

Women must be bold, build networks, mentor others

BY AGNES OPOKU SARPONG

THE Vice President, Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, has urged women in the public sector not to be intimidated or pressured to conform to society's expectations, but to focus on impact, integrity and lifting others as they rise. She said leadership was not about appearance or fitting into other people's image, but about staying true to values and making meaningful change.

— Veep

She gave the advice at the Second Annual Conference for Women in Leadership in the Public Sector held yesterday in Accra under the auspices of the Public Services Commission.

According to her, women must act with boldness, clarity and purpose. She encouraged them to build strong networks,

seek mentorship, sharpen their skills and position themselves as indispensable contributors to national development.

The Vice President noted that although progress has been made, women still faced structural and cultural barriers that limit their advancement into leadership roles.

"These include limited access to senior-level opportunities, unequal career progression and the burden of domestic responsibilities," she mentioned.

She stressed that addressing these challenges required deliberate policies and institutional reforms.

Promoting women's leadership, she emphasised, was essential for effective governance, transparency and inclusive development.

Highlighting the government's commitment, she referenced President John Mahama's directive that public service agencies ensure at least 30 per cent female representation in leadership positions, with a target of 50 per cent by 2030.

She described the directive as a clear step toward implementing the Affirmative Action Act and strengthening gender equity.

She also pointed to ongoing economic and social policies aimed at empowering women, including initiatives to expand access to capital, improve healthcare and support girls' education.

The Deputy Chief of Staff, Nana Oye Bampoe-Addo, described the conference as timely as the country prepares to mark International Women's Day.

She said Ghana's Reset Agenda was a call to rebuild institutions and reposition women at the centre of national development.

Citing figures from the Public Services Commission, she said women currently occupy 26 per cent of managerial roles in the public sector.

"In the judiciary, although Ghana has had three female Chief Justices in succession, women make

up only four out of 19 Supreme Court justices," she said.

She again noted that positive signs in other sectors, including the appointment of women to head key institutions such as the Ghana Prison Service and the Ghana National Fire Service.

However, she stressed that more effort was needed to meet the targets set under the Affirmative Action Gender Equity Act of 2024.

Nana Oye Bampoe-Addo advised women to embrace personal leadership, saying leadership is defined by service and impact, not title.

She urged them to practice transformational leadership, build strong institutions and leave lasting legacies.

She also called on women to reject corruption and arrogance, stressing that public service is a sacred trust that must be guided by integrity.

Moreover, she encouraged them not to allow stereotypes or discrimination to silence their voices, reminding them that the law protects their right to lead.

The Chairman of the Public Services Commission, Prof. Victor Kwame Agyeman, reaffirmed the need to fully implement the 30 per cent directive on female appointments.

He urged human resource directors in public institutions to ensure that gender mainstreaming becomes a priority and that the President's directive is followed.

He said Ghana's current female representation in senior public service roles, estimated at about 27 per cent, compares favourably with some regions, but stressed that parity remains the ultimate goal.



• Vice President (third from right) with some dignitaries at the Annual Conference for Women in Leadership in the Public