

# GHANA



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## STATEMENT

BY

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ON

**AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN, AT THE  
THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 65<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*NEW YORK, 12<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2010*

**Mr. Chairman,**

Permit me, on behalf of my delegation, to join previous speakers in expressing our congratulations and support to you and the members of the bureau. Ghana looks forward to fruitful and successful deliberations in this Committee during your leadership of this session.

We express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General of UN Women, Ms. Michelle Bachelet and the distinguished speakers for their contributions under this agenda item. My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the African Group as well as that of the Group of 77 and China and is equally grateful to the Secretary General for his insightful reports on this agenda item.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The African Union declared 2010-2020 the decade of women in Africa and called on actors to be creative in using all available resources to ensure that there is real achievement of the commitments made to promote and observe women's rights and work towards gender equality and women empowerment. It is, therefore, fitting that in July this year, the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was established to improve UN system-wide coherence by bringing together the various UN institutions that focus on women's issues.

This year's report reflected, among other things, on the disparities that continue to exist between available legislation and its implementation, the connection between early implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the unrelenting violence perpetuated against women worldwide, and the fact that women remain in the least paid jobs without social protection. Furthermore, progress in healthcare has been limited, with maternal mortality rates still high, while in the area of peace and security, policy development has not yielded the commensurate progress.

The Beijing Platform for Action recognized that social and cultural factors often made women more susceptible to diseases and infection. Globally, a lack of gender balance in decision-making positions and conflict management still persists. Women still constitute the majority of the poor and in some countries lack access to and control over resources, thereby limiting their economic autonomy and increasing their vulnerability to economic and social shocks. Similarly, the ability to produce reliable, accurate and timely statistics, in particular gender statistics, remains a daunting challenge for many countries.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Agriculture is the main driving force behind Ghana's economy, accounting for over 42% of GDP. Women constitute about 80% of our informal productive sectors of the economy and control more than 50% of informal sector businesses. However, Ghanaian women continue to encounter difficulties in accessing credit facilities which prevent them from attaining their full potential to contribute to the development of our economy. Government, within this context, has set up programmes to provide women with micro-credit and small loans, agro-processing equipments, and enhance their capacity through information sharing and skills training.

In our determination to address violations on the rights of women, Ghana has prepared and ratified a number of legislations including the Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Acts, both of which ban all forms of violence and trafficking, provides interventions to rescue, rehabilitate and re-integrate victims as well as punish the perpetrators of such crimes. With the support of our development partners and some UN Agencies, the national machinery is implementing a National Plan of Action (NPA) on Domestic Violence as well as the establishment of a human trafficking secretariat to coordinate activities of the Management Board.

To date, government has effectively criminalized sexual offences and harmful traditional practices such as ritual servitude, cruel widowhood rites and FGM. Further legislation has also been passed to address women's rights in marriage, divorce and inheritance, while efforts are underway to establish a Spousal Property Act and review the existing Intestate Succession Law. Social protection policies targeting poor women such as the capitation grant, free pre-natal and delivery services to pregnant women, the school feeding programme and the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) have been introduced.

Women's participation in governance and decision-making is being spearheaded through programmes that support women taking part in district and national elections through training and public education. Furthermore, to ensure adequate resource allocation to gender issues, we are promoting gender mainstreaming and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) into key Ministries, Departments and Agencies with the view to enhancing evidence-based decision-making on gender equality and women empowerment by collating gender and sex disaggregated data in all districts.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In spite of government's diligent efforts, the majority of Ghana's women are yet to achieve gender parity and economic independence. The lack of sustained progress in expanding women's participation in governance, harmful socio-cultural practices, low coverage of women under the social security scheme, violence against women, inadequate disaggregated data, and inadequate shelters for female victims as well as the lack of adequate resources has hampered the effective implementation and enforcement of laws, policies and programmes.

To function optimally, we need to enhance collaboration with our development partners, donors and stakeholders, as well as provide technical, financial and other forms of support to Government programmes. Consequently, there is the need to examine the issue of alternative funding and share best practices with each other.

On our part, we intend to intensify advocacy and awareness creation on the development and rights of women, facilitate the establishment of Legislative Instruments that protect the rights of women, launch a Network of Women on Peace and Security to enhance the number of women in decision-making positions in the country, as well as build two new shelters in Accra and more in all regions of the country to promote victim protection.

**Mr. Chairman,**

It must be established that there is an express correlation between poverty reduction, women empowerment, gender equality and the sustainable socio-economic development of our nations. Indeed the activities of an educated, skilled and financially resourced woman has a direct impact on the health, nutrition and educational requirements of her children. Subsequently there is the need to increase the capacity and resources of governments for gender equality in all sectors.

Let me reiterate, that as we strive towards to this end, the Government of Ghana remains committed to pursuing workable solutions and hastening the implementation of gender programmes to ensure gender equality and women empowerment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Thank You.