



**NATIONAL FEMINIST FORUM  
CONCEPT NOTE**

**THEME: ENHANCING ACTIVISM IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: MOBILISING FOR INCLUSION  
AND DIVERSITY**

**INTRODUCTION**

The socio-cultural and economic well-being of women, who are 52% of the nation's population, cannot be taken for granted if Ghana wants to ensure an all-inclusive developmental growth. Gender equality and women's rights remain not only a moral imperative but also a pragmatic priority for development and peace. The struggle for women's rights remains a critical concern in Ghana.

Many common traditional gender barriers persist within the predominantly patriarchal societies in Ghana. Gender roles are rigid, with women bearing the burden of reproductive work and unpaid care work in households and not having equal access to opportunities—including access to education, capital, and land. Although there have been several policy commitments toward the quest for gender equality in areas of leadership, women's empowerment, and livelihood opportunities, among others, they have yielded minimal results across all spheres of national life. This is reflected in the low representation of women in decision-making and elective office; women constitute about 14 percent of members in the 8th Parliament of Ghana although they constitute nearly 51 percent of the population.

Over the years, feminists have been facing significant backlash and spaces for social movement mobilisation at the global level are shrinking (Bonisteel & Green, 2005; Della Porta, 2013). Several scholars have argued that this is especially evident for developing countries (Wood, 2016) and has repercussions for civil society sustainability (Della Porta, 2013; Pratt, 2016).

Despite working through coalitions and networks to create a stronger voice for women in Ghana's policy advocacy space, there are still challenges inhibiting increased activism within the women's movement. There is however the need to recognize the fact that there is a strong movement of women and organisations across the country who are working to ensure the protection of the rights of women and girls in all spaces. It is therefore critical that the different constituencies work together as a strong inclusive collective with diverse background and identities to maximise efforts to push for systemic and structural gendered reforms.

NETRIGHT in its quest to contribute to strengthening the women's movement in Ghana provides space for feminist discourse through the hosting of the national feminist forum which brings together feminists with diverse background and interest to interrogate policies, discuss challenges facing the movement and agree on strategies to enhance women's rights and gender equality work.

The 2022 National Feminist Forum will provide an opportunity to reflect on feminism and gender equality work, strengthen momentum to push for a common feminist agenda, discuss topical and emerging issues affecting feminists across different spaces and to build solidarity.

The National Feminist Forum is supported by Plan International Ghana with funding from Global Affairs Canada under the Women's Voice and Leadership Project.

## **RATIONALE**

Feminist organizing has increased in Ghana as feminists continue to demand for a just and equal society for women and girls. In the struggle for women's rights and gender equality, the demands of our time make it obligatory for us to continuously examine, scrutinize and interrogate processes that perpetuate existing structural inequalities that work to exclude women, girls and vulnerable groups from fully enjoying their fundamental human rights.

With recent discourses on feminism and the women's movement, the convening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Feminist Forum (NFF) presents a unique opportunity and space for feminists to identify some of the key challenges facing the women's movement in Ghana and think through how the feminist agenda can be advanced by all across generations while respecting our diversities.

The Ghana Feminist Forum will bring together feminists from across the country to deliberate on issues of key concern to women and girls. It will further be an opportunity to network, collaborate and understand the needs of women in different spaces by exploring diversities and intersectionality and how these translate into the work of feminist and women's rights organisations as we mobilise for change and bridge the gap to promote inclusiveness, shared leadership and ownership in order to strengthen the women's movement in Ghana.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the NFF are to

- create a safe space for feminist discourse,
- assess women's rights and gender equality work,
- discuss critical issues affecting the women's movement and strategize to increase and sustain activism to push for transformative reforms,
- Develop an inclusive agenda which integrates the voice of both older and younger generation from different social classes and across the rural/urban divide to redefine African feminism as a way of moving forward as a movement.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Multiple forms of feminism and its implications for constructing a Ghanaian feminist identity explored,
- Clear and well-defined strategies to strengthen women's mobilising and networking to push for gendered transformative changes,

- An inclusive action plan for diversity and intergenerational collaboration in the promotion of women's rights through a feminist agenda developed.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The forum will be conducted using an interactive format facilitating the exchange of ideas by participants. Key methodologies to be used will include presentations, panel discussions, breakout sessions and plenary discussions. The forum will use art, culture, technology and creative expression, and innovative ways in which activists can forge alliances, learn, celebrate activist creativity, and ultimately advance our feminist and cross-movement work.

### **PARTICIPATION**

It is expected that sixty (60) participants made up of feminists representing both older and younger generation from different social classes including the rural/urban divide across Ghana will attend the National Feminist Forum (NFF).