

Inflation for February 2024

23.2%

Source: 2024 Budget Statement

Business

Empowering women in cocoa: Players call for targeted support

By Elizabeth Nyaadu Adu

PLAYERS in the cocoa sector are advocating targeted support for women-owned businesses in the cocoa sector to overcome market barriers, particularly with access to credit and financial services.

For instance, they believe the government providing incentives, capacity-building and tailored programmes could indeed help address those challenges and improve market access for women entrepreneurs, ultimately benefiting both the businesses and the cocoa sector.

In an interview with the Daily Graphic on the sidelines of a workshop for the Netherlands Trust Fund V (NTF V) project beneficiaries in Ghana, the Technical Manager for Ghana Cocoa Initiative, Tawiah Agyarko-Kwarteng, said there was increasing diversity in the cocoa sector, with more women entrepreneurs and chocolatiers.

However, market barriers, including limited access to financing, discriminatory practices and unequal access to resources and information, remain a major challenge for women in

the cocoa sector.

Organised by the Netherlands Embassy in Ghana, in collaboration with the NTF V project and the International Trade Centre (ITC), the event was on the theme: "Empowering Women in Cocoa: Celebrating Diversity, Inclusivity, Resilience, and Achievements."

It formed part of activities to mark the 2024 International Women's Day Celebration with the global theme- "Invest in women: Accelerate progress"

The event provided a unique opportunity to recognise and empower women who play pivotal roles in cocoa processing and farming.

She explained that overcoming these barriers requires targeted support programmes, policy interventions and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and inclusion in the industry to create equitable market opportunities for women in the cocoa sector.



• Tawiah Agyarko-Kwarteng, Technical Manager for Ghana Cocoa Initiative, addressing participants in the event

"It's quite expensive to access markets externally and to ensure that you have everything in place to export your products. For many women who

cannot also access financial services, they are not able to have that market access that is needed.

So we need to start looking at how we can address this by providing some form of incentives for women-owned businesses, providing more capacity-building and access to opportunities to specified contextualised programmes that support market

access for women-owned businesses in particular," Mrs Agyarko-Kwarteng said.

Addressing challenges

For his part, the National Coordinator for Alliance for Action Programmes at

ITC, Larry Attipoe, said given that many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are either owned, led or significantly supported by women, the ITC prioritised addressing the unique challenges women faced in business, particularly in Africa.

This intentional approach, he said, involves not only increasing women's participation but also ensuring the quality and impact of their involvement to tackle trade barriers, especially non-tariff obstacles such as logistical constraints or product quality issues.

"By leveraging its extensive database on trade-related information, particularly exports, the ITC equips businesses with valuable insights into navigating international markets.

This database, which is publicly accessible, provides crucial details such as export requirements for specific countries and market demands for various products," he said.

Mr Attipoe said by offering comprehensive support and guidance tailored to specific trade contexts, ITC strives to enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of SMEs, ultimately contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries.

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