

# 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 66<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF**  
**THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

*NEW YORK, 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2011*

**Mr. Chairman,**

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for his insightful reports under this important agenda item. Ghana aligns itself with the statements made by Kenya on behalf of the African Group and Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Government of Ghana remains committed to promoting and ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment through concrete administrative, legal and constitutional means. The 1992 Constitution and the laws of Ghana in conjunction with other international legal 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 frameworks 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 rural women as economic agents for national food security and rural development. It stressed the need for all regions to institute land reform policies favourable to women as well as individual or joint land titles and build up the capacity of women's rights to own land and other property.

Furthermore, with increased male outmigration 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 or even local levels. To enhance a systematic approach to addressing the needs of rural women, the report emphasized the need for gender-sensitive policies in the institutions responsible for rural development, agricultural 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 our farm labour force. They generally work as subsistence farmers, small-scale entrepreneurs, unpaid care workers or casual wage labourers. The global financial and economic crisis, volatile prices of food and fuel as well as the uncertainties and impact of climate change has further complicated efforts to reduce poverty and inequality and aggravated an already dire situation.

Realising that agriculture, which accounts for over 42% of GDP, is the main 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 technological services, as well as upgrading their skills in management and finance. Since 1995, there have been programmes to provide women with micro-credit and small loans, agro-processing equipments, and schemes to enhance their capacity through information sharing and skills training.

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 rural 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 policies targeting poor and rural women such as free pre-natal and delivery services to pregnant women, the school feeding programme, the Community-Based Health Planning Services (CHPS) and the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) have also been introduced.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Public investment in sustainable infrastructure such as public transportation, water and sanitation and renewable energy as well as fuel-efficient and labour-saving technologies is fundamental to reducing the time women spend on daily unpaid chores in addition to enhancing their chances at gainful employment outside the home. A holistic approach is therefore necessary to ensure the integration of gender equality into national policies especially with regard to food and agriculture.

States, civil society and international organizations must all work together to identify new trends in rural labour markets; enhance the capacity of national statistical offices to collect, analyze and disseminate comparable sex-disaggregated data to ensure gender-sensitive measures are integrated in policy design; and target rural women in national and local employment creation initiatives as well as build their productive 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 strengthen the implementation of all existing commitments on rural women's rights and rural development to ensure their effective contribution to local and national development. In addition, we need to examine the subject of alternative funding and share best practices and lessons learnt in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in rural areas.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The participation of women in decision-making is currently the weakest link in the fight against poverty. This level of low participation by women, excludes their perspectives from 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 all fields 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 quotas as a starting point 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 perception that "women belong both at home... and in the political arena". Indeed, we must all take the necessary steps to hasten the implementation of gender programmes to ensure gender equality and women empowerment to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Let me conclude, by conveying sincerest felicitations to H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Ms. Leymah Gbowee and Ms. Tawakul Karman on been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 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.**