

Gender

Gender Minister courts support from female journalists

By Rebecca Quicoe Duho

THE Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey, has said the vision of President John Dramani Mahama is to reduce vulnerability to the barest minimum in the country.

She has, therefore, affirmed the ministry's commitment to gender equality, child protection and social welfare, aligning with the President's vision of reducing vulnerability to the lowest possible level.

According to her, as part of the government's 120 days agenda, the ministry was going to activate and implement the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill, work on the Social Protection Bill to be sent to parliament, improve the quality of the school feeding programme, amend the Domestic Violence Act to enhance its effectiveness, provide free sanitary pads to deprived girls and empower more women economically through the yet-to-be-established Women's Development Bank.

Engagement

Dr Lartey said this when she engaged senior female journalists in a dialogue on media collaboration, gender issues and the media's role in advancing women's rights.

About 40 selected female senior journalists and editors from various

media houses attended the meeting where the minister shared her vision and courted support from the female journalists to help her succeed in delivering on her mandate.

She said as part of the government's commitment to protecting domestic violence victims, the ministry was going to establish 16 shelters, one in each region, to provide rapid response and safety for survivors.

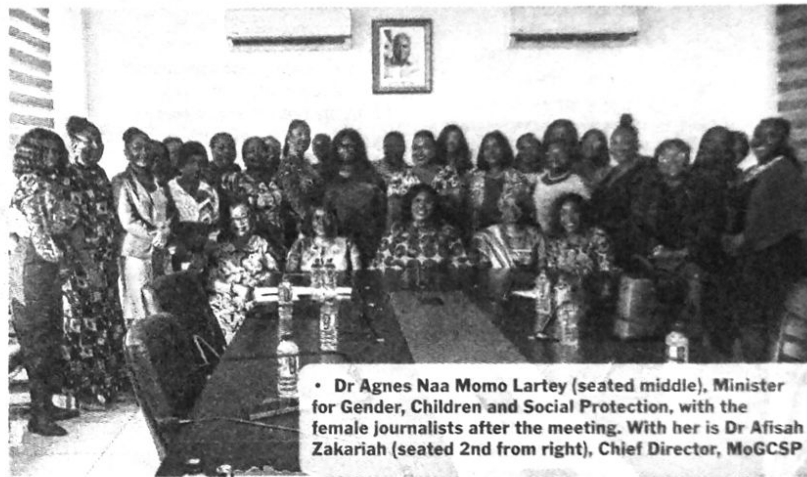
Among other things, the minister said she is going to work on resourcing the domestic violence fund which is supposed to provide financial support to victims of domestic violence.

On women in agriculture, the minister said she was ready to support women in agric, saying: "I want to see more women in the agric sector doing export."

Role of media

The minister underscored the crucial role the media play in shaping public perception and policy advocacy, stressing that the media has a unique responsibility to amplify women's voices and highlight gender-related challenges.

She urged journalists to use their



• Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey (seated middle), Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, with the female journalists after the meeting. With her is Dr Afisah Zakariah (seated 2nd from right), Chief Director, MoGCSP

platforms to challenge harmful cultural practices that hinder gender equality, saying the way women are portrayed in the media was sometimes dehumanising and, therefore, called on the media to help reduce stereotypes in the country.

The Minister took up an idea mooted by one of the female journalists to establish a daycare facility at the office premises to support working mothers.

She said such a move would help set an example of the importance of providing such a critical facility to support women to pursue their careers and climb to the top.

Dr Charity Binka, Executive Director of Women, Media and Change

(WOMEC) and Ghana Chapter President of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN), who was the convener of the meeting, commended the Minister for her interest in working with the media.

She called on the female journalists to bring their experiences and expertise on women and children issues covered over the years to bear on the many interventions the Minister had outlined for the benefit of society.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Director, Dr Afisah Zakariah; Francisca Atuluk, Social Protection Director, MoGCSP and Afua Ansere, Senior Gender Specialist, UN Women.

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