

Gender

NGO calls for Gender Responsive Budgeting in cocoa sector

By Pacome Emmanuel Damalie

SEND Ghana, an agriculture-oriented non-governmental organisation (NGO) has called on the government to institutionalise Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in the agriculture sector to help promote women's involvement.

It emphasised that stakeholders in the cocoa production value chain needed to embrace the concept of GRB to ensure equitable distribution of resources to help women access the needed facility to thrive in the sector.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with the Daily Graphic in Accra, the Programme Officer of SEND Ghana, Nana Kwesi Barning Ackah, indicated that the government through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture

(MoFA) needed to "commit financial resources to ensure smooth implementation of gender-responsive budgeting, and also to institutionalise it to make it binding on institutions and officials to do a proper GRB".

He explained that once the GRB was institutionalised, it could enhance the country's image internationally as that would satisfy the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) five and 10 and other areas in achieving Agenda 2030.

Mr Ackah said the lack of institutionalisation of GRB had affected vulnerable groups' participation in the cocoa value chain, especially women, adolescent girls and others.

He added that, "to ensure the increased participation of women in the cocoa sector, the GRB must be mainstreamed as part of policies in the cocoa and agriculture sector to ensure a lot of women are contributing to policy initiatives and also policy

reforms".

Gaps

The Programme Officer of SEND Ghana lamented the lack of political will which has characterised the implementation of GRB in the country, having since 2021 engaged with various stakeholders including the MoFA and ministries of Education and Gender, Children and Social Protection.

He called for a deliberate resource commitment to the implementation of the GRB, saying, "a huge financial commitment was lacking to ensure that the budget responds to the needs of the various vulnerable groups in society".

Mr Ackah added that there have been capacity constraints, which were "limited knowledge of decentralised stakeholders on understanding the concept of gender-responsive budgeting, the gender concept as well as



• Nana Kwesi Barning Ackah, Programme Officer, SEND Ghana

how to mainstream gender in their policies, programmes and budgets".

This, he indicated, had reflected in some of the programmes that are being rolled out at the national and decentralised levels showing a lack of analysis through the gender lens.

Complaints and call

He stated that women in the cocoa sector and the agriculture sector at large have

registered frustration at limited access to land and productive equipment.

Mr Ackah explained that although the GRB was not calling for the prioritisation of women or men, it was calling for equity and equality to encourage and ensure full participation of women likewise the men in developing the agriculture sector.

"GRB doesn't mean that you are prioritising women and leaving men. GRB is just to ensure that there's equality, there's equity in the system, fair distribution and inclusive distribution of resources," he said.

He emphasised that when the GRB concept was embraced, it would help bridge the gap between men and women, boys and girls, persons with disabilities, other disadvantaged groups, for them to also benefit from most of the policies and programmes introduced by the government.

He added that SEND in collaboration with the Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform (GCCP) would continue educating stakeholders and advocate the formulation and implementation of GRB in the cocoa sector and agriculture at large.