

Speech: UK is committed to ensure everyone is equal, safe and empowered: Speech by Enyonam Azumah

It's an honour to be here today to speak on behalf of DFID – at this important dissemination event of the What Works research and COMBAT intervention.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) occurs in all parts of the world and in all societies and remains one of the most systematic widespread human rights violations worldwide. 1 in 3 women has suffered violence in her lifetime with abusers generally being members of the family. Women are predominantly victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) at a rate of around 5 times more than males. For children exposed to IPV, the long-term health and social consequences are similar to those of child abuse and neglect.

DFID is proud to be a global leader in efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls in all its forms. Eradicating VAWG is a key pillar in our new Strategic Vision on Gender Equality and the FCO's Special Envoy for Gender Equality has made a commitment to ensure a foreign policy that focuses on 3 themes to achieve gender equality – Equal, Safe and Empowered. Our work typically provides support to women's rights organisations; tackles the attitudes that normalise violent behaviour; gets comprehensive services to survivors; ensures that national legislation and policies are in place and implemented and ensures that we conduct rigorous research to produce evidence on What Works to prevent VAWG.

DFID's new Strategy on Disability Inclusion Development places a greater focus on mental health and psychosocial support. We recognise that exposure to all forms of conflict, violence and insecurity more broadly can have a major impact on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of all people with high rates of depression among victims being linked with observing IPV and or experiencing violence in childhood.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The objective of this forum is to share DFID-funded research, evidence and best practices on preventing domestic violence. The 'What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls' programme is a flagship programme from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which is investing an unprecedented £25 million over five years to the prevention of violence against women and girls supporting primary prevention efforts across Africa and Asia.

Component Three of the Economic and Social Costs of Violence against Women and Girls is a 3-year multi-country project that estimates the costs of VAWG, both social and economic, to individuals and households, businesses and communities in Ghana. Today, ISSER will present findings from a survey

conducted among businesses in Kumasi and Accra revealing how domestic violence impacts businesses in Ghana. The findings show that domestic violence has ripple effects throughout the community and is not contained within the four walls of the home. No such analysis has previously been carried out in Ghana, or indeed elsewhere in West Africa.

The impact of the Ghana study may be significant in breaking new ground in understanding the impact of VAWG eg. on the physical and mental health of individuals, community cohesion, economic stability and development in order to provide further evidence for Government to accelerate efforts to address VAWG.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our commitment to ensure everyone is Equal, Safe and Empowered aligns with His Excellency the President's vision to create a Ghana where all citizens are able to actively participate and contribute towards the socio-economic development of the country to create a self-reliant and prosperous Ghana Beyond Aid. It is crucial that we act together to stop IPV: women, men, youth, teachers, political leaders, government ministries (health, education, gender and finance), traditional and religious leaders, civil society organisations, international, multilateral organisations, academia, grassroots organisations and the media – in a coordinated, multi-actor and multi-sectoral approach if we are to meet the Goal 5 of the SDGs by 2030.

In conclusion, failure to eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls constitutes a drag on the national economy and on inclusive human development. There is thus strong incentive for investment by the government and other stakeholders to address VAWG as the cost of inaction may be significant. Finally, I'd like to applaud ISSER for their hard work and expertise in developing the research and intervention. I'd like to thank the Minister of Gender and the Government of Ghana for their leadership and look forward to working together, in partnership, to build a safer, healthier and more prosperous Ghana for all ensuring, above all, that we reduce gender inequality and eliminate violence against women and girls in Ghana.

Thank you.