

<https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2016/11/15/ghana-gets-womens-situation-room/>

Ghana gets Women's Situation Room

The Women's Situation Room (WSR), a women's peace building mechanism that mitigates conflict before, during and after elections in Africa has been replicated in Ghana.

It is a non-partisan and neutral process that mobilises women in collaboration with the youth to engage stakeholders to support the women's call for peaceful elections as a peace and security measure in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325.

The UNSCR 1325 reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Resolution 1325 urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations peace and security efforts.

It also calls on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly, rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

The WSR process is currently being replicated in all 10 regions of Ghana by the Women and Youth Coordinating hubs, who continue to engage key stakeholders and the public, while mounting a robust awareness raising campaign for peaceful elections in December.

The eminent members of WSR – Ghana include Ms Adwoa Pokua Bame, the National Co-ordinator; Professor Akua Kuenyehia, a former Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Ghana; Ms Afia Yakubu, peace and security campaigner; Mrs Sabina Ofori-Boateng, a retired civil servant; Naa Koteitsoo Afrasomanso I, Queenmother of Koteiman; Madam Gertrude Oforiwa Fefome, Global Advocacy Adviser; and Professor Ama Atta Aidoo, a remarkable writer.

Others are Prof Henrietta Joy Abena Nyarko Mensah-Bonsu, an educationist and the Director for the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LCIAD), University of Ghana; the Reverend Dr Joyce R. Aryee, a pastor; and Ms Angela Bannerman, General Secretary, Young Women Christian Association, the Convener and host of the WSR Ghana Secretariat.

Counsellor Yvette Chesson-Wureh of Liberia, the initiator the WSR, in her remarks at the launch in Accra, said as part of the essential activities in replicating the WSR in Ghana, the convener of the process were introducing the Ghana Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism for the December 7 General Election.

She said politicians must not be allowed to continue to use the youth to create violence for their own selfish gains; stating that in the event of an outbreak of violence and conflicts, women and children suffered most.

She said the WSR initiative, which started in Liberia, had gradually expanded to Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and now Ghana.

She tasked the Ghana team of eminent women to ensure the success of the project.

Ms Bame said WSR-Ghana's Early Warning and Response Mechanism had been initiated by the training and deployment of 120 Focal Persons (women and men including youth) to key flash areas across the 10 regions.

She said WSR – Ghana had identified 96 flashpoints in the country, and that the early warning component comprised their focal persons; monitoring and reporting on threats and incidents of violence in their respective flashpoints..

The National Coordinator said the reports received so far had been centred around low grade conflicts between supporters of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC); the two leading political parties in Ghana.

She explained that the Early Response was the Eminent Women Mediators engaging the police on resolving reports received in real time and using their clout to access leaders of political parties to intervene and resolve incidents as and when they were reported.

Ms Bame said they were currently introducing the WSR concept to key stakeholders and opening lines of communication to ensure effective collaboration before, during and after the polls.

She announced that as part of its advocacy campaign, the WSR-Ghana would hold a series of week-long activities throughout the country.

She said WSR – Ghana would on Wednesday, November 16, hold a day's inter-party Dialogue Forum in Accra for Women Organisers from the six main political parties contesting this year's presidential election – NPP, NDC, Progressive People's Party (PPP), Convention People's Party (CPP), National Democratic Party (NDP) and the People's National Convention (PNC).

She said they would be holding a 1000 Women's Peace March for the NPP and the NDC, in all 10 regions on Thursday, November 17; to be followed by the formal launch of WSR – Ghana, the same day at the forecourt of Parliament in Accra.