

Commemoration of World Telecommunications and Information Society Day:

Prioritise women for jobs — Sam George

By Juliet Akyaa Safo

THE Minister of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation, Samuel Nartey George, has directed agencies under the sector to choose women whenever they are presented with two equally qualified candidates, where one is a woman.

"To the agencies under the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation. Let me be candid, when you are presented with equally qualified candidates, choose the woman who shows promise. This is a policy direction," he said.

He also called on stakeholders to deliberately invest in the future of girls to ensure their full participation in technology.

Mr George gave the direction at the commemoration of the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day at a ceremony in Accra on Monday on the theme: "Gender equality in digital transformation."

Inclusiveness

Mr George said it was also a timely reminder that digital revolution must be inclusive rather than being defined solely by speed or access.

The minister further explained that the reason why inauguration of boards under the sector had been delayed was because about 98 per cent of institutional representation were men.

"It's been tough finding women with the requisite skills and experience to fill those board

positions because, yes, we want to put women in those positions but we need to also be minded about competence and skill," he said.

The minister also announced that the government was in the final stages of developing a national digital policy that would guide the ethical and inclusive deployment of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence.

The acting Director-General of NCA, Reverend Edmund Yirenkyi Fianko, the acting Deputy-Director General, Technical Operations, NCA, Salifu Suleman, and the UNESCO Representative to Ghana, Edmond Moukala, all said that digital exclusion limited an individual's potential and national development.

Child abuse

The Gender Minister, Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey, said her outfit and the communication ministry had revised the National Child Online Protection framework, expanding its scope to cover all forms of online child sexual exploitation and abuse in the country.

She highlighted the importance of cyber security for girls and women, adding that stricter attention should be given by caregivers and the government.

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Efforts

Panellists at the event also called for deliberate efforts to address socio-cultural barriers to promote women's participation in information and communication technology (ICT) and prioritise gender-based budgeting to reduce the infrastructure and digital gap in the system.

They also stressed the need for collaboration between the private sector and the government to bridge the digital gap.

The panellists were the Chief Executive Officer of Telecel Ghana, Patricia Obo-Nai; Chief Programme Officer, MoGCSP, Vera Karikari Bediako, and the West Africa Regional Director of CSquared, Estelle Akofio-Sowah.



• Sam Nartey George (4th from right), Minister of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovation, and Agnes Naa Momo Lartey (5th from left), Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, with other guests. Picture: SAMUEL TEI ADANO