.

First, it is difficult to conduct field research as the subjects of the study, victims and traffickers, are considered "hidden populations" therefore, conducting interviews is almost impossible. A second limitation is the researcher cannot be physically present in West and Central Africa due to the high level of risk in conducting fieldwork in this area of organized crime. Third, document analysis is advantageous in offering a comprehensive and comparative descriptive account into the different approaches to the issue of child trafficking.

**Selection of Documents**

There were 29 documents focusing on human trafficking published by these three organizations. The majority of the publications were on countries in Europe and Asia. UNODC has the majority of these publications with 12 publications. The second largest



in the number of publications is the Anti-Slavery International with ten documents. The IOM has seven publications. UNODC has a larger number of policy implementation toolkits compared to the other two organizations. UNODC and IOM publications tackle all forms of exploitation with the exception of trafficking in organs. However, the Anti-Slavery International publications are mainly focused on domestic work and forced labor.

I chose 13 documents to compare the approaches of these organizations in fighting child trafficking. The technique employed to select the documents is based on the regional focus of these publications in addition to how frequent the term child trafficking (CT), or trafficked children (TC) and the names of the selected countries (Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria) are repeated in the documents. For example, the attached Table 1 lists the three organizations and their publications. Based on their contents, I categorize these publications into four groups: toolkits, assessment of trafficking reports, regional focus reports, and handbooks. I also show on the table the number of repetitions of the terms CT, TC, West Africa, Child, Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria in each document. Each of the selected documents has used the terms CT/TC at least once. However, though some of the selected documents did not have the terms CT/TC, they were selected due to the frequency the names of the selected countries appeared in the documents. An example is the Anti-Slavery International reports of Human Traffic, Human Rights: Redefining Victim Protection (2002) and Protocol for Identification and Assistance to Trafficking Persons and Training Kit (2005), where Nigeria has been mentioned more than 50 times. The 13 selected documents provide an overview of what is human trafficking and what the selected organizations' efforts are in combating trafficking. In addition, the selected

documents cover trafficking patterns in the region and the organizations' efforts against child trafficking in the selected countries.

### **Challenges of the research**

The main challenge of this research is finding detailed information. Specifically finding information regarding the exact number of children trafficked in the region, and the number of cases taken to trial. In addition, there was limited information on the three organizations' activities in the three selected countries, as neither their websites nor their publications had detailed information on projects these organizations conducted in the region. Moreover, there was limited information regarding the evaluation of the success of these projects in achieving their planned outcomes.

### **Definitions used in this study**

These definitions have been retrieved from UNODC.

Forced Labor:	All work or service which is exacted from a person under the menace of penalty and which is undertaken involuntarily (UNODC, 2006, p. 6)
Smuggling of migrants:	The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a country of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (UNODC, 2006, p. 6).
Trafficking in persons:	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the

exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (UNODC, 2006, p. 7).

Trafficking  
Protocol:

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNODC, 2006, p. 7).

**Table 1: Selection of Documents**

UNODC	Repetition of Terms	IOM	Repetition of Terms	Anti –Slavery International	Repetition of Term
<b>Toolkits</b>					
1) Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Person (2008)	CT/ TC-45 WA- 18 Child- 127 Nigeria- 38 Ghana- 1 Gabon- 0	No Toolkit		1) Protocol for identification and assistance to trafficked persons and training kit (2005)	CT /TC- 0 WA-1 Child - 18 Nigeria- 7 Ghana- 1 Gabon- 0
2) Assistance for the Implementation of the ECOWAS plan of Action against Trafficking in person (2006)	CT/ TC- 4 Child- 87 Nigeria- 24 Gabon- 7 Ghana- 7				
<b>Assessment of Trafficking Reports</b>					
1) Trafficking in persons: Global Patterns (2006)	CT/ TC- 3 WA- 2 Child- 67 Nigeria- 23 Ghana- 8 Gabon - 4	1) Data and research on human trafficking: a global survey (2005)	CT/ TC- 31 WA- 2 reps Child – 296 Nigeria-41 Ghana-10 Gabon-16	1) The migration-trafficking nexus (2003)	CT/ TC- 4 WA-1 Child - 43 Nigeria- 8 Ghana – 2 Gabon- 9
2) An Introduction to human trafficking: vulnerability, impact and action (UN-GIFT) 2008	TC/ TC- 9 WA – 7 Child- 104 Ghana-0 Nigeria – 0 Gabon- 0			2) Human traffic, human rights: redefining victim protection (2002)	CT/ TC – 0 WA- 3 Child- 42 Nigeria- 132 Gabon & Ghana - 0
<b>Regional Focus Reports</b>					
1) Measures to combat trafficking in human beings in Benin, Nigeria and Togo (2006)	CT- 63 Ghana -28 Gabon- 31	1) Migration, human smuggling and trafficking from Nigeria to Europe (2006)	CT/ TC-0 WA- 23 Child-22 Ghana – 7 Gabon- 3	1) The cocoa industry in West Africa (2004)	CT/ TC- 17
<b>Hand Books</b>					
No Hand Book		1) The IOM hand book on the direct assistance for victims of trafficking (2007)	CT/ TC-1 WA-2 Child- 267 Nigeria, Ghana & Gabon - 0	1) Child domestic workers (2005)	CT/ TC- 4 WA – 6 Child-321 Gabon – 3 Nigeria -0 Ghana- 0

Terms:

CT Child Trafficking  
TC Trafficking of Children  
WA West Africa

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, I will look into the emergence of the term “trafficking” and how it developed from one international instrument to another leading to the latest definition of trafficking adopted by the United Nations legal instrument. The importance of this review is to highlight how the scope of the legal instruments expanded from focusing on prostitution of white women to include all persons and all forms of exploitation such as sale of organs, prostitution, domestic servitude and forced labor.

Following the discussion of the definition of the term trafficking, I will proceed to review the research conducted on trafficking in the African region. I will commence by reviewing the magnitude of the issue and then review the factors that affect it. I will also briefly discuss the impact of trafficking on the development process of Africa.

### **White Slavery 1830**

In the 1830s, in Britain, the term “white slavery” was used to describe wage slavery and working children, before being used in the 1870s by activists campaigning against the British government’s regulation of prostitution (Quirk, 2007, p.187, citing Bristow). The main aim of the campaign was to control contagious diseases. As these campaigns progressed, the term of “white slavery” changed to describe procurement of innocents for the purpose of forced prostitution (Quirk, 2007). The link of “white slavery” to forced prostitution emerged from a number of activists who claimed that British girls and women were coerced into prostitution abroad. These activists advocated to raise the legal age for this profession from 13 to 16. However, the lobbying efforts to raise the legal age failed, and the activists sought the help of the press. The media’s

coverage of the treatment of victims led to public outcry and widespread use of the term “white slave” to depict innocent white women in the hands of foreign men (Leppanen, 2007).

The issue of forced prostitution soon became international. In 1877, the Continental and General Federation for the Abolition of the Government Regulation of Prostitution (CGFAGRP) during its first international congress advocated internationalizing the abolitionist movement. According to Leppanen, “the purpose of internationalizing the abolitionist movement was the belief that regulation promoted not only prostitution but also intensified traffic in prostitutes to areas where it was legal” (2007, p.525). In 1899 in Paris, 13 nations (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Switzerland) discussed the International Agreement for the *Suppression of the White Slave Traffic*. The primary interest was to handle traffic in women on a national level by promoting administrative measures and appointing authorities responsible for enforcing and controlling trafficking. The governments also were interested in investigating what caused women and girls to leave their homes (Leppanen, 2007). Quirk notes that with “white slavery” nationalism and racism emerged as a concern, as European countries perceived themselves superior to other races and viewed women of their nationality being abused by others as an insult to their national dignity (Quirk, 2007).

The first international instrument was developed in 1904; The International Agreement of 1904 for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, which was later, amended by the Protocol *Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of*

*the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others* and approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 3, 1948.

In 1910, another milestone change occurred to the definition of the trafficking victims. Before 1910, the victim was a girl or a woman who was *forced* into prostitution however in 1910; the International Agreement for the *Suppression of the White Slave Traffic*<sup>1</sup> identified victims even if trafficking occurred with their consent. The convention states that “...the convention rules unlawful recruitment of women or girls by enticement or procuration, by fraud, by violence, by compulsion, through abuse of authority, or other means - including trafficking with the consent of an under aged girl or woman,” (Leppanen, 2007, p.526).

The International Council of Women and the International Women’s Suffrage Alliance criticized the convention’s usage of the term “white slavery” because it did not include the prostitution of women of color. The term “white slave traffic” was replaced by “traffic in women and children” in 1921 at an international conference hosted by the League of Nations and attended by 34 nations. This emphasized that the measures adopted should apply equally to all races (Leppanen, 2007).

The efforts to define trafficking and its victims continued in the 1920s. The League of Nations conducted two major reports on trafficking of women; the first, in 1927, was entitled *Report of the Special Body of Experts on Trafficking in Women and Children: Enquiry Into the International Organization of, and Certain Routes Followed*

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<sup>1</sup> Ratified and signed by Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and Switzerland in 1910

by, *the Traffic Between Various Countries of Europe, North Africa, North America, South American and Central America*. The second report in 1932, was entitled *Enquiry Into Traffic in Women and Children in the East*. These reports demonstrated that the scope of anti-trafficking efforts has become international as each of the reports focused on different regions. (Leppanen, 2007).

These reports also attempted to identify the victims. The League of Nations in the first report shed light on the three categories of trafficked women: (1) adult women trafficked with their consent, (2) young girls, and (3) adult women who were forced into prostitution. The report defined international traffic as “*the direct or indirect procurement and transportation for gain to a foreign country of women and girls for the sexual gratification of one or more other persons*” (Leppanen, 2007, p. 528). The definition included the transportation of “*girls to become mistresses of wealthy men*” and it included women entertainers and artists who were promised better compensation but were pushed to prostitution instead. The report also observed national traffic, the traffic from one region to another in the same nation-state. International traffic was noted to be different as women that were trafficked across national borders were under greater control by the trafficker, as some held the women’s passports and travel documents. The report described women to be “*cater[ing] for men of foreign race*” (Leppanen, 2007, p. 529).

In 1949 *The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others* consolidated earlier international instruments concerning “white slavery” and traffic in persons (Quirk, 2007). Joel Quirk notes that the 1949 Convention “... introduced/reaffirmed some important ingredients and was long a major port of call for discussion of sexual servitude” (Quirk, 2007, p. 192). The



Convention called for all states to suppress not only trafficking in persons but also prostitution, regardless of whether either occurred with the consent of the women involved (Outshoorn, 2005). Quirk notes that the Convention reaffirmed that a person could not consent to abuse upon her person. He states that trafficking was left undefined and that the Convention included not only international migration but also domestic activities and that “the scope of the Convention is decidedly limited. Other forms of forced labor and sexual exploitation were not covered” (Quirk, 2007, p. 192).

The 1949 convention was followed by the 1956’s Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, which criminalized servile marriage and the transfer of children for the purposes of exploitation. According to Outshoorn, “The Convention superseded the earlier international agreements and set the standards for the next decades” (2005, p.142). The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, was adopted in 1956 and called on states to abandon the following practices in addition to the prohibited practices identified in the 1926 Slavery Convention (OHCHR, nd):

*(a) Debt bondage, that is to say, the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined;*

*(b) Serfdom, that is to say, the condition or status of a tenant who is by law, custom or agreement bound to live and labor on land belonging to another person and to render some determinate service to such other person, whether for reward or not, and is not free to change his status;*

*(c) Any institution or practice whereby:*

(i) *A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group; or*

(ii) *The husband of a woman, his family, or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or*

(iii) *A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person;*

( d ) *Any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years, is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labor.*

In 2000, the UN protocol to *Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* was the latest international effort to define trafficking (see Figure 1 for a timeline of major international legal instruments). This protocol is part of the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.

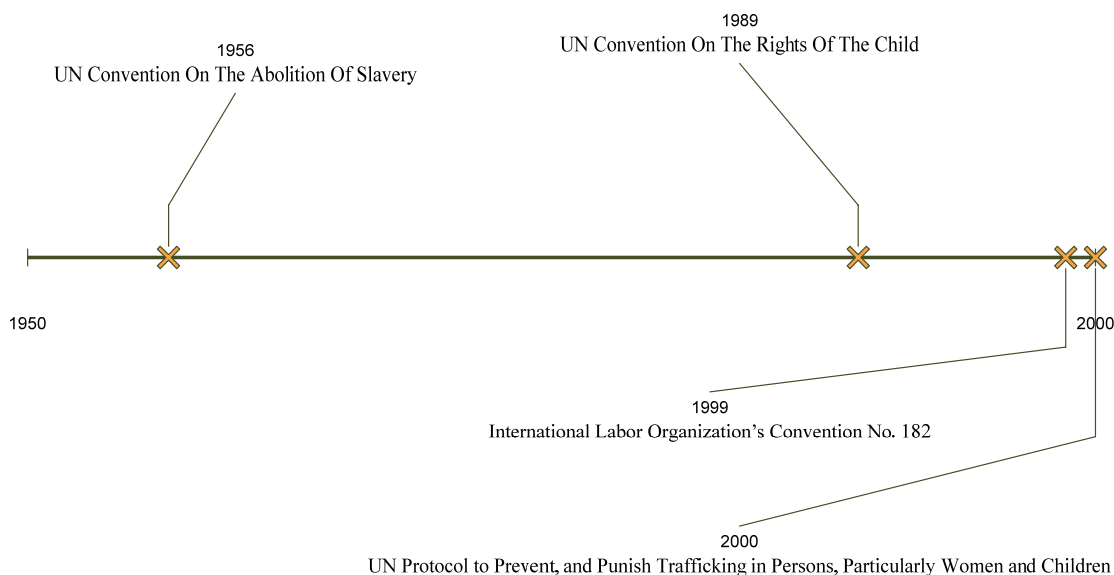
Representatives from 141 countries gathered in Palermo, Italy, to define the crime of trafficking. They attempted to create unified legal measures to end human trafficking and to create reliable reciprocal data between countries. However, not all countries signed this protocol, as some governments had reservations (Raymond, 2001). The majority of countries, especially the less wealthy and sending<sup>2</sup> countries as opposed to receiving<sup>3</sup> ones sought a definition that protected all victims. The argument raised by countries that have legalized and regulated prostitution and legitimized pimps and brothel lords, is that prostitution or sexual exploitation be omitted from the protocol and that the definition of trafficking be limited to *forced and coerced* trafficking. The Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Thailand, Spain, Canada

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<sup>2</sup> Sending /origin countries are those with a flow of people moving from that country to another.

<sup>3</sup> Receiving /destination countries are those that are attractive to many people who migrate or move there.

and the United Kingdom, as well as small groups of well-financed nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (Raymond 2001) supported this view. Some of the aforementioned countries revised their prostitution laws in the 1970s, as part of “the international mood to modernize criminal law in a humanitarian and more liberal spirit” (Outshoorn, 2005, p. 150).



**Figure 1 Timeline of Major International Legal Instruments**

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) also had opposing positions for distinguishing between forced and voluntary prostitution; such as the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), and the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW). The International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights (ICP) worked against trafficking and forced prostitution. However, The CATW along with other NGOs in the International Human Rights Network opposed the legalization of prostitution. Outshoorn notes, “They insisted on including the end purpose of trafficking as prostitution or sexual

exploitation, thus maintaining the link between the two issues” (Outshoorn, 2005, p. 150). On the other hand, GAATW and the International Human Rights Group in the Human Rights Caucus opposed the criminalization of consensual sex work, which was also supported by the ICP. The Caucus supported the proposal of the UN Convention Committee, which wanted to broaden the end purpose to include forced labor, debt bondage, and forced marriage (Outshoorn, 2005, p. 150).

Currently there are still calls to improve the international instruments to fight trafficking. Melissa Ditmoreen and Marjan Wijers write that “Governments’ delegates were not keen to commit their countries to protecting the rights of non-nationals and managed to avoid a serious debate on the need for mandatory protections due to lack of time created by protracted debate on the definition” (Ditmoreen & Wijers, 2003, p. 85). They note that many of the delegates had a law enforcement background and no training on issues of human rights. This meant that at the beginning of the negotiation, “a great number of them did not see the connection between combating the crime of trafficking and the need to provide assistance to trafficked persons and protect their rights” (Ditmoreen & Wijers, 2003, p. 85). This view could be supported by the fact that in 2000, 121 countries signed the new Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, but only 80 countries signed one its supplementary protocol, *the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. In October 2000, the new convention and its supplementary protocols were finalized, including the following definition (Raymond, 2001):

*“Trafficking in Persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability*

*or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.*

*Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;*

- a) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;*
- b) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;*
- c) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.*

The debate over the definition is still in progress. For example, Outshoorn notes that the Protocol has ended the debate on trafficking and its relationship to migration, slavery, or prostitution and that the protocol’s definition provides a framework for law reform to address this practice. However, Mike Dottridge notes, “the protocol concentrates on people who are trafficked across frontiers, but children and adults are also trafficked within their own countries” (2004, p.9). Dottridge states that the protocol distinguished between the different purposes of trafficking but consider them “exploitation”, and it also distinguished between trafficking and people smuggling. However, Dottridge’s research notes that before the UN protocol, the term trafficking was limited to children and adults subject to commercial sexual exploitation in prostitution. Joel Quirk also notes the limitation of the protocol stating that it was established as one of the three supplementary treaties of the 2000 Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, and that the Convention was designed to strengthen cooperation against organized crime. He notes that “these provisions only apply to

serious crimes with a transnational dimension, involving an organized criminal element” and that “it does not matter how people cross borders, but if their experiences occur within state boundaries they are not covered” (Quirk, 2007, p. 193). Also, UNICEF stated that the protocol has created a clear distinction between “Child trafficking and the seasonal migration of child workers and the situation of immigrant children exposed to labor exploitation”, especially in West and Central Africa, where child trafficking often occurs with the consent of parents and, in some cases, the children themselves (UNICEF, 2002, p.11).

In conducting the review of the development of the definition of trafficking from the early 20th century to the latest instrument in 2000, we could note that the debate is still ongoing. The importance of reaching a universally acceptable definition is that it guides international interventions. Trafficking is both a domestic and international challenge, which requires countries to reach a mutually acceptable definition to guide their cooperation and efforts.

In this study, I define child trafficking along the lines of the UN Definition, however my definition addresses the limitations that have been raised by researchers as discussed earlier: Child trafficking is the movement of children under 18 years of age within a country and cross-borders for the exploitation of children for all purposes. Traffic of children occurs with or without the consent of the child’s parents or guardian and involves individuals or organized crime.

After reviewing the development of the definition of trafficking as a crime and its victims, I will look into the issue of child trafficking in the African region. I will proceed

to review the dimension of this challenge in the African region by attempting to answer the following questions:

1. How many people are trafficked?
2. What are the trafficking routes?
3. Who are the recruiters and the traffickers?
4. How much profit is generated?
5. What are the factors that contributes to trafficking?
6. What is the impact of trafficking on the victims and their societies?

### **How many people are trafficked?**

Africa is a region of migration, in which people move from one area to another voluntarily or to escape civil war, armed conflict, natural disaster, or starvation. Children are no exception to the pattern of moving from one place to another, either temporarily or permanently. Some are dispatched by their families and others choose to leave home (Salah, 2001). According to a report by Dottridge, *Kids As Commodities? Child Trafficking and What to Do About It*, “Only a minority are stolen (kidnapped) or sold” (Dottridge, 2004, p.16).

It is hard to know the exact number of trafficked children today. Researchers are faced with the challenges of limited availability and reliability of data on victims and the differences in how countries view victims of trafficking as well as differences in data collection capacities (Adepoju 2005; Das & Ebbe, 2008). Furthermore, a report Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) notes that there is a “lack of sharing of existing data between states, partly because states are reticent to share what is sometimes confidential

information”(IOM, 2005, p. 11). In addition, the situation is no better at the national level because “in many countries it is still common to mingle data relating to trafficking, smuggling, and irregular migration.” The report also states that the scope of most studies was limited to trafficking for the purpose of prostitution, and excluded other forms of trafficking. This made it difficult to estimate accurately the increase in trafficking (IOM, 2005, p. 11). Another challenge is that victims, traffickers, and prostitutes are considered “hidden populations” which is difficult to survey and draw samples from. According to the IOM, “membership in hidden populations often involves stigmatized or illegal behavior, leading individuals to refuse to cooperate, or give unreliable answers to protect their privacy” (IOM, 2005, p. 18).

Identifying the nationality of victims is also a challenge encountered by police in some regions such as East and West Africa due to the lack of identification documents such as birth certificates. The use of false documentation also makes the tracing process difficult (UNICEF, 2005; Anti-Slavery International, 2003; UNESCO, 2005). In addition, when assessing the level of cooperation among countries a UNICEF study notes that there is more awareness and information on trafficking from countries of origin because, politically, they are less sensitive to being perceived as victims than to admitting association with victims’ exploitation. However, it remains difficult to obtain reliable data from origin countries on the destinations of trafficked persons. Victims who escape are reluctant to return home as some are concerned about the stigma within their families and some are worried about being re-trafficked (UNICEF, 2005).

In spite of the challenges, there are currently notable attempts to provide quantitative data. The U.S Department of State’s annual report on human trafficking for



2008, estimates that “approximately 800,000 to 900,000 people are trafficked across national borders, which does not include millions trafficked within their own countries. Approximately 80 percent of transnational victims are women and girls and up to 50 percent are minors” (State, 2008, p.7). However, according to Francis Miko (Miko, 2007), the U.S. government concedes that its figures are not accurate since its methodology had gaps in data. The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) report *Better Data, Strategy, and Reporting Needed to Enhance U.S Anti-trafficking Efforts Abroad* states that “the U.S. government has not yet established an effective mechanism for estimating the number of victims or conducting ongoing analysis of trafficking-related data that resides within government entities” (GAO, 2006, p2 ). An IOM report *Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey* agrees with Miko’s questioning of the U.S government’s figures and notes that the US State Department provides a “brief description of the statistical methods employed to calculate the estimates, but does not explain the methodology used to arrive at the baseline data sources”(IOM, 2005, p.13)

The UN has also initiated several attempts to measure trafficking. For example, UNESCO’s “Trafficking Statistics Project” based in Bangkok provides data online and explains the methodology used to collect these data. However, the data are weighted toward Southeast Asia (UN.GIFT, 2008). A global database on trafficking was established under the Global Programme Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GPAT) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). This database collects data by using information provided by the countries, which can be compared between each

other, and across the different regions (IOM, 2005). In 2008, the UN.GIFT<sup>4</sup> noted that there is still limited information about the dimensions of human trafficking crimes. Even preliminary criminal justice data on trafficking offences are not publicly accessible which undermines any effort to collect reliable data (UN.GIFT, 2008).

As for West and Central Africa, which is the regional focus of this paper, the majority of studies reviewed refer to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) figures of 200,000 to 300,000 children trafficked annually (IOM, 2005; UNODC, 2006; Dottridge, 2002).

### **What are the trafficking routes?**

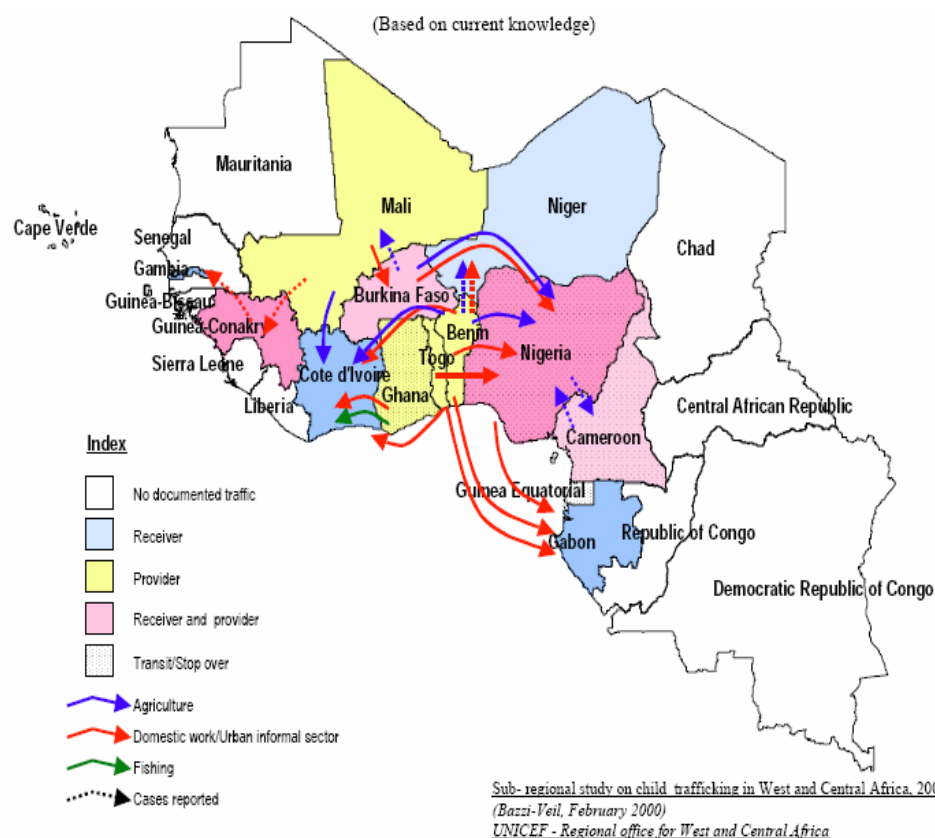
Africa is an origin, transit, and destination region for victims of trafficking. It is estimated that 92 per cent of countries in the region are origin countries, 41 per cent are used as transit, and 44 per cent are destination countries for victims of trafficking. In some cases, a single country is an origin, transit, and destination country. For example, Nigeria is an origin country for children trafficked to Cameroon, a transit country for Ghanaian children trafficked to Gabon, and a destination country for children trafficked from Benin (UNODC, 2006; IOM, 2005). There are two major patterns of trafficking in West and Central Africa. The first, internal trafficking which is the trafficking of victims from rural to urban areas, and the second, cross border trafficking from one country to another and in some cases from the African continent to another continent. Studies published by international organizations showed that trafficking routes include origin and

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<sup>4</sup> United Nation Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

transit countries as Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Togo and destinations countries as Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, and Nigeria. (See Below Map 1)(IOM, 2005). For example, a study by Mike Dottridge showed that "Beninois children taken to work in Gabon....and other testimonies revealed that Beninois children were being held in transit at fishing villages in southeast Nigeria, before being embarked in open canoes to cross the sea to Lib reville" (Dottridge, 2002, p.40).

**Map 1 Child Trafficking Flow in West and Central Africa**



*Source: UNICEF- Regional Office for West and Central Africa*

### **Who are the recruiters and the traffickers?**

The recruiters are males and females familiar to the victims and are not strangers. Reports like *Trafficking in Women and Children for Sexual Exploitation in Southern Africa*, *Data Research on Human Trafficking: Global Survey*, and *Oral Report on the Global Challenge of Child Trafficking: Background Paper* point to the role parents play in influencing children to be trafficked. Research notes that the parents' ignorance and their hope for better opportunities for their children lead to trafficking of children. "The victims' parents are deceived with gifts under the pretence that their wards would be assisted with education and jobs abroad" (IOM, 2005,p.80).

The purposes for recruitment of children vary. UNODC states that a larger number of sources gathered in the region refer to the trafficking of minors than of adult women and that only a small number refer to the trafficking of men. According to the UNODC, commercial sex and forced labor are the two most common trafficking purposes (UNODC, 2006).

Traffickers have to balance between supply and demand through maintaining supply through false information, fraud and force, and demand by providing a reliable source of trafficked persons (Sita, 2003; Anderson & Davidson, 2003). Traffickers may be either organizations or individuals according to a UNICEF study. In some cases, the victims themselves are sent back to their villages to recruit new children for work. For example in Tanzania, victims are sent back to recruit other children to work in the mines (UNICEF, 2005). The IOM also notes that, "Mozambican traffickers are mainly local women in partnership with their compatriots and South African men who transport trafficked victims from Maputo to Johannesburg or Durban" (IOM, 2005,p.79) The report

states that it is not youth, but primarily women engaged in prostitution, who are sent back to their villages to recruit young girls. Both girls and boys are recruited with promises of a better life and easy money with some promise of education (IOM, 2005).

### **How much profit is generated?**

A study conducted by Patrick Belser (Belser, 2005) estimates US\$ 27.8 billion were generated from commercial sexual exploitation of human trafficking. However, UNICEF estimates US\$ 7 to 10 billion is generated annually from trafficking (UNICEF, 2005). Another estimate, by the U.S. intelligence community, is US\$ 9.5 billion annually (US, 2008); however, Belser questions the profit figures estimated by UNICEF, stating it is “unclear how profits were calculated” (Belser, 2005, p18). Almost half of all the revenues is made in industrial countries, followed by Asia which generated US\$ 9.5 billion. US\$ 3.2 billion are generated from Transition economies; US\$ 1.0 billion from the Middle East and North Africa; US\$ 0.6 billion from Latin America; and US\$ 0.1 billion from Sub- Sahara Africa (Belser 2005).

The UNODC states that trafficking is number three in the top criminal activities in the world. Human trafficking outranked illegal arms and drug sales, because it involves less risk and that the victims could be trafficked repeatedly (UNODC, 2006).

### **What are the factors contribute to trafficking?**

In Africa, each country faces a specific challenge or combination of challenges that contribute to child trafficking and these challenges vary from one country to another. Studies identify causes and vulnerabilities in the region as “push factors” or “supply side”

issues (Anderson & Davidson, 2003). Poverty, corruption, and weak protection measures are some examples. I will examine the following factors and their effects on trafficking:

1. Traditional Practices in the Region
2. Poverty
3. HIV/AIDS
4. Armed conflicts
5. Lack of institutional capacity

### ***Traditional Practices in the Region***

The practice of child fostering in some cases makes children vulnerable to traffickers, as parents unwittingly put their children at risk by giving them to traffickers in exchange for money or promises of employment, apprenticeship or education for the child victims (Adepoju 2005; Akresh, 2004). The tradition of child fostering is a common practice and is an acceptable institution in African societies. Parents send their children to live with relatives or nonrelatives to escape poverty and strengthen family ties. Verhoef notes that throughout Sub-Sahara Africa “a family is conceptualized as more than the biological mother, father, and children. It is natural for children to grow up with many relatives, mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters-- who share responsibility for their care and to whom they are obligated throughout life.” He notes that the same family members are expected to support each other and, respect and obey their elders (Verhoef, 2005, p. 369). Akresh found that in families with better social networks, which include rich or powerful relatives, fostering is much more likely as parents seek to improve their children’s circumstances. Since the labor productivity of adolescents, especially females, is essential to the operating of many poor and middle-income African households, families will seek to redistribute this labor as judged most efficient. In his research, Akresh has found that families with a large number of five- to fifteen- year-old girls are

more likely to foster out and that families with few adolescent girls are more likely to foster in (2005).

In addition, traditional views of gender roles have an effect on trafficking. Social and cultural environments where women and girls are considered inferior and weaker objectify them and contribute to their being trafficked (UNICEF, 2002). The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) noted in 2008 that “disempowerment, social exclusion and economic vulnerability are the result of policies and practices that marginalize entire groups of people and make them vulnerable to being trafficked” (UN, 2008, p.6). Herzfeld has cited a tradition of *Trokosi* in Southeastern Ghana by which girls as young as seven are dedicated to a shrine by the parents to atone for a family transgression. Families believe that if they do not give their daughters they will be cursed. Although these girls have done nothing wrong, they are given to a priest and forced to stay; they work all day and act as wives to the priest. In addition, due to the traditional definition of gender roles, parents usually prefer to send girls to domestic work to finance the boys’ education.

Moreover, certain ethnic groups may be more vulnerable than others. Dottridge (2004) states that some women-employers are selective in their choices among ethnic groups. He gives an example from Nigeria, where girls of the Edo tribe are known to be the most obedient. These girls are trafficked either for prostitution or to be used as domestic servants or street vendors.

### ***Poverty***

Poverty is often a reason and a factor for migration and trafficking. West and Central African countries suffer from the effects of economic mismanagement. The lack

of alternative ways to earn a living and the absence of economic stability in many of the African countries drive people to move and look for other opportunities (Admassie, 2002; Anne Case, Paxson, & Ableidinger, 2004).

The effect of poverty combined with the traditional definition of gender roles as discussed above significantly increased the vulnerability of poor girls. The UNICEF report *Combating Child Trafficking* notes that “when poverty is acute, a girl may be regarded as an economic burden for her family and her marriage to an older man may be seen as a family survival strategy” (UNICEF, 2005, p. 14). Moletsane (1999) and Herzfeld (2002) state that many families depend on their children, especially girls, to assist with the work. Herzfeld notes that children, particularly girls are seen as easy to control and that a child laborer is cheaper and is not likely to demand better working conditions. Studies identify women and girls to be the first to be given away by their families for sexual exploitation, as they are seen as an economic burden. Herzfeld surveyed the work performed around the world by children and highlighted that domestic work in the homes of strangers is the largest form of employment for girls. The study documents such cultural practices as the exchange of young girls for basic goods and necessities as a means of survival, a practice known as *Kubaba*. However, the UNICEF Regional Representative of West and Central Africa, Rima Salah (2001) blames other factors such as ignorance of the risks involved in trafficking on the part of families and children (UNODC, 2006; Salah, 2001).

### ***HIV/AIDS***

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is another factor that places women and children in a vulnerable position. Martens, Pieczkowski and Vuuren-Smyth (2003) note that children



who escape domestic violence and are orphaned by HIV/AIDS become street children who can be coerced or forcibly abducted and taken across borders with the consent of border officials to work in border towns and agricultural settings (Martens, Pieczkowski, & Vuuren-Smyth, 2003). Even though there have been several efforts to address the issues of HIV/AIDS and trafficking, however, “There are still no integrated approaches that view the linkages between the two issues” (UN.GIFT, 2007)<sup>5</sup>. Some studies note that the wide spread of HIV/AIDS in the region is related to human trafficking (Anne Case, Paxson, & Ableidinger, 2004). For example, the IOM notes that in South Africa the “perception that having sexual intercourse with young girls diminishes the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS has increased demand for young sex workers, and unscrupulous scams are cashing in on this situation by trafficking young girls to the country” (IOM, 2005).

### ***Armed conflicts***

The African continent has its fair share of armed conflict and political turmoil. The internal civil wars and armed conflicts within countries have pushed people to move to neighboring countries or overseas. Women and children are often exposed to violence, sexual exploitation, and hazardous working conditions, or are used to reward soldiers (Dottridge, 2002; Das & Ebbe, 2008). Although studies on children sold by armed forces in areas of conflict are limited, it is reported that children are often kidnapped or sold to become child soldiers or labor in the army. For example, boys become cooks, militants, and killers, while girls are mainly used as sex servants to the militants and the labor. A

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the UN.GIFT Website (<http://www.ungift.org/ungift/en/humantrafficking/hiv.html>)

UNICEF report states that “Some children join fighting forces due to poverty or abuse, others are forcibly recruited or abducted. Children’s roles in conflicts vary. They are used as messengers, porters, cooks, ‘wives’ who provide sexual services or as combatants” (UNICEF, 2005, p. 14).

### ***Lack of institutional capacity***

In general, the level of trafficking-related legislation in almost all the countries in Africa makes the prosecution of traffickers impossible and provides no protection to the victims. The insufficient law enforcement resources and limited information sharing among countries are only two of the many factors that contribute to child trafficking in the region (Human Rights Watch, 2003; ILO, 2003). UNODC also notes the lack of political will to enforce legislation already in place and the limited capacity of immigration officers to control trafficking at the borders. Another common factor recognized by a number of studies is corruption among law enforcement, judicial systems, and local officials, which has hindered control of trafficking (UNODC, 2006).

In some African countries, there is a wide spread lack of birth registration of individuals, exacerbated by the state’s lack enforcement. This lack of official birth registration makes children more vulnerable to trafficking. Having no identification when crossing between countries makes children difficult to trace back to their home countries, and this makes it difficult to return children to their families and to be rehabilitated (Aradau, Claudia, 2005; Dottridge, Trafficking in Children in West and Central Africa, 2002; UNICEF, 2002). The UNICEF notes the example of Uganda where “the collapse of the birth registration system has exacerbated the difficulties of family reunification for children abducted by the Lord’s Resistance Army”. This means children would not get

the protection of authorities in neither the origin nor the destination country (UNICEF, 2005). UNICEF notes that the unregistered children come from poor, marginalized, or displaced families or from countries where systems of registration are not available. UNICEF estimates that “In Sub-Saharan Africa, 70 per cent of births- 17 million children- went unregistered” (UNICEF, 2004).

### **What is the impact of trafficking on the victims and their societies?**

The purpose of this section is to evaluate briefly the notion that fighting trafficking should be an integral part of the social, economic, and political development efforts in the region. Trafficking is a significant challenge in Africa and this section will highlight the impact of trafficking on the social and economic development of the continent. I will focus on the following effects:

- Violation of human rights
- Social exclusion and crime
- Loss of human capital
- Marginalization of public health
- Undermining of government authority

Trafficking violates the fundamental rights of all people to life, liberty, and to be free from slavery and all forms of exploitation. Socially, trafficking weakens family ties and undermines extended family relationships. It also decreases the family’s influence and control over the child. Trafficking also weakens the transfer of cultural values from generation to generation, which weakens the core value of most African societies (IOM, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2003). Fitzgibbon notes that, “Victims who do return to

their villages may have a different frame of reference from other community members and may become disruptive and labeled juvenile delinquents” (Fitzgibbon, 2003, p. 87).

Economically, trafficking affects negatively the human resources capital in African countries. Children who work fulltime at an early age do not have access to education, making it difficult to emerge out of poverty and illiteracy. Trafficking also affects children’s physical and social development, making them unable to acquire the skills necessary to be competitive in their country’s labor market and in the global economy. In addition, forced child labor depresses wages for all workers. The departure of children to other countries causes a loss of human capital (Fitzgibbon K. , 2003;UNODC, 2006).

In addition, trafficking exposes victims to many health problems such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, infectious diseases, violence, dangerous work conditions, poor nutrition, and drug and alcohol addiction. In addition, Fitzgibbon notes that the ILO reports “trafficked children in Africa are at a high risk for sunstroke, increased heart rhythm, poisoning due to chemicals in insecticides, dust inhalation in sawmills and mines, machinery accidents, burns, road accidents, stagnation of growth, and general fatigue that makes them less resistant to malaria and other diseases due to exposure to harsh working conditions”. Children also endure psychological trauma from abuses, which lead to a life of crime. Trafficked children are less likely to participate in immunization programs, which undermine governments’ efforts to eradicate early childhood disease (Fitzgibbon, 2003, p. 87).

Politically, trafficking undermines government authority by endangering public safety, particularly the security of vulnerable populations (UNODC, 2006). Fitzgibbon

notes that “in 2002, in Akwa Ibom, Nigeria, immigration officials attempting to capture child traffickers were attacked by the well-armed traffickers and forced to retreat”.

Governments that are unable to protect children have failed to protect their people. In addition, traffickers corrupt law enforcement and immigration officials, which undermine the government’s capacity to combat corruption (Fitzgibbon, 2003, p. 87).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided an overview of how the definition of trafficking developed and changed over time. In recent years, progress has been made in the development of common understanding of human trafficking and in establishing international legal instruments against trafficking of persons. Today, trafficking is defined under international law: *Trafficking in Persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation* (United Nations, 2000). The UN definition shows the difference between smuggling of migrants and trafficking using three specific criteria, the consent of the victims, the type of exploitation, and source of financial gain. The definition also helps defining child trafficking, and shows the forms in which victims are trafficked. However, even though the definition broadly defines trafficking, it does not note the issue of internal trafficking which is as serious in West and Central Africa as is cross- border trafficking.

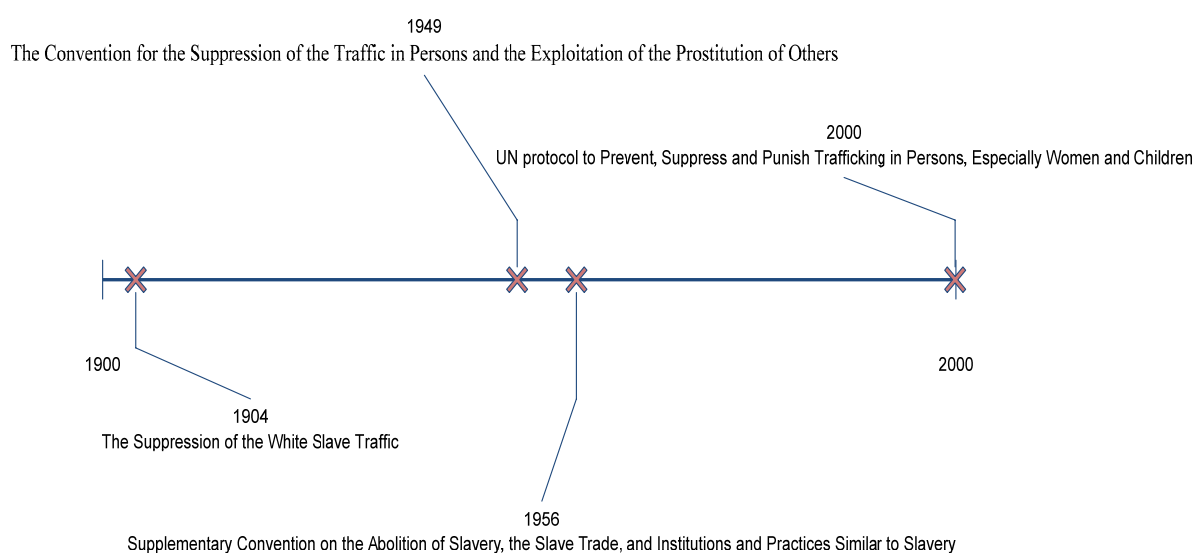
This chapter also reviewed the dimension of trafficking in the African region. The two main patterns of trafficking in West and Central Africa are internal trafficking and cross-border trafficking. The trafficking routes in these areas for instance, include Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Togo to Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, and Nigeria. It is estimated that between 200,000 and 300,000 children are trafficked annually in West and Central Africa. However, research on the African region is still limited compared to the amount of research on Europe and Asia. Much of the research on trafficking sets out basically to show that measuring trafficking, mapping the routes, and identifying the main countries of origin and destination in the region is a problem. The unavailability of data is mainly caused by the limited access to the relevant population involved in trafficking, such as victims and traffickers, which some referred to as the “hidden populations”. Other factors such as the limited institutional capacity also limited the availability of data.

A number of studies on trafficking identified common factors that make children vulnerable to traffickers, such as poverty, lack of institutional capacity, HIV/AIDS, and traditional practices. Trafficking has an impact on the individual and on the country as a whole. It affects victims physically and psychologically; it also affects the countries' national safety and manpower.

## CHAPTER FOUR: WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA TRAFFICKING

### LEGISLATION: PREVENTION AND PROSECUTION

In this chapter, I will look into the international and regional instruments regarding child and human rights that shaped the countries and the international organizations intervention in combating trafficking. In addition, I will look into the situation of trafficking and the governments' efforts in the three selected countries. In each of these countries, I will provide an overview of the child trafficking situation, the active legislation on trafficking, international, and nongovernmental organizations' efforts in these countries, and multilateral cooperation between Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria and Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC as well as with neighboring countries. However, in this chapter I will not discuss the efforts of the selected organizations in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria, which will be covered in Chapter Five.



**Figure 2: Timeline of Major Child International Legal Instruments**

At the present, several international and regional instruments created guidelines for governments to protect and safeguard children's rights (see Figure 2). In this section, I will look into the international instruments that are the main legal pillars in protecting children's rights worldwide. I will define the following:

1. The UN Convention on The Abolition of Slavery (1956)
2. The UN Convention on The Rights of The Child (1989)
3. The International Labor Organization's Convention No. 182 (1999)
4. The UN Protocol to Prevent, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)

These four international instruments created ground for banning children's rights violations, child labor, and the trafficking of children into all forms of exploitation. In this section, I also discuss the four main regional instruments that laid grounds for children's rights in the region:

1. The African Charter on Human and People's Right (1979) and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (1995)
2. The African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child (1999)
3. Declaration and Action Plan "African Common Position on Children" (2000)
4. Declaration on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (2001)



## **International Instruments**

### ***The UN Convention on the Abolition of Slavery (1956)***

The 1956 UN Convention created grounds for the other legal instruments mentioned in this section that affirm children's rights. This convention banned debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage, and exploitation of children with or without the consent of their parents or guardians. In addition, the key contribution of this convention is that it criminalized slave trafficking, called for setting minimum age for marriage, and registration and public declaration of marriages.

*Gabon is not a participant in this convention. Ghana's accession was in 1963, and Nigeria's succession was in 1961* (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, nd).

### ***The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)***

The importance of this convention is that it is the first legally binding international instrument which provides universal human rights protection to the children and which requires participants to be held accountable by the international community. For the fight against child trafficking this convention provides an important tool; the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. This protocol requires countries to protect children from being sold for sexual and non-sexual purposes for example, forced labor, illegal adoption, and organ donation. This protocol became legally binding in 2002 (UNICEF, nd).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed, ratified, accepted, and accessed by the African governments on different dates as illustrated in Table 2. The targeted countries -- Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria -- signed the CRC in January 1990.

*Gabon ratified<sup>6</sup> the convention in 1994, Ghana in 1990 and Nigeria in 1991* (the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, nd).

**Table 2: Convention on the Rights of Child**

Participant	Signature	Ratification, Acceptance(A), Accession(a), Succession(d)
Benin	25 Apr 1990	3 Aug 1990
Burkina Faso	26 Jan 1990	31 Aug 1990
Congo		14 Oct 1993 a
Côte d'Ivoire	26 Jan 1990	4 Feb 1991
Democratic Republic of the Congo	20 Mar 1990	27 Sep 1990
Gabon	26 Jan 1990	9 Feb 1994
Gambia	5 Feb 1990	8 Aug 1990
Ghana	29 Jan 1990	5 Feb 1990
Mali	26 Jan 1990	20 Sep 1990
Niger	26 Jan 1990	30Sep1990
Nigeria	26 Jan 1990	19 Apr 1991
Senegal	26 Jan 1990	31 Jul 1990
Togo	26 Jan 1990	1 Aug 1990

*Source: United Nations Treaties Collection*

### ***The International Labor Organization's Convention No. 182 (1999)***

This convention is also known as the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention and is considered one of the most successful treaties by the ILO in terms of ratifications.

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<sup>6</sup> Ratify: a country appears periodically to report its progress with regard to the implementation of this convention and report children's rights status in their countries to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

The convention defines the worst forms of child labor such as slavery and practices similar to it, sexual exploitation, and the usage of children in conducting crimes such as drugs smuggling. The ILO works with the countries to monitor the current conditions and by implementing programs to assist the government to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

*Gabon ratified the convention in 2001, Ghana in 2000, and Nigeria in 2002 (ILO, nd).*

***The UN Protocol to Prevent, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)***

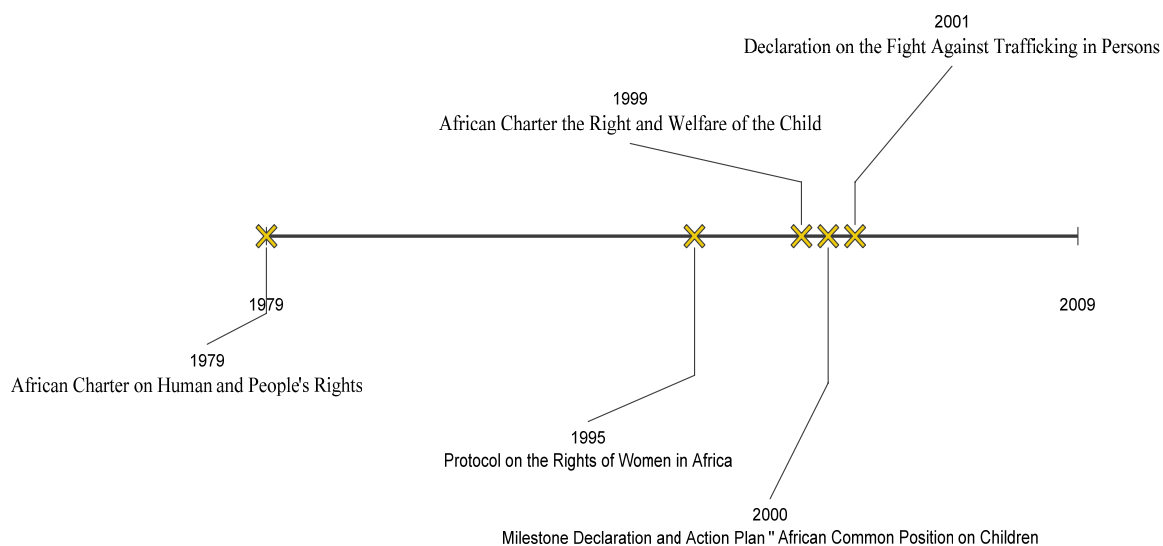
This legal pillar created a clear distinction between child trafficking and seasonal migration of child workers, and provided a more focused definition of trafficking. It also called for more protection and rights for the victims such as the need to immune the victims from punishment in the crimes that may have been involved in such as immigration violation and prostitution. It also called for scrutiny before deportation of the victims back to their home countries if this exposes them again to trafficking danger but also calls for a framework to reintegrate the victims back in their communities safely (United Nations, 2000).

*Nigeria signed in 2000 and ratified in 2001 but Gabon and Ghana did not sign yet.*

**Regional Instruments**

There are a number of initiatives taken by African countries in general, and especially by West African countries, to create a safe environment for African children.

There are four important instruments in the region that built a foundation and created guidelines for African countries to protect children's rights (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Timeline of Major Regional Legal Instruments**

### ***African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (1986)***

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights entered into force in 1986. The charter emphasized that "freedom, equality, justice, and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples" (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, nd). In 1995, the heads of states<sup>7</sup> and governments of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) met in its Thirty- First Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In this session, the states and governments of the OAU recommended to include a Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa to the

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<sup>7</sup> 53 out of 54 African states were members, the Kingdom of Morocco left in 1984.

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which created sets of legal instruments that provide equal rights to women and men. The Protocol provides protective measures to girls. For example, Article 6, under "Marriage", urges state parties to take legal measures to guarantee that the minimum age of marriage is 18 years. Article 12, under the "Right to Education and Training", urges state parties<sup>8</sup> to take measures to provide equal opportunity and access to education and training for all. The protocol also put special emphasis on protecting "the girl-child from all forms of abuse, including sexual harassment in schools and other educational institutions and provide for sanctions against the perpetrators of such practices" (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, nd).

#### ***African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999)***

In 1999, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child entered into force. It urged states parties<sup>9</sup> to take appropriate measures to ensure that children enjoy equal rights and freedoms, right to birth registration and prevent the sale, abduction, and trafficking of children for any purpose by any person, including parents or guardians. It also bans the employment of children in hazardous conditions (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, nd).

#### ***African Common Position on Children (2000)***

In 2000, the Organization of African Unity drafted an "African Common Position on Children". This draft was composed of a Declaration and a Plan of Action. The

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<sup>8</sup> 53 out of 54 African member states of the OAU

<sup>9</sup> African members states of the OAU

Declaration recognized that children represent Africa's future, and that member states are responsible in helping children achieve their rights. The Plan of Action provided guidelines and objectives to be decided upon in each member state according to its needs. Priority was given to children's rights in each state through the National Plan of Action, by "enhancing the life opportunities, overcoming HIV/AIDS, realizing the right to education and protection (pro-legal; anti-abuse, violence and exploitation) and participation of youth and children. Furthermore, steps are outlined for international partnerships to achieve these goals and modes of implementation are provided for the national, regional, and continental level". This draft was adopted by the Pan- African Forum on the Future of Children in May 2001, and endorsed by the seventh session of the OAU Council of Ministers and the 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2001 (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs 2007, 1).

***Declaration on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (2001)***

In 2001, the heads of states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) called for the Declaration A/DC12/12/01 on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons, where they acknowledged children were becoming victims of trafficking, and stressed children's vulnerability and the need for special measures of protection for their development and well being. In this session, the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, and Children was recalled, addressing the issue of trafficking across borders and within states. In addition, the heads of states recognized the significance of effective cooperation, intelligence gathering, information sharing, and the importance of training to prevent and curb trafficking in human beings. They also noted the importance of a comprehensive international approach between

countries of origin, transit, and destination to include measures to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute traffickers, and to adopt internationally recognized human rights (ECOWAS 2001).

These regional legal instruments have created the knowledge for African countries to identify and protect children's rights. It also equipped member countries with the necessary tools to protect children from being trafficked. However, the existence of these instruments in a particular country does not mean that that nation actually enforces them. The U.S. State Department produces an annual report on foreign governments' efforts to eliminate human trafficking. The report classifies countries into tiers based on their compliance to the standards of the U.S. Law on Trafficking in Persons, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which stressed protection, prosecution, and prevention (Three Ps) in combating trafficking. Tier 1 covers countries that have fully complied with the TVPA standards, and does not include any of the African countries. Tier 2 includes governments that have not fully complied with the TVPA, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves in line with TVPA standards. A number of African countries are listed under Tier 2, including Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Togo. Those governments that do not fully comply with the TVPA's minimum standard, but are making significant efforts to bring themselves up to its standards are classified as Tier 2 Watch List. This composes of Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic Chad, Congo (DRC), Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Niger, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (U.S. State Department, 2008).

In this section, I examine the situation of trafficking in Gabon, Ghana and Nigeria and the efforts of these governments in combating it. Further, this section looks into the level of cooperation among these governments and with international organizations, specifically the UNODC, IOM, and Anti-Slavery International. For each country, I will discuss the following:

1. Overview of Child Trafficking
2. Legislation on Trafficking
3. International and Nongovernmental Organizations' Efforts
4. Multilateral Cooperations

## **Gabonese Republic**

### ***Overview of Child Trafficking***

Gabon is predominantly a destination country and, to a lesser extent, a country of origin for trafficking in persons. It is a destination country for children trafficked from Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo and a small number come from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Mali. To Gabon, girls are trafficked for domestic servitude, forced street vending, forced restaurant labor, and sexual exploitation, while boys are trafficked for street begging, and forced labor in workshops and agricultural settings (U.S. State Department, 2008). According to the Prevention Project of Johns Hopkins University, it estimated that 53,000 of the 132,000 children living in Gabon are forced to work. The Protection Project notes that the relative wealth Gabon enjoys among Sub-Saharan countries contributes to trafficking there. In addition, the country's economy is heavily dependent on immigrants. A report by Protection Project cites UNICEF's assertion that "the scope of child trafficking into the country has increased. Many of the country's small family businesses started experiencing major financial problems and decided to use



child labor as a solution and a way to cut the costs of doing business” (Johns Hopkins University, nd ; UNHCR, 2008).

### ***Legislation on Trafficking***

In 2001, the Gabonese government implemented strict measures to prosecute and deport child traffickers. The constitution was amended to include tough sanctions against child labor, child trafficking, and child abuse. The Gabon Penal Code<sup>10</sup> states the following:

[the law] “*Prohibits the seduction, procurement, or trafficking of persons for the purposes of prostitution. The offense of sharing the profits of or living with someone who engages in prostitution is punishable with a fine and imprisonment of three months to one year. The punishment is two to five years’ imprisonment if the offense involves a minor (under 18 years of age), if force or coercion is used, or if the trafficker is the victim’s spouse, parent, or guardian. Owners of establishments that support prostitution can be imprisoned for up to five years or fined 20,000 francs for harboring of minors. Furthermore, any sexual act with a child below 15 years of age is punishable by imprisonment of up to five years or a fine of up to 5,000 francs*” (Johns Hopkins University, nd, p. 3).

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<sup>10</sup> As the official language of Gabon is French, I used secondary sources for versions in English.

Below is a highlight of the main legislative characteristics of the country:

**Table 3: Legislation of Gabon**

Minimum working age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 years minimum age for employment and apprenticeship</li> <li>• 20 years minimum age for voluntary recruitment into military</li> </ul>
Punishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large fine along with 2 to 6 months for violating minimum working age</li> <li>• 1 -6 months for forced labor</li> <li>• 2-12 month and a heavier fine for slavery, abduction, and pimping</li> <li>• 5 -15 years imprisonment and fine for perpetrators of trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation</li> <li>• 2-5 years imprisonment for procurement of minors for the purpose of prostitution</li> </ul>
Actions on Trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabon conducts regular patrols to combat maritime child trafficking</li> <li>• Gabon is among the 24 countries that adopted the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons.</li> <li>• Gabon joined the Plan of Action against Trafficking in Person , especially women and children in West and Central African Region</li> <li>• Gabon bilateral and regional agreement to combat child trafficking and the ILO Convention number 183 are included the governments' UN Development Assistance Framework 2007-2011</li> <li>• Gabon child trafficking "Watch Committees" is located in the country's nine provinces. Gabon operates three centers for trafficking victims providing them with assistance and help repatriate trafficked children to their countries.</li> <li>• Gabon works with UNICEF on raising awareness on child trafficking through workshops, seminars, radios, television messages and posters.</li> </ul>

*Source: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

According to the U.S. State Department, Gabon, as a country listed in the "Tier 2 Watch List", does not comply with the required standards for combating trafficking.

Gabon is placed in this category because it failed to demonstrate its efforts to combat

human trafficking during the previous year (U.S. State Department, 2008). The U.S. State Department report states the following:

*“Gabon does not have one specific law that prohibits all forms of human trafficking; however, it does have several laws that collectively prohibit all forms of human trafficking. Gabonese law prohibits child labor trafficking through its 2004 Law Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking, which prescribes penalties of five to 15 years’ imprisonment and a \$20,000-\$40,000 fine. Article 4, Title 1 of Law Number 3/94 criminalizes forced labor, prescribing inadequate penalties of one to six months’ imprisonment and a possible fine of \$700-\$1,400. The procurement of a minor for the purpose of prostitution is prohibited under Penal Code Article 261, which prescribes a penalty of two to five years’ imprisonment and a fine, a penalty that is sufficiently stringent but not commensurate with punishments prescribed for rape. Forced prostitution is prohibited by law number 21/63-94, which prescribes a penalty of two to 10 years’ imprisonment, which is sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties prescribed for rape” (U.S. State Department, 2008, p. 121).*

The U.S. State Department’s Trafficking in Persons report notes that in 2008 the Gabonese government failed to report trafficking convictions, and that the country’s effectiveness in prosecuting trafficking is hindered by the inefficient legal procedures (U.S. State Department, 2008).

### ***International and Nongovernmental Organizations’ Efforts***

There are no available data to determine if the Gabonese government worked with UNODC, and IOM. However, the Anti-Slavery International worked with the government of Gabon on a project to help eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In addition, the government of Gabon cooperated with organizations such as UNICEF, and Alisei Que Dirige Sergio Vezzola in fighting child trafficking. The government worked with Alisei Que Dirige Sergio Vezzola to carry out a European Union–sponsored project called the Right to Be a Child. The project was concerned with raising awareness in Libreville. It is estimated that within the first year of the project more than 100 trafficked

children were repatriated through the Alisei to their origin countries (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

The Gabonese government also worked with UNICEF, focused on creating a better understanding of child trafficking through training of customs officials, senior security, and border police officers in Gabon. In 2003, Gabon set up a national commission against child trafficking. The Gabonese government, jointly with UNICEF, installed a free hotline for fighting child trafficking and exploitation, the first initiative against child trafficking in Africa. There are also two reception centers to provide help and support to rescued victims of child trafficking. The government also established a reception and transit center in Libreville with the help of the the Regional Support Project for the Protection of Minors against Child Trafficking in West Africa (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

### ***Multilateral Cooperations***

Gabon took part in multilateral cooperation with other African countries to combat child trafficking. In 2002, the First Specialized Meeting on Child Trafficking and Exploitation in West and Central Africa, in Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire, was organized by Interpol for representatives of West and Central African countries, United Nations agencies<sup>11</sup>, international organizations<sup>12</sup> and regional NGOs. The meeting resulted in adoption of the Yamoussoukro Declaration on Child Trafficking and Exploitation in

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<sup>11</sup> The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labor Office/International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO/IPEC), and the United Nations International Drug Control Program/Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP/UNDCP) known today as UNODC.

<sup>12</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM)

West and Central Africa, in which the state parties agreed to hold synchronized information campaigns and amend their existing legislation on children. The declaration also provided incorporated or strengthened programs to train security agents, the judiciary, and all actors to promote and protect children's rights. The declaration introduced an official travel document that allows children to travel freely. The declaration urged governments to continue working toward regional agreement against child trafficking (United Nations General Assembly, 2002). In 2002, the Gabonese government began cooperating with the government of Benin in combating child trafficking by studying both the host families that used child workers and the mistreated children (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

## **The Republic of Ghana**

### ***Overview of Child Trafficking***

Ghana is an origin, transit, and destination country for trafficking of children for the purpose of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Internal trafficking is more common than cross-border trafficking. Children are trafficked within Ghana for forced labor in agriculture, fishing, and street begging. It is estimated that in 2005, 40,000 children worked as porters on Ghana's streets. Both boys and girls are trafficked internally for domestic servitude and sexual exploitation; however, boys trafficked for sexual exploitation were less reported than girls were. Cross-border trafficking of children from other countries, primarily Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Nigeria, and Gambia, is for domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. Ghana is a transit country for girls mainly trafficked from Nigeria through Ghana to Western Europe and from Burkina Faso through Ghana to Cote d'Ivoire (U.S. State Department, 2008).

Economic hardship, low levels of education, and few employment opportunities are considered root causes of trafficking in Ghana. In addition, there are traditional practices, for example, the *trokosi* or “wives of the deity”, a practice which originated in the South and East of Ghana, but occurs also in Togo and Benin. In this custom, virgins are brought to a shrine to compensate for crimes committed by their families. The girls live with priests and perform sex and household duties. A girl will be replaced with another one from her family if she dies (Johns Hopkins University, nd ; IOM, 2005).

### ***Legislation on Trafficking***

The Ghanaian government has taken a number of actions to fight child trafficking. The Ghanaian Criminal Code provides that “any prostitute wandering in public streets or a public highway or any place of public resort in any town and behaving in a riotous and indecent manner shall be guilty of an offence and may be arrested by any police officer when found so offending”. The Criminal Code prohibits “any female loitering or importuning wayfarers for the purpose of prostitution in any public street or highway or any place of public resort in any town to the obstruction and annoyance of any residents or wayfarers shall be guilty of an offence”. The code also criminalizes “surrounding activities, including pimping or trading in women for monetary gain; pandering (i.e., inducing women and children to become prostitutes or procuring them for the purposes of prostitution); providing (i.e., maintaining, renting, or leasing) a place for prostitution; and promoting prostitution.” The code also criminalizes anyone who “induces or knowingly permits any child of less than 16 years of age to resort to or be in or on his premises to be carnally known” by sentencing of seven to 25 years. The Criminal Code also criminalizes those who encourage the “the seduction or prostitution of a child under 16 years of age

and allowing a person under 16 years of age to work in a brothel (Johns Hopkins University, nd, p. 3; UNHCR, 2006).

Below are highlights of the main legislative characteristics of the country:

**Table 4: Legislation of Ghana**

Minimum working age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 years and 13 years for light work</li> </ul>
Punishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 years of imprisonment for those who employ persons under 18 years in hazardous labor</li> <li>• 3 years of imprisonment for forced or bonded labor</li> <li>• 1 to 10 years of imprisonment for having Sexual relation with a girl under 14 who facilitates/uses child for prostitution or transporting illicit drugs</li> <li>• 5 years of imprisonment for trafficking in persons , providing another person for trafficking and using a trafficked person</li> </ul>
Actions on Trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghana was among the 24 countries to adopt Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the Joint Plan of Action against Trafficking in persons, especially women and children in West and Central Africa</li> <li>• Governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire have taken agreement under the Harkin-Engel Protocol, through the development of an action plan to combat exploitative child labor in the coco sector</li> <li>• Government of Ghana included child labor as an issue need to be addressed in its Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2006</li> <li>• Government of Ghana with the help of ILO/PEC included child labor concerns in the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) that developed in 2007</li> <li>• The government under the NPECLC worked to build the capacity of government officials and civil society on the issue of child labor, international law, and child protection especially in the cocoa sector</li> </ul>

*Source: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

According to the U.S. State Department, the Ghanaian government is categorized as Tier 2, which means it does not meet the minimum standards for the combating of trafficking; however, Ghana is making significant efforts to do so. The report also notes

that Ghanaian officials and police have shown limited capacity in referring victims to service providers. In addition, the Ghanaian government does not provide shelters or service centers for sex trafficking victims (U.S. State Department, 2008).

### ***International and Nongovernmental Organizations' Efforts***

Ghanaian government worked with a number of international and nongovernmental organizations including the IOM to curb trafficking however there was no information regarding the UNODC and the Anti-Slavery International efforts in Ghana. In 2002, the IOM conducted the Yeji Trafficked Children Project in Ghana on child trafficking for labor exploitation in the fishing communities. Its aim was to raise awareness on the issues of child trafficking for labor exploitation. In 2003, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and the International Union of Foods collaborated with the Agricultural Workers Union of Ghana in organizing a three-day international workshop on child labor in the cocoa industry. In the same year, a three-year project was launched under the title The West Africa Cocoa/ Agriculture Project. Its aim was to withdraw and educate 10,000 children from exploitation on cocoa and other farms in West Africa. A number of representatives from Ghana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, the European Union, and the United States set up the project (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

The Ghanaian government also cooperated with International Needs Ghana (ING), which is a Christian organization; part of the global International Needs Network's effort on community development and educating and advocating for the



children's rights. ING conducted a three-year program to release and rehabilitate 900 *trokosi*<sup>13</sup> and their children. There are other organizations working on human trafficking such as the Coalition on the Rights of the Child, which has played a role in freeing hundreds of children from the sex industry in Ghana (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

The government of Ghana also implemented other initiatives in tackling the issue of trafficking. In 2003, funded by the World Bank, the government undertook projects to address the problem of street children. In 2007, the government of Ghana established a Human Trafficking Board, and the Human Trafficking Fund was composed of government agencies, international organizations, and NGOs. The board drafted a national action plan to combat trafficking (Johns Hopkins University, nd; U.S. State Department, 2008). It launched a number of campaigns to educate the public on the issue of trafficking and the existing laws. The government also worked with cocoa companies to collect data to measure the extent of forced child and adult labor in the cocoa sector (U.S. State Department, 2008).

### ***Multilateral Cooperation***

The Ghanaian government was involved in regional initiatives in fighting trafficking. In 2003, coordinated by the ILO, security officials from Ghana and Nigeria met in Ghana to discuss measures to combat the escalation of child trafficking in the West African region (Johns Hopkins University, nd). In 2003, labor experts from Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, along

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<sup>13</sup> "Wife of god", a girl who must live and work in a shrine where she becomes the sexual partner of priests.

with European countries, met in Lusaka, Zambia, for a three-day workshop, which was also coordinated by the ILO with the objective of integrating child labor issues into policies and programs.

Ghana was also involved in a conference hosted by the World Tourism Organization in Senegal, where a resolution was drafted urging governments, the private sector, international organizations, and NGOs to work on eliminating child sex tourism. The objective of the resolution was to develop better strategies, efficient intervention, and more interaction at the local, national, and the regional levels (Ghana Web, 2003).

## **Federal Republic of Nigeria**

### ***Overview of Child Trafficking***

Nigeria is an origin, transit, and destination country for children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Internal trafficking exists as cross-border trafficking. Girls are primarily trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude and sexual exploitation, and boys are trafficked for street begging, forced labor in agriculture, mining, stone quarries, and domestic servitude. Cross-border trafficking is mainly destined to West and Central African countries such as Gabon, Cameroon, Benin, Niger, Gambia, and Ghana. Children are also trafficked to North Africa and Europe. Nigeria serves as a destination country for children trafficked from Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone, Togo, and other countries (Johns Hopkins University, nd; U.S. State Department, 2008; UNODC, 2006). Nigerian children are trafficked internally from areas such as the states of Akwa, Ibom, Cross River, Ebonyi, Imo, and Kwara to big cities such as Abuja, Lagos, Kano, and Kaduna for labor exploitation. Children from Ekorì and Nko in Cross River State in southern Nigeria are

trafficked to the western states of Ondo and Ogun (Johns Hopkins University, nd; UNODC, 2006).

A number of reasons contribute to trafficking in Nigeria, among them economic hardship, weak family ties, low level of education, lack of employment opportunity, corruption, and the desire for migration to improve their economic and social situation (UNODC, 2006 ; IOM, 2006).

### ***Legislation on Trafficking***

The Nigerian Criminal Code and Penal Code provided a number of measures to combat trafficking. The Criminal Code prohibits anyone who has lawful custody of a girl of less than 13 years and “causes or encourages the seduction, unlawful carnal knowledge or prostitution of, or the commission of an indecent assault upon such a girl”, which is punished by imprisonment for seven years and a fine (Johns Hopkins University, nd, p. 10). The code penalizes any person who “sponsors a girl or woman by giving her any financial, physical, or material assistance to enable her to travel out of Nigeria for the purpose of becoming a prostitute or to carry out any immoral act.” It also penalizes any person who “administers any oath on a woman or girl or performs any fetish ritual in order to enable her to travel out of Nigeria for the purpose of becoming a prostitute or to have unlawful carnal knowledge with any person”. It also criminalizes trading in prostitution, which includes living on the earnings of prostitution, and soliciting. The punishment of living on the earnings of a prostitute is imprisonment for two years and a fine (Johns Hopkins University, nd, p. 11; UNHCR, 2002)

The Penal Code imposes punishment of up to ten years and a fine on anyone who “buys, sells, hires, lets to hire, or otherwise obtains possession” of a person less than 18 years of age with the intent of using such a person for “prostitution or other unlawful or immoral purposes” (Johns Hopkins University, nd, p. 11). The Labor Code outlaw employment of a child less than 15 years of age in any industry, and less than 16 years to work underground. Those who employ children under these circumstance will be subject to a fine. The Labor Code specifies conditions for the employment of children younger than 14 years of age to be on “a daily wage, on a day-to-day basis and so long as he returns each night to the place of residence of his parents or his legal guardian” (Johns Hopkins University, nd, p. 12).

Below are highlights of the main legislative characteristics of the country:

**Table 5: Legislation of Nigeria**

Minimum working age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 years minimum age for employment and apprenticeships</li> <li>• 15 years minimum age for employment for industrial work and board vessel</li> </ul>
Punishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject to a fine to those who employ children under 12 for lifting or carrying load that could cause physical injuries</li> <li>• Subject to a fine to those who employ children under 16 to work underground, on machines, at night or from 4 or 8 hours in any period</li> <li>• 7 years imprisonment and a fine for anyone who has lawful custody of a girl of less than 13 years and subject her to sexual exploitation</li> <li>• 10 years imprisonment to those who export from Nigeria or import into Nigeria a person less than 18 years</li> <li>• 14 years imprisonment for those involved in procurement, use, or offer person for the production of pornography or pornographic performance</li> </ul>
Actions on Trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nigeria is part of the regional project “Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa” that assesses the problem of trafficking in nine African countries. One of the phases of the project was focused on assisting children victims of trafficking. It also included raising awareness and strengthen the local capacity to address the problem</li> <li>• Nigeria adopted the Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and Administration Act, which was established by the National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters</li> </ul>

*Source: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

The Nigerian government is categorized as “Tier 2” by the U.S. State Department. The Nigerian government did not fully meet minimum standards for abandoning human trafficking. However, the government is making significant progress to do so. The Nigerian government has made significant efforts to prosecute trafficking cases. It also provided care to victims, however, the quality of care was limited due to funding constraints (U.S. State Department, 2008).

### ***International and Nongovernmental Organizations’ Efforts***

The Nigerian government has worked with international and nongovernmental organizations in fighting trafficking. The international organizations have extensive

efforts in the country. In 2000, the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) was launched by the ILO in cooperation with the Central Niger State College of Education in Minna to develop teacher-training colleges throughout Nigeria. In 2003, the African Regional Labor Administration Center conducted a workshop on child labor in the agricultural sector to build commitment of the participating countries<sup>14</sup> to tackle child labor and develop an action plan.

In 2004, the UNODC Nigeria office, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) implemented the Program of Action against Trafficking of Minors and Young Women from Nigeria to Italy for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation. The objective of this project was to expand the law enforcement and criminal justice capacity to address the trafficking of minors and young women into Italy for commercial sexual exploitation. A further purpose was to create international cooperation against trafficking and informing the public of the issue of trafficking (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Youth Development collaborated on a project with UNICEF and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, along with local agencies and NGOs, to combat trafficking. The project, UNICEF's Model Youth Resource Learning Center in the South of Nigeria, ran from 2002 to 2004. The objective of the project was to decrease child trafficking, youth violence, and youth HIV/AIDS infection in Edo and Delta states (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

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<sup>14</sup> Participating countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The IOM Nigeria country office signed a memorandum with the National Policy on Protection and Assistance of Trafficked Persons (NAPTIP) to build the capacity of law enforcement, strengthen logistic and technical services, and raise awareness through training. The IOM participated in the development of the NAPTIP in Nigeria through the development of the health chapter, which created standard guidelines for providing health-care services to victims of trafficking<sup>15</sup>. Further information will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

There are a number of nongovernmental organizations in Nigeria working on combating trafficking such as The Women's Trafficking and Child Labor Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF), which was founded by the president of Nigeria, Amina Titi Atiku Abubakar. This organization assisted in the development of the Bill against Trafficking in Persons. Other local NGOs are involved in the fight against trafficking such as The Women's Consortium of Nigeria (WOCON) which carried out anti-trafficking and reintegration of trafficked children campaigns. This organization also works on raising awareness, advocacy, workshops, and research (UNODC, 2006).

### ***Multilateral Cooperation***

The Nigerian government is active in collaborating with other countries to eradicate trafficking. For example, in 2000, Nigeria signed a cooperation agreement with Italy to reduce and combat trafficking in persons. The agreement had the support of the United Nations. The agreement that was introduced by the United Nations Interregional

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<sup>15</sup> Personal communication with Queen Chinwe Okaro, Senior Program Coordinator with the IOM Nigeria country office during the period from January to April 2009

Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) specifically was designed to stop trafficking in minors and young women from Nigeria to Italy for sexual exploitation. Italy is an important partner for Nigeria in fighting against trafficking due to the large number of Nigerians involved in prostitution in Italy. Both countries will exchange information on the activities of traffickers, and Italy will provide training for Nigerian law-enforcement agencies in dealing with trafficking (Anti-Slavery International, 2002).

Nigeria joined the West Africa Cocoa/Agriculture Project, previously mentioned under the multilateral cooperation of Ghana. In 2003, Nigeria and Benin cooperated on working on preventing child trafficking and facilitating trafficked children's return to their home countries. In 2003, Nigeria and Niger collaborated to eradicate cross-border crime, including child trafficking, through public awareness campaigns and other security-related initiatives. In the same year, Nigeria also signed security pacts with Chad to stop smuggling, trafficking in persons, and other cross-border crimes. Also in 2003, police chiefs from Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo met in Lome, Togo, to discuss cooperation in dealing with cross-border crimes. In 2004, officials from Benin, Nigeria, and Togo, as well as UN representatives, met in Abuja, Nigeria, to discuss cooperation in combating human trafficking in West Africa (Johns Hopkins University, nd).

## **Conclusion**

A number of efforts have been made by the international community to put an end to child trafficking. I highlighted some of the main international legal pillars that developed practices for countries to protect and save children from being trafficked. There are also initiatives in the African region to tackle trafficking, among them is the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which emphasized "freedom, equality,



justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples" (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, nd). Examining the three selected countries, Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria, shows that these countries share common factors that contribute to trafficking such as poverty, low education level, and lack of employment opportunity, as well as the natural desire of people to improve their social and economic situations that fuel the migration movements. Moreover, it was shown that each country has adopted laws to combat child trafficking.

The three selected countries have legislation on employment and several laws on protecting children's rights. From examining their legislation, it will be noted that these countries have different laws for the minimum age of employment. Nigeria's and Ghana's minimum age of employment for light work or apprenticeship is at 12 -13 years of age. Gabon's minimum age is 16 years for employment and apprenticeship. However, Ghana has stricter laws on violating minimum age of employment, which is punished by 2 years compared to 2-6 months imprisonment in Gabon and a fine in Nigeria for the same crime. Nigeria fines those who employ children under 12 for lifting or carrying load that could cause physical injuries. Forced labor is punished by 1-6 months imprisonment in Gabon, compared to 3 years imprisonment in Ghana. The three countries' punishment for those who use children in prostitution or sexual exploitation is imprisonment, however, they vary in their period of imprisonment Gabon 5-15 years, Ghana 1-10 years and Nigeria 7 years (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Legislative comparison**

Countries	Gabonese Republic	Republic of Ghana	Federal Republic of Nigeria
Minimum working age	16 years minimum age for employment and apprenticeship 20 years minimum age for voluntary recruitment into military	15 years minimum age for employment 13 years for light work	12 years for employment and apprenticeship 15 years minimum age for employment for industrial work and board vessel
Punishment s	Large fine along with 2 to 6 months for violating minimum working age 1 -6 months for forced labor 2-12 month and a heavier fine for slavery, abduction, and pimping 5 -15 years imprisonment and fine for perpetrators of trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation 2-5 years imprisonment for procurement of minors for the purpose of prostitution	2 years of imprisonment for those who employ persons under 18 years in hazardous labor 3 years of imprisonment for forced or bonded labor 1 to 10 years of imprisonment for having Sexual relation with a girl under 14 who facilitates/uses child for prostitution or transporting illicit drugs 5 years of imprisonment for trafficking in persons , providing another person for trafficking and using a trafficked person	Subject to a fine to those who employ children under 12 for lifting or carrying load that could cause physical injuries Subject to a fine to those who employ children under 16 to work underground, on machines, at night or from 4 or 8 hours in any period 7 years imprisonment and a fine for anyone who has lawful custody of a girl of less than 13 years and subject her to sexual exploitation 10 years imprisonment to those who export from Nigeria or import into Nigeria a person less than 18 years 14 years imprisonment for those involved in procurement, use, or offer person for the production of pornography or pornographic performance
U.S. State Department classification of governments efforts in fighting human trafficking	Tier 2 Watch List (does not comply with the required standards for combating trafficking)	Tier 2 ( did not fully meet minimum standards for abandoning human trafficking) Limited capacity in referring victims to service providers. Does not provide shelters or service centers for sex trafficking victims	Tie 2 (did not fully meet minimum standards for abandoning human trafficking) The quality of care was limited due to funding constraints.
Protocol to Prevent and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, and Children	Not signed	Not Signed	Signed in 2000
Regional Actions against Fighting Trafficking	Gabon is among the 24 countries that adopted the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons Gabon jointed the Plan of Action against Trafficking in Person , especially women and children in West and Central African Region Gabon bilateral and regional agreement to combat child trafficking and the ILO Convention number 183 are included the governments' UN Development Assistance Framework 2007-2011	Ghana is among the 24 countries that adopted Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons  The government under the NPECLC worked to build the capacity of government officials and civil society on the issue of child labor, international law, and child protection especially in the cocoa sector	Nigeria is part of the regional project "Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa" that assesses the problem of trafficking in nine African countries. One of the phases of the project was focused on assisting children victims of trafficking. It also included raising awareness and strengthen the local capacity to address the problem

The three selected countries are working with neighboring countries and with one another to develop agreements, workshops, and projects to raise awareness on the issue of child trafficking. Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria work on developing national legislation and practices to eradicate child trafficking and protect victims of trafficking.

Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria have been collaborating with international and nongovernmental organizations in developing measures and practices to end child trafficking. Nigeria is distinguished from Gabon and Ghana as the local Nigerian NGOs have been recognized by a number of studies for their efforts in combating trafficking. However, these countries are categorized as Tier 2 and Tier 2 Watch List by the U. S. State Department for not meeting the minimum standards to combat human trafficking. Ghana and Nigeria have been recognized for making significant progress to meet the minimum standards to combat human trafficking. On the other hand, Gabon has been criticized by the U.S. State Department for not having law that prohibits all forms of human trafficking (U.S. State Department, 2008). Nigeria is the only country among the three that has signed the UN Protocol to Prevent and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, and Children in 2000.

After examining these countries' legislation and their involvement in international instruments and regional instruments and looking at these countries collaboration with international and nongovernmental organizations, the question that comes to mind is do these countries have the political will to enforce existing legislation? Answering this question is difficult as there is no accessible information to know if these countries implement existing legislation on protecting children's rights.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS' RESPONSES TO CHILD TRAFFICKING**

In this chapter, I will give an overview of the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Anti-Slavery International in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria. I will also examine the common challenges these organizations faced in fighting child trafficking in the region and the common recommendations for combating it. However, my observations and recommendations will be presented in Chapter Six.

### **The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**

#### ***Overview***

UNODC is the designated U.N. entity that focuses on the criminality of human trafficking and how to affect change through the criminal justice system. It works on establishing adequate, functional, legal, and institutional frameworks for its mandates through effective implementation of international treaties and the development of domestic legislation. UNODC was established in 1997 by the merger of the United Nations Drug Control Program and the Center for International Crime Prevention. Its mandate is to support member states in their fight against illicit drugs, HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, money laundering, corruption, terrorism, and organized crime (UNODC, nd).

The most notable effort of the UNODC is its role in the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). In 2007, UNODC received a grant from the United Arab Emirates to launch the UN.GIFT. This initiative is managed in

cooperation with the International Labor organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). UN.GIFT promotes the global fight against human trafficking, using the tools provided by the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children. The initiative's aim is to "mobilize state and non-state actors to eradicate human trafficking by reducing both the vulnerability of potential victims and the demand for exploitation in all its forms; ensuring adequate protection and support to those who fall victim; and supporting the efficient prosecution of the criminals involved, while respecting the fundamental human rights of all persons" (UN.GIFT, 2007).<sup>16</sup>

### *Initiatives in the region*

UNODC operates through four regional offices in Africa; the regional office in Eastern Africa, which covers 13<sup>17</sup> countries; the regional office in Egypt, which covers the Middle East and North Africa; the regional office for West and Central Africa, which covers 22 countries; and a regional office for South Africa, which covers 11 countries. UNODC recently signed an agreement with the Libyan government to establish a sub-regional office in Libya to cover four countries<sup>18</sup> in North Africa (UNODC, 1997).

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<sup>16</sup> Quote retrieved from UN.GIFT website. <http://www.ungift.org/ungift/en/about/index.html> accessed January 21st 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

<sup>18</sup> Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria

UNODC targets heads of state, law enforcement, victims/survivors of trafficking, and offenders. Its work consists of raising awareness among policymakers, law enforcement bodies, the judiciary, and civil society.

UNODC follows the three Ps (Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution) framework in fighting trafficking in all regions in the world. Under the prevention segment of this framework of UNODC, UNODC executed the project “Assistance for the Implementation of the ECOWAS<sup>19</sup> Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons”, which was initiated from the Meeting of ECOWAS Heads of States, in December, 2001. The project’s objective was to strengthen the capacity of the ECOWAS’s executive secretariat to implement the ECOWAS Plan of Action. It assessed the existing national legislation and drafted new legislation in response to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. Because of this project, UNODC published a training manual for ECOWAS countries to use as reference material and in training activities (UNODC, 2006).

The project “Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Benin, Nigeria, and Togo” is another project under the prevention segment that aims to improve the level of available information on trafficking in human beings within these countries. The project produced 44 recommendations to strengthen actions against trafficking in these countries directed to different stakeholders, including law enforcement, immigration, judiciary and government officials, embassies, foreign governments, NGOs,

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<sup>19</sup> Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

international organizations, civil society, and regional actors. The main recommendations were to draft and implement legislation that complies with the international legal instruments and to improve the level of information availability and sharing (UNODC, 2006).

A study by Johns Hopkins University examines another prevention project, the Program of Action Against Trafficking in Minors and Young Women from Nigeria to Italy for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation, which was carried out in 2004 by the UNODC Nigeria office and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). The project focuses on establishing appropriate law enforcement and criminal justice responses to the targeted trafficking of minors and young women into Italy for commercial sexual exploitation, creates international cooperation against trafficking, and informs the public about the issue of trafficking (Johns Hopkins University, nd). There is no information about this project on the official UNODC website<sup>20</sup>. None of the websites of the other four regional offices in Africa indicates any projects on human trafficking. There is more information on drug trafficking projects in the region on the organization's website than on human trafficking projects.

UNODC's prevention and protection work focuses on providing training materials tailored for law enforcement, government officials, and those who deal with victims of trafficking through their line of work for all regions in the world. The "Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons" was published in 2006, and updated in 2008. This

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<sup>20</sup> I tried to communicate with the Nigeria country office, but my attempts went unanswered.

toolkit provides recommendations and lessons learned in increasing international cooperation and providing collective approaches to ensure the elimination of existing and future trafficking routes. The training manual contains 19 instruments to overcome the challenges to prevent trafficking in persons, and examines the root causes of trafficking and its demand side (UNODC, 2008).

The organization's prevention and protection framework also includes awareness campaigns of the dangers of trafficking through public service announcements. UNODC has mobilized celebrities from Hollywood and Bollywood<sup>21</sup> to fight trafficking. Hollywood celebrities include actress Emma Thompson, Ashley Judd, Mira Sorvino, Julia Ormond, and singer Ricky Martine. Bollywood celebrities include Amitabh Bachchan, John Abraham, actress Preity Zinta and Kajol Devgan (UNODC, nd).

The campaigns consist of visual and audio announcements targeted at all vulnerable groups and victims of trafficking in all regions of the world. Several audio campaigns aim at informing the public of trafficking women into sexual exploitation. Other campaigns focus on rescuing victims from exploitation on the promises of a new life after rehabilitation or on prosecuting traffickers. The campaigns cite successful rescue stories by law enforcement efforts in China, Italy, India, Nigeria, Peru, and the UK (UNODC, nd). Video campaigns show men, women, and children victims. The campaigns include trafficking in forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and domestic servitude. They also encourage people to report those in exploitative conditions,

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<sup>21</sup> Bollywood is an informal popular term used to refer to the Hindi language film industry in India. Information retrieved from Wikipedia; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bollywood> accessed March 19th, 2009



inform the public about the dangers of trafficking, and expose the deception methods used by traffickers.

The prosecution segment of UNODC's framework is centered on strengthening national criminal justice systems. It is based on UNODC's belief that achieving successful convictions depends on the police and other policymakers having knowledge and capacity to fight human trafficking. UNODC supports countries in expanding the capacity of effective law enforcement and criminal justice institutions. It also helped draft comprehensive legislation in many countries to comply with the international legal obligations to fight trafficking. UNODC regularly conducts training sessions for police, border guards, prosecutors, judges, and NGO staff in many countries, including Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa (UNODC, 1997).

## **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

### ***Overview***

The IOM was first known as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME). The name changed over the years to the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952, to the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) in 1980, and finally to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 1989 (IOM, nd).

IOM works with its partners in the international community on four broad areas of migration management: migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration and forced migration. It promotes international cooperation on migration issues and assists in the search for feasible answers to migration problems. IOM has extended

its scope to human trafficking, considering that trafficking is closely related to migration and smuggling as it involves the movement of people from one area to another. In 2007, the IOM joined with the Global Initiative on Fighting Human Trafficking to become part of the management team of the UN.GIFT (IOM, nd).

### ***Initiatives in the Region***<sup>22</sup>

The IOM has established offices in all regions in the world including four regional offices in Africa. The regional Office for South Africa is in South Africa and covers eight countries<sup>23</sup>; the regional Office of West Africa is in Senegal and covers 14 countries<sup>24</sup>; the regional Office of East Africa is in Kenya and covers eight countries<sup>25</sup>; and the regional Office of North Africa in Egypt, and covers six countries<sup>26</sup> (IOM, nd).

Similar to UNODC, IOM's international framework in fighting trafficking follows the three Ps (Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution). The organization's presence in the African region consists of several projects focused mainly on raising awareness of the public of human trafficking, on providing technical support to national government and NGO partners to address human trafficking, and on providing assistance

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<sup>22</sup> Though the IOM has extensive experience in trafficking, there is limited information on projects conducted in Africa on the organization's publications. However, the Nigeria country office provided information on IOM's activities in Nigeria

<sup>23</sup> Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe

<sup>24</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone

<sup>25</sup> Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda

<sup>26</sup> Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia

to trafficked persons, law enforcement, target victims, and service providers who work at protecting victims of trafficking (IOM, nd).

In Nigeria, the IOM country office reported<sup>27</sup> that the IOM efforts in Nigeria are built on already established activities by other institutions. For example, IOM Nigeria signed a memorandum with the National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons (NAPTIP) to cooperate and build up capacity in these areas:

1. Technical assistance to the NAPTIP to strength their existing logistic and technical service;
2. Port of Entry Assistance services such as Return/Repatriation, Sheltering, Victim Counseling, and Rehabilitation/Re-integration
3. Public Awareness, Education and Training

IOM cooperated with NAPTIP, with support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), by providing technical support to the development of the Health chapter of the National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria, which the Federal Government of Nigeria approved in 2008. The Health chapter provides standard guidelines for providing access to health-care services for victims of trafficking. This policy adopts a comprehensive approach to protect and support trafficked persons by empowering them and supporting their reintegration through rehabilitation programs. The policy include the following activities; reception,

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<sup>27</sup> Personal communication with Queen Chinwe Okaro, Senior Program Coordinator with the IOM Nigeria country office during the period from January-April 2009

identification, sheltering, counseling, family tracing, return/repatriation, integration, empowerment, follow-up/after care and disengagement<sup>28</sup>.

In other areas, IOM Nigeria's direct assistance program included return assistance; family tracing, airport reception, sheltering/temporary accommodation; in-country transportation to final destination; access to counselling services, medical and legal services; access to educational reinsertion, vocational training and income generating activities; and follow- up and monitoring<sup>29</sup>.

There is no information regarding IOM's operation in Gabon but limited information is available about projects in Ghana<sup>30</sup>. In Ghana, the Yeji Trafficked Children Project targets children victims of trafficking for labor exploitation in fishing communities. The project aims at rescuing children engaged in hazardous labor under harsh conditions. It is also aimed at making fisherman in 11 fishing villages around Lake Volta understand the nature of their exploitative actions through engaging fishermen and trafficked children in focus group discussions, using questionnaires, and conducting in-depth interviews (IOM, 2007).

As part of its prevention segment of its framework, IOM published a handbook for those dealing with victims through their line of work, detailing measures to protect victims from offenders before and after trial. The handbook is also concerned with the

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<sup>28</sup> Personal communication with Queen Chinwe Okaro, Senior Program Coordinator with the IOM Nigeria country office during the period from January to April 2009

<sup>29</sup> Personal communication with Queen Chinwe Okaro, Senior Program Coordinator with the IOM Nigeria country office during the period from January to April 2009

<sup>30</sup> Information collected from IOM publications

safety of people assisting victims. In addition, The IOM's prevention work includes public visual announcements, but though IOM is engaged in a number of counter-trafficking campaigns; there is only one relevant video on the organization's website. The campaign warns of the dangers of trafficking and is directed at African women in vulnerable groups who could be lured into trafficking.

## **Anti-Slavery International**

### ***Overview***

Anti-Slavery International, which was formed in 1839, is the world's oldest international human rights organization and works exclusively against slavery and related abuses. Currently its main areas of work include forced and bonded labor, child labor, human trafficking, and traditional slavery. The organization focuses on ending slavery; it works on research in the issue of slavery, collecting information on cases of slavery, urges effective enforcement of existing laws and adopting of laws where they do not exist; and campaigns for the elimination of forms of slavery. In its anti-trafficking efforts, the organization is mainly focused on forced labor and domestic servitude and not on the other forms of exploitation, which violate human rights.

Anti-Slavery International adopts a framework in fighting trafficking similar to the frameworks the UNODC and IOM adopts. Anti-Slavery International defines trafficking as modern day slavery along with forced labor, early and forced marriage, and the worst form of child labor. Its work is divided between implementing joint-projects and advocacy. Anti-Slavery International works with governments, intergovernmental agencies, and local organizations in countries with a history of slavery to develop and implement measures to end slavery practices. It advocates awareness and supports

research to end slavery and it is the only charity in the UK working exclusively on slavery and related abuses (Anti-Slavery International , 2007).

### ***Initiatives in the Region***

Anti-Slavery International does not have offices outside the UK, but builds partnerships with local organizations in Africa, South Asia, East Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Gulf. In Africa , Anti-Slavery International has partnerships with Enfants Solidaires d’Afrique et du Monde (ESAM) Benin; Groupe de Recherche - Action pour un Développement Endogène de la Femme Rural du Burkina (GRADE), Burkina Faso; Action Contre L’Exploitation des Enfants et des Femmes (ACEEF), Guinea; COCTE/Vidomegon, Gabon; Association pour la Lutte contre le Travail des Enfants au Niger (ALTEN); Organisation pour la Prevention du Travail des Enfants au Niger (OPTEN), Niger; WAO Afrique, Togo; and the African Centre for Human Development, Ghana. Detailed information on the activities of Anti-Slavery International in collaboration with these organizations is very limited.

The organization has done extensive work on eliminating trafficking in the UK compared to other countries. However, in comparison to information of Anti-Slavery International projects in other regions of the world, information of their projects in Africa is very limited.

Anti-Slavery International initiated a sub-regional project to set up an NGOs network in five West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, and Togo) and one from Central Africa (Gabon) to work together on eliminating the worst forms of child labor and exploitative work conditions. The project’s aims are to estimate the size

of the child labor market, inform the public of the negative impact of child labor, and build NGO capacity for advocacy surrounding the issues of child labor (Anti-Slavery International, 2003).

As part of its prevention and protection segment of its framework, the Anti-Slavery International conducted a study under the title of “The Cocoa Industry in West Africa: a History of Exploitation”. The study looks into child exploitation in the cocoa industry, the influential role of the media and UK’s consumer-influencing companies, and the response of the government of Côte d’Ivoire in adopting and implementing measures to protect children from exploitation. The study traced child exploitation in the industry through the entire supply chain of cocoa powder from the plantations to the foreign companies. It stressed the magnitude of the consumers’ role in protecting children from exploitation (Anti-Slavery International, 2004). An extensive study of the role of the public has not been conducted by either the IOM or UNODC, though both stress the need for public involvement to help end child exploitation.

The Anti-Slavery International published a training kit titled “Protocol for Identification and Assistance to Trafficked Persons and Training Kit” for those dealing with victims through their line of work, detailing measures to build relationships and communication with victims. The training kit is also concerned with training law enforcement bodies on gathering and updating information on trafficking (Anti-Slavery International, 2005). Another study conducted by the Anti-Slavery International titled “Human Traffic, Human Rights: Redefining Victim Protection” stressed the importance of placing victim protection at the core of governments’ anti-trafficking policies, in addition to providing victims residency permits (three months) and providing them with

housing, medical and psychological and material assistance (Anti-Slavery International, 2002).

The Anti-Slavery International also published a study titled “International Action against Child Labor: Guide to Monitoring and Complaints Procedures” that advocates for the adoption and use of international instruments on children’s rights and stresses the importance of informing the public of existing child labor laws (Anti-Slavery International, 2002).

After researching the history and documents of the Anti-Slavery International, I noted that their awareness campaigns are different from the IOM and UNODC’s campaigns in that they rely on educational materials such as documentaries and studies that are given to local NGOs during the implementation of projects (Anti-Slavery International, nd). On the other hand, IOM and UNODC raise awareness through radio and/or TV spots.

## **Challenges**

Three organizations echoed the same challenges in curbing trafficking in all regions of the world. In Africa, UNODC, IOM, and Anti-Slavery International have pinpointed several challenges that undermine efforts to fight trafficking. These challenges include the lack of the following: political will by countries; expertise and specialization within criminal justice agencies and the courts; coordination and collaboration to curb trafficking; adequate funds to hire personnel and purchase of equipment to monitor borders; facilities for victims of trafficking; and legislation on human trafficking.



However, the main challenge that has emerged in numerous studies by the three organizations is the lack of information on victims, traffickers, and trafficking patterns. In 2008, UN.GIFT attributed the limited understanding of the magnitude of human-trafficking crimes in the world to the dearth of quantitative information. Even basic criminal justice data on trafficking in persons (TIP) offences is not publicly available for many countries and regions of the world, making compilation of accurate statistics on human trafficking elusive and unreliable at any level (UN.GIFT, 2008). In order to develop counter-trafficking interventions, further research is needed in areas to tailor a set of practices and recommendations for each country and for each region.

Another challenge is the poor coordination and collaboration between NGOs and government agencies, which is counter-productive and undermines any attempt to fight the issue of trafficking. It creates duplicate efforts in areas instead of focusing on areas that need more effort and fosters individualist approaches, which counteract approaches and strategic directions taken by other organizations or other agencies in fighting the problem. This lack of coordination and collaboration among organizations and actors displaces trafficking from one area to another where traffickers can establish new routes and networks (Anti-Slavery International, 2005; IOM, 2005; UNODC, 2006).

Moreover, inadequate funds to hire personnel and purchase border-monitoring equipment are a challenge that undermines government authority. UNODC says that in Nigeria, “Officers report being threatened by traffickers and reported a lack of information coming from the countries, which had deported Nigerians. There is a lack of networking among agencies” (UNODC, 2006, p. 108). The limited resources also contribute to the failure to collaborate among law enforcement agencies, which makes

some of them unaware of relevant legislation regarding new laws on human trafficking. In addition, the limited resources constrained these law enforcement agencies from hiring specialists to train their staff on identifying human trafficking victims, and knowing the relevant legislation and its enforcement (IOM, 2006 ; UNODC, 2006 ; Anti-Slavery International, 2002).

Poor facilities for victims of trafficking such as shelters and service centers are a challenge to all involved in working with them. The police and immigration authorities cannot provide adequate care for victims while they are still in custody. Governments and NGOs in some countries have inadequate shelter and rehabilitation facilities making them unable to provide safe housing and protection to victims (Anti-Slavery International, 2005; IOM, 2007; UNODC, 2006).

There are also institutional challenges. The absence of specific trafficking legislation places victims in a vulnerable position. Offenders of serious trafficking acts will be prosecuted under current penal and labor codes, which do not provide support to victims during and after trial and do not compensate victims for damages or lost wages. In some countries, trafficking legislation exists but there is little political will for governments to enforce these laws (Anti-Slavery International, 2002; IOM, 2007; IOM, 2005 ; UNODC, 2006).

Families' denial that trafficking exists has also been considered as a major challenge facing the efforts to combat human trafficking. In addition, victims sometimes have the false perception that the abuse they faced is because of their "bad luck" or

because of their personal failure to protect themselves (UNODC, 2006; Anti-Slavery International, 2002 ; IOM, 2005; UNICEF, 2005).

### **Recommendations**

The three organizations set several recommendations directed to governments, law enforcement agencies, criminal justice institutes, NGOs, and the public in general. These recommendations are a product of various projects and efforts by organizations in different regions in the world in curbing trafficking. UNODC, IOM, and Anti-Slavery International have specific recommendations tailored to regions, in addition, to universal recommendations for all regions in the world. Out of the three selected countries, Nigeria has had the most attention by these organizations because it was found that large numbers of the victims involved in trafficking of prostitutes are Nigerians (Anti-Slavery International, 2005; IOM, 2006; UNODC, 2006).

Common recommendations made by these organizations include: improve data collection, create systematic databases, increase level of knowledge, coordinate and collaborate between various stakeholders, adopt and implement legislation on trafficking, ensure prosecution of traffickers, allocate resources and manpower to fighting trafficking, and implement local development projects to strengthen young people's roots in their communities.

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC, stress the need for further studies on trafficking in the region. At a more general level, they want to improve the level of knowledge of trafficking and its causes; the process, in which children are recruited, transported and exploited; and of the impact of trafficking on various stakeholders. These

three organizations urged the need for extensive documentation and accurate data gathering through research, registration, and information sharing with local, NGOs, and neighboring countries. They also urged governments to collaborate to create and maintain a systematic database on trafficking to avoid duplicate information gathering (IOM, 2005; UNODC, 2006; UNODC, 2006; Anti-Slavery International, 2002; Anti-Slavery International, 2005).

Strengthening the legal commitment and political will at the national and international level was recommended for governments. It was noted in studies that in some countries upgraded anti-trafficking legislation was in place yet was not enforced due to the limited political will to undertake this challenge. Countries were urged to incorporate the provisions of the UN Trafficking Protocol into their national counter trafficking legislation and implement them. In addition, governments should ensure that traffickers do not go unpunished for their crimes. The training of law enforcement officers, immigration officers, criminal justice personnel and ensuring they become trainers themselves to train incoming personnel is a common recommendation among these three organizations (UNICEF, 2005; UNODC, 2006; UNODC, 2006; Anti-Slavery International, 2002).

Other recommendations were made on the need to establish centers and shelters for victims of trafficking, and to purchase adequate equipment and hire enough personnel to monitor borders and stop trafficking. In addition, the Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and the UNODC stress the need for local development projects in areas to strengthen young people's roots in their communities through projects that will create opportunities for young people to become owners of their own economic activities. These local

development projects will limit the possibility of young people to fall under false promises of better economic opportunities despite the risks involved (Anti-Slavery International, 2005 ; IOM, 2007; UNODC, 2006).

## **Conclusion**

Each one of these organizations, UNODC, IOM, and Anti-Slavery International has extensive experience in fighting against trafficking. However, each organization approaches the issue in its own way.

As previously illustrated, UNODC approaches human trafficking mainly from a legal perspective. It supports countries' efforts to revise and upgrade their legislative system to comply with the international legal obligations. It also promotes cooperation between countries' law enforcement agencies in collection and disseminating information and enforcement of anti-trafficking legislation.

However, IOM examines migration of the people from a more humanitarian perspective. As shown in its projects in Nigeria, its efforts are mainly focused in supporting the active NGOs in this field and supporting national activities in protecting and reintegrating victims. It has developed extensive interventions that are directed towards supporting and reintegrating victims back in their communities through counseling and training.

The Anti-Slavery International approach to trafficking stems from its historical human-rights based approach. However, its approach is to intervene through joint projects with local NGOs. Moreover, upon examining its projects, I noticed that they mainly target workers who are or may be exposed to trafficking victims. Their

publications are geared towards law enforcement personnel and other interested professionals to increase their ability to identify and interact with trafficking victims.

Despite the differences, these organizations work at curbing trafficking within a similar framework of prevention, protection, and prosecution through projects implemented in different regions of the world. Their activities vary in different regions such as Europe, Asia, and Latin America, where they have conducted more extensive research than in the African region.

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC's efforts are based on projects implemented in the region that vary in their target groups. However, all three organizations have projects and studies focused on drawing out the challenges and coming up with recommendations that could help end trafficking. Even though each organization approached the issue from a different perspective, they all have pinned down similar challenges and recommendations about those involved in trafficking. The challenges consist of lack of the following: expertise and specialization within criminal justice personnel; coordination and collaboration among agencies; adequate resources and personnel to monitor borders, facilities for victims of trafficking; and legislation on human trafficking (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Comparison of the three organizations' efforts**

Organizations	UNODC	IOM	Anti-Slavery International
Approach	Approaches human trafficking mainly from a legal perspective	Approaches human trafficking from a more humanitarian perspective	Approaches trafficking stems from its historical human-rights bases approach
Presences in the Region	4 regional offices in Africa; Eastern Africa (13 countries), West and Central Africa (22 countries), South Africa (11 countries) and Sub-regional office (4 countries)	4 regional offices in Africa: East Africa (8 countries) ,West Africa (14 countries), South Africa (8 countries) and North Africa (6 countries)	Does not have offices outside the UK, but builds partnerships with local organizations in Africa
Framework	Prevention ,Protection & prosecution	Prevention ,Protection & prosecution	Prevention ,Protection & prosecution
Projects' focuses	<p>Raising awareness among policymakers, law enforcement bodies, the judiciary and civil society</p> <p>Strengthen national criminal justice system</p> <p>Assist develop effective law enforcement &amp; criminal justice institutions</p> <p>Help draft comprehensive legislation in many countries</p> <p>Conducted training sessions for police, border guards, prosecutors, judges, &amp; NGOs staff in many countries</p>	<p>Raising awareness in the general public of human trafficking</p> <p>Technical support to national governments &amp; NGO partners</p> <p>Assistance to victims, law enforcement, service providers</p> <p>Conducted training sessions for NGOs staff</p>	<p>Urges effective enforcement of existing laws &amp; adopting of laws where they do not exist</p> <p>Raising awareness in the general public of human trafficking</p> <p>Technical support to law enforcement bodies</p> <p>Assistance to victims, law enforcement, service providers</p> <p>Conducted training sessions for NGOs staff</p>
Target groups	Heads of states, law enforcement, victims/survivors of trafficking, and offenders.	Governments, intergovernmental agencies & local organizations. Those who come in contact with trafficked people through their everyday work	Governments, intergovernmental agencies & local organizations. Those who come in contact with trafficked people through their everyday work
Area of focus	All forms of trafficking, however, their studies does not include sale of organs and child soldiers	All forms of trafficking, however, their studies does not include sale of organs and child soldiers	Focuses on forced labor , child pornography` , sale of child & domestic servitude
Accessibility of information	Reports and campaigns are accessible to the public, however, information on organization's projects in the three selected country is not accessible	Reports and Campaigns are accessible to the public, however, detailed information on organization's projects in the three selected country is not accessible	Reports are accessible to the public, however, documentary and organization's projects is not accessible to the public

The three organizations set several recommendations directed to governments, law enforcement agencies, criminal justice institutes, NGOs and the public in general. Common recommendations made by these organizations include: improve data collection, create systematic databases, increase level of knowledge, coordinate and collaborate between various stakeholders, adopt and implement legislation on trafficking, ensure prosecution of traffickers, allocate resources and manpower to fighting trafficking, and implement local development projects to strengthen young people's roots in their communities.



## **CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In this section, I will discuss weaknesses that were identified as a result of the research and then I will proceed to present the lessons learned from this study that could be transferred to other regions. I will conclude the section by introducing the suggested areas of future research.

### **Weaknesses**

I am going to assess the weaknesses of these organizations according to how they implemented their projects and what issues were the focus of their interventions (see table 8)

Examining the projects the Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC conducted in the region, I noted that the time frame of studies was short, the size of the samples examined were small, and there are lack of studies on evaluating these organizations projects' impact on trafficking. My observations that I have reached after examining these three organizations' projects and publication are similar to observations made by a report (Data and Research on Human Trafficking: A Global Survey 2005) published by the IOM on existing efforts on human trafficking.

**Table 8: Comparison of the weaknesses of the three international organizations**

<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>UNODC</b>	<b>IOM</b>	<b>Ant-Slavery International</b>
Time frame of studies short	less than 6 months	No information	Less than a year
The size of the samples examined were small	Example: UNODC's study in Nigeria interviewed 19 children from the nine states	Example: IOM study in Ghana examined to study hazardous children labor focused only on 11 fishing villages	Example: In the study "Human traffic, human rights: redefining victim protection" only 30 cases were interviewed from 10 countries.
Limited studies on evaluating organization's projects' impact on trafficking	No information on the evaluation of the projects were accessible online	No information on the evaluation of the projects were accessible online	No information on the evaluation of the projects were accessible online
Limited information about destination countries	No information on destination countries were accessible online	No information on destination countries were accessible online	No information on destination countries were accessible online

***The time frame of studies was short***

These organizations efforts are project-oriented and the period of these projects in the region is short. For example, UNODC's project "Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Benin, Nigeria, and Togo" was conducted in November 2003 and concluded in March 2004. The project aimed to assess the issue of trafficking in three countries Benin, Nigeria, and Togo through conducting interviews with stakeholders.

The project consisted of two weeks training sessions for researchers and only two weeks to conduct interviews with all the stakeholders throughout the whole country. This short period did not allow the researchers to reschedule appointments with victims that could not meet during the first attempt. UNODC noted that "...time constraints limited the amount of work that the research teams were able to conduct" (UNODC, 2006, p. 40).

The short periods do not allow researchers to invest more time in their interactions with the victims and their families. Relationships with the victims require trust building to obtain information and insights regarding this invisible population.

***The size of the samples examined were small***

The sample used in the studies is considered too small to generate any reliable conclusions. For example, UNODC's study in Nigeria (Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Benin, Nigeria, and Togo) interviewed 19 (3 males and 16 girls) children from the nine states. This sample may not be adequate to provide an accurate estimate of victims of trafficking in Nigeria.

***There are lacks of studies on evaluating these organizations projects' impact on trafficking***

Though these organizations disseminate information regarding their projects, yet there is no information regarding the achieved results of these interventions in comparison to their planned outcomes. The actual impact may be different from what was originally planned. It is understandable that due to the hidden nature of trafficking and its victims, it may be extra challenging to measure the effectiveness of projects yet, it is vital that their impacts should be measured to increase the effectiveness of the future interventions.

The importance to follow up on a project contributes to creating better projects that address all the aspects of a specific problem. These three organizations have focused on victim protection and assisting victims through service centers and shelters. However, the three organizations did not look into the well-being of the victims by looking into their lives after they return to their home countries. Anti-Slavery International stresses the importance of supporting victims in their home countries, but it does not have projects to assist victims after six month or one year after their return to their origin country.

***There is limited information about destination countries***

It was also noted that destination countries did not get as much attention in the studies as the origin or the transit countries. The available information on trafficking produced by the three organizations has no information on destination countries. For

example, three studies by the Anti-Slavery International<sup>31</sup>, IOM,<sup>32</sup> and UNODC<sup>33</sup> examined the factors of trafficking of Nigerians, but there was no information on the destination country.

It is important to have studies that look into the three points of trafficking and the factors that make people move to another country. In addition, we would benefit from examining the transit countries to identify the factors that make them a transit point, and from examining the destination countries to identify the factors that create an environment for trafficking to exist. It is important to obtain a comprehensive perspective about the conditions in the three points of the triangle of trafficking, which would help understand trafficking routes and help create better cooperation among countries in controlling these routes that help in the traffic of people.

Not only the way these projects were implemented had its weakness, but also the issue that was the focus of their interventions was limited. The three organizations' activities mainly focused only on three forms of child exploitation: sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and child labor. The IOM and UNODC activities included sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced labor. However, the Anti-Slavery International mainly focuses on forced labor in their activities. Other forms of exploitation need research such as the sale of organs and child soldiers.

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<sup>31</sup> Human traffic, human rights: redefining victim protection (2002)

<sup>32</sup> Migration, Human Smuggling and Trafficking from Nigeria to Europe (2006)

<sup>33</sup> Measures to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in Benin, Nigeria and Togo (2006)

Moreover, these three organizations only focus on cross-border trafficking even though they do recognize the existence of internal trafficking. There are no studies conducted by these three organizations on the issue of internal trafficking or the factors that lead to trafficking within one country.

### **Lessons Learned**

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC activities were focused on prevention, protection and prosecution which include all areas needed to be addressed in fighting trafficking. Even though these three organizations approached the issue of trafficking differently, they followed a similar framework in tackling the issue of trafficking.

At the conclusion of this research, I present the following issues that emerged as lessons learned from my study of the role of the three selected international organizations in West and Central Africa.

The lessons learned are that to increase the effectiveness of the global fight against child trafficking, it is important to:

1. adopt and enforce legislation on trafficking;
2. target all stakeholders and raise their awareness;
3. prosecute offenders and protect victims of trafficking;
4. create a central database on trafficking in persons;
5. strengthen the level of collaboration among government agencies, local organizations, and governments;

### **Importance of adopting legislation on trafficking**

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC through their publications have stressed the importance of implementing and adopting the UN Protocol as the first step in curbing trafficking. These organizations also urge countries to ratify existing legislation to comply with international instruments that provide guidelines for countries to follow in fighting trafficking. These three organizations have repeatedly mentioned in their publications the main international instruments that protect the rights of children and people from being subject to exploitation. Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC in their publications also stressed the importance of informing people of their rights and stressed through their projects the importance of informing the public of existing legislation that would protect people's rights.

### **Importance of targeting all stakeholders and raising awareness**

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC have included all stakeholders in their projects. For example, The Anti-Slavery International in its project, "Action against Child labor: Guide to monitoring and complaints procedures" delivered the message to all the stakeholders on the importance of adopting legislation that protected children's rights and informing the stakeholders of the dangers of employing children in hazardous conditions. The IOM also targeted all stakeholders through their projects such as the "Yeji Trafficked Children Project", which the IOM focused on delivering the message to the stakeholders of the nature of exploiting children through engaging them in hazardous labor conditions. UNODC also through a number of their publications focused on delivering the message to all stakeholders. UNODC has a larger share of campaigns compared to Anti-Slavery International and IOM and has been successful in targeting all

groups of people through their visual and audio campaigns. These campaigns were also directed to all those who work with victims through their line of work or any person who might encounter or identify victims/vulnerable of trafficking. On the other hand, Anti-Slavery International's campaigns made documentary videos available to the public upon purchase.

### **Importance of prosecuting offenders and protecting victims of trafficking**

The three organizations focused on the importance of adopting and enforcing legislation that protects vulnerable people from being trafficked. Anti-Slavery International and UNODC focused on training law enforcement bodies and judiciary on the importance of recognizing the available international instruments and the importance of prosecuting offenders. These two organizations focused on providing guidelines and tools for law enforcement bodies to identify victims of trafficking. Anti-Slavery International and UNODC's publications highlighted several techniques for law enforcement to adopt when conducting interview with victims of trafficking. These techniques varied from building trust to knowing the questions to be asked during interviews. On the other hand, the IOM focused on providing guidelines to local organizations' staff that work with victims of trafficking on methods to protect themselves and victims from being subject to assault by offenders. The three organizations were keen on the physical safety of victims of traffickers and the psychological well being of victims in their countries of origin.

### **Importance of creating a central database on trafficking in persons**

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC stressed the importance of collecting data on trafficking in persons. There have been several efforts in creating a



central database on trafficking in persons such as the 2004 data comparison project of UNESCO Bangkok that have documented global estimates on human trafficking cases reported by governments and international organizations. However, the UN.GIFT notes that these “regional or global estimates are frequently based on aggregating smaller-scale estimates that are themselves based on unsound methods” (UN.GIFT, 2008, p. 3). The three organizations state that the majority of countries lacked coordination in collecting data. This is because data gathering among national agencies is usually geared toward their own administrative purposes and not for general statistical purposes. It is important to create a central database that supports designing effective policies in fighting trafficking. In addition, it will help identify major information gaps in human trafficking research.

### **Importance of collaborating among government agencies, local organizations, and governments**

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC have stressed through their interventions the importance of collaboration among government institutes, local organizations, and countries to share information regarding the issue of trafficking. In addition, the Anti-Slavery International and IOM recommend collaboration among local organizations in different countries through the development of shelters/centers that could follow up on victims after their return to countries. Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC stress the importance of governments’ collaboration in implementing international instruments that create a common ground among countries to identify victims of trafficking and offenders.

## **Future Research Areas**

Although I embarked on this research with the intent to answer my research questions to what extent is child trafficking a domestic problem in African Region and in which region is it a significant challenge, the questions remain unanswered.

Until the present day, researchers are still having difficulty estimating the exact number of trafficked children. This challenge is not exclusive to Africa but it faces researchers focusing on other regions due to the clandestine nature of the crime, the hidden populations of victims and traffickers, and the lack of accurate data on trafficking in persons.

Another issue I was interested to know more about was whether these organizations' efforts were successful in bringing governments to implement international instruments that protect children's rights. In Chapter Four, I looked into the existing legislation on children's rights in Gabon, Ghana, and Nigeria to identify these governments' legislation regarding child trafficking. There were several efforts by these governments to create a sound environment for children. However, there was no information from either the three governments or the three organizations if UNODC, IOM, and Anti-Slavery International's efforts were successful in bringing governments to implement international instruments.

We also need to study the level of collaboration among governments, local agencies, NGOs, and international organizations to identify the most collaborative actors. This would be an important study to develop lessons learned and recommendations to enhance global and regional collaboration in fighting child trafficking.

Anti-Slavery International, IOM, and UNODC stressed the importance of implementing and adopting international instruments that protect children's rights. However, these organizations' publications do not mention the initiatives taken by these governments in adopting international instruments regarding children's rights or human trafficking as a result of these organizations' efforts.

In conclusion, there are visible efforts by the global community in putting an end to human trafficking. However, these efforts are hindered by a number of issues that could be avoided through adopting and implementing legislation on trafficking, raising awareness among all stakeholders, prosecuting offenders, creating a central database on trafficking in persons, and strengthening the level of collaboration among government agencies, local organizations, and governments.

These global efforts are important to help put an end to trafficking. However, the issue of trafficking is much too complicated to solve it with just enforcing the identified lessons learned. There is a need to address the root causes that make these children vulnerable to human trafficking crimes. In Chapter Three, I mentioned several factors that make children vulnerable to trafficking such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, traditional practices, armed conflict, and limited institutional capacity. The root causes are also addressed globally through the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which promote an end to poverty and hunger, combating HIV/AIDS, universal education, gender equality, maternal health, environmental sustainability, and global partnership. I strongly believe that human trafficking should be addressed by a comprehensive response and not get distracted by developing fragmented efforts.

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