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GHANA

REPORT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS FOR THE
PERIOD 1 JULY 1969 TO 30 JUNE 1973

During the period under review, the Government of Ghana committed itself to the task of accelerating the pace of the nation's economic and social development and to ensuring that all the regions enjoyed the fruits of development equitably so that the living standards and quality of life of Ghanaians could be improved. The Government's policy of self-reliance adopted in 1972 helped to achieve some of these objectives. The key-point of the policy of self-reliance was to feed ourselves, relying less on imported food items. Self-help projects in the various fields such as health, housing and education were encouraged.

III. (B) RIGHT TO SOCIAL SECURITY

Under Section 27 of the Social Security Decree 1972 (NRCD 127) all employers are required to pay for each month in respect of each worker, an employer's contribution of an amount equal to twelve and one-half per cent of such worker's salary during such month.

(C) THE RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

The Government took important steps to provide people with adequate food. For example, in March 1970, a Task Force was established to improve the flow of food such as maize, rice, yams, cassava, plantains and cocoyams into the urban areas. Food thus distributed was cheaper and farmers had the incentive to produce more food for sale to the task force. Also in 1970, the Government set up the Grains Development Board for the purpose of stimulating increased production of grains and legumes in the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana.

In 1972, in its efforts to increase food production and in line with its policy of self-reliance, the Government declared the years 1972 to 1974 Agricultural War Years, and launched the "Operation Feed Yourself Programme". Under this programme farmers were encouraged to grow more food and backyard gardening was also encouraged. Fertilizers, insecticides, seeds and agricultural implements were made available to farmers. Indeed, the programme has ushered in an agricultural revolution unprecedented in Ghana's history as is evidenced by the fact that now people of all levels of the social strata have taken to agriculture, either as full time professions or as hobbies. Millions of acres of land have been brought under cultivation and in 1973 combine harvesters had to be brought to the country to facilitate the harvesting of cereal.

In 1972, the Government increased the minimum wage to ₵1 per day. Also during the period under review the Government embarked on a programme to improve the quality of the personnel of the Department of Social Welfare. A post graduate course was started at the University of Ghana in 1969 for new graduates in the Department and other senior officers underwent courses at the Institute of Public Administration. The aim was to make them more effective and improve the quality of services which they provided to the suffering individuals of the community. The Government also encouraged the formation of voluntary organizations which were engaged in promoting the social well-being of the population. In August 1969, for example, the Ghana Assembly of Women to which all national women's associations are affiliated, was established.

(D) THE RIGHT TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE STANDARD OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

It has been the Ghana Government's policy to lay emphasis on preventive medicine and to bring health care to the rural population. During the period under consideration therefore, the Government actively continued with its communicable disease control programme in connexion with measles and small-pox, Bilharzia, malaria, Tuberculosis and Onchocerciasis. With respect to Bilharzia, focal treatment of the snail habitats was started in October 1969.

The Government also continued to provide the necessary medical care. More Health Centres and Health Posts were set up. The number of Community Health Nurses increased to provide maternal and child health services. Nutrition rehabilitation centres were established to help educate mothers of mal-nourished children. A Central Chemical Industry was established for examination of foods, drinks (especially locally manufactured), drugs effluent from mines, and rivers. With respect to environmental health, the government established a programme to improve rural water supplies since unsafe drinking water is a major cause of a large number of diseases.

(E) THE RIGHT OF THE FAMILY, MOTHERHOOD AND CHILDHOOD TO PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE

Article 13 of the 1969 Constitution provides for the enactment of laws which will ensure the right of women and children to enjoy special care and assistance necessary for the maintenance of their health, safety, development and well-being.

The Labour Decree 1967 (NLCD 157) continued to be in force. Under its Section 41 provision is made whereby no person shall employ a female in any mine or underground work or in any industrial undertaking on night work. No person shall employ a child (i.e. a person under the age of 15 years) except where the employment is with the child's own family and involves light work of an agricultural or domestic character only. Under section 45 of the Decree, no employer shall employ a young person (i.e. a person over 15 years but under 18 years) in any industrial undertaking on night work or in any mine or underground work.

In 1970, the Government made obligatory upon all employers to grant three months maternity leave with full pay to their pregnant female employees.

(F) THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

During the period under consideration, the Government endeavoured to overcome some of the problems connected with the Accelerated Development Programme of 1951 and the compulsory universal education introduced under the 1961 Education Act by erecting more buildings for Schools, increasing the number of teacher training colleges and replacing pupil teachers with trained teachers. Indeed, by 1972/73 the teaching force had been increased by some 6,350 trained teachers.

In line with the Government's determination to make schooling as practicable and as meaningful to the pupils as possible, subjects relating to animal and crop husbandry, local crafts and vocations as well as teaching of elementary science and home science

were given the greatest emphasis in elementary schools. The Continuation School Programme which began with 18 pilot schools in 1969/70 had by 1973 expanded to involve about 300 schools. The Government continued to award scholarships to deserving students irrespective of sex, to attend Secondary Schools and higher educational institutions.

(G) THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN CULTURAL LIFE

The Government took keen interest in the cultural life of the people. Since 1972, regional as well as national art festivals have been organized by the Arts Council of Ghana. Local language teaching in schools has also been promoted by the Ministry of Education.