



**AFRICA LEGAL AID (AFLA) IN COOPERATION WITH THE GHANA
COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE
(CHRAJ)**

**NARRATIVE REPORT
Contemporary Forms of Gender Based Violence:
Commemorating International Women's Day**

**THEME:
THE GHANA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT AND CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF
GENDER –BASED VIOLENCE**

VENUE: ACCRA, GHANA

Introduction

To commemorate International Women's Day, celebrated around the world, from 8th March, Africa Legal Aid (AFLA), in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice of Ghana, (CHRAJ) convened a Forum on the *Ghana Domestic Violence Act and Contemporary Forms of Gender-Based Violence*, in Accra, Ghana. This Forum was part of AFLA's on going Gender Justice Campaign to raise awareness on contemporary forms of Gender Violence and in particular, highlight marginalized and undertreated areas including *inter alia* the Media and Gender Violence, and Defining Sexual Violence. Gender Mainstreaming in human rights and international justice was a recurring theme. One of the main outcomes of the Forum is that it highlighted the need to expand Gender Crimes to include emerging and undertreated offences that are gendered in nature and scope. The deliberations will contribute to formulation and adoption of a Policy Agenda for Gender Justice which will be used for advocacy and lobbying initiatives in Africa and beyond.

Opening

The Opening was addressed by Ms. Anna Bossman, Deputy Commissioner of the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice of Ghana (CHRAJ), Evelyn A. Ankumah, Executive Director of Africa Legal Aid (AFLA), and Hon. Hajia Hawawu Boya Gariba, Deputy Minister for Women and Children's Affairs of Ghana.

Chairing the Opening, **Ms. Anna Bossman** of **CHRAJ** commended AFLA for the initiative, a timely intervention which she said CHRAJ was happy to participate in, to commemorate International Women's Day. Ms. Bossman welcomed all participants, especially the international participants who traveled all the way from their respective places to attend the Forum. Below is an excerpt of Ms. Bossman's address:

'The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) joins the International Community to commemorate International Women's Day. This day has been set aside to

acknowledge and celebrate women's social, political and economic achievements the world over. The CHRAJ recognizes and applauds the Ghanaian woman's contribution to the nation's development and stability.

But while we admit that Ghana has certainly made progress in the protection and promotion of women's rights, that progress does not measure up to the aspirations of our people in general and of our women in particular. Discrimination against women abounds, and injustice towards women persists, manifesting itself in very many ways, including the trafficking of women and children, domestic violence, disparity in education and healthcare, exploitation in labour, violence against women in conflict situations, feminization of poverty, sexual harassment and negative harmful cultural practices'.

The Deputy Commissioner of CHRAJ further noted that, ensuring the promotion and protection of women's rights is a shared responsibility of Government, civil society, the media, the general citizenry and women themselves and therefore tackling discrimination against women must be a top priority in any governmental policy making. Ms. Bossman further stated:

'Over the years, Ghanaian women have rightly demanded to be given equal opportunities as their male counterparts to be counted on in realizing the government's national development objectives. The arduous task of developing our nation and entrenching democratic values cannot be borne by one sex alone, whether men or women. Successive governments have made statements avowing their total support and commitment to ensuring equal participation and equal opportunities for women. Sadly, governments in the main have not backed their talk with concrete action. Government strategies and policies and programmes often lack integration of gender perspectives.

Furthermore, while gender equality is generally embodied in the 1992 Constitution, the obstacles and difficulties faced by women are clear evidence that the principles of parity and equality in our democracy continue to be thwarted by well-established sets of rules and practices which were developed without the consent or approval of women'.

In conclusion she said, 'CHRAJ takes this opportunity to call on the government to demonstrate concretely by its actions, its policies and programmes, that it is fully committed to gender equality and women's empowerment in Ghana'.

Ms. Bossman then wished all women and girls in Ghana a very Happy and Peaceful Women's Day on behalf of the Commission, and then introduced the panel speakers for the opening.

AFLA's Executive Director, Evelyn A. Ankumah, submitted a Statement, *A Policy Agenda for Gender Justice* read on her behalf by **Dr. Nomsa Mbere, Member of the Governing Council of AFLA**. She thanked all for coming to participate, share expertise and views, and listen to those of others, at yet another discussion on Gender Inequality, Gender Discrimination, and Violence against Women. Evelyn Ankumah said:

'While preparing this statement, I had to ask myself if there is anything we are going to address at this Forum that has not already been discussed, analyzed, told and retold. I came to a negative conclusion; the issues we will address today are not new. They have been addressed at many fora at community, national, regional levels as well as the level of globalization of gender justice. Numerous Acts, Treaties and Resolutions have been adopted to combat discrimination and violence against women, and to enhance the status of women in society, and their participation in development.

As a result of these initiatives, we have seen, throughout Africa, a notable increase in numbers of women who have risen to positions of governance, whether in Parliament, the

Executive/Administration, the Judiciary, and other public and governmental bodies. For example, the Post conflict country of Rwanda boasts almost 50% of women in Parliament, the highest in any country worldwide. The Post conflict state of Liberia is led by a woman. And this historic African nation of Ghana has appointed women to key positions of governance. They include the position of Chief Justice, the position of Speaker of Parliament, and the position of Attorney-General and Minister of Justice. Yet, these numerical victories scored to date, are not reflected in the realities on the ground. Women continue to be violated, targeted, scorned, and disparaged, at all levels of society, and through both crude and sophisticated means, with hardly any redress. One may question if these numerical victories for women, are but a cosmetic!

While not a women exclusive and gender specific organization, Africa Legal Aid has had a bias for women and gender in all its activities, since its inception. AFLA has focused its activities on marginalized and undertreated areas of human rights and international justice. As a result, AFLA seeks to mainstream gender in all its activities. These include strengthening Justice Sectors in Africa, and contributing much needed African perspectives to international and gender justice. In 2007, at the close of the conference on the *Interface between Peace and Justice in Africa*, convened by Africa Legal Aid, in cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC), A Gender Justice Campaign was initiated by the Arusha based United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and AFLA, to disseminate information on the revolutionary and pioneering work of the ICTR, and the Legacy of the Africa based Tribunal on Gender Justice. As is well known, it was in the ICTR's 1998 landmark Judgment of *Akayesu* that rape was found to constitute an act of genocide.

Given that AFLA's core expertise is not Gender, AFLA has seen the need to collaborate with women specific and gender groups, who by themselves or through their networks share their experiences and expertise with AFLA as well as learn from AFLA's expertise on human rights and international justice and Gender Mainstreaming. As a result, over the years, AFLA has established an extensive network of women and gender groups, advocates and experts. It is through this cooperation that AFLA was called upon to spearhead the creation of an Africa Gender Justice Network Forum, as one of the recommendations of the Dakar Gender Justice Forum convened by AFLA in cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)), in March, 2009.

AFLA is establishing the Gender Network Forum in cooperation with a core group of organizations and individuals from various disciplines of Gender, across the geographical regions of Africa, including post conflict and at risk countries. This core group, the Steering Committee, will be responsible for steering the work of the Africa Gender Network Forum. Among other activities, the Gender Forum will provide targeted legal assistance to women in litigation on gender based violence through *amicus briefs* to national, regional or international tribunals; Request for Advisory Opinions from the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights; and taking up test cases, either directly or by assisting others in doing so. Through regular interaction and consultations with the General Network Forum, and through Strategic Meetings of the Steering Committee, and the General Meetings of the Gender Network Forum, the issues addressed will remain contemporary and cutting-edge, focusing on marginalized and undertreated areas of gender based violence of particular resonance to Africa.

To facilitate the activities of the Gender Network Forum, an interactive Gender website is being established under the auspices of Africa Legal Aid to create on-line participating communities including the legal fraternity, gender platforms and women and gender advocates and scholars, to enable direct communication with the Steering Committee and networks in a time and cost efficient manner. Participants will have the possibility to create their own africalegalaid.com for their access to a web based library search system on Gender Justice, Human Rights and International Justice.

In addition, the Steering Committee will formulate principles and policies to expand the list of offenses that constitute Gender Crimes, emphasizing the African perspective, to be used for advocacy and lobbying initiatives at the national, regional and international levels. AFLA, has participated in the 'Crimes against Humanity Initiative', which will be convening on 11th and 12th March. This Initiative is proposing a Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity to compliment the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC Statute).

With respect to Gender, there are a number of offenses that fall through the cracks because they are neither addressed in national legislation or in the Statute of the International Criminal Court. And when they are addressed they are not implemented. Gender based crimes which are on the rise but do not receive sufficient attention in Africa, and more generally in the South, include Gendered Violence perpetrated through the Media such as the internet- You Tubes and the like. Forced Marriage although recognized as a crime on paper is not implemented, and the gendered aspect of this crime is ignored. Contemporary forms of Slavery is recognized on paper but not implemented, and the gendered aspect is ignored. Gender Violence in Sports is hardly addressed. There is need to define sexual violence and adopt a holistic approach to combating violence against women in all its forms. The policies formulated and adopted by the Africa Gender Network Forum can enhance the work of the Crimes against Humanity Initiative. It will fill the gaps in protecting women from gendered violence. As well, it will be used for advocacy and lobbying initiatives before judiciaries and quasi judicial organs, legislative bodies, in Africa and elsewhere'.

Evelyn Ankumah concluded by referring to a quote from a Women's Magazine: *"Women and Power: Is there a more incendiary combination of words in the English Language? Drinking and Driving? Teenagers and sex? A Woman can never be too rich or too thin, but.....she could be too powerful, for which if she wasn't smart enough to camouflage herself she generally paid the price. Sometimes she got burned at the stake. Sometimes she got run out of town. Sometimes she simply got sexualized, which has been the easiest way to neutralize, if not destroy an accomplished woman."* In this connection, she shared this personal, but related experience:

'In March 2009, weeks after returning from our Gender Forum in Dakar, I was accused in the tabloids of running a brothel catering to Ghana's diplomatic clientele. What started as a private landlord tenant dispute virtually became a matter of national interest. I felt victimized and my husband and I decided to leave the country with our then seven year old daughters. Legal actions against the persons concerned were instituted and all interim rulings have been in my favor. I'm still living with the trauma of the whole experience and wonder how many successful women have to endure such'!

The **Deputy Minister for Women and Children's Affairs of Ghana, Hon. Hajia Hawawu Boya Gariba** was then called upon by the Chair to formally open the Forum. In her address, the Deputy Minister said it was an honour to be invited as a participant, and in particular, to open this important Forum which focuses on raising awareness on contemporary forms of gender violence with emphasis on the media and gender violence as well as sexual violence.

The Deputy Minister said the Government has shown great commitment in addressing domestic violence in this country. Consequently, Government and therefore the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), in collaboration with civil society organizations, developed and facilitated the passage of the Domestic Violence Act (Act 732) in 2007.

The Act provides protection from domestic violence particularly for women and children. Domestic Violence defined by the Law includes specific acts, threats to commit, or acts likely to result in:

“Physical abuse, namely physical assault or use of physical force against another person including the forcible confinement or detention of another person of access to adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, rest, or subjecting another person to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”.

Domestic violence, according to the law, is therefore not confined to wives, husbands and their children, but extends to the treatment of house helps, as well. Observing publications and reports on domestic violence in homes, it is evident that violence occurs between husbands and wives on the one hand and women and house helps, on the other hand. Violence is perpetrated against women by their husbands and vice versa, even though the occurrences of the former are in the majority.

She further noted that to effectively curb the occurrence of domestic violence, it is incumbent on all of us to assist Government to educate our fellow women and men on the existence of the Domestic Violence Law and the need to report such cases in order to enforce the Law. This will serve as a deterrent to the practice. The Deputy Minister said:

‘In this light, I find this Forum which is being organized to commemorate International Women’s Day very relevant. More importantly so when this year’s celebration coincides with the 15th Anniversary of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). Celebrating 15 years of implementation of the 13 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, which includes gender and violence, requires serious stock taking. Ghana has assessed progress made within these fifteen years in its Third Progress Report on the implementation of the Platform for Action. The areas identified for further action, in the report, should be strictly adhered to, if we are to make further progress in the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment’.

She stressed the need for the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service and all concerned organizations to come together to offer support and provide protection for women and children.

The Deputy Minister for Women and Children said she was happy to be part of the Gender Forum which purposely directs attention to contemporary forms of violence which will go a long way to enable the relevant authorities and security agencies expand the list of offences that constitute gender crimes. She commended Africa Legal Aid (AFLA) for this initiative which she said will go a long way to effectively complement the efforts of Government in this direction.

She urged participants to give equal attention to the rampant reports on the ill treatment meted out to house helps in a domestic setting by fellow women and mothers. She said as women and mothers, we should be seen to be protecting these house helps and treating them as we treat our own children. It is critical to note that our children, more often than not, regard these house helps as their companions since they are left with them throughout the day. Our children therefore pick a lot of behaviours and practices from them. It would thus be to our benefit, if we treat and handle them humanely. Hon. Hahia Hawawu Boya Gariba emphasized that it is our responsibility to address this social issue by educating our fellow women on the existence of the Domestic Violence Law and its meaning. We need to stress that any woman who physically abuses her house help and denies her of access to adequate food, clothing and shelter or subjects her to torture and inhuman treatment or punishment, is liable to the Domestic Violence Law. Let it therefore be our aim to educate, sensitize and create this awareness among our women folk.

The Deputy Minister for Women and Children’s Affairs noted with satisfaction that the deliberations of the Accra Forum will feed into Africa Legal Aid’s ongoing Gender Justice campaign and will contribute to the formulation of the AFLA initiated Policy Agenda for Gender Justice, to be utilized as a tool for advocacy and lobbying initiatives in Ghana, throughout Africa,

and other countries. The Minister said, on this note of assurance it was her honour and privilege to declare the Accra Gender Forum duly open.

The first substantive discussion was chaired by **Dr. Edward Kwakwa**, Legal Counsel of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Member of the Governing Council of Africa Legal Aid (AFLA). He introduced the Presenter, **Ruth Ansah Ayisi**, of **Gender Links** to speak on the theme *The Media and Gender Violence*.

At the outset, Ms. Ruth Ansah Ayisi narrated two stories, one of which she was involved. She said five years ago, she was facilitating a workshop for journalists in Mozambique on how to report effectively on gender violence. As part of the training, she went out into the communities with the journalists to cover stories on gender based violence. With the help of a local organisation a mother of about 45 years, who she called *Rosa* agreed to give an interview. Ms. Ruth accompanied the journalist and photographer to *Rosa* who explained to them that she was raped by her husband after she asked him to use a condom. Although they usually did not use condoms, she had noticed that he had a sore which she suspected was a sexually transmitted disease. She was even worried about HIV/AIDS and suspected that her husband had other women.

The issue that came out as all important here was protection of the subject. At first *Rosa*, who had little schooling and was not media savvy, said to use her name. Ms. Ruth pointed out to her that her husband might read the article. *Rosa* quickly changed her mind and asked the journalists not to reveal her identity. The journalist agreed to use a pseudonym and the photographer agreed to take a picture of her from her back so her face would not be shown. Ms. Ruth said she was satisfied that they had a strong and gender sensitive story highlighting the under-reported prevalent type of gender violence: marital rape complicated by HIV/AIDS. However, when the newspaper came out, she was in shock. Ms. Ruth had just dropped her son, Kwame, at school, when a friend phoned to ask why I was pictured in an article that headlined, **“Woman Raped by Husband after Demanding He use a Condom”**. She said she rushed to buy the paper, her heart beating fast. When she bought the paper she found a picture of her with a thin black strip across her eyes, which clearly did not hide her identity. The woman who was the subject of the story had her back to the camera, but the editor had wrongly assumed Ms. Ruth was the woman being interviewed. Not only had the editor/journalist not taken care to identify the right subject, but they hadn’t even disguised the wrong subject well. Despite the fact that Ms. Ruth is herself a journalist, she said she hated the media at that moment and empathised totally for the first time with people who never talk to journalists.

Ruth Ansah Ayisi said *‘this story illustrates the big problems of covering issues that require the subject to trust the journalist. Journalists are under deadlines, they want a story, and this leads to mistakes. In this incidence, this mistake wasn’t too bad for me, but it could have been devastating for a survivor of domestic violence’*.

She then narrated the second story which is an illustration of another problem. It was in May 2004, when Ms. Ruth was writing a story about gender violence in the Trobriand Islands in Papua New Guinea. She interviewed a young woman, who she will call *Tina*, with a local community worker who was translating for her. *Tina* was about 17 years old when she arranged to secretly meet her boyfriend from the neighbouring village. It was not culturally accepted to go out with boys outside your own village. So when she returned from meeting her boyfriend, a group of boys from her own village beat her, shaved her head and gang raped her. She was almost unconscious. A man found her and took her home. Her community thought that she would accept the usual compensation for such an act – a pig and some money. But no, she broke with tradition and insisted on reporting the incident to the police. For the first time, boys in her village had to face a court and were sentenced to long prison terms. Ms. Ruth asked *Tina* how she felt when she

succeeded to get justice for the crime against her. Instead of translating *Tina's* answer, her local translator got involved in a heated debate with *Tina* while Ms. Ruth waited impatiently for the translation. In the end the woman translating said, "*Tina* regretted going to the police; she didn't want to see the boys go to prison. They were from her village."

Ruth Ansah Ayisi asked: *'How would a journalist write that story? It depends on his or her views on the issue. That is the other major challenge I want to bring to this Forum. I have worked as a journalist for many years. I try to be objective and let the reader decide about the issue after providing all the facts. But I know I have my own biases. We journalists, like everyone else, have our own views and understandings. Journalists are not simple reporters. There is no such thing as objective reporting. How can we address in the context of reporting on gender violence?'*

She noted that this has led some people to argue that media exacerbates the problem of gender violence. Without a doubt it can. But "media can also be a powerful tool which shapes public opinion and social discourse."... "Media can play a significant role in changing perceptions, questioning stereotypes and bringing both attitudinal and behavioural change across society." However, more often in Africa, journalists are still failing to cover gender violence in all its many forms in a sensitive and effective way.

To examine the subject matter, Ms. Ruth provided the accepted definition for Gender Violence from the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Article 1: Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Article 2 of the Declaration states that the definition should encompass, but not limited to acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family, community or perpetuated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs. These acts include marital rape, female genital cutting, and other traditional practices harmful to women; non-spousal violence; sexual violence related exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in school and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution.

In outlining how journalist report Gender Violence, she made mention of the following pertinent findings as a result of a research by Gender Links on how the Media covers Gender Violence.

- Media coverage of gender based violence is often sensationalist and trivialises the people's experiences, perpetuating rather than challenging society's attitudes and responses to gender based violence.
- Gender based violence receives more quantitative media attention than other "gender issues"; it doesn't get front page coverage and is not seen as an important story.
- Most reports are on femicide and rape. Domestic violence, which occurs more regularly, and events protesting against gender violence receive relatively little coverage.
- Stories on abuse and rape often imply that women are "asking for it to happen" through references such as "she was alone at night" or "she was wearing revealing clothes". Sometimes just the photo the journalist chooses to show can make the reader judgemental.
- Media has done little to combat myths that accompany gender violence regarding children. For example the myth that HIV and AIDS can be cured by having sex with younger girls has been reported with inadequate comment.
- There has been a tendency to highlight the experiences of men as perpetrators. The word *love* features frequently in headlines relating to violence against women... saying it is a crime of passion.
- There is a reliance on the courts as sources of stories: one study conducted by Gender Links found that 42% of GBV stories emanate from court cases.

- Journalists tend not to give credibility to victims/survivors. Their stories are often reported in a tone of scepticism, prejudice or helplessness.
- Forgotten survivors: the media rarely carry stories of women who have survived brutal attacks and worked to rebuild their lives. They could serve as role models to those who are currently in abusive relationships.
- Media often ignore certain groups when covering GBV e.g. rural women, women with disabilities and lesbian women.
- Coverage tends to be event rather than issue driven.
- The majority of journalists covering GBV are men, which can lead to a lack of sensitivity in the way this issue is covered.
- Women working in the media also face GBV. In Gender Links' 2009 "Glass Ceilings" study, women in media houses across the SADC region complained about being treated as sexual objects and men showed little appreciation and understanding of what is meant by sexual harassment. Only 28% of media houses surveyed said they have sexual harassment policies in place to protect employees from this behaviour.

Ruth Ansah Ayisi concluded her presentation by recommending that media training should be provided to journalists through workshops, in-house training, lunch meetings with editors, etc. She concluded by saying that we are not asking for journalists to become campaigners, just to become better journalists, tell more diverse, accurate stories in a sensitive and professional way. And by so doing, the story of gender violence will be told in the way it should be. And if that happens, the media can make a major contribution to fighting gender violence in our communities.

The Chair, then introduced **Dr. Audrey Gadzekpo, Director, School of Communications, University of Ghana, Legon**, to discuss the afore described presentation. Dr. Audrey Gadzekpo said she agreed with Ruth Ansah Ayisi's presentation and she is glad the presentation flagged how the Media reports on marginalized and vulnerable groups. How do you avoid taking advantage of their inexperience with the media? She noted that while giving them voice and putting their issues on the agenda because it is very important to put their issues there, it is equally important to preserve their dignity. Dr. Gadzekpo observed that often times we do not preserve their dignity not just in terms of photography but in terms of what we quote them as saying. She said marginalized and vulnerable groups are not very good in the English language and are often mocked with direct quotes that show that they are illiterate. It does not give them dignity. It is important to report and frame issues in ways that help people understand the importance and magnitude of the problem, and move people to action, especially for policy making.

Dr. Gadzekpo noted that how issues are framed is such a big challenge for journalism. She said issues are often framed in a way that undermines the issues. She gave the example of a story in a Ghana Newspaper report on a twelve year old girl who had been defiled by her school teacher. While the defilement was reported and the report seemed outraged by the defilement, the report at the same time said the twelve year old who has crazy buttocks, which the guy could not resist. This not only undermined the seriousness of the issue, but it also suggested that this victim somehow tempted her class teacher, and it takes away from the crime that had been committed.

The Discussant opined that during the debates to enact the Ghana Domestic Violence Act, which took many years, it was pointed out that society needs to understand this issue, but the journalists themselves do not understand the issues. We can't assume that because they are journalists, or because they are female journalists, they will understand and report issues on gender violence in ways that will empower the victim, and get people to take the necessary actions. She shared an experience she encountered with a male journalist on the GTV Breakfast show in Ghana. She said it involved a male journalist and she almost hit him. The story was about a woman who had been raped and beaten by her husband for refusing him sex when she was in her period. The male

journalist said 'but who says if you are in your period you can't have sex with your husband'. Dr. Gadzekpo said it is a problem that the Reporters themselves are not sensitive to issues of gender violence.

Dr. Gadzekpo referred to a study she conducted published in a recently published Book, *Architect of Violence*, published by the Gender and Documentation Centre. In the Book, she describes how femicide was reported by the Ghana Media.

In 2002, between February and May, the newspapers regularly reported on what they called spousal murders. There seemed to be an epidemic of spousal murders. Dr. Gadzekpo looked at the way they framed these issues during this period. There were a total of twelve articles just between February and May on the issue of spousal murders and as an academic, she looked at it through an academic frame work. One of her findings was that the crimes were reported like exceptional crimes. They minimized the seriousness of the crime by making them appear as extraordinary. They would use words like *tragedy* often they would write *it was a peaceful neighborhood, he was a nice man, she too was working!* And it was as though one day something went crazy, and that was it, he murdered her.

The journalists would describe the crimes as symptomatic or some underlining psychological disorder. So you had a newspaper for example talking about unemployment and poverty on one side as against financial and other societal pressures on the other side making people explode at the least provocation. We were not engaging with what was happening within our society, the fact that domestic violence that leads to femicide is a continuum, it's the extreme end of the continuum of violence that is permitted and tolerated within the society.

Journalists would report, *he said the woman refused to cook for him, she was insubordinate, she was unfaithful*. One of the articles reported that the woman was on the phone and she was allegedly talking to her boyfriend and it just made her otherwise sane husband go crazy and kill her. The family responded it had nothing to do with that. So the headline the next day was that the woman had not been unfaithful. It is a real problematic way of reporting on these issues. We hardly find discourses, talking and engaging with the cultural, institutional and societal underpinnings that form the root causes of violence against women. In other words, it was important to contextualize the violence for people to see that it was intentional, goal directed behavior rather than something that just happened. As the Presenter, Ruth Ansah Ayisi so well put it stories are reported as events rather than issues.

Dr. Gadzekpo said she would like to encourage journalists to try other styles of reporting that are not event driven because if its event driven, it is episodic. Something happens or you go somewhere, you report it and that is the end of it. There was only one editorial out of the twelve stories and the other eleven were straight new stories. They weren't features, there weren't analytical pieces, which will allow for more elaboration and explanation and all of that. It was straight news; this is what happened, where, when, end of story. There were hardly any follow up stories. The follow up stories were the ones where the family had reacted, more likely the official rejoinder to the paper to say 'how dare you say that she's been unfaithful'. Nothing like that happened and so that became the follow up story. Again end of story. There is a routine failure to provide enough background and context to stories, to do follow ups. There is overly dependence on authority and official dogmas. We do not hear the voice of activists and the victims themselves. When victims tell their story, its often more compelling than when an official is saying this is the problem. I think that we need to challenge ourselves. I want to encourage journalists to really go out there and look for the stories because they really are out there and people are prepared to cooperate much more than we think they are prepared and we need to earn their trust.

She said they need to know that if I tell you this story, you won't exploit me and I won't get into further trouble, because if we don't do those kind of stories we have this diary approach to stories, event driven approach to coverage then we are really not going to help people understand the magnitude of the problem. Dr. Gadzekpo said she believes the best kind of journalism is that you do the story and people are moved enough by the story to do something about the story.

Dr. Gadzekpo thanked the participants for listening, and said she leaves them with the challenge that we need to do more.

Floor Discussion:

A participant from the floor questioned: *"It is true that the victim's dignity has to be protected, it is very important, but my question here is what about the person accused in the Media whose case has not been settled? There are cases where we've found that the accused wasn't even the offender. So how is he or she also to be protected? In recent times we've had people, not only prominent people, whose pictures have been shown in newspapers and tabloids to have said or done one thing or another. So are they also not to be protected until may be the courts decide? Is it possible that their dignity is also protected?"*

Another participant from the floor also questioned: *"Now there is an act that has been passed concerning Domestic Violence. How can journalists have access to these people who are within the households, they have a lot of concerns which needs to be highlighted so that such abuses are not perpetrated continually. How are they reached so that they benefit from this Act that has been passed?"*

Ruth Ansah Ayisi answered responded: *"This is the reason why on-going training has to continue. The idea of opening up the house to journalists is really good but the problem is that the journalist could abuse it. It can be dangerous if you don't get someone who is ethical about how they are going to report".*

A participant from the floor contributed by saying that: *"As journalists, a lot of times we need to go one step further to talk about the social implications and inequalities behind the stories we are reporting on. And that comes with education. I am taking classes at Legon and Gender is integrated into the discourse. It is definitely up to journalist to have the ability to share what they know, they have the responsibility to share as well".*

Ms. Bossman contributed by saying: *"We receive lots of complaints from women and most of the complaints are complaints of gender violence even if you don't call it domestic violence. It is, as we've heard not only the beaten up etc, it is also psychological. I think that you should also share with us some of the stories, you don't have to mention the people's names but we have a number of cases that we have over the years that can illustrate the sort of trauma that women go through. Sometimes you find out that it is even very difficult for them to tell us their stories. Sometimes, unfortunately, some of our case officers are also not very sensitive to the issues that these women bring. Sometimes I hear one or two of our case officers- when they get stuck with some mediation- trying to encourage, I wanted to say coerce- the women to accept terms that are not good for them but just so the man can get away to feeling that half a loaf is better than none all. I think you can also share some of the stories with us and let's see if we can learn from these stories. I am encouraging you to do so".*

Angela Dwamena-Aboagye said: *"I can have this conversation with Ms. Bossman but I think the CHRAJ is here so I wanted the opportunity to speak to it. We need to get the kinds of skills that will enable us to wear about three hats at the same time even though our salaries are very small, because we are the only hope. We are the only hope. We must become educators, and we must become people who respond, and we must become people who advocate for change at the top*

level, all in one go and especially for CHRAJ at the community level. I overheard someone say 'it is not our mandate'. It is your mandate, yes violence is a human rights issue and you have the mandate to investigate all human rights issues. So it is your mandate, may be you just can't prosecute those involved but it is your mandate and so I would expect that in terms of responding, that CHRAJ will work with some organizations that have the skills to enable them have their officers respond because they can't have counselors in all their offices, it is impossible, they would need people with the kind of skills to respond sensitively, even if they can't do the whole thing, just bring some hope and some light to some child's eyes or some woman who has been battered. But if you don't have the skills or the knowledge, you end up messing the case up".

Ms. Anna Bossman responded: *"Angela is absolutely right; there is a lot of hope and expectations on us, even though we are trying to do our best, perhaps our best is not good enough. I think that we probably do need to have some other strategies to try and deal with the problems that we have. Luckily for us there are organizations such as the Ark Foundation. There is also, well the media. We've been talking about the Media and Gender Violence, the media should be able to help us tell our stories, sometimes we have very compelling stories to tell and we don't actually have to wait for the media. My colleague is saying that we should put some of these stories out ourselves, because some of the cases we do receive are very interesting and very informative as well.*

Shortly after the floor discussion ended, the session on the theme *Defining Sexual Violence* commenced. This session was chaired by **Jane Quaye, Executive Director of International Federation of Women Lawyers, FIDA** – Ghana. After some introductory remarks, she introduced the speakers: **Dr. Nomsa Mbere of the Governing Council of Africa Legal Aid (AFLA)** was the **Presenter**, and the **Discussants** were **Nana Oye Lithur, Executive Director of Human Rights and Documentation Centre, and Angela Dwamena Aboagye, Executive Director of Ark Foundation.**

Dr. Nomsa Mbere noted at the outset that in defining, we identify and state the nature of things. We see how they relate to us and we can identify with them and others whose lives they touch. Many of us are living with the physical and emotional scars that will not heal until we define. She said when we define, we create awareness and we put systems in place to assist us the victims and us the perpetrators, who experience an emotional imbalance which translates to how we function as society and in society. She said to define is to break the silence, to begin the journey to heal self and society, to create dialogue, discourse and debate on issues of importance in society, to stop perpetuating a culture of suppression, culture of anger, culture of intolerance and judgment; and to stop hiding behind culture and traditions in violations of human rights. Dr. Nomsa also made mention of a Tswana Proverb *'Mosadi ke Thari ya sechaba'* (*A women upholds the society*).

Dr. Mbere informed participants that The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was first to define gender based violence as

'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life'.

Article 2 of this declaration states that the definition encompasses acts of sexual violence including sexual abuse, rape including marital rape; sexual violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in schools and elsewhere, trafficking in women; and forced prostitution. It is important to add that sexual violence is a gender issue and affects both men and women; boys and girls. Sexual violence includes physical and psychological intimidation; verbal sexual harassment is included. This broad definition encompasses unwanted sexual advances and

acts, rape and forced sex through coercion, as in blackmail and threats of violence or simply lack of consent and marital rape. Other forms of coercion that amount to sexual harassment are found in the work place. Coercion happens in schools, colleges and universities, with teachers making advances at students in exchange for good grades. Denial of contraceptive protection (condoms) is also a form of sexual violence.

More so, within the context of child marriages forced sex is likely to occur. The children may be ignorant of their rights and also lack self-confidence to follow the procedures in law that would protect them. They suffer in silence. Because of culture and tradition they may feel that there is no way out and have to uphold family honour, fearing retribution. Homes can be the most dangerous places for women and children as they continue to harbour and protect those who abuse children, in incest. The perpetrators of the abused are often known to the children and are often very close friends and relatives. These forms of sexual violence are perpetuated by the community culture of silence. Victims may be protecting their parents and siblings, they may fear that they shall be shamed and victimized further. Some fear further blame for having courted the abuse. This silence is also aggravated by the exaggerated sense of family loyalty that is enforced in many cultures. The lack of sensitivity in handling investigation of sexual violence may expose the violated to further victimisation by the authorities which will contribute to the silence. Child sexual abuse includes forms of defilement and inappropriate acts towards children, including sexual innuendoes. Paedophilic tendencies are rife in our communities and can be preceded by child pornography, a form of sexual violence too.

Furthermore, transactional sex can be classed as a form of sexual violence, where women of lower economical status give sexual favours to a number of men, who share the financial burdens of necessary financial commitments; children, food, shelter, school fees or clothing.

In today's age of materialism, young people want certain clothes or gadgets, and older men or women with money provide these in exchange of sex; a form of sexual violence. This could also explain why some women in the 21st century may be prepared to go through polygamous marriages or are happy to be mistresses; and others, lovers or toy boys, in spite of the lack of emotional support that these marriages or situations bring to them.

Harmful traditional and cultural practices that cause irreparable damage to the girls' sexual health fall within the definition of forms of sexual violence. Female genital mutilation or manipulation, done to make sure that the man has optimum pleasure in the sexual act, are constantly being carried out. There are virginity testing that are done on young women, to brand them pure for the men. Such practices not only are psychologically harmful but are known to have girls use alternative methods of sex e.g. anal sex, which has its hosts of health hazards. In current times, some women actually opt to have similar concept to female genital manipulation in their late years in order to also create enjoyment for the men. If the husband demands this or she does it as she tries to counter competition from younger women; this can be defined as sexual violence. Abduction of young girls, some who are forced to marry still occurs in culture and in war, where they become war brides. Here they get exposed to sexual violence.

Notably, in armed conflict, systemic rape is often used as a tool of war, this has prompted international legal instruments to pronounce rape as a war crime; perpetrators can be prosecuted in war tribunals. Human trafficking is a form of sexual enslavement. It is a billion dollar trans-national commercial sex industry. The magnitude of the problem has prompted the UN to adopt a protocol against human trafficking. In domestic trafficking young girls and boys from villages are promised decent jobs in cities only to be forced into prostitution to survive; or are forced to service the lucrative virtual media pornographic industry. Young women are traded in catalogues as brides. Some are known to be used not only in sex enslavement but in domestic work to look after these men or as farm workers.

Dr. Nomsa Mbere further opined that poverty does expose some women to forms of sexual exploitation, this may be because of unemployment or low incomes. They have responsibilities of looking after children; this financial burden put on them by absentee fathers. This is exacerbated by the lack of social services and social welfare. In poor neighborhoods, there isn't much street lighting, security and policing is often inadequate, the transportation to and from work or school is lacking and often women walk long distances to get transport and as a result become target to violent sexual crimes. This speaks to lack of infrastructural development as a result of possible misuse of development funds by the government at hand or corrupt practices in the system. We therefore cannot divorce sexual violence from economical development. There is a perverse nature in some of the men in our communities who believe that women do ask for violation by the way they dress. (It makes one wonder how our forefathers as they roamed the land coped with women they came across who wore the bear minimum; they certainly did not rape them). Some women also perpetuate this belief by their attitude towards how others dress and fail to question some of the cultural practices that are out dated in this age; instead they become the violators.

Some men feel the need to have power and control. Hence it is easier to violate and intimidate children, or those who are economically less well off or dependent on them. This demonstrates the insecurity and lack of confidence that some men are facing in our communities and we need to get to the psychological root cause. There seems also to be a belief that having sex with minors will cleanse the man who is HIV positive or protect him in some way. Child sexual abuse is encouraged by this belief.

Having highlighted the problem, Dr. Mbere proposed the following solutions:

- Improve economic standing of women;
- Open honest dialogue with those in the community to understand that these violations are happening in their homes. We should all own the challenges that our communities face, the solutions lie in us pulling together;
- Have men take a stand, as in the White Ribbon movement campaign founded in Canada. Here men make pledges to take responsibility for ending violence against women. Have them dialogue on the underlying psychological issues that perpetuate such violence;
- Women must stop being used as instruments to violate other women;
- The primary health care systems should be well resourced to include psychological support for those who have been abused; and
- Come out of a culture of conformism and question acts and practices that do not make sense or violate others human rights in our societies.

Jane Quaye, chair of the session then called upon Nana Oye Lithur, Executive Director of the Human Rights and Documentation Centre, to discuss Dr. Mbere's presentation. Nana Oye Lithur said she is happy Dr Mbere's paper devoted quite a bit of time in not only defining sexual violence but also giving examples, which are very touching. She said like Botswana, Ghana has proverb which has been made into a popular song *aboa konkotiba aboa konkotiba*. Literally, the song describes a tadpole becoming a frog, but it is about a young girl who becomes supple and is ready for sex. Nana Oye says we have not really protested against these songs. Rather, we dance to them. She said the Ghana Music Awards tried to cancel some songs which had been nominated for best songs, but more needs to be done.

Referring to Article 2 of the Declaration and how it defines sexual violence, Nana Oye Lithur questions whether the article addresses issues in the African context. She says Dr. Mberere rightly pointed out the harmful traditional practices and culture, which is what she would like to focus on especially within our African context where we have harmful traditional practices. She said some of these practices have been criminalized in Ghana. In 1994 female genital mutilation was criminalized. Later in 1998 Trokosi (a practice where virgin girls were given up for atonement for sins committed by male members of the family) and other traditional practices were outlawed but the practice continues, with no prosecutions. There are hundreds of girls still in shrines. There have been interventions to release some of these girls from the shrines but it is interesting to note that since 1998 there has not been a single prosecution.

Nana Oye Lithur highlighted the issue of widowhood rites and sexual violence. She said she was surprised to learn from a colleague from a law firm whose husband died that when your husband dies you have to have sex with a stranger to expel the spirit of your husband away. She shared the story of a lady who leaves her town, Sewhi Wiaso and comes to Kasoa on market day to have sex with the stranger, and eventually gets the HIV Virus. She says "culture" has not been adequately captured in Article 2, nor has it been adequately captured in Ghana's Domestic Violence Act.

Nana Oye Lithur concluded by asking what it would take to ensure that institutions respond to sexual violence in a way that will protect the rights of victims, respect their rights to privacy and to bodily integrity. She said this is a critical question that still needs to be answered in Ghana and elsewhere.

The Chair then introduced the second discussant, Angela Dwamena-Aboagye to discuss Dr. Nomsa's presentation. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye, Executive Director of the Ark Foundation Ghana said Defining sexual violence is an interesting exercise because it's not only something you do academically but it actually saps your energy. It actually has an impact on you the more you get to know about it, the more you get drawn into it in ways that become unhealthy and sometimes you need to stop and de-roll. If you take in too much of this you'll probably need some kind of psychological exercise. Now Nana talked about the language of sexual violence following from Dr. Nomsa's paper. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye said she'll say a bit about that, the subtlety of it; the way it takes you captive. Nana sang *kokontiba*. You are like a captive audience.

The subtlety of it is that you hear the music and you will dance to the tune because the tune and the melody of it is so good that you don't know you are actually contributing to exacerbating a problem that is very key and fundamental to society but if you listen carefully and you get drawn in by the words, the pam, pam, pam at the end of the song is in itself. She said the pam, pam, pam reminds her about a case she handled involving a girl who had been so badly battered by her own big brother from age 14 to age 24, ten years of incest and everybody was asking why she didn't tell. That was the question and the day she broke the silence, she became suicidal.

Her whole family rejected her and the doctor who examined her said she would go to heaven or hell to go to court to testify because the pam, pam, pam that had happened to her reproductive organs was such that she might not be able to have a baby. Her womb was battered because of the nature of the violence she had faced from somebody who was supposed to love her. So you may not know when you are dancing to that kind of music that you are actually becoming a perpetrator. One song that I love the melody so much is Serwaa Akoto; mbaa nyinaa ti sei yeba yi a, Serwaa Akotonow somebody will say; but that's a good song, it talks about the virtuous woman and all of that but put the lyrics in your head, keep listening, describing how docile she should be and how she should not talk back and how guaranteed her legs look.

Then you go into the language of it that makes it so subtle that you don't know what you are actually propagating so you begin to propagate that women are objects; objects of pleasure, objects to look at, objects to enjoy and so why should they talk back at you.

Angela Dwamena Aboagye said, Dr. Nomsa addressed the definition of sexual violence very well and she would like to add to that. She said when you look at sexual violence against the limitations of the law in defining all the different aspects of it, you wonder whether the law the law is as effective as we think it is. She said after 10 years of prosecuting criminals, she can say that the law is only one part of the solution, and it is only a start. She refers to a Bolgatanga /Navrongo study, where they added the law when persuasion failed. She expressed the view that sexual violence carefully targets its victims, and the victims are often in a vulnerable situation, eg refugees.

Angela Dwamena Aboagye concluded by noting that Sexual violence is used not only as a weapon with collateral damage but as a strategy, and it is frightening.

Floor Discussion:

A participant observed that legislation alone is not enough, and the question remains unanswered as to who becomes the duty bearer with responsibility to act.

Another participant referred to an incident in 1998, where young men grouped in different quarters attacked women who wore miniskirts, beat and raped them and nobody said anything about it. The community's response was that when you come from a decent home, you should not wear miniskirts and if you do, then you ask to be violated. So now we are blaming the victim whereas it is the society itself that has been socialized to be violent.

Nana Oye recommended that the government be taken to Court. She said a few years ago, a lawyer took AMA (Accra Metropolitan Assembly) to Court and got the Supreme Court to affirm a declaration that engaging people to carry pan latrines is a violation of human dignity. She said the Supreme Court agreed. Nana Oye said she realizes that enforcement might be a problem but this is an alternative worth exploring.

Dr. Nomsa Mberere said: "we need to push for what are we worth. Let us put the people we think are worthy leaders up in positions of power because hopefully they will be the ones to make the relevant changes."

Final Plenary:

Dr. Edward Kwakwa chaired the Final Plenary on the theme *Expanding the list of Gender Crimes*. He introduced the panelists: Mr. Frank Bodza, of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) speaking on behalf of Bernice Sam, the Country Coordinator; Ruth Ansah Ayisi, and Valerie Edusei Poku, of the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice.

Mr. Frank Bodza said their intervention will attempt to bring to the fore topics that have been marginalized or undertreated.

These 'other' kinds of violence could come under the Domestic Violence Act which has expansive gender neutral language; and others which fall outside of the domestic setting have to be considered as amendments to the Criminal Offences Act.

It may be time to look at the neutral language that is used to define some crimes in our Criminal Offence Act in view of the specific nature of emerging crimes some of which are based on the sex of the person. The connotations of superiority of a man over a woman which underlie some of

these crimes cannot be overlooked. Thus the proposed reforms of crimes based on person's sex or sexual orientation should attract stiffer sentences.

The Wildaf representative presented the following proposals for consideration.

1. Violence against girls and women; or boys and men during conflict

Thank God, Ghana is relatively a peaceful country therefore we have not and will not experience the kinds of violence that went on in neighbouring countries. But let us not kid ourselves that we don't have our fair share of internal conflicts. There are over 120 internal conflicts relating to chieftaincy, land, ethnicity, politics and many more.

We do not have the statistics of women and girls who may have suffered any particular kind of violence, most likely of a sexual nature, during any of the internal conflicts. Neither do we know of such abuses against boys.

If the security agencies know of such violence, it is important to bring the issue up for national discussion and solution. If there are no records of such violence, we may want to consider them at this forum.

2. ICT Related Violence against Women's Bodies

What happened in the Aburi area recently involving a man who got women to pose nude or get into sexual acts that were recorded purposely for the internet requires further discussion.

Poverty, illiteracy and ignorance of the power of technology underlie the Aburi case. This man preyed on these women because they are women. And of course the cyber sex industry is huge. Yet what would be the specific crime that this gentleman could be brought under? We do not know if the police arrested this person and whether he has been charged with an offence.

The Aburi case is not the only one in the country. It has brought to the fore discussions on dangerous persons who use women's bodies and abuse women's dignity for profit. It is time to develop a specific crime to deal with this.

3. Violence against girls and women during natural disasters

Natural disasters on the magnitude of Haiti and Chile seem far from happening in Ghana. But the flooding in 2007, 2008 and 2009 in parts of the northern regions and Western Region are recent examples. Sexual aggression and violence happen when there is a breakdown of social order, during a catastrophe, affecting those living in temporary shelters or tents, children separated from parents, girls and women.

In reconstruction it is important to keep the needs of girls and women central to government deliberations in order not to widen the gender equality gap. As well, we would want to consider crimes during disasters as amendments to the Criminal Offences Act.

4. State implicated violence against women

An emerging phenomenon of gender based violence that implicates the state which requires mention and discussion is the deliberate 'targeting' of particular persons mainly women who are

harassed, intimidated and humiliated. Two examples come to mind – Maame Dorkunu and Evelyn Ankumah. What is baffling though is that the rationale behind these state actions is not very clear. Whilst the state has purported to give reasons for its action – that reasoning has not been so convincing. Perhaps this is an opportunity to discuss this kind of state action.

5. Men killing wives or femicide

Perhaps it is time to breakdown the crime of homicide (murder, manslaughter) further to include femicide, because of the increasing rate at which wives and female partners/girlfriends/cohabittees are being killed in Ghana. Femicide is simply defined as the “killing of females simply because they are females” (Wikipedia). Examples include rape murder, mutilation, battery that leads to wife killing and honour killings.

6. Wives maiming or killing husbands

There are women who cut off the genitalia of their husbands or partners or murder them. These kinds of crimes must also be given a name and included in our criminal laws.

7. Rape during robbery

Another worrying trend in Ghana is rape during robberies. Several cases of women and girls are raped when armed robbery occurs. It is not clear if police statistics capture the case as robbery and rape or simply robbery. It is important to note that men and boys could also be raped during robbery.

8. Prostitution

Although the Criminal Offence Act covers prostitution, there is the need to reconsider new language to cover the emerging trend of ‘imported’ prostitution which will engulf the country because of the oil industry.

In instances where the police get reports of prostitutes who are physically abused by foreigners, what often happens? Such cases will increase in the future and it is important to reconsider how to address them.

Our laws should be strengthened to punish clients of prostitutes as well. Sweden, Norway and Iceland have laws that punish the client.

9. Hate crime directed at homosexuals

Sexual orientation or the attraction or intention to have sexual relations with those of the same sex is here with us in Ghana. As a predominantly religious country, we often ‘hide’ from discussions around gays and lesbians. Often all we hear is that sodomy is prohibited under our criminal laws. But we cannot be like the proverbial ostrich. We must face reality. There are gay clubs. There have been interviews on Joy FM and TV 3 with people who practice homosexuality.

In other countries, there has been 'hate crimes' committed against homosexuals. While some countries have passed laws to address such hate crimes. Ghana should consider this too because it is only a matter of time before we are openly confronted with 'hate crimes' against homosexuals.

Ruth Ansah Ayisi said she feels quite strongly on the issue of homosexuality and sexual orientation and was very concerned when she read the Uganda Bill. She expressed the view that with homosexuality it could only be considered a crime if it's forced. If it's exploitation of boys then it's a forced act, but if it's between two consensual beings then it's up to them and it's not a crime.

A **Participant** asked Valerie Edusei Poku of the Attorney General's department to enlighten participants on natural canal knowledge as against homosexuality and lesbianism in Ghana.

Another **Participant** said he had heard of boys communicating with their foreign partners through the internet pretending to be women. They are sometimes required by their partners to do things for them to see, including showing their private parts. The participant wanted to know how and if this constitutes gender based violence.

Frank Bodza: In terms of this nudity and how they are sent to the internet. Sometime ago it happened in Swedru if you will all remember and it was in the news, PNP reported it. This is about ten years ago. 1999, so eleven years now. Yes it is true. We never did anything about it and it has come up again. Just close to us in Aburi. Aburi and Accra is just like Labadi and Osu, a stone throw. So looking at the magnitude of the Swedru one that we talked about it for few days and we forgot about it. The new one has come and we are now trying to say that we have to do some thing about it but actually the law makers must sit up, look at it critically and put measures in place for the future because as he said you go to the café and you see the young boys and they will be giving instructions, say this, do this, demand this from the man. The unfortunate thing is that by the time the money comes in, the lady has been paid just five Cedis and the man will get all the thousands of the Ghana Cedis. Recently when a guy was arrested for this cyber crime, each week he makes 3000 Ghana Cedis. So measure it with your salary. They are making a lot of money and they will use the young ones, tell them, give them the instructions and they indirectly influence them to do such things; that this man that you see is interested in you and they will never tell her the truth about the whole thing; that they are doing it to get their own resources or whatever from outside. And it is happening and we have to make specific laws that regulate such cyber crimes in this country.

Valerie Adusei Poku of the Attorney General's Department explained to participants the difference between Rape and defilement, and how they are prosecuted.

Dr. Edward Kwakwa then brought the Meeting to a close noting that the discussions were substantive and productive. He summarized that the deliberations began with a Statement by the Deputy Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Ms. Anna Bossman, providing. That was followed by a statement from Evelyn A. Ankumah, Executive Director of AFLA, read on her behalf by Dr. Nomsa Mbere, who is a member the Governing Council of Africa Legal Aid. And then that was followed with the Opening of the Forum by the Deputy Minister for Women and Children's Affairs, Hon. Hajia Hawawu Boya Gariba. The session on Media and Gender Violence began with an excellent presentation by Ruth Ansah Ayisi, followed by a discussion by Dr. Audrey Gadzekpo. Next another excellent presentation by Nomsa Mbere on defining sexual violence, by two equally lively discussants, Nana Oye Lithur and Angela Dwamena-Aboagye. The Final Plenary on Expanding the list of Gender Crimes, steered in particular by the representatives of Wildaf and the Attorney General's Department was a very useful one.

Outcome and Follow Up:

The Forum ended with a Final Plenary which deliberated on expanding the list of offences that constitute Gender Crimes. It was noted at the beginning of the Forum that the outcome of the meeting will contribute to AFLA's ongoing Gender Justice Campaign which will formulate principles and adopt a policy agenda for Gender Justice to be used for advocacy and lobbying initiatives in Africa and elsewhere. In addition, a Ghana specific Project will be developed by AFLA, the West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP) and the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs of Ghana (MOWAC) to carry forward the lessons from the Accra Meeting, and using AFLA's Gender Justice Forum as platform, train men and women to work together in combating Domestic Violence and contemporary forms of gender based violence, and to mainstream gender in Ghana's Constitutional Review Process.