



**SUBMISSION OF COUNTRY REPORT
INPUTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL
ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONON ‘WOMEN IN
DEVELOPMENT’ (A/RES/74/235)**

**BY
MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL
PROTECTION
GHANA**

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INTRODUCTION

The Government of Ghana (GoG) has made a commitment to promote women empowerment and human rights with the ratification of key international instruments. Government through various institutions has developed policies, projects and is implementing strategic interventions to enhance women's access to justice, rights, leadership, decision-making, accountable governance and economic opportunities.

Gender is a cross-cutting issue that affects every facet of developmental process in Ghana. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) is the national machinery mandated to promote gender equality, equity, empowerment and development in Ghana. The MoGCSP pursues these through mainstreaming gender concerns into development planning, policies, budgeting, programmes, interventions and activities at all levels of implementation.

The President of the Republic, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo being the African Union (AU) champion for the promotion of gender and women empowerment has re-positioned the country in the quest to attain Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) as well as achieve sustainable development for all, especially women and girls in rural areas.

Implementation of gender specific economic, social, cultural and legal measures are being accelerated by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in collaboration with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), academia, media, traditional and religious leaders and the private sector to improve and promote the well-being, rights and empowerment of women and girls particularly in rural areas.

It is certain that ensuring gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women is critical for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly goals 1, 2 and 5.

Significant progress has been made in Ghana at the centralized and the decentralized government levels toward improving the situation of women and girls to fully achieve national development.

Information related to the implementation of General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/74/235) are outlined below:

Strengthening and implementing gender-responsive poverty eradication strategies, including social protection systems, to help ensure an adequate standard of living for women and girls, especially in response to challenges posed by the COVID- 19 pandemic

Poverty across the sub-region and Ghana is increasingly feminized as women are among the vulnerable group most impacted by economic shocks and fluctuations. Poverty alleviation has been a challenge as evident in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, significant

gains have been made in the country's fight against poverty and deprivation. Equally, the overall reduction in the incidence of poverty and inequality is profound in many parts of the country. Ghana has seven (7) flagship social protection interventions namely, Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme, Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Labor Intensive Public Works (LIPW), the Education Capitation Grant (ECG), Free Senior High School Policy (FSHSP) and the Complementary Livelihood and Asset Support Scheme (CLASS) has been instituted to support the poor and the vulnerable. In July, 2020, Ghana statistical Service (GSS) reported that, 77.4% of households experienced a decrease in income during COVID-19 restrictions¹ Thus, approximately 22 million Ghanaians were affected by reduced household income. In addition, 5.7 percent of business establishments had to close during the partial lockdown, with 16.1 percent continuing to be closed after the easing of the lockdown. Apart from, ECG which reduced by 0.02 percent post-pandemic restrictions in 2020, all other interventions recorded significant increases in the number of beneficiaries, ranging between 0.7 percentage increase for LEAP and 51.04 percentage increase for FSHSP. About 60% of the beneficiaries of these programmes are female headed households.

Increasing investment in and implementation of gender-responsive policies and programmes for full and productive employment and decent work for all women, including their participation in and access to labour markets, and addressing women's disproportionate job losses during the COVID-19 crisis

Ghana in recent times has been ranked highest as a country with the most female entrepreneurs (46.4%) according to the MASTERCARD Index of Women Entrepreneurship (MIWE). The rising figures of female entrepreneurs are propelling business innovation in emerging markets. This shows that the entrepreneurial activities of women are the anchors of economic growth and development in the country. According to the MASTERCARD Index of Women Entrepreneurs, women in Ghana own almost half of all businesses in the country. As a means of fully harnessing the potential for productive employment and decent work and growth, the following targeted programmes have been developed to provide women with capital, knowledge and tools to enhance the economic capacities:

- Ghana Women Entrepreneurship Summit (GWES)
- Coronavirus Alleviation Business Support Scheme (CAPBuSS)
- Mastercard Foundation Recovery and Resilience Programme
- NBSSI Mastercard Foundation Young African Works Project
- ITC She trades in Commonwealth Ghana directory

¹ Ghana Statistical Service (2020): Brief on COVID-19 household and job tracker wave 1

Prohibiting all forms of discrimination against women, including in the world of work, including against women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as migrant women and women with disabilities

In Ghana, the 1992 Constitution guarantees the Human Rights of all citizens including women, children, vulnerable and other disadvantaged groups such as the aged and people with disabilities. As well as equality and freedom from discrimination where person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status. In addition, the National Council on Persons with Disabilities is responsible for the various categories of disability groupings. In compliance with Section 42 (9) of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715), the Council has a Disaggregated Database Unit maintaining a register on persons with disabilities. The Unit maintains a disaggregated database on persons with disabilities which guides government's policies and interventions. Interventions to prohibit discrimination and ensure the full integration of women with disabilities into the development process include:

- The National Council on Persons with Disability set up an Inclusion Unit with the aim to provide specific needs for women and girls
- The development of a framework to mainstream the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in national and, especially, local-level policies and programs.
- The draft Persons with Disabilities Re-enactment Bill 2020 has dedicated a section (Section 37) to the rights of women and girls with disabilities, within which their rights to productive employment are reaffirmed and flexible employment terms provided for the group.
- Partnership with commercial banks to develop and expand access to innovative financial products for women especially in the areas of Agri-business, creative arts, ICT, services, manufacturing among others.

Reports on abuses and infringements on individual rights at work are reported directly to the Equal Opportunities offices for redress. If action is not taken within a stipulated time (2 weeks), the complainant has access to the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice which serves as the Ombudsman for the Country.

Supporting women's entrepreneurship, expanding existing women-owned and -led MSME and facilitating opportunities for new women entrepreneurs

The Government of Ghana has instituted a Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC) as an apex body responsible for implementing the Government of Ghana's (GoG) microfinance

programmes targeted at reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth, particularly among rural women and girls. Through its services, MASLOC has undoubtedly benefited some citizens across the country in diverse ways. Many beneficiaries have reported growth in their income and businesses, as well as improvement in their socio-economic participation and general well-being. The President of Ghana directed for 50% of the MASLOC loans to be dedicated to women in small scale-farming and businesses.

The Ghana Enterprises Agency, as an institution championing the course of women entrepreneurship, is currently undertaking targeted programmes to provide women with capital, knowledge and tools to enhance their economic capacities. These include:

- Ghana Women Entrepreneurship Summit (GWES)
- Mastercard Foundation Recovery and Resilience Programme
- NBSSI Mastercard Foundation Young African Works Project
- ITC She trades in Commonwealth Ghana directory
- Showcasing inclusive business models that benefit smallholders, particularly women

In April 2020, at the onset of the pandemic, the Government announced a package of economic stimulus measures called the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme (CAP). Key initiatives under the CAP included a GH¢600 million for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) via the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme - Business Support Scheme (CAPBuSS), which is expected to be supplemented by up to GH¢400 million in bank lending. This was to provide financial support to MSMEs in Ghana, especially women who are the majority in that space.

The COVID 19 Stimulus Fund, put together by the 3 female-led organizations and invested approximately \$2,500- \$5,000 (GHC 15,000 – 30,000 in local currency) in female-led small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs). It is largely an equity-based model which provides SMEs with initial funding and based on the profit they make, a percentage is taken and ploughed back into the fund to be re-invested into supporting other SMEs.

Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, sexual harassment and discrimination against women and girls, including in the world of work, and addressing the increase in gender-based violence during the pandemic

The Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) established the Domestic Violence Secretariat to coordinate the full implementation of the Domestic Violence Act 2007. Parliament has also passed the Domestic Violence Regulations, 2016 (L.I. 2237) to fully implement the Law. To this end several measures have been

undertaken to address violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 period. They include:

- The renovation and refurbishment of the victims/survivors shelter in Accra.
- The establishment of the Orange Support Centre and the Boame Mobile Application in March 2021. The Centre and Mobile Application are to facilitate quick response and referrals to appropriate institutions for redress. A multi-disciplinary team of experts is available to provide a range of services to victims and survivors. A Psychologist is also attached to the Centre to provide psycho-social counselling for victims and survivors. The active 24-hour uninterrupted helpline is 0800 111 222. To date over 6000 calls have been received by the orange support center, 280 are active, 50 resolved and closed and 233 are in the process of being resolved.
- The Domestic Violence Information Portal has been developed to provide and enhance data sharing amongst all stakeholders in the fight against Domestic/Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Child Marriage
- The launch of a web-based online system to document and report on the provision of social welfare services (child protection, social protection and gender-based violence), known as Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS). (<http://www.mogcsp.gov.gh/swims/>) SWIMS is based on standard national data collection forms, workflows, referral pathways and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for use by staff of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) responsible for social protection, child protection, justice for children and gender-based violence-related services and other service providers including NGOs, CSOs, and Residential Care Facilities/
- The National Cyber Security Act, 2020 (Act 1038) that seeks to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence and harassment online especially harassment on nonconsensual sharing of intimate images and sexual extortion. The National Security, Ghana Police Service and the Ministry of Communication have put in place a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance of the Act.
- The Ministry of Communication and Digitalisation has initiated the “Girls in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)” programme to equip young girls with the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively manage the internet.
- The Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service has established a ‘One - Stop – Shop’ for domestic violence cases. The Centre is equipped with a clinic, shelter, social welfare office and a psychologist to provide psycho-social counselling for victims and survivors.

Providing equitable and universal access to affordable and quality healthcare services including sexual and reproductive health, for women and girls in order to achieve the realization of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, particularly in contexts of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19

Government's **Agenda 111** which seeks to construct and refurbish 111 health facilities in the country is being implemented to improve the delivery of quality healthcare at the district level and boost access to healthcare services for all citizens as a lesson from COVID-19. The pandemic highlighted the unequal distribution of healthcare facilities in the country, showing concentration of healthcare infrastructure in Accra, Kumasi and our other big cities.

Ghana has developed a Strategic Plan for a comprehensive response to Human Rights - related barriers to HIV and TB services in Ghana (2020-2024), established a Discriminating Reporting (DR) System and a Health Right Desk at CHRAJ. Sensitization, mentorship, school and out-of-school programmes are organized to create awareness on HIV and Aids among young people. Conscious efforts are made to consistently involve adolescent girls and young women are in decision making spaces in the national HIV response.

As a country committed to the virtual elimination of Mother -to- Child Transmission (MCMT) of HIV and has adopted the global MTCT rate of 5% or less as the benchmark for the elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV. Therefore, all HIV positive mothers to have access to antiretroviral prophylaxis (ART) for HIV exposed infants.

Also, Ghana adopted the "Treat-All" policy in 2016 in which People Living with HIV (PLHIV) are eligible for treatment, and this was expected to increase the number of PLHIV on ART.

Promoting and protecting women's and girls' right to education and ensuring their safe and equal access to and participation in education throughout the life cycle and at all levels, given the prolonged suspension of educational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and redressing the attrition of women and girl student.

Ghana is implementing the universal free basic education policy, free Senior High Education Policy, and STEM education policy which are giving women and girls access to education.

Furthermore, the 'Better Life for Girls' project introduced in education enabled over 4,000 adolescent girls to stay in school, prioritizing their education and advancement in STEM and empowering them to reach their highest potential

Government also has a Safe School Policy to deal with GBV and bullying, as well as a Re-Entry Policy to secure access to education for teenage mothers who may have been affected

by the prolonged suspension of educational activities during the COVID-19. Mentorship sessions for girls are organized periodically to empower girls in education, skills acquisition and career development.

Integration of gender perspective into climate change, environment and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes and providing adequate resources to ensure the full and equal participation of women in all levels of decision making and implementation in all these areas.

Gender equality and climate change remain central to Ghana's Development Agenda as captured in the National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework for 2022-2025. The Policy Framework among other key areas addresses gender equality and climate change to promote reduction of deforestation, ensure gender equality, increase productive use of clean water, good energy and safer environment.

To facilitate the integration of gender concerns into climate actions and Ghana's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), a gender analysis has been conducted for the 7 priority sectors of the Nationally Determined Contributions which include Agriculture, Energy, Health and Disaster Risk Reduction among others to identify key gaps for gender mainstreaming. This has resulted in the development of a National Climate Change Gender Action Plan and Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Climate Actions. The planning, budgeting and gender focal persons from across the seven priority NDCs sectors at the national level and other selected staff at the sub-national level have been trained in the use of the tool kit to adequately mainstream gender into climate actions in the country.

Improving and systematizing the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable disaggregated data with a focus on women's employment, informal employment, access to decent work and social protection, entrepreneurship and unpaid care and domestic work through time-use surveys and satellite accounts to assess the contribution of such work to national income.

The Ghana Statistical Service has improved its disaggregated data through the 2021 Population Housing Census which compiles highlights of results of Sex Profile, Literacy and Education: Economic Activity. This will provide important information to guide decision-making by a variety of stakeholders and support the evidence-based implementation of the national development agenda and support the tracking of achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

CONCLUSION

In Ghana, the gains made in improving the situation of women and girls have been facilitated by a number of institutional frameworks, legislative and policy interventions. The Government aims to create a society of fair opportunities for all Ghanaians. Therefore, building on the far-reaching social intervention policies will help create a fair and inclusive society, which ensures that all citizens including women, girls the excluded, vulnerable and persons with disability share in the country's wealth and prosperity.

The Government of Ghana will continue to improve the situation of women and girls by focusing on ensuring gender mainstreaming in sector programs at the national and sub-national levels to achieve gender equality.

Ghana reaffirms its commitment to continue to expand, accelerate and promote efforts toward ensuring the full realization of the rights, equality, economic empowerment and social well-being of women and girls.