

Gender

Allocate adequate resources to improve social development — NETRIGHT

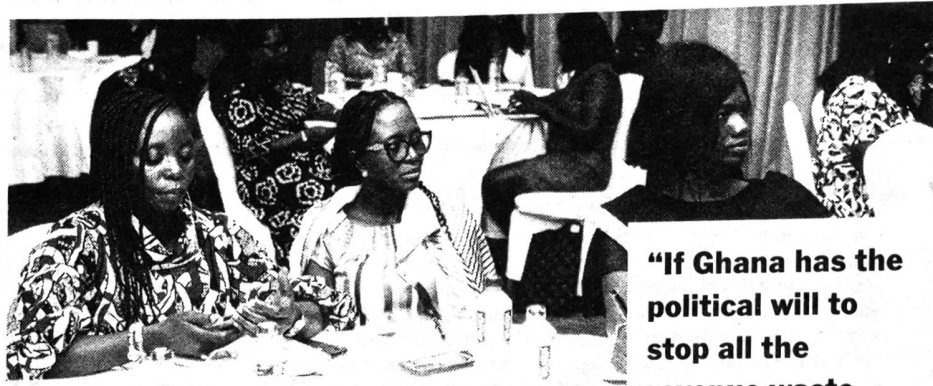
By Juliet Akyaa Safo

A STUDY by the Network for Women's Rights Initiative (NETRIGHT) on illicit financial flows, public debt and gender equality has shown significant disparities in expenditure between various ministries.

Between 2018 and 2025, the study revealed that the country's total interest payments were 37 times the cumulative expenditure allocated to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP).

The Head of Secretariat of NETRIGHT, Patricia Blankson Akapko, who made this known, said similarly, the country's total debt servicing obligations amounted to approximately 53 times the expenditure of the MoGCSP.

"A recent study by NETRIGHT on illicit financial flows, public debt, public financing, public services and gender equality shows that between 2018 and 2025, Ghana's total interest payments were equivalent to approximately 37 times the cumulative expenditure allocated to the MoGCSP, two times that of the



Some participants of the forum.
Picture: ELVIS NII NOI DOWUONA

Ministry of Education, and 28 times that of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

"Similarly, over the same period, total debt servicing obligations amounted to approximately 53 times the expenditure of the Ministry of Gender, three times that of the Ministry of Education and 39 times that of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture," she added.

To her, if money spent on debt servicing and interest payments was channelled to gender-responsive and social inclusion development, the country would be on the right path to leaving no one behind. "If Ghana has the political

will to stop all the revenue waste, corruption as part of effort to increase revenue mobilisation, then there will be no need for borrowing," she added.

Mrs Akapko was speaking during a Policy Conference on Gender and Social Development organised by NETRIGHT in collaboration with Open Society Foundations in Accra.

The conference was aimed at addressing gender inequalities, social exclusion and the need for intentional efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Gender target

Mrs Akapko said the MoGCSP has reported that 99.5 per cent

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of its annual budget was consumed by Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and the school feeding programme leaving minimal resources for broader gender and social development needs.

She called for an urgent need to address social inclusion with

commitment to funds investment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030.

The Convenor of NETRIGHT, Professor Akosua Darkwah, called for the need to channel resources towards addressing basic needs such as clean water, criticising the narrow focus on infrastructure like skyscrapers and roads.

She also suggested that the country must explore alternative models to improve social conditions.

Social development

In a presentation on gender and social development in Ghana, a Social Policy Analyst and Development Management Consultant, Dr Esther Offei-Aboagye, said 24 per cent, that is about seven million people, were multidimensionally poor in 2021.

Also, at least one in ten women reported physical or sexual violence annually, with social protection systems existing but inadequate.

She added that women spend 15.5 per cent of their time on unpaid care, limiting economic and political participation.

She indicated that although new frameworks such as the Affirmative Action Gender Equity Act and National Social Protection Act (Act 1148) provided strong foundations, awareness, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement were weak, even among civil society.