

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HON. MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE
AND ECONOMIC PLANNING DURING THE SIGNING OF A GRANT
AGREEMENT OF £40M FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR THE 5 - YEAR
HEALTH SECTOR SUPPORT GRANT ON 21ST MAY 2008 AT 10.30 AM AT
THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING CONFERENCE
ROOM**

1. SALUTATIONS

r. Michael Hammond, DFID Country Director;
Hon. Minister for Health;
Hon. Deputy Minister(s);
Country Manager of the Crown Agents;
Members of the Press;
Invited Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. INTRODUCTION

I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you all to this signing ceremony. Today's ceremony concretizes the pledge made by the British Prime Minister to His Excellency, President Kuffour during the recent "Business-Call-to-Action" Conference in London to assist developing countries meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This marks yet another milestone in the ever fruitful bilateral economic relations between Ghana and the United Kingdom which dates back to the colonial times and continue to grow stronger and stronger.

3. THE GRANT

Ladies and Gentlemen, by this ceremony, the Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland is extending to the Government of Ghana a grant facility of £40 million to support the health sector for the next 5 years. The United Kingdom shall specifically provide an annual grant of £8.0 million over the next 5

years (2008-2012) to support the Government of Ghana implement the Health Sector Programme of Work which covers the entire package of support to improve maternal and child health.

4. SOME RECENT SUPPORT FROM UK TO THE GHANAIAN ECONOMY

The United Kingdom has been a keen supporter of the Ghana's Health Sector. For example, an amount of £7.5 million was disbursed by the United Kingdom in 2007 as interim support to the health sector programme of work.

For the period 2006-2008, the UK Government provided £120 million budget support through the Multi Donor Budget Support arrangement

Again for the period spanning 2006-2015, the UK Government provided £100 million towards the Education Sector Strategic Support Programme. Out of this amount, £20 million has already been disbursed for the 2006 and 2007 financial years.

5. OBJECTIVES

The provision of this grant is the result of UK government's policy on "partnership commitment" to assist developing countries speed up progress on the MDGs. This 5-year Health Sector Budget Support will, among others, enable us to pursue the agreed Health Sector Programme of Work, together with our development partners, to achieve the targets of the GPRS and of MDG 4 and 5 of improving maternal health and reducing child mortality.

6. CONCLUSION

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to emphasize that Government is doing everything possible to make real progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals of reducing by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio and reducing by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five years.

Government would wish to urge that we work together towards improving the timing of disbursements of this support to enable us effectively plan and utilize these critical inflows to Ghana's budget.

In conclusion, I wish to extend on behalf of the President, the Government and the People of Ghana, our gratitude and appreciation to the Government and People of the United Kingdom for this kind gesture.

Thank you and may God bless us all.

