

'DMB must nominate a woman as running mate'



Madam Irene Naa Torshie

Analysis by Richard Appiah

In a move that could potentially rewrite Ghana's political history, calls are intensifying within the New Patriotic Party (NPP) for its Flagbearer, Dr. Mahamud Awumia, to consider selecting a female running mate.

If this call is heeded, it could pave the way for Ghana to witness its first female vice-president, marking a significant milestone of 67 years after gaining independence.

Two prominent female figures have emerged as frontrunners, vying for the running mate slot: Madam Irene Naa Torshie Addo and Akosua Frema Osei-Opare.

As the selection process unfolds, amidst fervent lobbying, proponents argue that it is imperative for Ghana, as a beacon of democracy, to break the gender barrier at the highest levels of leadership.

Ghana's demographic landscape continues to showcase a notable gender skew, with provisional results from the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) revealing a significant surplus of females over males.

According to the latest data, Ghana boasts approximately 400,000 more females than males, with the female population constituting 50.7% of the total populace, while males make up 49.3%.

The census data indicates that there are approximately 15.6 million females, compared to 15.2 million males in the country, highlighting a consistent trend of a female majority within the population.

This gender disparity underscores the significant influence women hold in shaping the socio-political landscape of Ghana.

In the realm of politics, the selection of a female running mate by the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) has sparked discussions among political analysts and observers.

With the NDC's move to embrace gender diversity in its leadership structure, attention

has now turned to the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), with expectations mounting for them to follow suit.

Political watchers assert that the NPP's decision regarding its choice of a running mate holds considerable importance, particularly in light of the country's female majority population.

By selecting a female running mate, the NPP could potentially tap into a significant voter demographic and enhance its appeal to female voters across the nation.

The precedent set by the NDC underscores the growing recognition of the pivotal role women play in Ghana's political arena.

As political parties strive to broaden their support base and appeal to diverse segments of the population, addressing gender representation becomes increasingly crucial.

The NPP's response to the call for a female running mate is eagerly anticipated, with many viewing it as a strategic move not only to attract female voters but also to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality and inclusivity in governance.

Ghana currently lags behind in terms of female representation in executive positions, both nationally and continentally.

While several African countries have seen women ascend to the presidency or vice-presidency individually, none have simultaneously had both positions occupied by women.

In the case of presidents, notable examples include Joyce Banda in Malawi, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in Liberia, Ameenah Gurib-Fakim in Mauritius, Sahle-Work Zewde in Ethiopia and Elisabeth Domitien in the Central African Republic, among others.

Reflecting on the broader African context, women have made significant strides in political leadership across the continent.

Countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, Senegal, São Tomé and Príncipe, Mozambique, Mali, Namibia and Tanzania have all seen women hold presidential positions.

Additionally, numerous nations, including The Gambia, Tanzania, Zambia and Liberia have had female vice-presidents.

The call for a female running mate in Ghana is not merely about symbolism but is rooted in the broader agenda of women's empowerment.

Advocates argue that increasing women's representation in political leadership is vital for Africa's socioeconomic development, offering a pathway to combat poverty and disease.

While Ghana has seen women occupy significant positions in various professional fields, including education, sports, business, politics, fashion, and music, the political arena still presents challenges.

Despite these hurdles, the precedent set by other African nations underscores the potential for Ghana to embrace gender diversity in its highest echelons of power.

As the NPP weighs its decision, the selection of a female running mate could signal a progressive step towards gender equality and inclusive governance in Ghana, potentially reshaping the country's political landscape for generations to come.