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STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 63RD SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 56: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

New York, 14th October, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation commends the Secretary-General for the preparation of his thought provoking reports before us and the valuable recommendations contained therein. These reports undoubtedly set the momentum for the consideration of this matter.

We also extend our appreciation to the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and the various officials for their insightful introductory statements. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Government of Ghana has made gender equality and the empowerment of women an integral part of its initiatives towards sustainable development, peace, stability and security. Consequently, the necessary administrative, legal and constitutional mechanisms have been put in place to promote the development of women and ensure the protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in conformity with the Beijing Platform of Action and the outcome document of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly. We are taking steps to provide progressively an enabling environment for enhanced women participation in decision making at all levels of society as well as incorporate gender perspectives in all dimensions in development policies, programmes and plans. On Friday 10th October, 2008 the national gender machinery launched a National Women in Decision Making Directory to fulfill its Affirmative Action commitments.

Mr. Chairman,

Ghana supports the Secretary-General's leadership role to end violence against women. In this regard, the Government of Ghana has adopted a comprehensive approach to eliminate all forms of violence against the Ghanaian woman through enhancing the legal and policy frameworks to protect women. Currently, legislation to prohibit negative cultural practices which impede the development of women such as ritual servitude, harmful widowhood rites, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), early marriages, violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, discriminatory food allocations and taboos and practices relating to health and well being of women are being implemented effectively.

Following the passage of the Domestic Violence Act by the Parliament of Ghana on 21st February 2007, Domestic Violence and Victim Support Units within the Ghana Police Service are working to protect women and children from domestic violence, abuse and neglect, provide support and services to victims and end impunity for violence against women. In addition a Domestic Violence Policy and a comprehensive National Plan of

Action has been finalized and a DV Secretariat set up. A DV Management Board is in place with the Minister of Children and Women (MOWAC) as its Chair. Additionally, various gender focused training programmes are under-way within the law enforcement agencies to improve their capacity to cope with gender-based violence.

In order to intensify prevention and ensure a conducive environment that does not tolerate violations of the rights of women and children, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, a constitutional body, monitors and educates the public on human rights and enhances women's awareness of existing legislation and remedies

Mr. Chairman,

Trafficking in women and girls is an atrocious violation of their rights. It is indeed appalling that despite the adoption in 2000 of the landmark United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, trafficking is thriving and millions worldwide particularly women and girls are trafficked across borders regularly.

Ghana has demonstrated the political will to tackle this issue and ensure that effective national counter-trafficking mechanisms are available to address the phenomenon based on the United Nations model of prevention, protection and prosecution. Ghana passed a Human Trafficking Act, Act 694 in December, 2005 which provides Law provides for the establishment of a Trafficking Fund and the provision of basic material support, skills training, family tracing and other matters connected with the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims. It is our hope that a credible United Nations anti-trafficking Plan of Action would advance international support to ensure that necessary resources are made available to implement anti-trafficking initiatives.

Mr. Chairman,

It is an acknowledged fact that allocation of sufficient resources to national gender machineries for the advancement of women will contribute immensely towards effective implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the achievement of other internationally agreed development goals. We therefore agree with the observations on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women at the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which underlined that investing in women and girls has a multiplier effect on sustained economic growth.

The Government of Ghana having acknowledged the lack of resources as one key obstacle to effective implementation at national level has instituted prudent fiscal micro-

economy policies. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) has been introduced into the 2009 Budget Guidelines to all public sectors. Strategies have been put in place to deepen collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP) and National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) to enhance capacities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Gender responsive budgeting. MOWAC organized an evaluation workshop in the last week of September, 2008 to verify how far MDAs incorporated GE issues in their respective 2009 budget estimate submissions to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

We believe that increased financial inflows from bilateral and multilateral sources will accelerate achievement of internationally agreed development goals and targets relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Prior to the third of a series of High-Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness convened in Accra, Ghana this year representatives of women's groups, including gender advocates and experts and individuals from women's rights organizations and women's empowerment organizations and civil society organizations, attended the Accra International Women's Forum and deliberated on Gender Equality (GE) and Aid Effectiveness in support of promoting MDG 3.

We are looking forward to the follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development and the review of the implementation of the Monterrey consensus in view of the opportunity they will provide to further explore the gender implications of financing for development, and strengthening coherence between macro-economic policies, plans and programmes and the internationally agreed goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, it is our hope that the decisions of this Committee will endeavour to further strengthen our unreserved commitment to gender equality and the advancement of women. Allow me to reiterate what was rightly stressed by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women in her introductory statement to this Committee that "it is only through such commitment that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly will be achieved".

I thank you.