



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUÉ

### A JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE ATTENDEES OF THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY

| NOVEMBER 26–27, 2024.

| ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER | GHANA

#### ***“IT IS TIME FOR ACTION, THE TALK IS OVER”.***

This second International Conference on Gender Equality was held on Tuesday November 26 and Wednesday November 27, 2024, at the Accra International Conference Centre.

There were over 320 participants from 12 countries.

Participants were drawn from Portugal, Australia, Canada, USA, Sweden, Nigeria, and Ghana, among others.

The ICGE-24 conference served as a platform for driving innovative actions that lead to measurable progress in achieving gender equality in developing economies. The conference focused on the theme **“From Vision to Reality: Catalyzing Sustainable Gender Equality in Developing Economies”**. It was hosted by I Believe Global Foundation which is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, and Ghana and it was under the leadership of Mr. Yaw Henaku, Rachel Akosua Lundgren, Professor Smile Dzisi, Dr. Emmanuel Ayifah, and Sarbina Mensah. I Believe Global Foundation works with partners such as SEND Ghana, University of Portugal, Lisbon, and the Progressive Sage, the Technical Universities, as well as other public universities to achieve its conference outcomes for that particular year. This conference was under the distinguished chairmanship of Professor Smile Gavua Dzisi, a former Vice-Chancellor of Koforidua Technical University and a Gender Consultant.

It featured the following global thought leaders and world class speakers such as:

- Dr. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye,
- Dr. Afua Ansre
- Professor Ada Juni Okika
- Augusta Impact Keneboh
- Professor Bethuel Presley
- Mrs. Jane Kwawu,
- Dr. Josephine Larbi-Apau,
- Professor Ebenezer Malcalm,
- Dr. Patricia Owusu Darko,
- Dr. Sergio Bordalo e Sá (Portugal),
- Dr. Abdul-Aziz Seidu (Australia),
- Professor Amevi Acakpovi

## **Key Issues**

*The keys issues that emerged at the conference include:*

1. The clarion call that Gender Equality in this season has intergenerational ramifications
2. Gender Equality is a fundamental human right, and not a fancy western concept
3. Gender Equality is not about exacting female hegemonies, but a call for women and men to work together to remove barriers that impede female participation and access to opportunities that augur well for the development of society as a whole.
4. Societies that promote gender equality tend to achieve more inclusive and long-term growth.

5. Women's equal representation and participation in politics and decision making will help confront the existing barriers to achieving gender parity
6. Parental and cultural factors continue to affect the career choices of girls and women for certain courses that were traditionally male dominated
7. Cultural attitudes that play a substantial role in determining women's access to leadership and decision-making roles need to be changed; because where obstacles to women's economic and political participation persist, societies fall behind. However, countries that empower all citizens, including women, experience more sustainable and inclusive growth.
8. The conference highlights the need of integrating Gender Equality (GE) as a core subject in all post-secondary institutions, including universities, colleges of education, nursing schools, and technical and vocational training centers across the represented countries. This educational reform aims to inspire a cultural transformation, fostering a future grounded in inclusivity, respect, and equal opportunities for everyone.
9. Since some of the best jobs are still in STEM, obliterating all the limitations to the participation of the girl-child and women in STEM programs and careers should be the consuming passion of the governments of all developing countries.
10. Technologies are important for all facets of life; women should be interested in technology and technological courses, such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and the various tools such as CHAT GPT, COPILOT, Meta AI, Humanoid Robots, self-driving cars, etc.
11. There persists a wide digital gap among the female population of many developing countries owing to inadequate digital literacy, and inefficient access to information.
12. The conference calls for the implementation and application of the Affirmative Action Gender Equity Act, 2024, which was passed in 2024 across all the various segments of the Ghanaian's work and life.

13. All the experts and thought leaders who presented papers at the conference are unanimous about the role of mentoring of girls and women, and by extension, men to accelerate the pace of progress towards gender equality in every facet of society.
14. All participants have agreed that women should build confidence and self-efficacy to be successful and last in leadership roles
15. The 2024 conference will help to build partnerships and strengthen ties for greater gender inclusiveness
16. Where obstacles to women's economic and political participation persist, societies fall behind. Developing countries should empower all citizens, including women in order to experience more sustainable and inclusive growth.
17. The conference also emphasizes that women themselves should break all odds and strive to be relevant in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century world which is full of opportunities for educational advancement, career diversities and entrepreneurial achievements.
18. Since women are important actors in energy use and management, they should be at the table of energy policy decisions at the local, regional and national levels.
19. Three decades after the Beijing Declaration many developing countries are yet to reap the full benefits of gender equality, owing to much lip service by country governments but little action
20. Women should create a supportive network and actively seek mentorship to be able to advance in their lives and careers.
21. Many educated women have not taken advantage of personal branding to stand out in their work and personal lives.
22. Women still experience lower financial inclusion caused by lack of access to the right information for women business owners and fewer specific financial products that are favorable to women's circumstances, as well as incoherent entrepreneurial support systems that target women entrepreneurs.

23. There have been weak political will over the years to boldly enact and implement gender inclusive policies, regulations and laws.
24. All conference attendees highlight the significance of forums like ICGE in promoting knowledge exchange, advancing research and innovation, building connections, strengthening solidarity, revitalizing the gender equality movement, raise awareness and inspiring actionable steps forward in Africa and beyond.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All developing countries should speed up their implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal 5 (Gender Equality) for greater gender parity because countries that have made the relevant changes in support of gender equality since the passage of the Beijing Declarations have been experiencing transformational gains on their economic and social fronts
2. The central banks in Africa should empower the commercial banks and lending intermediaries to create financial products that are attractive to women and their peculiar needs for business and personal purposes
3. Developing countries like Ghana must work harder to reshape society's attitudes towards women's participation in economic and political life.
4. All stakeholders, including governments, the African Union, UN Women, policymakers, academic leaders, civil society organizations, and etc., should recognize the critical need for educational reform that aligns with global efforts to achieve gender equality.
5. Women should aspire to build personal brands and articulate their visions well to be noticed
6. Women should build confidence and self-efficacy to be successful and last in leadership roles
7. Women must go beyond, and manage negative self-talk and internal biases very well

8. Women should prioritize their mental health and manage stress regularly to promote better health and well-being
9. The Affirmative Action Gender Equity Act, 2024, must be implemented as a matter of urgency to mainstream gender issues in all aspects of life and work in Ghana
10. Enforcement of the provisions of the Affirmative Action Gender Equity Act, 2024, should be promoted in schools and workplaces with the help of the sector Ministry and its allied agencies.
11. Gender activists, advocates and Government as well as CSOs involved in the gender space should be empowered to contribute to an annual Gender Equality Survey and Index that will guide continuous monitoring, and lead to the production of disaggregated data that will guide current and future policy interventions.
12. Government should be encouraged to build and run a Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) that will guide relevant generation of revenue and expenditures for gender specific interventions
13. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection must work with key research agencies to build gender disaggregated data to guide gender policy-making and implementation.
14. Call to action emphasized the necessity of ongoing advocacy, rigorous research, and the promotion of more gender-centric conferences like ICGE and networks.

## **KEY ACTIONS**

I Believe Global Foundation (IBG) will continue its support role for all interventions towards gender equality

1. Based on participants' feedback from ICGE, IBG will continue to organize Gender-Focused International Conferences like ICGE, to foster meaningful discussions through evidence-based approaches, and produce impactful knowledge products. The insights and

outcomes from these conferences will be used to design and implement projects aimed at advancing SDG 5 within the Ghanaian ecosystem and across Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. IBG will continue to hold other meetings to highlight the key gender issues and empirical studies, as well as best practices that are working in many progressive societies. IBG will also participate in UN summits and sessions, and other international conferences to amplify its global impact.
3. IBG will collaborate with key institutions and stakeholders, including UN Women, the African Union, government ministries, and other relevant organizations, to promote the integration of gender equality subjects across post-secondary disciplines to reshape/transform societal norms.
4. IBG has established the Institute of Gender Research and Implementation Science (IGRIS) to initiate research into Gender issues and develop strategic interventions.
5. Mentorship/Leadership Project for Young Women are planned to be run by the organization.
6. Institute Economic Support through Digital skill Training aimed at empowering African female entrepreneurs.
7. Offer training in General Health Program for women, among others.
8. IBG will continue to forge strategic alliances, stakeholders' engagement, and strengthen partnerships to advance gender equality in developing economies and support other initiatives critical to the organization's mission.

## CONCLUSION

The International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE 24) was a phenomenal success. Facilitators and participants alike contributed novel and powerful ideas towards the accomplishment of the conference outcomes.

