



PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEMAKING MINUTES

Empowering peace: Canada helps put female police officers in the driver's seat



The Director General of Human Resource Development of the Ghana Police Service, Mrs. Joana Osei-Poku has called on all personnel to constantly train to uplift their competencies to meet the international policing standards. www.ghanapolice.info/news_95.htm

March 10, 2010 at the Police Headquarters in Accra, Ghana, 50 female officers graduated from a driver training course developed and run by facilitators from the Pearson

Peacekeeping Centre and the Ghana Police Service and supported by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Canada donated eleven 4x4 vehicles, communications and GPS equipment to ensure Ghanaian officers had the right equipment for driver training and for training for UN peace missions.

UN peacekeepers were required to have excellent vehicle handling, defensive driving and quick decision making skills in crisis situations, skills that most Ghanaian women had had no opportunity to develop until the groundbreaking Canada-Ghana cooperation. Pearson Peacekeeping facilitators noted that at least 85% of the Officers who had previously failed their driving exams would now pass under the guidance of newly trained driving instructors at Ghana Police Service.

In her comments, Joana Osei-Poku, who spoke on behalf of the Deputy-Inspector General of Ghana Police, noted that the 2009 driving course was designed for Officers who would conduct the UN peacekeeping pre-selection driving test and mentor other Officers to become driving examiners. The two week course was set up in the "train the trainer" model to ensure long-term capacity building.

The 2010 female graduating class deployed to the UNAMID mission in Darfur. According to one participant, "Women are suffering all over the continent and I wanted to help my sisters in places like Sudan. This course was very important to me and my whole family

because now I was able to participate in a mission and make a difference in the lives of my African sisters.”

The Canadian High Commissioner to Ghana, Darren Schemer, pointed out at the 2010 closing ceremonies that Canada’s part in facilitating peace operation participation helped bring security, stability and support to highly volatile situations, and also helped lay the ground for reconstruction and development.