

# Universal Periodic Review of Ghana

## Submission for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session

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### I - A CHILD'S RIGHT TO A QUALITY EDUCATION - SDG 4

#### **CONCERN: Inadequate Infrastructure and learning materials**

1. The Vice-President of Ghana, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, at the 60th anniversary celebration of the Navrongo Senior High School (NAVASCO) in the Kassena Nankana Municipality in the Upper East Region, stated that “the goal of quality education can only be attained with appropriate investment in educational infrastructure”.
2. He said that the government is providing 3,000 projects across the country to ensure quality education, with 50 per cent of them nearly completed. In the Upper East Region, about 164 educational projects have been undertaken, with 57 per cent of them already completed.
3. The Vice-President said the government had commenced the provision of free Wi-Fi for senior high schools, 46 colleges of education and 13 public universities while 350,000 laptops had been provided to teachers under the ‘one teacher one laptop’ policy. This, he noted, was part of the measures by the government to improve quality of teaching and learning in the country<sup>i</sup>.
4. In contrast, the Bawku West District branch of the Ghana National Teachers Association (GNAT) said that poor infrastructure in most schools in the area is affecting smooth academic work, leading to poor performance. Poor structures and lack of furniture coupled with lack of teaching and learning materials of the new curriculum were impeding smooth delivery of lessons and appealed to the government through the District Assembly to address the situation. Most of the schools did not have furniture including teachers’ tables and chairs compelling the children to sit on the bare floor to learn with others lying down on their stomachs to write.<sup>ii</sup>

5. The delay in the supply of the new curriculum materials for the new educational reforms is not only hindering the smooth implementation of the program but making teaching and learning cumbersome for the Ghanaian teacher and learner.
6. Some schools in the Jirapa municipality lack basic structures forcing them to have classes under trees while students in a school in the Atwima-Mponua district in the Ashanti region are left without a roof over their heads since the school's roof was ripped off during a rainstorm. A large number of school buildings are in a dilapidated state and are a threat to the lives of teachers and learners and also home to reptiles.
7. According to the Executive Director of Africa Education Watch Mr. Kofi Asare, in a sector where 5,000 basic schools continue to exist under trees and there are 4,000 primary schools without a Junior High School the abandoning of Government projects after there is a change of Government can be attributed to the lack of cross-political buy-in. There is need for political parties to build consensus on major educational strategies to ensure continuity of infrastructure projects by successive governments.<sup>iii</sup>

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

*The government should ensure that all schools, including those in rural and remote areas:*

- i. are provided with basic building infrastructure and desks for teachers and students by 2026.*
- ii. are provided with textbooks based on the new curriculum in accordance with its free text book policy by the next academic year*
- iii. are provided with an even and fair distribution of teacher's laptops and internet facilities by 2025*

### **CONCERN: Teacher attrition and retention**

9. Teacher attrition and retention in the education sector is a matter of concern for all Ghanaians. According to the Education Ministry in the 2020 academic year, approximately 155 teachers resigned and in the 2021 academic year 293 professional teachers quit.<sup>iv</sup>
10. Despite the various interventions that had been put in place by the state to retain teachers, which includes the Single Spine Pay Policy and the best teacher award scheme, and more recently the government and teachers' unions collective bargaining arrangement which was agreed upon in 2020 but is still to be honoured by the government; many teachers, continue to leave the teaching field for other professions every year because of poor service and salary conditions.<sup>v</sup> The situation is even more dire in rural areas where accommodation is either of poor quality or not available.

## 11. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. *The government should allocate 10% of its budget to build accommodation for teachers in the rural areas.*
- ii. *The government should ensure the implementation of the 20% of basic salary as allowance to teachers in deprived areas*
- iii. *All qualified trained teachers should be engaged especially in rural schools which lack teachers*
- iv. *Insurance schemes should be provided by government for teachers in deprived areas*
- v. *Appointment of educationists as ministers, director generals and chairpersons to educational committees and sector.*
- vi. *Re-double efforts to work on the supported recommendations from the last UPR of Ghana (146.20 - 146.29)*

## II COOPERATION WITH TREATY BODIES

**CONCERN: Ghana has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and a Communications Procedure**

12. The Chief of Staff, Akosua Frema Osei-Opare, has indicated the country's resolve to fight child prostitution and pornography at an event to mark the 75th anniversary of UNICEF in December 2021. She said that the country would soon ratify the "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography".<sup>vi</sup>

### 13. RECOMMENDATION:

- i. *Ghana should ratify the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on Rights of the Child without delay, both being supported recommendations at the last UPR of Ghana (146.1 - 146.5)*

## III CONCERN: Illegal Mining

14. The lure of quick money, poverty and inadequate job opportunities has forced many minors and youth in the country to engage in illegal mining activities or 'galamsey' to earn their daily bread. Many young lives continue to be lost as a result of the collapse of the mining pits. Most of these youth wish to stop but the fear of unemployment has compelled them to continue engaging in illegal mining which is steadily making Ghana's water resources impure for drinking and other domestic uses.
15. Activities of illegal mining have resulted in formation of sinkholes, contamination of soil, ground, and surface water pollution, and loss of biodiversity.

### 16. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i. *Expedite action on the review of the Minerals and Mining Act to ensure sound management of the extractive sector to include control of illegal mining activities and integrate community rights (147.18, Kenya)*
- ii. *Strengthen measures to eradicate child labour (146.80, Japan)*
- iii. *Take the necessary measures to eliminate and penalize all forms of hazardous child labour (146.184, Republic of Korea)*
- iv. *Create more jobs to accommodate a higher percentage of youth.*
- v. *Encourage Technical training to enable self-employment.*
- vi. *Abolish Electronic levy to encourage youth entrepreneurship.*

#### **IV CONCERN:Corruption**

17. Ghana's finance minister, Ken Ofori-Atta, estimates that the country loses over US\$4 billion annually to corruption: abuse of entrusted power for advancing private interests. The loss is about 20% of Ghana's budget, reckons Richard Quason, deputy commissioner of Ghana's Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice. This money could instead help improve the country's education, healthcare, water, housing, electricity, and communication and transport network infrastructure.
18. Corruption also undermines democratic stability and social justice and occurs in both private and public sectors in Ghana, including public procurement, the judiciary, police, public services, and land, tax and customs administration.<sup>vii</sup>
19. The government in 2019 passed a new bill called "Right to Information Bill Act" under RTI ACT 989 which promotes transparency and accountability by empowering people to access information on central and local governments as well as non-governmental organizations, which are publicly funded.<sup>viii</sup>
20. While the implementation of the Act is expected to encourage a culture of transparency and accountability in public affairs and, in particular, make official government data easily accessible to journalists in their work, the reality of the situation is that one still has to endure cumbersome bureaucratic procedures and spend a lot of money and time resources before the request is met. Many journalists have been targeted in the quest for information and in the discharge of their duties.
21. Corruption in Ghana's criminal justice system is also responsible for the country's weak law enforcement making corruption a low-risk offence.<sup>ix</sup> This coupled with the political interference and the appointment of 'party people' to government departments to fight corruption compromises the system of checks and balances.

#### **22. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- i. *The Attorney-General's Department should be separated from the Ministry of Justice and made independent of the executive influence.*
- ii. *Resource the Office of the Special Prosecutor and state anti-corruption bodies and allow them to function independently.*
- iii. *Strengthen monitoring mechanisms to detect and address law enforcement corruption.*

- iv. *Appointments to state anti-corruption bodies should be based on integrity and qualifications.*
- v. *Re-double efforts to combat corruption (146.84; Algeria)*

## V CONCERN: Gender Inequality

23. In Ghana, gender inequality in which females have usually been treated as second-class citizens can be traced back to patriarchy. While females in Ghana are underprivileged in various arenas of life, the three main areas are education, economy and political participation.<sup>x</sup>
24. Gender Inequality in Education - At the basic school level, the gender gap is minute as most children in Ghana are taken to school due to some state policies. However, the gap increases as boys and girls advance through the educational levels. Common factors cited for the gender gap in education in Ghana are culture, poverty and pregnancy.
25. Gender Inequality in Economy - Another area in which high gender inequality exists is the economy. Gender inequality in economic activities has placed women in a disadvantaged population, as men have access to and control over more wealth than women. Although many women in Ghana are engaged in some economic ventures, they are likely to engage in part-time or seasonal jobs which usually pay low wages
26. Gender Inequality in Political Participation and Governance - Gender inequality in Ghana's political system is very high with few women included in government. Beside the parliamentarians, women are also poorly represented in the other political appointments made.

## 27. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. *Re-double efforts to introduce measures to promote the full and active participation of women in public life (146.142; Zimbabwe)*
- ii. *Adopt the Affirmative Action Bill without further delay (146.42; Denmark)*
- iii. *Re-double efforts to promoting gender equality through specific laws, plans and programmes(146.62; Peru)*
- iv. *Eliminate obstacles to the enjoyment of land property rights for women(146.131; Albania)*

<sup>i</sup><https://www.businessghana.com/site/news/general/250408/Government-provides-infrastructure-to-boost-quality-education>

<sup>ii</sup><https://www.myjoyonline.com/poor-school-infrastructure-affecting-academic-work-in-bawku-west-gnat/>

<sup>iii</sup><https://coverghana.com.gh/70-of-the-e-blocks-are-now-useless-in-the-short-to-medium-term-kofi-asare/>

<sup>iv</sup><https://educationweb.com.gh/education/only-293-ges-teachers-resigned-teaching-2021-moe-spokesman/>

<sup>v</sup><https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234635222.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup><https://thebftonline.com/2021/12/16/unicef-celebrates-75th-anniversary-in-child-protection-and-socio-economic-devt/>

<sup>vii</sup><https://theconversation.com/what-ghana-can-do-to-combat-corruption-educate-prevent-enforce-176367>

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<sup>viii</sup><https://mofep.gov.gh/rti/introduction>

<sup>ix</sup><https://theconversation.com/what-ghana-can-do-to-combat-corruption-educate-prevent-enforce-176367>

<sup>x</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342572475\\_Gender\\_inequality\\_in\\_key\\_sectors\\_in\\_Ghana\\_Current\\_trends\\_causes\\_and\\_interventions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342572475_Gender_inequality_in_key_sectors_in_Ghana_Current_trends_causes_and_interventions)