



## ***OCA condemns rape of children in Western Jamaica*** *...Office calls for implementation of Sexual Offenders' Registry*

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The Office of The Children's Advocate (OCA) noted with deep concern and pain for our nation's children the recent reports of violent acts against children which have been reported in the media.

The gruesome rape of three girls ages 8, 14, and 16 in September in Irwin, St. James, the alleged impregnation of an 11 year old girl by her grand-uncle in St. Ann, as well as the recent discovery of the bodies of two little boys ages 10 and 7 in Zion District, Trelawny who seem to have been violated and subsequently killed, illustrate the callous disregard of our children's entitlement to life and protection, and their right to live in a society that safeguards their well-being.

Children's Advocate, Diahann Gordon Harrison, noted that "such atrocities clearly demonstrate that there remains a cadre of adults within our Jamaican society who fail to recognize that we are all



charged with the responsibility of protecting our children. To do otherwise and to willfully perpetrate acts of violence against children means that there is a callousness which seems to be superseding basic decency and our moral obligation towards our children. The impact of these acts of terrorism is not only felt by our children, but by the entire society at large. The OCA condemns this violence and hopes that the perpetrators will be apprehended by law enforcement and that if convicted, severe sentences are awarded at the appropriate time."

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## ***OCA working on National Gender Mainstreaming Policy***

The OCA has partnered with the Bureau of Women's Affairs (BWA), for the *National Policy on Gender Equality* (NPGE). The aim of the policy is to mainstream gender within a human rights based framework, to ensure that females and males have equal access to opportunities, resources, and rewards. The NPGE outlines Jamaica's commitment towards gender equality, through the realization that development, as a multidimensional process, must involve the reduction of gender inequalities as an integral element of achieving broad-based equitable growth.

Under the OCA's partnership with the BWA several actions will be implemented. These include:

1. Provide an overview of gender mainstreaming and the National Policy on Gender Equality to the staff of the OCA.
2. Sensitize the staff of the OCA on the roles and functions of the Gender Focal Point.
3. Ensure that all policy recommendations provided by the OCA are established in a manner that enforces gender equality.
4. Enhance the collection of sex disaggregated data, specifically *Legal Representation Requested* and *Legal Representation Provided*.

### **ACTION STEPS**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Lead Player/Actor</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Resources Required</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
Sensitize staff on GFP, gender mainstreaming and the NPGE	GFP	July 13 <sup>th</sup>		Staff awareness on the functions of the GFP, gender mainstreaming and the NPGE is achieved.
Develop policy recommendation in accordance with the goals of gender mainstreaming	Children's Advocate/ Legal/Policy Officers	Continually		Policies are established in a manner that enforces gender equality.
Collect sex disaggregated data on legal representation, requested and legal representation provided	TBD	August 31 <sup>st</sup>		sex disaggregated data on legal representation requested and legal representation provided.

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Mrs. Gordon Harrison further stated that “events such as these underscore the urgent need for the implementation of tools that can further assist us in the protection of the nation’s children. As Children’s Advocate I use this opportunity to reiterate our call for the rolling out of the Sexual Offenders’ Registry as is provided for by our laws and for the use of video link and video recorded evidence in appropriate criminal proceedings.”

The Children’s Advocate also noted that the media should be mindful of the sensitivity of such cases when publishing their reports. “We recognize that there is a delicate balance that has to be achieved in this regard. While it may be desirable to capture the substance and the abhorrence of the crime, journalists must also be aware of the negative and traumatic effect that the revelation of too much detail can have on a child victim.”



“The print media on September 26, 2012 published intimate medical details associated with the St. Ann story and had a photograph of the room in which it is alleged the incident occurred. Caution must be exercised as one would hate to add to the trauma and the discomfiture which the child undoubtedly feels, and also because of the

child’s right to privacy and the undergirding principle that we must at all times strive to omit any details which may lead to the identification of the child involved and the possibility of stigmatization of that child,” Mrs. Gordon Harrison said.

Sexual violence against the nation’s children has been of particular concern. Data from the Office of The Children’s Registry (OCR) indicates that between 2007-2011, there were 7,245 reports of alleged sexual abuse, of that number 6789 of them were against girls.

***OCA partners with stakeholders for community meeting in Trench Town***

The OCA partnered with the Child Development Agency (CDA) for the staging of its community meeting in Trench Town, St. Andrew on July 3, 2012. The event which was well attended by community members, also saw in attendance representatives from the Office of The Children's Registry (OCR), and the Centre for the Investigation of Sexual Offences and Child Abuse (CISOCA).

The OCA presented a powerpoint presenta-




**OCA Investigations Officer, Devasha Benjie, speaks with a member of the public during the event.**

tion on the role and functions of the Office, and responded to questions posed by the attendees.

Minister of Youth and Culture, the Hon. Lisa Hanna, gave remarks, and also called on community members to play a more active role in the care and protection of not only their own children, but all children, as stipulated under the Child Care and Protection Act.

***Farewell 'Goodie'***

*Tribute to*



*Dorraine N. Goodin*

*It is said that you measure the quality of life lived by the way one is remembered upon death.*

*Dorraine N. Goodin affectionately called 'Goodie' was in one word - 'extraordinary'. She began her sojourn at the Office of the Children's Advocate in August of 2011 and assumed her duties with relentless alacrity. 'Goodie' was the child amongst us who interacted well with everyone whom she came in contact with. Her willingness to help others was boundless and her concern for the wellbeing of her colleagues was unparalleled.*

*She absolutely loved to laugh and she celebrated life which was evident as she spoke with gusto of her plans to herald the day of her birth. However, God had other plans for our 'Goodie' and called her home in the twinkling of an eye - without suffering and sorrow on the eve of her birthday.*

*Thanks for your time with us...we will miss you 'Goodie'. Walk good 'til we meet again.*

*Sadly missed by the members of staff of the Office of the Children's Advocate.*