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Mr. Chairman, the Ghana delegation wishes to express its deepest appreciation to the UN Commission for its continuous dedication to Population and Development issues the world over. The choice of theme for this session could not have been more relevant today. More than ever before, there is an urgent need to involve young people in all the processes of development. Ghana therefore commends the UN Secretary General, HE, Ban Ki-Moon, for prioritizing youth

the deepening of youth focus particularly in the areas of education and reproductive health, employment, entrepreneurship, and political inclusion.

Ghana recognizes adolescents and youth as crucial stakeholders in development. They are active participants in society today, in addition to representing the future global workforce. Yet, quite often, their voices go unheard and their views are overlooked as either immature or counter-productive. In Ghana, however, efforts are progressively directed towards reversing this trend.

unsafe and unprotected sex. Fortunately, the National Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy provides for the right of all adolescents to reproductive health information and services including an option for abstention from sex.

Ghana is rapidly becoming urbanized, with a large army of unemployed youth migrating from the rural hinterland in search of non-existent jobs. This trend is increasing urban poverty and other related challenges including the inability to afford decent housing, livelihood and sexual and reproductive health among the youth.

Mr. Chairman, to address these challenges confronting adolescents and the youth, Ghana has implemented several programmes that directly or indirectly affect the holistic development of adolescents and youth. Adolescents are increasingly becoming more knowledgeable about sexual and reproductive health issues that affect them. Prominent among these interventions are:

- The establishment of the National Population Council (NPC) in 1992 by an Act of Parliament to co-ordinate all population related programmes in Ghana and to advise government accordingly. The NPC is currently working towards revising the National Population Policy to include emerging issues particularly those that directly affect adolescents and the youth.
- The provision of guarantees of rights and freedoms for all persons including the youth in the 1992 Constitution. There is media plurality and the youth are encouraged to participate in the

grouping of their choice. The youth actively participated in the development of the Ghana

Other important policies that are targeting youth related challenges include the National Reproductive Health Policy and Standards, the National Reproductive Health Strategic Plan, National Youth Policy and the HIV/AIDS and STI Policy which have provided frameworks through which young people are protected to promote their growth and development. The Domestic Violence Act and the Anti-trafficking Law which criminalizes trafficking in human beings in the country have both been passed by Parliament. There is also the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) with different components aimed at not only creating jobs for the youth but also developing their skills.

big gap between policy and implementation in terms of quality and coverage resulting in