

Gender

Engage women in peacebuilding — UNDP

By Mary Anane-Amponsah

SUPPORTING meaningful participation of women and girls in peacebuilding and conflict prevention is an effective strategy for lasting peace in West Africa, the Ghana Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Dr Angela Lusigi, has said.

She said research had shown that women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution advanced peace and the processes for peacebuilding.

Dr Lusigi was speaking at a panel discussion on the theme, "Women, Peace and Security: Supporting the meaningful participation of women and girls in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in West Africa".

Importance

The programme was to explore the role of women in promoting peace and security in West Africa and provide a platform for policymakers, academics, civil society and other stakeholders to share the lessons learnt from their experiences of conflict situations.

It was also for them to come up with recommendations to support the meaningful participation of women and girls in bringing about stability after disasters, preventing conflict and creating durable peace in conflict

situations.

The event was supported by the Australian High Commission, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS), and West Africa Network For Peacebuilding (WANEP).

Dr Lusigi said the International Peace Institute, for instance, had found out that women's participation increased the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years by 20 per cent and a peace agreement lasting 15 years by 35 per cent.

Studies, she added, had also shown that women's inclusion in peace processes increased the quality of the peace.

Dr Lusigi disclosed that in 2022, only 16 per cent of negotiators in peace processes globally were women.

"Out of the 18 peace agreements reached in 2022, only one was signed or witnessed by a representative of a women's organisation. With the rising number of unconstitutional changes in government and conflicts in our region, we simply cannot afford to leave women out of the peace and security sector," she stressed.

"There are many examples and lessons to be learned from courageous women leading peace movements."

The United Nations Secretary-General's recent report on the resolution of 1325 said nearly a quarter of a century after its adoption, women's

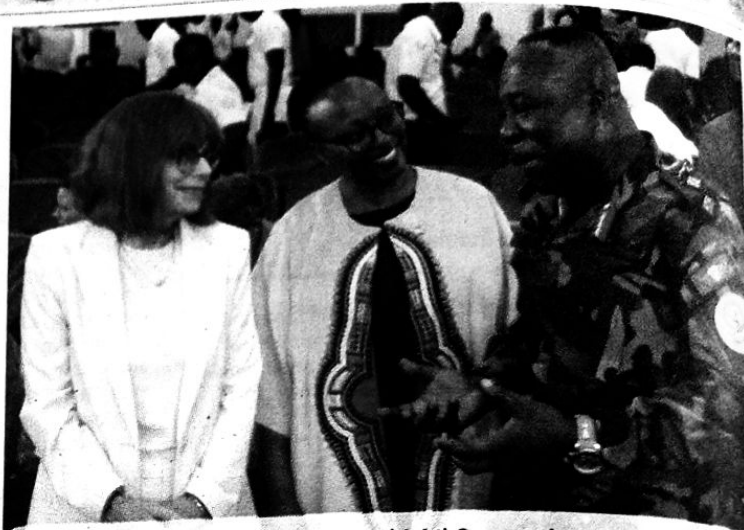
full, equal, and meaningful participation in building peace should have been the norm and not an aspiration or an afterthought.

She, therefore, outlined three key opportunities that the region could adopt to galvanise action and investment to ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation in building peace.

She said there was a need to increase the percentage of women in peacebuilding and mediation processes.

Dr Lusigi further said there must be means to amplify and share experiences across the continent through stronger collaborative networks across borders.

"There are many examples and



• Major General Richard Addo Gyane (right), Commandant, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, interacting with Dr Angela Lusigi (middle), Resident Representative in Ghana, United Nations Development Programme, and Berenice Owen-Jones (left), Australia High Commissioner to Ghana, during the Women Peace building and conflict in West Africa panel discussion. Picture: ESTHER ADJORKOR ADJEI

lessons to be learned from courageous women leading peace movements. For instance, the women of Liberia who were instrumental in ending the second civil war and institutionalising Women Situation Rooms to monitor elections", she added.

Panelists

The panel members at the discussion were the President of the Association of Women Leadership and Sustainable Development (AFLED), Mali, Mariam Diallo Drame; the regional analyst on Women, Peace and Security of WANEP, Nora Da Do Noviekou; the executive director of Forum for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA), Theodora Williams Anti, and the Ghana Armed Forces' Brigadier General Anita Asmah.

The Commandant of the KAIPTC, Major General Richard Addo Gyane, acknowledged the important role women played in peacebuilding, stating, "It is already a categorical fact that the resolution of conflicts is no longer the coveted preserve of men".