

**THE WOMEN'S WING OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC
CONGRESS (NDC)**

VOICE OF WOMEN SUMMIT -- 2024

SPEECH

BY

NDC FLAGBEARER

**HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA
FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

Kumasi, Ashanti Region

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*Madam Chairperson,
Nananom & Nanahemaanum,
Women of Ghana,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear citizens of Ghana:*

I am deeply honoured to be joining you this morning at this historic summit – one that amplifies the voice of the Ghanaian woman.

Today, we are here to launch a vision – a vision that places the women of Ghana at the center of national development and governance.

I want to begin by thanking the Women’s Wing of the NDC for launching this Call to Action – a bold step towards a future where women lead at the highest levels of politics, are economically empowered, and have access to the education and health care they need to thrive.

Women play a most critical role in our society and the NDC’s “Resetting Ghana” Manifesto, launched on 24th August 2024 recognizes this. We have made clear, in both policy and practice, that our Ghanaian women are not just beneficiaries of development – they are the architects of development.

For us the NDC, our mission is simple: Ghanaian women matter. Ghanaian women are partners in development. And our Party has put forward proposals to ensure that women sit at the table of national decision-making, side by side with men.

This is not an empty promise; I have already shown my commitment through the nomination of a female running mate – a symbol of our inclusive and gender-balanced government.

I am deeply honoured to have a woman of immense integrity as my running mate and, God willing, the next Vice President of Ghana. Professor Naana Jane Opoku Agyemang will God willing, in January 2025 be Ghana's first female Vice President.

The NDC believes strongly that it is long overdue, at this time in our democracy, for us to have a truly inclusive and gender-balanced government.

Ladies and gentlemen:

This commitment is not a fleeting sentiment.

It is rooted deeply in my personal journey, as I recounted in my memoir, about the profound influence of three women: my aunt, my sister Rose, and my mother Abiba Nnaba on my life. It is these women who raised me and taught me the values of perseverance and compassion and shaped the man you see today. It is their strength that I pay homage to today.

Their strength in adversity, their perseverance and their unshakeable focus, deeply inspired me and shaped my early appreciation of and deep respect for women.

But today the stakes are much higher and bigger than my story.

Beyond personal anecdotes, we must confront the harsh realities that women in Ghana face today.

Despite women's significant contribution to our nation's development, gender inequality remains pervasive, particularly in the informal sector, where 92% of workers are women often without safety nets. This is an important sector that contributes as much as between 30-40% of Ghana's GDP.

This situation has exacerbated poverty among women, as highlighted by the 2020 Census: which indicates that of Ghana's 7.3 million poor people, the majority – 3.76 million – are women.

In fact, nearly 54% of unemployed people in Ghana are women. Why should poverty have a female face in Ghana, with 1.44 million women classified as extremely poor, and living on less than \$1.90 a day? Why should poverty have any face at all? These numbers should not just shock us; they should spur us to act.

These statistics tell a painful story. Behind each number is a woman – perhaps a mother, a sister, or a daughter – who works tirelessly every day but still goes to bed hungry.

They are the backbone of our communities, yet they bear the heaviest burdens of inequality.

This must change.

Our Resetting Ghana Manifesto offers bold solutions to address these challenges.

First and foremost, job creation is at the heart of our agenda.

The NDC will implement a 24-Hour Economy, creating opportunities for businesses to operate around the clock in three shifts. Instead of one person working one job as a singular shift, we shall now have for the same job, three people working in three shifts.

Imagine the potential – thousands of new jobs created, productivity at an all-time high, and our nation reaping the benefits of a stronger economy.

Ghanaians, especially, our young people and women, will no longer have to suffer for jobs like before.

But we must ask ourselves: why, after decades of promises, do we still see these inequalities?

Why, after six decades of independence, does poverty wear a female face in Ghana? We the NDC is time for action, not just words. It is time for solutions, not excuses. Ghanaians have suffered for too long over the last almost 8 years under Akufo-Addo and Bawumia.

Our approach will therefore be swift and purposeful. Together with my Vice President Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, in our first 120 days in office, we shall work with Parliament to begin drafting the legal framework for this 24-Hour Economy.

This is a concrete, actionable policy that will immediately begin to transform our economy. We will create the conditions for our youth and women to thrive, and we will do so with urgency.

Imagine a Ghana where the markets bustle with activity, not just during the day but into the night.

Picture young women in agriculture, leading with innovative technologies, and small businesses powered by a national Women's Development Bank, providing low-interest loans and gender-sensitive and considered services.

This is our vision: a Ghana where economic empowerment is not a privilege but a right.

We will increase women's representation in Parliament, district assemblies, and leadership roles across all sectors. We will do this not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because Ghana needs the best of its human resources.

By operationalizing the Affirmative Action Act of 2024, we will ensure that women hold at least 30% of political appointments.

We will pass the Property Rights of Spouses Bill, the Domestic Workers Bill, and the Intestate Succession Amendment Bill, further solidifying women's rights and protections.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Our policies will directly target unemployment and economic empowerment.

The Women's Development Bank will support women-owned businesses, while our National Apprenticeship Programme will provide free TVET training to young people, especially women, in various trades.

Our Digital Jobs Initiative will train one million coders, including women, ensuring that Ghanaian women are not left behind in the global digital economy. Additionally, our *Adwumawura* Programme will mentor and support 10,000 start-ups annually.

Let me reiterate that these programmes are not abstract concepts – they are rooted in Ghana's current realities.

With 27.7% of women experiencing gender-based violence, we will implement a national Zero Tolerance Policy on sexual harassment and domestic violence. We reject the notion that women should suffer in silence.

We will establish regional shelters, provide comprehensive care for survivors, and work to eliminate the scourge of violence that holds too many women back.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

Throughout my presidency, the NDC showed commitment to gender equality, but we are aware of the challenges that remain. From the Affirmative Action policies we supported, to the social protection initiatives we pioneered, we have laid the groundwork.

Now, we must build on these successes with renewed energy and focus.

So ladies and gentlemen:

I, together with the NDC I shall lead, offer you a social contract.

Within the first 14 days of my presidency, I will nominate my Cabinet – 30% of whom will be women.

I will address the high cost of living by scrapping draconian taxes like the E-Levy and COVID levy.

I will ensure the implementation of our 24-Hour Economy and distribute free sanitary pads to all girls in primary and secondary schools.

I will establish the Women's Development Bank, and I will launch the *Adwumawura*, National Apprenticeship, and One Million Coders programmes.

You, the women of Ghana, are the heart of this vision.

Whether you are a hairdresser, farmer, teacher, or entrepreneur, you are the driving force behind Ghana's future.

Today we stand at the crossroads of history and I ask you the women of Ghana here in the Ashanti Region and all the 16 regions to march forward with me to create a Ghana where women are celebrated as nation builders.

A Ghana where your strength, intelligence and resilience are not just admired but actively harnessed for the betterment of our nation.

Join me, Professor Naana Jane and the NDC. The time for change is now, and the leaders of that change are you – the women of Ghana. With your strength, passion and determination, we can create a nation where every woman is empowered to lead and to succeed.

So let us rise together, hand in hand, as we create a future of equal opportunity and prosperity for all. Together, we shall march towards a future where women are not just participants in our development but leaders of it, a future where every girl and every woman can fulfill her potential.

I thank you and may God bless us all.