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Women must challenge themselves to take up leadership roles - Panellists at launch of Women in Energy Ghana

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From left: Dr Julet Twumasi-Anokyi moderating the panel comprising Mr Charles Darku, Ms Essie Anno Sackey and Ms Jean Githinji at the launch of Women in Energy Ghana.

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Panellists at a forum on advancing women in the energy sector workforce have called on women to make themselves relevant by bringing their unique skills to bare to ensure that male dominance is minimised.

They said while the policies and advocacy for increased women participation were relevant, it was important that they pushed themselves harder to ensure that they rose to top positions.

The Managing Director of PHI Century Ltd, Ghana, Ms Essie Anno Sackey, said it was important for women in the energy sector to make themselves relevant and not be afraid of the “Boys Club” in the sector.

“Women must explore, examine opportunities and bring their unique skills to bare. Do not be afraid of the “Boys Club,” she said while contributing to the discussion at the launch of the Women in Energy (WiE) Ghana on February 12.

Another panellist, a Strategy and Content Integration Consultant from Kenya, Ms Jean Githinji, said the call for women to rise to the top was an individual action that required women to challenge themselves and position themselves well to take up roles.

The Chairman of the Ghana Upstream Petroleum Chamber, Mr Charles Darku, said more deliberate efforts were needed to get women into senior-level positions in the energy sector.

He said it was important to have a change of mindset on women’s participation and provide the right infrastructure that would enable both men and women to occupy top positions.

“Women must explore, examine opportunities and bring their unique skills to bare. Do not be afraid of the “Boys Club”.

Gender disparity

The Managing Director, Tullow Ghana Ltd, and the Executive Vice-President, Tullow Oil Plc, Mr Kweku Awotwi said the global energy industry was far from achieving gender parity.

According to the Global Energy Talent Index (GETI) report which surveyed more than 20,000 people across the oil and gas industry in 2018, women made up 10 per cent of the global energy workforce in oil and gas, renewables, petrochemical, power and nuclear sectors.

He said the situation was no different in Ghana with available data pointing to similar disparities.

“Ghana is yet to have a female minister, substantive or deputy, of Petroleum, Power or Energy.

“There are only three female CEOs found in both government and international oil companies - Ms Frances Asiam of Ghana Cylinder Manufacturing, Ms Randi Cruz of ExxonMobil and Ms Khadija Amoah who was recently appointed CEO of Aker Energy Ghana in the past week,” he stated.

Research findings

According to a 2018 study on gender representation in the petroleum sector by energy policy NGO, Ghana Oil and Gas for Inclusive Growth (GOGIG), there were only three female chairs on 33 boards surveyed, with only five of those boards having more than one woman represented.

In addition, the UNDP’s Gender Analysis report 2018 states: “Women are primarily active in the lower-paid, non-technical fields such as administration, finance, marketing and public relations.”

These numbers can only mean one thing: that Ghanaian women’s participation in the energy sector is depressingly low.

Women in Energy Ghana

The platform brings together women professionals in the energy sector with a vision to ensure that there is visible women’s leadership and participation that contributes to inclusive development.

WiE Ghana’s mission is to advocate increased integration, contribution and leadership of women in the energy sector and it hopes to fulfil this mission by adopting various strategies.

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