

**CELEBRATION OF WORLD RURAL WOMEN'S DAY AT
AMASAMAN IN GA -WEST DISTRICT OF GREATER ACCRA
SPEECH BY HANNAH OWUSU-KORANTENG DIRECTOR OF
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There is enough empirical evidence to support the fact that hunger and poverty have resulted from inequitable distribution of resources and exclusive policies that have tended to disempower majority of people especially women. Corporate greed and the desire of capital for super normal profits have created a world in which a few benefit from the wealth and productive efforts of the majority. Such greed cuts across race, religion and sex because those who believe in such unjust system are united and working to perpetuate the global inequalities. Poverty and hunger are created and affect women and households especially those that are serious workers of the world – Rural people.

Climate change has become a major concern for the world and nations are struggling to minimise its effects. Investors today are disregarding conservation practices of the past. Agriculture and other investments such as mining are stripping the forests of its rich resources as industry continues to pollute the atmosphere to the extent that the world is losing its protection – ozone layer depletion, carbon build up and emissions of obnoxious gases.

The establishment of commercial farming using conventional methods with high use of chemicals are contributing to the menace of global warming. Surface mining in farming communities of Ghana has brought untold hardships including hunger to the hitherto productive agricultural communities through displacement, pollution of streams and degradation of farmlands. One mining company alone displaced about 18,000 people living in rural farming communities to pave way for surface mining. Some farming communities in Ghana that were displaced by mining had to be resettled in new areas without land for farming. Hunger, disease and poverty have become endemic in the communities that had enough to eat until the global economic order determined their present situation.

A development concept that seeks to exclude the majority of people especially women from the development process would end up

perpetuating underdevelopment. There is a growing concern that mineral dependent countries like Ghana are increasing their dependence on the extractive sector with implications for the survival of the rural majority especially women. This undermines global peace and security. The concept of sustainable livelihood emphasises the importance of linking local realities to central policies in development interventions such that the lives of the majority are not sacrificed for narrow profit interest.

There is a gender dimension to Environmental protection. Women have an important role to play in protecting the environment because women are seriously affected by environmental degradation. Global warming with its associated changes in climate has the potential of wiping out the productive capacity rural areas to support agriculture. Climate change may change crop growing patterns and yields. Climate change has the potential of causing floods and drought. In Ghana many rural dwellers especially women depend on standing forest and agriculture for their sources of livelihoods. It is thus commendable that Farmers Organisation Network in Ghana (FONG) is collaborating with other National Farmers Organisations in Ghana to celebrate this year 's World Rural Women's Day (WRWD) with the theme **"Climate Change: Rural Women are Part of the Solution"** .

There are choices to be made for a better world. Fortunately, individuals, youth, women's groups and organisations are determined to create a world based on equity, fairness, justice and respect for the dignity and rights of people irrespective of race, religion, sex etc.

There is a choice to be made between the forces of greed and oppression and the forces of equity, justice and dignity of the human being. It is thus imperative for the majority to change the order for a just world where investments go hand in hand with the preservation of nature and values of the indigenous people. I believe that it is possible to change the global development agenda, to achieve environmental justice and women must be recognised as important change agents.

Thank you