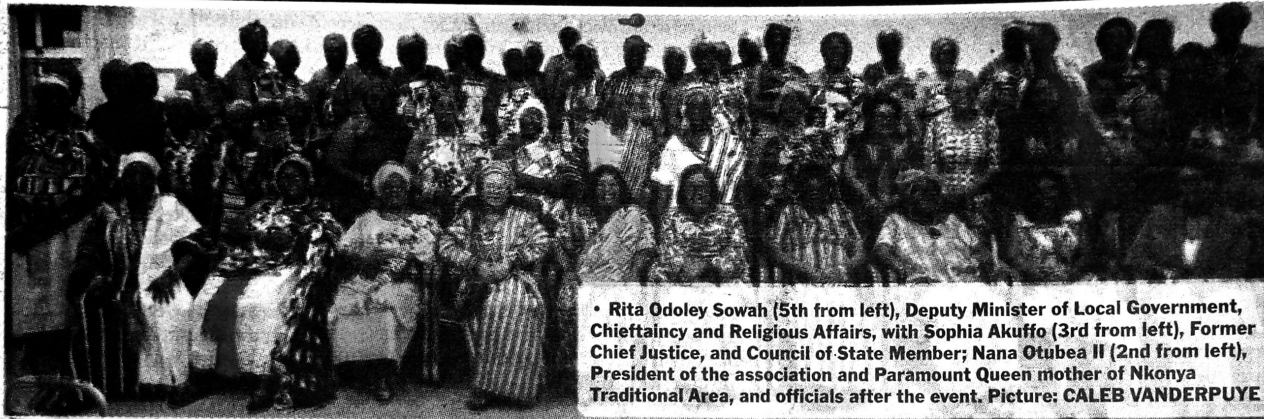


Gender



• Rita Odoley Sowah (5th from left), Deputy Minister of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, with Sophia Akuffo (3rd from left), Former Chief Justice, and Council of State Member; Nana Otubea II (2nd from left), President of the association and Paramount Queen mother of Nkonya Traditional Area, and officials after the event. Picture: CALEB VANDERPUYE

Queenmothers call for inclusion in decision-making

By Juliet Akyaa Safo

THE All Regions Queenmothers Association has called for more representation and inclusion of queenmothers in decision-making at the Regional and National Houses of Chiefs.

The President of the association, Nana Otubea II, explained that despite the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill, queenmothers remained underrepresented, particularly on the judicial committee of the regional and national House of Chiefs.

She said it was also unfair to exclude queenmothers in the election of regional and national presidents.

"When there is a case between a queenmother and a chief and it goes to

the regional level, the composition of the judicial committee is made up of only males with no female representation," she said.

The President made this known during a seminar on the enforcement of the Affirmative Action Bill in Accra.

It was on the theme: "Inclusiveness of queenmothers at the decision-making level in the regional and national Houses of Chiefs".

Delay in allowance

Nana Otubea II, who is also the Paramount Queenmother of Nkonya Traditional Council, Oti Region, stressed that the association would advocate to be part of decision-making at the regional and national Houses of Chiefs.

"Oti region, for instance, a chief is being challenged for his legitimacy but has been gazetted and even allowed to sit on a judicial panel, which is also

challenging another chief in a case."

"How is that so? There are queenmothers who are qualified to sit on that panel. So we are asking for equity, not equality, equity in discharging responsibility at all levels," she said.

She also lamented the delay in the payment of their allowances for almost three quarters, calling on the authority to address it.

Systemic barriers

The Former Chief Justice of Ghana and a Council of State Member, Justice Sophia Akuffo, said constitutional changes were necessary to ensure gender equity, including setting minimum numbers of queenmothers in regional houses of chiefs.

She said the country must actively fight against biases, even in the judiciary.

The Former Chief Justice called for empowerment and support for individuals and groups to reach their full potential, backed by the Constitution.

She said community engagement, seminars and media coverage were needed to tackle systemic barriers.

Equity

In a speech read on her behalf, the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, Dr Agnes Naa Momo Larrey, said the ministry had compiled a list of nominees for the Gender Equity Committee and forwarded it to the Office of the President for consideration and approval.

She said the ministry would continue to engage with stakeholders to design and implement activities that promoted gender equality, equity and women's empowerment.

The Deputy Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, Rita Odoley Sowah, called for a re-examination of institutional frameworks and cultural norms that shaped leadership in traditional settings, while advocating deliberate opportunities for queenmothers to contribute as equal leaders in key decisions.

In response to their delayed allowances, she gave assurances to advocate their allowances to be paid.

A Senior Lawyer and Convener of the Affirmative Action Law Coalition, Sheila Minkah-Premo, called on queenmothers to mobilise alliances across regions and engage with parliament and the Ministry of Chieftaincy to table amendments that reflected inclusive leadership.

She also urged them to collaborate with civil society organisations and gender advocacy coalitions to keep the issue in the public domain.