

Women need deliberate agribusiness policies

• NGO urges policymakers

By **Diana Mensah**

THE Founder and Lead of Guzakuzu, Nana Adjoa Sifa Amponsah, has called for deliberate policies for women in agribusiness and systemic change to bridge the resource gap between female and male entrepreneurs in agribusiness.

She said women, although smallholder farmers, comprise over 50 per cent of the agricultural sector and contribute significantly over 80 per cent of Africa's food supply as compared to their male counterparts.

"We need to be intentional about the policies we set for women, especially those in agribusinesses. So, we are calling for greater support to ensure that women-led ventures receive the capital, land, training and market access they deserve," she said.

That, she said, would ensure their growth, foster a new generation of women leaders in agribusinesses and empower women to create lasting

economic impact in Africa.

Event

She was speaking at the graduation ceremony of Guzakusa's 8th cohort of the IGNITE - African Women Agribusiness Fellowship programme in Accra.

Guzakuza is a pioneering organisation committed to providing women in agribusiness across Africa and the diaspora with tools and resources.

It was held on the theme: "Spark up, power up, and scale up," to empower women to ignite change in their communities and businesses, elevate existing ventures and expand their reach.

About 100 women completed the course at the end of an intensive training programme running from July to November.

This year, the IGNITE, also known as the African Women in Agribusiness Fellowship programme, received over 1,600 applications from

41 countries, selecting 250 women from 28 countries.

IGNITE is a transformative and intensive programme designed to propel female founders and leaders to the next phase of their agribusiness journeys.

Commitment

Nana Amponsah said the organisation was committed to helping tackle these issues by providing capacity-building, technical guidance and access to an expanding ecosystem within the country and beyond. "Through IGNITE, women are gaining access to strategic partners and platforms to sell their produce," she added.

She said the organisation would launch a Women in Agribusiness Fund to offer financial support to graduates, tapping into existing resources and strategic partnerships to aid women-led agribusinesses.

The Co-founder of Crystal Oasis Foods and a member of the 5th Cohort, Eva Sunu-Attah, on behalf of the Ignite alumni association,



• **Nana Adjoa Sifa Amponsah** – Founder and Lead of Guzakuzu

expressed hope that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

would open new opportunities for small, micro and medium enterprises (SMMEs) led by women and enable access to a 1.3 billion-strong market.

She entreated that women's contributions must be recognised and valued to ensure equitable participation in the vast marketplace.

She congratulated the graduates and entreated them to join the IGNITE Alumni Association to cultivate a robust community of women who would elevate Africa's agricultural markets.

The Commission Manager of Sustainable Employment through Agribusiness, GIZ, Sarah Rueffler, encouraged the women entrepreneurs to leverage the programme to grow their network and learn from one another.

Appreciation

The head of the 8th Cohort of the Ignite - African Women in Agribusiness Fellowship Frances Agyapong, on behalf of the graduates, expressed gratitude to the mentors and facilitators for their support, guidance, wisdom and encouragement.