



Swaziland hosts HIV and child protection Workshop

Author: Brian Wesaala

Saved From : www.scout.org



MANZINI - From 21 ? 22 May 2010, the Swaziland Scout Association hosted a workshop on HIV and child abuse. Participants were drawn from the Southern Zone of the Africa Scout Region. Delegates started by seeking a common understanding to the question ?Who is a child?? to which they agreed that a child is a person below the age of 18 -- who have their own rights and responsibilities -- true to the assertion that ?a right comes with responsibilities?.

Participants discussed challenges faced by children, such as lack of proper shelter, child abuse and exploitation, food insecurity and limited access to health care and education. With regards to child abuse, it was observed that the latter starts at home, schools and youth organizations. Participants noted that there is an increase in child-headed homes.

This workshop responds to a call made by the World Scout Committee in 1992 in a statement renouncing child abuse, it reads: ?Paedophilia, which is the condition of being sexually attracted to children who could be of either sex, is a crime in all cultures and is totally inadmissible in an educational movement for young people."

Child trafficking was identified as another major threat to the sub-region. Participants indicated that many children have gone missing. They are allegedly abducted and sent to various countries for hard labour and sex exploitation, among others. This event in Swaziland is in line with a resolution that was passed by 36th World Scout Conference in 2002 on ?Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm? in order to ?urge NSOs to adopt and implement policies and procedures to ensure the safe passage of young people throughout their time in the Movement?.

There are concerns that with the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, the situation is likely to get worse. Furthermore, participants held a session that sought to discuss ways to reduce HIV/AIDS. At the end, participants resolved that Scouting has to play a major role in child protection. The event was organized under the auspices of Save the Children Swaziland.