

Gender

Political parties urged to provide clearer implementation strategies for gender-related policies

By Rebecca Quaiicoe Duho

An analysis of gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) provisions in the manifestos of the two major political parties has pointed to the need for more detailed plans to be included on how the implementation of policies aimed at increasing women's participation in decision-making processes will be carried out.

This includes specifying the percentage of substantive ministerial positions allocated to women versus deputy roles, clear metrics for tracking progress as well as clear timeline for achieving specific targets.

The analysis was commissioned by the Network for Women's Right In Ghana (NETRIGHT) and sponsored by Star Ghana Foundation with support from the Foreign, Commonwealth Development Office under the UK High Commission on Gender and Social Inclusion Analysis of Political Party Manifestos in Ghana.

At a forum in Accra last Thursday to disseminate the findings, stakeholders commended both the ruling NDC and the opposition NPP for targeting gender-specific projects in their various manifestoes.

The stakeholders present included the Affirmative Action Law Coalition, the Ghana Federation for Persons with Disability, the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, Feminist Africa, Centre for Gender Studies (University of Ghana), Ghana Integrity Initiative, Institute for Democratic Governance, Action Aid Ghana, Amnesty International and Imani Ghana.

Also present were political parties including the Movement for Change and Ghana Union Movement.

Recommendations

However, it recommended that going forward, both the NDC and NPP should provide clearer implementation strategies for gender-related policies, particularly regarding the Affirmative Action Law and women's representation in leadership roles.

A Development Practitioner and Consultant, Rachel Gyabaah, who did the analysis said the New Patriotic Party (NPP) positioned its 2024 manifesto as a comprehensive blueprint aimed at addressing various socio-economic challenges in the country, with particular attention to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), saying the manifesto outlines several initiatives that reflect the party's commitment to enhancing the status and empowerment of women, as well as marginalised groups within the society.

Although many of the GESI-applicable policies in the 2024 manifesto of the NPP are vaguely stated, and mostly without detailed information such as the anticipated size of the target beneficiaries, cost or source of funding, some few more policies proposals are conspicuously salient in the manifesto.

On the National Democratic Congress (NDC) manifesto, she said it articulated a robust vision for GESI as it outlined a series of initiatives aimed at addressing the systemic inequalities faced by women, the youth and marginalised groups, reflecting the party's commitment to inclusive governance and social equity.

Also, she said the manifesto was a well-structured document, which

makes provisions for many interventions or policies that are fundamentally instrumental to achieving gender equality and social inclusion.

Focusing more on the NDC's Manifesto as the ruling government in her recommendations, she said while the establishment of the Women's Development Bank was a positive step as stated in the NDC's manifesto, additional support mechanisms were necessary to ensure that women entrepreneurs could access resources effectively.

She also called on the government to collaborate with civil society organisations (CSOs) that focused on gender equality and social inclusion to enhance community engagement and grassroots support for GESI initiatives.

She also, among others, called for a focus on intersectionality, saying there was the need to recognise and address the intersectional nature of discrimination that affected women differently based on their socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability and other factors.

She lauded the government on its commitment to implement the Affirmative Action Law and also set up a

Gender Equity Committee tasked with ensuring accountability in gender-related initiatives and also oversee the implementation of policies aimed at achieving a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women in political appointments, thus promoting gender parity in governance.

Equal participation

The Portfolio Manager, Rights to Services, Star Ghana Foundation, Raymond Danso, said the foundation was focused on creating spaces for citizen groups to engage with political

parties and therefore commended NETRIGHT for the manifesto analysis.

He said although the country had made gains in democracy, there were still gaps in achieving gender equality saying the analysis would help bring out flaws in equal participation.

Mr Danso therefore said Star Ghana was firmly of the

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belief that the forum had the ability to catapult change.

The Head of Secretariat, NETRIGHT, Patricia Blankson Akakpo, in a welcome address, said over the years, political parties had taken the country for granted, especially women's participation and therefore the need to scrutinise the two major political parties' manifesto and to analyse their commitments for gender equality.

She said women groups in the country would hold the NDC accountable for its gender-centred promises in the manifesto as well as ensure that those that were necessary but have not been captured are also pointed out to them for implementation.

The Facilitator for the forum, Bernice Sam, a member of NETRIGHT, said the study was to analyse the extent to which political party manifestos integrate gender equality, with a focus on their commitment to addressing key issues such as women's economic empowerment, participation in decision-making, social protection and gender-based violence.



• Rachel Gyabaah (4th from left), Development Practitioner and Consultant; Raymond Danso (3rd from left), Portfolio Manager, Rights to Services, Star Ghana Foundation, and Patricia Blankson Akakpo (5th from left), Head of Secretariat, NETRIGHT, with other participants in the forum

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