

GHANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF GHANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
19 EAST 47TH STREET,
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TEL. 212-832-1300 • FAX 212-751-6743

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STATEMENT

BY

HON. JULIANA ASUMAH-MENSAH
MINISTER FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS

AT THE

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

NEW YORK, MARCH 3, 2010

My delegation wishes to express our sincere support to you and the organization in the success of your 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 sympathy 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 61/191 and looks forward to the establishment of a viable gender entity.

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, continued to strive to make progress in implementing the commitments of the PFA, notwithstanding significant 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 formulated and enacted a number of legislative provisions, including the Domestic Violence, Trafficking Acts, criminalized sexual offences and harmful traditional practices such as child 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 operationalized. Women are part of the National, Regional and District Peace Councils, as well as Regional Peace Promoters and Mediation Committees which have helped to de-escalate conflicts and maintained peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

To ensure adequate resources for implementation 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 10 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 Female Empowerment and Support (FES) programme which provides micro-credit, skills development, capacity building and supply of appropriate technology equipment, information, extension services and advice. The programme will benefit the extremely poor population, has been introduced to reduce poverty.

The introduction of programmes such as the National Nutrition Programme, the school feeding programme for school children, and one laptop for every child within the T-LEIS Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, has contributed to improved access to education in terms of enrollment and attendance. The gender parity index (ratio of girls to boys) is currently 0.7 in primary school and 0.96 in secondary education (2005/07). The elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education is likely to be achieved by 2015.

In order to address existing challenges on maternal mortality to achieve MDG 4 & 5, policies and legislations have been put in place including a Health Service Act which ensures free maternal care under National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS, 2007) and promotes access to maternity services. These efforts produced a 5% decrease in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) 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 is 174 deaths per 100,000 live births. The level of infant and child deaths remains high, particularly in rural areas.

Also, strong with governmental support in addressing the AIDS problem, the national prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS has declined to 1.0%. This is due to strong governmental support including successful behavior change and transmission programmes. This has resulted in some hospitals in regions with highest prevalence rates recording success stories of 96% babies born to HIV positive mothers.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana recognizes that the ~~country's~~ ~~economic and~~ ~~political life is a~~ ~~prerequisite for successful and~~ ~~development.~~ ~~However,~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~appointed~~ ~~to~~ ~~key~~ ~~positions~~ ~~with~~ ~~high~~ ~~visibility~~ ~~and~~ ~~prestige~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~Speaker~~ ~~of~~ ~~Parliament,~~ ~~the~~ ~~Chief~~ ~~Justice,~~ ~~the~~ ~~Minister~~ ~~of~~ ~~Youth~~ ~~and~~ ~~Sports,~~ ~~the~~ ~~Minister~~ ~~of~~ ~~General~~ ~~and~~ ~~Minister~~ ~~for~~ ~~Justice~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~Director~~ ~~General~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Immigration~~ ~~Service.~~ ~~Even~~ ~~though~~ ~~Ghana~~ ~~is~~ ~~integrating~~ ~~the~~ ~~Millennium~~ ~~Development~~ ~~Agenda~~ ~~with~~ ~~some~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~goals~~ ~~making~~ ~~significant~~ ~~improvements~~ ~~the~~ ~~country~~ ~~is~~ ~~still~~ ~~far~~ ~~from~~ ~~achieving~~ ~~the~~ ~~Millennium~~ ~~Development~~ ~~Goals.~~

There are ~~however~~ ~~challenges~~ ~~with~~ ~~an~~ ~~structural~~ ~~and~~ ~~programmatic~~ ~~and~~ ~~resource~~ ~~oriented~~ ~~due~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~lack~~ ~~of~~ ~~sustained~~ ~~progress~~ ~~in~~ ~~expanding~~ ~~women's~~ ~~participation~~ ~~in~~ ~~governance;~~ ~~limited~~ ~~visible~~ ~~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~~ ~~which~~ ~~hinder~~ ~~women's~~ ~~advancement.~~ ~~A~~ ~~notable~~ ~~obstacle~~ ~~that~~ ~~needs~~ ~~greater~~ ~~attention~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~lack~~ ~~of~~ ~~reliable~~ ~~and~~ ~~consistent~~ ~~data~~ ~~to~~ ~~monitor~~ ~~progress~~ ~~of~~ ~~MDGs.~~

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, it is Ghana's determination to continue to ~~implement~~ ~~measures~~ ~~that~~ ~~progressively~~ ~~enable~~ ~~us~~ ~~achieve~~ ~~gender~~ ~~equality~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~advancement~~ ~~of~~ ~~women.~~ ~~In~~ ~~addition~~ ~~to~~ ~~that,~~ ~~there~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~need~~ ~~to~~ ~~enhance~~ ~~collaboration~~ ~~with~~ ~~development~~ ~~partners~~ ~~and~~ ~~local~~ ~~stakeholders~~ ~~to~~ ~~provide~~ ~~technical~~ ~~and~~ ~~financial~~ ~~support~~ ~~for~~ ~~programmes~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Ministry~~ ~~of~~ ~~Women~~ ~~and~~ ~~Children's~~ ~~Affairs~~ ~~to~~ ~~attract~~ ~~low~~ ~~cost~~ ~~financing~~ ~~of~~ ~~international,~~ ~~south~~ ~~and~~ ~~north~~ ~~south~~ ~~cooperation.~~

The Ministry has kick started a ~~self~~ ~~assessment~~ ~~process~~ ~~to~~ ~~evaluate~~ ~~its~~ ~~more~~ ~~effective~~ ~~systems~~ ~~for~~ ~~achieving~~ ~~gender~~ ~~equality.~~ ~~In~~ ~~the~~ ~~new~~ ~~Gender~~ ~~Equality~~ ~~Framework~~ ~~therefore~~ ~~presents~~ ~~an~~ ~~opportunity~~ ~~for~~ ~~achieving~~ ~~gender~~ ~~equity.~~

Thank you