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PRESS RELEASE

CONGOLESE PASTORSHIP “MUST ENSURE THAT ITS ROBUST NEW CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES ARE CASCADED THROUGHOUT CONGOLESE CHURCHES – IN THE UK, EUROPE AND THE CONGO”, SAYS CCPAS

Pledge sign up before Children’s Minister shows extent of progress in Congolese churches

The Congolese Church Pastorship: “must now ensure that its robust new child protection procedures are cascaded down to influence Congolese churches – in the UK, Europe and the rest of the World. In particular, all leaders and children’s’ workers must now receive appropriate child protection training”.

That is the keynote message being given by David Pearson, Executive Director of the Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Services (CCPAS) as more than 200 Congolese church leaders gathered in the presence of Children’s Minister Beverley Hughes to pledge the best possible protection for the children in their congregations.

The pledge - *Congolese pastors working together to safeguard our children* – was signed at a major event in a church in north London. It was organised by CCPAS in partnership with the Congolese Pastorship UK and was also attended by senior representatives from the Metropolitan Police and the DFES.

The Pastorship was founded 18 months as a response to allegations of child abuse connected to a small number of churches within the Congolese community. Since then, Congolese church leaders of all denominations have actively been working together with CCPAS, the Metropolitan Police and local authorities to ensure that churches affiliated to the Pastorship provide the optimum protection for their children and encourage churches not yet affiliated to follow their example.

Beverley Hughes, Children’s Minister said:

“This pledge to put a new priority on child protection is a very welcome move from the Congolese Pastorship. I’m very pleased that they have worked so closely with us and the London child protection agencies on this. It is imperative that we all work together to reduce the risk of harm to children and to ensure that proper action is taken to intervene when necessary. It is the least our children deserve.”

David Pearson commented: “The Children’s Minister has come to see for herself the giant strides that have been made by Congolese churches across the spectrum in terms of developing and implementing the best possible standards of child protection.

”In that context, it is essential that the few – very atypical – cases that have arisen are not seen as acceptable by African churches in general - the overwhelming majority of which have no truck whatsoever with child abuse of any description.

“Today’s pledge-signing event proves that good safeguarding standards are being promoted in Congolese churches and their leaders are being encouraged to work with the statutory agencies wherever there are concerns. In so doing, it is not only beneficial to each and every church involved, but it will help isolate and expose any group that may be in danger of putting children at risk.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) is an independent Christian charity providing professional child protection advice, support and training to churches, faith and other organisations throughout the UK and beyond.

Every week it is involved with:

- 30 churches/faith organisations helped in developing child protection policies
- 830 children’s workers and leaders trained
- 500 contact helpline (24 hours) or email for advice
- 300 criminal records checks carried out for churches and faith groups

For more information, please see www.ccpas.co.uk