

# POLICY BRIEF

Media and Governance Series

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## **INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE IN GHANA: - THE MEDIA PUSH REQUIRED**

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# 1.0 Background

**W**omen constitute the majority of Ghana's population. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS 2013), women form 51.2% of Ghana's total population and have consistently remained the majority in the country. However, despite this majority, women remain under-represented in governance processes of the country either at the national or at the local levels. The low participation and representation of women in governance processes is woefully unacceptable as it does not promote sustainable development. This is because, their views, concerns, knowledge, contributions and expertise are critical to the holistic development of the country.

The United Nations (UN) declares that for women to be effective in any governance space, a minimum threshold representation and participation of 30% is required. This implies that any participation of women below 30 per cent makes women ineffective within that decision making space. Women are hugely significant in national development, hence increasing their participation in governance processes in Ghana – both at the local and national levels – undoubtedly requires the support and conscious commitment of all critical stakeholders (such as government, CSOs, Media, Development partners and women themselves) at all levels.

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In Ghana, over the years, the media continues to be influential in setting the public agenda and giving decisive visibility to issues. Thus, their failure to consciously include women in their programming means that increasingly, only few women get the chance to participate or be involved in public discourse, decision making processes.

This policy brief highlights the extent of women's participation in governance in Ghana and what has been the role of the media (traditional and online) in increasing women's participation in governance and the challenges. It also makes key recommendations on increasing women's participation in governance processes.

## **2.0 Contextual Analysis of Women's Participation in Governance Processes in Ghana**

At all historical junctures, women in Ghana have contributed immensely towards Ghana's political life. From the period of independence to date, women have contributed resources and actively articulated their concerns and issues within both their households and in the public arena. In spite of the pivotal role Ghanaian women play within the family, community and society at large, their presence in key decision-making positions in any of the sectors of economic, political and social life is minimal. They are relegated to the background as far as public decision-making is concerned. This is because of the absence of concrete policy measures to ensure that the structural inequalities between women and men are taken into account in promoting participation in policy decisions.

At the political front, since 1992, when the country ushered in multi-party politics after over a decade of military rule, Ghana has held seven (7) parliamentary and presidential elections and six (6) district level elections that have been by and large, conflict-free. Yet, women's representation in decision-making, in both local and national elections has failed to reach the 30 percent UN recommended minimum threshold in women's representation in decision-making. This is in spite of the efforts made by the media, civil society organisations and other key stakeholders.

**Table 1: RESULTS OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (1965-2016)**

<b>1 YEAR OF ELECTION 6YEAR0</b>	<b>T O T A L SEATS</b>	<b>SEATS CONTESTED BY WOMEN</b>	<b>SEATS WON BY WOMEN 0</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
1965	104044	19	19	18.2
1969	104	9	1	0.7
1979	140	19	5	3.5
1992	140	23	16	8.0
1996	200	57	18	9.0
2000	200	95	19	9.5
2004	200	100	25	10.9
2008	230	103	19*	8.2
2012	275	133	29	10.6
2016	275		38	13.8

Today, at the national level, out of the two hundred and seventy-five (275) Members of Parliament, only thirty-eight (38) of this number are women, representing 13.81%. In addition, women form 19.35% of the total number of Ministers and 20% of the total number of Members of Council of State. This low representation is seen in almost all appointments and elected spaces of governance in the country.

In furtherance to this abysmal representation of women, a research conducted by ABANTU for Development (a women's rights organisation), in 2015, revealed that boards of major state institutions in the country, such as the Ghana Police Service, the Ghana Prisons

Service, Ghana Cocoa Board, Ghana Immigration Service, Ghana Revenue Authority and the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) mostly had one (1) woman. This occurrence, the research indicated, allows decisions to be made without women's contributions, knowledge, expertise and perspectives, thus, hampering development and perpetuating the inequalities of society. The research highlighted that it is important to ensure that women are adequately represented in public life in order for them to contribute to overall development.

This one-woman representation, otherwise known as **tokenism**, is also realised in the appointment of women to occupy certain key positions in government such as the Attorney General's Office, the Chief Justice, the Electoral Commission and the Chairperson of the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE). However, these positions do not afford women the opportunity to make substantive and critical contributions as individuals and not as a collective.

**At the local level**, the situation is no different even though women are often at the forefront of grass-root mobilisation and campaigns. Women constitute a little below 5% of the total percentage of assembly members in the country though the Government of Ghana gave a directive for the appointment of not less than 30% women.

The statistics at both local and national levels show that women's participation in governance processes in Ghana remains below the UN threshold of 30%, contributing to women's inability to be effective in decision making. This abysmal representation of women is evident at the global level as Ghana currently stands at the 143<sup>rd</sup> position out of 193 (One Hundred and Ninety three) UN member states in terms of gender equality and women's participation.

Though Ghana was the first country in Africa to pass a law (Representation of the People's Act, 1959) which allowed ten (10) women to enter into the first Parliament in 1960, it is unfortunately now one of countries with the least representation of women. Unlike other countries in Africa that have taken concrete interventions to increase women's participation in governance, Ghana continues to lag behind. Senegal, for example, passed a Gender Parity Law in 2010 that obliges all political parties to nominate an equal number of women and men on party lists and as constituency candidates, otherwise they are disqualified.

As a result of this law, in 2012, the number of women increased from 22.7 per cent to 42.7 per cent. Furthermore, Ethiopia now has a Cabinet representation that is 50/50 for women and men. Rwanda which has become an example to many countries in Africa and across the globe, has reached 68% in terms of women's participation and representation in governance processes. Each of these countries have shown tremendous growth and development as a result of their gender equality interventions. Thus, it is evident, that no country can develop without women's active and effective participation in governance processes.

### 3.0 Legal Frameworks that Promote Women's Participation in Governance

It is interesting to note that in spite of this extremely low participation and representation of women in governance, Ghana is signatory to a number of protocols and conventions that mandate it put in place measures that would increase women's participation in governance processes. These legal frameworks offer the basis for increased advocacy for the promotion of women's participation in decision making spaces. These laws exist at the global, regional and national levels.

At the global level, as a member of the United Nations (UN), Ghana has ratified a number of conventions including:

- **The Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948** states that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her own country either by voting for, or running as a candidate for election.
- **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** was adopted by member states in 1979 as an International bill for the rights of women and for parties to take measures to prevent any form of discrimination against women. The Convention defines discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction

#### Global

- a. Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948
- b. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- c. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – 1995
- d. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015

#### Continental

- e. AU Protocol on Women's Rights – 2004
- f. AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality of 2004

#### National:

- g. The Representation of the Peoples Act of 1959
- h. The 1992 Constitution Articles 17;35;36;40

made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." Thus, exclusion of women from governance, public life, politics, economic and social lives constitutes discrimination of women.

In addition, **Article 7** of the Convention demands of States Parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

**(a)** To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

**(b)** To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.

In view of this, CEDAW is very clear on the demands placed on member states as well as their commitments at ensuring gender equality and Ghana as a member state has ratified this Convention and is therefore required to adhere to the provisions outlined in it.

- **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – 1995** sets a target of a minimum 30% representation of women in all decision making positions at all levels in member states.

The Beijing Declaration further provides that equal participation of women and men in decision-making provides a balance that reflects the composition of society, something that is needed to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2015** states that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world and calls on UN member States to provide women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes in order to fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large.

At the African Regional level as well, a number of protocols and conventions also exist to direct African countries under the African Union (AU) to promote women's rights and their participation in governance and decision making spaces. Some of these are:

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.

- **Protocol on Women's Rights – 2004** mandates State parties of the African Union to ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision making
- **The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality of 2004** reaffirms the commitment of the Heads of State of the African Union to put in place policies to promote equal participation of women and men in:
  - ✓ ***the legislature***
  - ✓ ***leadership of political parties***
  - ✓ ***the executive branch of government***
  - ✓ ***the judiciary***
  - ✓ ***local government***
  - ✓ ***Boards and committees and other areas***

**At the National level**, there are legislation that mandate Ghana to support women's participation in governance processes. Some of these laws include:

- **The Representation of the Peoples Act of 1959** was an affirmative action law that paved the way for ten (10) women to be elected to the National Assembly, which was the first Parliament in 1960.
- **The 1992 Constitution**, which is the highest law of the land, has a number of provisions, guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens. These provisions include:
  - ✓ **Article 17** provides that (1) all persons shall be equal before the law and a person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status.
  - ✓ Under the Directive Principles of State Policy which guides the Executive, Judiciary, Legislature and Political parties in applying the Constitution, **Article 35(5)** provides that the State shall actively promote the integration of the peoples of Ghana and prohibit discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of place of origin, circumstances of birth, ethnic origin, gender or religion, creed or other beliefs.
  - ✓ **35(6)** states that the State shall take appropriate measures to achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices

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An active remedial mechanism or policy aimed at removing discrimination, improve the rights and socio-political progress of non-dominant groups who are historically disadvantaged. It is a temporary act to facilitate equality in representation for national development.

Under the provisions of economic management, Article 36(6) provides that the State shall afford equality of economic opportunity to all citizens; and, in particular, the State shall take all necessary steps so as to ensure the full integration of women into the mainstream of the economic development of Ghana.

**Article 40** also mandates the State to adhere to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), Commonwealth and ECOWAS of which Ghana is a member. And as indicated above, these International agencies have agreed on protocols and conventions that advance women's rights and their participation in governance. Finally, at the local level, Ghana's Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) provides for a minimum 30% appointment of women into the local governance structure.

## 4.0 Compliance with Legal Instruments and Frameworks

In terms of the compliance with the legal instruments stated above, it is unfortunate to note that successive governments have not complied with these laws and provisions. For example, no government has so far been able to attain the 30% appointment of women into Ghana's Local Governance system as stipulated in Act 936, Ghana's Local Governance Act, 2016. Women's participation at the local level continues to remain at an awful rate of 10% and below.

Furthermore, Article 36(6) provides that the State shall take measures to ensure the full integration of women in the economic development of the country, yet, an 11-member Economic Management Committee was set up by the President to oversee the economic development of the country and there was no woman appointed to be part of the Committee. This is a clear demonstration of lack of compliance with the directive principles of State Policy as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution. A similar occurrence is seen in the appointment of ministers, as women currently only form 19.35% of the total number of ministers.

Taking into cognizance the UN threshold of 30% in all governance spaces as stated by the Beijing Platform for Action, it is evident that Ghana has over the years not been able to attain a 30% representation of women neither in Parliament, among ministers, in public offices nor at the district level.

It is also worth noting that, though some efforts have been made to promote women's participation, the measures have been very slow and largely unconsciously done, not in line with required laws and provisions.

## **5.0 Existing Mechanisms to Promote Women's Participation**

In spite of the under-representation of women, some initiatives though minimal, have however been taken to increase women's participation. Some of which include:

- a) The Electoral Commission in 2016 reduced the filing fees of women Parliamentary aspirants from GH₵ 10,000 (\$2,000) to GH₵ 5,000 (\$1,000) to allow for more women to contest the elections.
- b) Political parties have also reduced filing fees for women aspirants of Parliamentary and Presidential Primaries to encourage more women to contest. More specifically, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in 2018 has stated that women and persons with disabilities who wish to contest the parliamentary primaries are to pay 50 percent of the fixed filling fee, thus, 50 per cent less [GH₵200,000] of the filing fee
- c) The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), in 2015, resolved to give a 50% rebate on both filing and development fees to women and persons with disability.
- d) The flag bearer of the NPP in 2016, also gave an affirmative action directive, mandating that no one should contest women sitting Members of Parliament. However, this Affirmative Action policy received a backlash from party members as they opposed the decision: it was therefore rescinded.
- e) Civil societies have remained critical players in this discourse. They have through various interventions built the capacities of women aspirants to contest and also to be effective, and have as well supported them in various forms through their campaign processes to increase their chances of election.

## **6.0 Critical Challenges to Women's Participation in Governance in Ghana**

There are a number of challenges that have prevented and continue to prevent women from actively participating in governance processes all these years. This paper takes a look at five (5) of these critical challenges that confront women. These are:

- 1. Lack of political will and commitment** to addressing inequalities and promoting women's rights and their participation in governance. Based on the governance structure of the country, the three (3) arms of government, particularly, the executive and



legislature have a critical role to play in advancing women's participation. The first President of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, spearheaded the passage of the Representation of the People's Act in 1959 to allow for ten (10) women into the First Parliament in 1960. Countries such as Senegal, Rwanda and Ethiopia have demonstrated strong political will by passing laws that ensure 40% to 60% representation of women in their Parliament, district assemblies and other decision making spheres. The government has the power to appoint ministers, appoint 30% of local level

officials, ambassadors, Council of State, Board members of public institutions and committees as well as other critical spaces of governance. Yet, women are less represented in all these spheres due to the lack of political will to make women's participation of critical concern. It is this challenge that has led to the formation of a National Economic Management Committee that had no woman and also the appointment of six (6) regional ministers and their deputies for the newly created regions with only (1) woman.

**2. The patriarchal nature of the Ghanaian society** has continuously hindered women from realizing their full potential in every aspect of the society. Consequently, women's lives everywhere are marked by distinct patterns of disadvantage on many fronts: at home, in politics, in the labour market, and in the larger society. Challenges and obstacles to women's equal participation in leadership and decision making spaces have their bases within the prevailing cultural, social and economic systems which are generally patriarchal in nature. Ghana is a highly patriarchal country where males generally wield primary power and predominate in roles of leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Men tend to have more access to opportunities that lead to dominance and power as compared than the women. These are evident in cultural proverbs, idioms and general societal orientation. Some structural norms and traditions do not encourage women to take up leadership positions because men are seen as the natural leaders within the society. As such, women venturing into such spaces is seen as challenging the traditional order, thus, met with a lot of opposition.

**3. Unpaid Care work:** The gender role ascribed to women as full time wives, mothers, caregivers and career women puts too much pressure on her such that little or no

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Patriarchy refers to a social system within which male authority is central to social, political and economic organisation: a feature of most human societies.

consideration is given to leadership positions or political positions which comes with its own challenges and additional tasks. In the Ghanaian society or home, household chores are mainly the sole responsibilities of women making it almost impossible to make time for other leadership roles and responsibilities, taking into consideration the already-burdened life of the woman. Thus, most women are often engrossed in their ascribed roles at home and in the society that they really have no time for participation in governance processes.

**4. Inadequate Funds and Resources:** women's low access to resources and opportunities, especially economic resources, renders women economically handicapped in competing with their male counterparts in politics. This is because, political leadership requires huge amounts of money, material and human resources, making participation in governance in Ghana an expensive venture. In most cases, women's access to and control of resources especially capital is limited. This makes women unable to contest for any political position, talk more of winning them since it involves a lot of resources and the majority of women in Ghana are financially disabled. In addition to this, the little capital and resources available to women are often used to take care of the home, given their roles as care givers and more often, as single parents.

**5. Lack of Support** – Again, the patriarchal system of the country makes it almost impossible for men and women to support other women to engage in politics or other leadership positions. Ideally, due to the long years of marginalisation of women, women aspirants should have received tremendous support for offering themselves up for electioneering processes. However, the reality is actually the case. Women aspirants receive less or no support and sometimes strong opposition in their bid to participate in politics and other decision making spaces. Key stakeholders such as the family, political parties and the media often do not render the needed support. In reality, some women have had to consistently negotiate with their families in order to participate in governance processes while others have been forced to choose between their spouses and their political ambitions.

## 7.0 How has the media fared in promoting Women's Participation in Governance in Ghana?

**The Media** is the sword arm of democracy and acts as the watchdog that protects public interest against corruption. It is one of the most powerful tools of communication in the developing and developed countries that aids in ensuring that rights of citizens are protected and inclusive governance is achieved in line with laid down laws and procedures. The messages the media transmit – online and traditional - have the potential to either

change or reinforce social norms and behaviours, and mobilize citizens to take progressive actions. The role of the media therefore remains crucial to nationwide development, specifically, women's participation and their contribution in national governance.

The media in Ghana remains influential in setting the public agenda and giving decisive visibility to issues. It is worth mentioning that the media have contributed mostly in positive ways at advancing women's participation in the governance of the country. Particularly, they provide their platforms to profile women aspirants and allow them the opportunity to "sell" themselves to the public and increase their visibility during elections – local and national. Media houses, such as the national daily – the Daily Graphic - has consistently provided a column in its newspaper to address gender and related issues while providing the platform for women's increased participation in governance processes. Other media houses have also used their platforms to grant various interviews for women aspirants to amplify their voices and enhance their visibility as well as their chances of being elected while addressing other gender related issues.

Undoubtedly, several media houses and journalists have participated and received trainings by organisations such as UNESCO, CSOs and other development organisations on gender sensitive reportage and using their platforms to increase women's voices and participation in governance. Other civil society organisations such as the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana, Federation of Women Lawyers, Women in Law and Development and ABANTU for Development have also provided training for media houses on amplifying women's rights issues and the need for their participation, echoed in the passage of the Affirmative Action Law. Organisations such as the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in raising awareness and increasing discussions around women's participation and involvement in public discourse in Ghana, between the year 2013 and 2014 tracked and reported on the women's participation and voice in public discourse through radio.

These organisations have also partnered media outlets in sensitizing the public on gender equality and women in governance, especially during electioneering processes. Some media houses have in turn provided their platforms for free for the enhancement of women's participation in national discourses. Currently, STAR-Ghana Foundation is supporting a number of media houses across the country such as TV3, GBC, Ghana Journalists Association and others to provide spaces for women aspirants to discuss their vision and reasons for which they seek to be elected. It is interesting to note that the national ministry charged with the promotion of gender issues - Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) has also worked vigorously with the media to sensitise the public and increase dissemination on the need to vote women and on critical gender related issues.

**Despite these commendable efforts**, some media houses, intentionally or otherwise, continue to allow their platforms to be used to denigrate, and negatively create tension

around women aspirants and women in governance, questioning their participation, competences and even their presence in decision-making spaces. These confrontations have sent negative signals to women interested in governance and have deterred many from venturing into politics and other leadership spaces as a result of the **negative media “attacks” and “name calling”**.

**Media advocacy on women issues have also not been sustainable;** and particularly for the traditional media spaces, such efforts have remained at the discretion of media owners, managers and programme producers other than a conscious effort to create legitimate spaces for women in the media landscape. Despite the huge potential of the internet to empower women voices in the civic space, [a study](#) conducted by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), found that, unreliable internet service, high cost of data services and sexual harassment serve as barriers, preventing women from exploiting the huge potential the internet offers for self-empowerment and overall development.

## **8.0 Recommendations for Increasing Women’s Participation in Governance**

Based on the issues raised above, it is evident that women’s participation in governance has progressed albeit at a snail’s pace. There is the need for an increased and concerted media push to sustain gains made regarding the visibility, voices and participation of women in decision-making spaces. This policy brief thus makes the following recommendations:

### ***1. The Media must embark on Sustained and Result-oriented Campaigns on the Issues of Women***

The media must make use of all available research and statistics from academia and civil society on the low representation of women in governance in Ghana and use their platforms (radio, television, print and social media) to increase public awareness, advocate for citizens’ interest and garner support for the promotion of women’s participation in governance. A clear example is seen in the role the media played in “inciting” the public against “galamsey” in Ghana. The media used all their platforms (audio and visuals) to expose the ills and hazards of galamsey as a means of creating awareness against the canker while gathering support from the public against the canker. As a result of the intensive media involvement, the government had no option than to intervene and put in place measures to stop galamsey. In the same vein, the media has a major role to play in addressing women’s low representation.

for women parliamentary aspirants of the 2020 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections to ensure that as many women that contest elections win them and are represented in those spaces of decision making.

**2. The media must increase coverage of issues of women in major programmes - Morning shows, Mid-day news and political discussion programmes; editorials, front pages and others.**

The media must endeavour to amplify the great strides of women – across both the public and private sector. There are women in the many fields of endeavour – the sciences, engineering, CSOs, medicine, artisans etc. the media must consciously make time to fish out such personalities for their programmes and shows. Again, they should collaborate with civil society organisations to profile women aspirants of the 2019 District Assembly Elections, have these aspirants on their shows, increase their visibility, assist in campaigns and amplify the need for citizens to vote for them. A replica of this initiative must also be done

**Key Recommendations for Media**

- 1. Embark on Sustained & Result-oriented Media Campaigns on the Issues of Women**
- 2. Increase coverage of issues of women in major programmes - Morning shows, Mid-day news and Evening political programmes; editorials, front pages and others.**
- 3. Contribute extensively to the campaign on the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill (AAB)**
- 4. Public education and sensitisation on the effective use of the internet (social media and other online platforms**
- 5. Mobilisation and Movement Building**

**3. Media must contribute extensively to the campaign on the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill (AAB)<sup>1</sup>.**

The law on Affirmative Action presents itself as the guaranteed way to increasing women's representation in decision making spaces such as Parliament, district assemblies and other areas of governance in the country, given the inherent discrimination and inequalities that exist in Ghana's political and socio-cultural structures. The Bill has been in existence for over seven years but has still not reached the floor of Parliament. The media must question the delay in its passage and just as the media pushed through every available means for the passage of the Right to Information Bill (RTI), it must do same to get the Affirmative Action Bill passed within the shortest possible time. The media remains inherently the largest voice and one of the most powerful tools at promoting women's rights, gender equality and women's participation in governance: without the media, this vision cannot be realised.

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the AA Bill is to promote the full and active participation of women in public life by providing for a more equitable system of representation in electoral politics and governance in accordance with the Republic of Ghana's international and constitutional obligations and national development aspirations.

#### **4. Public education and sensitisation on the effective use of the Internet (social media and other online platforms)**

While the internet and online spaces provide opportunities for women empowerment, there are many potential risks and threats that deter women from actively participating in those spaces. The media must also step up education for women especially young women on effective use of social media rather than using the platforms for acts that further denigrate women offline.

#### **5. Mobilisation and Movement Building**

It is evident that the fight for women's participation in decision making cannot be won by one group of people. Women's issues are human rights issues as well as national issues. It is therefore important for all key stakeholders: government, civil society, media, religious and traditional leaders as well as the entire citizenry to form alliances and collectively advocate for women's participation. All and sundry must also mobilise for interested women and build the capacities in order to put themselves up for elections. The concept of men advocating for women's rights and their participation in decision making must also be encouraged as this group of men are likely to influence other men especially those in power to develop policies and programmes that support women's candidature.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

In conclusion, women's low participation is a loss to the nation and in spite of the various Constitutional and International provisions for promoting women's participation, the problem still persists, mainly due to the absence of a clear law that specifically and holistically deals with the issue, by providing punitive measures for non-adherence. The Affirmative Action Law presents itself as Ghana's best alternative at increasing women's participation in governance. All stakeholders must therefore commit to increasing public awareness and advocacy to ensure its passage within the shortest possible time. In the meantime, a key stakeholder such as the media, must take advantage of the existing mechanisms and legal frameworks to continue pushing for women's increased participation in all decision making spaces. If we recognize our national loss due to women's low participation and put in as much effort at all levels, Ghana is likely to move from its current position as the 143<sup>rd</sup> at the global level to a much promising position in terms of women's participation.



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## CONTACT US

Media Foundation for West Africa  
30 Duade Street, Kokomlemle  
P. O. Box LG 730, Legon  
Accra, Ghana  
Tel: +233(0) 302 242470  
Email: [info@mfwa.org](mailto:info@mfwa.org)