

How one woman's leadership is transforming registration of documents landscape

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Some two years ago, Ms. Saptieu Elizabeth Saccoh was appointed the Administrator and Registrar-General (ARG) in charge of the registration of all legal documents such as conveyances, leases, mortgages, agreements of myriad sorts and last but not least, the administration of estates of those who die without any provision of a testamentary disposition on how to dispose of their estate. The announcement was greeted with a deluge of doubts by legal stalwarts most of whom held the plausible opinion that a more senior legal practitioner should occupy such office because of its enormous responsibilities. I must confess that I had my misgivings too.

The office of the Administrator and Registrar-General was wrapped in a blanket of uncertainty, at least that was the image her predecessor etched on many a mind. The previous office holder consciously or subconsciously swaddled the office with thick garments of secrecy. The corridors were ill-lit and cheerless, the offices dusky and the processes usually orphaned by poor leadership and artificial delays. A lawyer could predict anything in the world but not when their documents would be registered at the OARG and whether or not documents submitted for registration would not be misplaced by choice or slipshod management. So, Ms. Saccoh had a job cut out for her to fail at the cradle, but predictions were soon to be defied.

Despite her stint as one of the junior counsel at the OARG, Saptieu was the least likely to surmount the mountain of challenges which come as the natural addenda to the torrent of responsibilities appertaining to the office. On assuming the office, she immediately set out to transform the derelict and dying walls of the office with colours of a facelift bustling with new energy, hope and prestige befitting the office. The nondescript wedding room has been wholesomely refurbished and the new hall, adorned with all the frills matching the excitement and beam of the rites of matrimony. With bureaucracies eliminated, unnecessary processes decluttered, payment into commercial bank introduced and clear and accountable receipting systems installed, instruments for registration now come in droves and so is the revenue which this office adds to the Consolidated

Revenue Fund. Naturally, with surge in confidence in the system, comes a corresponding increase in the utility of the service and systems by both lawyers and the general public. The reception, processing and management of instruments for registration have greatly improved with three offices now being fully functional in the provincial towns and automation of all its records is underway. Like Corporate Affairs Commission, a new breed of women is in charge and the nation's doing business rating is flying high.

This past Friday on special invite by the ARG, the Office of the Administrator and Registrar-General dished her cynics and sceptics a scrumptious buffet of humble pie when it recognised those firms of lawyers that have been most compliant and giving the office the least upset or headache in the registration of their instruments or documents. Mouths gaped, faces spell-bound at the Midas-touch of this woman who was dismissed even before she took the seat once occupied by leading figures in the law. They say, do not judge a book by its cover, I would say do not judge a woman by her age or experience—great visions of change reside in our female compatriots. Ms. Saccoh's leadership has reinforced the need to give women and girls the opportunity to serve and change our narratives of poverty and political decay. Here is one woman is offering free tutorials to the Ministry of Lands whose processes are still meticulously sheltered in secrecy and patriarchal disorganization.

As influential as she is, but characteristic of her personality, Saptieu has shone very conservatively in the limelight and is allowing her towering achievements to do the talking. Now, this is what is exactly a new direction and one woman's exceptional leadership is showing our men how to do it!