**Expert Panel on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery**

**Statement by Mr. George Lenard Sayi**

Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition

**Brief contextual background**

The government of Tanzania has taken legal and policy measures to address child domestic labor, child trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. The Constitution guarantees the right to work and entitles everyone to just remuneration. In 2009, the government enacted the Child Act, which prohibits employment of children under 14 and prescribes that a child of 14 years may only be employed to do light work. Additional laws prohibit forced labor, the commercial sexual exploitation of children and Child Trafficking; make it compulsory for children between 7 and 13 years old to be enrolled for primary education; and define a wage for twelve employment sectors, including domestic work.

This legal and policy framework is supported by a set of international instruments ratified by Tanzania, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Right and Welfare of Children.

But despite the availability of an adequate legal and policy framework, implementation of these laws and policies remains a challenge because the majority of people are simply not aware of their existence and the government is lacking enough commitment to allocate funds and trained staff to effectively implement the law.

**Challenges**

Child domestic labor is one of the most widespread and exploitative forms of child work in Tanzania, and one of the most difficult to tackle. Tanzania has 1,730,000 domestic workers (according to the ILO), equal to 7% of the working age population. This includes 640,000 domestic workers hidden in very informal, undocumented working arrangements. These are mostly girls from poor rural families, sent to work in urban households. Their routes into domestic service are unmonitored, and the private households where they live and work fall outside normal workplace regulations. Consequently, girl child domestic workers are extremely vulnerable to exploitation.

While domestic work is regarded as a ‘safe’ form of employment, a wide range of abuses are perpetrated against child domestic workers - including physical, verbal and sexual violence. Although some children enter domestic labor hoping to continue their schooling, most are deprived of opportunities for education and work in conditions that can be considered worst forms of child labor. In addition to physical/sexual abuse, unmet educational needs, inadequate pay and excessive working hours, many child domestic workers suffer extreme isolation & neglect, and a lack of care and protection.

Tanzanian children in domestic work are migrants from rural areas and small towns to cities such as Mwanza and Dar-es-Salaam and trafficking is known to be a factor, but is extremely difficult to evidence. For girls from poor rural communities, issues of child domestic work and child marriage are closely related, and alternative outcomes to the same poverty-driven imperatives. Families often see sending girls into domestic service as preferential to early marriage; but are unaware of the abuse and exploitation that follows. Sometimes, girls themselves run away to avoid forced child marriage or simply to escape poverty or other forms of child labor. But the absence of regulatory structures and non-implementation of protective legislation means CDWs are less likely to have their situations noticed, still less acted upon, than children working in more visible or formalized contexts.

**Work of the organization to address these needs and contribute to rehabilitation and redress**

TheTanzania Domestic Workers Coalition is a non-government organization established in 2011 and registered in 2012, which gathers 27 member organisations. Its overall goal is "to enhance the human and technical capacity of Civil Society Organisations to protect CDWs from abuse and exploitation and advocate at national and international levels".

Child domestic workers are primary beneficiaries of the work of the Coalition, but there is also secondary targets including: government agencies, private sector institutions, parliamentarians, community members, teachers, religious leaders and employers of domestic workers.

Under the current grant from the UN Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, the Coalition provides several forms of direct assistance to child domestic workers assisted by 7 member organisations within 2 districts in the Mwanza region. In only 6 months, the Coalition has provided 160 children with skills training such as batik and soap making, 10 children have been enrolled and successfully completed a 6-month Vocational Training session, and additional 50 children have been assisted with psychosocial and legal support.

The project has also helped the creation and strengthening of Child Domestic Workers Advisory Committees who meet with local government leaders to raise their awareness about children and child domestic workers rights, discuss cases of abuse, responsibilities of duty bearers and in general to strengthen key stakeholders’ understanding of the issue.

The Advisory Committees are also involved in what is the core of the project, which is the development of by-laws, that is laws developed by the community thus standing a better chance of being applied. Because of their nature, the process of by-laws development requires ownership and hence participation of the whole community and local key stakeholders, involving awareness campaigns, including with children, about their rights, extensive community dialogue, advocacy with employers and training of local community leaders and government officials on both the issue and the relevant legislation; a process that has brought outstanding results for example in terms of payment of wages and stipulation of regular contracts with the latest surveyed figures close to 90%.

The commitment of employers has also proven to be critical in the success of the project. As a result of their involvement, employers have established an association of Responsible Employers that delivers peer to peer community mobilization currently gathering more than 300 employers.

These results have been possible thanks to a holistic intervention targeting the individuals and groups that are affected by slavery; as well as focusing around the factors which create, perpetuate and tolerate the situations in which slavery practices occur; and engaging with the people responsible for them or who have influence and control over them.

The work done in empowering and rehabilitating the CDWs is critical in enabling them to act as effective advocates in the cause of CDW rights; and their prominent presence in this advocacy is critical to its success in winning over the communities and local authorities to introduce and implement the by-laws. Which then benefit all the CDWs in the target localities, not just those that have been directly reached by the project.

We are aiming at replicating this work in other districts and regions in Tanzania.