

**SUBMISSION BY THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA) TO
THE OFFICE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ON
THE UNVIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

The shared objective of the government and UNFPA in its assistance in Ghana has been to advance awareness and enjoyment of human rights by all inhabitants – women, men and young people - facilitated by the government and civil society partners, collaboration with other UN Agencies and bilateral development partners. Some of the human rights instruments amended were possible due to the mandate given under the Laws of Ghana (Revised Edition) Act 562 of 1988, to bring all laws in conformity with the 1992 Constitution. Some of these instruments and measures which have received technical and financial support from UNFPA over the years, in collaboration with implementing partners, include:

1. Review of the Children's Act 560 of 1998 – to increase the legal minimum age of marriage to 18 years;
2. Amendments of the Criminal Code;
 - a. – Act 29 of 1998 that criminalized harmful traditional practices such as female genital cutting/mutilation, *trokosi* - abolished customary/ritual servitude within the wider context of harmful traditional practices and similar practices. Issues also covered included the deletion of section 42 (g), which had hitherto permitted non-consensual sex within marriage.
 - b. – Act 554 of 1998 that increased the age of criminal responsibility, and had specific provisions for the protection of women and children from all forms of violence and abuse specific offenses (indecent assault, sexual offences with related sanctions).
 - c. - Act 741 of 2007 widens the scope of responsibility in the practice of FGM to include participators other than the practitioners and also increased sanctions for the offence.
3. Support for the elaboration, validation and submission of the 4th, 5th and 6th reports to the CEDAW Committee in 2006 and also the 6th and 7th CEDAW reports for Ghana in 2012;
4. Supported national consultations and advocacy with policy makers for the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act 732 of 2007, including sensitization of stakeholders; and the development of the DV National Policy and Plan of Action (NPPoA, 2009-2019), to guide implementation of the Domestic Violence Act including effective law enforcement); A draft Communication/Advocacy Plan is in the process of being adopted by the Domestic Violence Secretariat of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC);
5. Human Trafficking Act 694 of 2005 – participation in stakeholder consultations;
6. Spousal Property Rights Bill - participation in consultations;
7. Support for the establishment of the Women and Juveniles Unit (WAJU in 1998) subsequently re-named the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU in 2005) of the Ghana Police Service;
8. Technical and financial support for the establishment of the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) in 2001, adoption of the National Gender and Children's Policy in 2005 and Strategic

Implementation Plan (2005-2008) to mainstream gender concerns in national development processes towards improving the socio-cultural, legal, economic and political situation, and participation of both women and men in national development processes;

9. The review and adoption of the National Youth Policy, the National Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy and the National Adolescent Development Programme including the Ghana Strategic Plan for the Health and Development of Adolescents and Young People 2009-2015 and the Standard and Tools for monitoring adolescent and youth friendly health services in Ghana;

10. The elaboration of the Reproductive Health Policy and Standards; support for the effective management of fistula cases, rehabilitation of survivors and campaign for its eradication;

11. UNFPA supported the drafting, review and stakeholder consultations to validate and adopt the first ever National Ageing Policy which was launched in December 2011. An implementation Plan has been validated, an M&E Framework is currently being developed with collaboration with NDPC. A draft bill on ageing in Ghana is in the process of being submitted by the responsible Ministry (Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, MESW) through Cabinet to Parliament for consideration.