



EXECUTIVE WOMEN NETWORK (EWN) 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

THEME: “A DECADE OF LEADERSHIP, A FUTURE TOWARDS HOLISTIC IMPACT”

CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS

BY

MRS MATILDA ASANTE-ASIEDU

SECOND DEPUTY GOVERNOR, BANK OF GHANA

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The Keynote Speaker,

Distinguished members of the Executive Women Network,

Founders, present and past leaders of EWN,

Members of the Executive Committee,

Distinguished speakers and panellists,

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very Good Morning to you.

Ten years ago, this network was an idea. Today, it is a decade old. So, I want to put one question to everyone seated here, and I hope it stays with you long after today's celebrations: ***which of the burning ideas you conceived have you put to work, and what has changed because you acted?***

Distinguished guests, as far I am concerned this question is where leadership becomes impact, and I would like us to carry it through this anniversary.

It is an honour to chair this gathering. I remember when we launched EWN at the Labadi Beach Hotel. I was then leading Access Bank's Women's Initiative, the "W" Initiative, designed to inspire, connect and empower women, and EWN was a worthy ally in that journey. I am delighted that it remains so for many women-focused initiatives.

Ten years carries a story: courage, uncertainty, sacrifice and persistence, and the satisfaction of watching a beginning become a community with a life and purpose of its own. EWN was built on a simple conviction, that women in leadership need more than positions. They need community, and spaces to learn, connect and create opportunities for generations to come. A decade on, that conviction has been proven right.

Women leaders in Ghana have come a long way. We are no longer observers in Ghana's economy and growth agenda. We are decision-makers. Across banking, energy, telecommunications, healthcare, education, wellness, agribusiness and fintech, just to mention a few, women are leading complex institutions, managing risk and compliance, and driving innovation and growth.

But an anniversary should do more than look back. Our theme, "A Decade of Leadership, A Future Towards Holistic Impact," asks what comes next. Let me offer three thoughts.

First, measure leadership by impact, and live it wholly.

Leadership changes meaning as we grow. Early in our careers, we want to prove ourselves, and there is nothing wrong with ambition. But as Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests, leadership eventually asks more of us. The title is not the destination. Did an institution become stronger because of you? Did a younger colleague gain confidence because you encouraged her? Did you use your influence to make room for someone else?

That is why impact must be holistic. The story of a woman in leadership is rarely only a career story. It is work, family, relationships, aspiration and, often, sacrifice. We were long told that success meant balancing everything perfectly. I am yet to experience that bliss. But what I can say for sure is that there are seasons when work demands more, seasons when family needs more, and seasons when we must slow down and reassess. For me, the better question is whether we are living intentionally: understanding our season, making choices we can stand by, and staying connected to the people and values that give success its meaning. A person's life is not measured by a business card alone. Our health, our peace of mind, our financial independence and the people we develop matter just as much.

Second, equip yourself for the decade ahead.

This week, and again just before I joined you this morning, I was engaging the Boards of Directors of our commercial banks on artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, and how they are changing the financial sector. The reality is that technology and artificial intelligence are changing how we work, and the skills that brought us this far may not carry us through the next ten years. So, we must remain learners, however senior we become. Preparation builds confidence, and confidence amplifies voice.

Own what you build. We speak often about careers, but not enough about assets. Are we investing? Building businesses? Creating financial security? Thinking about what we pass on? A woman who is financially informed and secure can make choices, withstand shocks and support others. Let us think boldly of women as owners, investors, entrepreneurs and creators of wealth.

Third, open doors.

Progress cannot rest on women alone. Institutions must change. It is easy for an organisation to say it supports women in leadership. The real test comes when

opportunities arise: who gets the important assignments, the visibility, a place on the succession plan? Those of us in positions of influence must be deliberate. Mentors give guidance; sponsors give access, and without access, talent remains unseen. Advice is helpful, but advocacy is transformative. Women need leaders, men and women, who will say, “I have watched her work. She is ready. Give her the chance,” and then stand beside her when the challenge comes.

Many of us can name the person who did that for us, who saw something in us before we saw it ourselves and mentioned our name in the right room. We must honour them by doing the same for others.

The law is now on our side. Ghana’s Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 sets a phased pathway to parity in leadership and decision-making: 30 per cent by 2026, 35 per cent by 2028, and 50 per cent by 2034. The first milestone falls due this year. But that future will not arrive by accident. It requires women ready to claim their space, boards willing to open doors, and a society that treats inclusion as an imperative, not an option. So, the question for each of us is this: which women are you preparing to take that opportunity?

We must normalise women’s leadership across our social, political and economic life, so that it no longer feels exceptional, and so that the next generation sees leadership as a path, not a privilege reserved for a few.

Let me plainly say why this matters. Elevating women is not tokenism. It is an economic imperative. Women are just over half of Ghana’s population. Imagine if all that potential were unleashed. There is enough evidence to show why this is necessary. Research by McKinsey in 2023 found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams were 39 per cent more likely to outperform their bottom-quartile peers financially. The case is also social: when women rise, households rise, communities are strengthened, and economies become more resilient.

So here is how I hope the next decade will be told. The first decade tells the story of what EWN has built. The next must tell the story of what EWN has changed: institutions strengthened, businesses created, younger women prepared for leadership, wealth built, and communities that felt the effect of the leadership in this room. That is what holistic impact means: leadership measured by what changes around us, in our institutions, our families and our communities.

The future of Ghana’s economy will be shaped not only by policies, but by leaders like yourselves, with strong convictions backed by deliberate action. EWN is a

living example of women shaping the future with purpose and with legacy in mind, building institutions that strengthen Ghana and Africa beyond our tenure.

Let me close with a request.

Before you leave this hall today, write down one name: a woman whose career, business or confidence you can advance. Within thirty days, open one door for her. Make the introduction. Put her name forward. Give her the assignment. Share what you know about investing.

One name. One door. Thirty days.

If every woman in this room does that, the next decade will not be measured by how many of us reached the top, but by how many we brought with us. And I look forward to hearing about which doors were opened at our next meeting.

I congratulate the founders, the leadership and every member of the Executive Women Network on ten remarkable years. You should be proud of what you have built, and even more excited about what lies ahead.

Happy 10th Anniversary to the Executive Women Network. And on that note, I declare this anniversary duly launched.

Thank you.