1) Family-oriented policies and programmes that enhance strong inter-generational interactions, such as parenting education including the family caregivers and support for grandparents, including grandparents who are primary caregivers.

In response to General Assembly Resolution 74/124, Ghana has developed a number of family-oriented policies and programmes to enhance strong inter-generational interactions. They include the following:

- Child and Family Welfare Policy, 2015
- Justice for Children Policy, 2015
- Social Protection Policy, 2015
- Children’s (Amendment) Act, 2016
- Foster Care Regulations, 2018
- Adoption Regulations, 2018
- Foster Parent Training Manual, 2018
- Foster Care Operational Manual, 2018
- Case Management Standard Operation Procedures, 2018
- National Standards for Residential Homes for Children, 2018
- National Standards for Children 0-3 Years

Detailed Report

a. Child and Family Welfare Policy

Children are very important to the future survival and development of every nation. It is therefore imperative that state parties put in place pragmatic measures to protect children and ensure their survival and development. Since children grow in families, the importance of the family cannot be over-emphasized, hence the development of the Child and Family Welfare Policy for Ghana.

The Child and Family Welfare Policy of Ghana seeks to establish a well-structured and coordinated child and family welfare system that promotes the wellbeing of children, prevents abuse and protect children from harm. The overall goal of the Policy is to help formulate child and family welfare programmes and activities to more effectively prevent and protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
The policy recognizes a child as a person below the age of 18, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana and the Children’s Act, 1998 (Act 560). It also takes into account how a child is defined in the Ghanaian context in relation to the family and concept of childhood. In the Ghanaian context, a child is one who is still largely dependent on an adult for the necessaries of life. The policy looks at a family as a group of people related by blood, marriage, law (in the case of adoption), common identity as well as lineage and ethnic group. For purposes of the Policy, the definition of family is guided by traditional and cultural norms which often go beyond the concept of nuclear family to include uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, grandparents and so on. This is referred to as extended family system.

The Policy seeks to strengthen the co-ordination between the formal system of child protection where services are rendered by Department of Social Welfare, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit and so on and the informal system which includes Traditional Authorities, Faith-based Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations. Through this Policy, Traditional Authorities (Chiefs, Queen mothers, opinion leaders), Faith-based Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations have been empowered to play specific roles which contribute to the strengthening of families and prevention of violence against children. Social Welfare Officers, Traditional Authorities, Faith Based Organisations and NGOs are being trained throughout the country to aid the implementation of the Policy.

Social education is ongoing throughout the country to improve the knowledge base of the people on the Policy in line with the implementation plan for Ghana.

b. Justice for Children Policy

This Policy seeks to protect children who are in conflict with the law and emphasizes the need for community structures to play various roles to ensure justice for such children. Some cases are not serious cases and can easily be resolved peacefully at the community level. The Policy seeks to strengthen the co-ordination between the informal structures at the community level and the formal structures in helping to resolve matters involving children.

c. National Social Protection Policy

The UN has advocated for the development of pragmatic social protection policies and programmes that will ensure an equitable distribution of wealth and to ensure that the
disadvantaged and the vulnerable benefit from relevant social services such as health care, education, water, food security, decent work, etc.

In Ghana, the concept of the National Social Protection Strategy began in 2007 and focused on poverty reduction, reduced inequality and livelihood improvement. The strategy aims to spearhead the harmonization and prioritization of sector-wide social protection programmes and to facilitate collaborative implementation of social protection in Ghana which will protect the rights of extremely poor and vulnerable people who will be able to have decent lives through income support, livelihood empowerment and improved systems of personal safety.

The first draft and the revised draft in 2012 formed the bases for the development of the National Social Protection Policy in 2015. The National Social Protection Policy seeks to help co-ordinate all the social protection programmes in Ghana. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has since 2013 been working in close collaboration with major stakeholders such as the National Development Planning Commission and Development Partners to help strengthen social protection programmes in Ghana. These programmes include:

- The Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP)
- Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPW)
- Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour
- Fertilizer Subsidies Programme
- Pension Schemes
- The School Feeding Programme
- Free Compulsory Basic Education
- Free Senior High School Education
- Free School Uniforms
- Free maternal and Child Health Care
- The National Health Insurance and the pro-poor exemptions for indigents aged 70 and above and other indigents.

d. The Children’s (Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act 937)

This is the Nine Hundred and Thirty-Seventh Act of the Parliament of Ghana. It is an Act to amend the Children’s Act, 1998 (Act 560) to make further provisions in respect of foster care and adoption and to provide for related matters. The major amendment was in respect of foster care and adoption. Foster care and adoption are alternative family care
options for children who are separated from their parents for one reason or another. The policy direction is that every child should grow in a family because that is the best place for children to be nurtured. The Act has succeeded in strengthening the foster care and adoption programmes in Ghana.

e. Foster Care Regulations, 2018 (LI 2361)
The Foster Care Regulations are helping in the smooth implementation of the children’s (Amendment) Act and clearly spells out procedures and processes in foster care. The goal of foster care is to return the child to his/her biological family as soon as possible and foster parents play a key role in supporting the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and the biological family to achieve this goal. Foster care is a temporary arrangement. It can be short term or long term. Short term is one year or less. Long term is until the child attains 18 years.

Foster Care Placement Committees have been formed and trained in ten administrative regions in Ghana out of 16 regions. The remaining six regions will have Foster Care Placement Committees this year. Each Committee has five members and chaired by the Regional Director of the Department of Social Welfare. Among other things, the Committees are to approve the eligibility and suitability of prospective foster parents, the eligibility of children to be placed in foster care and match and place children with foster parents. Foster Care in Ghana goes through the following process:

- Recruitment drives/Recruitment of prospective foster parents
- Establishment of eligibility of prospective foster parents
- Orientation of prospective foster parents
- Home study and home study report
- Recommendation of eligible prospective foster parents for training
- Training of prospective foster parents
- Licensing of trained foster parents.

The law also made provision for the establishment of a Foster Care Fund. Efforts are being made to set up the fund to support foster care programmes in Ghana. So far, 272 foster parents have been trained and licensed. 121 children are being cared for by foster parents currently. Processes are on-going to place more children in foster care. Foster care is providing the needed opportunity for children in need of families to enjoy family life.

f. Adoption Regulations, 2018 (LI 2360)
This was enacted to aid the smooth implementation of the Children’s (Amendment) Act. It was enacted to provide children in need of families with permanent families whilst safeguarding their best interest. This law has helped to protect children who are adopted. Ghana acceded to the Hague Convention, 1993 in 2017. The amended law therefore reflects provisions in the Hague Convention.

The adoption law has the following reforms:

- The establishment of the Central Adoption Authority
- Establishment of the Adoption Technical Committee and Adoption Board
- Revocation of adoption order when fraud and falsehood are detected.
- Setting upper age limits for applicants in both in-country and inter-country adoptions as well as relative adoption. To qualify to apply for adoption, the applicant should be 25 years up to 55 years in in-country adoption, 25 years to 50 years in inter-country adoption and 21 years to 65 years in relative adoption.
- Adoption cases can now only be handled by the High courts. Before the amendment, adoption cases were handled by the District courts, circuit courts and High courts. This step is to ensure the maximum protection of children and families.
- Monitoring of children adopted for five years. In the previous law, no provision was made for monitoring.
- Matching and placing children for adoption can only be done by the Adoption Technical Committee. Formerly, this was done by Regional Social Welfare Officers.

These and others have brought about better protection for both children and prospective adoptive parents.

g. Foster Care Manuals

Two manuals have been developed, namely, the Foster Parent Training Manual and the Foster Care Operational Manual. The Foster Parent Operational Manual serves as a guide for Social Welfare Officers who are frontline officers in foster care. The Foster Parent Training Manual was developed to empower caregivers and strengthen families. Since Convention 74/124, Ghana has initiated a number of complimentary measures towards resolving the many challenges associated with child care practices, especially for children in need of alternative care. The laudable initiatives have gone a long way to reinforce and complement the informal foster care system which is increasingly becoming strained in the light of the considerable socio-economic stress that has come to bear on it.
To push further the implementation of the formal foster care programme that ensures that fostered children’s rights are guaranteed, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) through DSW developed a structured, user-friendly foster care training manual with support from UNICEF, USAID and Civil Society Organisations. The manual is useful in the training of foster parents and parents in general. It is a tool to build and strengthen the capacities of staff at the national and sub-national levels. The use of the manual is ensuring that foster children are able to live and be nurtured in caring and loving homes.

h. Case Management Standard Operating Procedures

The state, through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection developed the Case Management Standard Operating Procedures in 2018. The role of the Case Management SOP for Children in need of care and protection cannot be over-emphasized. It is intended to serve as a guide for social workers in handling cases of children in need of care and protection. The document focuses on direct assistance, case planning, case implementation and child reintegration.

It is the desire of the Government of Ghana that Ghanaian children live in dignity, enjoy their rights and live a life free from violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation. Supporting children who are victims of violence, abuse and exploitation requires a robust case management SOP for children in need of care and protection. This was found to be a missing piece in our ongoing national efforts. The SOP has come to fill this gap and aims to equip social workers and other child protection practitioners across the country with the needed practice guidelines on how to professionally handle protection cases and to ensure essential quality services are provided to the most vulnerable children.

Social Welfare Officers and other stakeholders have been trained throughout the country on the SOP and they are in turn implementing and training others. It is an important tool which will go a long way to strengthen child protection in Ghana.

2. Investments in Parenting Education

Parenting education is ongoing throughout the country. The state keeps investing in the development of policies and policy documents to aid in the education of parents to improve their parenting skills. Workshops, conferences, sensitization meetings, Television documentaries, etc. are ongoing in this regard. The state believes that if parents are equipped with the needed
knowledge, it will have positive outcomes in child care and protection. The development and implementation of policies outlined in number (1) above points clearly to efforts being made.

3. Measures taken to prevent all forms of violence against children

45% (11.4 million) of the population of Ghana are children. This segment of the population is vulnerable and need to be protected to ensure their survival and development. Measures are in place to prevent all forms of violence against children in Ghana.

The measures include the following:

- **Strengthening of the Care Reform Initiative Programme**: This programme is aimed at strengthening families, prevent parent-child separation and prevent abuse of children. It is also aimed at promoting alternative care of children. Through this programme, the public is constantly being educated to create happy and loving homes for children to thrive. Communities, groups, schools etc. are educated against violence. This is being implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Department of Social Welfare and other stakeholders.

- **Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) Programme**: This is a programme (communication strategy) aimed at changing the violent behaviour of adults towards children. The public is educated through programmes on TV and radio. A lot of awareness has been created through these programmes. This is being implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Local Government and other stakeholders.

- **Removal of children from places of harm to places of safety**, in line with section 19 of the Children’s Act, 1998 is being enforced.

- **Safe Schools Policy**: This policy is aimed at making the school environment safe for all school children. It is aimed at eliminating bullying and all forms of violence against children. It is being implemented by the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service in collaboration with other stakeholders.

- **Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) Public Education Programmes**: This programme is being implemented by DOVVSU Unit of the Ghana Police Service in collaboration with other stakeholders.

- **Programmes against child marriage are ongoing.** A Child Marriage Unit has been set up at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection roll out activities to prevent child marriage. Programmes are being organized throughout the country to prevent child marriages.
• Programmes to prevent human trafficking, especially child trafficking are ongoing. The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Police Service and the Human Trafficking Secretariat of the MoGCSP are spearheading activities to prevent human trafficking.

4. Provision of legal identity including birth registration

Having a legal identity is the right of every citizen of Ghana. In Ghana, people are identified through birth registration, National Insurance cards, Voters registration cards and currently National Identification cards. The most important of all these is the birth certificate which is basic. The Births and Deaths Registry in collaboration with other stakeholders is carrying out intensive public education for people to understand the need to register births.

5. Ways and Means to observe the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family

The state will definitely observe the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The planning will be done in collaboration with other stakeholders which will include launching and public education.