**Women left behind? Implications of Ghana’s Oil Discovery for Women in Sekondi Takoradi**

**ABSTRACT**

In June 2007, Ghana discovered oil in commercial quantities of its Cape Three Points in the Western Region of Ghana. Prior to this discovery, attempts to find oil in Ghana did not yield much successful results. Commercial production was therefore not a viable option for Ghana to embark on. The expectations of Ghanaians at the time of oil discovery was high especially in the capital of the Western Region, Sekondi Takoradi. Many expected an immediate boost in the economy in the form of oil-related jobs and increased demand for goods and services which would eventually result in a rise in incomes. Actual production of oil commenced in 2010 and Ghana through its oil production experienced increased national revenue accompanied by increased economic growth. This study looks at implications of Ghana’s oil discovery for a selection of women engaged in diverse economic activities in Sekondi Takoradi capital of the Western Region in Ghana. Using findings from a previous quantitative research, the study identifies the key economic activities of women to be fishing, farming, trading and the provision of multiple services such as catering and hospitality, teaching and nursing. A follow up qualitative survey of women in each category of the selected economic activities shows that the oil find has resulted in a growth in economic activity of some whiles growth for others has been slow. It is perceived from the study that many women feel “left behind” in all the social dynamics that have taken place since oil production began. The study concludes that the benefits of oil for women in Sekondi Takoradi has been skewed in favour of those engaged in the provision of certain services. There is a need to collect more gender disaggregated data which reveals other potential opportunities for women in Sekondi Takoradi in oil related activities. Recommendations are made on how to ensure that these opportunities are visibly created and understood by the women.