

We must empower both gender

— Girls Education Officer

From Joana Kumi, CAPE COAST

THE Central Regional Girls Education Officer of the Ghana Education Service, Priscilla Christabel Eshun, has called for a healthy balance in the empowerment of girls and boys across the country.

Ms Eshun was addressing the inception meeting of sub implementing partners of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) held by the Central Regional Coordinating Council in Cape Coast for the second quarter of 2024.

Ms Eshun stated that an imbalance in empowerment initiatives favouring girls over

boys would not augur well for the holistic development for the nation's future populace and development.

She cautioned that that could result in well-educated women partnering less educated men.

"It has become evident that much attention has been given to girls' empowerment than the boys. The boys have been left out and if care is not taken we will polish our girls to go and marry unpolished boys," Ms Eshun remarked.

Inclusive empowerment

She advocated more inclusive empowerment strategies that also engaged boys, emphasising that gender should be

considered in all educational endeavours.

Ms Eshun pointed out that teachers in the Central Region had been trained in gender-responsive pedagogy, ensuring that gender considerations were integral to classroom teachings.

She also addressed other prevalent issues among students in the region such as teenage pregnancy, skin bleaching and body modifications such as tattoos and piercings, noting these were particularly common among female students.

"We have been recording teenage pregnancy, bleaching, cohabitation, tattooing and multiple piercings. You will see students, especially the girls, who have tattooed their boyfriends' names either on their hand or neck," she stated.

The education officer further noted that

sexual harassment was a growing concern within secondary education, affecting both genders.

She said trained teachers were equipped to handle confessions of sexual assault appropriately, ensuring they reached the right authorities.

Ms Eshun called on parents and guardians to play their part in guiding their children away from behaviour detrimental to their education, asserting that while schools would do their part, home guidance was equally crucial.

Adding to the concerns, the Regional Adolescent Health Coordinator, Emma Delali Forley, indicated the health implications of certain youth behaviours, such as skin bleaching, saying it could be devastating.

She also cautioned the youth against the indiscriminate use of unprescribed medications, stressing the long-term risks to kidney health and other potential medical issues.