

# Judicial Service attains gender equity in appointments

By Augustina Tawiah

**T**HE Judicial Service has been commended for attaining gender equity in the appointment of justices and magistrates in the country.

From the Superior Courts to the district courts, it has been revealed that out of a total of 443 justices and magistrates at the close of 2024, 223 were males, representing 50.3 per cent, while 220 were females, representing 49.7 per cent.

That makes the service the first public institution to have attained the 30 per cent gender equity that institutions are supposed to attain by 2026 as proscribed in the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (ACT 1121).

The Convenor of the Affirmative Action Law Coalition, Sheila Minkah-Premo, who disclosed this at a workshop on the Act organised for civil society organisations (CSOs), trade unions and

the media, said a total of 14 justices appointed to the Supreme Court comprised 10 males and four females while the Court of Appeal had 19 males and 13 females, making a total of 32 justices.

The High Court, she said, had 68 male and 55 female justices while the Circuit Courts had 47 male justices and 54 female justices, making a total of 101 justices.

On the other hand, professional magistrates at the District Courts constitute 34 males and 68 females, while career magistrates are made up of 45 males and 26 females.

Ms Minkah-Premo said the gender equity success of the Judiciary meant that it was possible for institutions to attain gender parity if they worked towards that goal.

## Workshop

Parliament, on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, passed the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (ACT 1121) and received a presidential assent on September 11,

2024. This Act, among other considerations, seeks to promote a progressive increase in the active participation of women in public life from a minimum of 30 per cent to an equality of 50 per cent by 2030, in line with Sustainable Development Goal Five (SDG 5).

Since the implementation of the Act has become a national priority, the Affirmative Action Law Coalition, with support from ABANTU for Development and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), is strengthening the capacities of key actors to understand the provisions, implications and opportunities that the Act presents.

The training workshop, therefore, aimed at empowering participants with the requisite knowledge, skills and tools to effectively report on and advocate the implementation of the Act while enhancing a nationwide understanding of the Act across all levels.

## Gender Equity Committee

Ms Minkah-Premo said although she

suspected the Attorney-General's Office had also met the 30 per cent gender equity per the number of females currently working there, she was yet to establish that fact.

She urged the Gender Equity Committee to work towards getting baseline information for the various institutions to enable them to measure how far they had reached by the data in the targets.

She said that before the judiciary arrived at its current success, it did a situation analysis, which revealed that the number of women was low when it came to justices.

She said when the report was presented to the Judicial Service in 2011, it consciously started making efforts to get more women onto the bench, and that strategy worked.

"So it shows that if a particular institution really wants to be more gender conscious, it has to do a little study, possibly a situation analysis, and then come up with a policy in terms of what steps should be taken to make sure that they address the gender discrimination in the workplace," she advised.

During an earlier training workshop, Ms Minkah-Premo said of the current 19 Cabinet members, two were women, representing 10.5 per cent.

She was particularly impressed with the fact that the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection was now a Cabinet minister.

For the Council of State, she said only eight out of the 31 members were females, adding that it had only one elected female representative out of the 16 regions, while seven women were appointed by the President out of his 15 appointees to the council.

She commended the landmark appointments of females as heads of the Ghana National Fire Service and the Prisons Service, as well as chief executive officers and managing directors.

In a welcome address, Moyosola Afutu from the FES expressed hope that participants would be able to pass on the knowledge they had gained from the training to others to ensure the successful implementation of the Act.



• Sheila Minkah-Premo (2nd from right on the front row) with participants and facilitators at the training workshop