

Gender

Appoint more women to head various district assemblies

• NETRIGHT to President

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THE Network for Women's Right in Ghana (NETRIGHT) is calling for more women to be given the opportunity to occupy the position of chief executives for the various Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to promote gender equality at the local level. For this reason, NETRIGHT has made a passionate appeal to the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-

Addo, to appoint at least 60 per cent of women as government appointees out of the government's 30 per cent appointees to district assemblies and also give a critical number of women the opportunity to head the various assemblies.

Addressing a press conference last Tuesday, the Head of the Secretariat, Patricia Blankson Akakpo, said the under-representation of women in decision-making positions in the country continued to remain a matter of grave concern especially at the local level.

The press conference was organised by NETRIGHT in partnership with

Alliance for Women in Media Africa, National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG), the Affirmative Action Bill Coalition (AABC) and the Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC).

Evidence

However, she noted that the trend over time, provided compelling evidence that a yawning gap still existed.

"Women's representation on district assemblies has never passed 11 per cent. This falls far below the minimum 30 per cent recommended by the United Nations, in a system that is intended to bring the government to the doorstep of the people," she added.

Ms Akakpo stated that the statistics recorded during the recently held local government elections 2023 was ample testament of the challenge of under-representation.

She said the administrative directive attached to the 30 per cent government appointee in the district assembly had never attracted the seriousness required, adding that with the recent parliamentary primaries held, the two main political parties, namely the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), exposed the challenge of under-representation of women in decision-making roles.

Both parties, she said, saw a disproportionate low number of women securing nominations for parliamentary seats with only a

fraction of female candidates compared to their male counterparts.

Affirmative bill

She said the group believed that in the spirit of fair and equal representation, their call to the President if heeded would balance the prevailing under-representation and also ensure that gender considerations were systematically taken into account in decision-making for sustainable development.

The convener of the AABC, Sheila Minkah-Premo, said the issue of under-representation could have been addressed if the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Bill had been passed in 2023 and implemented. She therefore called on parliament to pass the bill to address the disparity.

The General Secretary of NALAG, Kokro Amankwah, said district assembly elections over the years had seen a reduction in the election of women as assembly members.

Last year's election, she said, was one of the toughest for women aspirants as the elections had been divided into political lines making it difficult for women to compete.

Again, he said the monetisation of elections in the country was a key factor affecting the performance of women in the district assembly elections and therefore appealed for women to be given their due in politics and leadership position as many women had a lot to offer to help develop the country.



• Kokro Amankwah (middle), General Secretary, NALAG, explaining a point to Sheila Minka-Premo (left), Convener of the Affirmative Action Bill Coalition, and Patricia Blankson Akakpo (right), NETRIGHT, during the press conference. Picture: EDNA SALVO-KOTYE