

# Gender

## Don't pay lip service to women issues

### • NETRIGHT to political parties

By Diana Mensah

**T**HE Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) has urged leaders of the various political parties to move beyond campaign promises and take concrete steps to address the needs of women, young people, persons with disabilities, and socially excluded groups.

The Head of Secretariat, NETRIGHT, Patricia Blankson Akakpo, made the call in an interview when NETRIGHT engaged some political parties on gender-transformative social policy making in the country ahead of the 2024 elections.

"We are tired of the empty promises. We are tired of them giving women of this country lip service, and all the things that they say are rhetoric," she said.

#### Prioritise AA Law

She, therefore, called on the next administration to prioritise the Affirmative Action Law, adding that "we are looking at social policies, we are looking at women's representation and participation. For instance, why not devote 30 per cent of all appointed

political positions to women, given their low representation in parliament and district assemblies?" she stressed.

#### Event

The forum was to discuss how the various political parties' policies would alleviate the adverse effects of austerity measures, particularly on vulnerable populations.

The forum, in collaboration with the Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Post-COVID-19 Africa (GETSPA) Project, aimed to spark critical discussions on how political leaders plan to reshape social policies to address longstanding gender inequalities in the country.

The event, supported by the Open Society-Africa, is part of NETRIGHT's two-year advocacy initiative dubbed: "Empowering Women for Change: Advocating Gender Transformative Social Policies through Feminist Mobilising in Ghana (WE TRANSFORM)".

The project seeks to drive systemic change by mobilising women across the country to demand policies that are more equitable.

The event brought together the representatives of five political parties, namely, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the National Democratic Congress

(NDC), the Progressive People's Party (PPP), the Convention People's Party (CPP) and the Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), among others.

The NPP was represented by a Deputy General Secretary, Dr Antoinette Tsiboe-Darko; the NDC was led by its Secretary for the 2024 Manifesto, Nana Oye Bampoe Addo; the GCPP was led by the National Women Organiser, Nora Saamaa Gyempeh; Eben Agbenya represented the CPP and Felix Emmanuel Mantey stood in for the PPP.

#### Comprehensive gender reforms

The former Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Nana Oye Bampoe Addo, in an address, said the NDC would offer a comprehensive and people-centred approach to governance, with clear policies designed to tackle economic challenges, reduce gender inequality, and empower marginalised groups.

"At the centre point of our ideology is inclusiveness. Our ideology speaks to people-oriented policies and proposals, ensuring a standard of living for every single person," she said.

She said the next NDC government would ensure that all Ghanaians have access to basic necessities such as jobs, health care and education, regardless of social status.

Dr Tsiboe-Darko, also said the NPP government was focused on creating an

enabling environment for private businesses, including women-owned enterprises.

Dr Tsiboe-Darko said the NPP government would support women entrepreneurs through initiatives such as the Women Empowerment Fund, which aims to provide capital, training and stability for women's businesses.

#### Economic programme

Ms Gyempeh also outlined the party's emergency economic programme, which would focus on providing micro-grants and small loans to support small-scale businesses owned by women.

"The GCPP will also focus on technology, helping young ladies and children to build their skills from an early age," she added.

Mr Agbenya also outlined the party's plans to support women financially, including minimising interest rates on loans from banks and training women in national security. He said the CPP would integrate gender issues into the school curriculum, provide sanitary packages for students, and improve maternal and child health services.

Mr Mantey on the other hand also said, "The party plans to introduce education police, who will ensure that every child is in school and receiving the education they are entitled to and address the alarming rates of teenage pregnancy in rural communities".