

## Opinion: Campaign to challenge trafficking in Malawi

By Cedric Nkungula

Soccer comes with social satisfaction and is also an epicentre of commercial interests both at macro and micro levels and as the most popular sporting event, it attracts several actors. For the first time in the history of FIFA the African continent, will, next year host the World Cup, in South Africa.

While this appears to be good news, the other side of the story is that sporting events have been an effective trap for individuals especially women and children to fall prey to unsuspecting perpetrators. Simply put, by its very nature, soccer is associated with tourism and often times, encompasses sex pleasure.

It is no doubt therefore that the forth-coming World Cup fiesta in South Africa will provide an opportunity for sex tourism and lead to a boom in the sex industry. It is after bearing this in mind that Malawi has stepped up efforts to resist human trafficking which could lead to prostitution. Leading the campaign is Malawi Network Against Child Trafficking (M-Nact) whose aims are to investigate, report and raise awareness on human trafficking ahead of the 2010 World Cup finals in South Africa.

Speaking during a National Dialogue Against Human Trafficking in Malawi, Minister of Gender, Children and Child Development Patricia Kaliati warned human traffickers of tough times once the legislation is enacted. The free speaking minister accused men for what she called irresponsible attitude towards women and children. "How can one sleep with his own children," wondered Kaliati. "Seriously, those who do this are not real men created by God. May God take them all because this is really pathetic."

Kaliati then turned to women to be exemplary by not abusing their own children and report perpetrators of human trafficking to authorities. "Yes women should also be exemplary. If you feel that you cannot take good care of your own children, then you better remain single instead of having children just to abuse them," she emphasised.

Making his presentation, Malawi Human Rights Consultative Committee National Coordinator Mavuto Bamusi observed that a lack of specific anti-trafficking legislation makes prosecution more challenging and allows a limited range of punishments to be meted out to convicted traffickers. "Further, there is no law or policy aimed at providing legal assistance or information to presumed victims of child trafficking," he said. "Indeed, there is no law or policy specifically relating to the status or treatment of victims of trafficking."

A representative of the judiciary Zione Ntaba says human trafficking is a violation of human rights hence the need for concerted efforts to contain it. "It's a violation of human rights so lets not put a blind eye on it," she said.

Reports indicate that on the eve of the 2006 German World Cup, Police authorities observed that the demand for prostitutes and the influx of prostitutes dramatically increased. The four week Germany World Cup is believed to have left huge boom on Germany's sex industry with an estimated 40,000 young women/girls mainly from poorer European countries – many of whom were believed under age girls.

Interpol estimates that today, human trafficking is

the third largest source of profit for transnational criminal organisations after drug trafficking and weapons smuggling, fetching as much as US\$19 billion-a-year.

● **Writers Bio**

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