



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN SERVICES

SPEECH BY MR. SHEM NYAKUTU, SECRETARY
DIRECTORATE FOR CHILDREN SERVICES
DURING THE INTERNATIONAL MISSING
CHILDREN DAY

25th May 2021

Representatives from Partners, Government Ministries,
Departments and Agencies

Staff of the Ministry

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to join the world in commemorating the International missing children day. In Kenya, a day does not pass before we hear or read in the media cases of missing children. The impact goes wider than just the missing child. Families are left behind, often in limbo, not knowing the whereabouts or welfare of their loved ones.

The theme for this year is **“Together we can bring back our missing children home”**. The theme calls for all of us to work together in bring the missing children back home.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Kenya has demonstrated its high-level commitment to matters of missing children. The Department of Children’s Services (DCS) coordinates and supervises services aimed at promoting and protecting the wellbeing of children and their families. A Technical

Working Group (TWG) spearheaded by the Department of Children's Services has been working to develop a model framework on standard procedures for missing children.

The inaugural TWG was held on 3rd November 2017 and membership currently is composed of 16 organizations - both state and non-state actors. The TWG organized for the commemoration of the International day for the Missing Children 2019. The event was celebrated at Nairobi Children's Remand home with the theme "Bring our children back Home". The event involved the Sub county children officers, representative children and managers from CCIs and statutory

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is important to note that different stakeholders are doing what they can to respond to incidences of missing children. For instance, Missing Child Kenya runs an online portal to boost search efforts as quickly as possible, the children's court routinely holds press conferences for lost children, the Department of Children Services handles such cases by referring them to police/court /or charitable children institutions

In order to effectively prevent and reduce the number of children going missing, as stakeholders in child protection, we need to understand the picture and context of missing child and whether there are any particular locations or venues which are particularly high risk and where children are regularly going missing, age categories prone to going missing and if there are indicators of missing as a result of child trafficking.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this International missing children day, we are encouraging a holistic approach encompassing prevention, protection, education and support to missing children and their families. We are in the process of finalizing the missing children guidelines so as to achieve a coordinated national policy response across various government departments and civil society organizations.

Families and communities need to be confident that when children go missing those responsible for finding them will work to reduce the likelihood that they will come to harm while away and that all organizations will work together to resolve cases of missing children

as quickly as possible, whilst providing the families of missing children with the support they need.

In conclusion time is of essence in missing children cases. There is therefore an urgent need for all the stakeholders to work together, in synergy and to adequately respond to incidences of missing children in a systematic way. Every child deserves a safe childhood.