

GENDER DIMENSIONS OF GHANA'S OIL AND GAS POLICY DRAFT
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Background

With the increasing awareness of the economic potential of the discovery of oil and gas in Ghana, there are increased calls on government to provide a more prudent, effective and holistic legal framework to guide the entire petroleum industry. The absence of effective policy guidelines to protect citizens from oil and gas exploitation, elsewhere on the continent, have resulted in costly social conflicts and entrenched poverty in oil producing areas and widened gaps between the rich and the poor who are mostly women and deepened inequalities between various social groups including women (Coulombe et al 1995). These historical lessons from badly managed oil and gas wealth of some African countries are re-enforcing calls by several stakeholders and civil society groups for effective, inclusive and well coordinated citizen participation in policy dialogues in the sector. Given how marginalized women and women's groups have been in national policy dialogue calls are also being made for the introduction of specific measures to ensure the participation of women's rights and gender oriented groups in these dialogue processes and that these processes are informed by a strong gender analysis. The core argument is that citizen participation will contribute to better management of the industry in a way that ensures transparency, accountability to women and men, equity and delivers benefits to the entire country. Citizens are demanding the development of a national petroleum policy through well coordinated inclusive national consultations of stakeholders with women and men involved. That such a policy should be the basis of all ensuing laws and regulations to govern the sector.

General overview of the oil and gas industry in Ghana

Ghana with a scanty oil production capacity of 6,000 barrels of oil per day ("bopd") was considered an insignificant player within the global league of oil producers. However, since the announcement of the discovery of crude in commercial quantities the status of the country is set to change. In June 2008, estimated reserves of one billion barrels of oil and substantial quantities of gas were announced from which Ghana will be producing approximately 120,000 barrels of oil a day, along with significant quantities of gas. It is estimated that government revenues from oil and gas could reach cumulative \$ 20 billion barrels of probable reserves over a production period of 2012 to 2030 in the Jubilee Field alone.

Policy Evolution for the Petroleum Sector in Ghana

Currently the upstream sector of the petroleum industry in the country is governed by piecemeal legislations that span a period of over two half decades. These laws include Ghana National Petroleum Corporation Act, 1983 (P.N.D.C.L 64), the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act, 1984 (P.N.D.C.L, 84), the Petroleum Income Tax Act, 1987 (P.N.D.C.L 188), the Internal Revenue Act 2000, the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation Petroleum Model Agreement, the Ghana Shipping Act, 2003 and the Maritime Security Act, 2004 (Act 675).

There have been calls that these piece meal laws do not present a developed legal framework for the oil and gas sector. Since the discovery of the resource government has undertaken a number of activities aimed at boosting its capacity to effectively manage the resource. These activities include a conference for the development of oil, discussions among committees and sub-committees to produce a master plan for petroleum exploration, discussions with the development partners on a programme of development and operations, and the development of a draft petroleum policy and the Upstream Petroleum Authority Bill. It is important to state that except

for the presence of individual women in some of these activities, the greater aspects of these activities did not address gender issues directly as a design feature. Highlights of any gender considerations were therefore, incidental or implied rather than planned. This makes any impact on gender issues as far as these activities are concerned difficult to assess.

The processes and procedures adopted for the development of two important policy documents have been viewed with mixed feelings from the public. It is perhaps in this light that proponents of gender equality and equity seek to established that diversity in the management initiatives that deal with gender related issues and that would address barriers to women's participation is vital in the policy discourse. The government claimed the two documents were born out of effective consultation with stakeholders including a series of seminars and workshops held at various places to solicit public inputs into the development of these policy documents. However, civil society groups in the country have expressed concern that key information relating to policy initiatives have been kept lightly and the discussions on the policy document were made behind closed doors accommodating the views of a select few. The Ghana Catholic Bishop's Conference Dialogue and Advocacy Office on Good Governance said in December 2008 that "the public has to know the details of oil contracts, unfortunately such agreements are not placed in the public domain". Civil society groups have claimed that the promised broad and inclusive deliberations for the development of a fundamental oil and gas policy and master plan for oil and gas sector (the Upstream Petroleum Authority Bill, 2008) has largely been closed to the Ghanaian Public.

It is expected that the new government will open up and widen the debate on these legislative instruments to address the growing concerns of the Ghanaian public to enable the various stakeholders make the necessary input that could enhance the quality of these frameworks. It is in anticipation of such public dialogue on these legislations, particularly the draft national oil and gas policy, which should constitute the core guiding document for any future laws and regulations on the oil and gas sector, that NetRight is undertaking an analysis of the withdrawn Policy. The Analysis seeks to identify areas that could be addressed to enhance the delivery of a gender sensitive policy for the oil and gas sector of Ghana.

This exercise is underpinned by the general realization that gender mainstreaming in the extractive sector in general and the relatively developing petroleum sector is yet to get the required attention despite growing recognition of linkage between the consequences of oil and gas exploration and role of gender. The participation of all citizens, particularly women in the policy development processes would inevitably influence the way the oil and gas of the country will operate. Citizens participation will also help highlight areas where there is need to address women's concerns and support women advancement through a proactive recruitment regime, promotion and skills building policy (Strongman, 2001). Despite the absence of adequate information on gender issues in the extractive sector in Ghana, particularly the oil and gas sector, there are ample international experiences that present a wealth of literature on gender issues in the sector. Unavoidable ones include the effect of displacement on women in the sector (Abraham, 2008)), labor issues (Karin, 2008), childcare for women working in the sector (Blanc, et al 1990) and cultural and health impact on women in resource rich areas (Twumasi, 1993).

This discussion paper therefore highlights salient areas that could be examined, if the government re-opens public debate on the document, which it must do, to mainstream gender in the oil and gas industry in Ghana. The discussion also draws useful gender specific lessons and experiences from the country's age old mining sector.

Summary of Scope and Content of the Draft Fundamental Petroleum Policy for Ghana

In terms of scope, the policy draft focuses on the upstream segments of the petroleum industry value chain. Never the less, the other phases – midstream and downstream segment are critically considered to ensure that effective linkages are established to ensure to maximize benefits to the nation from petroleum operations (Draft Fundamental Petroleum Policy for Ghana, 2008). The policy document lists resource ownership and jurisdiction, fundamentals of the fiscal regime and legal framework, broad relationships among actors in the petroleum sector, broad institutional frameworks, and principles of state and institutional national participation as key issues in the policy. The petroleum policy frame has four main pillars consisting of the regulatory framework for the management of the operations and commercial aspects of the country's petroleum sector. These are:

- a. Fundamental Petroleum Policy,
- b. Petroleum Legislation,
- c. Petroleum Regulations and
- d. Model Contract.

The Policy document also outlines rules and activities for the regulation monitoring of the operations of petroleum companies. These include:

- i. Development of petroleum legal and contract framework;
- ii. Petroleum Good Governance;
- iii. Social Impact Management;
- iv. Petroleum Sector Organization; there is no explanation of this in the text – does it matter?
- v. Health, Safety and Environment;
- vi. National Participation/Local Capacity and Competence;
- vii. Fiscal administration,;
- viii. Revenue management;
- ix. Resource Management;
- x. Data and Information management
- xi. Human Resource Development
- xii. Technology Development

Main Areas of Gender Concern in the Draft Policy

There are concerns that the policy document and the concomitant draft regulatory frameworks have not mainstreamed gender issues in order to ensure ample regulation to address gender issues in the incoming petroleum sector. These calls have echoed demands for gender sensitive enactments that would secure opportunities for women in the workforce, protect both women and men workers while taking into account the different roles women may play in the sector since they occupy a vulnerable status in the economy. This would guarantee sustainable livelihoods for both women and men in communities likely to be impacted by petroleum exploration, development and production; among others. It has well been documented that relevant

enactments that are likely to address gender issues may include a Contract Labour Act that could provide for a percentage women employed as contract labour. A Maternity Benefit Act that would particularly address the child bearing and child caring characteristics of women, An Equal Opportunity for women and men in hitherto “men only” jobs in the sector, and a Welfare Fund Act that would particularly be beneficial to all employees of the industry regardless of sexual exigencies. (Abraham, 2008)

The draft policy document acknowledges that the ingredients of a well formulated and lasting policy will include a focus on the fundamental issues and the so called cross-cutting governmental activities. These together must address basic questions about the stakeholders in the industry, their relationships with each other and to the resource, and the principles that must guide these relationships and the development of the industry to ensure success. To what extent have these outlined issues and activities that are meant to define stakeholder relationships in the industry address gender concerns? For the answers, we exam some of the fundamental issues and activities outlined in the policy document.

Fundamentals of the Fiscal and Legal Framework:

The significance of putting in place laws to regulate the petroleum sector cannot be overemphasized. The concern however is the tendency of these laws to marginalize certain social groups. The current petroleum laws play a role in hindering gender equity in the sector. The illusion is being created that gender equity exists in all spheres of life because there are gender equal laws and women’s concerns are considered in the formulation of legislations. In less developed countries like Ghana, many laws relating to women’s economic citizenship have remained discriminatory (Manuh, T. 1989). The existing petroleum exploration and production law, 1984, PNDCL 84, section 7, sub section 1 provides for a contractual agreement between land owners and contractors to secure land for petroleum operations. In the face of the fact that heads of a household who are the custodians of lands are often men, determining the use of land is the exclusive preserve of the man. The truth is that women almost have no say when it comes to land issues and the benefits of the leasing of land might often elude them. Given lessons from the mining sector where fiscal benefits of the sector has long eluded the local communities, especially women and women’s groups, there is need to clearly identify various groups of beneficiaries including investors, government and communities, whilst ensuring women and men are amongst these groups. Traditional rulers, disproportionately men, arguably part of the community, have long enjoyed fiscal benefits from the mining sector; there is overwhelming evidence that they have usually appropriated these benefits for the exclusive benefits of themselves and their immediate families.

The petroleum exploration and production law, 1984, PNDCL 84, section 23, sub section 10, provides that contractors or sub-contractor has the right to employ citizens with the requisite expertise or qualifications in petroleum operations. The concern here is that most women in Ghana lack formal education, knowledge and skill in petroleum exploration. This means that in fulfilling this legislation, contractors will disproportionately employ men, majority of whom may have the requisite skills. There is general agreement that there are formidable barriers to gender equality in the oil and gas sector. The male dominated culture of the industry coupled with the complex nature of oil and gas projects are in themselves major impediments to the corporate status of women. Indeed it is not just enough to rely on the good intentions of oil companies to ensure women don not miss out on employment opportunities, rather the government should ensure the introduction of equity principles to address the concerns of women. In this regard it would be prudent to require oil companies bidding for contracts to sign a statement of commitment to gender equity and also incorporate commitment to gender equity as criterion for

scoring bids on oil operations that are put to public tender. In addition, it would be worthwhile to integrate gender equity outcomes with key milestones in their overall human resource plan. This would build into women's benefit plans quantifiable training and employment outcomes for them.

Petroleum Good Governance

Under petroleum good governance the policy documents states: "recognizing that general good governance promotes investor confidence, which is essential to the profitability of Ghana's Petroleum industry, general principles of good governance shall be applied to the sector in order to entrench transparency, credibility, predictability, accountability and integrity in all activities of the industry".

In order for the industry to blossom, there obviously must be a well established, stable and ethical government that consistently practices principles of sound governance. In this venture the political side deliberations in the sector must consist of supporting political structures and organizations in which women are well represented in the planning and executing of prioritized and highly accepted policies and strategies for oil operations. It is imperative that government promotes a pervasive citizen voice, participation, and empowerment of women, assurance of civil liberty, equity, rule of law; curbing corruption; and improving petroleum sector service delivery by making it more transparent, accountable, and responsive. Transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the sector can be improved by allowing both men and women to monitor oil operations. Indeed the area of empowerment and increasing women's voice and participation can improve upon various initiatives and measures designed to enhance decision making as far as the exploration of oil is concerned. (World Bank, 2000).

Another issue about good governance is the strong emphasizes on profitability and interest of investors as main incentives for ensuring good governance in the sector. This flawed and parochial focus does pose political, regulatory, and governance challenges to the country as a whole. Good governance, indeed, is an inherent hallmark of civilization and a basic fundamental requirement of any democratic society and a strong required for sustainable and equitable development. Thus, the preamble on petroleum good governance needs to be recast to reflect the known tenets and principles of good governance. While Ghana has good democratic credentials among its peers in Sub-Saharan Africa, regulations and oversight remain a challenge that needs improvement. In addition petroleum sector bad governance in some countries on the continent should serve as painful reminder of the price for bad governance in the sector. In respect to gender, painting a picture of the abysmal representation of women in the workforce and in government in most oil rich African countries would underscore how governance in oil and mineral production re-enforces low status of women in many countries. In countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Botswana, bad oil governance has affected gender relations by reducing the presence of women in the labor force. This has had profound social consequences: it has led to higher fertility rates, less education for girls, and less female influence within the family in these countries. (Ross 2008). The political consequences of bad governance cannot be overemphasized. When fewer women work outside the home, they are less likely to exchange information and overcome collective action problems; less likely to mobilize politically, and to lobby for expanded rights; and less likely to gain representation in government. (Ross 2008).

It is important that the oil policy ensures good governance in other to encourage the entry of women into the labor force which would tend to boost women's political participation and influence. Indeed there is a strong potential for women in the oil workforce to become more likely to engage in conversations that could promote their interest in politics. Women in the

industry are also likely to join informal networks that could facilitate their collective action and help them develop their civic skills.

Sadly, in the case of oil exploration, women and children have borne the brunt of bad governance in the sector and this situation should constitute strong justification for good governance in Ghana's emerging oil sector. Already there are disturbing developments in Ghana as local civil society groups are concerned that key information such as petroleum agreements- is not being disclosed and that important policy decisions are being made behind closed doors.

Health and safety and environment

Oil and gas exploration is beset with high risks of health, safety and environmental problems (E&P/ UNEP, 1997). The policy draft recognizes this and hence provides for the need for government and other stakeholders in the industry to find effective ways to avoid these risks. Environmental concerns are important for the development of a sustainable oil and gas sector (Patin S. 1999). Production, transport and use of hydrocarbons can cause serious environmental damage unless these activities are properly managed. Oil operations such as drilling can increase sediment loads which can contaminate drinking water as well as discolour water bodies. Women who use water from the rivers and other water bodies to wash clothes and cook food are certainly going to suffer. If poor water quality does lead to negative health impacts, it is women, not men, who typically care for the family when they are sick who would bear most of this challenge. The quality of both men and women's lives can also be reduced by increased air and noise pollution from the oil operations. For oil communities, the loss of lands and space for subsistence farming and fishing can be one of the most significant impacts. The Destruction of fishing space and farmlands, vital sources of women's economic livelihoods means staying at home, offering domestic service, engaging in prostitution, and wallowing in abject unemployment. In addition, there is evidence that safety regulations in developing countries are frequently inadequate, and rarely enforced. Spills of refined petroleum products have claimed hundreds of lives through explosion and fire in most oil rich counties. The combustion of refined products is a significant source of air pollution which retards the intellectual development of children; the burden on nursing mothers is only to be expected. It is important for the oil and gas policy to emphasize the need to use a range of options to mitigate environmental pollution from the sector and such options should take into account specific gender conditions and priorities.

There are environmental standards which can be effectively enforced by the oil industry. The fear however is that, the country has weak institutional capacity to monitor and enforce protective regulations. Though policy directions capture the need to enforce safe environmental practices, there are no adequate commensurate institutions to enforce these policy provisions effectively. The consequence is the tendency for oil companies to apply their own in-house norms which may provide less systematic protection against environmental damage.

Human Resources Management

Workplace issues such as developing a culture of equity and diversity within the sector has been identified as a key factor to sustaining the effective operation of the sector. While the sector shows strong growth potentials, the capacity of women to be absorbed by oil companies is questionable especially with regards women's capacity in the area of science, technology and engineering. The pauperization of women by potentially harsh and male dominated occupational sphere in the sector, coupled with the expected maximization of profits by corporate oil companies without consideration for the human resource base of the masses especially women has the tendency of reducing the ability and capacity of the women folk to equal opportunities for

wealth creation and decent living standards and could re-enforce perpetual subordination of majority of women to the economic dictates of their male folks. It cannot be more imperative to inform and educate women about the factors that influence career success so that they can learn about high value skills to ensure recognition for their achievements and improve access to professional advancement.

It is important for stakeholders of the oil policy to examine workplace issues and take actions to create working environments that are welcoming to women in the skilled jobs. Immense research and effective practices spanning the areas of career development, recruitment, selection orientation, retention, training, and health and safety should be a priority in order to push the objective of increasing their employable skills, retention as well as strengthening leadership potential forward. Issues of gender-based occupational health and safety issues, such as sexual harassment and bullying by men in the workplace; women's place as against men in the industry's structure should be given due attention. Deliberate educational policies that would improve the intake of females into all levels of our educational systems with specific emphasis on science education for the girl child especially in oil and gas related fields would be particularly helpful. For women who have not had the opportunity to acquire formal education, economic empowerments that will deliberately target women in micro-credit financing with minimum bottlenecks to enable them take advantage of the end products of the petroleum business would be embracive. In these respects, there have been several calls by civil society groups that more women should be appointed into directorship of oil and gas companies especially on the boards of government owned shares.

Data and Information management

In the competitive and challenging field of oil and gas exploration, effective data management is very essential. The capturing, storing and accessing of valuable data regarding oil and gas can be made effective by oil and gas data management tools. The policy draft identifies that one of the key requirements for oil and gas data management would be to have a well defined management strategy. Management techniques such as storing data and information as well as analysis of the relationship between the resource boom and poverty reduction are crucial for the management of data and information in the sector. Information on the growth of the oil sector and the growth performance in the non oil sectors is vital for escaping the so-called "Dutch disease". Lack of such information would make it difficult to assess the relative performance of vital sectors that are key to the development of women vis a vis the oil sector and would also make it difficult to test the relationship between oil-dependence and poverty in the country. Poverty pervades the livelihoods of most women than men in Ghanaian (ISSER 2008) and if the country fails to ensure transparent and prudent management of oil data and its use, women's impoverished status could be severe with increased inequality, decreased child bearing welfare, and greater vulnerability to economic shocks. Serious shortfalls in the management of data by government would prevent poor people especially women from capitalizing on the country's natural resources to get out of poverty.

It is an open secret that Government agencies responsible for the management of data and its dissemination thereof are very reluctant to open up for civil society participation and scrutiny. In this vain it would be very difficult to track the performance of the industry, the performance of other sectors vis a vis national expenditure because there would be a very vague, if any, link between engendered expenditure choices of government and declared policy objectives. Among suggestions for a prudent management of information of the sector is the call by civil society groups who seek to highlight the importance of holding public hearing to gauge public opinion on

spending priorities of government and to see if such spending is in tandem with the policy objectives of the sector and whether they are gender sensitive.

In fact there is acknowledgement that very little evidence demonstrates a direct relationship in terms of decentralized management of information with regards development funds and poverty reduction. There is however the risk that in the absence of any policy guideline, male dominance could excuse the capture and control of decentralized resources, thus starving initiatives of poverty reduction of which women seem to be so much entangled with. The thought is that prudent data management would be instrumental to monitoring oil revenues and expenditures by simplifying and disseminating information for the consumption of all.

Social and Economic Impact management

Oil and gas industries generate significant revenues for the national economy (Sherk,1996) and sound macroeconomic management and governance are required to ensure that these revenues are successfully converted into social benefits that should be shared among all and that would lead to broader-based overall equitable economic development and poverty reduction for the country as a whole. While the oil and gas policy draft provides significant commitments to establishing avenues for all to benefit and explore opportunities for developing the economy, at the same time such policy arrangements could bring substantial risks if not well managed. The finite nature of oil and gas resources make it particularly important that governments and investors ensure that the benefits of their exploitation contribute to the development of the human, social, and physical capital needed for sustainable development.

There is a wealth experience in the cases of certain countries about how investment and oil revenues have not been able to guarantee economic growth or poverty reduction. (World Bank 2004). Thus, the presence of oil and gas industries may be associated with a variety of negative social and economic outcomes. For example, increasing cost of living would have an effect on the poor who are mostly women. Decisions in the sector about how community income will be spent may rests in the hands of committees or councils dominated by a community's male leadership, where women are not represented and their views not heard. In addition, women are the main subsistence farmers in most communities and loss of land can cause loss of food for the family and loss of income for women. Unfortunately compensation for the lost land is expected to be received by the owners and landlords but not the women, who would have loss their source of livelihoods. Negative social impacts such as the changes in community structure and stability and the disruption, loss of safety and security that comes with a large influx of migrant workers from the outside, increase in domestic abuse and sexual violence leading to social disruption and family breakdown as men's income levels rise, alcoholism, prostitution, rise in HIV/AIDS and other STDs, increased crime, and rising costs of food, land, housing, and transportation due to the increased activity associated with oil exploration would occur if nothing is done to curtail such occurrences. At the local level, where industry enclaves would be surrounded by the poor and vulnerable inhabitants of indigenous communities, compromising on translating sustainable benefits from the exploration of oil and gas could bring gender issues into question as the vulnerable segments mostly made up of women may be deprived of the benefit of the resource.

Revenue Management

Proper management of oil and gas operations is expected to provide major benefits to the country in terms of revenue. The oil and gas policy draft outlines the need to effect significant changes to the management of revenue in other to accommodate the optimal inflows of revenue anticipated form the exploration of petroleum in the country. The country stands to benefit from the resource if it is well managed. Some of benefits may include increased local employment, transfer of

technical and commercial skills and development of local capacity, a share in fiscal revenues at the local level, enhancement of local social infrastructure and improvement in the delivery of services, especially in areas such as health, education, transport and power as a result of increased public funds and investor contributions and positive multiplier effects in and beyond the communities in which the extractive operations will be located.

An important gender issue related to revenue management is the under representation of women in politics and decision making. In the political turf, only few women are present and hence dawdle to withstand male discriminatory considerations. Political empowerment through improved political representation of women must be tangible in the policy paper. Governments must promote policies and enact laws and accompanying regulations that would support gender mainstreaming in the country as a whole so that women would have equal legal standing as men including property ownership rights and equal access to employment and equal pay for equal work. In the course of oil exploration there should be avenues to develop processes that ensures that women and women's groups are consulted in consultation processes and their views and concerns recorded and represented. Government should ensure that there is a certain minimum level of women's representation in consultative and decision-making bodies at the local, provincial and government levels, including community-exploration company bodies and government-exploration company bodies since this can ensure a transparent system of oil revenue management.

Key policies crucial for a prudent management of oil revenues should take into account the need to establish a transparent and accountable mechanism with respect to revenues earned and their disposition. Perhaps in consultation with principal stakeholders and public interest groups, government can develop good plans for the use of resource revenues. It is important to add that plans to use revenues earned from the extraction of the resource must be subject to a credible audit exercise to ensure an appropriate implementation of these plans. Effective gender sensitive consultations in policy design, implementation and operation should embrace the conditions of women who are among the vulnerable groups in society (Karin, 2008). Indeed it has been projected by several civil society groups that their effective participation in the resource benefits at all levels including sharing of fiscal revenues would trigger well performing oil and gas sector.

National Participation/Local Capacity and Competence

While the provision is generally adequate, emphasis should be put on objectively verifiable guidelines for the development of local expertise, reduction of expatriate quotas and focused development of capacity of women who have traditionally played very subservient roles in the sector globally. The mining sector should provides learning lessons for a more precise defining this issue statement. The mining sector, due to the very subjective treatment of these principles has seen steep growth of expatriate workforce in the sector with staggering wage disparities between national workforce and their expatriate counterparts. Non participation of local communities, and particularly women in mining sector jobs have been blamed on lack of skills. An important gender issue in the extractive sector has been the issue of HIV/AIDS and although the disease affect both men and women, it's physiological effects, social consequences and other gender- related abuse, are particularly more severe for women especially those in the developing world. (Faleyimu 2000). Traditional gender role behavior deprives women of economic opportunities and sex becomes an important economic commodity. This survival strategy is one of the factors responsible for increase in sexual networking in the extractive sector. It is important that the oil and gas sector targets workplace-based HIV/AIDS awareness program at both their employees and their host communities. A broader integration of gender concerns into HIV/AIDS prevention programs can enhance the success of such targeted interventions.

In addition mining companies' employment statistics indicate that mining companies typically employ 90% to 95% men even though there is now growing evidence emerging that women can do most mining jobs as well as men if not better. Mining companies that have introduced women to become heavy equipment operators have reported that over the long term, efficiency is higher and operating and maintenance costs lower for heavy equipment operated by women than men. The pay gap reporting has been canvassed in the several studies in the mining sector. Against this backdrop it is only fair that transparency and equity principles regarding salary arrangements be ensured to assist fairness in negotiations, and in particular assist females in overcoming cultural issues relating to lack of confidence, as well as weeding out instances of discrimination. There is evidence that while the development oil and gas could provide incomes and raised employment, very little ever filters down to women (Strongman, 2008). There is therefore need for this policy principle to have specific clauses that should address gender discrimination in employment and pay. Policy considerations should push for building of skills of local women to maximize their chances of employment in the sector as well as provide adequate attention to building measures that can ensure the rise to positions of power by these women.

Fiscal Administration

This principle is generally adequate, however, given the lessons from the mining sector, skewed disbursement of fiscal benefits among national, local government, traditional authorities and rarely any direct community participation, is considered one of the fundamental causes of conflicts in mining communities. In such cases most of the people who lose out are women. The policy should specifically assert the need for an effective fiscal benefits distribution system that is transparent and predictable with accountability clauses and equity principles. Consideration should be given to a legally backed community development fund designed, managed, distributed and monitored by both women and men in equal numbers with outlined fundamental principles for its application. Experience in the mining sector in Ghana shows that little, in terms of policy, has been put in place to facilitate value enhancement. The policy of fiscal administration should embrace specific clauses that should mandate the use of fiscal incentives to encourage investment in the entire oil and gas industry value chain reflecting gender differentials in value chain work for women and men.

Petroleum Resource Management

Provisions in the policy draft recognizes the finite nature of petroleum resources and tasks petroleum companies operating in Ghana to ensure optimal production methods using the best technology and field practices possible. A well planned petroleum operation would ensure that the resource extraction will be in a sustainable manner for the development of the economy. To prudently manage the petroleum resources, developing transparent and equitable regulatory systems for the oversight of natural monopolies is welcome news especially in the management of private of competitive segments of the industry. The creation of a domestic capacity to design and implement gender sensitive policies in the institutions responsible for the management of the oil and gas industry is critical to achieving sustainable petroleum resource management.

Several experiences from other countries report the consumption of unwholesome fuel products by consumers (Sherk, 1996). In this light it is imperative for government and all stakeholders in the management of the petroleum resources to be committed to ensuring access to clean and affordable fuels to all consumers especially the poor. In this respect, promotion of LPG for households and for commercial and industrial uses with appropriate pricing and taxation policies would contribute to raising the standard of living of citizens as well as offer opportunities for developing a local private sector for women and men. LPG at affordable prices would be

particularly helpful in the chores of households (World Bank 2001) and will help reduce, drastically, indoor air pollution. Indoor air pollution has even greater adverse health impact than urban air pollution, affecting especially rural women and children (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1993). Switching to gaseous fuels has been demonstrated to be one of the most effective means of tackling indoor air pollution. Applaudable efforts by Government in this venture would be to emphasize efficiency in the production and distribution of gaseous fuels, fuel taxation, and the impact of the downstream petroleum sector policy framework on the access to cleaner fuels by the poor.

End of Production Decommissioning

Must stress the polluter pays principle. Need for specific provisions for the introduction of economic instruments for environmental management such as performance bonds as is now the case for the mining sector. The risks and threats from oil and gas projects, particularly those onshore, are family conflicts – social, dislocation, domestic violence, crime and environmental damage including deterioration of water quality, lost farms and other livelihood opportunities. The bulk of these harmful impacts are skewed more strongly toward women. On the other hand oil and gas projects benefits when examined from a gender perspective, mostly accrue to men, who gain the bulk of formal sector employment opportunities. The men also claim the loudest voice as to how government and company funded infrastructure programmes would be allocated.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The absence of effective policy guidelines to protect male and female citizens from oil and gas exploitation, elsewhere on the continent, have resulted in costly social conflicts and entrenched poverty in oil producing areas and widened gaps between the rich and the poor who are mostly women and has exacerbated inequality among various social groups. These historical lessons from badly managed oil and gas wealth of some African countries should serve as guidelines to strengthen the calls for coordinated citizen participation, including women's rights and gender oriented organizations in policy dialogues in the sector. Strong citizens' participation will contribute to better management of the industry in a way that ensures transparency, equity, and accountability and delivers benefits to the entire country.

There are numerous alternatives for reducing the negative impacts and increasing the positive impact of extractive sector on the overall well-being of women and men as well, however any effort can be successful only through a combined concerted effort from the government, companies, non government organizations, local communities, civil society groups to mention but these. There is the need for government engage in dialogue with civil society groups to comprehensively formulate and implement policies related to promotion of gender mainstreaming in the sector. In this light it would be important for government to resource the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC) to promote policies, implement strategies, represent in the enactment of laws and accompanying regulations that support gender mainstreaming. Women constitute more than half of the population of the country (ISSER 2008), hence should share equally with men in the benefits from natural resources and should not bear a greater burden than men from the risks of extracting these resources. Specifically, a well resourced MOWAC could promote creative and thoughtful recruitment techniques in the oil and gas sector, tailored for women. The Ministry's objective should be the setting of targets, tapping into women's networks, facilitating the avoidance of gender stereotyping in the sector and using positive role models to give speeches at schools and universities to boost the moral of female students. This can be achieved through participatory processes for the evolution of equitable policies, legislation and regulation in the sector. Such processes should consciously accommodate identifiable groups

such as those of women and other vulnerable groups and adopt participatory tools that would ensure their effective engagement.

Ample evidence exist in Ghana's age old mining sector to suggest that lack of serious consideration of gender issues in the country's mining sector has resulted in women disproportionately bearing the brunt of the negative impact of mining activities in the country such as lost of livelihoods, lost incomes, unemployment etc. Policy developments in the petroleum sector should embrace these useful gender specific lessons from the mining sector. In the absence of significant policy guidelines to ensure women's contributions are embraced, women will likely continue to face barriers that would sideline them from benefiting from the resource boom. It is important for all stakeholders in the design of the oil and gas industry to develop gender sensitive policies and organizational initiatives to address inequities in the sector. Positive steps should be supported at overcoming barriers to women's participation, in order to ensure that the country's oil and gas sector benefits fully from their ideas, contributions and alternative working styles.

In the light of the identified gender weakness of the draft policy, there is need to open up the draft document for further discussion and conscious efforts should be made to address the gender gaps identified in this discussion.

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