

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion says the limited participation of women in local government leadership remains a concern, warning that their absence from decision-making positions close to communities represents a missed opportunity.

Gender and Family Promotion Minister Consolée Uwimana raised the issue during the fourth General Assembly of the Local Government Women Network, a platform that brings together women leaders and employees from districts and the City of Kigali down to village-level administration, along with government institutions and development partners.

Uwimana said local government institutions are the foundation of governance because they operate closest to citizens, receiving community concerns and working on solutions. She said women's limited representation in these structures prevents them from fully contributing to decisions that affect their lives.

"Local government is the backbone of governance and the closest to citizens," Uwimana said. "When women are not adequately represented in these institutions to contribute to decision-making, it is a loss."

Although Rwanda has strong political support for gender equality, Uwimana said many women remain hesitant to pursue leadership positions, particularly in local administrations.



Officials highlighted initiatives aimed at addressing the gap. The Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities, in partnership with the gender ministry and the Ministry of Local Government, has introduced internship opportunities in local administrations for recent female university graduates. The program is intended to build confidence and encourage young women to pursue leadership roles.

Anne Marie Kagwesage, coordinator of the Local Government Women Network, said the platform was created to strengthen women's leadership skills, encourage knowledge sharing and promote gender equality across local government institutions.

Data from the association show that women hold 41% of seats in district councils and 30% of district mayor positions. Women account for 17% of sector executive secretaries and 28% of cell leaders.

Overall, women occupy about 44.5% of elected positions in local government, according to a 2026 review by the association.