

ECPAT International

Special consultative status

Executive Director: Ms. Dorothy Rozga Address: 328/1 Phayathai Road, Ratchathewi,

Bangkok 10400, Thailand Phone: +66 2 215 3388 Email: info@ecpat.org Website: www.ecpat.org

ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations working for the eradication of all forms of sexual exploitation of children. For the past 26 years, ECPAT has acted as the international watchdog, monitoring States' response to sexual exploitation of children, and advocating for robust international measures to protect children from sexual exploitation. ECPAT International currently has 95 network members operating in 86 countries.



Stepping Stones International

Private Bag 00421

Gaborone Botswana

Phone: +267 573 9858 Fax: +267 573 9898

Website: www.steppingstonesintl.org

Stepping Stones International (SSI) is a nonprofit organization empowering orphaned and vulnerable youth, their families and communities. SSI assists them in unlocking their potential and creating realizable opportunities. The youth realize their strengths through SSI's services. SSI embraces four services, namely, youth empowerment, family enrichment, strengthening youth service providers and advocacy. The programs include literacy, life skills, leadership skills, advocacy to end gender based violence, counselling, child protection and financial literacy.

Submission Child Sexual Exploitation in Botswana 28 June 2017

for the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in Botswana

to the **Human Rights Council** 29th Session (January 2018) UPR third cycle 2017 - 2021

Justification for submission

- 1. This submission is the first by ECPAT International concerning Child Sexual Exploitation¹ (CSE) in the Republic of Botswana.
- 2. Although the Government of Botswana (GoB) ratified the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC) in 2003, it has not submitted an initial report. This lack of attention to a serious infringement on children's rights warrants a submission on the topic. This submission reviews the present state of CSE nationally, reviews the efforts made by the GoB in addressing CSE since the country's last UPR review period and provides recommendations aimed at enhancing elimination efforts.
- 3. The UPR 1st and 2nd Cycles did not focus on the elimination of CSE in Botswana, and combatting CSE did not feature prominently among the recommendations the reviewing Countries proffered.
- 4. However, without addressing CSE directly, several countries referenced the issue of sexual violence, which inevitably includes violence perpetrated against children. Both Djibouti and France called on the GoB to combat and eliminate domestic and sexual violence, as well as gender-based discrimination in general.²

Methodology and scope

- 5. ECPAT conducted desk research and relied on relevant reports produced by the partner organisation in the country
- 6. The scope of this submission is limited to CSE and its different manifestations including the exploitation of children in prostitution,³ online child sexual exploitation (OCSE), 'child pornography',⁴ child trafficking for sexual purposes, the sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism⁵ (SECTT), and child marriage.

CSE in Botswana

- 7. With a population of approximately 2.3 million people, the UNDP designates Botswana as a "medium development country". Despite making significant progress on poverty elimination by the end of 2015, "inequality remains a major concern" in Botswana, particularly "between urban and rural areas, and especially in remote and hard to reach areas in the Western and Northern parts of the country".
- 8. According to several studies, one of the main reasons for the increased incidence of CSE in Botswana is poverty, along with unemployment and power dynamics.⁸

- 9. Botswana is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking and trafficking appears to be the most significant manifestation of CSE in Botswana. Most vulnerable are the poor, unemployed and children.
- 10. Unfortunately, numbers on CSE victims are difficult to isolate because no comprehensive study has occurred yet. Although boys are included, girls are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked for prostitution purposes along the highway system.
- 11. According to a two-year study conducted by the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), approximately one in four children in Africa experience some form or sexual violence in their lifetime.⁹
- 12. In Botswana specifically, Childline Botswana reports that the GoB largely ignores CSE saying that CSE is "rampant", particularly in northern regions. ¹⁰ For example, second only to neglect, sexual abuse is one of the most commonly addressed issues among the 611 total calls to Childline Botswana's Crisis Line in 2015. ¹¹
- 13. Nevertheless, despite a few numbers available on the prevalence of CSE, "there is a dearth of hard data establishing its incidence". ¹²
- 14. There are many reasons for underreporting, but the primary reason addressed by scholars, and pertaining to Botswana, concerns the role the abuser plays in the victim's life and the unwillingness of the victim to 'turn' against someone important to the family. ¹³
- 15. Concerning 'child pornography', again there is a lack of research on prevalence, use, and circulation. In response to prompting by Interpol though, the Botswana Police noted the rising numbers of social media accounts circulating abuse materials and committed to addressing the issue.¹⁴
- 16. Regarding SECTT, there is again no data however, ECPAT International and the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children launched a Sub-Saharan Study on SECTT in November 2016 as part of the Global Study on SECTT and addressed two of Botswana's prominent neighbours, South Africa and Zambia.¹⁵
- 17. The report states that "tourism in Africa has more than tripled in the last 20 years".
 Consequently, ECPAT International found that "increases in travel and tourism worldwide have led to a vastly expanded and diversified tourism infrastructure, multiplying the opportunities and venues available to offenders." This was particularly true for Sub-Saharan Africa; "where many countries have not . . . been known to be prime tourist destinations but which are now experiencing increased numbers of tourists and travellers, resulting in greater vulnerability of African children".

 17

18. Concerning child marriage, again no data is available. As explained by Ditshwanelo, a Botswana-based human rights NGO, although the Children's Act of 2009 states that no person under 18 years may marry, "under customary law a child can be married off below 18 and girls can be forced into marrying someone against their will". And the majority of people from Botswana rely on traditional structures and do not place confidence in centralized legal systems. 20

Recommendations:

- Commission a comprehensive research to study CSE numbers to determine the extent of the problem, and to identify target areas, vulnerable groups, and areas for improvement;
- Submit an initial report for the CRC Committee on the implementation of the OPSC;
- Prioritise an awareness raising campaign to educate families on the criminality and dangers of sexual abuse and exploitation; and
- Establish and fund a nationwide hotline service, sufficiently staffed and trained, 24 hours available, with a broadly published, toll-free number.

Legislative framework

- 19. Although it provides protections for basic human rights, the Constitution of Botswana does not make explicit references to child rights.²¹ Furthermore, the Constitution lacks the use of "'child' and 'woman' specific language" in relation to equal protection before the law.²² Chapter II of the Constitution does however, reference children as they relate to requiring consent from a parent or guardian (or court order) to detain children or require participation in religious instruction.²³
- 20. The most relevant legislation for CSE elimination is The Children's Act of 2009, which guarantees "every child" the right to be free from sexual abuse, exploitation, prostitution and pornography.²⁴
- 21. Additionally, the Act criminalises the failure to report exploitation and calls on the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs to enact programs preventing CSE.²⁵ Finally, the Act specifically addresses the process for protecting children via protective orders,²⁶ rehabilitating abused children,²⁷ registering perpetrators of abuse,²⁸ exposing children to pornography,²⁹ and preventing the abduction and trafficking of children.³⁰
- 22. Both the Penal Code, as well as the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, also prohibit sexual exploitation and, in particular, child trafficking.³¹ However, there is no clear definition of 'child prostitution' in line with article 2 of the OPSC.
- 23. The Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2014 further criminalises trafficking of children, and even includes provisions on identification, reporting, victims' rights, and a provision

- mandating the creation of an expert-comprised Human Trafficking (Prohibition) Committee to make recommendations on policy implementation, strategies, etc.³²
- 24. Botswana has legislation that prohibits exposing children to pornographic images', prohibits using children to make pornographic material, criminalises possession, as well as computer-facilitated offenses, and addresses broad 'data-retention' policies³³ however, the legislation does not comply fully with the OPSC.³⁴
- 25. Botswana's legislation does not currently require Internet Service Providers (ISP) to gather and report suspected abuse materials to relevant law enforcement agencies unless an identified user is currently under active investigation.³⁵
- 26. In the framework of a study conducted by the NGO Stepping Stones International to analyse the preparedness of key government ministries providing services to child survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation, results have shown low levels of access to, comprehension, knowledge and application of relevant national legislation among respondents.³⁶

Recommendations:

- Amend legislation:
- * To provide a legal definition of exploitation of children in prostitution (or 'child prostitution') aligned with article 2 OPSC;
- * To mandate that ISPs track, monitor and report on both content and non-content data³⁷ concerning child pornography; and
- * To align national legislation with article 3 of the OPSC by prohibiting the production, distribution, dissemination, importation, exportation, offer, sale, or possession of child pornography.
- Establish a group of legal, child protection and service delivery experts to create simplified versions of the Penal Code and the Children's Act of 2009 for government service providers.³⁸

National and regional policies addressing CSE

27. Starting in 2010, the GoB adopted a six-year National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children to facilitate the welfare and protection of vulnerable children. However, despite some progress, UNICEF found that the Plan lacked a "detailed guideline" for a consistent "mode of operation", lacked a "budget matching the guidelines", did not harmonise properly to facilitate good practices, and lacked "consequences" for not following the guidelines.³⁹

- 28. Botswana is also one of 15 South African nations taking part in the Southern African Development Community's 10 Year SADC Strategic Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2009-2019).⁴⁰
- 29. Recognizing trafficking as a "public security concern", the SADC Plan mobilises domestic leaders to implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, and its supplemental Protocols, through domestic legislation, trains law enforcement officers and other key stakeholders, strengthens the capacity of members to respond to trafficking, and engages in awareness raising campaigns.⁴¹
- 30. In 2014, as part of the midterm review, the SADC commissioned research on the nature, extent and impact of human trafficking in the region. The research found "significant data gaps on trafficking in persons". ⁴² And although "it was generally acknowledged that women and girls are the most vulnerable groups to trafficking in persons; poverty, unemployment and lack of income-generating opportunities [were] the significant push factors driving the crime in the region". ⁴³

Recommendations:

- Prioritise implementing a new National Action Plan to address the gaps articulated by UNICEF;
- Offer or subsidise tailored recovery and reintegration services for CSE victims; and
- Strengthen and utilise the existing national child protection committees at all levels.⁴⁴

Child and youth participation

- 31. Emerging from Part VI, 34(1) of the Children's Act of 2009, the GoB established the National Children's Consultative Forum (NCCF) wherein each of Botswana's 16 districts choose 10 children to represent and advocate for children's issues at the national level. Among its functions, the National Children's Consultative Forum collaborates with the National Children's Council in order to advocate for a child-centred approach to national legislation, policies and strategies. UNICEF-Botswana praised the move for promoting the inclusion of children into the consultative process, particularly as it pertains to developing the national vision. 47
- 32. Additionally, UNICEF-Botswana works with local broadcasters to implement the annual "Children's Month of Broadcasting" in March. In 2017, the theme was "Adopt zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation; your voice counts", where broadcasters not only geared programming toward children, but incorporated children's voices into the actual programming and encouraged participation in speaking out against exploitation.⁴⁸
- 33. However, despite these enormous efforts, practical, cultural considerations weigh heavily on a child's ability to participate and voice abuse. As reported by Ditshwanelo, "children

in Botswana are not viewed as 'rights-holders'". In fact, "children are expected to obey their parents and other adults without question and are actually not allowed to participate in community decision-making. Consequently, there is a lack of participation by children in decisions affecting them".⁴⁹

Recommendation:

- Work with children as agents for change; e.g., through social media channels and with the global Bill of Rights for Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. ECPAT and partners developed the Bill of Rights for Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse with the input of 400 children and youth, most of whom are CSE survivors from 28 countries. English: http://bit.ly/BoReng.

Access to justice

- 34. According to Child Rights International Network (CRIN), Botswana ranked 135th out of 197 total countries on its recent "Access to Justice for Children: Global Ranking". ⁵⁰ Out of a possible high score of 87.5 on CRIN's access to justice criteria scale, Botswana scored an unsatisfactory 40.2. ⁵¹
- 35. CRIN reached this conclusion by grounding its methodology in four distinct categories, each with a subset of relevant criteria:
 - a. The status and influence of the CRC on domestic legislation;
 - b. The legal status of children including access to both claims and legal assistance;
 - c. A child's ability to challenge violations including access to courts and the court's ability to remedy violations; and
 - d. Practical considerations including costs, timing, privacy and venue.⁵²
- 36. Botswana maintains a 'dualist' approach to international law and treaties; meaning that treaties are not enforceable upon ratification but must be incorporated through domestic legislation. Although the Children's Act of 2009 incorporates elements of the CRC, the Convention does not take precedence over national law and is not enforceable⁵³ in Botswana courts.⁵⁴

Recommendation:

- Work with local NGO's to establish best practices for enhancing access to justice for children;
- Establish a commission to oversee the implementation of the best practices in both courts and law enforcement training-centres.

¹ The used term is in line with the recently and widely adopted Terminology Guidelines. ECPAT International (2016), "Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse,

Adopted by the Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, 28 January 2016", Bangkok: ECPAT, 24, accessed on 11 December 2016, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx

- ² UN Human Rights Council Twenty-third Session, Universal Periodic Review (2013), "*Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Botswana*", 22 March 2013, para. 115.63 (Djibouti) and 115.65 (France), https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/125/04/PDF/G1312504.pdf?OpenElement.
- ³ ECPAT prefers the term 'exploitation of children in prostitution' instead of 'child prostitution' in line with the widely adopted Terminology Guidelines. ECPAT International (2016), "Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, adopted by the Interagency Working Group in Luxembourg, 28 January 2016", Bangkok: ECPAT, 29, accessed on 28 March 2017, http://luxembourgguidelines.org/.
- ⁴ Ibid., 39. ECPAT prefers the term 'child sexual exploitation material' or 'child sexual abuse material', but in line with the Terminology Guidelines, still uses 'child pornography' in a legal context.

- ⁸ Jamu, S.M., Mahloko, T., Letshabo, K., Ajasi, A., Pavey, L., Jamu, L. (2015), "Gaining traction by action activating accountability to protect the right of children: Evaluation of preparedness in government services against child sexual abuse and exploitation in Botswana. Gaborone, Botswana: Stepping Stones International, under the support of the European Union.
- ⁹ African Child Policy Forum (2016), "Crimes and extreme violence against children in Africa: A glimpse into our hidden shame", pg. 1, https://app.box.com/s/sezvrhjhq3wt80j69tj27iopdsj143kf.
- ¹⁰ Laban Walloga (2012), "Botswana report finds extensive child sex abuse", Africa Review, http://www.africareview.com/News/Botswana-report-finds-extensive-child-sex-abuse/-/979180/1635434/-/1728rk/-index.html.
- ¹¹ Childline Botswana (2016), "Crisis Line 2015 Statistics", http://www.childlinebotswana.org/index.
- ¹² Bowman, et. al. (2014), "Child Sex Abuse within the Family in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Change in Current Legal and Mental Health Responses", Cornell International Law Journal, Vol. 47, Issue 2, pg. 238, http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1841&context=cilj.

- ¹⁴ Calistus Bosaletswe (2014), "*Interpol Requests Batswana to be Investigated for Child Pornography*", Sunday Standard, http://www.sundaystandard.info/interpol-requests-batswana-be-investigated-child-pornography.
- ¹⁵ See ECPAT International (2016), "Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism", http://globalstudysectt.org/.
- ¹⁶ ECPAT International (2016), "Offenders on the Move: Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism", http://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Ex-Summary-for-Offenders-on-the-Move ENG.pdf.

⁵ Ibid., 54.

⁶ UNDP, Human Development Reports (2017), *Botswana*, http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BWA.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 4.

¹³ *Ibid*.

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/61336/92021/F138317428/BWA61336.pdf.

¹⁷ ECPAT International (2016), "Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism, Regional Report: Sub-Saharan Africa", http://globalstudysectt.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Region-SUB-SAHARAN-AFRICA.pdf.

¹⁸ Girls not Brides (2016), "Child marriage around the world: Botswana", http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/botswana/.

¹⁹ Ditshwanelo (n.d.), "My Future Today: a Guide for Youth", http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw/child_rights.html.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Republic of Botswana, Constitution of Botswana, http://www1.chr.up.ac.za/undp/domestic/docs/c_Botswana.pdf.

²² Coley, Dionne (2014), "Child Protection and Sexual Offences in Botswana: Comprehensive Policy Review", Stepping Stones International, under the support of the European Union.

²³ *Ibid*.

²⁴ Government of Botswana, *Children's Act, 2009 (No. 8 of 2009)*, Part III – Bill of Child Rights, A.63, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/97343/115462/F-447304512/BTW97343.pdf.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Part X, 43 – 50.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Part X, 54.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Part X, 55.

²⁹ *Ibid.*. Part XI. 58.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Part XVI, 114.

³¹ See ILO NATLEX, Database national labour, social security and related human rights legislation, Penal Code, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/61337/92022/F805974928/BWA61337.pdf; and Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act,

³² ILO NATLEX, Database national labour, social security and related human rights legislation, Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2014 (Act. No. 32 of 2014), http://www.ilo.int/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/98257/116854/F314402507/BWA98257.pdf.

³³ International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (2016), "*Child Pornography: Model Legislation & Global Review*", 8th Edition, https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Child-Pornography-Model-Law-8th-Ed-Final-linked.pdf.

³⁴ Government of Botswana, *Children's Act, 2009 (No. 8 of 2009)*, Part XI – Offenses, 58, http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/97343/115462/F-447304512/BTW97343.pdf.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 21.

³⁶ Jamu, S.M., Mahloko, T., Letshabo, K., Ajasi, A., Pavey, L., Jamu, L. (2015), "Gaining traction by action – activating accountability to protect the right of children: Evaluation of preparedness in government services against

child sexual abuse and exploitation in Botswana. Gaborone, Botswana: Stepping Stones International, under the support of the European Union.

- ³⁷ Content-based data concerns the 'content' of the communication sent or received by a user and can include the text, images, or video files, etc. Non-content-based data concerns any data not explicitly identified as content and can include locations, times, duration of the messages, sources of the communication, and the size of the message.
- ³⁸ Jamu, S.M., Mahloko, T., Letshabo, K., Ajasi, A., Pavey, L., Jamu, L. (2015), "Gaining traction by action activating accountability to protect the right of children: Evaluation of preparedness in government services against child sexual abuse and exploitation in Botswana. Gaborone, Botswana: Stepping Stones International, under the support of the European Union.
- ³⁹ Birgitte Woel (2016), "2016 Botswana: Assessment of the Orphan Care Programme Botswana", UNICEF Evaluation Report, https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_94531.html.
- ⁴⁰ Southern African Development Community (2017), "SADC makes commendable progress in fighting human trafficking", https://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/sadc-makes-commendable-progress-fighting-human-trafficking/.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² *Ibid*.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*; Also *See* South African Development Community (2016), "*Trafficking in Persons in the SADC Region: A Baseline Report*", http://www.sadc.int/files/3514/7505/0085/SADC Baseline Report Low Resolution.pdf.
- ⁴⁴ Jamu, S.M., Mahloko, T., Letshabo, K., Ajasi, A., Pavey, L., Jamu, L. (2015), "Gaining traction by action activating accountability to protect the right of children: Evaluation of preparedness in government services against child sexual abuse and exploitation in Botswana. Gaborone, Botswana: Stepping Stones International, under the support of the European Union.
- ⁴⁵ Ministry of Local Government (2013), Republic of Botswana National Consultative Children's Forum, http://www.gov.bw/en/Ministries--Authorities/Ministries/Ministry-of-Local-Government-MLG1/News/NATIONAL-CHILDRENS-CONSULTATIVE-FORUM-2012/.
- ⁴⁶ Coley, Dionne (2014), "Child Protection and Sexual Offences in Botswana: Comprehensive Policy Review", Stepping Stones International, under the support of the European Union.
- ⁴⁷ UNICEF (2016), "Botswana, April 2016: Dikgosi facilitate children's involvement on formulation on national vision", https://www.unicef.org/esaro/5440_bot2016_children-involvement.html.
- ⁴⁸ Moagi Madasi (2017), "UNICEF intensifies fight against sexual exploitation of children", Botswana Unplugged, http://botswanaunplugged.com/7317/unicef-intensifies-fight-sexual-exploitation-children/.
- ⁴⁹ Ditshwanelo (n.d), "My Future Today: a Guide for Youth", http://www.ditshwanelo.org.bw/child_rights.html.
- ⁵⁰ Child Rights International Network (2015), "Access to Justice for Children: Global Ranking", https://www.crin.org/en/access-justice-children-global-ranking.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² CRIN (2015), "Access to Justice for Children: Country Report Card", https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/access to justice scorecard.pdf.

⁵³ Although not enforceable, some courts have noted the CRC's 'persuasive' value in deciding cases. *See Ndlovu v. Macheme*, (MAHLB-000522-07) [2008] BWHC 293 (6 October 2008), http://www.saflii.org/bw/cases/BWHC/2008/293.pdf.

⁵⁴ CRIN (2015), "Access to Justice for Children: Botswana", https://www.crin.org/sites/default/files/botswana_access_to_justice_0.pdf.