

Women in Maritime marks International Day



By Juliet Akyaa Safo

THE United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has organised a forum to empower women-led small and medium enterprises in the maritime and trade sectors.

The event was also to commemorate the International Day for Women in Maritime, Logistics and Trade, which is marked on May 18 annually.

Organised under the Feed the Future Ghana Trade and Investment (GTI) activity in collaboration with the Women in International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA)-Ghana, the event marked 50 years of WISTA

Internationals and 14 years of WISTA-Ghana.

It was on the theme: "Empowering women-led Small and Medium-sized Enterprises through trade: strategies for growth".

The event brought together 120 women-owned business leaders and women from the maritime industry to exchange strategies and lessons learned for business expansion.

The conference was also to empower women in trade through collaboration, professional development initiatives and advocacy.

WISTA-Ghana

The President of WISTA-Ghana, Gertrude Ohene-Asienim, said WISTA-Ghana's objective was to educate

participants on the best practices to improve their businesses.

Some of the best practices included using digital tools, learning regulatory frameworks in exporting and importing goods and accessing funds.

"We want to empower women in the sector of trade to be able to upscale their businesses to target a much larger audience globally," she added.

She said it was important for women business owners to use technology and adopt the necessary skills to sell their products, identify the right market and work with foreign partners.

"We want women to know and understand payment methods when exporting to avoid fraudsters, how to use appropriate digital platforms and how to access funding," she said.

Empowerment

The Chief Director of the Ministry of Transport, Mabel Asi Sagoe, said the conference was timely as it brought in new perspectives, creativity and resilience to drive innovation, job creation and economic growth.

"Climate change technological advancements and geopolitical tensions present formidable obstacles that demand innovative solutions and

collaborative effort.

"In this endeavour, the wisdom, expertise and leadership of women are indispensable," she said.

She urged participants to continuously build their capacity to face head-on challenges such as limited access to finance, market, entrenched gender bias and cultural barriers hindering the growth and challenges of enterprises.

"With consented effort from governments, financial institutions and the private sector, we can create an enabling environment that fosters

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women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment," she said.

She urged participants to inspire one another and leverage the knowledge acquired at the conference to propel their businesses.

Mrs Sagoe congratulated women on their

diverse contributions to the growth and development of the maritime and logistic sector.

Investment

The Gender, Youth and Social Inclusion Specialist at GTI, Stephanie Donu Sarpong, expressed the GTI's commitment to investing in women and girls, and empowering them to assume leadership roles in various sectors.

She said the GTI had engaged more than 14,000 entrepreneurs with over 9,000 being women.

She mentioned that 51 women in the maritime industry had also been trained in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on topics such as trading procedures, business registration processes, and the utilisation of digital tools specific to AfCFTA.



• Jemilat J. Mahamah (middle), Secretary, WISTA International, with Aisha Abdul-Salam (3rd from left), Deputy Director of Administration, Ghana Maritime Authority, and other dignitaries cutting the cake to mark WISTA International 50 years and WISTA-Ghana 14 years anniversary.

Picture: ESTHER ADJORKOR ADJEI