

# **2<sup>nd</sup> Global Civil Society Forum**

Hosted by  
**Voices of African Mothers, Inc. (VAM)**  
In Collaboration with  
**MDG Global Watch**

(Under the Distinguished Patronage of the  
**Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Accra, Ghana)**

**Great Hall**  
**Legon, Accra, Ghana**  
**13 – 16 July, 2009**

Voices of African Mothers (VAM); the Millennium Development Global Watch; and the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs will present the second Civil Society Forum, at the Great Hall in Legon, Accra, Ghana from 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2009.







The conference will focus on providing civil society organizations, engaged in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, an opportunity for networking and knowledge sharing including the presentation and discussion of best practices.

The first Civil Society Forum was successfully organized in Paramaribo, Suriname from 2-4 May, 2007. It was at this meeting that it was decided to hold the second Forum in Accra, Ghana in 2009.

## **I. Main Theme**

### **“The Critical Role of Women in the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals”**

## **II. Expected Outcomes**

-  Solutions to challenges caused by the global food crisis for women, children and other vulnerable groups
-  Lessons learned and best practices in the attainment of Millennium Development Goal #2 – a case study of Ghana
-  Men and women working together in the attainment of gender equality and empowerment of women
-  Reducing child mortality and improving maternal health
-  Building effective partnerships for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals
-  Effective leadership in addressing the stigma and discrimination arising from HIV/AIDS

## **III. Forum Background**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG), derived from the Millennium Declaration of September 2000 and the Monterrey Consensus of March 2002, require strong commitment and action by all segments of society for their full and effective achievement. They entail a Herculean task that cannot be simply accomplished by governments, inter-governmental and governmental organizations alone. The peoples of the world, through their civil society organizations, need to mobilize themselves not only to claim the realization of the goals from their respective governments, but also to work actively and continuously to that effect. Furthermore, for the people's efforts to be most effective there is a need to enhance coordination between their civil society organizations and to build synergies within these organizations.

#### The Millennium Development Goals:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

#### **IV. Forum Hosts**

Voices of African Mothers, Inc. (VAM) was founded in 2004 by Nana Fosu-Randall, a retired UN official and a native of Ghana. VAM is a non-profit, non-governmental organization registered in Ghana and the US with specific goals to help the women of Africa to obtain a full range of educational opportunities, to attain economic empowerment and to become decision-making leaders of the African Continent. As Mrs. Randall reveals, "In the many areas of Africa that have suffered the devastating effects of war, women are the chief surviving victims. They have all experienced a deep trauma, and we must try to help them and their children recover."

MDG Global Watch is a non-profit organization focusing on the assurance that every country on the globe meets the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The organization does not only function as an awareness enhancer with regards to the MDGs, but also works on assisting, linking and monitoring processes toward achievement of these goals on a global scale, through activity development, project participations, networking, meeting attendances, project follow ups and regular publicity campaigns pertaining to the MDGs, including an annual global progress report.

#### **V. Objective**

The Forum's aim is to provide civil society organizations, engaged in the achievement of the MDGs, an opportunity for networking and knowledge sharing, including the presentation and discussion of best practices. Underlying this objective is the need for civil society organizations to broaden their perspectives from their immediate focus or concern to a larger picture and to cross-fertilize.

In response to our objectives, the 2007 Civil Society Forum successfully organized in Paramaribo, Suriname and adopted the "Paramaribo Declaration: Working Together Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals."

The 2009 Civil Society Forum will expand on this objective by communicating to the world, through their civil society organizations, the outcome of the September 2005 summit review by the Heads of State and Government of the achievement of the goals and decision taken in light of the review.

It is of paramount importance that representatives of the civil society (including NGOs with special focus on the media) around the world are well informed of the outcome of the review and the decisions reached by the world leaders as we are advised of the course of action expected from them. The Forum will also address the right to develop

## **VI. Venue**

The 2009 Civil Society Forum will be held in Legon, Accra, Ghana at the Great Hall conference center.

The Forum will be held every two (2) years in one of five regions of the world and started in May 2007 in the Latin American Caribbean region.

Accra has been chosen as the 2009 venue in view of its comparative advantages to five (5) African cities, namely Cotonou (Benin); Addis Ababa (Ethiopia); Nairobi (Kenya); Tunis (Tunisia); and Pretoria / Cape Town (South Africa).

## **VII. Primary Language**

The primary language of the Forum will be English. As much as possible, simultaneous interpretation from French and Spanish into English and English into French and Spanish will be provided. All background Documents, issue papers, press releases, and outcome of the Forum will be provided in English

## **VIII. Participants and Observers**

Ideally, each country of the world should be represented at the Forum by recognized Civil Society Organizations. Also, interested governments and inter-governmental organizations should attend.

Bearing in mind that the Forum will be held in each region of the world on a rotational 2-year basis, priority for this Forum is being given to the representation of countries and Civil Society Organizations of the African region.

In accordance with a prevailing practice at the United Nations, Civil Society Organizations from developed countries should be able to meet the cost of travel and daily subsistence allowance of their representatives to the Forum.

In an effort to increase global awareness of the MDGs and highlight the contribution of Civil Society Organizations to the realization of the goals, media observers will be actively sought.

The participation of government officials, especially those of the African region, and of representatives of international organizations, including the United Nations system, is encouraged and welcome. Also, invitations are being extended to several renowned keynote speakers and experts on the issues to be addressed.

VAM and MDG Global Watch are actively engaged in fundraising to assist with the cost of participation of keynote speakers, substantive experts and experienced facilitators.

## **IX. Forum Structure**

The Forum will be organized in plenary and focused sessions.

There will be an opening and closing session attended by the dignitaries, all participants, observers and the media.

## **X. Travel Arrangements**

Registrants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. Should you need assistance, please feel free to contact VAM supporter, Paul Odei at ITE Travel: (212) 808-5368 x202; 211 E. 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York, NY 10017; Email: [Paul@AmericaTravelClub.com](mailto:Paul@AmericaTravelClub.com).

## **XI. Transportation**

### **Airport: Kotoka, Accra, Ghana**

The terminal is located 6 mi/10 km from the city. The airport offers flights throughout the region, Europe and North America. The primary carrier is Ghana Airways, but several European airlines also fly to the airport.

**Car Hire:** Please look for the VAM Courtesy Desk in the Kotoka Airport terminal to assist you with transfers to and from the hotel.

## **XII. Currency**

The Ghanaian currency is the Cedi (GCD). Exchange rates vary.

## **XIII. Accommodations**

VAM has acquired favorable hotel rates for conference participants. The cost is approximately \$70-\$85 USD, which includes breakfast.

Please contact the Ghana office to assist in your reservations:

233.277.595.916

233.244.749.204

233.202.017.882

