



Participants and dignitaries at the conference

EPL Holds Rise Women Conference 2024

BY Ebenezer K. Amponsah

EMERGING PUBLIC Leaders (EPL) has held a conference dubbed, 'Rise Women conference 2024', aimed at developing strategies with stakeholders to promote gender equality and accelerate the economic empowerment of women.

The conference also seeks to advance progress towards gender equality by addressing the intersection of poverty, institutional strengthening, and financing from a gender perspective.

In his remarks, Head of Civil Service, Dr. Evans Aggrey Darko, who commended Emerging Public Leaders (EPL), and its partners for the initiative to improve gender mainstreaming within the public service, said the Civil Service was a pivotal point to harness the full potentials of all including women in driving economic progress and fostering inclusive growth.

According to Dr. Evans Aggrey, giving women equal access to education and employment opportunities for financial and entrepreneurial services could help unlock such vast potential.

He also emphasised that gender equality, inclusivity and economic transformation for women required concrete actions and meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

He said the Civil Service is committed to promoting gender equality by ensuring gender responsive programmes, collecting and utilising gender disaggregated data while building a gender sensitive organisational culture, and advocating for gender equality among other initiatives in the Civil Service.

He added that the Civil Service is currently working towards developing a gender action plan to mainstream women into managerial positions.

He said his outfit is also piloting gender mainstreaming target into the performance agreement of the Chief Director of the Head of Civil Service, the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, and the Ministry of Health till the end of the year and implemented nationwide in 2025.

Former Dean of the School of Educational Development and Outreach, University of Cape Coast, Prof. George Oduro, in his key

note speech said despite several laws and proposals to empower women in all spheres of their lives, the country has not committed itself support women.

He, therefore, called on stakeholders to move beyond documentation and laws, and take concrete steps to implement these provisions that are aimed at supporting women.

He also urged Institutions not to focus only on equality but ensure equity is ensured, given the challenges women face in their attempt to take up roles in their respective fields of endeavours.

"Ghana has laws that create equality for all but what priorities are we putting in place to ensure that the woman works alongside the man in the event that she has to undergo maternity leave and many other things that women face in their lives?" Prof. Oduro asked.

He said the conference was, therefore, timely as most developing countries were now working towards empowering women, given the ratio of women to men in the global population.

Vice Dean for International Programmes at the

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Prof. Esmeranda Manful, also said women are varied heterogeneous groups comprising both educated and uneducated.

She said it is, therefore, imperative that young girls were educated beyond Senior High School while encouraging more of them to pursue tertiary education.

Prof. Manful, who is also the Head of Department of Sociology and Social Work at KNUST, further stated that more needs to be done by institutions to build the capacity of women after they complete tertiary education given the intersectionality of women with diverse needs.

According to Juliet Amoah, Country Director for Emerging Public Leaders of Ghana (EPL), the gap between gender inclusive policies and their effective implementation significantly hinders progress towards gender equality, equity and empowerment

She said, "The Rise Women conference served as a pivotal event designed to create a platform for dialogue, collaboration and action."

Among some of the topics discussed at the two-day conference which started on Tuesday, August 13 to Wednesday, August 14 on the theme, 'Empowering Women Leaders: Paving the way to Equality' were integral role of NGOs in the strive for gender equality in Ghana, pathways to gender equality, addressing women's poverty through sustainable development initiatives among several others.

Also present to engage in the gender discourse were Dr. Yaw Fiavey, a sociologist and gender advocate; Dr. Esther Amoako, Director for Gender and Career Mentorship; University for Development Studies, and several other distinguished personalities from academia and Public Service Institutions.