

## Preface

Since independence Ghana has made major progress in the attainment and consolidation of growth. Significant progress has been made in poverty reduction, improvement in economic development, good governance, youth and gender empowerment. Important pieces of relevant legislation have been enacted and institutional arrangements improved to promote inclusive society. Government for instance has enacted the Domestic Violence and Disability Laws, established Domestic Violence Victim Support Units and the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy. However, a number of questions arise as to how to accelerate equitable growth and sustainable human development towards the attainment of a middle income country status and the attainment of MDGs by 2015.

The importance of inclusiveness has been recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations, the Social Summit in Geneva in 2000 and the Millennium Declaration. The relevance of inclusion has been acknowledged as a core issue in sustainable poverty reduction and human development. Debate in the country also reflect the expectation of both national stakeholders and development partners on the need to promote and enhance inclusiveness and accelerate equitable development while continuing the efforts to create more wealth for the nation as a whole.

Ownership of economic, social and political development through a broad-based method is key in the pursuance of MDGs and attainment of middle income status. In collaboration with other key stakeholders we realised the relevance to have this exercise done so that empirical evidence will be obtained through the analysis and the examination of major indicators to provide basis of enhancing inclusion and equitable distribution of growth. The report is expected to promote facts-based discussions on social exclusion with the view to addressing those facts as a way of contributing towards creating a more inclusive society.

This report commissioned by the UNDP examines the different manifestations of exclusion, review gaps to inclusion in various areas of national development such as; social, economic, political as well as legal. It also analysis the status of human development in Ghana and examines relevant indicators for measuring exclusion from it. Finally the report discusses key policy recommendations towards taking practical measures to enhance inclusiveness and equity in the country.

While the report does not necessarily reflect the UNDP's position on any of the conclusions/recommendations of the study, we trust that the debate it will generate will further strengthen the efforts of the country for sustainable and equitable human development. An inclusive society promotes social cohesion, social order and harmony which are essential requirements in ensuring a functional and productive society for economic emancipation. Sustained growth that leads to improvement in the living standards of citizens depends on the levels to which a country develops and actively involves the full capabilities of its human resource. This must be the challenge for all stakeholders and development partners; to support national efforts and programmes for inclusive development.

We hope that the report will lead to national debate on the ways towards an inclusive society. On behalf of the UNDP I will like to express my appreciation to all the independent authors and contributors who have assisted in the preparation of the report and to all our development partners, notably DFID for their financial and technical contribution.



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