



# Female judges key to eradicating negative cultural practices —President

**P**RESIDENT Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo says female judges play pivotal role in eliminating undesirable cultural practices that impede development, particularly that of women and girls.

He said the experience of female judges placed them in a prime position to lend distinct perspectives and strengths to the cause of justice and equity.

“Women judges across Africa and the globe bring unique view points and strengths to the judiciary. Their experiences, often mirroring the societal challenges we seek to overcome, equip them uniquely to advocate for justice and fairness,” the President noted, at the opening of the 18th International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) Conference in Accra, on Monday.

The three-day conference that aims to capitalise on previous successes and take advantage of the IAWJ’s unique position in bringing together judicial officers from around the world to discuss

matters of mutual importance, was being held under the theme: ‘Combating Negative Cultural Practices in Contemporary Times – The Role of Women Judges.’

President Akufo-Addo noted that having women at all levels of the judicial system across the African continent, not only increased respect for the judiciary, but also fostered confidence in the justice delivery system.

He said that the theme for the event was a call to every member of the judicial system, particularly women judges, to “leverage our collective legal acumen to dismantle barriers to justice.”

President Akufo-Addo mentioned that negative cultural practices were not just an affront to victims, but were “a blemish on our collective human conscience. As judges and upholders of the law, you have the power to redefine norms and set precedents that protect the vulnerable and marginalised.

He said in dealing with issues like gender-based violence, child marriage, widowhood rites and female genital mutilation, practices

steeped in deep-rooted cultural norms, the voices and ruling of female judges could resonate deeply, driving societal transformation.

The President said: “It is imperative to acknowledge that the fight against these practices is not confined to the courtrooms. Education, awareness, and collaborative governance are critical. We must engage traditional leaders, educators, and communities to recalibrate mindsets and attitudes. It is in our schools, homes, and community gatherings where the foundational beliefs of our next generation are formed.”

President Akufo-Addo urged female judges to uphold the ideals of fairness, equality, and justice in all their decisions to combat detrimental cultural traditions.

“Let them (judgements) be a beacon for those in the shadows of fear and oppression. Remember, each decision you make not only affects the individual in your courtroom but also sets a tone for what we, as a society, deem acceptable.

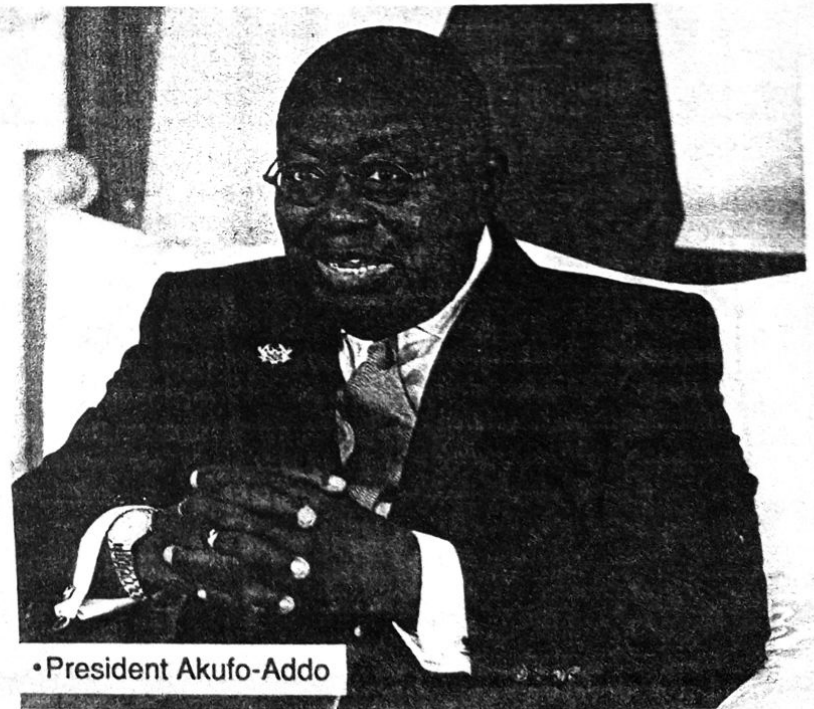
“As we look towards the

future, let us envision a continent where the law does not only punish but also educates and reforms. A future where our daughters will be judged not by their compliance with outdated customs, but by their potential to lead and innovate. In this grand vision, women judges stand not just as enforcers of the law, but also as architects

of societal change,” he said.

The IAWJ is a non-profit organisation, founded in 1991, whose members are judges from around the world. It supports and empowers its global network of women judges, to advance gender equality, end discriminatory laws and promote human rights.

—GNA



•President Akufo-Addo