



NETRIGHT bemoans low women participation in political decision making

BY AGNES OPOKU SARPONG

WOMEN in Ghana continue to face major challenges in political participation despite election progress made so far, the national consultative forum held in Accra has revealed.

The forum organised by NETRIGHT in partnership with STAR-Ghana Foundation was to review the 2024 elections and push for gender-responsive governance and inclusive democracy.

It brought together stakeholders from the political parties, civil society groups, youth organisations, the media, and development partners.

The Programme Manager at NETRIGHT, Ms Cynthia Sunu, noted that while Ghana has a strong reputation for holding peaceful elections, the reality of women's representation in governance remains worrying.

According to her the election also marked a historic moment with the swearing-in of Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang as Ghana's first female Vice Presi-



• Participants during the meeting Photo: Seth Osabukle

dent.

Ms Sunu however, said the achievement, while significant, does not reflect a wider shift in women's political inclusion, stressing that "Out of 276 parliamentary seats, only 39 are held by women, representing just 14.1 per cent."

She also added that ministerial and top leadership positions were

still heavily male-dominated despite the passage of the Affirmative Action Act, 2024 (Act 1121), which was applied for the first time in this election.

In addition, Ms Sunu pointed to long-standing barriers such as socio-cultural norms, limited political financing for women, and gender bias within political parties

as some of the reasons for this poor representation.

Beyond gender gaps, she mentioned voter suppression, misinformation, and the opaque nature of political party financing.

Ms Sunu stressed the need for reforms that promote accountability, transparency, and inclusion in both electoral and governance

systems.

She also called for increased civic education, financial support for female candidates, and the active inclusion of young people and excluded groups in political leadership.

A representative from STAR-Ghana Foundation, Ms Feruza Salisu, said the post-election period provides an opportunity to evaluate what worked, what did not work and what must be improved before the next elections.

She called on citizens and civil society to keep pushing elected leaders to deliver on their campaign promises and uphold democratic values.

Ms Salisu said an inclusive democracy was not only about elections but also about making sure all citizens regardless of gender or background had a voice in how the country was run.

The event offered a platform for open dialogue, allowing participants to reflect on the election process, identify gaps, and make recommendations for reforms.

Participants emphasised the need for stronger political will to implement policies that ensure fair representation.