

GHANA



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STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

**54TH SESSION THE COMMISSION ON THE
STATUS OF WOMEN**

NEW YORK, MARCH 3, 2010

My delegation is pleased to join previous speakers in expressing our congratulations and support to you and the distinguished members of the bureau for the success of this session. Ghana looks forward to a fruitful and productive session, whose outcome should be an effective vehicle for making a difference in the lives of women.

We express our solidarity and deep condolences to the Government and People of Haiti and Chile for the devastating earthquake that affected lives and property.

Ghana welcomes the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 63/311 and looks forward to the establishment of a viable gender entity that would work for women.

We align ourselves with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of the African Group, and the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana has since the last review of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) relentlessly striven to make progress in implementing the critical areas of the BPfA, culminating in significant gains amid several challenges. Gender perspectives as well as MDG indicators have been factored into the national development policy frameworks and strategies of the country.

Mr. Chairman,

In a continuous effort to address violations of the rights of women and children, Ghana has formulated and enacted a number of legislations, including the Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Acts, criminalized sexual offences and harmful traditional practices such as cruel widowhood rites, FGM, ritual servitude, and passed laws to address women's rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance. The Government is currently in the process of passing a Spousal Property Rights Bill into an Act and also reviewing the existing Intestate Succession Law.

To facilitate women's role in peace and security, Ghana's Plan of Action on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is in the process of being finalized. Women are part of the National, Regional and District Peace Councils, as well as Regional Peace Promoters and Mediation Committees which have helped deepen the democratic processes and maintained peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

To ensure adequate resource allocation for gender equality programmes, the Government has through a cabinet directive introduced Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) into key Ministries such as Agriculture, Health and education and 16 other Ministries, Departments and Agencies. This is complemented by the systematic compilation of sex-disaggregated data with the collaboration of the Statistical Service of Ghana.

Women's empowerment programmes have provided micro-credit, skills development, capacity building and supply of appropriate technology equipment, information, extension services and advice.

Mr. Chairman,

Social Protection Policies targeting poor women have been introduced. Among these is the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) where close to 50 percent of females are NHIS registrants. A Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer programme which benefits the extremely poor population, has also been introduced.

The introduction of programmes such as capitation grant, free school uniforms, free bus ride for school children, and one laptop for every child within the Girls Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, has contributed immensely to improved access to education in terms of enrollment and attendance. The gender parity index (ratio of girls to boys) is currently 0.97 in primary school and 0.96 for secondary education (EMIS, 2006/07). The elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education is likely to be largely achieved by 2015.

In order to address existing challenges of maternal mortality to achieve MDGs 4 & 5, policies and legislations have been put in place including a Health Service Act, which ensures free maternal care under a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS, 2007) and promotes access to maternity services. These efforts brought about a 5% decrease in Maternal Mortality between 2005 and 2006. Ghana, like other developing countries still has a high maternal mortality rate. The Ghana Maternal Health Survey, 2007 indicates that maternal mortality ratio in Ghana remains unacceptably high at 451 deaths per 100,000 live births. The level of births assisted by skilled personnel still remains low, particularly in rural areas.

Also, strong with governmental support in addressing the AIDS menace, The national prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS has reduced and is currently at 1.9%. This is due to strong governmental support including successful mother -to -child - transmission programmes that has resulted in some hospitals in regions with highest prevalence rates recording success stories of 96% babies testing negative after 18 months.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana recognizes that the equal participation of women in the social, cultural, economic and political life is a prerequisite for successful and sustainable development. As such women have been appointed to occupy some key positions which in the past were male dominated, such as the Speaker of Parliament, the Chief Justice, the Minister of Youth and Sports, the Attorney General and Minister for Justice and the Director General of the Immigration.

Even though Ghana is integrating the MDGs into her national development agenda with some of the goals making significant improvements, the country is not likely to achieve all of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015.

There are however challenges which are structural, programmatic and resource oriented. The lack of sustained progress in expanding women's participation in governance, limited viable district level gender support units, lack of sustained commitment from government and development partners, inability to scale-up strong partnerships with civil society organizations and inadequate resources for ending violence against women and girls inhibit women's advancement. A notable obstacle that needs greater attention is the lack of reliable and consistent data to monitor progress of the MDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, it is Ghana's determination to continuously adopt and implement measures that progressively enable us achieve gender equality and the advancement of women. To function optimally, there is the need for enhanced collaboration with development partners, donors and local stakeholders- to provide technical and financial support for programmes of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. We acknowledge the importance of international, south-south and north-south cooperation.

The Ministry has kick started a self assessment process to enable it develop more effective systems for achieving gender equality. The New Gender Entity Framework therefore presents an opportunity for achieving this goal.

Thank you