

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY ANITA OPOKU-TAWIAH, GENDER COMMISSIONER OF  
THE GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION OF GHANA (GRASAG) ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE GRASAG DAY WITH THE GIRLS AT AWUTU SENYA EAST  
ON 11TH OCTOBER, 2019**

The Chair, Education Directors, Management and Staff of the Awutu Senya East Ghana Education Service, Teachers, Distinguished Members of GRASAG, Dear Students, Ladies and Gentlemen Good Morning .

Every year on 11th October, we mark the International Day of the Girl Child. It's a day the world celebrates the girl child by acknowledging the progress they have made while reemphasising the challenges that they face and renew efforts and commitment to ensure gender equality in the new generation.

The Graduate Students Association of Ghana (GRASAG National) this year is working with girls to amplify their voices and stand up for their rights. We believe that we have been able to come this far through inspiration from others and so we are here to give you hope and to afford you guidance in your journey to greatness! Yes you can!

This year, under the theme, “Empowering to be Unstoppable for a Brighter Tomorrow”, we are celebrating achievements by girls and for girls since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Madam Chair, in nearly 25 years, we have seen more girls move from dreaming to achieving. More girls today are attending and completing school with few getting married or becoming mothers along the way.

Others are gaining the skills they need to excel in the future world of work. Girls are breaking boundaries and barriers posed by stereotypes and exclusions, including those directed at children with disabilities and those living in marginalized communities. As entrepreneurs, innovators and

initiators of global movements, girls like us are creating a world that is relevant for us and future generations.

### **Free SHS**

GRASAG Gender Commission is using this occasion to appreciate government for its initiative of the free SHS education. We believe it would increase the chances of girls from deprived families' access to education.

We would however call on government to equally put in efforts to improve the quality of education that Ghanaian students everywhere receive which includes girl child education.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The talk on sexual harassment has taken over the waves recently as a result of the BBC 'Sex for Grades' documentary that was released. Although as an association, we find the content not reflecting the title of the documentary, we believe that sexual harassment does exist and harassment everywhere is a menace that abuses the rights of everyone and especially the Girl Child. Sexual harassment reduces productivity and thus should be eliminated from society.

Colleague Students, as girls I urge you to stand up for your rights at all times to report any form of harassment that you may encounter on your journey to greatness. There are channels to report these incidents. I use this opportunity to call on universities to strengthen their sexual harassment policies and make it known to students so they can take advantage of them.

I would like to reiterate that GRASAG Gender Commission is always open to partner developmental agencies who work to improve the lives of Ghanaian students at all levels. We open our doors to mentoring you all the way to greatness.

So before you leave this ceremony get a contact of Graduate students who will assist you with guidance as you journey to greatness!

### **Breast Cancer**

Before I take my seat, ladies and gentlemen, permit me to touch on the issue of Breast Cancer. As we all know, October is the breast cancer awareness month. Breast cancer is curable although it is the second deadliest cancer currently. Do not therefore lose hope or be afraid when you or

anybody close to you is diagnosed of the cancer. However, know that early detection saves life. Periodic self examination for symptoms of breast cancer is necessary.

Many who have died out of breast cancer is as a result of initial reliance on herbal and spiritual solution allowing the cancer to deteriorate. It is crucial to seek medical attention as soon as it is detected.

As family members of breast cancer victims let us stop stigmatization as it is not communicable. Let us all get involved in eliminating the cancer as it could be her, me or you!

GRASAG National is using social media to create awareness on Breast Cancer. For those of you who have access to social media, you can follow our campaign on all our social media platforms to create the needed awareness.

Thank you for coming.

Enjoy the rest of the program.



Figure 1GRASAG GenCom Delivering Her Message at the Programme