



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

30 October 2023

Madam,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Ghana by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 42nd session in January/February 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Ghana was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 53rd session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/gh-index>), and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'V' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Volker Türk

Her Excellency
Ms. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey
Minister for Foreign Affairs
and Regional Integration of Ghana



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

Ghana is commended for the passing of the historic bill by the Parliament to abolish the death penalty in the country, which is expected to be promulgated into law by the President. Ghana is further encouraged to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, in addition to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The passing of the Witness Protection Act, the Right to Information Act, the New Companies Act and the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Act, as well as further steps aimed at combating corruption, including the establishment of the Office of the Special Prosecutor to combat corruption, are positively noted. The adoption of the Justice for All programme, the promotion of the right to education through initiatives such as the free and compulsory universal basic education programme, and the adoption of laws prohibiting corporal punishment in educational settings, are also noteworthy positive developments.

During the review, concerns were raised with regards to the continued existence of “witch” camps. The Government is encouraged to accelerate the closure of camps hosting women accused of being witches.

Ghana is also encouraged to address concerns that have been expressed about the lack of compliance of the proposed "Promotion of Appropriate Human Rights, Sexual and Family Values" bill with international human rights obligations, and about the absence of a law prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children.

Ghana is encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the Parliament, the judiciary, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations of other international or regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is further encouraged to further strengthen the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-ups, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Ghana may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
30 October 2023