

**SPEECH BY THE GEA PRESIDENT AT THE LAUNCH OF THE  
FEMALE FUTURE PROGRAMME, AT THE MÖVENPICK  
AMBASSADOR HOTEL, ACCRA, ON 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2019**

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- **The Chairperson, Mrs. Rose Karikari Anang**
  
- **Our Guest Speaker, Ms. Mansa Nettey**
  
- **The Norwegian Ambassador to Ghana, His Excellency  
Gunnar Andreas Holm**
  
- **Representative of the Norwegian Investment Fund for  
Developing Countries (Norfund), Hege Seel Elisabeth**
  
- **Representative of the Confederation of Norwegian  
Enterprise (NHO), Kjersti Granaasen**
  
- **Members of the GEA**
  
- **Invited Guests**
  
- **Friends from the Media**
  
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great pleasure to be at the launch of the Female Future Programme (FFP) in Ghana. I am particularly elated that the Ghana Employers' Association, which is the premier employers' organization in the country, is the host of this excellent programme that seeks to develop women to assume leadership roles and board positions in both the corporate world and the public sector.

Madam Chair, permit me to use this opportunity to thank our development partners, the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Norwegian Embassy in Ghana, for their immense support in replicating the Female Future concept in Ghana for the development of women in our dear country, Ghana.

As President of the GEA, I take it personal when it comes to developing and empowering women to compete favourably with their male counterparts in the corporate environment and every aspect of life. This is because the capabilities of women in leading an organization to success cannot be overemphasized. The few women that I have worked with in my corporate life have discharged their duties efficiently to the admiration of all.

Madam Chair, it is important to note that in all facets of Ghana women are underrepresented at the decision-making and leadership levels. For instance, women form more than half (51%) of Ghana's population, but they are underrepresented in management, leadership and boardroom positions. According to the latest Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) report, most formal sector working women are found in services and sales jobs in their organizations whilst the managerial, professional and technical occupations that lead one to top positions are dominated by men.

Also, a study conducted by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs in 2016 to ascertain the gender dynamics and challenges confronting the elevation of women to boardrooms in private and public institutions in Ghana, found that the proportion of women to total board members is less than 26 percent. Additionally, only 6 percent of organizations have females as board chairpersons and 49 percent of women who rise to board level positions are made to occupy non-executive positions.

As part of preparations towards the implementation of the FFP, a baseline study was conducted by GEA in the early part of this year. The study identified some interesting factors such as effective mentoring mechanisms, efficient social support systems, social networking and building of emotional intelligence to be crucial in elevating women to leadership positions. It also revealed that demotivating factors such as

weak self-image, lack of assertiveness and determination, and mentoring lapses limit women representation at the apex of the corporate ladder.

Madam Chair, these studies do not paint a good picture about the gender diversity of our corporate environment. One can interpret this to mean that most enterprises are not making full utilization of all the talents at their disposal. GEA as the mouth piece of employers in the country believes that this narrative must be rewritten. We must provide women with the requisite skills and give them opportunities to assume higher responsibilities.

It is against this background that GEA in collaboration with the NHO is implementing this programme to make it an integral women capacity building programme in Ghana's corporate space, for the development of female leaders to occupy boardroom and other leadership positions. According to Ms. Jacqueline Mugo, CEO of the Federation of Kenya Employers, "A Female in the boardroom makes the difference". GEA would like to associate itself with this assertion as women by nature are good risk managers, which is a critical skill needed to lead any organization.

Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen, it must be noted that the programme originated from Norway and has been replicated in other sister organizations in Africa. In 2010, the program was exported to NHO's sister organization in Uganda, the Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE), in 2012 it was implemented by the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)

in Kenya and in 2015 it was initiated in Tanzania by the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE). It is currently being piloted in Tunisia.

Available evidence shows that organizations that supported their female staff to successfully go through the programme have benefited significantly from increased productivity, profits, workplace happiness, improved corporate image and reduced turnover as well as risk/return ratios. The success of the FFP has generated much interest internationally. The program has been rated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as one of ten best-practice examples of gender diversity initiatives in the world.

Madam Chair, the programme consists of three modules, namely: Leadership Development, Rhetoric and Board Competence. Women that went through all the sessions of the programme in our sister countries have built excellent oratory and negotiation skills, boardroom competence, discovered their inner potentials and obtained additional knowledge to lead any organization. The programme is opened to top and middle level managers, board members, female CEOs and every woman aspiring to be a leader in any sector of the economy.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, permit me to use this platform to appeal to Ghana's corporate leadership to integrate FFP in their overall organization's strategy to sustainably support women to participate in the programme in order to maximise the full potential of their female workers,

improve workplace diversity and enable women contribute significantly to overall national development.

**Thank you for your kind attention**