



PRESS STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

Accra, 3rd April, 2025

Subject: Urgent Call to Address Gender Disparities in MMDCE Nominations and Appointments Nationwide

The Ghana Chapter of the UNOWAS Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace, and Security is deeply concerned about the alarming underrepresentation of women in the nominations and appointments of Municipal, Metropolitan, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) across Ghana. The current situation of women constituting less than 6.9% of appointed MMDCEs is unacceptable. Despite ongoing advocacy and the Government's stated commitment to affirmative action, the current appointments reveal a troubling gender imbalance that undermines progress toward gender equity in governance, particularly under the Mahama administration.

A Disturbing Overview of Gender Representation

According to a national statement released by the Ministry of Local Governance on March 26, 2025, which listed 72 nominees across various regions, only 5 of these nominees are women. This represents a mere 6.9% of total nominations and highlights systemic barriers that inhibit women's participation in decision-making roles. Below is a breakdown of female representation across regions:

Region	Female Nominees	Total Nominees	Percentage
Volta	3	18	16.7%
Bono	2	10	20%
Greater Accra	7	94	7.4%
Oti	0	9	0%
Ahafo	0	6	0%
Bono East	0	9	0%
North East	0	6	0%
Savannah	0	5	0%
Western North	0	9	0%

The UNOWAS Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security was established in April 2009 to promote gender-responsive and youth-inclusive strategies for sustainable peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel. It serves as a space/network for experience sharing, analysis, and participatory evaluation of initiatives and efforts for promoting and recognizing the essential roles that women and young people play in conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict recovery.

This data underscores the significant underrepresentation of women, with several regions failing to nominate even a single woman. Such an imbalance undermines Ghana's democratic principles and jeopardizes the nation's progress toward equitable governance.

Affirmative Action Law: A Call for Accountability

The current nominations blatantly disregard Section 16 (1), (2), and (4) of the Affirmative Action Law, which mandates progressive gender balance in governance institutions and public service appointments. Specifically:

The President is required to ensure that gender equity targets are met in appointments to ministerial positions, district assemblies, and other governance bodies.

Public institutions must report annually on their progress toward gender equity.

The observed underrepresentation contravenes these provisions and undermines efforts to achieve sustainable development, peace, and stability through inclusive governance. This non-compliance not only breaches legal obligations but also perpetuates systemic barriers to women's participation in decision-making roles.

Recommendations for Immediate Action

To address this urgent issue, we propose the following actionable steps:

Emergency Review and Reform of Nomination Processes: Conduct an immediate and independent audit of the shortlisting mechanisms to identify systemic barriers preventing women from being nominated.

Implement Affirmative Action Measures: Enforce gender quotas to ensure at least 30% female representation in MMDCE positions before confirmations.

Accountability Taskforce: Establish a high-level, multi-stakeholder taskforce to oversee compliance with affirmative action mandates and report directly to the President.

Establish Monitoring Mechanisms: Develop robust systems to track gender equity progress and hold institutions accountable for compliance with affirmative action guidelines.

Public Awareness Campaign: Initiate a national campaign to highlight the critical importance of women's leadership in local governance.

Accelerated Capacity Building for Women: Launch an intensive, nationwide program to prepare women for leadership roles, particularly in regions with zero female nominations. Collaborate with women's groups such as ours, the UNOWAS Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace, and Security to provide training programs that enhance skills and competitiveness for leadership roles.

Conclusion

The severe underrepresentation of women in MMDCE nominations is not merely a gender issue; it is a governance crisis that threatens Ghana's democratic foundations and development goals. Immediate, decisive action is imperative to rectify this imbalance and ensure that women's voices are heard at all levels of governance.

The persistent exclusion of women from leadership roles is not only a betrayal of trust but also a waste of their immense talent and contributions. We urge the government to act decisively to rectify this imbalance by adhering to affirmative action mandates and fostering inclusive governance structures. This matter deserves the utmost urgency.

The UNOWAS Working Group stands ready to provide any necessary support to facilitate rapid and meaningful change through advocacy, capacity-building initiatives, and monitoring

frameworks. Together, let us work toward a future where women have equal opportunities to lead and contribute meaningfully to national development. The time for rhetoric has passed; Ghana must act now to safeguard its commitment to inclusive governance and gender equity.