REPORT

WOMEN IN CHEMISTRY NETWORK

LAUNCH OF THE WOMEN IN CHEMISTRY NETWORK (WICN) AND CELEBRATION OF THE 2024 IUPAC GLOBAL WOMEN'S BREAKFAST IN GHANA

Date: Tuesday 27th February, 2024
Venue: CSIR-STEPRI Auditorium in Accra



SPONSORS

1. INTRODUCTION

In line with the goal of creating visibility and building the capacity for women in the chemical sciences, the Women in Chemistry Network (WICN), founded by Professor Marian Asantewah Nkansah, was launched at the CSIR-STEPRI Auditorium in Accra.

The event which had the theme **"Promoting Gender Diversity in the Chemical Sciences"** was held on Tuesday 27th February, 2024 to create awareness about its existence and essence and also to encourage other women in the chemical sciences to be part of its membership. This date was strategically fixed to coincide with the 2024 edition of the annual Global Women's Breakfast #GWB2024, organised by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC). The detail programme outline is shown in Appendix 1.

Membership of WICN is open to all women with qualifications in Chemistry, Biochemistry, Chemical Engineering, Pharmacy and related disciplines.

2. ATTENDANCE

The event was attended by one hundred and four (104) people including State Officials and Heads of Department, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Academics, Industry players, Policy makers, Civil Society Organisation, professional women and men in the chemical sciences, graduate students, high school students, sponsors, and the media.

3. SPEAKERS

The founder and convener for the event Professor Marian Asantewah Nkansah, Department of Chemistry, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) Kumasi, in her opening remarks, shared her motivation for establishing WICN. She stated the idea was conceived in January 2011 and started as a social media fun page, prior to the launch of the International Year of Chemistry programme in Paris. She expressed her joy in seeing a 13-year-old dream come true.

Emerita Professor Isabela Quakyi, Vice President of Science Section, Ghana Academy of Arts and Science (GAAS) was the Chairperson of the event and spoke about some of the Academy's approaches to recognize and increase representation of women in the sciences. She found it refreshing to know that efforts are being made by others such as WICN to augment their efforts for our collective good.

Professor Frances Owusu Daaku of the Department of Pharmacy Practice, KNUST in her keynote address reflected on the theme and had a number of take-home messages including:

- Intellect is gender-neutral.

- Go for it, even if the possibilities appear slim
- Never let your gender be the reason to give up
- Find competent mentors to guide you
- Understand what you're doing, work hard, and you will succeed.

Professor Dorcas Osei-Safo, Department of Chemistry, University of Ghana Legon, the Featured Speaker, recounted her life story and how she had to navigate family, childbirth and social commitments to reach her current status.

4. GLOBAL WOMEN'S BREAKFAST PRESENTATION

Emerita Professor Mary Garson Vice President of IUPAC Convener of IUPAC Global Women's Breakfast (GWB) was the Guest Speaker. In her video message to the gathering she gave a background to the GWB. She also shared some thoughts on **"Promoting Gender Diversity in the Chemical Sciences".** She talked about the low representation of women in the STEM workforce and the need to strengthen the participation of women**.** She admonished young women to follow their interests, cultivate their skill sets and identify opportunities that march their skills sets. She commended Professor Nkansah on this initiative and extended a hand of collaboration and support for the Women in Chemistry towards the future. A PowerPoint document from the GWB team was also shared with the gathering.

5. LAUNCH OF WICN LOGO AND WEBSITE

Also at this gathering was the launch of the logo Appendix 2 and website (https://www.womeninchemistrynetwork.org/) of WICN together with the cutting of a special WICN cake decorated with images of glassware and a molecule on top Appendix 3 to commemorate this historic occasion.

6. PANEL DISCUSSION

There was a panel discussion on the theme by the following after the snack break. The panelist included:

- Dr. Mary Magdalene Pedavoah. C. K. Tedam-UTAS, Navrongo
- Mrs. Esther Aboagye Tandoh. Head of Assay Lab. Ghana Manganese Company Ltd. Nsuta
- Dr. Trinity Ama Tagbor. CSIR-Institute of Industrial Research, Accra
- Dr. Caroline Kwawu. Department of Chemistry, KNUST-Kumasi
- Mrs. Jemima Offei-Agyepong. The Head of Cosmetics Units, FDA, Accra

7. SPONSORS

The event was sponsored largely by local partners including the Ghana Maritime Authority, CHEMICO Ghana Limited, Heritors Labs Ltd., SKIDCOM Ghana Ltd., Desert Lion Group of Companies-Ghana, Family Dream Expert Consult Ltd., CSIR- Science and Technology Policy Research Institute (STEPRI), Voltic Ghana Ltd., Women in Mining (WIM) and Multi Media Ghana Ltd., with support from the Royal Society of Chemistry.

8. CONCLUSION

The successful launch of WICN signifies more than just the beginning of a new initiative; it represents a commitment to unlocking opportunities, realizing potential, and fostering a platform for continuous learning and advancement. The successful launch of WICN is a stepping stone for a more concerted effort and dedication to work together to harness skills, talents and to bring more women in the STEM career.

9. APPRECIATION

The leadership would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful organization and execution of the launch network. Without your dedication, expertise, and collaboration, this event would not have been possible. We wish to express our appreciation to the organizing committee, speakers and presenters, sponsors and partners, attendees and all volunteers.

10. ORGANISING COMMITTEE

SN	NAME	Role	ORGANISATION
1	Professor Marian Asantewah Nkansah	Chairperson	KNUST, Kumasi
2	Dr. Latifatu Mohammed	Deputy Chair/Secretary	CSIR-IIR, Accra
3	Dr. Mercy Badu	Member	KNUST, Kumasi
4	Professor Dorcas Osei-Safo	Member	UG, Accra
5	Dr. Caroline R. Kwawu	Member	KNUST, Kumasi
6	Mrs. Jemima Doreen Offei Agyepong	Member	FDA, Accra

Appendix 1: Detailed Programme outline



Appendix 2: THE WICN LOGO



SYMBOLS

Face: Representing all women

Round bottom Flask with Benzene Ring Inside: Chemical Research

WICN inside a bezene ring: Acronym for the Women in Chemistry Network

Circle: All embracing and global outlook of the network

COLOURS

Purple: Femininity and Creativity

Lime Green: Nature and sustainability

Black: Professionalism and power

Appendix 3: DECORATED CAKE



PHOTO GALLERY



Main Speakers at the WICN Launch



Emerita Professor Mary Garson Vice President of IUPAC Co-convener of IUPAC Global Women's Breakfast (GWB)



Panelist Discussing Theme of WICN Launch



Group Photograph of Participants of WICN Launch





Appreciating Sponsors



Men Supporting the Launch of WICN



Senior High School Students at the WICN Launch



Solidarity Message from a Chartered Chemist, RSC



Solidarity Message from the Ghana Science Association



Solidarity Message from the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Ghana



Solidarity Message from the Ghana Institution of Engineering



Solidarity Message from the Germany Embassy



Solidarity Message from the Ghana Education Service

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