

Gender

Nana Oye calls for continuous recognition of women



By Rebecca Quaiocoe Duho

A CHIEF of Staff at the Presidency, Nana Oye Bampoe Addo, has called for the continuous recognition of women as a daily culture and an integral part of the country's national fabric.

This she said must not become an annual ritual, a token gesture, a false consciousness, or merely a feel-good exercise but that it must become normal practice in our homes, our institutions, and our public life.

Ms Bampoe Addo was speaking at the 1st Biennial Conference of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA) Women's Forum, organised in collaboration with the Ghana School of Law in Accra.

The forum was on the theme "The Role of Women Lawyers in National Development: Honouring Trailblazers."

The occasion was used to honour 10 female lawyers and FIDA Ghana, for mentoring the next generation, promoting dialogue on progress and challenges, and strengthening professional networks across sectors.

Women's contribution

Ms Bampoe Addo said the evidence of women's contribution to the legal profession today was undeniable saying as of 2025, women constituted approximately 43 per cent of registered lawyers in Ghana, and in recent Bar admissions women had even formed the majority.

She said within the broader

context of the national 'Reset Agenda', these gains mattered deeply.

She said women occupied roughly 27 per cent of key political appointments, adding that it was safe to say women were helping lead this generation of transformation across governance, administration, and public life and the judiciary is no exception.

She expressed her concerns on what she termed 'the modern challenges facing women' who continue to play multiple roles of keeping the home, caring for family, mentoring communities, and still contributing significantly to the transformation of the country.

She said unfortunately, some of these modern challenges now came in another form through recent jurisprudence and some judicial pronouncements on the rights of women, particularly spouses involved in matrimonial causes.

Citing a recent case, in her personal capacity as a lawyer, human rights advocate, and gender activist, she lamented a judgment brought out as "one of several decisions that exposed a worrying culture where a judge, in resolving matrimonial disputes, subjected parties, especially women, to derogatory, dismissive, and objectifying commentaries clothed in obiter dicta and what was often styled as 'judicial activism;'"

Subtle barriers

The Chief Justice, Paul Baffoe Bonney, who gave the keynote address, said the subtle barriers that women faced in their quest for progress in their various endeavours were not just women's issues but national, saying if half of the

population was being sidelined, then the nation was the one to lose.

He said he had witnessed from the bench the quiet but yet transformative power of women lawyers and what they could do to achieve success and called on all to give women the chance at all levels to excel.

The Director of the Ghana School of Law, Professor Raymond Akongburo Atuguba, urged women lawyers to remain committed to building an inclusive legal profession, saying their achievements should inspire young girls to pursue careers in law with confidence and determination.

He said the contributions of women lawyers to national development extended beyond courtrooms into governance, academia, and public service.

The President of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), Efuia Ghartey, reflected on the journey of women in the legal profession, from the pioneering efforts of early female lawyers to the growing influence of women across the judiciary, legislature, and public institutions.

She urged women lawyers to continue to strive for excellence and to remain committed to lifelong learning, noting that the profession demanded both competence and integrity.

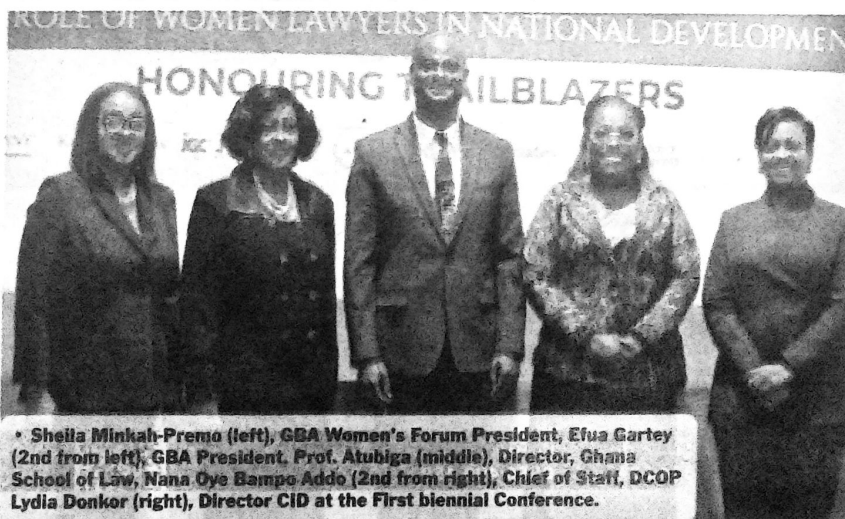
Women honoured

The nine distinguished women lawyers who were honoured for their outstanding contributions to shaping Ghana's legal landscape, were Efuia Ghartey, first female GBA President, Felicia Gbesemete, first female GBA Vice President, Esi Mathilda Forster, first female lawyer, Justice Annie Jigge, first female judge, and Justice Georgina Theodora Woode, first female Chief Justice.

The rest are Professor Ekua Kuenyehia, first female university law professor, Justice Joyce Adeline Bamford Addo, first female Speaker of Parliament, Betty Mould-Iddrisu, first female Attorney General, and Grace Adubea Orleans, first female solicitor secretary.

The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Ghana) was also honoured for being the first female lawyers association in the country while Sheila Minkah-Premo was honoured for putting together the first Biennial Conference of the GBA Women's Forum.

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• Sheila Minkah-Premo (left), GBA Women's Forum President, Efuia Ghartey (2nd from left), GBA President, Prof. Atubiga (middle), Director, Ghana School of Law, Nana Oye Bampoe Addo (2nd from right), Chief of Staff, DCOP Lydia Donkor (right), Director CID at the First biennial Conference.