

The Ministry of Women and children's Affairs was established in 2001 under the Headship of Mrs Gladys Asmarh. The Hon Juliana Azumah Mensah is the current Minister.

The Ministry exists to promote the welfare of women and children in Ghana. It is the entity designated by government to initiate, coordinate and Monitor gender responsive issues. It is to ensure equal status for women and promote rights of children.

**Ministry** : Ministry of Women & Children's Affairs

**Minister** : Nana Oye Lithur

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### **Aims And Objectives:**

- The formulation of gender and child specific development policies, guidelines, advocacy tools strategies and plans for implementation by MBA, District Assemblies, Private Sector Agencies, NGOs, civil Society Groups, and other Development partners.
- Prepare National Development plan and programmes for women and children in which all the desired objectives and functions of the Ministry are programmed for implementation.
- Insuring that development programmes for women and children are effectively implemented, through continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process, making sure stipulated objectives are fulfilled.

### **Achievements**

- Abolition of child trafficking.
- Promoting women into decision-making positions has always been a priority of the ministry.
- Acquisition of 200 Gari processing machines to lend to women in the Rural Areas, and the cultivation and processing of cassava.
- The ministry has provided advice on countering domestic violence and has achieved significant improvement in domestic violence legislation and protection of women and others.
- Trained Gender Desk Officers.

## **ACTIVITIES OF MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION IN GHANA**

The Government of Ghana cognizant that child labour and its worst forms mitigate against child development, ratified the ILO Convention 182, in 2000, that prohibits Worst Forms of Child Labour.

The Ghana Government recognizing that children are vulnerable and require special protection, appropriate to the age, level of maturity and individual needs, ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and was the first country to do so in February 1990 after the Convention came into force in September 1989. Ghana also ratified the Convention on the Elimination and discrimination.

Ghana , to protect her children against harmful traditional practices included a whole chapter on the rights of a child in the 1992 Constitution.

Ghana before the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) established in 1989, the Ghana National Commission on Children to see to the general welfare and development of children and co-ordinate all essential services for children in the country, with the view to promoting the rights of the child.

The first National Programme of Action dubbed, the child cannot wait, was developed with set goals that gave a focus to the work by government and civil society organizations to enable progress for children in their survival, protection, participation and development.

The country since the ratification of the CRC, has developed policies and programme backed by legislative frameworks that offer strategies for the protection, survival and development of our

children. Some of the legislations and policies include:-

The 1960 Criminal Code (Act 29)

1992 National Constitution Article 28

Children's Act 1998 Act 560/LI 1705 " Regulations on children's Act

Criminal Code Amendment Act 1998 (Act 554)

Juvenile Justice Act 2003 (Act 653)

Education Act 1961/FCUBE

The Human Trafficking Act 2005 (Act 694)

Furthermore, a number of complementary policies and programmes that affect the welfare of children exist, for example:

Early Childhood Care and Development Policy, 2004

Draft Street Children in Ghana Policy Framework, 1995

National Gender and Children Policy, 2004

Ghana HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework 2001 " 2005

National Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for HIV/AIDS in Ghana 2001 " 2005

National HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Policy, 2004

Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy, 2000

Juvenile Justice Act of 2003 (Act 653)

Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 1993 (Act 458) and other amendments in 1994 (Act 484) and 1998 (Act 544)

Revised National Population Policy, 1994

### **National Disability Policy.**

Government of Ghana is committed to protect the rights and welfare of its children as well as develop its future human resource needs for the country's development. To this end, a number of laws, policies and programmes have been put in place over the years to protect Ghanaian children.

The Government of Ghana has ratified the following international conventions:-

ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (NO. 182)

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child  
The Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (NO. 5)  
Forced Labour Conventions (NOs. 29 and 105)  
Labour Inspection and Convention NO. 81  
Equal remuneration (NO.100)

### **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

To ensure a more frontal attack on child labour and further facilitate the national child labour elimination process, the Government of Ghana signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ILO in March 2000 committing itself to eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour. This marked the commencement of the United States Department of Labour (USDOL) funded ILO technical assistance programme, dubbed, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. Through ILO/IPEC support, great strides have been achieved in legislation, policy and programme development and implementation.

Government of Ghana has a comprehensive institutional and administrative arrangements that facilitate effective sharing of ideas and information aimed at child labour elimination in Ghana . Under this, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies as well as various stakeholders have joined hands for a holistic onslaught against child labour in Ghana .

The following institutional reforms and structures to effectively deal with child labour and related matters have been put in place:-

Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE) with Child Labour Unit (CLU),  
Employment Information Bureau (EIB) and Social Welfare

Department as its main focal points for child labour and related matters

Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), with Children's and women's Departments, to handle all issues affecting women and children Girl-Child Education and Basic Education Divisions in the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS)

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), a major stakeholder with a Child Labour Desk to handle child labour and related issues

Creation of child labour desks by other stakeholders, including the Ghana Employers Association (GEA) and the Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC) to mainstream child labour

issues into their regular activities.

In addition to the above measures, the Government of Ghana has implemented and will continue to implement a number of programmes in collaboration with stakeholders, which directly address the child labour issue. Prominent among these is the full implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy through free attendance at public basic schools to disengage children from child labour.

Other programmes include: the Skills Training and Employment Placement (STEP) and the Street Children component of the Community-Based Poverty Reduction Projects of Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (MMYE); School Feeding, Early Childhood Development and the Skills Training and Apprenticeship Programmes by Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. The rest include: institution of awards schemes for teachers; sponsorship of teacher trainees and needy children; construction of educational infrastructure and various poverty reduction programmes. The Municipal, Metropolitan and District Assemblies are involved in the implementation of these programmes.

It is refreshing to note that, the aforementioned programmes and activities are not exhaustive. There are lot of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Non Governmental Organizations, Community Based Organizations, Religious Organizations and many others who are helping to eliminate child labour and poverty in Ghana .

The government has included child labour issues in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II), to enable her marshal resources nationally and internationally to support the development of her children on who the future of this nation depends.

Government will continue to sensitize people on the worst forms of child labour in the cocoa farming communities and synchronize activities with other child labour programmes such as the Time Bound Programme.

Given the prominence that Government of Ghana places on the coca sector, a more focused and sector specific programme, the Cocoa Child Labour Elimination Programme<sup>1</sup> has been developed. The programme among others is planned to carry out a baseline survey in the cocoa sector by a consortium of stakeholders including cocoa industry partners to establish the incidence of child labour and its worst forms of guide interventions, policy makers and interested stakeholders.

Government of Ghana has adopted multi-sectoral and stakeholders approaches to address its

social problems including child labour and worst forms of child labour in the entire country. It will continue to use these approaches in a pragmatic manner to ensure full and effective implementation of the national intervention programmes to support children and the vulnerable including child labourers when identified.

The solution to child labour problem, which is multi-faceted and cuts across sectors and national boundaries may not come from the use of political and/or economic power which in the end can ruin efforts of the Government and stakeholders who are working assiduously to nib the problem in the bud.

The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs has since the enactment of the Human Trafficking Act 694 in December 2005, has not rested on her oars. The Ministry which is mandated to coordinate the implementation process of the law has organized dissemination workshops through out the country for all stakeholders. Discussions were held with other partners and stakeholders on their roles in the prevention, rescue and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking. The outcome of the meeting afforded the Ministry the opportunity of being informed, of the magnitude and scope of the problem and challenges facing the implementing partners.

The Ministry has also carried out series of capacity building of stakeholders, including the Media , Religious Bodies and MOWAC Staff on the Human Trafficking Act, and other legislations and Policies addressing worst forms of child labour including trafficking.

The Ministry, among several activities, has organized visits and fora with community opinion leaders, chiefs, traditional rulers and queen mothers those the communities identified as sending' and receiving' communities, support in the form of school uniforms, cloth and micro finance for the mothers, and alternate livelihood skills training to empower mothers in the communities. Recent visits to the receiving communities, the Volta River indicate that the children are in school, and the fishermen have formed co-operatives for assistance from the Ministry of Fisheries to engage in fishing by. There has been a significant increase in the enrolment of children in school because of the capitation grant. The Ministry is liaising with GES for progress of the school Feeding Programme. Most of the "sending" communities are already enjoying the Women's Micro-Finance Scheme e.g. Ekumfi Akra, Emmuna, Apam Manford etc.

Ghana 's approaches may appear slower than expected but in a developing process, the country is going through the experiences the developed countries went through during their

industrial revolution period. (The Tale of two cities, the Oliver Twist, the great expectations and the Tom Sawyer eras) . These stories tell us that child labour in its worst forms including trafficking, children working in quarries and coal mines thrived during these periods, in the history of Europe and America . The adoption of pragmatic strategies is what helped these countries to achieve the best for their present generations of children in these developed countries.

Ghana like most developing and under developed countries is also going through the difficult parts of its Socio-economic transformation but with a determination to achieve the best for her children. Ghana was an exemplary first country to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN GHANA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The government of Ghana has passed a number of legislation and ratified various conventions and treaties that seek to promote the rights of women and children and their development in a coherent manner. Specific programmes have been designed to implement majority of these Conventions and Treaties. Some of them have been adapted into our National Development Policy Frameworks with specific strategies and time-bound measurable targets.

### **These Treaties and Conventions include the following:**

- \*Ratification of the conventions on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 2nd January 1986.
- \*Ratification of the Convention on the right of the child (CRC), 5th April 1990.
- \*African Charter of the Rights and Welfare of the Child, February 1990.
- \*Adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, 1995.
- \*Adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 2003 (specifically the protocol relating to women's rights has been approved by Parliament for ratification), March 2007
- \*The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as part of Ghana's Medium to long-term Development Policy Framework (GPRS I & II).
- \*Adoption of African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's

Empowerment, July 2004.

## **ACHEIVEMENTS**

Ghana strived to translate various conventions and Protocols relating to Gender Equality, Women and children's Rights and their Development into concrete policy actions and outcomes since the 1980s. Major achievements include the following:

- \*Complied with International Reporting obligations and submitted and defended Ghana's 3rd, 4th and 5th CEDAW Reports at the UN in August 2006.
- \*Submitted Report on progress made on the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for action. Beijing + 5 and 10 (2000 & 2005).
- \*Submitted Report on implementation of African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2006).
- \*Passed the Human Trafficking Law to prevent trafficking in person especially women and children and to provide for rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking.
- \*Built the capacity of stakeholder institutions to implement the law on trafficking.
- \*Disseminated and sensitized communities on the Human trafficking law.
- \*Passed the Domestic Violence Law that seeks to protect victims of domestic violence and improve family cohesion.
- \*Established MOWAC as a Central Management Agency charged with the responsibility of; (i) formulating Policies and Strategies to promote Gender Equality, (ii) the Socio-economic Empowerment of women, (iii) the protection, survival and holistic development of the Ghanaian child and (iv) coordination of all policies and programmes for the advancement of Gender Equality and the Protection of the Rights of women and children in Ghana.

## **SPECIFIC ACHEIVEMENTS OF THE NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERY**

- \*Gender and Children's Policies Formulated.
- \*MOWAC Strategic Implementation Plan 2005-2008 in place.
- \*Formulated the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy (ECCD) for implementation.
- \*Developed Orphan and Vulnerable Children's Policy (OVCP).
- \*Engendered the strategic Focus of GPRS I & II.
- \*Facilitated the implementation of the Affirmative Action Policy (AAP) that led to the establishment of Gender Desk Officers (GDOs) in all MDAs and some districts.
- \*Continuous collaboration with MDAs, MMDAs, DAs, NGOs and CBOs to implement Gender, Women and Child related programmes and projects.
- \*Coordination of sector policies for the advancement of gender, women and children at national sector and district levels.
- \*Dissemination of government policies at grass root levels to enhance participatory approach to development and good governance.
- \*Affirmative action to achieve gender parities in Girl-child Education.
- \*Carried out sensitization programmes to create health awareness for women (Reproductive Health and Right Issues, Family Planning and Safe motherhood).
- \*Collaborated with relevant government agencies to implement policies on free pre-natal and

delivery services for women.

\*Facilitated the registration of more than 1000 Kayayei under the National Health Insurance Scheme.

\*Extended Micro Credit to women engaged in economic activities with a view to reducing their poverty levels and vulnerability.

\*Trained over 17,000 women in the informal sector on financial management skills

\*Mothers of trafficked children supported with micro credit to carry out small skills business to support their families.

\*Organised women durbars at regional and district levels to disseminate information on government policies and potential impacts on women and to receive feedbacks for possible policy review.

\*Initiated consultative process towards the passage of Property Right of Spouses Bill.

\*Organized consultative Fora with key stakeholders to deliberate on issues of maternal mortality and strategies to curb the incidence.

\*Sensitized public especially women and vulnerable groups on HIV/AIDS.

\*Organized International Expert Forum to deliberate on strategies to increase women's participation in decision-making positions.

\*Provided policy inputs on women and children's concerns for incorporation into national and sector plan eg: (i) Energy Sector Policy, (ii) Land Administration Policy, (iii) Social Protection Strategy Policy etc.

\*Developed an effective Gender M&F Framework to track Progress and Evaluate outcomes and impacts of Gender related programmes and projects.

## **CHALLENGES**

The Ministry faces both financial and human resource constraints in its Gender Equality promotion, Women's Empowerment and the Survival, Protection and Development of the Ghana child. Specific challenges include:

\*Socio-cultural constraints

\*Behaviourial and attitudinal changes within our cultural Set-up

\*Lack of sex-disaggregated data (gender data) to promote effective Gender planning and evidence-based decision making on Gender, Women and Children issues.

\*Enhancing an effective and stronger coalition with all stakeholders to accelerate the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment agenda.

\*Ensuring that National, Sector and District Annual Resource Allocation Frame works (budgets) adequately address Gender equality and Women Empowerment issues.

## **LIST OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

<b>NO.</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONSTITUENCY</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
1	Cecilia Abena Dapaah	Bantama	NPP
2	Grace Addo	Amansie West	NPP
3	Mrs Gifty Ohene konadu	Asante Akim South	NPP
4	Josephine Hilda Addoh	Kwadaso	NPP
5	Elizabeth Agyemang	Oforikrom	NPP
6	Mary Salifu Boforo	Savelugu	NDC
7	Doris A. Seidu	Chereponi	NPP
8	Samia Yaba Nkrumah	Jomoro	CPP
9	Caterine A. Afeku	Evalue Gwira	NPP
10	Gifty Eugenia Kusi	Tarkwa - Nsuaem	NPP
11	Elizabeth Kwatsoe Tawiah Sackey	Okaikwei North	NPP
12	Frema Osei Opere	Ayawaso West-Wuogon	NPP
13	Irene Naa Torshie Addo	Tema West	NPP
14	Shirley Ayorkor Botchway	Weija	NPP
15	Juliana Azumah-Mensah	Ho East	
			NDC
16	Akua Sena Dansua	North Dayi	
			NDC
17	Esther Obeng Dapaah	Abirem	NPP
18	Gifty Klenam	Lower West Akim	
			NPP
19	Beatrice Bernice Boateng	New Juaben South	NPP
20	Elizabeth Amoah-Tetteh	Twifo/Ati Morkwa	NDC