

AU, KAIPTC hold training for women, youth in election observation

By Daniel Kenu

THE African Union (AU), in collaboration with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), has held a training course for women and youth across Africa in election observation and democracy.

The three-day course formed part of AU's commitment to inclusive democracy and credible electoral processes in Africa and its recognition of the importance of enhancing the capacity of women and youth to strengthen their role in democracy and elections.

The programme, which was also supported by the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), was aimed at "building capacity of women and youth in short-term election observation; increasing the pool of women and youth short-term election observers in the AU database ready for deployment in AU Election Observer Missions and improving women and youth's understanding of elections and electoral operations in Africa".

Promoting democratic integrity

In his address at the closing ceremony, the acting Commandant of KAIPTC, Air Commodore David Anetey Akrong, underscored the importance of promoting

democratic integrity and resilience, emphasising that it was a responsibility which must not be left to only political leaders.

"Young men and women have a responsibility not only as voters, but also as agents of change who seek to promote safety and prosperity through their impartial participation in electoral processes," he said.

The Commandant urged the participant to use the knowledge obtained from the training to bring transformation as an impartial election observer to promote peace, transparency and democracy in Africa.

Air Commodore Akrong emphasised that while many countries such as Rwanda, Liberia,

Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Ghana, among others, had adopted affirmative action legislations as a way of promoting gender and women equality and participation in democratic processes, same could not be argued about the opportunities that were provided for the youth and women to participate in political leadership and electoral affairs.

Catalysts for change

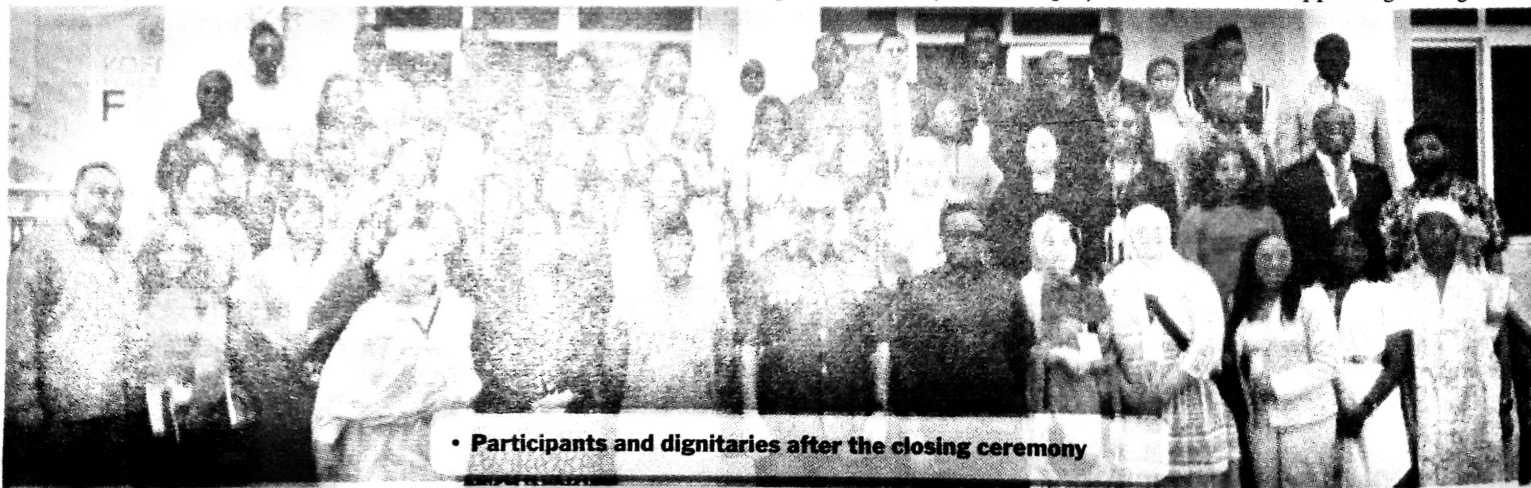
For his part, the Commissioner of the African Union Commission on Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Bankole Adeoye, said the AU envisioned the participants as catalysts for

change.

"We see you, the youth, from all parts of our continent as the dynamic force that we need to energise and re-energise democracy," he said.

The AU Commissioner emphasised the importance of empowering youth to drive democratic change in Africa, indicating the need for decisive and definitive action to capacitate young people, women and men to take forward the agenda of democracy.

Mr Adeoye stressed that the future of democracy in Africa depends on the active participation of young people, adding that women must lead this change, while men also play a crucial role in supporting this agenda.



• Participants and dignitaries after the closing ceremony