

# Gender

## ICU Gender Desk calls on trade unions to advocate for women's rights, welfare

By Emmanuel Bonney

THE Gender and Youth Desk of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) has marked International Women's Day with a charge to trade unions to strongly advocate the rights and welfare of women in the workplace.

The Head of the Gender and Youth Desk of the ICU, Esinam Poku, who made the call, said: "Women play a vital role in our economy and in the labour movement, yet many still face barriers that limit their full participation and advancement".

### Area

"One important area that requires our attention is what is commonly referred to as the 3Ms in the workplace—menstruation, maternity and menopause. These are natural stages in the lives of many women, yet they are often overlooked in workplace policies and discussions," she said.

As trade unionists, she said, "we must critically consider these issues when advocating for workers' rights".

Menstruation, Mrs Poku said, should not be a source of stigma or discomfort at work, and workplaces must provide supportive environments and adequate facilities.

She said maternity protection was essential to ensure that women can safely balance work and motherhood without discrimination or job insecurity.

She said menopause, which affected many experienced women in the workforce, also required understanding, support and policies that promote dignity and well-being at work.

### Issues

She said addressing these issues was not simply a women's issue, but rather both a workplace justice issue and a trade union issue. "If we are truly committed to rights, justice and action for all women, then we must ensure that our workplaces are inclusive,

supportive, and responsive to the realities women face.

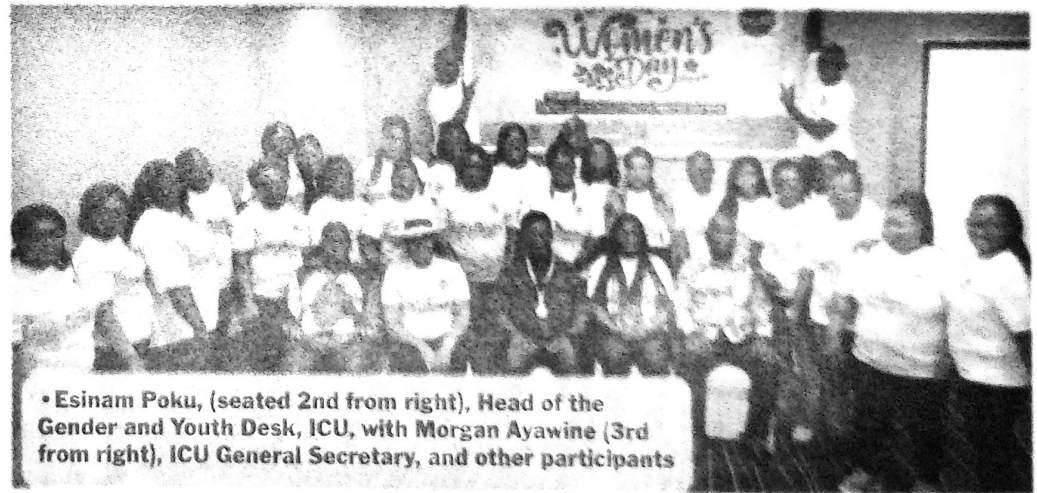
"Let us, therefore, use this day not only to celebrate the achievements of women but also to renew our commitment to advocating policies and practices that promote equality,

dignity and fairness in the workplace.

"Together, let us continue to push for rights, justice and action for all women," she said.

The General Secretary of the ICU, Morgan Ayawine, said the full realisation of rights, justice and meaningful action for all women and girls was long overdue.

He said while there might be some semblance of progress, it was often used to camouflage the reality that those fundamental values had been denied to women and girls for far too long.



• Esinam Poku, (seated 2nd from right), Head of the Gender and Youth Desk, ICU, with Morgan Ayawine (3rd from right), ICU General Secretary, and other participants