



EXPERT ROUNDTABLE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE IN UGANDA

Date: 22ND MAY, 2013

Venue: SILVER SPRINGS HOTEL, KAMPALA

The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) in partnership with Penal Reform International (PRI) and the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN), with financial support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) is hosting a one day round table on Juvenile Justice to be held on 22nd May 2013 Kampala.

Background

Children are an especially vulnerable group with unique psycho-social needs; therefore the focus of a comprehensive juvenile justice system must be in the best interest of the child. In all decisions concerning treatment, trial, custody and reprimand of the child, his or her best interest should be the primary consideration. Each of these decisions should be made with the ultimate goal of rehabilitation of the child in order to prevent recidivism.

Uganda has ratified several international and regional treaties and conventions including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which legally obliges the state to protect the rights of all children including those in conflict with the law. The acceptance and ratification of international conventions, standards and guidelines regarding the administration of juvenile justice has provided a large body of information and a comprehensive framework for a juvenile justice system in line with child rights. However policies without implementation are of little benefit, there is need to ensure that Justice Systems fully conform with the right of the child to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth as stated in Article 40 of the CRC.

A recent review of juvenile justice data, made available through the FHRI-PRI Violence Against Children report '*A review of law and policy to prevent and remedy violence against children in police and pre-trial detention in Uganda*' reveals that there are still a number of grave concerns with the current justice systems in Uganda. Some of these include the high number of children in detention which exposes them to violence; the non-implementation of human rights standards relating to children in conflict with the law and minimum use of non-custodial and diversionary measures.

Objectives of the round table and expected outcomes

- To bring together professionals involved in implementing, monitoring and supporting the reform of juvenile justice systems in Uganda in order to discuss priorities and targets and next steps to promote diversion and restorative justice.

- To provide a platform for discussing findings and recommendations in the FHRI-PRI Violence against Children report '*A review of law and policy to prevent and remedy violence against children in police and pre-trial detention in Uganda*'
- The round table will present an opportunity for participants to share knowledge, good practice, innovative ideas and successful projects relating to juvenile justice.

Outcomes

- It is expected that participants will agree upon priorities and next steps to work towards promoting diversion and a restorative approach to justice for children in Uganda.
- The roundtable will create and strengthen partnerships and networks between government bodies, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to effectively address issues challenges and opportunities for children in conflict with the law.

Participants

The roundtable will bring together 28 participants representing government, civil society as well as international partners and experts active in juvenile justice.