Mr Speaker, in celebrating International Women’s Day, I believe we should show gratitude to the Hon Minister responsible for women who has come to draw attention to what we ought to do as a nation.

Mr Speaker, my contribution would just be for us to engage in some serious introspection. I would want to draw attention to some relevant provisions in our Constitution. Article 15 (1) of the Constitution provides, and with your permission, I beg to quote:

“The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable.”

Mr Speaker, article 16(2) provides, and I beg to quote again:

“No person shall be required to perform forced labour.”

Mr Speaker, article 17(2) provides:

“A person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, or social or economic status.”

Mr Speaker, article 17(4) provides, and I beg to quote:

“Nothing in this article shall prevent Parliament from enacting laws that are reasonably necessary to provide —

(a) for the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalance in the Ghanaian society;

(b) for matters relating to adoption, marriage divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other matters personal law;”

Mr Speaker, clauses 1, 2 and 3 of article 22 provide and I beg to quote:

“(1) A spouse shall not be deprived of a reasonable provision out of the estate of a spouse whether or not the spouse died having made a will.

(2) Parliament shall, as soon as practicable after the coming into force of this Constitution, enact legislation regulating the property rights of spouses.

Mr Speaker, we are still counting. So many years after the promulgation of this Constitution in 1992, article 22 (3) provides, and I beg to quote:

“With a view to achieving the full realisation of the rights referred to in clause (2) of this article –

(a) spouses shall have equal access to property jointly acquired during marriage;
(b) assets which are jointly acquired during marriage shall be distributed equitably between the spouses upon dissolution of the marriage.”

Mr Speaker, article 26(2) provides, and with your permission I quote:

“All customary practices which dehumanise or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person are prohibited.”

Mr Speaker, the Constitution prohibits it.

Mr Speaker, article 27(1) provides, and with your permission I quote:

“(1) Special care shall be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth; and during those periods, working mothers shall be accorded paid leave.

(2) Facilities shall be provided for the care of children below schoolgoing age to enable women, who have the traditional care for children, realise their full potential.

Mr Speaker, these are constitutional imperatives. What have we done thus far, so many years after the coming into being of this Constitution? And what is Parliament doing? What is Parliament required to do that we have not done, pursuant to the achievement of these constitutional imperatives?

Mr Speaker, I am done. I thank you for accommodating me.