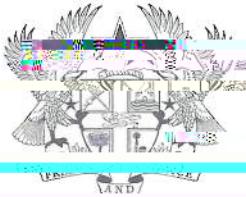


GHANA



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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. KEN KANDA

**AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF GHANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

AT THE

**THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 66TH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful reports on this important agenda item. I concur with the statement made by ~~Nepal~~, ~~China~~, ~~India~~, ~~Iran~~, ~~Maldives~~, ~~Peru~~, ~~Yemen~~ and ~~Yugoslavia~~ with the Group of 77 and China.

The Government of Ghana remains committed to promoting and ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment through concrete initiatives in the legal, political and constitutional realms. The 1992 Constitution and the laws of Ghana in conjunction with other ~~international~~ ~~regional~~ documents such as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and Protocols, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly remain the guiding policy framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women in our country.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General's report noted that despite the lack of recognition for the pivotal role rural women play in agriculture and rural development, the High-Level Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in 2010 highlighted the critical role of rural women in national food security and rural development. It stressed the need for all countries to institute fair reform policies favourable to women as well as individual families, communities and build up the capacity of women's rights to own land and property.

Furthermore, with increasing migration in rural areas, there has been an expansion of women's roles in agriculture and other tasks. Yet, this has not translated to the full and equal participation of women in decision making bodies at the national and local levels. To enhance a systematic approach to addressing the needs of rural women, it emphasized the need for gender-sensitive policies in agriculture and other related sectors.

Mr. Chairman,

Rural women form the backbone of the agricultural labour force in most developing countries and in Ghana, 47% of rural women constitute the agricultural labour force. They generally work as subsistence farmers, small-scale entrepreneurs and care workers or casual wage labourers. The global financial and economic crisis, volatile prices of food and fuel costs, as well as the uncertainties and impact of climate change has further complicated efforts to reduce poverty and inequality and aggravated rural underdevelopment.

Realizing that agriculture is the mainstay of the economy and the driving force behind Ghana's economy; and the fact that ~~Ghanaian~~ food crop farmers are about 55% to 60% women, the Government of Ghana has undertaken a wide range of measures to address the complex challenges confronted by rural women. These include the extension of credit facilities, improved technology services, as well as upgrading their skills in management and finance. Since 1995, there have been many programmes to provide women with micro-credit and small loans, agro-processing enterprises, and schemes to enhance their capacity through information systems.

Education is the most sustainable means to empower rural women, and to this end the Ministry of Education has organized "night schools" with the intention of making women functionally literate. With the advent of the capitation grant, free school uniforms and school feeding programmes, the enrollment and retention of rural female students has improved.

significantly. Other social protection programs targeting poor and vulnerable groups such as pre-natal care, child survival and health promotion, school feeding programme, Community Based Health Planning Services (CBHS) and the National Nutrition Improvement Scheme (NNIS) have also been implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

Public investment in sustainable infrastructure, sanitation and renewable energy as well as fuel-efficient and labor-saving technologies is fundamental to reducing poverty, while gender equality is key to achieving this. In addition to enhancing their chances of finding employment outside the home, a holistic approach is therefore necessary to mainstream integration of gender equality into national policies especially with regard to food and agriculture.

States, civil society and international organizations must work together to implement interventions that support rural women's capacity by national statistical agencies to collect and disseminate comparable sex-disaggregated data to ensure gender equality measures are integrated in policy design and target rural women in national and local employment creation initiatives as well as build their productivity, capacity to enable them participate in the global value chain.

Likewise we also need to put in place temporary special measures to realize the full and equal participation of women in decision making, and signaling this commitment through existing commitments on rural women's rights and our development to ensure their effective contribution to local and national development. In addition, we need to examine the subject of rural women's funding and address best practices and lessons learned in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in rural areas.

Mr. Chairman,

The participation of women in decision-making is currently limited, which hinders their fight against poverty. This level of low participation by women excludes their personal safety, policies and legislation, and deprives society of their contribution to national budgets and resource allocation. Essentially, it is crucial that we move beyond socio-political considerations to ensure women's full participation in the field of governance and decision making. Conscious of the need for a multi-pronged approach to increase the number of women in politics, Ghana is considering the introduction of a quota system to address the existing gaps.

At the inception of the new UN-Entity for Women, it is high time that we develop a new concept that promotes the participation of women in all fields and arenas, and in the political arena". Indeed, we must all take the necessary steps to hasten the implementation of gender programmes to combat gender inequality and discrimination that will lead to the Millennium Development Goals.

Let me conclude, by conveying my congratulations to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Ms. Leymah Gbowee and Mrs. Tawakui Karman on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Inc. their fight for women's safety and rights to full participation in peace-building. Their activities are not only an inspiration to women in Africa and the Middle East but to women all over the world."

I thank you.