

SADC countries urged to unite

Southern African countries have been urged to unite and fight against child trafficking within the region before 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Madam Graça Machel made the call during the Southern Africa Network Against Trafficking and Abuse of Children (SANTAC) Regional Conference on Prevention and Intervention Against Child Trafficking which was held at Rovuma hotel in Maputo from 8th to 9th October, 2008.

Madam Graça, SANTAC Patroness, explained that cases of child trafficking in the region were on the rise and countries need to establish networks which could help counter the malpractice.

"Chances are that more children are expected to be trafficking during the 2010 world cup in South Africa. Countries need to start now to be on the look out before it is too late," she observed.

The Patroness said governments within the region and Non Governmental Originations (NGOs) should spearhead the drive to combat child trafficking.

Madam Machel pointed out that child trafficking was a lucrative business and perpetrators were well advanced in handling their dealings.

She noted that it was worrisome to observe that women were being in the fore front in trafficking children in most countries.

Machel said previously people thought that women were supposed to be protectors of children but things on the ground are quite different.

She added that most state institutions were not ready to counter the malpractice with the prevailing situations in the absence of appropriate laws to protect children from such malpractices.

She called on for the judiciary, police and immigration and civil society to work together in order to eliminate the current situation. Machel spoke of the need to develop a clear plan so that the situation should be well taken care of before 2010.

The Vice President of SANTAC Board of Directors, Maxwell Matewera said there was need to develop strong civic education tools to guard against the malpractice. He said communities need to be made aware of child trafficking effects and the impact that is there for their trafficked children.

"This could be one of the best ways of addressing the issue at hand," Matewera viewed. Child trafficking activities are said to be generating between US\$7 to 10 billion.

Poverty and lack of adequate knowledge on effects of child trafficking were among top list of contributing factors to the escalating levels of the malpractice in the region. Malawi and South Africa are the other two countries in the process of passing child trafficking laws. SANTAC is active in eight of 14 Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states. It has been registered and legalized in Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa.



Madam Graça Machel