

# GHANA



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## **STATEMENT**

BY

**H.E. MR. LESLIE K. CHRISTIAN**  
AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

DURING THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT  
2010 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

*New York, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2010*

**Mr. President,**

On behalf of my delegation, I am pleased to join previous speakers in expressing our congratulations and support to you and members of the Bureau for the success of this session.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We wish to commend ECOSOC for choosing this important theme for the Annual Ministerial Review "**Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women**", especially coming on the heels of the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by the Commission on the Status of Women in March this year.

The agenda for women's empowerment as enshrined in the Beijing Platform for Action aims at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. It affects what goes on at home, the workplace and in the wider national and international communities.

I hasten to emphasize, Mr. President, the need for women to work together and in partnership with men towards achieving the common goal of gender equality everywhere.

**Mr. President,**

Ghana has a long standing commitment to working towards gender equality and women's empowerment and a lot has been done in efforts to achieve the twelve critical areas of concern under the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs have been mainstreamed into the country's development policy framework; Ghana Poverty

Reduction Strategies (GPRS I and II). In addition, guidelines have been developed for all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to incorporate a gender perspective in their policy formulation and implementation, including planning and budgeting processes.

Ghana has formulated and enacted a number of legislations to empower women including criminalizing sexual offences, harmful traditional practices and in the recent past, the Domestic Violence (2007) and the Human Trafficking (2005) laws. The Government is currently facilitating a process to pass a Spousal Property Bill into an Act and also review an existing Intestate Succession Law.

**Mr. President,**

Deliberate policy initiatives have also been designed to empower women economically, through training and skills development, capacity building, supply of appropriate technology equipment; information sharing among others. About 43 women groups in rural communities have been provided agro-processing equipment while female school drop-outs have been trained in alternative livelihood skills.

The elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education is likely to be achieved by 2015. The establishment of a Girls Education Unit within the Ministry of Education coupled with other educational sector reforms, such as the capitation grant, free bus ride for school children, provision of school uniforms, one laptop for every child programme, and establishment of annual Science Technical and Mathematics Education Clinics have all contributed immensely to improved access to education in terms of enrollment and attendance. This has brought Ghana close to achieving gender parity in school enrollment at a rate of 98 percent for girl child education at the basic level. Other achievements in the Education Sector include the development of the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003-2015 which outlines the Ministry of

Education's plan for development of the sector and embodies the goals of Education for All (EFA), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The results of women's empowerment is gradually being felt in diverse ways; especially in decision-making which allows women to influence policies at all levels of the development process. Currently, three prominent national positions are occupied by women: the Speaker of Parliament, the Chief Justice and Attorney General. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs intends to re-launch the "Women in Local Governance Fund" to mobilize more resources to assist women aspiring for the District level elections.

**Mr. President,**

In conclusion, although there have been advances in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, more efforts will be required to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015. Enormous challenges are ahead in the areas of child and maternal mortality. Recent findings indicate that Ghana recorded 547 deaths per 100,000 births in 2009. The level of births assisted by skilled personnel still remains low, particularly in rural areas.

It is also instructive to note that since Ghana embarked upon her path to democratic governance in 1992, women's participation in Parliament has not moved beyond 11 percent. Progress towards increasing the number of women in public life suffered a setback with a further reduction in the number of women from 25 to 20 elected into Parliament in 2008. The recent global economic and financial crisis has exacerbated these challenges, further undermining efforts of developing countries to meet their gender related and other commitments agreed at various United Nations summits and conferences.

We enjoy enhanced cooperation with various United Nations agencies as well as bilateral and multilateral partners including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Ghana will continue to strengthen this relationship with development partners to support our national efforts towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals and targets relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Ghana reiterates its readiness to continue to pursue workable solutions that will further strengthen our unreserved commitment to gender equality and the advancement of women.

I thank you.