



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HONOURABLE NANA OYE LITHUR, MINISTER OF GENDER, CHILDREN
AND SOCIAL PROTECTION AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE
DAY AT THE BANQUET HALL, STATE HOUSE, OSU ACCRA**
23RD JUNE, 2015

The Hon Minister of State Responsible for Public Sector Reform
The Chairman and Members of the Public Services Commission
Heads of Public Service Institutions/Agencies
Invited Guests
The Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for inviting me to commemorate this years African Public Service Day with you this morning. The Public Service Day was instituted by the UN General Assembly in 2002 by Resolution 57/277, which designated 23rd June of every year, as Public Service Day.

This day is set aside to celebrate the values and virtues of public service to the community. We know that throughout history, human progress has been propelled not just by famous leaders, not by states, but by ordinary men and women who believe that change is possible. The public service day is an occasion to highlight the contributions of the public service in developing our dear nation; to recognize the work of public servants within our public sector.

I congratulate the African Union Commission and the Public Service Commission of Ghana for the choice of this year's theme, "***The role of Public Service in Women Empowerment, innovation and Accessible Service Delivery***". Indeed, you could not have selected a more appropriate theme than this one.

This year marks 20 years of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which provided a blueprint for realizing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. This year also witnessed the declaration of the African Union Heads of State as the year of women's empowerment and development towards Africa's Agenda 2063 and the fortieth anniversary of our national women machinery, the then NCWD now MoGCSP.

These developments show the readiness of governments to realize women's and girl's equality and empowerment.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the public sector has been an avenue for women to excel. The public service offers training programmes that enhance the skill and potentials of women. It is worthy of note that many women have in recent past occupied the highest positions in various public service organizations in Ghana.

The head of the Public Services Commission, Mrs. Bridget Katriku, Chief Justice, Her Ladyship Justice Georgina Theodora Wood, and the immediate past speaker of Parliament, Right Honourable Joyce Adelaide Bamford Addo have all shown that the public service is a good avenue for women empowerment and that women have sterling leadership qualities.

In recent times His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama, has shown Government's commitment to make the public service accessible to women leaders. There are now 29 percent of Ministers, 23 percent of Deputy Ministers. There are 5 female Chief Directors and 55 female heads of department in the public service. 8 percent of District/Municipal/Metropolitan Chief Executives are women.

Eight Cabinet Ministers hold the portfolios of Foreign Affairs, Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Education, Fisheries, Culture and Tourism, Gender Children and Social Protection, and Transport.

The rest are:

- Chairperson of the Council of State
- Director General of the Ghana Aids Commission
- Controller and Accountant General
- Government Statistician
- Director General of Prisons
- Chair of the National Commission on Civic Education
- Executive Director of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre

Ladies and gentlemen, it is important to note that education is necessary for women empowerment. And all the women who have played significant roles in public service did so because they had educational empowerment.

Education therefore is the prerequisite for a woman's rise to prominence in public service. In that regard the Government is working to improve the quality of education, especially at the basic level. This has resulted in the narrowing of the gender gap in school enrolment. The current literacy rate for women stands at 68.5% for women as compared to men at 80.2%. The gender parity index on general enrolment in schools increased from 0.85 in 2009/2010 to 0.91 in 2013/14.

According to the World Bank, Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP on education stood at 5.5 percent in 2010. This went up to 8.1 percent in 2011.

Data from the World development indicators (2012) indicates that the female labour force participation rate, which is 69 percent is lower than the male 72 percent. However the 6th round of the Ghana Living Standard Survey show that this disparity is observed mostly in urban areas (75 percent for men, 72 percent for women). For rural dwellers it is 80 percent for both sexes. In the Civil Service for instance 41.4 percent of the total workforce are female.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, women representation in political institutions may be one of the areas where Ghana has a challenge compared to other Sub-Saharan countries such as Cameroun or Senegal. 10.9 percent of seats in parliament are held by women in Ghana, while the average in Sub-Saharan Africa is 22.3 percent.

To address this challenge, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection sponsored and drafted the Affirmative Action Bill and has submitted the final draft to the Attorney General for consideration. The Bill seeks to promote the full and active participation of women in public life by providing for a more equitable system of representation in electoral politics and governance. The object of the Bill also seeks to ensure the progressive achievement of gender equality in political, social, economic and educational spheres in society. The government shall ensure that not less than forty percent (40%) of appointments to positions of authority and decision-making in the body politic consist of women. The forty percent quota for the recruitment of women also applies in the security services, defined to include the Police, Prison, Fire, Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority, the Immigration Service and the Bureau of National Investigation.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Ministry is strengthening the legal and policy framework to enhance women empowerment. In this regard, the MoGCSP has also drafted a National Gender Policy and submitted to Cabinet. The policy will address gender equality, equity and empowerment of women.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, notwithstanding the achievements made so far, public sector institutions, which are responsible for fulfilling the government mandate to provide adequate services to all citizens, continue to face several challenges in the delivery of gender-responsive and equitable services. These include: insufficient fiscal space for investment to address the multiple and interconnected needs of women and girls; the limited capacity within public sector institutions to conduct gender analysis and implement planning and budgeting for gender-responsive services; and the low representation of women in decision-making positions in public sector administration.

Government is taking action to address these challenges in order to ensure that services are more responsive, particularly to women and girls. These efforts can be seen in part through the development of multi-sectoral public service initiatives to address key areas, such as violence against women, maternal mortality, and gender and democratic governance. The setting up of the Ministry of Gender,

Children and Social Protection by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama shows the commitment of the Government of Ghana in empowering women and girls.

The Ministry, which is the government machinery mandated to empower women and promote the welfare of the vulnerable in society believes that strengthening institutional frameworks and increased government resources will enhance service delivery and innovation.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Government acknowledges the important role of the public service in National development. Government also acknowledges the role of public service in women empowerment and will continue to put in the necessary institutional and policy framework to strengthen the service.

As we celebrate the African Union Public Service Day, I would like to congratulate public servants for the great work they do every day to enhance the development of Ghana.

Let me echo the words of our President John Dramani Mahama during the 2015 May Day celebration in Accra. "Let us resolve to continue to work diligently and in truth so that together we can increase productivity in all aspects of our national life and make our dear nation greater and stronger."

Thank you.