

# Unlock full potential of African women

## • Dr Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings urges African countries

**By Pacome Emmanuel Damalie**

THE Member of Parliament for Klottey-Korle and member of Ghana's delegation to the Pan African Parliament, Dr Zanetor Agyeman-

Rawlings, has called for urgent structural reforms to unlock the full potential of African women in agribusiness, trade and development.

Speaking at the 2025 Pan-African Women's Day Commemoration in Midrand, South Africa, last Thursday,

she pointed out that land ownership has been a persistent barrier to women's development for several decades.

She emphasised that although women performed much of the work in agriculture, they often do not own land and, therefore, cannot use it as collateral for loans.

"Ironically, studies show women are more reliable in loan repayments, yet they face the greatest barriers to accessing credit," she said.

### **Inter-Africa Trade**

On cross-border trade, where women formed approximately 90 per cent, Dr Agyeman-Rawlings proposed the introduction of female customs and immigration officers at all border posts to provide both practical support and protection to women traders.

She also advocated for a shift in perspective on the conversations

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about reparations.

"We must view the transatlantic slave trade as a conquest. Millions were taken as prisoners of war. Reparations should come in tangible forms such as infrastructure, technology and energy investments that support African development," she stated.

### **Recommendations**

Dr Agyeman-Rawlings also proposed recommendations for

promoting women's empowerment on the continent to help in the development.

She proposed the creation of short video profiles of the diverse and accomplished women in the Pan-African Parliament, showcasing their achievements as a form of creating visibility for women to inspire young girls across the continent.

"If they can see it, they can aspire to it," she said, stressing the importance of representation in shaping ambition and possibility.

She cautioned against urging women to abandon traditional cooperative systems, which often function more organically and efficiently than formal structures.

She, however, advocated for financial institutions to redesign their models around these organic, community-based systems that already drive local economies.

Dr Agyeman-Rawlings called on leaders and societies at large to value women's unpaid labour across the continent, stressing that "we must put a financial value on the unpaid labour of women on the continent to make sure that more women are empowered."



• Dr Zanetor Agyemang-Rawlings, MP for Klottey-Korle and a member of the delegation to the Pan-African Parliament, speaking on the floor of the Pan-African Parliament