

# GHANA



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19 EAST 47TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017  
TEL. 212-832-1300 • FAX 212-751-6743



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## STATEMENT

BY

**HON. ALHAJI AHMED AWUDU YIRIMEA**  
DEPUTY MINISTER, MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT,  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT, GHANA

AT THE

**FORTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

New York, April 7, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China and would like to join other delegations in congratulating you on your election to the Chair of the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development. We wish you and the new Bureau every success. We also wish to congratulate the Director and Staff of the Population Division and UNFPA for the valuable documents provided for the meeting.

Mr. Chairman, the theme for the Forty-First Session of the Commission on Population and Development "Population Distribution, Urbanization, Internal Migration and Development", is most appropriate, timely and important to a developing country like Ghana whose population is rapidly becoming urbanized. Urbanization comes with opportunities like well planned urban centers which provide markets for rural produce, more cost-effective and easily accessible social services. It also has its dark sides such as overcrowding, poor sanitation, air and water pollution, drug abuse, unemployment, crime and "streetism". These require immediate attention to improve the quality of life of urban dwellers.

Mr. Chairman, the fast pace of urbanization in Ghana is a major concern to my Government. The proportion of the total population living in urban localities has increased from 23 percent in 1960 to 44 percent in 2000. It is estimated that this will increase to 52 per cent by 2010. Urbanization in Ghana has most often been associated with rural-urban migration. Evidence from the 2000 Population and Housing Census of Ghana revealed that the contribution of migration was 37.4% between 1984 and 2000. There are indications that natural increase would contribute significantly to future urban growth in Ghana.

Internal migration is currently growing in importance and complexity. Among today's migrants are the increasing numbers of adolescents who are ill-prepared for urban life and end up becoming street children. The more vulnerable are the female adolescents, who do menial jobs and are exposed to sexual abuse leading to unintended pregnancies and STIs including HIV/AIDS. Internal migration has unfortunately widened the gap among the population of Ghana with rural communities losing the human capital they so much need for socio-economic development.

In the light of the above, the Government of Ghana has taken steps, with financial and technical support from our development partners, to address major challenges of urbanization by implementing programmes such as Urban I, II, III and IV projects which address infrastructural needs of urban communities. In addition, an urban Transport Policy is being developed to address the urban transportation problems in the country, whilst the Ministry of Water Resources is

assessing the challenges of water supply. Other important initiatives to promote balanced development in Ghana and to help stem rural/urban migration are the designation of selected communities as growth centers and the implementation of an effective decentralization policy.

The Government of Ghana has also supported the establishment of a Migration Research Centre at the University of Ghana. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Interior have also established Migration Divisions to coordinate issues on migration in the country. In addition, the National Population Council in collaboration with the National Development Planning Commission, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment, and the Ministry of Health, is organizing a Forum on Population Distribution, Urbanization and Development in August this year to sensitize policy makers, planners and other stakeholders including civil society, on the challenges and opportunities of urbanization and its linkages to Ghana's poverty reduction and socio-economic development.

Besides, the efforts by the Government, a number of non-governmental organizations are also working in the area of urban sanitation and housing and with street children. Unfortunately, the activities of these organizations are not fully synchronized and well coordinated to ensure effective implementation of programmes.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Ghana recognizes the rapid pace of urbanization in the country and the urgent need to address these challenges. We expect that the national Forum in August 2008 will contribute to the development of appropriate policy response to the challenges of urbanization and human settlements strategies for Ghana. In this endeavour, the Ghana Government will ensure that issues relating to women's empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS will be given due attention. Government will partner with all stakeholders including NGOs to address the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities of population distribution, urbanization and internal migration to ensure the attainment of our development goals.

I thank you for your attention.