

# **GHANA RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMME (G-RAP)**

## **2010 NATIONAL GENDER FORUM**

**ON**

***Civic Engagement for Gender Equality and Good Governance in Ghana:  
Sharing Experiences, Contesting Spaces, Renewing Commitments***



**16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010,  
Airport West Hotel, Accra**

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## SECTION ONE

### 1 Introduction

#### Background

Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP), is a donor funded initiative that works to complement the national development agenda in line with the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) by enhancing gender sensitivity in its support for sustainable and equitable development. As part of its contribution to effective pro-poor programming, G-RAP recognizes the critical role of social equity and the place of gender in promoting good governance and poverty reduction. It is against this background that G-RAP as a key facilitator to such efforts sought to create a platform to promote the sharing of gains and challenges in gender equality even as commitments are renewed, new agenda are set and strategies are revised for the years ahead. Equally important is to document experiences for mass dissemination and historical purposes, draw up strategies to tackle remaining unexplored spaces and unyielding challenges that need serious attention in the years/decades ahead.

#### Rationale for the Gender Forum

Though women in Ghana play central roles in the economic development of the nation, they have much more limited access to resources than their male counterparts. Societal attitudes, customary practices and beliefs, traditional roles of women, gender relations within the family, limited access of women to education and training as well as inadequate representation of women on decision making bodies, among other things, operate together to place them in a disadvantaged position.

Available statistics indicate that women form over 50% of the population however their share of political and public office appointments is less than adequate. There continues to be poor female representation and voice in private and public life despite the fact that good and inclusive governance has gained credence in development, cooperation and planning as a way of ensuring that processes and outcomes are effective and yielding expected results. This is also against the backdrop of the ongoing discourse on aid effectiveness and sustainable development which makes it incumbent on government and development practitioners to institute measures that promote the effective, inclusive and democratic delivery of development interventions.

There is no doubt though that the past decade of development reforms has made significant impact on gender equality especially with regard to legal, policy and programming reforms and expanded interventions in social policy and services thus enabling for gender equality to work. Successive Ghanaian governments, civil society and donors have increasingly responded to gender equity commitments through targeted programming, policy reforms and institution building. The women's lobby has become an important political consideration and gender equality and women's rights activism has probably enjoyed the most enabling period in its history however a lot more remained to be done if the women who form a critical mass of the population have to be accorded their right status in the society.



### **Forum objectives**

The forum was therefore necessary:

1. To assess current policy making trends
2. To create a platform for gender experts and development practitioners to engage with policy makers, donor partners, Civil Society Organizations, to share gender experiences on policy.
3. To compile, publish and widely disseminate research papers, which would be the focus of the Forum.
4. To engender and renew public interest and the discourse on gender equality and the need for policy reform and government commitment to existing policies in the sector
5. To create the opportunity for academia and practitioners to network to determine the direction of Ghana's gender equality agenda

### **Thematic areas**

To achieve set objectives, G-RAP put in a public call for interested persons including civil society, state actors, donor partners and gender experts to contribute papers that address one or more aspects of the thematic areas. Ahead of the Forum, abstracts were received and reviewed by the Editorial Consultant Dr. Agnes Atta Apusigah, of the University of Development Studies, Wa Campus. The full papers would be prepared for publication after the Forum. The thematic areas were as follows:

1. **Historical, political and contextual analysis of gender, civic engagement and good governance:** Should chart, contest and situate discourses, politics and/or policy frameworks, directions and trends. May include analysis of options, alternatives, implications and shaping globally and locally.

2. **Institutionalized programmatic responses to gender equality commitments and concerns in good governance through citizen engagement:** Should address practical responses and provide critical perspectives on policies, programmes and projects intended to address gender equality and women's rights concerns in good governance. May include responses deriving from civil society- state or donor.
3. **Mobilizing and networking on gender equality for good governance at institutional, organizational and community levels:** May include partnerships and may contest or critique successes, effects, achievements
4. **Practical Experiences, workable strategies and novel actions and alternatives by gender equality and women's rights organizations:** May include case studies and specific actions such as coalition building, networking such as Women's Manifesto or the Women's Manifesto Coalition, Sisters Keepers, Social Watch, Women's Caucuses, Gender Budgeting, Daily Monitoring of CEDAW.

### **Forum and programme venue**

The programme was designed to afford presenters and participants the opportunity to address the set objectives. The presentations took the form of PowerPoint presentations. Space was created for plenary discussions, contributions, questions and answers. There was a forum chairperson for the entire programme however each session had experienced moderators who steered affairs to ensure that the set objectives were met. (See *Appendix A* for the detailed programme). The venue for the forum was the Airport West Hotel and the dates were 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

### **Participation**

The Forum attracted a high level of participation with participants drawn from all sectors of national life and from areas outside the national capital. They included the academia, policy makers, development partners, gender activists and the media. In all, there were about 146 participants, including the media and GRAP staff. (See *Appendix B* for the details of the participants)



## SECTION TWO

### 2 Forum Day One

#### Opening

In her introductory remarks, **Ms. Lawrencía Adams**, Team Leader of the Programme Management Team of G-RAP noted that G-RAP has been involved in key projects particularly those that complement national efforts towards poverty reduction and are based on the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) document. In this respect, G-RAP had since 2005 extended support to 35 organizations across the country. She noted that in all this, gender mainstreaming has been the guiding principle as the effective tool for poverty reduction and the achievement of the national development agenda. Ms. Adams was hopeful that the forum would afford participants the opportunity to analyse how far the advocacy on gender mainstreaming had travelled in Ghana and examine the effectiveness of the advocacy tools being used for gender mainstreaming while bearing in mind the vulnerable and the marginalised. Ms. Adams introduced the Forum Chairperson, Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo, a renowned writer, consultant on gender and a lecturer.

**Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo** in her acceptance statement set the tone for the meeting by reminding participants of some questions people still ask when they hear any talk about gender equality adding that on the gender front there is an overzealous escapism that manifests itself in the use of language which can be likened to those used for issues like “post colonialism, post gender, post racialism”. She noted that no matter what language used issues around the gender inequality discourse still remained not only in Ghana but all over Africa. Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo said the problem persist because, like all development advocacy, literature and the arts as tools for advocacy had been neglected. She warned activists to be wary of cynics in the debate on gender to ensure that sight is not lost over the incredible issues involved in the gender debate in Ghana.

She concluded her comments with a “flash” or short story that presented the case of a woman called Hawa who was caught up in a refugee camp and had to feed her dying children from food aid which was not suited for cooking in the form it was presented.

**Mr. Garret Pratt**, CIDA Senior Development Officer for Cooperation commended the commitment of G-RAP towards gender and poverty reduction in Ghana. He said the Forum’s objectives attest to the fact that development partners supporting G-RAP have made the right choice. He was impressed with work done so far by Ghanaian gender advocates which he described as really innovative work that has resulted in significant progress towards gender equality. However, what remains to be seen is the political decision towards gender. Mr. Pratt tasked all people present to see the gender agenda as a collective responsibility and not only for women activists and the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs. What was important to him was the need for questions to be raised about some aspect of approaches to gender equality. These included alternative ways of tackling the issues at stake, accountability and what could be done differently to strengthen advocacy.

**Dr. Agnes Atta Apusigah** presented the conceptual issues for the forum. She noted that the background issues that informed the theme and papers to be presented included the road that gender equality advocacy and gender sensitive policy formulation had travelled so far amidst

the plethora of studies that show that there was still a lot more work to be done. She noted the highs and lows of the gender movement as well as its relationships with successive governments and the connection between gender equality and good governance; instances where there had been what she described as “a wait and see policy” and “I hit you and civil society repression”; instances of co-optation, patronage, pro active engagement, confrontational engagement, parallel engagement and instances of selective and full endorsement.

Dr. Apusigah flagged a number of questions which she believed must engage the minds of all participants during the two day Forum;

1. The extent to which gender advocates have been performing
2. Is civil action ending up at the same mainstream?
3. What is being done upstream to compliment the level of work going on downstream to be able to meet commitments to gender equality?
4. If there is a call for a shift in the way things were done what could be done differently so that government and civil society organizations could both see each other as important and partners in the achievement of gender equality?
5. The extent to which civil society had reached out to make gender equality a visible part of every person’s daily life
6. The time to intensify efforts around the outcomes more seriously in terms of gender equality

**Honourable Mrs. Juliana Azumah Mensah**, Minister of Women and Children’s Affairs, performed the opening ceremony by stating some of the policy initiatives geared towards the promotion of gender equality in Ghana. She also stated the role being played her ministry as the intermediary and implementing agency between government and the society. Some government policy initiatives in response to the issues around gender have been the introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting in 2009 and the revival of the defunct Women in Local Government Fund to support women who would contest the September 2010 District Assembly Elections. Mrs. Azumah Mensah also indicated that her ministry had also initiated strategies to address the general and social concerns of the vulnerable, deprived and disadvantaged in the society with special emphasis on women and children. This included a review of the ministry’s structure, activities, formulation of a definite Gender Policy and a review of the Affirmative Action Policy. Another of the strategies was the involvement of men in the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The Minister was hopeful that government’s commitment and the collaboration with key players in the gender advocacy arena would give the needed impetus to the achievement of set goals.

**The Forum Chairperson, Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo**, on behalf of G-RAP expressed gratitude to Hon. Juliana Azumah Mensah for finding time to address the opening session of the Gender Forum. She recounted the events that surrounded the 2008 general elections when

and how the whole world congratulated Ghana for coming out as one nation. However, joys of Ghanaian women were short lived after the dust had settled and it became clear that instead of getting more women into Parliament, the earlier number of 25 women Parliamentarians was reduced to 20 and later this number through the forces of nature further came down to 19, Prof. Ata Aidoo on behalf of the participants congratulated the Minister for being one of the few women who campaigned and got elected into the legislature and appealed to her to work to ensure that her tenure as the Minister of Women And Children's Affairs would mark the most productive period in the history of Ghana and government's support for the gender issues.

## **Paper Presentations**

### **Session One: Theme 1- Historical, political and contextual analysis of gender, civic engagement and good governance**

The first session began with Prof. Elizabeth Ardayfio-Schandorf of the Commonwealth Geographical Bureau, West Africa Representative, as the Moderator. In a brief comment, she noted that contrary to what some people say, gender mainstreaming is not about women but about human resource development, national development, and progress. She conceded that the gender movement made some successes since the Beijing Conference but these had not reflected in local and national governance structures in the country.

While inviting the three speakers to make their presentations, Prof. Ardayfio-Schandorf tasked participants to bear in mind the question of whether gender mainstreaming had delivered on its promises; if it has not should the strategies be changed and what should be done to integrate gender into governance?. A summary of the presentations are as follows:

#### **Paper 1 - 'Gender and Climate Change Issues: The challenge for Policy advocacy in Ghana' by Dr. Rose Mensah-Kutin, Regional Director, ABANTU for Development, West Africa**

Dr. Rose Mensah-Kutin started her presentation by arguing that assumptions that linking climate change to gender is a major challenge and a hard thing for women to grasp as flawed. She said the mere fact that women groups at the 2010 CSW challenged the UN Secretary General for appointing an all-men committee to manage the fund on climate change is enough indication how far women have come in articulating issues that have implications for their lives. She noted the various UN Instruments and Conventions on climate change as well as reflections and thoughts around the subject with specific reference to the Kyoto Protocol and the UNFCCC and said that these do not have any specific language on gender. However, Human Rights Instruments are specific in their call on governments to uphold the principles of equality and protection against discrimination.

Citing the UN Conference on Environment and Development Agenda 21 (1992), World Conference on Human Rights (1992), Beijing Platform for Action (1995), CEDAW (1997), Millennium Declaration (2000), CSW Sessions (52<sup>nd</sup> Session, 2008), World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD, 2002). Johannesburg and others including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights among others, Dr. Mensah-Kutin noted that though not legally binding by themselves they are highly influential

and if combined makes it obligatory on states to ensure that laws on climate change fully take into account the rights of women.

Touching on the key issues at the core of climate change, she contended that over two centuries of industrialization by the developed nations has contributed to climate effect and its adverse effects on developing countries which are the worse affected. It has resulted in global warming, reduced crop yields, increased water stress and high costs in adapting to high sea level rise. Dr. Mensah-Kutin said though some view the issues as being neutral, the worst effects of Climate Change is felt among poor countries, communities and particularly among poor women and men. Thus the climate change discourse is another discourse about unequal power relations which can have major effect on women in society.

She was of the view that the women must be involved at all levels of decision and policy making on issues of climate change while demanding accountability from government on any mitigating funds made available. Women, she said, would have to engage the media and other civil society actors in the push for a gender responsive climate change policies at the national level.

**Paper 2 - 'Gender Equality, Contesting Media Spaces: Gender coverage in the Ghanaian Media'** by Dr. Messan Mawugbe, Department of Mass Communication Studies, Central University College, Accra.

This was a study conducted by Dr. Mawugbe to measure the level of civic engagement of news editors in the promotion of gender equality for good governance in Ghana and to measure the extent the Ghanaian media have made gender as an '*unseen voice*' in relation to other voices in its news coverage. The study was also aimed at assessing how the media as an institution has been responding to gender equality commitments through the promotion of citizen engagements, and the provision of equal spaces.

The study unit was based on editorials published by selected media for the period between 2005 and 2009. This was appraised against a set of news editorial categories such as *Gender* otherwise known as: (Women; Children, Youth; Men). News stories that did not fall within these categories such as Politics, Health, Education, Social, Agric, ICT and Telecommunication, Social Conflicts, Human Interest, Banking, Insurance, Mining, Oil & Gas, Tourism, were grouped under the category *Other*. According to Dr. Mawugbe, news editorials were selected as the appropriate unit since they constitute media houses' in-house editorial team observations and policies that have the potential to set Political, Cultural and Social Agenda for the Country.

The research was predicated on two questions:

1. Would news editors marginalize and under represent gender in their editorial coverage?
2. Would news editors give more prominence to other issues (non – gender) than issues on gender?

The findings, he said, revealed a consistent trend of 7 % Editorial focus on gender in 2006, 2007 and in 2008. This dropped to 4% in 2009 an indication of dwindling interest and commitment of Editors to Gender issues. He said on the whole only a total of 1.6% editorial

issues on women were recorded from the period 2005 to 2009 compared to 94% editorials devoted to other issues. This, Dr. Mawugbe said, is an indication of the fact that “Institutionalized programmatic responses to gender equality commitments and concerns in good governance through citizen engagement” have not been effective.

He recommended, among other things, a re-engagement of the media by Gender activists and civic society, the media being given a central role by policy makers, and civil society actors in the promotion of women equalities in democratic engagement. He also called on gender activists to employ consistent and scientific media monitoring as part of their operations and to enable them measure the level of media engagements and commitments to women/gender equality parameters.

Dr. Mawugbe suggested that any future study in this regard could also investigate the news content and frames to measure the role of women in democratic processes and expand the current study beyond the selected medium to include the electronic media as well as investigate the news content and frames to measure the role of women in democratic processes.

He noted that media commitment to women’s issues is at a critical level which demands an immediate attention from policy makers, civil society and media groups. He tasked Gender advocacy groups to initiate effective and committed relationship with the media for the promotion of Gender equality.

**Paper 3 - ‘Interrogating Affirmative Action as a Strategy for increasing women’s participation in politics: The Rhetoric and the reality’** by Ms. Bernice Sam, National Programme Coordinator, WiLDAF Ghana.

Ms. Bernice Sam, while noting that Affirmative Action was not new to Ghana, took participants back to the period immediately after independence when then President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah introduced Affirmative Action to boost women participation in politics. She said since 2001, any time the issue of Affirmative Action was raised as a means of increasing women’s participation in politics it had been met with a lot of debate questions and arguments that there are no restrictions to women’s participation in politics.

Ms Sam was not happy that 53 years after independence, Ghana could only boast of 19 women in a legislature of 230 members. The situation is more worrying when viewed against the fact that the last Parliament had 25 women and instead of the number improving the story was different. She also touched on the appointments to ministerial, local governance and other decision making positions which have yet not met President Mill’s promised percentage of female appointees.

According to Ms. Sam, the time is ripe for Affirmative Action legislation as had been introduced by some African countries including Rwanda where all is moving on well for women in politics. She noted that though it is argued that some political parties in Ghana field a high percentage of women during elections these are the weaker parties. She wondered if in the absence of Affirmative Action the adoption of proportional representation would not be a better option compared to the ‘winner takes all’ currently being practiced in an electoral system with the odds weighing heavily against women.

Ms. Sam was worried over the positive comments and declarations by government about its commitment to Affirmative Action which however do not seem to be yielding any result beyond the statements. She said unless factors that affect the low level of women participation in politics and on the floor of Parliament are removed the nation would not make any headway in increasing the number of women currently in politics. She cited in particular a campaign strategy that was adopted at Nabdam in the Upper East Region where the message to the electorate was that “if you vote for women you will face the wrath of the Gods.” These fear tactics are but one of the numerous things employed to keep women out of politics.

She suggested that the money factor as the basis for getting elected should be taken out of politics if we want to get women in there. She also stressed the need to interrogate why women do not vote for the women who contest in the elections as well as send a clear message to the political parties that women do not want to be consigned to the women’s wing forever.

Ms. Sam concluded by suggesting that the best way to make any headway was for women’s right advocates to rally together to make an input into the constitutional review for the case of Affirmative Action to be made part of the constitution.



## **Discussions**

The Chairperson, Prof. Ardayfio–Schandorf set the ball rolling with comments on the Ugandan Affirmative Action policy which she described as “an active one” that runs through the educational system as well as local governance through to national politics. She said what is essential for any Affirmative Action Policy to be successful is commitment on the part of government. She wondered why despite Government’s numerous declarations for affirmative action nothing was being done. She warned about the looming danger of rhetoric taken over tangible results and action on gender mainstreaming.

Prof. Ardayfio-Schandorf wanted to know what had happened to the Women's Manifesto and what was being done with it 10 years after it was adopted. She noted that while women have a lot more to do, for the gender advocacy to make the needed impact there was the need for men to be involved at all levels.

The first contributor noted that for an Affirmative Action Policy to work it must be written into the Constitution as was done by the Ugandans. This contributor said she had been in politics lately and noted that for every political position available there are 10 men as against one woman ready to go for it. Politics, she added, had been a male domain for so long that they would not give in so easily unless women got a policy to back the professed commitments by the politicians. She informed the meeting that at a recent lecture on the constitutional review she was surprised to discover that out of 38 proposals received by the committee there was nothing on gender. She suggested that the gender movement should take advantage of the constitutional review to get deliberate gender policies into the laws of the land and exhorted gender advocates to seize the opportunity. It was generally agreed that if gender is worked into the constitution it would engender specific legislation that would not change irrespective of which party comes to power.

Another participant noted that proposals currently available on affirmative action were good enough but there would be need for them to come up with concrete proposals that would enable them to influence national law as well as influence local and national governance.

The issue of politics and money dominated discussions for a while and the question was asked as to how politics could be done without money. Reference was made to the District Assembly Campaign Fund that the Minister of Women and Children's Affairs had indicated in her opening speech that would be revived to support some 20 women to contest the September 2010 District Assembly elections. A participant made it clear that the amount given when the fund was launched was too small while the male contestants went around telling voters to demand part of the money as a condition for voting for women.

Another participant asked if representatives of the political parties as key stake holders were invited to the forum. She also asked how politicians could be held responsible to their commitments when women have not been able to speak with one voice when questions border on politics. She indicated that for the gender movement to make headway the constituency and party of advocates must be women. This was in apparent reference to events during a demonstration to demand from President Mills to make real his campaign promise to appoint more women into his government.

Still on politics, the question came up as to the number of women who would be "willing to put their money where their mouths are and support female candidates who would want to contest the 2012 Parliamentary election to make sure that when they heads are being counted in parliament more women would be there."

The point was also made about the need for a deeper understanding of the political incentive for a government to appoint a certain number of women when there were more male competitors who bring in short term gain and to help sharpen advocacy tools.

On climate change a participant asked Dr. Mensah-Kutin to provide details on the actions being undertaken by Ghana to mitigate the effects of climate change. Another suggested that fighting climate change using the focus of adapting and mitigating the effects can be limiting.

He noted that too much emphasis on outside mitigation would not be the best option rather there would be the need for local monitoring and engagement with the Environmental Protection Agency and other organizations that have done some work on the issue.

A participant was happy with the presentation on climate change which she said had been well broken down and asked how other women, particularly refugees, could be brought into the picture. This raised the question of the representation of minority groups which they noted was not to be done by categorization.

Dr. Mawugbe was asked to clarify the purpose of his study on the media and gender. He was also to clarify what he meant by engaging the media and inviting the media. He was also asked to give concrete advice on how to engage the media.

Concern was also expressed about the media's quest for profit and how serious things including gender do not sell papers.

A male participant, while arguing that there were more men than women at the forefront of gender advocacy, cautioned that the issue should not be about roping in more men but more about the quality of their commitment. He challenged the participants to track the records of females in positions of authority and see how gender responsive they would be.



## Presenters' Responses

**Dr. Messan Mawugbe** said the media study unit used women as a news category within the news editorial. That was the reason why he proposed that future survey should be on women as an editorial category. On how to sell gender news he was emphatic that gender could sell if and when advocates make gender issues national development issue and all women are brought on board. He added that the media should be made part of all discussions instead of just calling them in to cover programmes and leave. Research must also be undertaken to have an understanding of positions taken by editors on gender this would also help gender advocates to have scientific proof of their effectiveness. He said in the western world there has been Affirmative Action within media houses.

**Dr. Mensah-Kutin** said a lot has been happening locally on climate change and women to ensure that it becomes a national issue. Discussions have been broadened and research papers have been developed on Gender and Climate Change. She disclosed that a Gender and Development Network would be launched soon. She said Africa also has a lot to learn from the developed world on the problem and women have a lot to input to ensure that policies help alleviate the effects of Climate Change on their activities.

**Ms. Bernice Sam** said as the advocacy builds up on getting more women into politics there would also be the need to carry the education to the electorate as well as the media on why they should support and vote for women. On if women would support their colleagues financially to contest elections; Ms. Sam gave the example of Kenya where a group of women came together by putting a percentage of their monthly earnings aside to support women who wanted to contest Parliamentary election. She said Ghanaian women could also adopt the same method to increase their presence in the legislature. She agreed with the suggestion that the gender movement interrogate the incentives and disincentives of political parties when it comes to fielding women in safe seats. However in the interim she would go for affirmative Action to increase the presence of women in governance.



Session Two: Theme 3 -- ‘Mobilizing and networking on gender equality for good governance at institutional, organizational and community levels’

**This session was moderated by Dr. Esther Offei-Aboagye, Director, Institute of Local Government Studies, Accra**

**Paper 1: ‘Advocating for Women’s Economic Justice; experience with Aid Effectiveness Processes’ by Ms. Patricia Blankson Akakpo, Programme Officer, NETRIGHT**

Ms. Blankson Akakpo gave a brief introduction on NETRIGHT which is a gender and economic justice advocacy network that seeks to bring a gender perspective in national processes and advocate policy change in ways that strengthen the work of individuals and organisations. NETRIGHT is also interested in economic and development policy issues at the regional and global levels. According to her the network had in the past decade held various high level global processes aimed at improving the delivery and impact of international aid. Among these is the **Paris Declaration (PD) on Aid Effectiveness (AE)** adopted in March 2005 at the HLF2 in Paris.

In Ghana, NETRIGHT organized nationwide consultations to mobilize and facilitate the active participation of women’s groups across the country in the CSOs Parallel Event and HLF3. This was followed with capacity building for women’s groups in Ghana on the PD on AE and its gender dimension. A total number of **398 participants** made up of representatives of women’s groups; the labour movement; religious bodies, institutions; NGOs; MDAs; and gender advocates, women’s rights activists, development practitioners; youth and the media were engaged in the consultations.

The events organized by NETRIGHT locally and internationally resulted among other things in the development of a document of the HLF3 referred to as the ‘Accra Agenda for Action’. It also resulted in awareness creation among a core group of media personnel to enable them understand the issues from a gender perspective and to keep the information on the AE on top of public discourse to enhance knowledge and awareness on the issue.

In 2008, NETRIGHT hosted the Accra International Women’s Forum which had 250 participants from across the world attended. Over 30 women/women’s groups representatives from Ghana participated in both the Women’s Forum and CSOs’ Forum. Three reports presenting the discussions and the different perspectives around the new aid architecture, aid effectiveness and specific concerns during the consultations have been produced.

Ms. Blankson Akakpo said despite time and financial constraints NETRIGHT has been able to achieve a lot due to strategic planning and broad consultations. She noted the complexities of gender work in an atmosphere of unequal power relations which makes it difficult to quantify results though success comes gradually. She attributed the successes chalked to delegation and inclusiveness, commitment and the joint mobilization of the space and voices of all women. Lessons learnt from all these efforts were that constant engagement in the AE process enhanced collaboration and created an opportunity for all to work together to ensure that gender equality is factored into all donor funded projects. It also came out clearly that measuring policy advocacy is difficult and it is even more difficult to indicate whether a change in policy or behaviour is due to advocacy or other factors especially in the case of gender equality and women’s rights issues.

**Paper 2: ‘Men as partners in promoting Gender Equality and Good Governance’ by Mr. Wilbert Tengey, Founder and CEO, Gender Development Institute, Accra.**

Mr. Tengey started by noting the growing interest worldwide in men’s involvement in fostering gender equality adding that gender dimensions of development is about what men and women do. It looks at the impact of development on both women and men, how both men and women participate and benefit equally from development. He further noted that gender inequality is a systemic problem; it is a power game, and not the work of any one individual. Promoting gender equality is therefore one of the major challenges of a balanced and sustained development process.

Mr. Tengey noted that since men play significant roles in perpetrating gender inequality it is therefore appropriate for them to be involved in any advocacy effort aimed at remedying the situation. This is so because historically no oppressive system has been truly defeated without the involvement of the oppressors. His conviction therefore is that men should be much more involved in the work of gender equality. Including men will be critical to the successful realization of gender equality. Unfortunately, however, this is not happening. What is necessary therefore is system of continuous engagement to remove male marginalization from gender advocacy and good governance. He warned that women’s quest to achieve quick results while keeping men out could be dangerous for various reasons. These include the fact that men control almost all the resources and have a lot to benefit from fostering inequalities.

Mr. Tengey also noted that, as with all other things, there are risks involved in bringing men on board. These include threats to funding for gender work, dilution of service and orientation, and a weakening of the impetus for justice for women. However, these should not make gender advocates to keep men out and throw away the good things to be derived from engagement with men in gender advocacy. What is needed is caution in determining who should be brought on board since some male collaborators may have their personal motives for doing so.

On the way forward, he called on activists to change roles, stop the blame game that men are the problem of all women, be more open and commit more energy to getting more committed men while men already involved in gender advocacy also step up their efforts to get their peers to change their attitude and join the fight for gender issues.

**Paper 3: ‘Promoting Women’s Rights through Coalition Building: The case of the Women’s Coalition for Ghana’ by Mrs. Ellen D.E. Dzah, Advocacy Officer, ABANTU for Development**

Mrs. Dzah traced the history of women’s rights advocacy in Ghana over the decade leading to the development of the Women’s Manifesto. She gave an overview of the various stages leading to the final preparation of the Women’s Manifesto of Ghana and the setting up of the Women’s Manifesto Coalition (WMC) to implement the issues and demands contained in the document.

In doing so, Mrs. Dzah noted that Ghana is signatory to many UN conventions and protocols giving recognition to concerns of women and gender equality as a means of consciously recognising women’s contributions and placing values on them. Ghana also established the

National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) in the middle of the 1970s to help in implementing governmental initiatives, especially income-generating activities to improve women's economic well-being. She also noted the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs in 2001 with cabinet status, ostensibly to initiate policies that would lay the foundation for greater responsiveness to gender equality principles in the country. Besides these policy interventions, gender advocacy groups have also not spared their efforts aimed at ensuring the integration of women in all spheres of national development.

In spite of the above mentioned interventions, as well as women's active interest and participation in the political process, there was still no consensus on how women's issues could be articulated and made a concrete feature of policy-making so as to allow for their increased involvement in decision-making. It was against this historical background that **ABANTU for Development** recognised the need to rethink the concept of women's political empowerment and refashion the tools for lobbying and advocacy and to hold government accountable for the commitments made to women. Based on best practices from other African countries including Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Uganda and Tanzania, **ABANTU for Development** came up with the initiative to develop a Women's Manifesto for Ghana by mobilising women to forge a stronger network for consensus-building on the initiative.

Between 2003 and 2004 a series of consultations and networking were undertaken with all stakeholders across board. ABANTU provided leadership around for the initiative and coordinated a process that led to the formation of a **Coalition on the Women's Manifesto for Ghana**. The Women's Manifesto came as a part of efforts to translate the agreed principles for promoting gender equality into concepts, tools and techniques that would actually help to transform government commitments made to women into concrete action. It is a political, non-partisan document that outlines broad national issues of concern to women that need to be addressed by government and other relevant agencies within set time frames.

The Coalition on the Women's Manifesto for Ghana, composed of 180 women's organisations, various civil society groups, NGOs, policy-makers, representatives of government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), organised labour, media women and men, interested individuals and representatives of registered political parties, were involved in the research, development and production of the Manifesto document.

The Women's Manifesto is made up of a preamble and ten sections on the following themes:

1. Women's Economic Empowerment
2. Women and Land
3. Women, Social Policy and Development
4. Women in Politics and Decision making
5. Women, Human Rights and Law
6. Discriminatory Cultural Practices
7. Women and Media
8. Women, Conflict and Peace
9. Women with Special Needs
10. Institutions with a mandate to promote women's rights

On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004, **The Coalition of the Women's Manifesto for Ghana** launched the document in Accra at a well attended ceremony with representation from all cross sections of the society. According to Mrs. Dzah the coalition has since then used various advocacy methods to promote the document to ensure a wide acceptance and legitimacy. The manifesto has since come to be accepted as a reference point for all discussions on gender equality in Ghana. This, she said, was evidenced in the numerous references it received from a broad range of gender activists and the political parties in their campaign programmes during the 2004 and 2008 for general elections.

Among its many successes has been its contribution to the greater visibility and acceptability of gender issues within Ghana's political landscape. The Manifesto has enhanced sensitization at all levels on the critical importance of gender equality and women's rights within Ghana's democracy while female candidates in elections have used the document to galvanise support during the electioneering campaigns. Mrs Dzah noted in particular that the ruling National Democratic Congress acknowledged the document in its political party manifesto. President Atta Mills and his government have indicated their readiness to work with the document.

The paper noted the passage of the Domestic Violence Act, Act,732, the Human and Children Trafficking Act, the Disability Act, Act 715 and the local governance fund to support women as well as the introduction of the free maternal health care as some of the specific demands in the Manifesto that have been addressed.

The Manifesto has been translated into four main local languages; Akan, Ewe, Ga and Dagbani to enhance accessibility to those who can read in these local languages. Mrs. Dzah disclosed that besides being used as a point of reference to engage African women at regional conferences, copies of the Manifesto have also been disseminated and shared on international platforms to promote the ideas contained in the document.

She concluded that despite the success of the document, it has been generally accepted that there was a need for a review of the Manifesto and this process has been initiated. She further noted that there is the need for government to go beyond acceptance to usage, engagement and collaboration with gender advocates even as efforts are being made to review the document.



## Discussions

The Moderator, Dr. Esther Offei-Aboagye, noted that the Women's Manifesto had done a lot for gender advocacy in Ghana and had been accepted by government which quotes it often but asked if that was all there was about the Manifesto. This set the pace for questions with all contributors asking what the next steps would be after the document had come this far.

A question was posed as to whether it was possible to engender gender based advocacy. This contributor said his thoughts were based on an interaction he had with students at Wa Senior High School when he asked them which of their parents they would save from death when both are faced with threat of death at the same time and they had a choice in the matter. He said it was clear from the responses that the students would save their mothers first, an indication that despite entrenched traditional positions women have pride of place and this can be used to start the gender equality discourse from the classroom.

Another participant also shared this view saying that there should be a redirection of the sensitization efforts to start from the bottom to the top since gender cuts across all levels of society. On the Women's Manifesto, he disclosed that his organization, SEND Ghana, had found it very handy and used it as their handbook for gender based advocacy and training.

On the benefits of having men in gender advocacy a call was made for the experience of men in the sector to be interrogated to find out how these could be used for coalition building and for change to impact policy decisions.

It was generally agreed that it would be a good thing to educate both sexes on gender equality, right from the classroom at senior school level.

On the issue of aid effectiveness it was suggested that the engagement of all key stakeholders must continue. A participant wanted to know if gender concerns have been incorporated into Ghana's Aid Policy that was being developed.

One issue of great concern that came up clearly as a setback to advocacy work was the frequent change of ministerial portfolios. Cultural hindrances and care work at home and in the kitchen were also identified as hindrance to women's economic empowerment.

It was also noted that sometimes donors' drive the process and this becomes critical to advocacy as governments bow to donor pressure to join in or express commitment to a process when they are not really committed to it and thus render the process mere rhetoric. It was therefore suggested that the gender movement also takes steps to contest the positions that come from without into the system.

Participants discussed how government could be made to live up to its promised 40% representation in governance and leadership. Turning to the forthcoming District Assembly elections, a participant asked if it would be possible to get a policy to get more women into the Assemblies in September 2010. Another asked if amidst all the talk about the Women's Manifesto, coalition building and male participation it would be possible to synchronize the lessons and the best practices to get 51% female representation in parliament to correspond with available population figures.

While acknowledging the role some men have played in the gender equality advocacy, a participant asked Mr. Tengey what in his view should be the role that men should play in gender equality. She also wanted to know about Mr. Tengey's thoughts and plans for a renewal of the gender advocacy movement as a man who had been involved in gender activism for close to 15 years.

It was noted that things appear to have died down on the debate on aid effectiveness and a case was made for the renewal of the enthusiasm to find out where women's aid money was being diverted. It was however stated by another participant that though the aid effectiveness discourse is to ensure that governments put policies in place to monitor aid money it is difficult for CSOs to engage them on the issue. This brought to the fore the issue of the extent to which gender concerns is integrated into aid projects.

A participant requested that any future gender forum should have representatives from all the regions participating.

## **Responses**

**Mrs. Ellen Dzah** in her response to some of the issues raised said about the Women's Manifesto Coalition recognizes the need to keep the coalition, consultation and engagement ongoing though things are not running smoothly enough. She also agreed to suggestions that donor pressure sometimes pushes policy makers into some of the projects but advocates have no option except to remain consistent and focused.

The Moderator added that the benefits of such situations are that it creates the opportunity for advocates to put their foot in the door and build on their champions.

Mrs. Dzah informed participants, that the Women's Manifesto Coalition has been involved at all levels and has a schools outreach programme and also uses press conferences to occasionally talk on selected issues from the Manifesto document. What is important, she noted, is the need to continue to share ideas and dialogue for policy reform on gender equality.

**Mr. Wilbert Tengey** in his response said the gender movement could be renewed when advocates take the talk to the youth in school and endeavour to train the boys and girls to take over. On how men have been involved in gender, he said it was an issue that would need another forum to discuss. However, he believed that men should also be given the space to work with women. As to whether men should lead the advocacy on gender, Mr. Tengey said that would have to be opened to debate. .

**Ms. Blankson-Akakpo** agreed that there had been a lull in the advocacy for women's economic empowerment after the aid effectiveness process. However, dialogue has been initiated to engage the Ministry on Women And Children's Affairs for the next steps. She said NETRIGHT had looks at the Aid Policy and would send comments to government soon.

**The Moderator, Dr. Offei-Aboagye** concluded that there was the need to continue to mobilize and build coalitions to make the Forum a regular one and suggested that based on the sentiments of members there would be the need for them to come out with proposals for the way forward by the end of the second day.



### **3 Forum Day Two**

#### **Session One**

#### **Theme 2: Institutionalized programmatic responses to gender equality commitments and concerns in good governance through citizen engagement**

**Moderator - Ms. Jeannette Quarcoopome, Programme Director, Media Foundation for West Africa**

**Paper 1: Reconciling Class and Patriarchy: Female Unionists and Union Governance in Ghana'** by Akua O. Britwum, Lecturer, University of Cape Coast

This paper was based on a research undertaken by Ms. Britwum on Trade Unions in Ghana. It examined the impact of gender democracy strategies on women trade union leaders' consciousness. It delineates women leaders' vision and circumscribes the goals they set for using the opportunities provided to alter the dominant male character of the Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC). Information for this paper came from interviews with female trade union leaders conducted from October 2007 to June 2008, in 8 out of the 10 regions in Ghana. The women leaders covered included National female office holders, Regional Women's Committee Executives and Gender Desk Officers of selected national unions. Interview data was supplemented with information drawn from trade union documents.

Ms. Britwum asserts that Trade Unions are torn between employer /employee relations and women involved in the sector are further torn between class and patriarchy. She said though Unions tend to exclude direct women's participation, they tend to create space for women alone and it becomes a comfort zone for them. However, this has helped to expand union space for women to voice concerns, create greater visibility to women's trade union interests, bring more women into trade union leadership and occasioned more Gender Desk strategies.

She stated that the system has failed to transform male norms and practices, limited power of prime movers, isolated and starved women's organisations of resources and created an absence of obligation of the mainstream to take on concerns generated in separate space. It also created weak linkages between women leaders, organs and members and has become tokenism for political expediency.

Ms. Britwum noted an increased representation of women in leadership positions from 6% in 1996 to 16% 2003. She also found out that it allowed women leaders to become confident and made it possible for them to access and stand for mainstream Trade Union positions

Some of the tools she recommended to be used to pursue an agenda for change include the expansion of leadership to challenge stereotypes, a sense of union ownership, connecting individual gains to group solidarity, generating mobilization points for group action and channelling energies into challenging patriarchal Trade Union norms and practices.

**Paper 2: ‘Mainstreaming or Caricaturing Gender in a democratizing Ghana? The “Gender Movement” in search of Results and Authenticity’ by Lloyd G.A. Amoah (PhD), Ashesi University, Accra, Ghana.**

Dr Amoah stated that the issue of gender had occupied his intellectual pursuits. He explained that he had deliberately put the gender movement in quotation marks and would unpack it as he went on. He traced the historical background of the gender movement in contemporary times to USA. The meeting at Seneca Falls by the Americans was significant in marking the beginning of the gender movement in a male dominated society. He also mentioned some recent world events including the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall and Ghana’s move towards constitutional rule in 1992 as happenings that have greatly impacted the gender movement. He further noted that democracy, the international policy terrain and the international finance institutions have all impacted the gender movement in Ghana positively.

Dr Amoah who was hard hitting in his presentation, warned that gender mainstreaming could become “a lion instead of a bird” if not handled with care. Birds, he said are active and that is what the movement should be. He asked if the gender movement had ever brought any critique to bear on the policies and challenges of development or took some of these policies as given and continued to proceed as usual. He was critical of the gender movement for what he saw as its inability to clearly outline the kind of development they wanted and asked if the movement had made any progress at all.

He however congratulated the gender advocates on the success of their efforts which culminated in the passage of the Domestic Violence Act and a couple of other laws and policies but added that these notwithstanding, the everyday living leaving realities of Ghanaian children and women still remain and these raises questions. Dr. Amoah said for the gender movement not to be caricatured by politicians the everyday living realities must be considered as important for the deep transformation of the lives of the women and children. He outlined three paradigms which he said would help with the reality. These are finding creative policy technique beyond the international policy regimes that make governments to simply dance to a tune that would not give desired change as well as taking ideas from women in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa to change organizational forms.

He concluded with a call on all activists to undergo theoretical orientation and “de-elitize” the gender movement to enable it to bite.

**Paper 3: ‘Legal literacy, an entry point for achieving gender equality in governance at the local level’ written by Ms. Bernice Sam and presented by Ms. Gifty Dzah, both from WiLDAF, Ghana**

The paper focused on local governance and the use of Legal Literacy Volunteers and the Coalition Of Women In Governance as entry points to ensuring gender equality and good governance at the local level in Ghana. It is premised on the fact that well after five local government elections with all the good intentions, people at the grassroots, majority of who are women, have not been as involved in their governance as it should be.

WiLDAF Ghana’s Legal Literacy Volunteer (LLV) programme, the Coalition of Women in Governance (COWIG) and its Community Reconciliation Committees (CRCs) were therefore designed to support community members to have access to participate in governance while at

the same time ensuring increased community access to justice. The Community Reconciliation Committee concept became necessary when it was realised that majority of the cases that come to the LLVs to settle are non-maintenance and compensation cases which need negotiation and mediation skills and a team of mediators. Therefore the CRCs are made up of male and female LLVs trained on alternative dispute resolution skills to be able to mediate and negotiate cases.

WiLDAF, Ghana formed the Coalition of Women in Governance (COWIG) after a week's training for participants on governance issues. Even though the name is 'Women in governance', the coalition had several active male members. The three models took place in the rural areas and with rural communities. The Coalition, among others, created the platform for individuals with interest in promoting women's participation in governance processes to meet and strategize. It also helped them to become involved in making gender equality changes in especially in bye-laws at their district assembly levels. The Coalition worked actively on educating community members towards the 2008 general and parliamentary elections.

Some significant successes include the work of COWIG members in the Tema Metropolitan Assembly to make some changes in the Assembly's by-laws. They were able to get more girls sponsored to school by the Assembly.

Quoting from a 2009 joint evaluation report with Action Aid as Partners, the paper indicated that members of beneficiary communities continuously mention the benefits of the interventions; both in terms of helping them to access justice and helping them voice out their opinion as far as governance of their communities are concerned.

The project had some challenges. These include the issue of culture and cultural practices in some communities which directly affect the work of the LLVs, COWIG or CRC teams, challenges with some local 'power brokers' in the community and the stigmatization in some communities - female LLVs called 'bitter women' while some male LLVs were called other names. The voluntary nature of the job also affected commitment levels.



**Paper 4: ‘Gender and the APRM; Civic engagement for promoting Gender equality in Ghana’** by Ms. Gloria Ofori-Boadu, Member, National Peer Review Mechanism Governing Council, Ghana.

The paper gave a background to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) which became necessary because of the need to monitor and evaluate the adherence of all African countries to the principles of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Under this the Head of State agrees to allow the citizens of a country to carry out and engage in a country self-assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the country’s state of governance under four (4) thematic areas: namely

1. Democracy and Good Political Governance.
2. Economic Governance and Management.
3. Corporate Governance and
4. Socio-economic Governance

The country self-assessment report is thereafter verified by various support and country review missions of APRM Panel members and experts drawn from various institutions and countries in Africa. The assessment of the country’s state of governance, best practices and limitations are captured in a report together with a Program of Action (POA) which captures and budgets the proposed measures for addressing any identifiable challenges or limitations regarding the status of the African country. Ms. Ofori-Boadu said Ghana was the first African country to present her citizen’s APRM report to the 3rd APRM Heads of State forum in Abuja, Nigeria, on June 19th, 2005. Thus, Ghana became the first African country to be reviewed by the APRM Heads of State Forum in Khartoum, Sudan in January 2006.

Ghana has also adhered to the requirement of submitting periodic Monitoring and Evaluation Progress Reports on the implementation of her Program of Action to the APRM Heads of State Forum. Ghana’s monitoring and evaluation report was reviewed in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, in January, 2009.

The Country Report and Program of Action is published and made public six months after the review to allow for government, civil society and other stake holders to have first hand information with regard to the contents of the report. It also enables the state to incorporate the program of action into the National Development Plan and a budgetary allocation is made for the program implementation in the subsequent years. According to her in Ghana for example, the APRM Programme of Action was adopted into the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy and annual budgetary allocations were made for its implementation. The APRM Programme of Action is now part of the Medium Term Development Framework developed by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) of Ghana.

Ms. Ofori-Boadu stated that under the APRM, Gender mainstreaming is an integral part of all sections of the document. Every sector therefore then becomes gender sensitive and every objective under the four thematic areas of the APRM is assessed based on how it values equally the differences between men and women, their diverse and socially constructed roles and responsibilities. This provides a gender equality perspective towards good governance in Ghana. She said through engagement with civil society and other stakeholders, the APRM

Country-Self Assessment Report (CSAR) noted among other things that a number of successful post-transition competitive multi party elections and orderly transfers of power had occurred in Ghana. There is nevertheless low representation of women in politics due to the lack of political will or commitment to gender equality by the political class and also due to socio-cultural factors.

The CSAR therefore recommended the need for clear Affirmative Action policies by a constitutionally created structure to deliberately and systemically mainstream gender equality. It also recommended Affirmative Action for women and youth in District Assemblies. In this regard, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs was tasked to "initiate a policy framework to be implemented over an agreed reasonable time-frame designed to bind the government and all political parties to adopt a 40% quota for women in all spheres of public society (Parliament, Cabinet, public service, etc.) as indicated by Ghana to the UN Secretary-General"

While noting the five objectives which serve as a basis for consultations under the above thematic pillars of the APRM, the paper noted that the objective on Gender and Economic Governance and Management which was included in the report to address gender mainstreaming of gender desk officers in policy design and implementation, to improve published gender disaggregated data by the Statistical Service and strengthen co-ordination between MOWAC and other MDAs to conduct gender analysis for design of policies and programmes received the least budgetary support for implementation.

Ms. Ofori-Boadu recommended that to encourage women to offer themselves for elected offices, women should cultivate a willingness to support other women in terms of cash and in-kind. "Elitist"- educated and professional women should also find opportunities to relate in a non-patronizing manner, to less educated women in order to bridge the gap and attendant mistrust and suspicion. This tends to push less literate women, who due to their erroneous socialization, to believe that men are the leaders and bread-winners and may tend to support men instead of women in politics.

Women who are elected or appointed into public office must work even harder than their male counterparts and cultivate excellent inter-personal skills in order to excel in an area which is male dominated. Women as individuals, groups and organizations, irrespective of their political leanings, must identify different ways to support the few women in politics and in public life. There still persists the perception that men can do better than women in political and senior-level offices. Women Ministers particularly those appointed to perceived male-reserved portfolio, tend to be treated with hostility and fierce agitations by some of their party-members, some media and individuals. To support this recommendation Ms. Ofori-Boadu quoted from a local newspaper, the *Chronicle* edition of Tuesday Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, the headlines of which screamed about the first and only female Attorney-General and Minister of Justice in Ghana's 53 years of existence as follows: "Betty Plonker: The A-G's charm is all jewellery, she is Mill's government's WEAKEST Link".

She however concluded that the APRM Self- Assessment Report has found and reports that "Despite policies put in place by the government and NGOs to make gender mainstreaming a reality, implementation has been very disappointing. ... in many respects, Ghanaian women have made important strides in the public service... But in other ways, the position of women has not changed much."

## **Discussions**

When the floor was opened for discussions, a participant asked about how the perceived elitism in gender mainstreaming could be addressed. The participant was of the view that gender mainstreaming seemed to be more about the relations between the state and the process where women at the grassroots are involved in decision making processes as well as about a disconnect between women at the grassroots and those who make it to the top. Making reference to a story in a copy of a national weekly, *Spectator*, on how some young women were harassed sexually in their job seeking efforts, he said that there is an urgent need for a form of radical approach in addressing gender issues. This contributor suggested that women could look at the possibility of withdrawing their services both at home and the work place for a day as a form of protest.

Another male participant also questioned the approaches being used to demand women's rights and said women do not have to demand they must take because it is their natural right as women. Women he said must be a bit more radical adding that any society that questions women's gender role does not need to exist. One of the male participants suggested that women would have to take the radical action of withdrawing their services from the boardroom to the bedroom to make men realize how much power women have and to ensure that desired results are achieved.

On the issue of work place discrimination a question was put to the university lecturers present to share their experiences with the participants.

An assertion that gender activists seemed to be more into themselves or exclusive and do not recognize other women outside their grouping provoked a lengthy discussion. It was stated by some of the participants that the issue of gender equality is not about women in the north or south, education or class it is about what is relevant to women.

On women in the Trade Unions, participants were impressed with how women trade unionists have demanded and used the space provided them to make great strides.

Both Ms. Akua Britwum and Dr. Lloyd Amoah came up for commendation for the depth of intellectual work and approach to their papers. They were however asked to put in more research to put their papers forward as conceptual issues coming from Africans.

Ms. Britwum was asked to elaborate on how class and patriarchy in the Trade Union has affected the basic issues for women and the need to re-strategize and also how women's interest in issues that the gender movement takes on, impact their everyday life issues.

**Ms. Dzah** who presented the paper on behalf of Ms. Bernice Sam was also tasked to include more findings in her final paper on how the various legal training models have impacted the family, clan and other small units at the lowest levels. The impact of the family on the community through the training must also be documented. A participant asked why the success stories the paper documented were only Accra/Tema based. This brought to the fore the issue that most projects described as meant for the grassroots tend to remain in the metropolitan and urban areas, even long after their pilot stages.

A participant was happy with the level of discussion saying that it was healthy for advocates to be able to criticize themselves indoors freely without acrimony, a pointer to the fact that there was no space limitation.

A participant queried Dr. Amoah for what she believed to be assumptions in the concluding parts of his paper about how the gender movement works, the role of elite women and rural women and the frustrations of what he described as ‘women and real women.’ She was of the view that he should have spoken with some of the women who have been in the forefront of gender advocacy over the years to seek information on how gender advocacy has evolved over the years in Africa. She said in terms of movement and non-movement there are contestations around it because mobilization is done around women’s issues as and when they come up. Dr. Amoah was informed that there were hosts of documentation available to tell the success stories and these could be made available to him to help him bring out the issues raised more clearly.

One of the younger participants expressed concern over a perception that the older and more experienced gender advocates seemed reluctant to transfer leadership, as well as share their experiences to ensure that as they leave the scene the youth would be able to step into the space created. In response to this, someone suggested that if the young ones do not see this happening they should create their own space. But responses across the room made it clear that mentoring had been going on and newer and younger advocates have been coming on board. WILDAF and ABANTU said they have mentoring and leadership transfer programmes in place and what was needed was for them to document the success stories over the years to erase perceptions that gender activists are a band of frustrated women.

The issue of the “elitisation” of the gender movement as stated by Dr. Amoah was challenged on the grounds that it should not be a problem because some of the women by virtue of their education are more able to articulate the issues. Perhaps the problem could be how they articulate the issues. However in all advocacies, educated and knowledgeable persons are needed to help move the process of social equality. The struggle for the gender movement is not to think that there is something wrong with being elitist, the struggle should be about how to connect.

Generally, the sentiment among participants was that there are misconceptions about the issue of elitism because the activism cannot be done without being knowledgeable about issues and moreover, activists do not work in a vacuum they have people who help mobilize around the issues. The elites, they said, are needed to do the studies around the issues while others mobilize around them. The debate around elitism took much time during the plenary with others asking who could be described as an elite because to them the so called elites are also products of the grassroots system.

Another contributor was of the view that the gender activism as a tool has had struggles over caricaturing because governments had hijacked it every now and then when they step in and begin to talk about gender mainstreaming when in reality it is only talk with no action.

## **Responses**

**Dr. Britwum** in response to how the universities are tackling gender mainstreaming said she was aware that the University of Cape Coast and the University of Development Studies have strategies in place and the remaining universities were also hooked in and though there are pockets of resistance they are not letting up pushing. She said elitism has helped them to understand what the issues are so they have been finding ways to engender the process.

She explained that women constitute up to 25% of the Ghana Trade Union membership and though their biological constitution has engendered laws that discriminate against their rights they have been able to develop structures to challenge the issues of everyday living realities which is a problem. The issue however has been how to mobilize those women into a collective force to change trade union structures.

**Ms. Ofori-Boadu**, on her part, said despite the skirmishes around the APRM it is still relevant for meeting the needs of good governance and gender mainstreaming. She said 30 countries have signed on and 12 have been reviewed. APRM demands inclusion of Programmes of Action in their budgets.

On the sustainability of WiLDAF's Legal Literacy training programmes, Ms. Dzah said efforts would be made to step up things, however their difficulty has been lack of funds and the frequent change of political leadership at the local government level which affects progress made in the establishment of rapport with the administrators at the local level.

**Dr. Amoah** appreciated the comments and suggestions made about his presentation. He promised to meet with gender activists to gather more information to further enrich it. He however added that the Ghanaian gender movement should endeavour not to lose the real issues of the Ghanaian woman to the dangers of universality. He said the world had moved from mass production to tailor measured production and gender advocacy tools must be fashioned to suit the needs of Ghana.

**The Moderator** in her concluding remarks said Dr. Amoah's presentation raised critical issues particularly those on elitism and these must be appreciated as a wakeup call to the gender movement.



## **Session Two**

### **Theme 4: ‘Practical experiences, workable strategies and novel actions and alternatives by gender equality and women’s rights organizations’**

**Moderator - Ms. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye, Executive Director, Ark Foundation**

#### **Paper 1: ‘We Know Politics: An Example of Successful Coalition Building to Engage Women in Governance’ by Ms. Bernice Sam**

This paper traced the various stages of the women’s movement in engaging governance right from the time of Ghana’s independence through the military interventions to the rebirth of democracy and the scaling-up of the gender movements from 1992. It noted the gains and challenges.

It acknowledged the Affirmative Action Law: Representation of Women’s Bill that got 10 women into Parliament and also women being appointed as ministers of state soon after independence. The era of the PNDC government also saw the creation of the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women’s Movement which mobilised women to support the revolution and the regime. Ms. Sam noted that the period also saw the economic empowerment of women through micro-credit schemes and the provision of services that supported women to focus on their work and the passage of laws to end discrimination against women and children. Women also enjoyed greater visibility at political events.

The paper noted that the return to democratic governance in 1992 created an enabling environment for coalitions and Civil Society Organisations including WiLDAF, the Gender Centre, AWLA, Sisters Keepers, NETRIGHT, DV Coalition among many others to rally together and strategise around specific issues. Developments in the government sector were the creation of Women And Juvenile Unit of the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy document, among other related policies.

Ms. Sam argued that though the environment was ripe for the women’s movement, financial difficulties constrained their achievements. She acknowledged that there were certain funds available both at the international and national levels to support but these were not enough to meet the daunting task thus the movement tended to congregate around what she described as ‘comfort’ areas and issues. The concentration was on short term projects rather than multi-year programmes with weak data collection and impact and outcomes difficult to realise.

The ‘We Know Politics Project’ was a 10 - month programme launched in 2008 involving a coalition of five women’s groups. The aim of the project was to use innovative strategies to engage women to express their views and make their voices heard in the 2008 elections. The impact of the project has since extended beyond the 2008 elections to encompass women’s voices being heard in community, district and national decision making processes.

The paper noted the difficulties the ‘We Know Politics’ project faced, including financial constraints. For instance out of an estimated \$800,000 only \$400,000 could be accessed from two donors. Other challenges included separating the leading figures on the project from being branded as being political, community demands that could not be met, the

underestimation of resource needs, media engagement, the unexpected presidential election run-off and its demands as well as the questioning of the neutrality and objectivity of partners.

There were, however, a number of successes. The project empowered and created the platform for women and men to talk governance at various levels. It helped to keep Affirmative Action as a topical issue and also made it possible for women to dialogue with Vice Presidential candidates.

**Paper 2: “Promoting Gender Equality through Gender Responsive Budgeting’ by Hon. Mrs. Gifty Ohene Konadu, Member of Parliament, Ashanti Akim South**

In 2007, Ghana adopted Gender Responsive Budgeting principles. Subsequently the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning directed all sector ministries to gather sex disaggregated data as part of preparations for the 2008-2010 budget guidelines. The ministries of Education, Health, Food and Agriculture and Women and Children Affairs were selected to pilot the implementation of gender responsive budgeting.

The presentation analyzed the gender aspects of the 2010 Government Economic Policy and Budget Statement in relation to provisions made for the Ministries of Education, Health, Food and Agriculture and Women and Children’s Affairs. The Ministry of Health collaborates with all partners to ensure that every individual household and community is adequately informed about, and has access to high quality health related interventions. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture promotes sustainable and thriving agri-business through research and technology and support interventions for farmers. The Education Ministry among other things provides equity and access to participation in quality education at all levels and bridges the gender gaps. The Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs was established to promote gender equality, equity, the survival, protection and development of children to ensure participation of both women and children in the development of the country.

Following her analysis of the budgetary allocations to these ministries and the various interventions in place to generate extra funds to meet their obligations, Mrs. Ohene Konadu identified inadequate funding as the main challenge to meeting the specific needs of gender.

Turning to the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs in particular, she noted the number of projects lined up for the 2010 fiscal year which include compilation of data on potential women leaders, capacity building for female candidates in the September district assemblies election, and the continuation of gender mainstreaming efforts, maternal and child health, child labour and “streetism” among many others. The ministry has also planned to establish a Gender responsive Budget Monitoring Unit and review the National Gender and Children’s Policy. Unfortunately however, government could only provide 53.62% of funds needed for the period. Donor and internally generated funds have therefore been targeted to make up for the shortfall. Furthermore, the approved 53.62% falls short of 2009 budgetary allocations to the ministry. She noted that since its establishment, the Ministry’s budgetary allocations have been lower than 1.0% of the national budget and have not been able to meet budgetary requirements.

The Ministry has therefore tended to rely heavily on donor funding for the interventions that it is expected to carry out for women and children and these have been affected by delays or problems encountered in accessing the funds.

Poor budgetary resourcing has also affected the recruitment of adequate staff to handle human trafficking and domestic violence, which usually call for prompt action. The ministry is further constrained by lack of office space which is crucial for it to deliver on its mandate.

One thing that stood out clearly from the presentation was the fact that the Parliamentary Select Committee on Gender and Children which has the mandate to examine and make recommendations for the approval of all matters on gender and children as well as women, men, boys and girls lacked the requisite skills to do so. Subsequently the Committee in collaboration with the Canadian Parliamentary Centre organized a training workshop on gender budgeting in July 2009. Following the training the Committee engaged with the ministries involved in the pilot programme to discuss Gender Responsive budgeting.

Mrs. Ohene Konadu recommended among other things, the allocation of adequate funds for gender related programmes, enhanced training at the various levels on gender responsible budgeting for all personnel while gender audits be carried out on the budgets of the selected ministries and their agencies as well as the monitoring of gaps in the implementation of gender responsible budgetary programmes.



**Paper 3: 'Participation Rights of Young Girls and its Relevance to Democracy in Ghana- Key Findings' by Susan Sabaa, Executive Director, Child Research and Resource Centre, CRRECEN.**

This study set out to primarily determine the gender dimensions of existing practices and structures in selected schools and communities that allow for the involvement of the Ghanaian child in decision making on matters that affect them. It also sought to find out girls and boys experiences, perceptions and interest levels for girls engagement in participatory and democratic practices in school and the community. It explored the young girl's experiences of participation at home, school and the community and made policy and

programmatic recommendations to enhance young girls' capacity for democratic engagement.

The study drew inspiration from the following;

UNCRC Article 12

***State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child***

CEDAW Article 5

***State parties must ensure that family education results in all round development of the child.....eliminating stereotypes and discrimination against women and girls.***

Children's Act: Sub Part 1-Article 11

***No person shall deprive a child capable of forming views the right to express an opinion to be listened to and to participate in decisions which affect his well-being, the opinion of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.***

A total of four rural communities and two semi-urban communities selected from Northern and Southern Ghana were used for the study. The selected urban communities have a cross section of people from different ethnic, religious, cultural and social backgrounds with some level of influence from modernisation. While the semi-rural communities offered a changing face of society, a transition from rural to urban and therefore have traces of indigenous values and cultures. Respondents were between the ages of 14-19 years, 74 % of who were living with both parents and 26% living with people other than parents. Of the 240 child respondents, 65% (156) had good knowledge of their rights. Girls made up 61% (95) while boys were 39% (61). The rights they mentioned were the rights to education, medical care, shelter, affection, love and understanding, protection against child labour, play and recreation, adequate nutrition, water, not to be discriminated against, right to a name, clean environment and protection.

According to Ms. Sabaa what stood out clearly was that none of the respondents mentioned their right to participation, an indication that most children do not know or consider it as crucial to their development. Significant also was that of the 12 teachers contacted only seven of them had heard or read about the Children's Act and only one of these had received training on it. All the teachers could however define gender very well and were comfortable with the leadership of females in schools; both mixed and single sex schools. The teachers indicated that girls' participation in leadership and decision making processes are hampered by religious, cultural and social norms.

The study also looked at experiences of the female child in the home; responsibilities, decision making, their learning and educational opportunities, structures and systems in the school environment that support their participation among many others. It also found out about the leadership and political leadership aspirations of the girls and if they would lend their support to women seeking leadership positions or not among other things.

The study concluded with some recommendations for actions to be taken by schools, parents, communities, and government to help address issues that would help prepare the female child to assert her right to decision making and also remove those that result in gender inequality in schools and homes. These include inspirational talks in schools, interaction with women role

models in the country, enrichment of school programmes with leadership activities, well stocked libraries and the strengthening of Student Representative Councils which must meet often.

Parents must advise, encourage and support children's ambitions, help them to explore and not impose things on them. Communities must give scholarship to support children in school, with important personalities in the communities making time to interact with the children. It was also recommended that the Girls Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service must among other interventions come up with programmes targeted at both male and female teachers.

### **Discussions**

The moderator, Ms. Dwamena-Aboagye set the ball rolling with a comment on the last presentation. She noted that the issue of girls must be placed high on the agenda in the next forum.

Referring to the presentation on the 'We Know Politics' project, a participant pointed out that during the PNDC era there were other groups besides the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement that were engaged in gender advocacy and that this should be noted by the final paper to be prepared by Ms. Bernice Sam. She was however commended on the project which some participants said helped to give visibility to women contestants and women issues during the 2008 electioneering period.

It was recommended that Ms. Sam include in her final paper specific organizational conflicts they came across during the execution of the project. She should also state the roles if any, played by religious bodies in promoting women political participation. It was suggested that WiLDAF should make the effort to document its work on the women's empowerment projects to tell the story of how far the gender movement had come. She was also asked to share the experiences of the five organizations that were involved in the project especially in terms of networking and conflicts and lessons learnt should be included in the final paper.

A contributor commended Ms. Susan Sabaa on her research and was happy to note that 50% of the girls in the research were interested in leadership roles. Another person asked why the research was silent on disabled children and asked that Ms. Sabaa consider this as an issue in view of the social and physical structures that exist in the school. An issue was also picked up over why the study did not extend to the Upper West and Upper East Regions which have a high incidence of sexual violence in schools.

It was recommended that since Ms. Sabaa's research was ongoing, she should extend the area of research to cover heads of schools in respect of how they treat girls as compared to boys.

While noting that gender responsive budgeting could only be useful when the figures are made available for scrutiny, a participant asked how the Select Committee on Gender and Children had been able to scrutinize allocations made for gender in other sector ministries' budget since the committee concerns itself mainly with its sector ministry. Another contributor was of the view that there is a disconnect between the Ministry on Women and Children's Affairs and the select committee given the fact that the Ministry more often than not had not been able to utilize funds made available for gender purposes and yet Parliament had not called them to order. She was also concerned about a seeming disconnect between the ministry and other sector ministries that have been implementing bits and pieces of gender related intervention projects. One participant was worried that Parliament could take certain bills on certificate of urgency and then refuse to handle other issues with the same speed.

## Responses

**In her response Ms. Sam** said her presentation actually acknowledged the work done by other movements prior to the return to democratic rule in 1992 but promised to have a second look at the issue. On the partnership that drove the We Know Politics Project, she said the focus of the paper is on how the partnership functioned. She added that she had not really taken a look at the role of religious bodies in the project but would take a look and have it included in her paper. She promised that efforts would be made to do a comprehensive documentary to tell the gender story.

**Ms. Sabaa** said the research was basically to look at the particular question of how girls are nurtured and their participation and inclusion in decisions. She outlined a couple of difficulties she had with one school head threatening her not to take the results of her findings out. She said due to funding constraints and the specific demands of the research they had to limit it to the particular area. However there are lots of things going on in schools particularly at the senior school level which she believes any of the organizations and individuals present could take time to enrich available data on gender in the country.

**Mrs. Ohene Konadu** conceded that gender responsive budget is fairly new to them in Parliament and analyzing figures is the only way they could make any meaningful contributions and suggestions. However the training they had has been of immense help. She said their difficulty was with the way national budgets come late and are rushed through Parliament so they barely have time to look at the sector ministry's budget let alone make the effort to look at the gender components of other related ministries. She agreed that expenditure patterns would have to be monitored so that the Select Committee would have an idea as to how money is utilized but added that on the whole, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs was not doing badly. What is rather needed is for all ministries to have gender responsive budgets as well.

In her concluding remarks, the moderator reminded all participants to keep in mind the need for them to put their votes where their mouths are.



## **4 CLOSING CEREMONY**

### **Chairperson- Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo**

A member of Research and Advocacy Organisations (RAOs) on the G-RAP Board, Mr. Vitus Azeem noted that the two-day forum had been a fruitful one as it brought pertinent issues clearly to the fore. He said he would have participated in any even if he were not a G-RAP Board member because he had been working on gender issues and is a committed gender advocate. Mr. Azeem was of the view that the two days Gender Forum would re-energize gender activists for the next phase of advocacy. He tasked all participants to be interested in issues in Parliament to ensure that decisions taken by Parliament meet national aspirations. He cited the example of the National Health Insurance Law which has provisions for MPs and District Assemblies to access some of the funds for projects other than those related to health. This is an issue he believed civil society organizations must take up.

Mr. Azeem also suggested that gender activists tracked Parliamentary debate to find out how many of the female parliamentarians actually talk on gender issues when laws and budgets are debated in the House. This would help them to strategize properly for the next stage of advocacy and also use the good report to justify increased space for women's participation in governance.

He recommended brainstorming for future discussion to determine whether gender activism should be separated from women's rights activism or whether the designation should remain the same. His recommendation was based on accusations that gender was being equated to women rights.

Mr. Azeem concluded with a call on gender advocates to start advocacy from their homes and communities before reaching out to the work places and the national arena. He said if this is done, there would not be the need for another national gender forum in the next two or three years because majority of Ghanaians would have become gender sensitive.

Ms. Jeannette Quarcoopome, also a member of Research and Advocacy Organisations (RAOs) on the G-RAP Board, noted the lively discussions during the two days saying it had been time well spent. She flagged a couple of issues that came out from the two days which she believed must be closely looked at. These include the need for Monitoring and Evaluation in order to expose the gaps and target specific interventions to craft new paths and directions, new collaborations and new strategies. G-RAP she suggested must support the effort to develop such monitoring tools. She also noted the need for the formation of new partnerships and coalition to ensure efficiency and effectiveness as well as the need to maximize the use of the media the despite the challenges they may have with them.

Ms. Quarcoopome further reminded the meeting about the need to document the very interesting stories to be told. She mentioned in particular the work being done by WiLDAF which she said when documented would help determine how much had been achieved and what more would have to be done. She was hopeful that G-RAP would find it necessary to lend more support to activities in the sector.

In her concluding remarks, Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo said the forum has been a great eye opener to her and from the papers presented it was clear that gender advocates would have to continue learning at all times. On the issue of gender responsive budgeting, Prof. Ata Aidoo

conceded that there were challenges for the female Parliamentarians but this could be handled with the support of parliamentary aids that would be tasked to pull out the gender components of budgets for the Gender Committee. To an appeal, from Hon. Ohene-Konadu, the forum Chairperson said consideration would be given to some financial support to help get this done.

She congratulated participants for the level of attendance and interest throughout the two days which she said was an indication of their commitment to gender equality in Ghana.

G-RAP Team Leader, Ms. Lawrencina Adams expressed gratitude all present and assured them of G-RAPS' openness to suggestions and readiness to receive comments via email or telephone to move the process forward.

Proceedings were brought to an end with the presentation of a draft communiqué arrived at end of the discussions was presented by Dr. Rose Mensah-Kutin for the approval of the house. She was asked to do some further fine tuning before its final release. *(See Appendix C for details of communiqué)*



## 5 SUGGESTIONS & EVALUATIONS

### Summary

Participants were generally appreciative of the depth of research papers presented and the issues raised/discussed. They were happy with the effort by G-RAP to put together such a high performing team. What most of the participants had difficulties with was the load of papers and the shortness of the time of delivery and discussions.

Some of the participants suggested that in future the number of presentations be reduced and time made available for smaller group discussions and to ensure the involvement of all participants. It was also recommended that the forum be replicated at the regional levels to ensure that more people benefit from it. Calls were also made for participation in the next National Gender Forum to be broadened to include traditional rulers, political parties and female Assembly Members from other parts of the country who would be made to share their experiences.

On the media's role, suggestions were that media practitioners should be involved at all the stages of gender advocacy and not only event coverage. A follow up session with news editors was also recommended.

Specific suggestions were made to only three of the presenters. They were; Mr. Wilbert Tengey, Dr. Messan Mawugbe, Dr. Rose Mensah-Kutin and Ms. Bernice Sam

### General

1. All Presenters. There is the need to consider women living around the mining communities. They always struggle for their survival resulting in loss of lives due to land degradation caused by the mining companies.
2. All presentations in Session Two were quite in a rush. I think enough time should be allocated next time so that we the participants will be able to grab all that you will like us to know.
3. The first session and all the resource persons have done a great job. Thanks to G-rap for such an opportunity especially for the young and active women at the meeting. The second was a bit inactive because most of the participants probably left.
4. The gender forum can include group discussions on the various topics, which should be made known to participants ahead of time
5. The various presentations of papers should be sent /emailed to participants after the forum ([manu.ghana9@gmail.com](mailto:manu.ghana9@gmail.com))
6. Next time, it will be interesting to see women in the Districts or community to make presentation on their way of engaging at that level.
7. It would be useful to reduce the number of presentations to allow for focus efficiency and more time for discussions experience sharing, etc.
8. Next forum should have a group discussion session so that smaller groups can brainstorm and come out with suggestions and allow more people (participations) to contribute to discussions
9. I recommend that a kind of well coordinated gender network could be set-up to hold regional Platforms and generate ideas that will feed into the National Gender Forum.

10. The gender forum is a great idea but we can improve it by engendering the advocacy process. Ignite a debate that involves both sexes to generate ideas that could result in concrete policy actions
11. Create broader participation of key stakeholders e.g. political parties, youth groups, CSO.
12. The Moderator should give the opportunity to young people and those lesser known faces to ask questions and make interventions.
13. I attended the opening session and thought that it is well-organised with very relevant range of speakers, topics and papers to stimulate an interesting debate. But, could be strict on time keeping, start session on time so those who need to leave early can get to hear the whole session. Also, to help with time keeping, the chairperson for the session could have spoken for less time- it is the papers and the Questions and Answers that we are really interested in.
14. All the presentations were very good and thought provoking. They raise more questions for discussion.
15. It will be very good if we provide more time for questions times
16. Make sure future venues have enough toilets for a conference room that seats close to a 100 people is not good enough. It is very gender insensitive!!!

#### **Dr. Mawugbe**

17. I think men (editors) are concerned about news that sells. More women should be encouraged to take courses in journalism and more importantly, take up editorial positions to project issues of women. Women in media should be encouraged to move from reading and presenting news to writing columns on women issues.
18. Media representatives at the highest level ought to be invited; owners of radio, TV stations and women/men in business could be invited as well. The forum could also be used as a tool to monitor the commitments of government, media business to gender.
19. Very good presentations would recommend that G-RAP followed up with Dr. Mawugbe to have a session with editors and media Houses in his findings.
20. The presentation was too fast. It was in a rush so some of the points were not captured properly. I think you should do something about the timing next time.
21. Dr. Mawugbe's paper would be more interesting and make a better contribution if it is moved from recommendation and focus on content of editorial statements, how women are presented and to what extent the media challenges known gender stereotypes.
22. I think invitations could be sent to media houses as participants of the forum and not to just to come and cover the event

#### **Ms. Bernice Sam**

23. "Interrogating Affirmative Action as a ....."(Title of Paper) To practicalise the affirmative action, we need to make a review in the voting system, where we have a first ballot box as voting for women separated from that of men. Secondly, in one constituency there should be a veto for equality by electing e.g. 3 women/3 men if for instance the constituency has 6 electoral areas. We have used this in the Northern Youth Forum to elect young women into position.

24. I suggest politicians, policy makers, and traditional authorities with women leaders come together at a common platform like we have done to discuss thoroughly on the issues of women inclusion (Affirmative Actions).
25. How do you intend to educate women to accept women who would like to participate or contest for a parliamentary seat? There are situations whereby women contesting may not be in the political party in which you are a member. Do you have to vote for her because she is a woman and forget about your political party?
26. Bernice Sam's paper should interrogate affirmative action, what it is, how has it been implemented in Ghana. It is good to cover the situation as it is in Ghana but the paper should provide more space to interrogate experiences elsewhere, what are the limits in other places and what should an affirmative action policy address in Ghana? The paper can provide framework for engaging the process for an AAP.

**Dr. Rose Mensah-Kutin**

27. Impact of Climate Change on questions cannot be over stated Totopé-Dangbe East is affected by high sea levels and has led to migration of young men for greener pastures, leaving women and children in squalid conditions
28. Great programme with a rich crop of speeches. Since papers were ready before presentations it would be better to have them in print at the end of each day as we wait for final report.
29. There is the need to engage issues of climate change in Ghana and development of local policies. We also need to make a distinction between engendering a process and bringing women as a category on board.

**Mr. Tengey**

30. Session Two, Mr. Wilbert Tengey, 2nd Presenter. How do you intend to educate the men who have less interest in gender advocacy to help achieve gender equality in Ghana?



## **6 APPENDICES**

## **Appendix A: Background Information**

**GHANA RESEARCH ADVOCACY PROGRAMME (GRAP)  
2010 NATIONAL GENDER FORUM  
16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010,  
Airport West Hotel, Accra**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**FORUM THEME: *Civic Engagement for Gender Equality and Good Governance in Ghana: Sharing Experiences, Contesting Spaces, Renewing Commitments***

**INTRODUCTION:** Despite the central role women continue to play in the economic development of Ghana, they have a much more limited access to resources than their male counterparts. Societal attitudes, customary practices and beliefs, traditional roles of women, gender relations within the family, limited access of women to education and training and inadequate representation of women on decision making bodies, among others, operate together to place Ghanaian women in a disadvantaged position. Currently although women form over 50% of the population their share of political and public office appointments is less than adequate and there continues to be poor female representation and voice in private and public life in Ghana.

Good and inclusive governance has gained credence in development cooperation and planning as a way of ensuring that processes and outcomes are effective and yielding expected results. Against the backdrop of ongoing discourse on aid effectiveness and sustainable development, government and development practitioners have been encouraged to institute measures that promote the effective, inclusive and democratic delivery of development interventions.

Undoubtedly, the gains from over a decade of development reforms have also impacted to some degree, gender equality especially with regard to legal, policy and programming reforms. The expanded interventions in social policy and services have been enabling for gender equality work. Succeeding Ghanaian governments, civil society and donors have increasingly responded to gender equity commitments through targeted programming, policy reforms and institution building. The women's lobby has become an important political consideration and gender equality and women's rights activism has probably enjoyed the most enabling period in its history. However, there still remain unexplored spaces and unyielding challenges that need serious attention in the years/decades ahead.

As a donor funded initiative, GRAP works to complement ongoing national development programmes, which are currently geared toward growth and poverty reduction as enshrined in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) by enhancing gender sensitivity in its support for sustainable and equitable development. Support for RAOs is intended to capacitate them to contribute more effectively to the promotion of pro-poor programming in Ghana. As part of its contribution to effective pro-poor programming, GRAP recognizes the critical role of social equity and the place of gender in it, and promotes good governance and poverty reduction. It is against this background that GRAP as a key facilitator to such efforts should create a platform to promote the sharing of gains and challenges in gender equality even as commitments are renewed, new agenda are set and strategies are revised for the years

ahead. Equally important is the need to document existing experiences for mass dissemination.

GRAP is therefore organising a National Gender Forum to assess current policy making trends and to create a space for engaging with policy makers, donor partners, civil society organizations, development practitioners and gender experts to engage and share gender experiences on policy. The papers, which would be the focus of the Forum, would be compiled into a publication for wider dissemination.

**THEMATIC AREAS:** Interested contributors including civil society, state actors, donor partners and gender experts were invited to contribute papers that address one or more aspects in the following thematic areas:

1. **Historical, political and contextual analysis of gender, civic engagement and good governance.** Should chart, contest and situate discourses, politics and/or policy frameworks, directions and trends. May include analysis of options, alternatives, implications and shaping globally and locally.
2. **Institutionalized programmatic responses to gender equality commitments and concerns in good governance through citizen engagement.** Should address practical responses and provide critical perspectives on policies, programmes and projects intended to address gender equality and women's rights concerns in good governance. May include responses deriving from civil society), state or donor.
3. **Mobilizing and networking on gender equality for good governance at institutional, organizational and community levels.** May include partnerships and may contest or critique successes, effects, achievements
4. **Practical Experiences, workable strategies and novel actions and alternatives by gender equality and women's rights organizations.** May include case studies and specific actions such as coalition building, networking such as Women's Manifesto or the Women's Manifesto Coalition, Sisters Keepers, Social Watch, Women's Caucuses, Gender Budgeting, Daily Monitoring of CEDAW.

**The sessions at the Gender Forum have been built around these thematic areas.** Abstracts are being received and reviewed by an Editorial Consultant. These will be compiled and printed for the Forum, while full papers are prepared for publication after the Forum. We will endeavour to share these with you for your information prior to the Forum, if received on time.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FORUM**

1. The **National Gender Forum** on 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010 will feature PowerPoint Presentation of papers, feedback, comments and discussions by participants for incorporation into the papers. **It is here that the invaluable inputs of Moderators will be truly appreciated even as they facilitate the plenary discussions.**
2. **Publication of Contributions:** After the Forum, there will be review and editing of contributions, requiring authors to work with the Editorial Consultant to finalize papers, prepare manuscript for Press and have manuscript printed.

For more details, please send emails to [info@g-rap.org](mailto:info@g-rap.org) or [grapgenderforum@gmail.com](mailto:grapgenderforum@gmail.com) or call 021 239853/0208159543

## Appendix B: List of Participants

### GHANA RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMME NATIONAL GENDER FORUM 16TH AND 17TH MARCH, 2010 AIRPORT WEST HOTEL, ACCRA PARTICIPANT LIST

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4	ABENA BAAFI	CARE INT. KASA	<a href="mailto:abena.baafi@co.care.org">abena.baafi@co.care.org</a>	024-4664452
5	ABIGAIL ASARE	AIP/FFP	<a href="mailto:abigailasare15@yahoo.com">abigailasare15@yahoo.com</a>	024-8432829
6	AFUA ANSRE	UNIFEM	<a href="mailto:aua.bansre@undp.org">aua.bansre@undp.org</a>	024-4665252
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11	AMA ATA AIDOO	MBAASEM	<a href="mailto:mbaasem33@yahoo.com">mbaasem33@yahoo.com</a>	020-8110780
12	AMA BLANKSON	ISODEC	<a href="mailto:amaanaman2001@yahoo.com">amaanaman2001@yahoo.com</a>	021 254918
13	AMA BRAGO APPIAH	SOCIAL SUPPORT FOUNDATION	<a href="mailto:amabrogool@gmail.com">amabrogool@gmail.com</a>	027-6089365
14	ANGELA D. ABOAGYE	THE ARK FOUNDATION	<a href="mailto:adaboagye@yahoo.com">adaboagye@yahoo.com</a>	021-511610
15	AYISHETU MIKEY I	CARE INT.	<a href="mailto:ayishetu.mikejiddrisu@co.care.org">ayishetu.mikejiddrisu@co.care.org</a>	024-8129959
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## Appendix C: Communiqué

### COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF A TWO-DAY NATIONAL GENDER FORUM ORGANISED BY GRAP ON THE THEME: “CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN GHANA: SHARING EXPERIENCES, CONTESTING SPACES, RENEWING COMMITMENTS”

**Date:** MARCH 15-17, 2010

**Venue:** AIRPORT WEST HOTEL, ACCRA.

#### Preamble

We, participants of the 2010 National Gender Forum organised from March 15-17, 2010 having met to present and discuss papers on a range of relevant themes such as climate change, political participation, media, trade unions, as a reflection of our contributions to date on the issue of promoting women’s rights and gender equality in Ghana;

**Recognising** that gender equality, women’s rights, and social justice can only be achieved with real commitment on the part of policy makers and with the active participation of women at all levels of decision making;

**Acknowledging** the commitment to promoting 40 per cent women representation in political processes and ensuring that 27 per cent appointments in the district assemblies have been women which is close to the minimum 30 per cent proposed by the UN;

#### **BUT**

**Concerned** about the lack of a clear agenda to ensure that all national governance issues address the specific concerns of women;

**Disappointed** that despite the high level of advocacy work undertaken by committed women and men on the need for a clear national agenda for the promotion of gender equality, women continue to face different forms of discriminatory practices, and excluded from critical decisions,

**Shocked** by the decrease in the number of women in Parliament and other decision-making structures in spite of the promise of the government for a 40 per cent representation in politics and decision-making;

**Aggrieved** by the continued experience of poverty, insecurity, poor health status, lack of employment and access to basic services such as water, health, education and electricity;

**Appalled** by the extent of political polarization currently being experienced within the public space with the active collaboration of sections of the media with dire consequences for the promotion of women’s rights and democratic governance,

**Encouraged** by the determination of gender sensitive women and men to remain committed to the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality in Ghana’s democratisation process;



**And**

**Committed** to working with relevant agencies, institutions and organizations with the mandate to promote women's rights and gender equality;

**Hereby demand as follows:**

1. That the Government puts in place guarantees in the Constitution for women's rights and gender equality promotion especially through the Constitutional Review Process;
2. That the Government undertakes an analysis of systemic obstacles for achieving the 40 per cent affirmative action target and release a new White Paper with realistic target for increasing the number of women in politics and decision-making;
3. That the Government retains the 50 percent target for women appointed into the district assemblies;
4. That the Government and donors include civil society organizations and women's rights organizations in all sector dialogue policy processes;
5. That the Government ensures that all policy discussions on climate change are informed by a gender analysis and the promotion of women's rights and effective participation of women;
6. That the Government strengthens health systems to ensure that every pregnant woman has free access to skilled attendance at birth and emergency obstetric care at the point of delivery to reduce the unacceptably high levels of maternal mortality;
7. That the Government fulfils its promise of implementing the demands contained in the Women's Manifesto for Ghana;
8. That the government holds itself accountable to the promotion of child rights and the rights of other vulnerable groups including the disabled from a gender responsive perspective.
9. That media houses take responsibility for improving the quality of reporting on gender equality issues by deepening their relationships with women's rights organisations;
10. That the Government increases its accountability to women's rights promotion through publishing sex-disaggregated data with a focus on results of public spending on women and men; and
11. That the Government makes funding support for women in local governance a percentage of the national budget instead of the ministries' (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development) budgets.