

Delegation from the Republic of Ghana
Position Paper for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women

The topics before the United Nations (UN) Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) are: Eliminating Child, Early and Forced Marriage by 2030 and Supporting the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making. The Republic of Ghana is deeply committed to the goals of UN Women to achieve gender equality, promote women's empowerment and uphold women's rights. Therefore the Republic of Ghana advocates enhanced cooperation on an international level to address the above-mentioned challenges.

I. Eliminating Child, Early and Forced Marriage by 2030

To the present day Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM) poses a threat to the insurance of women's rights, guaranteed by article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and to the establishment of gender equality all over the world. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and UN Women about 700 million women globally have been married off as children, being an obstacle for the sustainable development of the world's societies and the full individual development of women. Taking into consideration that millions of children entangled by CEFM have failed to gain necessary skills and knowledge, the issue of CEFM leads to a diminishing not only of the Republic of Ghana's but the whole world's socio-economic prosperity and development. The Republic of Ghana comes to the recognition that CEFM disproportionally affects girls and women living in poorer households in the rural areas of the Northern region. Even though the threat of CEFM was reduced by 60% in the past two decades, the Republic of Ghana is facing a population growth that makes eliminating CEFM necessary to secure the *Future We Want* as it is depicted in the General Assembly (GA) resolution 66/288 in 2012.

The Republic of Ghana stands in full support with the efforts made by the UN during the last decades. By ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and supporting the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women adopted by the GA in the resolution 48/104 we acknowledge the necessity of eliminating CEFM. Furthermore, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) encouraged us to fight the leading of causes of CEFM to prevent negative effects on education and employment. To foster the law enforcement in addressing CEFM, the Republic of Ghana complies with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) adopted by the African Union (AU), which prohibits child marriage. Moreover, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana makes child marriage illegal and the section 14 (1) a, b and c of the Republic of Ghana's Children's Act of 1988 sets the legal age for marriage to 18 years. The Republic of Ghana is dedicated to GA resolution 71/175 on CEFM by reaffirming all previous resolutions addressing CEFM and calling for end of CEFM as a harmful practice. In order to achieve the goal of eliminating CEFM by 2030 the Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection of the Republic of Ghana with support of UNICEF introduced the *National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage in Ghana 2017-2026* in November 2016.

In regard to the necessity of eliminating CEFM by 2030 in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by the GA resolution 70/1, the Republic of Ghana would like to emphasise that addressing the leading objectives that cause CEFM as well as supporting victims of CEFM is crucial. The Republic of Ghana seeks to establish the local strategy of the *Saksham Programme* managed by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Plan International on an international level. This

programme helps CEFM victims to gain necessary skills and economic freedom by taking part in a 45 days programme where a variety of subjects are taught. In cooperation with UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and the NGO Plan International the Republic of Ghana sees the necessity to establish these flexible and decentralised programmes that combine educational, economic and emancipatory factors to prevent women from CEFM and provide CEFM victims with new opportunities.

II. Supporting the Involvement of Women in Governance and Decision-Making

As closing the existing gender gap in governance and decision-making is essential to establish a balance in policymaking and gender-inclusive policies and programs, this does not only deserve the attention of the international community but instead our deepest commitment. Even though the world community experienced an increase in women's participation in national parliaments by 11.5% in the last two decades according to UN Women's facts and figures women are still strongly underrepresented despite their vital service for the society. The Republic of Ghana estimates that sustainable development and the achievements of the 2030 Agenda cannot be fulfilled with a lack of a more equal representation of women in the political process.

The Republic of Ghana welcomes the UN Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and reaffirms its support with the determinations of CEDAW to foster the participation of women in public in political life and the concepts of the BPfA to establish a basis for the advancement of women and girls in the fields of education, economy, power and decision-making. In order to create a legal framework for the involvement of women in governance and decision-making, Ghana is a signatory to the African Charter of which articles 8, 29 and 43 urge all Member States of the AU to adopt legislative measures to guarantee the political rights of women, create necessary conditions for their full and active participation and encourage women in electoral processes. Since we are convinced that supporting the involvement of women in governance and decision-making can only be realized by including men's efforts regarding this topic, the Ghanaian Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection together with the help of UN Women has launched the *He for She Campaign* in December 2017. By that we pursue the sensitisation and solidification of the society and rethinking of deprecated mentalities. Additionally, the Ghanaian free senior high policy enables education of secondary level to all children and especially encourages girls to gain necessary leadership skills.

The Republic of Ghana sees the need to enable women access to governance and decision-making. We are deeply convinced that women's involvement in these areas can only be achieved by having qualified and skilled women sit directly at the table of decisions. To achieve this goal, we seek to fill the missing link between secondary education and the political involvement by creating women career training centres with the help of UN Women and the UNDP. The Republic of Ghana sees the need in supporting women in achieving necessary leadership skills through training session and providing a port of call for all women who seek support in their political campaign and career. To establish an efficient working basis these women career training centres will cooperate with the existing International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW) of the UN Women, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Furthermore, the Republic of Ghana seeks to strengthen the efforts in including all members of the society in the involvement of women in governance and decision-making by widening the existing *He for She Campaign* funded by UN Women. The Republic of Ghana invites all Member States to join these efforts and is looking forward to the international community's cooperation in to the involvement of women governance and decision-making.