

**REPORT OF THE WORLD DAY
OF PRAYER AND ACTION
FOR CHILDREN**

TANZANIA

November 2012

A Joint Initiative

Between

The African Council of Religious Leaders—*Religions for Peace* (ACRL—RfP),

The Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC Africa)

And the

The Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)

Introduction

Observed on 20th November every year, the Day of Prayer and Action for Children (DPAC) is celebrated globally on Universal Children's Day (1958) and on the anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Purposely commemorated on this date, this further emphasizes that children are the priority. They have rights that need to be protected, respected and enjoyed.

The World Day of Prayer and Action for Children brings people together to pray for the well-being of children and recommit to take specific action in ensuring each child duly enjoys his/her rights. Universal Children's Day, established by the United Nations in 1954, also commemorates the 1989 adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The World Day of Prayer and Action for Children connects people and organizations to protect children. Improving the welfare of children is an urgent global challenge. By working with the world's diverse faith communities, governments and non-governmental organizations can accelerate and magnify their efforts to help children worldwide.

Tanzania

GNRC Africa engaged a number of stakeholders including religious leaders, children, the media, children's affairs ministry, FBOs, CSOs working for children and UNICEF in celebrating the DPAC under the theme: Stop Violence against Children. This was built on the work commenced in 2011 following the launch of the study on Violence against Children (VAC) in Tanzania, the first of its kind in Africa. The focus of the celebration was promotion of birth registration, positive parenting and non-violent discipline and preventing early pregnancies as way of curbing Violence against Children (VAC).

The mentioned activities sought to empower stakeholders and seek to change the communities' perception hence changing the situation of Tanzanian children who comprise a half of Tanzania's population. About 2,000 children and youth accompanied by their matrons/patrons gathered at the Karimjee Grounds to commemorate the event. Invited guests included religious leaders, representatives of Civil and Faith Based Organizations, community leaders, government and international organization representatives.

The day commenced with the singing of the national anthem followed by entertainment from the GNRC Conscious Music Band who performed songs from its selection of recorded songs on Child Rights and Stopping Violence against Children.

Various religious groups present held prayers for the children. Amongst the issues addressed was the need to improve the enforcement of laws, to better protect the rights of disabled people/children, the need for the state to prioritize birth registration, change conflicting laws surrounding marriages and a plea to religious leaders to use their positions to advocate for a stop of violence against children.



Photos: Children participants of the event in Tanzania

The Guest of Honor, Hon. Umyy A. Mwalimu, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Community Development Gender and Children addressed VAC by cementing the fact that it is an unacceptable crime and practice. She also highlighted efforts undertaken to address the issue of VAC in Tanzania namely: the launching of the VAC study, the establishment of gender and children desks in the judicial systems as well as a free helpline. Various media representatives were also present to cover the event.

Despite achievements in gaining commitments from the respective ministries, religious leaders, children and the media, an important lesson learnt by GNRC-Africa is that for true changes to happen, greater awareness and action is needed. The organization will therefore continue to work with various partners, community and religious leaders, together with the media and the children to advocate for the elimination of VAC and to empower children with knowledge and courage to say NO to violence.