12TH April 2020

**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR STREET CHILDREN 2020: Provide SAFE SPACES**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to you on behalf of [ORGANISATION NAME], an organisation working to make a difference to the lives of street children. As you may be aware, 12th April is International Day for Street Children. That is why I am writing to you, as a representative of the Government of Ghana, to **Commit to providing safe spaces** for street children.

Street-connected children are particularly vulnerable during the Corona pandemic and are likely to be negatively affected by the government’s public health response, in particular the lock down of parts of the country. Please note that

• The introduction of new regulations such as lockdowns and curfews can unfairly criminalise children who have nowhere to go, and lead to overcrowding in prisons and detention centres – a major risk factor for the spread of COVID-19.

• Where authorities are providing shelter off the street, for example in schools or other facilities, children should not be ‘rounded up’ by force, but given the option of shelter if they need it in order to stay safe.

We ask for immediate action and your commitment to provide safe spaces for the children currently on the streets. Both emergency and existing shelters MUST:

1. Allow for social distancing measures the same as are being enforced for the rest of the population – this means children must be able to maintain at least 2 metres distance and be supported to do so

2. Provide adequate soap, water and hygiene facilities for children and guidance on how to use them effectively

3. Ensure children are adequately supervised and supported and proper safeguarding measures are in place

4. Allow for contact with Street Workers and other trusted adults (maintaining social distance)

5. Consider children’s pre-existing health needs including those who depend on alcohol or other substances, and provide access to medicine

6. Provide access to adequate food

Even where shelters are provided, street-level responses are still required as there will still be street connected children and communities on the street. They MUST be given access to information, support and hygiene supplies where they are, on the street.

We at [ORGANISATION NAME], alongside our partners at the international network Consortium for Street Children, are happy to provide support and expertise to help you take these important steps towards protection for street children. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [CONTACT DETAILS] to discuss how we can best collaborate.

I hope you will take this opportunity to showcase the country’s commitment to protecting all children and giving them the safe environment they deserve. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,