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Ghana

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I. Introduction

1. The Government of the Republic of Ghana (GOG) under President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo affirms the universality, indivisibility, interdependence, and interrelatedness of all human rights, respectful of our unique national and regional particularities borne by our diverse historical, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The GOG has been working assiduously to promote and protect the rights of Ghanaian citizens, especially the poor, marginalized and vulnerable, and bring about policies that ensure that social justice shall be pursued and the rule of law shall always prevail.

2. The GOG is committed to implementing a rights-based approach to development and governance, especially in the areas of health, education, food and water security, housing, environmental preservation, and respect for culture. The GOG welcomes the scrutiny of its record in an open and constructive dialogue offered by the Universal Periodic Review process.

II. Process for the preparation of the report

A. Methodology

3. In drafting the report, the guidelines contained in decision 17/119 of the Human Rights Council were closely followed. This report was prepared by the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-ups (NMRF).

B. Description of the national follow-up process

4. Ghana inaugurated and set up the NMRF as an inter-ministerial coordinating body under the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Justice to ensure implementation of Ghana's obligations under international human rights treaties Ghana is a party to.

5. In this regard, the NMRF follows up, collates information from the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and reports on the status of implementation of Ghana's obligations.

C. Inter-institutional consultations

6. The NMRF held various consultative meetings with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Interior and its two agencies, the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Prisons Service, Parliament, and Ministries responsible for Foreign Affairs, Justice, Health, Gender, Women and Children Affairs, Education, Information and Employment.

D. Broader consultations with national human rights institutions and civil society organisations

7. The NMRF held several consultative meetings with the Perfector of Sentiments Foundation (POS Foundation), which is the convener for the Civil Society Platform on the Universal Periodic Review in Ghana and the secretariat for the Ghana Human Rights NGOs forum.

8. Further, in September 2022, the NMRF, after finalising this report, held a validation meeting to present the report to stakeholders, who made input into the report.

E. Contribution by the Parliament

9. Parliament is currently in the process of establishing a Committee on Human Rights to deal with human rights-related issues, including the exercise of Parliament's oversight

responsibility in relation to compliance with human rights instruments which Ghana is a party to. Parliament has made contributions to this report.

III. Implementation of recommendations from previous cycles

A. Equality and non-discrimination¹

Discrimination reporting system – fully implemented

10. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has a fully operational system of Stigma and Discrimination Reporting for the most vulnerable groups.

B. Protection of LGBTI persons from violence

11. The laws of Ghana proscribe violence against all persons, including LGBTI persons.

12. Parliament is engaged in a second round of stakeholder consultations with religious and traditional groups aimed at resolving religious and cultural differences associated with the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2021, which is being sponsored by major religious groups, traditional leaders and some Members of Parliament. Nevertheless, Parliament is considering submissions made by human rights defenders, including the Ghana Bar Association, academics and CHRAJ, to ensure that the Bill complies with the fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed under the 1992 Constitution.

C. Programmes and public policies on inclusion for vulnerable groups

Ghana school feeding programme

13. In line with SDGs 1 and 2, in 2020, the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) provides daily meals to beneficiary pupils in all districts of the country. This has ensured a high level of school enrolment. It has also provided employment and a ready market for local farmers.

14. With the resumption of schools in January 2021, the GSFP secretariat developed COVID-19 guidelines for programme caterers. The GSFP national and district operations manuals have been validated by stakeholders.

15. The challenge which exists concerns the difficulty in pegging the feeding grant per pupil with inflation, in order to maintain the quality and quantity of nutritious meals provided over time.

Livelihood empowerment against poverty²

16. The Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) programme is a Government social protection flagship programme that provides cash grants to 344421 beneficiary households in all districts of the country (SDG1).³ 78% of LEAP beneficiaries are also registered onto the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) (SDG3) to ensure access to health.⁴

National entrepreneurship and innovation programme

17. The Government also launched a National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme to provide an integrated national support for start-ups and small businesses (SDG1).

18. Each District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assembly has set aside 3% of their Common Fund for disbursement to persons with disabilities. (SDG10)

19. The GOG, in 2020, enacted the Ghana Enterprises Agency Act, 2020 (Act 1043) to, among others, facilitate the access by micro, small and medium scale enterprises to financial

and non-financial resources, including credit facilities and professional services, as well as machinery, equipment and raw material input from domestic and international sources.

20. Act 1043 also establishes a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Fund to provide funding to, among others, address the gaps in funding micro, small and medium enterprises, and develop such enterprises, particularly in the rural areas. (SDG1&8) Challenges include inadequate funding.

Business and human rights⁵

21. Ghana has launched a National Baseline Assessment (NBA) on Business and Human Rights. The NBA's authors used both primary and secondary research, including interviews with close to sixty business and human rights stakeholders. This, in addition to a stakeholder meeting held in August 2022, has raised the awareness of both state and private sector actors about the need to develop a national action plan on business and human rights. A multi-stakeholder steering committee has been mandated to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) for Business and Human Rights. The committee includes a representative from the country's SDG implementation office.

22. The NAP is expected to provide a framework for the State to enact legislation requiring, among others, licensing and extractive businesses to apply the guiding principles on business and human rights. (SDG 5, 8, 10).

D. Good governance – efforts to combat corruption (SDG 16)⁶

Office of the Special Prosecutor

23. The Office of the Special Prosecutor has been formally set up as a specialized agency under the Office of the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute corruption, bribery and related criminal cases. Regulations have been enacted to outline the procedure for the prosecution of such offences.

Witness protection

24. In 2018, the Witness Protection Act, 2018 (Act 975) was passed to protect persons who assist law enforcement agencies by disclosing information on acts of impropriety and thereby face a serious risk for the disclosure. A Technical Committee to draft Standard Operating Procedures for whistleblower protection in Ghana was launched in August 2022.

Right to information

25. In 2020, in line with the 1992 Constitution, the Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989) entered into force to provide access to information held by public institutions and promote a culture of transparency and accountability in public officers, subject only to the restrictions provided in the Constitution. Currently, a draft Legislative Instrument to operationalize the Act is in progress. Nevertheless, the Act is being implemented with about 157 requests having been made, out of which 130 were approved. The Commission is working to prosecute heads of public institutions who fail to give information requested under the law.

The Companies Act

26. The Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992) was enacted to amend, consolidate and revise the law relating to companies. Act 992 also introduces novel concepts in Ghanaian law, such as beneficial ownership transparency as a tool for fighting corruption and detecting inappropriate conflicts of interest. This facilitates the ease of doing business in Ghana and improves the corporate governance standards for companies doing business in Ghana.

The Criminal Offences (Amendment) Act

27. In 2020, the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Act, 2020 (Act 1034) was passed to categorize corruption and corruption related offences as felonies, and to provide for stiffer correlative penalties.

Conduct of Public Officers Bill

28. The Conduct of Public Officers Bill seeks to clearly define and proscribe conduct which amounts to corruption by a public officer. The Bill gives effect to Chapter 24 of the Constitution, which provides a code of conduct for public officers, and domesticates the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption.

29. The Bill lapsed with the dissolution of the Seventh Parliament. It has been resubmitted to Cabinet for approval.

E. Ratification of/accession to international treaties/conventions/protocols

Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at the abolition of the death penalty

30. There is a constitutional injunction on the death penalty in an entrenched provision in Ghana's 1992 Constitution. Therefore, an amendment of the 1992 Constitution and particularly, the Criminal and Other Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29), is required to abolish the death penalty.⁷ Parliament has, however, initiated the necessary process per a Private Member's Bill aimed at abolishing the death penalty.

National preventive mechanism

31. The CHRAJ Act is in the process of being amended to allow it to assume the responsibility of being designated as Ghana's NPM.

IV. Civil and political rights⁸

Right to life, liberty and security of the person

32. Signature and ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty is pending. In the meantime, Ghana continues to ensure that the death penalty is not applied against any person in Ghana. In particular, no persons with mental or intellectual disabilities, persons below 18 years of age at the time of the commission of the crime, and pregnant women have been executed in Ghana.

Rights related to name, identity, and nationality⁹

33. The Birth and Death Registry has started registering births via zoom. At the end of 2021, 70% of births were registered. There is in place the m-Birth system, a registration software which can be used both offline and online, and is now available in all 16 regions in Ghana.

34. The Registry through its Population Register project endeavors to reach rural areas and orphanages to register new births and anyone who is not registered.

35. Although, the systems for health and birth registration are not interoperable, information is shared between the Ghana Health Service and the Registry on new births and other statistics.

36. The recently enacted Births and Deaths Act, 2020 (Act 1027) provides for the notification of births to the Registry to facilitate real time registration of births. The

notification system, once established, will narrow the gap between the immunization rates and the registration rates.

37. With regards to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who live in refugee camps, officers of the Registry go to the camps weekly to register new births.

38. Currently, there is a free registration policy for children below the age of one.

Administration of justice, including impunity and rule of law – partially implemented¹⁰ (SDG16)

39. The Mutual Legal Assistance Act, (Act 807) designates the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a foreign entity for the purposes of obtaining assistance in respect of a criminal matter under an agreement between Ghana and the ICC.

40. The Office of the Attorney-General is preparing an International Criminal Court Bill to give effect to the Rome Statute of the ICC and to incorporate the statute as part of the laws of Ghana. The Bill is to enable courts in Ghana try offences recognized under the Rome Statute, and to provide a legal framework within which the ICC can prosecute cases in circumstances where the Ghanaian courts are unable to do so.

41. Also, all police officers are trained not to engage in acts of torture when conducting arrests, investigations, and interrogations. Therefore, an act of excessive use of force by any police officer is thoroughly investigated and internal disciplinary mechanisms are properly instituted. The perception of impunity by perpetrators may be due to poor feedback on the part of the police to the community in respect of administrative actions taken or sanctions meted out to recalcitrant police officers. The Police Administration is currently rectifying the situation by constantly sharing such information with the public.

42. The Criminal Offences Act has been amended to include genocide.

43. The Criminal and Other Offences (Procedure) (Amendment) Act, 2022 (Act 1079) was passed to provide for plea bargaining in respect of some offences to reduce the caseload of the courts, decongest prisons, and aid in reformation.

Closure of ‘witch’ camps and reintegration of women found in witch camps

44. Seven ‘witch’ camps have been identified in the Northern and Northeast Regions of Ghana. Efforts are ongoing to close these camps (SDG5). The challenge remains the slowness of the process and making the camps habitable. In the meantime, Ghana’s Gender Ministry has embarked on sensitization programmes, awareness – raising campaigns and relief support interventions in the camps and communities. An Emergency LEAP program to enroll the households in these camps has been initiated as well as linking them to the National Health Insurance Scheme.

Amend national legislation to allow Ghanaian nationals residing abroad to Vote

45. The Representation of the Peoples Amendment Act 2006 (Act 699) (ROPA) is yet to be implemented. A constitutional instrument has been presented to Parliament.

Integrate a human rights component into the protocols of actions for security forces¹¹

46. The police and prisons services have laws that regulate the conduct of disciplinary proceedings with human rights considerations. These are the Police Service Regulations 2012 (C.I 76) and Prisons Service Disciplinary Regulations (C.I 93).

Fundamental freedoms and participation in public and political life¹²

Vigilantism

47. The Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) was passed in 2019 to disband political party vigilante groups, proscribe acts of vigilantism and the use of land guards, among others.

Women participation in politics

48. Women are gradually increasing in number at decision making levels. No law limits the participation of women in the political process. Presidential candidates during the 2020 elections included 3 women. There has been a slight increase of female members of parliament to 40 for the 8th Parliament, inaugurated in January 2021. Out of the 56 Ambassadors Ghana deployed abroad, 24 are women.

Prohibition of all forms of slavery – partially implemented

49. The Human Trafficking Secretariat under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is actively working on clamping down on all forms of slavery which especially manifests through human trafficking. Social media campaigns, media discussions, consultations with key traditional leaders and stakeholders at the national, regional and district levels are being used to achieve the goal.

50. Legislation and institutions have also been strengthened in this area. In addition, steps have been taken to improve capacities to capture reliable data on the number of children trafficked in the country. Currently, there are various procedures and processes that help the Human Trafficking Secretariat and the agencies to proactively handle cases of child trafficking. The initiatives include:

(a) A Human Trafficking National Plan of Action (NPA) on the elimination of human trafficking. This has been disseminated.

(b) The establishment of focal units and desks in the various law enforcement agencies and Attorney-General's Office to handle issues of human trafficking.

(c) The operationalization on 1st February 2019 of an adult shelter. Victims are given comprehensive trauma informed care and support.

(d) The disbursement of GHC1,000,000 to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection for the Human Trafficking Fund, which is to protect victims and implement the NPA.

(e) The continuous meetings being held by the Human Trafficking Management Board (HTMB) since 2017, as well as the meetings held by the Child Protection Compact (CPC) Agreement Technical Working Group to strengthen child protection mechanisms in the fight against child trafficking.

(f) A specialized training program on child trafficking, migration and child exploitation for shelter staff, law enforcement officials, judges, attorneys and stakeholders to build their capacities to combat child trafficking.

(g) The approval, launch and wide dissemination of the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Human Trafficking – 2022-2026. The plan uses the four P approach (prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership) in combatting human trafficking which includes children.

(h) Challenges include lack of adequate funding.

Conditions of detention¹³

Strengthening efforts to improve prison conditions – health and sanitation

51. The COVID-19 safety protocols, as outlined by the GOG through the Ministry of Health, are highly enforced in all prison establishments in efforts to prevent the spread of

COVID-19 in the prisons. All newly admitted inmates are isolated and monitored for a number of days before they are moved to the main wards and cells. Also, inmates are supplied with medical materials and Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs). In addition, there are routine fumigation and disinfection exercises carried out in the prisons.

52. The registration of inmates under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) is free. In 2018, some infirmaries were upgraded to health centers and hospitals. The registration and upgrade of these facilities led to a significant reduction in the referral of cases to external health facilities.

53. The Ghana Prisons Service is now a member of the Ghana Association of Quasi Health Institutions. The Association, which is very beneficial to the prisons, has presented to the prison facilities, PPEs, free medication and COVID-19 testing kits.

54. Currently, the Ghana Prisons Service is developing a health policy to strengthen prison healthcare with the overall aim of ensuring optimum health for both inmates and officers.

55. Challenges however include lack of adequate funding for these programmes.

Revision of regulatory legal framework

56. A review of the Prisons Service Act 1972 (NRCD) 46, which culminated into the drafting of the Prisons Service Bill, is underway. The Bill recommends the expansion of the Prisons Directorate to also take care of health and agriculture separately. The Service has recently established Health and Agriculture Directorates to improve inmates' health and to boost agricultural activities in order to improve the diet of inmates. Also, the implementation of the mental health and disability laws and prison inspections has been incorporated into the draft Bill to ameliorate prison conditions.

57. Government, with the support of UNICEF, extensively reviewed the Children's Act, the Juvenile Justice Act, and related laws. The proposed amendments to these laws have been made, pending their submission to Cabinet by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

Reformation and rehabilitation and education

58. Programmes geared towards the reformation and rehabilitation of inmates through trade training, as well as formal and informal education, such as Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), and diploma and degree programmes in tertiary institutions are available to inmates.

Treatment regimes¹⁴

59. Prisoners have access to drug and substance abuse treatment, as well as professional psychiatric treatment.

Training in agriculture

60. Agriculture remains a core activity within the Service. Twenty prison establishments engaged in agricultural activities during the year 2020. As a result, inmates at those establishments received training in cash and food crop production, livestock rearing and poultry farming.

Trade training

61. In line with its rehabilitation programmes, the Service provides vocational and technical training to inmates across 44 prisons nationwide.

Special care for female prisoners

62. Female Prisoners are kept in separate prisons, with maximum security, under the care and supervision of female prison officers who have received training relating to the gender-specific needs and human rights of female prisoners. A mother and baby unit has been set up

at one of the largest female prisons in the country. Efforts are being made to replicate mother and baby units in the remaining six female prisons.

Overcrowding in prisons

63. Regulations on Prisons Service Parole as part of the wider process of enacting a non-custodial sentencing regime and improve areas of corrections, is in process. In addition, the Community Service Sentencing Bill has been developed in an effort to decongest prisons.

64. A virtual version of the *Justice for All Program* to hear the cases of inmates with overstayed warrants has been introduced to further decongest the prisons. This has resulted in a reduction of prisoners.

65. The facilitation of remand prisoners' access to justice has been improved with the assistance of officers who have undergone training as paralegals in the Paralegal Unit manned by both officers and inmates. They also provide support services to prisoners in respect of preparation and filing of appeals.

66. Also, selected inmates have been granted amnesty to further reduce prison inmates numbers.

67. New prisons are under construction.

V. Economic, social and cultural rights¹⁵

Right to work – measures to remove existing structural and legislative barriers for women in the labour market

68. Despite the lack of explicit legislation, existing jurisprudence shows protection of women's right to work, non-discrimination, sex and gender discrimination, and the right to found a family.¹⁶ In 2020, the GOG passed the Labour (Domestic Workers) Regulations, 2020 L.I. 2408 to improve conditions of work for domestic workers.

Right to just and favourable conditions of work

Minerals and Mining Act

69. A new mining and minerals law, which will repeal the current Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (Act 703), is yet to be deliberated on by Parliament.

70. The proposed law makes stringent provisions on the framework within which production and exploration firms will operate in Ghana. These provisions include *inter alia* provision on affirmative action towards bringing more women into the industry, changes in mining firms' obligations to the Government and to host communities, mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility requirement on firms, and the change of the stability agreement from 15 years to 5 years tenure.

Right to health¹⁷

Mental health

71. The Mental Health Fund has been established in accordance with the Mental Health Act, 2012 (Act 846). Regulations have been passed by Parliament in 2019 to operationalise the Act. A Mental Health Levy is in progress of being established to fund activities involving mental health.

72. The Mental Health Act makes provision for the establishment of visiting committees to ensure that the rights of persons with mental disorders within the community are protected. The laws for mental health services make provision for rehabilitation facilities which are expected to operate under strict supervision. The laws also provide for strict licensing regimen to ensure standard for care to persons with mental disorders. The law also provides

for informed consent to be given by the patient or representatives to certain treatment and procedures, including court processes, for treatment under compulsion and involuntary admission.

73. Prayer camps, being traditional and faith-based healers, are collaborators for the promotion of mental health in Ghana, since many people with mental disorders use such facilities for treatment. Consequently, the Mental Health Authority (MHA) aims to regulate these camps and provide medication and other needed items for care at the facilities. There are systems in place for the referral to orthodox facilities for further treatment and management.

74. Any form of inhumane treatment of persons with mental disorders is an offence, which is punishable by a fine or imprisonment. Training is underway for those involved in the treatment of persons with mental disorders. Licensing of all health facilities providing various forms of mental health services is another measure to be taken by the MHA to ensure that all forms of inhumane treatments to persons with mental disorders are eliminated. Seminars are organized as part of the continuous professional development of mental health professionals.

75. On a regular basis, the MHA encourages mental health professionals to carry out mental health awareness campaigns at churches, mosques, schools, lorry stations, community durbars and hospital out-patients departments (OPDs) with support information, communication and education materials from the MHA. Mental health departments of the various hospitals and polyclinics are enjoined to regularly write and submit reports on community awareness campaigns to the relevant authorities for onward transmission to the regional and national headquarters.

Prohibition of non-consensual treatments, such as forced medication and confinement¹⁸

76. As a general rule, all persons are expected to voluntarily submit themselves to healthcare services. The Sixth Schedule of the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851) makes provision for the Patient's Charter, which guarantees respect for the patient as an individual with a right of choice in respect of healthcare plans.

77. Specifically, under the Mental Health Act, a patient is at liberty to request for discharge from the hospital. The patient is also at liberty to refuse treatment. However, these liberties have to be expressed in line with due process and documentation. In case there is a need for compulsory administration of treatment or admission, the laws provide for standard approaches, which include court processes.

78. Under the mental health laws, the head of a medical facility is expected to report cases of long-term stay voluntary patients and admission to the Mental Health Tribunal established under the Mental Health Act. However, Ghana is yet to establish this Tribunal due mainly to funding challenges.

Access to health services, including in local communities¹⁹

79. The GOG is committed to attaining the SDGs. It is a signatory to the African Union Agenda 2063, Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well Being, Declaration on Primary Health Care in Astana (2018) and UHC 2030 Compact. Ghana defines UHC as: "All people in Ghana have timely access to high quality health services irrespective of ability to pay at the point of use." The goal of UHC is increased access to quality essential healthcare and population-based services for all by 2030.

80. The GOG has made determined efforts to address health inequalities and improve Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child Health Adolescent and Nutrition (RMNCHAN) outcomes. To this effect, a wide range of policies have been passed with the intention of improving the health of women, men, girls and boys. These include the Newborn Care Policy (2019-2023) which aims to guide the delivery of neonatal and child health services in Ghana, and the Adolescent Health Service Policy and Strategy (2016-2020). In addition, the Ghana Health Service has a Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition (RMNCAH&N) Strategic Plan 2020. Together, these policies and strategies align

with key and interrelated SDG targets designed to promote gender quality and reduce health inequalities.²⁰

81. Ghana continues to expand access to healthcare coverage and scope of benefits made available to citizens. Ghana's 2021 census results reported that 68.6 % of the population is covered by either the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) or private health insurance schemes. The mission of the NHIS is to provide financial risk protection against the cost of quality healthcare for all residents in Ghana. As at the end of 2021, the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) had 16,759,158 active members made up as follows: children under 18 years – 6,967,561; adult informal – 6,105,644; indigents (includes LEAP & persons with mental disorders – 1,546,062; pregnant women – 738,414; aged – 695,339; Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) contributors – 609,936; and SSNIT pensioners – 96,203.

82. Along with this is the need for continuous monitoring, supportive supervision, and hands on mentoring of health service providers. Additionally, Ghana considers community engagement systems to improve community participation in health and nutrition service delivery and accountability of the health system to the community issues to be prioritised.

83. The Government has also embarked on a national policy known as Agenda 111 which seeks to build several hospitals across the country to improve geographical accessibility for healthcare services. This policy will complement the already existing and operational policy for Community Health Planning Services (CHPS) Compounds, under which several health facilities have been built in rural, deprived and hard-to-reach communities of the country. These interventions have drastically improved access to primary and secondary healthcare levels in Ghana. Steps are being taken to make Universal Health Care (UHC) Package accessible throughout the country by 2030, to improve the quality of care. The Package is expected to be a set of health services that meet the health needs and aspirations of every Ghanaian irrespective of their age, gender and social status. It would also recognize the different health needs of all persons at different stages, and ensure that there is access to curative and preventive services, which take care of common diseases.

84. The Government's innovative policy for aerial delivery of emergency health commodities and blood by drones, as provided by Fly Zipline Ghana Ltd, further improves access to essential medical supplies, lifesaving blood and vaccines at hospitals and health facilities in remote areas, including CHPS Compounds and Zones.

85. To support remote communities without electricity grid connections, the Ghana Health Service introduced mobile clinics which have complete sets of clinical-electrical equipment on board.

86. The Government has also acquired over 307 state-of-the-art ambulances with advance life support equipment and tracking devices for all 260 districts in Ghana, to enhance access to healthcare in emergency situations.

87. Furthermore, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) have, over the years, been recruited and trained to provide highly skilled emergency and pre-hospital services across the country. The National Ambulance Service Act, 2020 (Act 1041) was recently passed by Parliament to establish the National Ambulance Service (NAS) as an agency responsible for emergency and pre-hospital service. Further to this, the National Blood Service Act, 2020 (Act 1042) was passed by Parliament to establish the National Blood Service (NBS) as an agency responsible for ensuring that quality and safe blood and blood products are provided in all hospital across the country.

Implementation of the New National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan²¹

88. Through a multi-sectoral consultative process, the Ghana AIDS Commission has successfully developed a new National HIV & AIDS Strategic Plan (NSP 2021-2025) to help guide its continuous fight against the HIV and AIDS pandemic, with the goal of achieving epidemic control and the fast-track targets of 95-95-95 by 2025. The NSP 2021-2025 also supports the achievements of the objectives of the National HIV and AIDS Policy (2016).

89. The NSP 2021-2025 identified the following new areas as critical for the national HIV response: (i) Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW): Providing HIV combination

prevention for AGYW and their partners; (ii) PrEP and PEP: Providing PrEP and PEP for Key Populations (KPs) and persons exposed to HIV; (iii) HIV Self-Testing (HIVST): Making this service available particularly for KP and AGYW with the participation of the private sector; and (iv) Integration of other health services: Taking HIV out of isolation to improve universal health coverage.

90. In terms of the implementation arrangement, the national response adopted a multi-sectoral approach involving the public sector Ministries, Department and Agencies, private for profit entities, civil society and faith-based organizations. The response is coordinated at the national, regional and district levels by the Ghana AIDS Commission Secretariat, Technical Support Unit and District Assemblies respectively.

91. In the effort to ensure no-one is left behind in the national HIV response, the following key actions were undertaken:

(a) Developed and implementing a Strategic Plan for a Comprehensive Response to Human Rights-related Barriers to HIV and TB Services in Ghana, 2020-2024. The goal of the Plan is to remove human rights-related barriers to HIV and TB services, and to improve access to quality HIV and TB healthcare and support services through pragmatic implementation strategies.

(b) Constituted a Human Rights Steering Committee to exercise oversight and coordinate the implementation of the National HIV & TB Human Rights Strategic Plan 2020-2024 and other related human rights issues.

92. An integrated Bio-behavioural Surveillance Survey (IBBSS) for Female Sex Workers (FSW) and men sleeping with men (MSM) conducted in 2019. The FSW IBBSS reported 4.3% prevalence among an estimated population of 60,000 FSW nationwide. Similarly, the Men's Study II conducted in 2018 reported an HIV prevalence of 18.3% among an estimated population of 54,000. Similar surveys were conducted within the prison community and report of a prevalence of 2.3%.

93. The Ghana AIDS Commission Act, (Act 938) establishes an HIV and AIDS Fund to ensure sustainable domestic financing of the HIV and AIDS response, and also provides for the protection of the human rights and safety of persons living with HIV and those with high risk of HIV infection under the non-discrimination provisions.

94. In an effort to enhance the quality of service provision to key and vulnerable populations, Standard Operative Procedures (SOPs) were developed to provide guidance for the rollout of a standard package of service by all implementing partners to all key and vulnerable populations.

95. To effectively meet the needs of all persons, the Differentiated Care Model was adopted, through which clinical services were delivered across all levels of the health service spectrum (tertiary, regional, districts, sub-districts, and CHPS Compound).

Right to education²²

96. The Constitution 1992 provides in Article 25 that no individual irrespective of gender, age, disability, access etc. is to be denied the right to education. Pre-tertiary education has been made free and accessible through the implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and Free Senior High School (SHS) Policy and Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions (TVET). These institutions admit all without discrimination. In Ghana, there is no conscious effort or policy to interrogate one's sexuality before the exercise of the right to education. Sexuality is not a *sine qua non* to accessing education in Ghana.

97. Through the Back to School Campaign by the Ghana Education Service, children, including pregnant school going girls and persons with disability, are accessing schools. Women have the opportunity to access adult education through the National Functional Literacy Programme (NFLP) run by the Complementary Education Agency (CEA). The CEA also runs a complimentary basic education programme that seeks to re-integrate out of school children into the mainstream.

98. The Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service (SPED) has been set up to ensure equitable educational opportunities for children with special needs and disabilities.

Combating corporal punishment of children in schools and childcare institutions²³

99. Ghana is committed to reforming its laws to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings. The Ghana Education Service banned the use of corporal punishment in schools and published guidelines for the use of positive discipline. Yet, prohibition is still to be achieved in the home, alternative care settings, day care, schools and some penal institutions.

Mechanisms to ensure all-inclusive-education

Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcome Project (GALOP)

100. The GOG has launched the Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcome Project (GALOP). This is a five-year GH¢218.7 million project for 10,000 least performing basic schools across the country. The objective is to improve the quality of education in low performing basic education schools and strengthen the education sector equity and accountability. The project aims to support the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plans (ESP 2018-2020), which has quality, access, equity, sustainability, and relevance as its key priority areas in order to provide equitable access to quality basic education to all Ghanaians.

Education of children with disabilities

101. Most public schools do not have facilities and structures for persons with disabilities. Children with disabilities find it difficult to access public buildings, transport and other facilities. Recreational facilities are insufficient, even though their situation may be different in special schools. In addition to discrimination, they also face stigmatisation. The Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) seeks to bridge existing gaps between persons living without disabilities and persons with disabilities.

102. Increased efforts are being made to promote inclusive education; provisions are also being made to support children with severe forms of disabilities and retardation to access schools.

Education of girls

103. A variety of mechanisms are in place to ensure access and participation of all children, especially girls. The Girls' Education Unit, established to facilitate and advocate the education of the girl-child, undertakes regular sensitisation and awareness creation programmes to encourage families to send their children to school. Some NGOs are assisting in this effort by providing small grants to families to undertake income generating projects.

104. The Government, NGOs and other donors, ensure that education professionals receive gender training and continue to address barriers to girls' basic education, especially till junior high school. Teachers have also been trained to demonstrate professional competence in gender issues. The government, in partnership with UNICEF and other donor partners, has put in place measures to promote 'safe schools' and a gender responsive environment through the availability of tools, resources and training to address inclusion, corporal punishment, school-related gender-based violence and menstrual hygiene management.

105. Under the Inclusive and Special Education programme, basic schools in 48 districts across all regions are currently practising Inclusive Education (IE). Since 2012, UNICEF has supported the Special Education Division to implement and expand IE in 14 districts.

106. In 2017, Government intensified efforts to reach many in the very complex area of special needs, including children who are autistic, and those who learn differently from the majority of learners.

Measures to ensure adequacy of teachers in schools

107. The following measures are in place to ensure that sufficient teachers are in the school system:

- (a) Increase in the number of teachers admitted into and turned out by training colleges. This was preceded by an increase in the number of teacher training colleges/colleges of education from 38 (in 2015) to 46 (currently);
- (b) Increase in the District Teacher Sponsorship programmes;
- (c) Introduction of an IN-IN-OUT Teacher Training programme;
- (d) Incentive packages for teachers in deprived areas;
- (e) Reduction in the number of teachers going on study leave and the introduction of Distance Education Programmes to provide alternative opportunities for teacher professional and academic development;
- (f) Access to courses for non-college trained teachers to gain admission into training colleges;
- (g) To bridge shortfall in staff at the pre-tertiary level of education, Government recruited teaching and non-teaching staff, and deploy them to schools across the country;
- (h) In-service training programmes are organised regularly to build on the competency of teachers. School and cluster based training programmes are conducted in all circuits and districts.

Vocational and technical training

108. Vocational and technical education are key components of the GOG's drive to ensure the provision and availability of quality education for young people. Hence, the GOG has established vocational and technical training institutions, with the objective of providing skilled human resource base for the manufacturing and other productive sectors of the economy. Intermediate Technology Transfer Units (ITTUs) are in all the regional centres under the Ghana Regional Appropriate Technology Industrial Services (GRATIS) initiative to offer apprenticeship training in various vocations and to provide refresher courses for artisans.

109. With respect to enrolment, the total number increased from 42,513 in the 2014/2015 academic year to 76,770 in the 2018/2019 academic year, a percentage increase of 44.6%.

110. Challenges of vocational and technical training education include:

- (a) Limited number of vocational and technical institutes;
- (b) Lack of facilities and materials for training students;
- (c) Inadequate technical teachers or facilitators;
- (d) Limited number of training institutions for technical teachers;
- (e) Difficulty in career progression;
- (f) Negative societal perception of vocational education being a preserve of school dropouts and academically poor children;
- (g) Perception of training offered to students in training institutions not in tune with the skill set needs of industry.

Tertiary education

111. The Pre-Tertiary Education Bill makes provision for the decentralization of the management of education service delivery to the District Assemblies and the creation of Technical Vocational Education Service, parallel to the Ghana Education Service to be responsible for the implementation of technical and vocational education and skills development policies. The Bill also proposes the establishment of a lean, but robust Ghana Education Service Headquarters/Council and the three Regulatory bodies: the National Teaching Council for the registration and licensing and the Professional Development of Teachers; the National Inspectorate Council for the setting up of the standards, improvement and enforcement of the Standards and the National Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Council for the review of curriculum and assessment issues of the pre-tertiary education level.

New educational initiatives (policies, bills, projects etc.)

112. The following are the new policies introduced between 2015 and 2019:

- (a) Free Senior High School;
- (b) Ghana Accountability Learning Outcome Project;
- (c) Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET);²⁴
- (d) Ghana Education Trust Fund Bill;
- (e) Complementary Education Agency Act;
- (f) Ghana Book Development Council Bill.

Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to education, and for their integration in the national policies

113. Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2018-2030) contains sub-policy objectives that are mapped to SDG 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.7 a, b, c. The ESP covers the timeline of the SDG 2015-2030 and the Ministry of Education's interventions are geared toward attaining these SDG 4 targets. The Ministry has commissioned a National SDG 4 Committee, led by the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) at the University of Cape Coast. The standing committee of experts from key stakeholder institutions are responsible for the progress monitoring exercise, and advise the Ministry of Education on necessary policy interventions to be put in place on matters related to SDG 4. The committee also regularly prepares reports on the progress being made as may be requested by UNESCO and the International Steering Committee on SDG4.

Strengthening CHRAJ

114. CHRAJ has been given the opportunity to open about 67 district offices and to appoint more officers in all the regions and districts. There has also been an increment in the Commission's budgetary allocation to enable it to effectively discharge its constitutional functions.

Justice system for minors aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant norms²⁵

115. The Juvenile Justice Act, 2003 (Act 653) provides the legal foundation for a separate and distinct approach for handling children in conflict with the law based on the welfare approach. The Act states explicitly that juvenile matters must be dealt with in a manner that is different from the way in which adult matters are handled. It further states that the best interests of the child are paramount. Jurisdiction for dealing with children in conflict with the law lies with specialised Juvenile Courts, which are composed of a District Court Magistrate and two other people, one of whom must be a social welfare officer. The Act outlines special procedural protections for children from the point of arrest, through trial and sentencing. A range of custodial and non-custodial sentencing options are available, and provision is made for the establishment of specialised Junior Correctional Centres and Senior Correctional centres for children. The Juvenile Justice Act also promotes the diversion of children away from the formal criminal justice system.

VI. Rights of specific persons or groups**A. Women****Gender equality legislation**

116. Government has drafted an Affirmative Action (AA) Bill which received Cabinet approval in 2016. It was however, not laid before Parliament that year. As a result of the

change of Government in 2017, there has been the need to review the Bill and resubmit to the current Cabinet for consideration and approval.

117. Efforts on the promulgation of the AA Bill are steadily taking shape, with a series of activities being carried out to review the Bill. In all, a total of 60 lawmakers, women caucus in Parliament, political parties and other key stakeholders have been engaged. Currently, the AA Bill has been resubmitted to Cabinet for approval.

B. Violence against women²⁶

Efforts to prevent harmful traditional practices²⁷

118. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is in the process of developing guidelines for engaging traditional authorities to address sexual and gender-based violence, harmful cultural practices, such as trokosi and female genital mutilation (FGM), and gender inequality in Ghana. There are roles for religious and traditional leaders regarding reporting on these issues.

119. The practice of FGM has been criminalised in Ghana by Section 69A of the Criminal and Other Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29).

120. There has been continuous sensitization programmes through the Gender Ministry and other state institutions, such as the Police Service (DOVVSU), Department of Social Welfare and Ghana Health Service on harmful cultural practices, such as FGM and other discriminatory practices against women.

121. The Gender Ministry organized sensitization workshops on teenage pregnancy and adolescent reproductive health to out-of-school youth and those who work as head-porters in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Western and Greater Accra Regions. 1,200 persons participated in these workshops.

122. Two high-level meetings were held in the Greater Accra Region with traditional and religious leaders from across the country to sensitize them on early marriage, FGM, domestic and gender-based violence and its dangers, including obstetric fistula.

123. These efforts have led to an increase in the reportage of gender-based violence and its related harmful practices. CHRAJ received about 89 cases of early child enforced marriages, which were duly investigated.

124. DOVVSU, per its mandates as a specialized Police Unit, has branches across the country that receives, investigates, apprehends, and prosecutes perpetrators of harmful traditional practices. The Unit also has intensified its awareness campaigns as a preventive measure against gender-based violence.

Polygamy

125. The practice of polygamy is deeply rooted in Ghana's tradition. The marriage laws of Ghana recognize polygamous marriages, which are customary in nature. There are options for couples to choose between having a monogamous marriage or a polygamous one. Couples have the right to make informed decisions regarding the kind of marriage they desire.

Protection and rehabilitation of victims²⁸

126. The Judicial Service, with support from UNICEF, refurbished 10 child-friendly and gender-based violence courts. Two of these courts are located within the DOVVSU One Stop Center. The courts have separate rooms where survivors of sexual and gender-based violence could testify without being in contact with perpetrators. These courts have proven to be effective for improving the access to justice to women and children, and preventing secondary trauma.

127. The DOVVSU One Stop Centre was established to provide well-coordinated, effective, and efficient services for the protection and rehabilitation to victims of any form of violence, including those resulting from harmful traditional practices. The building is a

state-of-the-art disability-friendly facility, staffed with, among others, clinical psychologists and lawyers.

128. The Judicial Service, with the support of UNICEF, conducted research on the “Assessment of sexual abuse cases before the Gender Based Violence Courts and other circuit courts in Ghana”. The assessment seeks to understand causes of attrition of sexual abuse cases and made recommendations for improving the access to justice to women and children. The report is yet to be launched.

Domestic Violence Fund

129. The GOG’s Domestic Violence Fund is essential to support survivors of domestic violence. The fund provides support for the running of shelters for child and women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. It also provides access to justice for survivors who would otherwise be unable to seek justice. In addition, it helps to take care of medical and legal costs. However, actual releases for the Domestic Violence Fund were 42% below the appropriated budget and need to be improved.

Efforts to combat discrimination against women and end all forms of discrimination and violence against women, including domestic violence²⁹

130. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection launched the Orange Support Centre and the Boame Mobile app in 2020 to facilitate quick response and referrals to appropriate institutions for redress. A multi-disciplinary team of experts is available to provide a range of services to victims and survivors. The Orange Support Centre has recorded 20953 as the total number of calls received. Out of these calls, a total of 536 cases of domestic violence were reported and 236 were successfully resolved.

C. Children

Anti-trafficking legislation³⁰

131. The Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694), which is currently in operation, was enacted for, amongst others, the prevention, reduction and punishment of human trafficking, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficked persons. It indicates that where children are trafficked, the consent of the child, parent or guardians of the child cannot be used as a defence in prosecution under the Act.

Child trafficking and abduction

132. Over the years, some activities of some industry sectors have had negative impacts on the enjoyment of the rights of children. For instance, in the agricultural sector and in some fishing communities, such as on Lake Volta, where children (both boys and girls) have been found to be victims of trafficking, ill-health and lack of opportunities for schooling have been found to be prevalent among the children.

133. Within the reporting period, the GOG has enhanced its systems to combat human trafficking. These include the strengthening of legislation and institutions. Steps have also been taken to improve capacities to capture reliable data on the number of children trafficked in the country. Currently, there are various procedures and processes that help the Human Trafficking Secretariat and the agencies to proactively handle cases of child trafficking. The following are some achievements made in the fight against human trafficking:

(a) The review, printing and dissemination of the Human Trafficking National Plan of Action (NPA) on the elimination of human trafficking. The Plan uses the four P approach in combating Human Trafficking, which includes children;

(b) The establishment of focal units and desks in the various law enforcement agencies and Attorney-General’s Office to handle issues of human trafficking;

(c) The operationalization of the adult shelter on 1st February 2019, where beneficiaries include children aged 16 to 18 years. All victims are given comprehensive trauma informed care and support;

(d) The disbursement of GHC1,000,000 to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection for the Human Trafficking Fund, which aims to protect victims and implement the Human Trafficking National Plan of Action (NPA);

(e) The continuous meetings being held by the Human Trafficking Management Board (HTMB) since 2017, as well as the meetings being held by the Child Protection Compact (CPC) Agreement Technical Working Group. The Working Group aims to strengthen child protection mechanisms in the fight against child trafficking;

(f) The printing and dissemination of information, education and communication materials. There are media engagements, press conferences and media launch of our programs to educate the general public. Social media handles and platforms disseminate awareness raising campaign materials;

(g) There is a specialized training program on child trafficking, migration and child exploitation for shelter staff, law enforcement officials, judges, attorneys and stakeholders to build their capacities to combat child trafficking;

(h) The commemoration of The World Day Against Human/Child Trafficking with major activities over the past four years;

(i) The sensitization of communities, which have been identified as sending and receiving victims of child trafficking, on the dangers associated with child trafficking and its impact on the child. Majority of these communities are along the Volta Lake and seas;

(j) The holding of a stakeholder conference to review the progress made in the implementation of the Human Trafficking National Plan of Action and the Human Trafficking Act of 2005, Act 694. This brought together all stakeholders and development partners working in the area of child/ human trafficking to review the work done and to plot the course for the future actions;

(k) The targeting of community leaders and traditional authorities through grand durbars and workshops with the aim of educating them on the issues of human trafficking;

(l) The organization of community dialogues to intensify advocacy and improve preventive mechanism in areas of child labor, child trafficking, child protection, and gender-based violence and social protection. The community dialogues brought together school children, teachers, fishermen, and fishmongers from neighboring towns to be sensitized on the issues of child trafficking;

(m) The establishment of the Children's Parliament by the Department of Children in November 2019 to periodically discuss issues of child labor, child trafficking and all forms of child protection.

Policies aimed at ending harmful traditional practices, in particular child, early and forced marriage³¹

134. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has launched a National Campaign to 'End Child Marriages'. So far, 5 national dialogues have been held for a total of 450 participants, including media houses, to enable them to use their platforms to engender discussions on issues of child marriage.

135. A Facebook page, Ghana Ends Child Marriage, and Twitter account, (@ChildMarriageGh, have been created to continually engage audiences with the right information using the #GhanaEndsChildMarriage statement.

136. 1,000 copies of the National Strategic Framework on Ending Child Marriage have been developed and disseminated.

National Action Plan on child labour using the measures for mining in other sectors³²

137. The National Action Plan on child labor is being reviewed to take into account the best practices in eliminating child labor. Additionally, Ghana is in the process of developing a Business and Human Rights National Action Plan that would mainstream child labour prevention practices in all business related activities in Ghana.

Implementation of the legal framework on child abuse and exploitation³³

Sexual exploitation

138. Children are protected by law from sexual exploitation and abuse. The Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 1998, (Act 554) criminalizes a range of sexual offences against children, ranging from indecent assault to unnatural carnal knowledge and defilement.

139. Though there is not much statistical data available to determine sexual exploitation of children, media reports and records of DOVVSU indicate that sexual exploitation prevails in the country. These reports show the engagement of children in commercial sexual exploitation. There is generally a challenge in the reporting of sexual exploitation cases due to the traditional notion of the tarnishing of the image of families of both perpetrators and victims if community members get to know about a sexual incident. In order to avoid the shame and stigmatization, some families fail to report cases involving sexual violence.

140. The causes of child sexual exploitation in Ghana are economic deprivation, irresponsible parenting, lack of adequate shelter for some children of poor parents, peer pressure and the quest to become rich at an early age.

141. Government agencies and civil society groups work to identify, counsel, offer livelihood skills training, and reintegrate or resettle child victims of sexual exploitation, most of whom are migrant children in large cities, such as Accra, Tema, Kumasi, Cape Coast and Takoradi.

142. The role of Government and non-government organisations in educating and sensitising the public on the various forms of sexual abuse and what to do if a child becomes a victim has been positive through the use of both print and electronic media.

143. The establishment and strengthening of agencies, such as DOVVSU of the Police Service, CHRAJ, the Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking Secretariats of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection have been significant for ensuring cases are dealt with speedily.

144. Since 2018, Ghana has made considerable progress in addressing the structural issues related to online child sexual exploitation and abuse, including the strengthening of the legal, policy and institutional frameworks with the passage of the Electronic Transactions Act 2008 and the Cyber Security Act 2020. The latter law has specific provisions related to the prevention and response to online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

145. Ghana conducted the Global Kids Online survey in 2018, which informed programmatic interventions to address online child sexual exploitation and abuse in line with the WeProtect Model National Response. Significant achievements include:

- (a) Ratification of the Council of Europe's Cybercrime Convention (Budapest Convention);
- (b) Setting up of a dedicated reporting portal to receive reports related online child sexual abuse material;
- (c) Establishment of a child protection digital forensic laboratory to analyse and assess electronic evidence linked to technology enabled crimes against children; and
- (d) Development of the Digital Literacy Package for school staff and students.

Sexual abuse

146. Records at DOVVSU of the Ghana Police Service and media reports indicate significant occurrence of sexual abuse in educational institutions and households in Ghana. Cases of home-related violence have been reported by the media, whilst records at DOVVSU also provide information as to the occurrence of the phenomenon.

147. According to DOVVSU, the most commonly reported sexual abuse cases are defilement, incest, attempted defilement and unnatural carnal knowledge. Most victims of sexual violence within the family and educational institutions are girls. However, there are few instances where boys are victims of sexual violence.

148. There are institutions set up to enforce the rules and regulations on child sexual abuse in Ghana. Notable amongst them are DOVVSU, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Department of Social Welfare (DSW), the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana), and the Ghana Legal Aid Board. These institutions, including the media, provide various services for the prevention of and protection against sexual offences in the country.

Protection of vulnerable children

149. Since 2019, the GOG, with support from UNICEF and other partners, has embarked on an initiative to strengthen the Integrated Social Services (ISS) in line with the system strengthening approach. ISS supports addressing multi-dimensional poverty and vulnerability by linking health, child protection, alternative care, gender-based violence, and social protection services. An integral part of ISS is the Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS), a digital case management system to document, report and facilitate intersectoral referrals of child protection cases. Types of cases handled in the order of most common types are:

- (a) Persons with socio-economic vulnerabilities and social protection;
- (b) Violence, abuse, custody, maintenance or neglect (online and offline);
- (c) Child labor and trafficking;
- (d) Children without parental care, unaccompanied or separated;
- (e) Adolescent pregnancy and child marriage;
- (f) Children in conflict with the law; and
- (g) Sexual and gender-based violence.

150. As of August 2022, both ISS and SWIMS have been deployed in 100 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), with additional 60 MMDAs to be covered by the end of 2022. Key results in 2021 include reaching over 30,000 children-in-need through ISS. This included 11,082 children (including 7,355 girls) who received intersectoral case management services across the 100 MMDAs. Over 960 children living in residential facilities were profiled, and over 1,350 children were reunified with their primary caregiver or provided with family-based care or alternative care services.

151. Still, challenges remain in terms of the completeness and quality of data and case management. Efforts are underway to strengthen the interoperability between SWIMS and other systems, such as the Maternal & Child Health e-Tracker of the Ghana Health Service, the Single Window Citizens Engagement Service (SWCES), the Ghana Child Labor Monitoring System (GCLMS), and the National Monitoring and Evaluation Information System (NaMEIS). The availability of the social service workforce is also limited. Only 3 out of 16 regions have filled more than 50% of minimum position per the Local Government Service staffing norms.

Assistance to children in preventive detention³⁴

152. Juveniles, including children in preventive detention, who do not benefit from any family support, benefit from prison support, in terms of vocational, educational assistance and other welfare packages advanced to the Senior Correctional Center by civil society organizations and other benevolent organizations. The Prisons Administration are in constant communication with relevant stakeholders to promote the activities of the Center to assist these juveniles. An example is a documentary by a local television station, TV3, on juveniles at the Center, which was done to stimulate public interest and engender support.

Persons with disabilities³⁵

153. The Persons with Disability Act, 2006 is currently being reviewed to comply with the UNCRPD. The Draft Persons with Disabilities Re-enactment is currently with Attorney-General. Ghana ratified the Marrakesh Treaty on 11th May 2018 to facilitate access to published works for persons with visual disabilities. In 2017, the National Council on Persons

with Disability launched the Framework and Strategies for Disability Mainstreaming in the MMDAs. Sensitization on the Framework and Strategies for MMDAs is ongoing. The Guidelines for the Management & Disbursement of the District Assembly Common Fund to Persons with Disabilities have been revised to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access the Fund easily.

154. The National Council on Persons with Disability and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority are in the final stages of passing a policy for the training and testing of drivers with disabilities.

155. The National Council on Persons with Disability and its stakeholders are developing Disability Inclusive Guidelines for Humanitarian Response to guide the management and ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities during disaster and risk management.

156. Draft Persons with Disabilities Legislative Instrument that complies with the UNCRPD is in progress.

157. The establishment of the National Council on Persons with Disability is a national initiative to improve the situation of persons with disabilities. However, to ensure the Council is effective in the implementation of this mandate, it needs financial support to pass the Draft Persons with Disabilities Re-enactment into law. Also, the delay in the implementation of the decentralization of the Council, as required after 12 years of the passage of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715), denies most persons with disabilities of this initiative. Similarly, the decentralization requires funding. The Disaggregated Data Unit at the Council is an initiative to maintain a reliable register on persons with disabilities for policy formulation. The Disaggregated Data Unit needs funding and logistics to upgrade its database system.

158. The Presidential Empowerment for Male Entrepreneurs with Disability (PEMED) and for Women Entrepreneurs with Disability (PEWED) in 2019/2020 presented GHC4,000,000.00 to enhance the inclusion of men and women with disabilities in the country to enable them to contribute to economic development, as well as create access to financial and employment opportunities. The program trained and supported about 2,000 men and women with disabilities, and created 280 direct and indirect jobs for women. The fund had a 50% grant element, and the other 50% was an interest free loan, payable in 2 years, with beneficiaries receiving between GHC10,000.00 and GHC50,000.00.

Strengthening strategies to guarantee the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees³⁶

159. The Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) is mandated to coordinate all activities relating to the management and care of refugees in Ghana. GRB is mandated to recognise persons seeking asylum in Ghana as refugees. The Agency advises Government on refugee management policy and ensures that Government policy and directives are adhered to in the management of the refugee programme.

160. GRB is the first point of call for all foreigners who come to the country to seek asylum. GRB receives applications, and registers, interviews and determines the refugee status of asylum applicants. GRB carries out a Refugee Status Determination and provides counseling services for refugees, as well as manages all refugee camps in the country.

161. The Government through GRB, provides livelihood assistance, such as skills training in areas including Information and communication technologies (ICT), hairdressing, soap making (certified by the Ghana Standards Authority), poultry rearing, farming, and mushroom production to the refugees. In the area of health, health centers are established in the refugee camps. Health personnel, who have been paid by Government, have been placed in these centers. Refugees are assisted to enroll on NHIS.

162. Basic schools have been established in the refugee camps. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) is operational in these schools. The programme allows free education from basic to junior high school. In 2017, the Government introduced the Free Senior High School policy. Refugees have free enrolment in high schools.

163. With the aid of Government, all other social services, such as water, sanitation, and electricity are provided in refugee camps. GRB provides refugee ID Cards which enables refugees to open bank accounts and participate in other activities. The Agency also helps in the provision of the UN Refugee Convention Travel Document to facilitate movement of refugees. Further, support is provided where voluntary repatriation is intended by refugees. The Legal Aid Authority assists in providing legal services to refugees.

VII. Conclusion

164. Ghana is committed to the implementation of human rights instruments for which it is a party in compliance with its international human rights and treaty obligations under the 1992 Constitution and will continue to strengthen its institutions responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Notes

- 1 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.63.
- 2 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.196.
- 3 LEAP cycle 77th and 78th report.
- 4 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.115, GPSNP 2021 Annual Performance Report.
- 5 A/HRC/37/7/Add. 1 – Para. 146.53, A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.51.
- 6 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.84.
- 7 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.67, 68, 69, 70, 71,72 and 76, Dexter Johnson v. The Republic [2011] 2 SCGLR 601 @ p. 702).
- 8 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.67,68, 69,70, 71,72 and 76.
- 9 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.28, 194.
- 10 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 147.82.
- 11 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.142.
- 12 A/HRC/37/7 – Para.146.42.
- 13 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.34.
- 14 A/HRC/37/7 – Para.146.88, 89.
- 15 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.40, 64,122, A/HRC/37/7/Add.1 – regarding para. 147.18 and 147.24.
- 16 (See: Commissioner of CHRAJ & 2 Others v Ghana National Fire Service & Attorney-General (the Fire Service case) (Suit No. HR 0063/2017 unreported).
- 17 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.105, 108, 111, 112,113, 115.
- 18 A/HRC/37/7/Add.1 – Para – 147.24.
- 19 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.115.
- 20 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.116,117,62, Including SDG 3.1; SDG 3.2; SDG 3.2; SDG 2.2; SDG 3.7 and 5.6; SDG 3.8) SDG 5.2 and 5.3.
- 21 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.118, 119,114.
- 22 A/HRC/37/7 – Para.146.120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 134, 135, 164, 171, 50.
- 23 A/HRC/37/7- 146.171.
- 24 CTVET is a government agency of the Ministry of Education established under the Educational Regulatory Bodies Act 2020 (Act 1030).
- 25 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.87.
- 26 A/HRC/37/7 – Para.146.48, 133.
- 27 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.156.
- 28 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.132, 137, 42.
- 29 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.62, 136.
- 30 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.92, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 183, 192.
- 31 A/HRC/37/7 – Para.146.155.
- 32 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.87, 159, 160, 161, 162, 165, 167, 168, 169, 195, 177, 178, 158.
- 33 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.172, 174, 179, 180, 182, 184, 188.
- 34 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.158, 195.
- 35 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.197, 199.
- 36 A/HRC/37/7 – Para. 146.200.