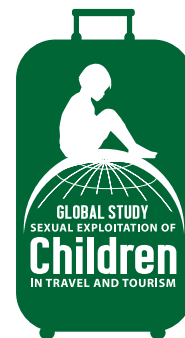## IN BRIEF

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

THE REGION

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) includes 46 countries, many of which are among the World's poorest. The regional report presents the findings of national-level research conducted in Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia, complemented by evidence from elsewhere in the region. In the four countries studied in-depth, consultations were held with a range of stakeholders, including child victims of sexual exploitation.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

According to the UN World Tourism Organisation, SSA is experiencing the second highest tourism growth in the world with 6% annual growth rate and 52 million visitors reported in 2012. This figure is predicted to climb to 134 million by 2030. The motives for travel and tourism vary widely across SSA, so do the quality and availability of travel infrastructure. For example, highly developed South Africa draws large numbers of business-travellers and attendees at mega-sporting events, as well as ordinary tourists, while Zambia's economy relies heavily on extractive industries that bring foreign investors and outside workers to mining and other economic zones.

CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS

Although tourism has historically been associated with North and West African countries, an influx of tourists and domestic travellers seeking sex with children is now being reported elsewhere in the region.

Children's vulnerability is rising with the emergence of new online, unregulated modes of accommodation and transportation. Global Study research revealed a trend toward the use of so-called *non-traditional types* of infrastructure for SECTT. One of them is **volun-tourism** that is popular among wealthy foreigners who are often not vetted, which leaves children vulnerable to abuse by sexual predators.

Foreign direct investment focusing primarily on mining, finance, construction and manufacturing is another setting that brings large groups of unaccompanied males into developing regions of SSA. In Zambia, the development of a foreign-led mining industry has been linked with a rise in SECTT, in particular by Chinese contractors and workers. Chinese investment in Africa increased from less than US$100 million/year in the 1980s to $26 billion by end-2013.

As many African countries are caught in **armed conflicts,** entire communities are forced to move, often to sprawling camps for the displaced, which increases children vulnerability to sexual exploitation by armed forces, peacekeeping troops or strangers in the camps. Ongoing instability and conflict in South Sudan has reportedly contributed to a rise in child prostitution of girls as young as twelve.

The number of internet users in Africa has increased by nearly 7,000% since 2000. Mobile Internet traffic across Africa is expected to rise 20-fold by the end of the decade. Hence, **online platforms and electronic devices** present another non-traditional venue used by offenders to target and recruit children into SECTT. Research by two NGOs in Kenya revealed that children (11-18) in Nairobi often accept "friendship" requests from strangers, who then make sexual advances. Moreover, chatting and picture exchange tools were reported to be the main channels used by offenders to target and recruit children into SECTT. Online platforms are also increasingly being used by intermediaries and to distribute pornographic images of children.

Many SSA countries still follow certain **cultural and religious practices,** such as child marriage, that may pose special risks for children. Research in Ethiopia, Mauritania and Niger showed that some child brides are sold by husbands into the sex trade, while those who run away from abusive marriages often end up working as prostitutes, due to rejection by families and societies.

Children's low social status in much of SSA means they are often seen as commodities, to be sold, traded or given away, used to settle debts or disputes. Due to limited options for upward mobility, many girls seek a man with political, economic and social power to secure their future. The case studies found that one of the most critical factors influencing vulnerability for all children, regardless of sex, from all socio-economic groups and backgrounds is parental care and family relationships.

RESPONSE

Almost all countries in SSA have ratified the major international conventions protecting children against SECTT-related crimes, however, levels of implementation vary greatly and child protection frameworks still need to be reinforced. Even when updated laws are in place, enforcement is insufficient Due, in part to corruption. Furthermore, reluctance among victims to report cases and lack of awareness about the reporting process was also mentioned in case studies. Another challenge is that legal systems generally place responsibility on the child or family to report the crime, rather than on the police and other responsible institutions. Moreover, services for child victims of SECTT are generally lacking or poorly resourced in SSA countries.

The *Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism* has been adopted by 24 private businesses, mainly hotel groups and travel agencies, in the region. Fair Trade Tourism is leading the development of certification criteria for volun-tourism, focusing on the involvement of local communities, fair share of benefits, adequate screening and training of volunteers and preventing child labour. *One-Stop Centres* offer victims of sex crimes combined medical, counselling and legal services at a single location.

RECOMMENDATIONS (SAMPLE ONLY):

1. Include SECTT in national child protection strategies

2. Prioritise the implementation of existing child protection legislation and policies

3. Involve the private tourism and travel sector, as well as ICT, mining and construction sectors in combating SECTT, and improve cross-sector coordination for the protection of children

4. Strengthen law enforcement and international cooperation to combat SECTT

5. Improve care and support services for child victims of SECTT

6. Address corruption at all levels

7. Strengthen the capacity of families and communities to prevent and address SECTT

8. Conduct awareness raising campaigns about the dangers of children's exposure to SECTT, including the online safety and potential dangers of ICT

9. Ensure that volunteer-receiving organisations have adequate child protection systems in place