



## COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON UNPAID CARE WORK HELD AT THE FIESTA ROYALE HOTEL, ACCRA, ON 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER, 2018

We, stakeholders in 'Promoting Opportunities for Women's Empowerment and Rights (POWER), drawn from six regions in Ghana, assembled at the Fiesta Royale Hotel in Accra for a National Dialogue on Unpaid Care Work under the theme: "Women's Unpaid Care Work Counts: Recognise, Redistribute and Reduce Care Burden on Women and Girls".

Under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the dialogue was organised by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in partnership with ActionAid Ghana, and attended by heads of government ministries and departments, DCEs and MCEs from selected districts in Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Brong Ahafo and Volta region; smallholder women farmers, Muslim groups and youth groups.

The objective of the dialogue was to promote a national campaign to challenge attitudes that underpin women's unequal responsibility for care work burden and unpaid care work in our national context, influence policy and demand adequate budgetary provision for the recognition, redistribution and reduction of unpaid care work by policymakers.

At the end of the dialogue, the participants, having examined recommendations from various speakers and evaluated contributions from plenary, concluded as follows:

### Unpaid Care Work in context

1. Across the world, there is active engagement on issues of Unpaid Care Work (UCW) and unequal distribution of work, with women having a disproportionate share of the work burden. UCW underpins the ethos and wellbeing of society, but it is mostly overlooked and undervalued by policy makers and legislators.
2. Due to the lack of recognition of UWC, there are no reliable figures to properly account for the enormous contribution of women to national accounts. Valuing UCW and using accurate gender data will determine the type of interventions and policies required to reduce UCW through government-led interventions.
3. There is a direct link between UCW and poverty among women, political participation and social wellbeing. 75% of women worldwide are responsible for UCW. It is a disservice to women when domestic work is not quantified and counted as work. Statistics from time diaries compiled by ActionAid reveal that considerable amount of time and energy are spent on house work by women, which deny them time to engage in productive and profitable work.
4. UCW affects the advancement of women in the corporate world and the economic fortunes of women in the informal economy. School girls in rural communities are sometimes withdrawn from school to support domestic work. It also affects women's Work-Life balance and their political advancement, which contributes to the neglect or low interest in gender-sensitive issues by the male dominated political sector.
5. UCW affects women's health, accounting for increasing cases of high blood pressure and psychological trauma among women, leading to low progress in women's economic activities. This contributes to high levels of poverty among women. Men enjoy many leisure hours which are denied women. Health insurance and medical interventions should target and protect women and girls.

### Interventions by Gov't and ActionAid

6. The Government of Ghana has ratified many international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment. Policy interventions such Family and Child Welfare, Early Childhood Care and Development, LEAP and many others are in place to

promote social protection and economic inclusion. There is recognition by state actors such as the Ghana Statistical Service to reduce UCW and promote the interests of women.

7. The National Gender Policy developed by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection recognises the effects of UCW and provides measures to reduce women's work burden. Under the Department of Gender's 'Community Profiling' programme, there is recognition for paid work and unpaid work, with clear interventions to support the reduction of UCW. There is the need to examine and strengthen existing frameworks and relevant policies to address gender stereotyping, reduce poverty among women and improve gender parity.
8. Under ActionAid's "Promoting Opportunities for Women and Empowerment and Rights" (POWER) intervention, smallholder women farmers and networks of women in development, have been empowered to advocate for their rights to productive resources, recognize the effects of UCW on their livelihoods, and supported to practice Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA).
9. ActionAid Ghana has constructed 24 child care centres in selected rural communities in five regions, provided polytanks and energy-saving cooking stoves for rural women and also embarked on aggressive community sensitization, including cooking competition among men, as part of behavior and social change strategies. Demonstration farms have served as practical learning points for smallholder women farmers.

### Recommendations and Resolutions

10. Programmes and interventions on women empowerment and gender mainstreaming will be properly targeted if there is reliable data on the monetary and time value of women's UCW. To effectively quantify the real value of UCW in national accounts, the measuring instruments and statistical approaches should reflect the changing demographics of the care landscape, by monitoring, targeting and increasing research to inform a holistic care policy.
11. Advocate for more public investment in the care economy and promote social mobilization, socialization and advocacy on behavior change, especially among men. The new orientation on women empowerment, feminism and gender rights activism should not only project its benefits to the woman, but highlight women's contribution to society.
12. There should be clear policies to increase community welfare provisioning and child care centres in both urban and rural communities. District Assemblies should absorb child care centres constructed by ActionAid in rural communities and budget for their maintenance, including the salaries of care workers working in these centres. Such workers could be paid under NABCO or YEA.
13. Promote the career progress of women in the corporate and informal economy by improving work-life balance through affirmative and gender-responsive policies, to allow flexible working hours for women. Employers should support in the reduction of UCW by promoting gender and child-friendly working environments. This will include child care facilities and maternity privileges.
14. Women rights advocates and social justice organisations should proactively engage the media by influencing and directing media content, including TV and radio advertisements, to promote the gender agenda. They should use the media to change attitudes towards UCW by mainstreaming gender in public discourses and projecting the story of the empowered woman in media spaces.

