



ROUNDTABLE
SOUTHERN AFRICA



Media Release
19 June 2017

ROUND TABLE SOUTHERN AFRICA ADOPTS CHILD WITNESS INSTITUTE

Round Table Southern Africa confirmed that it has taken the Institute on Justice for Child Witnesses under its wing and will be providing support to allow the organisation to work towards a fairer system for child victims of abuse. In keeping with Round Table's motto, "Adopt, Adapt, Improve", the new partnership offers hope for thousands of abused children who often experience further victimization when they enter the criminal justice system.

"We're proud to be in partnership with The Child Witness Institute and Child Witness Foundation, and through our combined efforts, we hope to make a huge difference in the lives of those affected by abuse," says Round Table Southern Africa president Andrew Lea. "We applaud the work already achieved by the Institute, and hope that our contribution will assist them in improving the lives of children everywhere."

Children are the most vulnerable members of our society: more than a third of girls will experience sexual abuse before they turn 18, and 15 percent of all rapes reported are perpetrated on children younger than 15. More than a thousand rapes are reported weekly in South Africa, and yet the justice system fails children, because it still does not acknowledge that child witnesses need special treatment.

It is to address this injustice that institute founder and CEO Dr Karen Muller established what was to become the Child Witness Institute in 1998. For almost 20 years it has strived for justice for child victims of crime, working tirelessly to fulfil its objectives of criminal justice reform for children before, during and after a criminal trial. This includes training role players through the entire contact chain from police to prosecutors (more than 5000 individuals trained); consulting in specific legal cases (more than a 1000 victims supported) and conducting research and monitoring into the issues surrounding violence against children. It also strengthens governmental and non-governmental responses to justice for child witnesses throughout Southern Africa and beyond.

Says Dr Muller, "We could not do our work without the support of organisations that believe in the best interests of the child. Round Table Southern Africa's support is of immeasurable value and we look forward to a successful partnership that will enable us to make a difference in the lives of thousands of child abuse victims."

For more information about the work of the Child Witness Institute and the Child Witness Foundation and to find out how to make a contribution, visit www.childwitnessfoundation.net

Please contact Zelda Geyer for additional information and / or for arranging interviews with the Institute - Mobile 082 376 7072 and e-mail address zelda.geyer@childwitness.net