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STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

**55TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 20 FOLLOW-UP TO THE FOURTH WORLD
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND TO THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WOMEN 2000: GENDER
EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE FOR THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

NEW YORK, 22 FEBRUARY- 4 MARCH 2001

Mr. Chairman,

It is an honour for me to address the 55th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I wish to convey my sincere congratulations to the Bureau in your election to steer the affairs of the Commission. We are confident that under your stewardship, we will achieve progress in addressing the challenges that impede the implementation of strategies towards the promotion of access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, as well as the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.

My delegation wishes to align itself with the statements made by Mozambique and Argentina on behalf of Africa and the Group of 77 and China respectively. We commend the Secretary General for the quality of his report. We are of course aware that in spite of the significant progress made many challenges still exist. We are nevertheless persuaded by the report of the Secretary General on Women on the strategic direction that is being charted to face up to these challenges.

In this connection, we will encourage UN Women to factor in existing regional structures such as the African Union and ECOWAS in the on-going study on field capacities, in order to complement the review of national level capacities. Ghana will continue to promote the access to and participation of women and girls in education, science and technology, convinced that science and technology are crucial for modernization, industrialization and socio-economic development.

Mr. Chairman,

In 1987, Ghana launched the Science, Mathematics and Technology Clinics, designed to address the gender imbalance and misconceptions about girls' participation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Education in general. Initially, 57 Clinics were organized for girls. To help sustain this process, the Ministry of Education, in 1993, set up a desk for the coordination of STMF. Subsequently, the Clinics were decentralized into 200 levels where two or three regions were combined in clusters for each clinic. By 1999, Clinics were extended to include girls from the tertiary level. Clinics are organized in all the ten regions of Ghana.

The experiences gained from these Clinics have led to the establishment of the Girls' Education Unit (GEU) under the Science Education Unit (SEU) in 1997 and 2001 respectively. The combined efforts of these two units have contributed a great deal to improve girls' access and performance in education in general, and science and mathematics in particular. After twenty years of the organization of ten clinics, women are currently in employment areas which were previously perceived to be male dominated.

The ultimate goal for the organization of the Clinics is to achieve the target of 50% female students at the tertiary level taking up Science, Technology and Mathematics related courses. Even though this goal is yet to be achieved, the STMF Clinics have yielded the following positive results:

- Students (girls in particular) are better able to deal with gender roles stereotypes associated with female misconceptions and dysfunctional patterns to achieve participating in Science, Technology and Mathematics subjects are gradually being broken.
- Student enrolment in science and mathematics is high not less than before the programme started. At the inception in the STME for girls only 17% of students were enrolled in science and 2% of mathematics in Senior High Schools. Currently, female students constitute 25% of students studying technology related programmes in the University of Ghana.

It is encouraging to note that recent Senior High School examination results also indicate that girls are achieving better grades in science as compared to their counterparts in previous years. More girls are participating in science programmes and the former are also performing better than their male counterparts.

The STME initiative which had 10,000 participants in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Following this success, the focus of the clinics was shifted since 2010, towards building the capacity of both girls and boys in creative thinking. Under the new programme Science, Technology, and Innovation Education (STIE) for girls and boys organized under the theme: "Empowering Ghana's Girls in Science, Technology and Innovation Education for a Better Ghana", these camps were targeted at selected students in junior high in the various regions.

Mr. Chairman,

We hope to continue mobilizing all national stakeholders as well as international collaboration with UN Women and other development partners. This will require developing our institutional capacities and the provision of relevant technical and financial support at the national and sub-national levels. It will also involve the development of the appropriate interdepartmental programme coordination to ensure an efficient and sustainable system of training and development of scientists for a science literate society. Every effort will also be made to collaborate with our existing regional institutions created by ECOWAS and the African Union to help realize an African literate society.

I wish to conclude by thanking the members of the panel for their participation in this session. We are pleased that the work of the Commission continues to be invaluable in raising and maintaining awareness of issues pertaining to gender inequalities for socio-economic development and peace. In this regard, it is our hope that the next session will engage innovative strategies that will accelerate efforts at the goal of this year's theme so as to attain gender equality and women's empowerment.

I thank you!