

**CONSULTATIVE GROUP FOR GHANA / ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP MEETING
JUNE 19, 2007**

**PRESIDENTIAL DISCUSSION:
STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF DPs BY THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER**

Mr President

Chair

Co-Chairs

Honourable Ministers

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

We have had very good presentations over the past two days; and have benefited from the contributions of a number of people, including notably Mary Robinson, several Ministers and representatives of Civil Society. The excellent sets of documentation available to us have provided the basis for the debate; and we should like to congratulate the Ministry of Finance and the CEM Team for this.

We have focussed on the results achieved over the past 12 months; the scale of problems which confront Ghana and the challenges which face us as development partners. In this context, we have taken note of improvements in the way our partnership works; and have looked at how it might be improved still further.

The first day was spent reviewing the work done so far on the Country Economic Memorandum. Particular highlights include:

- the positive story on growth – a matter for genuine satisfaction and congratulation;
- but also the need to keep an eye on the equitable distribution of that growth, especially as regards women and children so they are not disadvantaged; and so that poverty levels continue to fall;

- the great needs in terms of infrastructure, including notably energy;
- and, while sharing the joy at the recent discovery of oil, the challenges of the current energy crisis and the effect it can have on growth, as it has already had on inflation.

Our second day focussed initially on our partnership; on ways in which development partners, with the Government in the lead, could improve the overall framework of their partnership; and in particular on how we could both get the best out of the resources available. Effective and efficient use of resources was a recurrent theme; as was the need to ensure value for money for all investment decisions.

The afternoon session was devoted to Human Resource Development - in recognition of the fact that it is people who are at the heart of what we are seeking to achieve; and who will be the instruments for the delivery of our objectives. A number of weighty contributions from the floor on health and water; education and skills; and gender enabled us to look at the key issues under this heading at greater length.

Overall, the communique summaries the issues discussed during the meeting. But I should like to highlight one or two of them here:

- Ghana has presented a valid case for scaling up – of both its ambitions and the resources required to meet them;
- It can rightly boast of an excellent governance record - but needs to continue delivering on APRM action points, especially in the areas of decentralisation and corruption;
- MDGs 3, 4 and 5 (dealing with gender, child deaths and maternal mortality respectively) are off track and need urgent attention from Government and partners;
- But other MDGs are on track – with Ghana likely to be the first African country to achieve MDG 1;
- Ghana is on the road to middle-income status;
- But there are challenges in such areas as infrastructure including energy, gender and social exclusion which could threaten Ghana's progress if left unattended;

- Civil Society made a valuable contribution to the debate. We need to ensure that it remains included.

Finally, I should say something on the issue of scaling up. Our meeting came shortly after confirmation at Heiligendamm of the G8's commitment to significantly increased levels of assistance to Africa. Our meeting also showed that, overall, levels of assistance to Ghana have increased, are increasing and will continue to increase.

In my national capacity, I should like to say that the UK will be increasing its own programme of assistance to Ghana by at least 20% over the next three years; and, as noted at the recent Finance for Development meeting in Accra, we have increased our contribution to global funds such as the World Bank's African Catalytic Growth Fund by £60m (\$50m of which will go to Ghana's energy sector). The delegate of the European Commission will have more good news to announce in this vein.