ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN: GHANA’S EXPERIENCE

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OUTLINE

- Ghana – Brief Facts
- Key Gender Issues in Ghana
- Ghana’s perspective on the MDGs in advancing Gender Equality
- Ghana’s efforts towards Empowerment of Women and Girls
- Lessons on Advancing Gender Equality in Ghana
GHANA: BRIEF FACTS

- **Total population:** 24.97 million
  - females: 51%
  - population growth rate: 2.35%
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 61.45
  - females: 62.73;
  - males: 60.22
- **Governance**
  - constitutional democracy; presidential and parliamentary elections every four years
KEY GENDER ISSUES (1/3)

- Economic Participation and Opportunity:
  Gender discrimination in access to and control over productive resources and social services exacerbates women’s vulnerability to poverty

- Relatively high incidence of domestic violence, human trafficking

- Health and Survival:
  * Relatively high Maternal Mortality: 350 deaths per 100,000 live births (2nd most common cause of death) (MDG target: 185 deaths per 100,000 live births)
  * Relatively high incidence of breast and cervical cancer
Educational Attainment:
- Inequalities in female access to education; although Ghana close to reaching gender parity in primary education.
- Nonetheless, gender gap at post-primary education level remains a challenge
- Marginal improvement in percentage of females at Senior High School; and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) levels: from 44.3% in 2009 to 44.7% in 2010.
- Percentage of females pursuing non-traditional technical skills programmes (e.g. electronics, masonry, carpentry, plumbing, auto-mechanic) in Technical and Vocational schools accounts for less than 15% of total enrolment.
Political Empowerment:

* Low representation of women in the Legislature and also at the local government level

  #2008 general elections: 8.3% (19 seats) of the 230 parliamentary seats went to women; 91.7% (211 seats) taken by male counterparts)

  #2012 general elections: 10.2% (28 seats) of the 275 parliamentary seats won by women
Since adoption of Millennium Declaration: MDGs mainstreamed into successive medium-term national development policy frameworks:

- Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I), 2003-2005;
- Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), 2006-2009;
- Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA), 2010-2013

Ghana’s 1992 Constitution adopts an equal treatment strategy to address gender inequality

Also, Government has adopted other international protocols, e.g. CEDAW; Beijing Platform for Action; in advancing gender equality through gender mainstreaming and women empowerment strategies.
Ghana has adopted a combination of strategies and interventions to promote gender equality and women empowerment:

**Institutional Framework:** Establishment of Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs through Executive Instrument (EI 8) in January 2001
- core mandate: initiate and coordinate formulation of policies; monitor and evaluate execution of policies to promote gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and child development issues across all sectors

**Implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting:**
- A gender mainstreaming strategy aimed at using the government’s fiscal policy (normally considered “gender blind”) to achieve gender equality.
- 2009: Gender responsive budgeting piloted in three sectors of the economy (Education, Health Agriculture)
Mainstreaming Justice as a policy area for gender equity:

- Legal reforms, including Constitutional provision for gender equity under the law; and revision of Criminal Code of 1960, to criminalize harmful traditional practices, (e.g. ritual servitude, FGM perpetuated against young women and girls)

Parliament has enacted laws that promote the welfare of women and families, including:

- *Domestic Violence (DV) Act (Act 732) 2007*
- *Human Trafficking (HT) Act (Act 694) 2005*
- *Matrimonial Causes Act, (Act 367) 1971*
- *Laws against FGM, and harmful cultural practices injurious to the health of women and girls*
Affirmative Action (AA) Bill:
* Draft AA Bill being finalized; aims to enhance women’s participation in governance and decision making. The Bill is expected to be passed by 2013.

Implementation of Free Maternal Health Care

Project Specific Interventions:
* e.g. promotion of girls’ enrollment into Technical and Vocational training institutions to pursue non-traditional courses (electronics, masonry, plumbing, auto-mechanics, carpentry) through provision of scholarships for girls from extremely poor households.
* accelerated actions to address maternal mortality
National Indicators/Targets for advancing gender equality are drawn from the MDGs.

Country experiences led to:

* piloting of the gender responsive budgeting tool (in Education, Health, Agriculture), to better focus attention on gender issues.
* establishment of Domestic Violence Secretariat of the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs, in collaboration with Domestic Violence Victims Support Services Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, to facilitate prosecution of DV cases.
CONCLUSIONS (2/2)

Challenges:

- The delay in the passage of the AA Bill – it could serve as a tool to increase women’s representation in Parliament/participation in local governance.
- Lack of legislation to ensure that Government Ministries undertake Gender Responsive Budgeting.
- Difficulty in scaling up girls’ enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education Training.
- Slow pace in addressing maternal mortality