

Gender

Recognise, respect women's value in workforce

• ICU to organisations



By Emmanuel Bonney

THE Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) has urged employers who indulge in gender-based employment discrimination and wage disparity to immediately desist from the practice and recognise and respect the full and equal value of women in the workforce.

It said as a gender-friendly institution that upheld justice and equity for all, the union reaffirmed its commitment to promoting laws and best practices that support the fair recruitment and retention of women in all sectors.

The General Secretary of the ICU, Morgan Ayawine, said this at the Sixth

National Delegates Conference of the union in Tema last Tuesday.

The ICU-Ghana, he said, had recently expanded its structures to promote and deepen the participation of women in all aspects of the union's work.

Mr Ayawine said both men and women played crucial roles in the union—as heads of department/specialised units, regional officers and project coordinators.

“We hope that this inclusive example will be emulated by captains of industry and our social partners in workplaces and institutions across the country.

He said it was disheartening to acknowledge that, even today, women faced discrimination in employment.

A persistent misconception, he said, suggested that women might not be reliable in the long-term due to maternity

and family responsibilities. This assumption unfairly and unjustly undermined women's capabilities and contributions.

Women, Mr Ayawine said, must never be disadvantaged for their biological roles.

“When we speak of gender equality, we talk of equal rights, opportunities and treatment—regardless of gender.

Furthermore, the principle of Equal Pay for Equal Work has been eloquently championed by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and enshrined in Ghana's Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651), specifically under Section 68.

Principle

“Yet, in our part of the world, some employers continue to violate this principle—paying women less than their male counterparts for the same work. This unacceptable practice is not only unjust but an affront to the dignity and humanity of women,” he said.

He, therefore, used the occasion to strongly urge all employers who indulged in gender-based employment discrimination and wage disparity to desist immediately and to recognise and respect the full and equal value of women in the workforce.

“ICU-Ghana, as a gender-friendly institution that upholds justice and equity for all, reaffirms its commitment to promoting laws and best practices that support the fair recruitment and retention of women in all sectors,” he said.

The Head of Youth and Gender Desk of the ICU, Esinam Afua Poku, who presented a four-year report, highlighted the significant strides it had made in promoting gender equity, empowering women and amplifying their voices at

every level of the organisation.

She said the report outlined the key initiatives, programmes and strategic interventions undertaken to address women's challenges in the world of work and foster inclusive and equitable participation in union affairs.

Capacity building

“Over the past four years, the Women's Desk has focused on capacity-building, leadership development, policy advocacy and collaboration with key stakeholders. These efforts have contributed meaningfully to our shared goal of building a more inclusive and gender-responsive union.

“This report not only captures our collective achievements but also reflects women's strength, passion and progress across all regions. As we engage in thoughtful reflection and dialogue during this conference, may we be inspired to build upon these accomplishments and continue to champion the rights and dignity of women with even greater resolve,” she said.

Welcoming the members, the Tema Regional Officer of the ICU-Ghana, Alfred Lamptey, said the conference was not only a statutory gathering as per the union's constitution, but more importantly, a strategic forum to take a strategic decision against divisiveness and for unity, which was integral to the growth and development agenda of the leadership of the union.

A five-member national women's executive was sworn into office.

They are Happy Aheto, Chairperson; Mary Adjoa Appiah, Vice-Chairperson; Doreen Aryetey, Secretary; Brightener Boateng, Assistant Secretary and Emelia Etrou, Executive Member.



• Morgan Ayawine (standing), General Secretary of the ICU, addressing the conference