



Coalition of Domestic  
Election Observers (CODEO)

FINAL OBSERVATION  
REPORT ON

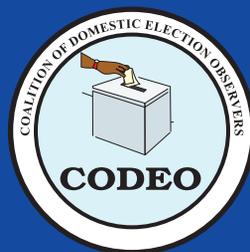
# **THE 2015 DISTRICT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS OF GHANA**

*Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government Elections:  
Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process*

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## ACRONYMS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| AGI        | Association of Ghana Industries                       |
| APRM       | African Peer Review Mechanism                         |
| CI         | Constitutional Instrument                             |
| CCG        | Christian Council of Ghana                            |
| CDD-Ghana  | Ghana Center for Democratic Development               |
| CODEO      | Coalition of Domestic Election Observers              |
| CSOs       | Civil Society Organizations                           |
| DAs        | District Assemblies                                   |
| DLE        | District Level Elections                              |
| DRRC       | District Registration Review Committee                |
| EC         | Electoral Commission of Ghana                         |
| EMB        | Election Management Body                              |
| FIDA-Ghana | Federation of International Women Lawyers – Ghana     |
| GBA        | Ghana Bar Association                                 |
| GenCED     | Gender Center for Empowering Development              |
| GFD        | Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations          |
| GJA        | Ghana Journalists Association                         |
| GMA        | Ghana Medical Association                             |
| GNDEM      | Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors          |
| GPCC       | Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council             |
| LI         | Legislative Instrument                                |
| LRC        | Legal Resources Center                                |
| MMDAs      | Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies       |
| MMDCEs     | Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives |
| NCCE       | National Commission for Civic Education               |
| NDC        | National Democratic Congress                          |
| NHIS       | National Health Insurance Scheme                      |
| NPP        | New Patriotic Party                                   |
| PNDC       | Provisional National Defence Council                  |
| PWDs       | Persons with Disabilities                             |
| SMS        | Short Message Services                                |
| TUC        | Trades Union Congress                                 |
| USAID      | United States Agency for International Development    |
| WAEON      | West Africa Election Observers Network                |
| WiLDAF     | Women in Law and Development in Africa                |
| YBF        | Youth Bridge Foundation                               |

## **PREFACE**

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The quintessence of functional citizen involvement in decision-making and local governance implies that local and national development is being promoted and democratic citizenship advocated for, leading to enhanced citizen participation in local governance. However, the current structure and composition of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), which underlie the concept and practice of local governance in Ghana skews the accountability of duty bearers to the central government. Chief Executives of the various MMDAs as well as 30% of the membership composition of the MMDAs are appointed by the President of the Republic. This limits Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs)'responsiveness to the needs of citizens—the primary beneficiaries of local governance, as they (MMDCEs) place a larger focus on executing central government's agenda rather than local government agenda. In the process, the needs of the marginalized and socially excluded, including women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs) who are under-represented in local government structures, are often not addressed.

It is against this backdrop that CODEO, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), implemented this project in support of the 2015 District Level Elections (DLE) to boost the participation of citizens particularly women, youth and persons with disabilities in local governance in Ghana. The activities under the project were carried out from June 2014 to December 2015, encompassing the period before the elections, during the elections and after the elections. The objective for supporting dynamic contributions by marginalized and vulnerable groups into the electoral process served as an alternative way for deepening Ghana's decentralization process by expanding their participation and voice. Through the tireless efforts of CODEO's Advisory Board, the Secretariat, Observers and member organizations, selected women, youth and PWDs were trained and deployed as civic educators, long term observers and poll watchers.

CODEO's objectives were achieved through the successful implementation of specific interventions and project activities in 86 purposively selected Districts in all the 10 regions of the Country. These achievements were made possible through diligent efforts of civic educators, pre-election observers, election-day and post-election observers deployed in the 86 districts. To increase citizens' awareness of the plight of the marginalized groups, and to encourage voters to vote for more women, youth and PWDs, 86 women were trained and deployed in the 86 project districts to embark on peer education. Community education programs were organized with the aim of whipping up interest of marginalized persons to contest in the District Assembly Elections. Further, CODEO organized capacity-building

workshops to enhance the capacity of marginalized individuals who were aspiring to be assembly members. The capacity-building program focused on effective campaigning and fundamental communication techniques to enable them improve their campaigning skills and ultimately enhance their chances of winning at the polls.

The Coalition carried out long term observations from the beginning of August 2014 until the eve of the elections in September 2015 by deploying the 86 observers. On polling day one, September 1, 2015, CODEO deployed a total of 681 poll watchers to the 86 districts to observe and report on the polling, counting of votes and declaration of results in the sampled polling stations.

Throughout the project implementation period, CODEO issued regular statements on its findings from its observation activities. This final report captures CODEO's findings on the entire electoral process, from the pre-election phase to the post-election period. The report further captures findings from the civic education and capacity building programs that were organized for aspirants in Ghana's District Level Elections (DLE). Finally, the report provides recommendations towards enhancing citizen participation in the DLE in the future, with a special focus on women, youth and PWDs. The report further recommends strategies for making the DLE attractive for citizen participation, both as contestants and voters.

We hope this report will be useful in enhancing citizen participation in local governance and thereby deepening decentralization for inclusive development outcomes.

**Professor Miranda Greenstreet and Justice V.C.R.A.C. Crabbe**  
**December 31, 2015**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) implemented a project in support of the 2015 District Level Elections (DLE) under the theme: “Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process”. The project sought to increase the participation of citizens, particularly marginalized groups including women, youth and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in local government elections. The project was designed and managed by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Secretariat of CODEO. The project's implementation was under the supervision and direction of the CODEO Advisory Board which is jointly chaired by Professor Miranda Greenstreet and Justice V.C.R.A.C. Crabbe. CODEO is grateful to the Co-Chairs and members of its Advisory Board for their direction, advice and support throughout the project implementation.

CODEO acknowledges the crucial support of the Board of Directors, Management and Staff of CDD-Ghana, and in particular the CODEO Secretariat staff, who contributed in varied ways to the successful implementation of the project. An extension of gratitude goes to the several observers who volunteered their time and energy as poll watchers to support a credible election process.

The Coalition is thankful to the Electoral Commission of Ghana for cooperating with CODEO towards ensuring peaceful and generally free and fair elections. CODEO appreciates the role played by the Ghana Police Service and other security agencies in ensuring that the isolated cases of disturbances and interferences that occurred on Election Day were responded to rapidly, and in a professional manner. All candidates who participated in CODEO's capacity-building programs for aspirants during the 2015 DLE are highly commended for their interest and participation.

CODEO further acknowledges the support and cooperation of its member organizations, particularly the Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), the Legal Resources Centre (LRC), Federation of International Women Lawyers, Ghana (FIDA-Ghana) and Youth Bridge Foundation (YBF), as well as other organizations and institutions including the Gender Center for Empowering Development (GenCED) and the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), in pushing the agenda of increased political participation of marginalized groups.

Finally, we would like to recognize that CODEO's support activities towards the 2015 local government elections were made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana.

This report was put together by the CODEO Secretariat. The Secretariat is headed by Dr. Franklin Oduro, who led the team to implement planned activities under the project and to produce this report. Mr. Paul Nana Kwabena Aborampah Mensah, Mrs. Rhoda Konadu Osei-Afful, Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin, Mr. Newton Yaw Norviewu, Mrs. Nana Ama Nartey and Miss Stephanie Fordjour assisted the Secretariat in putting this report together. CODEO and CDD-Ghana retain final responsibility for all errors, omissions and interpretations in this report.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Introduction

The rationale behind CODEO's interventions in the 2015 DLE was to augment citizens', particularly marginalized groups' awareness and participation in local governance. Titled *“Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process”*, the project broadly aimed to increase the engagement and participation of citizens in local government elections, as well as enhance transparency and credibility of the elections. The project was designed to respond to global and national calls to improve the representation of marginalized populations such as women, the youth and PWDs in public life. The interventions implemented under the project adopted a number of strategies to encourage more women, youth and PWDs to participate effectively in the electoral process. The strategies included capacity-building programs for women, youth and PWD candidates in the 2015 local government elections and to also canvass support for them among the electorates.

### Intervention Strategies

- Pre-election Phase: Among others, women, youth and PWD aspirants received capacity building training from CODEO on the concept of local governance and how to run effective and efficient election campaigning. In addition, 86 women were also trained and deployed to 86 selected districts to observe the pre-election environment. The 86 women also received training to administer peer education aimed at canvassing support and votes for females, young and PWD aspirants.
- Election Day Phase: On election-day, 681 election-day observers were deployed to selected polling stations across the country to observe the election-day voting processes and proceedings, from the opening of the polling centers to the close of polls, counting and declaration of results.
- Post-election Phase: Two major activities were planned for the post-election phase. First, the 86 pre-election environment observers were re-trained and deployed in their various districts to observe and report on the immediate post-election environment, including reporting on post-elections conflicts and contestations on the results, especially issues that involved the project target groups. Second, the project formed a civil society advocacy group with the aim of urging the government to include more women, youth and PWDs in the 30% reserved appointments into the assemblies.

## ***Summary of Findings:***

### **a) Observation of the Pre-Election Environment by CODEO Observers:**

- The Limited Voter Registration which took place ahead of the elections was generally smooth and peaceful with minimal incidents. It was, however, marked by low turn-out
- Many registration applicants could not produce any of the required identification cards for registration and hence, resorted to the use of human guarantors to secure their eligibility
- Several instances of violation of registration procedures were observed. For example, some people who could not produce valid identification cards or human guarantors were allowed to register at some registration centers. Some registrants were also allowed to by-pass the process by using other non-approved identification documents (for example, birth certificates) to register contrary to the guidelines for the registration exercise
- Biometric registration equipment generally functioned well at most registration centers, with some occasional breakdowns taking place at some centers
- Lack of understanding among some agents of political parties on the proper procedures for challenging the eligibility of a prospective registrant was observed
- The campaign process was generally observed to be peaceful although vigorous, with many aspirants conducting their campaigns using the house-to-house method, pasting of posters, holding meetings with congregants of various religious bodies and members of other social groups, clean-up exercises among others
- Discreet political party intrusion in the electioneering process, with political parties supporting candidates or candidates associating themselves with political parties
- Poor public awareness creation about the exercise, particularly in the run-up to the re-scheduled September 1, 2015 election. Voter and civic education to encourage citizens' interest and participation was limited in some of the districts. There was general public apathy towards the elections
- Minimal interventions by civil society organizations and the media in support of the elections, particularly on increasing citizen participation in the election. In general, there were no major visible activities by CSOs in support of local government elections in the districts observed

**b) Observation of the Polls:**

- By 6:00am, 97% of CODEO Stationary Observers had reported at their assigned polling stations
- CODEO Stationary Observers who were present at polling stations by 6:00AM reported that at 63% of polling stations observed, Polling Officials were punctual in accordance with the Electoral Commission's (EC) regulation, which required them to be present at their assigned polling stations by 6:30AM. At one-third of polling stations (33%) however, polling officials were not present at the time CODEO Stationary Observers arrived
- Electoral officials respected CODEO Stationary Observers' status as accredited observers and permitted them to observe the polls
- Approximately 82% opened by 8:00am. Of this figure, 34% were opened by 7:15AM and while 48% opened between 7:16am and 8:00am (see Figure 1, for the regional disaggregation of the above descriptive data)
- In all polling stations observed, voters' biometric registration information was verified. However, at about 8% of polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers reported about the malfunctioning of biometric verification machines at some point in time in the course of polls
- Reports from CODEO Stationary Observers showed that in 98% of polling stations observed, voters had their fingers marked with indelible ink before voting. Additionally, in 98% of polling stations, CODEO Stationary observers saw ballot papers being stamped with the EC's validating stamp before being issued to voters
- At 54% of polling stations observed, observers reported that no one arrived at the polling station after 5:00pm. However, at 40% of polling stations, electoral officials did not allow some voters who arrived after 5:00pm to vote
- During counting, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that nobody harassed or intimidated polling officials at most of the polling stations (96%). The CODEO Stationary Observers also indicated that in almost all polling stations (99%) there was no case of excess ballot papers being found in the ballot box than the number of voters who cast their ballots
- In 92% of the polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that none of the candidates' agents requested for a recount of ballots. Consequently, observers reported that in most of the polling stations, candidates' agents (95%) and the presiding officers (99%) endorsed the results declaration forms

**c) Observation of the Post-Election Environment and Advocacy Efforts:**

- In the post-election period, CODEO followed the President's appointments (30% of the total membership of MMDAs) into the various MMDAs as required by law and how inclusive these appointments were
- CODEO intensified its advocacy efforts in the post-election period. The objective was to canvas for the appointment of more women, PWDs and youth in the government's appointment of the 30% of assembly members
- CODEO therefore formed an advocacy coalition consisting of six institutions. This Coalition sought to push the agenda of including more marginalized persons in public life. It also tried to forge strategies intended to enhance the inclusion of marginalized groups in local government structures.

## **CHAPTER ONE** Decentralization, Local Governance and District Level Elections in Ghana

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### **1.0. Introduction**

Ghana has practiced decentralization for nearly three decades. The practice of decentralization and local governance is premised on popular participation, such that people living within particular localities have a say in the governance of their affairs. It is on the basis of this fact that citizens of demarcated electoral areas elect their representatives into the local legislature. The local legislature helps formulate by-laws that seek to provide governance for, and enhance development of the localities. This chapter provides an overview of the Local Government system in Ghana as well as an account of its implementation since inception.

#### *1.1 An Overview of Local Government and District Level Elections in Ghana*

The process of decentralization in Ghana began in 1988 with the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 207 which was enacted to give legal backing to the decentralization process in the country. The 1992 Constitution which ushered Ghana into democratic rule in 1993, consolidated and confirmed key provisions of the PNDC Law 207 as entrenched clauses in Article 240 of the Constitution.

The objectives for the introduction of decentralization were two-fold. First, there was to be Political Decentralization, which sought to transfer power through laid down administrative structures from the central government to sub-national governments. Second, there was to be Administrative Decentralization, which aimed at the re-distribution of authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of government. Thus, the relevant laws and provisions, such as the Local Government Act (Act 462) of 2003 and the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies' (MMDAs) Standing Orders (and the subsequent creation of the M/M/D/As) sought to consolidate local self-governance where people living within specific demarcated M/M/D/As were expected to have a 'voice' in how their communities were developed. The Local Government Act, establishing the district assembly system, also makes provision for an elaborate structure for decentralization at all levels, with the lowest level being the Unit Committee.

The practice of local governance and active citizen participation in decision-making processes was expected to nurture democratic citizenship, increase citizens' interest in governance and

promote local and national development. For close to three decades on, Ghana's decentralization agenda remains stagnant.<sup>1</sup> Effective political decentralization has not been achieved yet. M/M/DCEs are accountable to the President who appoints them than they are to their local citizens whose interest they serve. The technocratic capacity required to complement the work of elected Assembly Members is further stifled by the nature and composition of the Assembly.<sup>2</sup> The presidency appoints a third of the membership of the Assemblies just as the M/M/DCEs. In addition, very little has been achieved by way of fiscal and administrative decentralization. M/M/D/As are still largely dependent on central government for fiscal and administrative directions and are unable to develop and/or meet the needs of citizens at the local level.<sup>3</sup>

The efficacy of district level substructures has been considerably undermined by low patronage and participation over the years. For example, in 2002, only 5,619 out of the available 15,386 Unit Committee seats were contested for or attracted interested candidates (see CDD-Ghana/CODEO report on the 2002 District Level Elections). Indeed low voter patronage and low level of citizen's interest in contesting the 2010 local level elections prompted the introduction of a new Legislative Instrument (LI 1967) in 2010, which reduced the number and the composition of the Unit Committees from 15 to 5 elected members per electoral area. However, reducing the unwieldy size of Unit Committee membership has hardly improved the quality of the District Assemblies (DAs) and their sub-structures.

Aside the low level of citizen participation in local government elections and District Assembly activities, the constitutional provision (Article 248: 1 & 2) specifically making local government elections non-partisan has been flagrantly breached in practice. Political parties openly and covertly sponsor candidates contesting district level elections. In addition, the one-third Assembly members (representing 30% of total Assembly membership) appointed by the President typically keep allegiance to the President and ruling party.

It was against this background, as well as the poor performance of the Electoral Commission (EC) in the conduct of the 2010 district level elections<sup>4</sup>, that the planned 2014 district level elections were held rather in late 2015.

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<sup>1</sup>CDD-Ghana (2009), Reflections on Ghana's Decentralization Program: Progress, Stagnation or Retrogression-Papers from a Symposium

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup>Ibid

<sup>4</sup>The 2010 local level elections were conducted piecemeal and spanned more than 5 days, and also there were shortages of election materials in most of the polling centers. It was under this poor management of the elections that Parliament of Ghana set up a special committee to investigate the causes of the poor handling of the elections by the Electoral Commission and report same

## ***1.2 Inclusive Participation in Elections in Ghana: The Challenge of Marginalized Groups***

Citizens' interest and participation in politics and elections in Ghana is high mainly with national level elections (i.e. Presidential and Parliamentary elections). For example, Presidential elections in Ghana have consistently recorded a higher voter turn-out averaging 71.43% for all Presidential elections between 1992 and 2012<sup>5</sup>. On the contrary, citizens' participation in public life in Ghana has been worse at the local level. District Level Elections (DLE) have recorded less than 40% voter turn-out since 1994. With regards to elected representatives, participation has also been abysmal for women, youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). While women constitute over 50% of the total population of Ghana<sup>6</sup>, only 412 (representing 6.8 %) of the 6,093 elected Assembly Members in the 2010 DLE were women<sup>7</sup>. Similarly, as at August 2013, the President had appointed only 18 women out of 135 (representing 13%) to positions of M/M/DCEs<sup>8</sup>.

The overall situation of PWDs, who constitute 3.0% of Ghana's population (737,743),<sup>9</sup> is not any better. Despite civil society interventions aimed at increasing PWD participation in politics and public life, only limited advances have been made. An interim report on the 2012 elections by the Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations (GFD) indicated that training, capacity building and sensitization improved the ability of PWDs to actively participate in politics and public life; and that the GFD's programs enabled a total of 5,354 blind and partially sighted persons to be trained in the use of tactile ballot jackets to vote during the 2012 elections, with 694 of them actually using the jackets to vote on Election Day.<sup>10</sup> However, PWDs' participation in elections and public life in general continues to be very low at all levels. PWDs continue to experience some forms of social exclusion and neglect in the provision of public services despite the enactment of the Disability Act of 2006, which seeks to promote the welfare of PWDs and their full integration into the economic, social and political/public life of the country.

As it is in many African countries, the youth, representing 33% of the total population of Ghana is an important constituency in the country. The Ghana National Youth Policy (which defines youth as persons falling within the age bracket of 15 and 35) identifies insufficient opportunities for youth participation in decision-making as one of the major challenges

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<sup>5</sup>The average percentage voter turn-out for Presidential elections for the five elections from 1992 to 2012 is 71.43%. The 1992 voter turn-out was the lowest (50.52%) while the highest turn-out was recorded in 2004 (85.1%).

<sup>6</sup>Ghana Statistical Service (2012), 2010 Housing and Population Census. Sakoa Press Limited, Accra

<sup>7</sup>NDPC (November 2012) Progress Report on the implementation of the GSGDA, Accra

<sup>8</sup>Desk Study by Institute of Local Government Studies, August 2012

<sup>9</sup>Ghana Statistical Service (2012), 2010 Housing and Population Census. Sakoa Press Limited, Accra

<sup>10</sup>Ghana Federation of the Disabled (2013), interim report on the GFD activities on the 2012 elections, unpublished

confronting young persons in the country. The involvement of the youth in political and governance processes at both local and national levels remains weak, despite largely symbolic appointment of a few young people into high-profile government positions in recent times.

A number of challenges militate against effective participation of marginalized groups especially women, in politics and public life. The lack of affirmative action policies and limited support for women in politics contribute to their relatively low participation in public political life. Other contributing factors include negative perceptions of women in politics, traditional beliefs and cultural practices and “monetization” of elections among many others<sup>11</sup>. Further factors include the lack of political will on the part of government and political parties to move beyond rhetoric to push for inclusive political participation and socio-cultural norms and tendencies that look down on women, youth and persons with disabilities as equal partners, contribute to the low participation of these groups in politics. In the case of PWDs, the weak implementation and enforcement of compliance with the provisions of the Disability Act contributes to their marginalization.

### ***1.3 District Level Elections and Inclusive Participation***

Local level elections present the most practicable opportunity for citizens, including women, youth and PWDs to participate actively in the selection of their local representatives and contribute to local government decision-making. Indeed, local government elections command the largest mobilization of candidates and entail the most widespread campaign activities for elective office in the country. Over six thousand (6000)<sup>12</sup> seats in the various district assemblies nation-wide fall vacant at the expiration of a four-year term. Local level elections thus, set a useful stage to facilitate and sustain the momentum of meaningful election environment monitoring and civic/voter education through continuous citizen and civil society participation at the local level. However, there is a wide participation gap for sections of the population such as women, PWDs and the youth. The percentage of women and PWDs holding office in the MMDAs is very low. CODEO therefore designed this intervention to support Ghana's 2015 DLE, with the aim of sensitizing more women, youth and PWDs to actively participate in the elections as poll watchers and to also contest for seats into the district assemblies.

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<sup>11</sup><http://www.gendercentreghana.org/increasing-womens-political-participation> retrieved 08/10/13

<sup>12</sup>National Development Planning Commission (November 2012), Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda

#### ***1.4. Conclusion***

Citizens' interest and participation in national affairs is quite high in Ghana, especially as shown in voter turn-out in presidential and parliamentary elections in the country. However, there is general apathy and disinterest in local level elections as exhibited in the consistent low turn-out for various local government elections. DLEs, since 1994, have recorded below 40% voter turn-out, with the 2015 elections recording a little over 39% turn-out. Worse still, is the low participation of women and PWDs in the various assemblies, a situation which is similar to their representation in other national structures like the legislature and the executive. CODEO's efforts in the 2015 elections attempted to boost the representation and participation of the marginalized through a number of inter-related interventions-civic education, capacity-building for target candidates, and observation of the electoral environment. Beneficiaries of the various interventions were of the view that the project enhanced their inclusion and participation in the electoral process by preparing them to accept the challenge to contest for positions into the Assemblies. However, to fully address the problem and further enhance the participation of these groups in local government structures, there is the need for a sustained public education and engagements.

## **CHAPTER TWO**    **The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) and the 2015 District Level Elections**

### **2.0. Introduction**

Citizens' observation of electoral processes has been known as one of the cardinal principles for ensuring free and fair elections. Reports by citizens' elections observation groups provide independent data to authenticate and confirm the credibility of electoral process as managed by the Elections Management Body (EMB). It can help foster confidence in electoral processes while helping to reduce doubts over credibility of election outcomes. Ghana's largest citizen observer group, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) has over the years emerged as a credible citizens' organization promoting election credibility in the country. This chapter throws more light on the formation and activities CODEO in Ghana as well as its program of support for Ghana's 2015 District level elections.

### **2.1 About the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)**

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) was formed in the year 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana). CODEO sought to mobilize Ghanaian citizens to participate in the electoral process and to promote credible elections in Ghana. The Coalition through its activities also sought to complement the efforts of the Electoral Commission of Ghana in ensuring transparent, free, fair and peaceful elections in the country. Since its formation, CODEO has observed all presidential and parliamentary elections as well as the intervening district assembly elections and special elections, including run-offs, by-elections and intra-party congresses/primaries.

#### ***CODEO's Objectives:***

CODEO's main objectives are to:

1. Promote free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections by undertaking an independent and non-partisan observation of elections
2. Promote issue-based campaigning during elections
3. Instill confidence in the electoral process and the Ghanaian public at large
4. Work to deter, prevent and/or detect electoral fraud
5. Prevent and/or manage conflicts
6. Lend legitimacy and credibility to electoral outcomes
7. Encourage citizens' participation in elections

### ***CODEO's Institutional Structures***

CODEO has four principal institutional structures through which it implements its election activities. These structures are: The CODEO Advisory Board, The CODEO General Assembly, the CODEO Sub-committees and the CODEO Secretariat.

#### ***1. The CODEO Advisory Board***

The CODEO Advisory Board is the highest decision making body of the Coalition. At the time of the 2015 DLE, the Board was a fifteen-member group (it has a current membership of 16) chaired by two distinguished Ghanaians: Professor Justice V.C.R.A.C. Crabbe and Professor Miranda Greenstreet. The membership of the Advisory Board comprises representatives of some CODEO Member organizations as well as some accomplished Ghanaians from diverse fields. The Advisory Board holds periodic review meetings, particularly in election years, to deliberate and review CODEO's activities.

#### ***2. CODEO General Assembly***

The CODEO General Assembly comprises of a representative each from all CODEO member organizations (which was forty at the time of the 2014/15 DLE). CODEO member organizations include some of Ghana's influential bodies such as the Ghana Bar Association (GBA), the Ghana Medical Association (GMA), the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), the Trades Unions Congress (TUC) of Ghana, the teachers and nurses associations and the Association of Ghanaian Industries (AGI), among others. Others are leading religious groups including the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), the Office of the Chief Imam and the Federation of Muslim Councils. There are also leading women's groups like ABANTU for Development, Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana), and Women in Law and Development (WiLDAF). Representatives of these organizations meet to discuss and review CODEO activities and make proposals for the consideration of the CODEO Advisory Board and the Secretariat.

#### ***3. CODEO Sub-committees***

CODEO has three (3) main sub-committees which work to support the implementation of CODEO's election activities. These committees are: the Drafting and Reporting Committee; the Logistics and Procurement Committee and the Recruitment, Training and Deployment Committee. These sub-committees are activated in election years to help in the planning and preparations for CODEO's election observation efforts. Membership of these committees are drawn from CODEO member organizations with approval from the Advisory Board.

#### **4. CODEO Secretariat**

The CODEO Secretariat which is based at CDD-Ghana implements the decisions of the Advisory Board. Headed by a Project Manager and assisted by a National Coordinator, the Secretariat is responsible for realizing the policy decisions made by the Advisory Board. It provides technical advice to the Board and designs and implements CODEO's election observation activities.

#### **CODEO Election Observation Principles: Observers Code of Ethics**

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the country's electoral laws permit election observation by citizens' groups. The Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana has a Code of Conduct for observer groups which enjoin all observers to be independent, neutral and objective in their observation efforts. In support of the EC's efforts towards credible election observation, CODEO has further adopted a code of conduct which all its observers must sign onto before being deployed as election observers. The principles in the CODEO code of conduct are elaborated below.

- **Non-partisanship:** CODEO enjoins all its observers to be non-partisan at all times while observing elections. Observers are entreated not to engage in partisan political activities during the entire electoral process as doing so could undermine the credibility of CODEO's observation exercise
- **Vigilance:** CODEO enjoins its observers to be vigilant at all times while observing elections. Observers are to keenly follow and report any infractions in the electoral process while also noting commendable activities/actions by key players in the electoral process
- **Dedication:** CODEO observers are enjoined to show a high level of dedication, commitment and professionalism in the discharge of their duties
- **Honesty:** CODEO Observers are enjoined to report impartially on their observation. Observers must honestly and accurately report on events, incidents and facts at all times

CODEO observers sign a 'Pledge of Neutrality' obliging them to uphold CODEO's code of conduct, rules and procedures. In the event of a violation of this code, an observer's accreditation will be revoked and his or her services will be discontinued.

#### **Membership in Global Citizen Election Observer Networks**

CODEO is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM).

GNDEM serves to bring together citizen observers from around the world. As part of its effort to enhance citizen observation, GNDEM developed a “Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations” which provides best practices for citizen observation (there is more about GNDEM and Global Principles for Citizen Observation at: [www.gndem.org](http://www.gndem.org)).

### ***Membership in the West African Election Observers Network***

CODEO is a founding member of the West African Election Observers Network (WAEON), a regional network of citizen observation groups from 11 Anglophone and Francophone countries in West Africa that subscribe to the Declaration of Global Principles for Non-partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations. WAEON envisions a West Africa that is democratic, where governments are held accountable through regular and credible elections and where citizens effectively participate in the electoral process through professional observation of elections.

### ***CODEO’s Accomplishments***

Since its formation in 2000, CODEO has achieved many successes. Some of the accomplishments include the following:

- In the year (2000) of its formation, CODEO successfully recruited, trained and deployed 5500 of its members to observe the December 7 Presidential and general elections of members of parliament in 137 constituencies throughout the country and also observed the December 28 Presidential Run-off elections
- In 2004, CODEO deployed more than 7000 observers nationwide during the December polls
- In 2008, CODEO deployed over 4000 observers for the December 7 polls and the December 28 Presidential run-off
- In the 2004 and 2008 polls, respectively, CODEO introduced innovations in domestic election observation such as systematic ways of tracking incumbency abuse and election violence
- In the 2008 elections, CODEO, for the first time, successfully introduced in Ghana the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology for domestic election observation to independently verify the accuracy of the results of the Presidential polls. CODEO repeated the PVT methodology for the 2012 Presidential elections
- In 2012, CODEO deployed 4000 of its members throughout the country to observe the Presidential and parliamentary elections. CODEO further monitored the post-election Supreme Court proceedings on the Presidential election results petition

- Since 2002, CODEO has also observed intervening local government elections and internal political party primaries as well as regularly observed by-elections organized by the Electoral Commission
- CODEO's expertise has been tapped by citizens' observer groups from African countries such as Kenya, Liberia, Burundi, Nigeria, Togo and Central African Republic

CODEO, through its activities has enhanced public confidence in the electoral processes in Ghana and promoted transparency and credibility of electoral outcomes. Through its various reports, CODEO has highlighted and stimulated public conversations around critical issues affecting poll credibility in Ghana.

## ***2.2 CODEO's Support Activities Towards the 2015 District Level Elections***

CODEO's interventions in the 2015 district level elections sought to enhance the participation of women, youth and PWDs particularly as candidates contesting the elections. The interventions also sought to mobilize members of the targeted groups to be more active and effective as agents of their own empowerment in the processes of governance at the local government level, in particular, and in the country at large. The project aimed at observing all electoral activities in 86 selected districts throughout its 15-month duration.

### ***Goals and Objectives***

The main goals and objectives for CODEO's program of activities towards the 2015 DLE were to:

- Support the active engagement of women, youth and PWDs as candidates and observers in the electoral process and thus increase their participation in local government business
- Contribute to ensuring conformity with the prevailing rules governing the conduct of local government elections, especially the nonpartisanship character
- Contribute to increase in the number of marginalized persons elected into the district assemblies
- Contribute to enhancement in the transparency and integrity of the electoral process at the local level
- Increase the knowledge and capacities of women, youth and PWDs to be able to engage with district officials on the decisions of district assemblies, especially those that affect the marginalized populations

### ***Project Activities***

Four major interventions were identified for implementation during the entire electoral process. These include the following:

**1. Pre-election environment observation:** A total number of 86 women were recruited, trained and deployed as long-term observers and peer educators for a period preceding the polling day;

**2. Sensitization and Capacity Building Programs:** Training workshops were organized for candidates representing the targeted groups in the 86 selected districts to build their capacities and knowledge in local government administration. The training also focused on building and enhancing the communication skills of candidates in preparing for effective campaigning. Another workshop was held for 86 selected women who were trained as peer educators and election observers. These 86 women were deployed to the target constituencies to sensitize women, youth and PWD groups about the impending elections and how and why they needed to take part in the elections as candidates and voters.

**3. Election-day observation:** CODEO trained and secured accreditation for observers made up of women, youth and PWDs. These observers were deployed on election-day to watch the conduct of polls.

**4. Pre-election and Post-election environment observation:** The 86 women trained in local governance as peer educators also received training in pre-election and post-election observation and were deployed as such.

### ***Expected Impact***

CODEO expected its interventions to contribute to the following impact:

1. Increased participation of women, youth and PWDs in the electoral process as peer educators/mobilizers, aspirants and election observers
2. Increased knowledge and capacity of women, youth and PWDs in local government issues and improved engagement of these groups with local government structures
3. Improved conduct, particularly in respect of transparency and inclusion, by the Electoral Commission of the 2015 DLE
4. Increased number of members of marginalized and vulnerable groups elected/appointed into the assemblies
5. Evidence-based informed advocacy for improvement in the local government elections and inclusive participation for a deepened decentralization program

## **2.2 Conclusion**

Since its formation in 2000, CODEO has observed major elections in Ghana, including national elections, DLEs, and political parties' primaries. The coalition has worked to jealously protect its image and credibility over the years by ensuring that its members abide by the cardinal principles of independent election observation-independence, fairness, non-partisanship, vigilance, dedication and honesty. CODEO's reports are accepted and used as credible source of information on election outcomes and integrity. CODEO has, and continues to, contribute to the promotion of citizen participation and interest in the electoral process while instilling confidence in the electoral process. CODEO's interventions in the 2015 elections followed its traditional principles and objectives of ensuring a free, fair and transparent electoral process. Additionally, it sought to promote the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the elections as candidates and as poll watchers.

## CHAPTER THREE

## The 2015 District Level Elections in Perspective: The Electoral Commission, Its Preparations and Challenges

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### 3.0 Introduction

This Chapter takes a look at the Electoral Commission's (EC's) preparation and conduct of the 2015 elections. The chapter examines the processes embarked upon by the EC in the lead up to the elections, including the limited voter registration exercise. The chapter also discusses the legal battles which confronted the Commission while preparing for the elections.

#### *3.1 The EC's Preparedness for the 2015 District Level Elections*

The 2015 District Level Elections (DLE) were originally expected to take place in October 2014. However, that could not happen, and like the 2010 District Level Elections, it faced many delays and postponements. In 2010, the elections were expected to take place in October but ended up being conducted in late December, 2010. There still were further delays within some regions and districts. Eventually, the conduct of the elections spanned more than five days amidst logistical challenges such as polling stations running out of election materials. In addition, the EC could not get all its printed election materials in time to distribute to the various polling stations. The delayed elections and the abysmal conduct of the elections by the EC prompted parliament to set up a 20-member committee to investigate the issues surrounding the apparent difficulties of the EC in conducting those elections. The Committee made some recommendations to forestall any future delays and abysmal conduct of DLEs.

Four (4) years later, the 2015 DLE was still delayed. The originally announced November 2014 date for the polls was postponed a number of times until the election was eventually held on September 1, 2015. Besides the usual administrative challenges, the EC also faced a court suit by a citizen who challenged the legality of the EC's conduct in initiating and going ahead with electoral activities when the Constitutional Instrument (CI) regulating the conduct of the elections was waiting to mature in parliament. In the end, the Supreme Court delivered a monumental verdict which halted all electoral activities by the EC and directed the Commission to do the right thing by restarting the electoral process. The March 2015 elections were subsequently cancelled. A new date was later announced as September 1, 2015.

Even though legally the EC's delay in conducting the DLE does not breach the constitutional provision regarding the time frame allowed between the conduct of parliamentary elections and

DLE<sup>13</sup>, delaying the conduct of the DLE meant lesser time was available to the EC for the conduct of the presidential and parliamentary elections. Arguably, the absence of a specified timeframe for the conduct of the DLE, unlike the parliamentary elections may be a contributing factor for the EC's laxity in preparations for the conduct of those elections. From the onset of preparations for the 2015 DLE, there was no clear communication from the EC regarding the program outline or calendar of activities for the elections. In February 2014, the Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan hinted a possible delay of the elections when he appeared before the Special Budget Committee of Parliament and indicated that budgetary constraints had affected the Commission's preparations for the elections. As was subsequently explained by the Commission, there were also delays in the release of funds by government to undertake requisite activities ahead of the election. After much delay, the Electoral Commission finally set March 3, 2015 and the elections eventually came off in September following the Supreme Court ruling halting the conduct of the election.

Ahead of the elections, the EC carried out some activities which were relevant to the conduct of the DLE. These included the following:

### ***3.1. 1 EC Recruitment Exercise and Voter Education***

The Commission undertook recruitment for various temporary positions in October and November 2014 at its district offices. Job advertisements and calls for applications were put up in some district offices of the Commission as observed by CODEO observers. The Commission also carried out some civic education activities in the various districts. In some districts observed, such education sought to whip up people's interest in the elections. The Commission created awareness about issues like the procedure for correctly filling out nomination forms. The Commission also mounted candidate platforms in the various districts to provide the opportunity for candidates contesting in the elections to sell their messages to the electorate and provide them the opportunity to ask the candidates questions on their vision and mission for the electorate.

### ***3.1.2 Limited Voter Registration Exercise***

Revision of the voter register is a major activity the Electoral Commission undertakes ahead of major public elections in the country. The exercise enables the EC to clean up and update an existing voter register. The revision of the register entails voter registration for new eligible

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<sup>13</sup>The 1992 Constitution demands that the conduct of the parliamentary elections and the DLE must be at least, six months apart.

voters and exhibition of the voter register for public inspection. Ahead of the 2015 elections, the EC undertook a limited voter registration exercise from August 4-13, 2014 at some 6,000 registration centers in various electoral areas across the country. The exercise took place after an earlier postponement from July 20, 2014 following a Supreme Court decision that disallowed the use of the National Health Insurance Scheme ID cards as a valid identity card for registration purposes, contrary to what had been stipulated in the regulations for the conduct of the exercise. Two (2) citizens (Mr. Abu Ramadan and Kwasi Danso-Acheampong) had challenged the EC at the Supreme Court on the former's intended acceptance of the NHIS card as a qualifying identification card for registering new voters. Following the Court's decision, the Commission disallowed the use of the NHIS card for voter registration purposes.

The August 2014 limited registration exercise afforded Ghanaians who had just turned 18 as well as those who could not register in previous registration exercises the opportunity to register and get onto the voter register. The registration exercise was followed in late August by adjudication of cases by the District Registration Review Committees (DRRC) which examined applications challenging the eligibility of certain persons in the voter register. The EC proceeded to conduct a voter register exhibition exercise from October 24-30, 2014 which enabled voters to check up their details in the voter register while providing opportunity for people to object to names they deemed unqualified to be in the register. The exhibition exercise was marked by a generally low turn-out partly due to low publicity and poor public response.

### ***3.2 The Supreme Court's Suspension of the Elections***

As already noted above, the District Level Elections had been scheduled to take place on March 3, 2015. The EC was in the process of finalizing preparations for the conduct of the elections, including holding candidate debate platforms for aspirants when the Supreme Court on February 27, 2015 halted the conduct of the elections. This was just about 5 days to the date of the elections. The court declared the on-going processes leading to the conduct of the elections unconstitutional. This decision was the outcome of a suit filed at the court by an assembly member aspirant in the Effutu Constituency of the Central Region, Mr Benjamin Eyi Mensah. Mr Mensah, who had earlier had his nomination forms to contest in the elections rejected by the Commission for submitting them after the deadline of December 21, 2014, challenged the Commission for opening nominations when the Constitutional Instrument (C.I.) 85 laid before Parliament to demarcate electoral areas for the elections had not yet matured or been passed by Parliament.

The Supreme Court subsequently ordered the EC to re-submit the CI 85 before Parliament and restart the entire electoral process. The elections were thus suspended indefinitely. In an earlier decision by the Court just a day before this ruling, the Court had ordered the Commission to stop running advertisements on the elections while the case was yet to be decided. Following the Court's suspension of the elections, the EC submitted a new legislation (C.I.89)<sup>14</sup> to Parliament which matured on June 10, 2015. With the maturation and passage of this new C.I., the EC announced a new calendar for the elections which included a September 1, 2015 date for the polls.

It must be pointed out that the suspension of the elections affected not only individual candidates who had invested in their campaigns and had to start all over again, but also the state. The Commission (through its Chair Dr. Afari-Gyan) indicated to Parliament that they would need an additional Ninety Million Ghana Cedis (Ghc90,000,000.00) to organise fresh elections after the botched one. Other stakeholders like civil society organizations had to re-strategize their interventions in support of the postponed elections. The delay in the conduct of the elections also meant that the time left for the EC to prepare for the 2016 Presidential and parliamentary elections had been shortened.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

The conduct of local government elections in Ghana has over the years been associated with many challenges, including those related to demarcation of electoral areas, filing of nominations and delays and postponement of elections dates, among others. Unfortunately, some of these challenges continue to characterize various local government elections which indicate that a lot still remains to be done to address the fundamental causes of these challenges. Until adequate efforts are made by the EC and other relevant actors, local government elections will be plagued by such challenges.

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<sup>14</sup>Republic of Ghana. District Level Elections Regulation, CI 89 of 2015

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **CODEO's Interventions and Findings**

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### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, each of CODEO's four main activities in respect of the 2015 local government elections would be discussed. The main findings and highlights of each of the interventions are also presented. As discussed in Chapter Two, CODEO designed and implemented a number of interventions aimed at helping to address the problem of low citizen participation in Ghana's district level elections. CODEO's overall objective for implementing these interventions was to increase citizens' interest and participation in the elections and subsequently in local government issues. Most importantly, the project sought to enhance the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the electoral process as peer educators, pre-election observers, election candidates and as election-day poll watchers. In other words, the interventions were aimed at creating opportunities for women, youth and PWDs to effectively participate in the polls and in the business of district assemblies. The activities were carried out between June 2014 and December 2015. The activities which covered all the different phases of the electoral cycle are as follows:

- **Pre-election environment observation/Peer Education:** CODEO recruited, trained and deployed a total of 86 women to serve as long-term pre-election observers and peer educators simultaneously, for a cumulated period of about 5 months prior to the elections. The pre-election observation and peer education took place in 86 districts across the country selected purposively for the project. These activities were carried out by 86 women selected from the project districts and trained to lead implementation of the activities in their respective districts. The 86 project districts selected from the total 216 in the country was done through the use of a number of indicators including the number of women in the district, the participation of women, the youth and persons with disabilities in local government structures within the assemblies, among others.
- **Sensitization and Capacity Building Programs:** CODEO organized sensitization and capacity-building workshops for women, the youth and PWDs from the 86 selected project districts. Participants for the workshop were aspirants contesting for Assembly member positions in the various project districts. The objective of the training workshops was to build and enhance the capacities of target group aspirants in local governance and local government elections, and effective electioneering campaign.

- Election-day observation: CODEO recruited, trained and deployed 681 of its members as election-day observers. These observers who were made up of women, youth and PWDs were trained on how to observe and report on the polling day processes to enable CODEO undertake a fair assessment of the conduct of the elections.
- Post-election environment observation: in the aftermath of the elections, CODEO re-deployed its 86 pre-election observers/peer educators, comprising only women, to observe and report on the post-election environment within the project districts. CODEO utilized the findings of the post-election observation efforts to assess the post-election situation in the country.

#### ***4.1 Selection of 86 Project Districts***

Ghana, as at the 2015 elections had 216 local government authority areas spread across the ten administrative regions of the country. For the purposes of the CODEO 2015 election support project, a total of 86 local government authority areas were selected as project districts. This represented about 40% of the total number of local government authority areas in the country. To promote fair reach of the interventions under the project and to enhance effective targeting of project beneficiaries, a set of criteria comprising a mix of indicators was used to select the 86 project districts. The set of criteria included the following:

1. Districts with high youth/women and PWD population
2. Districts where greater numbers of PWDs had already submitted their names to the GFD secretariat to contest for positions during the 2014/15 local government elections
3. Districts with greater numbers of women as assembly and unit committee members and as Metropolitan, Municipal or District Chief Executives (MMDCEs)
4. Districts with PWDs as assembly and unit committee members and as Metropolitan, Municipal or District Chief Executives (MMDCEs)
5. Districts with youth-friendly policies
6. Districts with gender-responsive budgets following government's directive in 2009
7. Districts with densely populated electoral areas

The first six criteria were mainly informed by the project objectives. The use of these indicators was, among others, to enable CODEO follow keenly on districts promoting the participation of target groups in their local government systems and structures.

Each of Ghana's 10 administrative regions was assigned a quota of 6 districts. This resulted in a total of 60 selected districts. The remaining 26 spaces on the project were then divided between the regions according to the set criteria enumerated above.

## ***4.2 Intervention 1: Peer Education on Citizen Participation in Local Governance and Pre-Election Observation***

### ***4.2.1 Public Education and Sensitization on the Elections***

Ahead of the elections, CODEO carried out civic education activities with the objective of whipping up public interest and participation in the electoral processes. In particular, CODEO sought to increase the interest and participation of women, the youth and persons with disabilities in the elections as candidates, as observers and as voters. In this regard, CODEO identified 86 qualified women from the CODEO member organizations and trained them as Civic/Peer Educators<sup>15</sup>. Each of the 86 districts had one female Civic/Peer Educator who resided in the district. Three residential zonal workshops were organized simultaneously in Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale in the Greater Accra, Ashanti and Northern regions respectively from October 16-19, 2014 to prepare the selected women for their roles as Civic/Peer Educators. The Accra zonal training workshop comprised participants from thirty-four (34) selected districts in the Greater Accra, Eastern, Volta and the Central regions, while the Kumasi workshop had twenty-eight (28) participants from districts in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and the Western regions. The third zonal workshop was held in Tamale for twenty-four (24) participants from the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. A training manual was prepared to guide the training and to also serve as reference document for the work of the Civic Educators. The women received training as civic educators and as long-term pre-election observers as they had a dual responsibility for peer education and pre-election observation. The manual content sought to improve participants' understanding of issues on local governance, elections and election observation. It also provided information on how to conduct civic and voter education and sensitization in communities. The observers/peer educators were deployed immediately after the training to commence pre-election observation and the community-to-community civic education activities from October 2014 to February 2015. With the postponement of the elections, civic and voter education and pre-election observation continued from July 2015 to August 2015 after a new date of September 1, 2015 was announced for the elections to take place.

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<sup>15</sup>There were two sets of activities assigned all CODEO long term observers to monitor and report on stakeholders' activities and also to educate and sensitize the marginalized to actively take part in the elections, and the electorate to vote more for the women, youth and PWDs. The observers trained to embark on this public education were called Peer Educators.

CODEO's 86 Peer Educators/Pre-election observers conducted community sensitization and education programs across their assigned districts. The education and sensitization programs targeted marginalized persons and the broader community. On the one hand the programs sought to mobilize women, youth and PWDs to actively get involved and contest for positions into the District Assemblies and the Unit Committees as well as to take active part in the electoral processes. On the other hand, the education and sensitization programs targeted the general public and sought to rally them in support of women, youth and PWD candidates in the impending elections. The Peer Educators visited various communities and groups, such as churches, mosques, work places, towns and villages within the target districts and also conducted house-to-house education. Through these civic education activities, a number of persons became interested in contesting in the elections and subsequently filed their nomination to contest.

#### ***4.2.2 Highlights from Peer Educators' Education and Sensitization Activities***

- Each peer educator was tasked to visit at least, five (5) communities every two weeks and was required to submit bi-weekly reports to the Coalition. A community was defined to include any place of gathering or place of abode and could be places of worship such as mosques and churches, towns and villages, workshops and work places, schools etc. The Educators were also required to facilitate and engage at least two radio programs within each bi-weekly reporting period to discuss issues relating to marginalized groups and their participation in public life. At the end of August 2015, each of the Civic Peer Educators had visited an average of 30 communities within their respective districts. Each of them had also organized an average of 18 radio programs within the same period. Through their activities, they were able to reach over 23,321 voters through door-to-door education campaigns in the communities. The participants included 10,077 males and 13,244 females. Through the use of radio, the Educators were able to reach out to a lot more people both within and beyond their respective districts.
- In the course of their activities, the Educators engaged District Directors of decentralized institutions, such as the Electoral Commission, the National Commission for Civic Education, Gender Desk Officers of various institutions and assemblies, and District Police Commanders. Many of these personnel served as resources persons on civic education platforms, particularly radio programs. Some opinion leaders and personnel of civil society organizations were similarly engaged by the Peer Educators.

### ***4.2.3 Observation of the Pre-election Environment***

Consistent with CODEO's observation efforts, a long term observation of the pre-election environment was undertaken in respect of the 2015 local government elections to enable a comprehensive assessment of the electoral process. CODEO's 86 Peer/Civic Educators had received training simultaneously in long term pre-election observation and had been deployed to play the dual role of peer educators and pre-election observers. This meant each project district had a long-term observer. As noted earlier in this report, all 86 long term observers were females drawn mainly from CODEO's women-oriented member organizations.

Ahead of the elections, CODEO observed the limited voter registration exercise by the Electoral Commission which took place from August 3-14, 2014. CODEO trained and deployed 350 of its members as observers to selected registration centres nationwide. These observers undertook roaming observation of the registration exercise, with each observer visiting a number of registration centers in the period of observation. Subsequent to the limited voter registration exercise, CODEO observers followed up on the work of District Registration Review Committees (DRRCs) cases put in place by the Electoral Commission across various districts to review the eligibility and registration of certain persons whose eligibility to register had been challenged by some members of the public. The DRRCs had responsibility for probing into cases of ineligibility to register as raised by members of the general public. Observers followed the proceedings and work of the Committees in their districts, including the procedure for adjudicating on matters. As part of observing the finality of the limited voter registration exercise and the authentication of the voter register, CODEO deployed observers for the exhibition of the provisional voter register as carried out by the EC in late October 2014.

In October 2014, CODEO Long Term Observers followed closely, developments within their districts in relation to the elections: the preparations towards it and the activities of key stakeholders. In particular, observers monitored the preparatory activities of the EC and the NCCE, as well as interventions by civil society organizations in support of the elections. Other activities monitored were campaigning by aspirants and candidates, activities of the media, and the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the electoral process. Observers were required to send to the CODEO Secretariat bi-weekly observation reports on their findings on the pre-election environment. This enabled the CODEO Secretariat to analyse reports and to issue monthly observation statements from October 2014 to February 2015, and then (following the postponement of the election) from July 2015 to August 2015. CODEO issued a total of four pre-election statements detailing observation findings to key stakeholders and the general public (these statements have been attached to this report as appendices).

#### ***4.2.4 Highlights from Observing the Pre-Election Environment***

During the period of observation of the pre-election environment, the following key observations, summarized below, were made by CODEO:

- The Limited Voter Registration exercise was generally smooth and peaceful with minimal incidents. It was, however, marked by low turn-out
- Many registration applicants could not produce any of the identification cards required for registration, and hence resorted to the use of guarantors to secure their eligibility for registration. The practice was however consistent with registration regulations
- CODEO noted various instances of violation of registration procedures, such as the registration of persons who did not meet the registration requirements (applicants could neither produce identification documents nor guarantors as specified in the registration regulations or used unapproved forms of identification)
- Generally well-functioning biometric registration equipment, with some occasional breakdowns at some centers
- Lack of understanding among agents of political parties on the applicable procedures for challenging the eligibility of a prospective registrant
- Visible presence of agents from mainly the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in many centres visited
- Low visibility of security personnel at most centres visited
- General application of relevant procedures by most DRRCs observed in the conduct of their work
- Steady preparatory activities by the EC throughout the pre-election phase towards the conduct of the polls. This was however marked by uncertainties regarding the date and preparations for the elections at the initial stages of the process
- Positive campaign by the NCCE aimed at promoting the participation of women and persons with disabilities in the elections as well as sensitization of citizens on local governance
- Generally peaceful but vigorous campaigning process, with many aspirants conducting their campaigns through house-to-house engagements, holding meetings with congregants of various religious bodies and members of social groups, clean-up exercises etc.
- Aspirants engaged in ‘promise sprees’ to the electorate, including, promising the construction of toilet facilities, markets and roads, the provision of good and potable drinking water and street lights, cleaning and clearing of chocked gutters and refuse dumps, sustainable and all-inclusive development and supporting women, children and

PWDs through the provision of micro finance

- Discreet political party intrusion in the electioneering process, with some political parties supporting candidates. On the other hand, some candidates associated themselves with one political party or the other despite the non-partisan nature of the elections
- Defacing of aspirants' campaign posters by some unscrupulous faceless individuals
- Generally poor public awareness creation about the elections exercise, particularly in the run-up to the re-scheduled September 1, 2015 election. Voter and civic education to whip up citizens' interest and participation was limited in some of the districts
- General public apathy towards the elections
- Minimal interventions by civil society organizations and the media in support of the elections, particularly on increasing citizens' participation in the election

### ***4.3 Intervention 2: Sensitization and Capacity Building Workshops for Aspiring Assembly members***

The third major component of CODEO's interventions in support of the district level elections aimed to enhance the capacity of women, PWDs and the youth contesting the elections to compete and win the elections. In this regard, CODEO designed a capacity-building workshop for persons contesting the elections who fell within the target group. Following the filing of nominations by aspirants, CODEO, with the kind cooperation of the Electoral Commission, was able to identify and invite aspiring Assembly Members who were females, young and persons with disabilities to a one-day district-level capacity-building program. These workshops took place from February 9 to 15, 2015 at various district capitals in the 86 project districts. The workshops took participants through relevant issues such as the concept of local governance and decentralization, the District Assembly system/structure, the District level elections, and effective campaign and communication skills.

Overall, the capacity-building program deepened the understanding of participants on local governance and enhanced their chances of winning the elections through effective campaigning. All workshop participants received copies of a handbook on workshop content. CODEO received an overwhelming response from the target group, resulting in very high turn-outs at the various workshops held. Although CODEO had initially targeted 1,290 marginalized aspirants (an average of 15 candidates per district) for the capacity-building program, the numbers jumped significantly as more marginalized persons filed nominations to contest in the Election. In the end, a total of 2,468 (comprising 263 women, 1980 male youth, 113 female youth, 98 male PWDs and 14 female PWDs) out of 2960 identified marginalized aspirants from

the 86 project districts participated in the training workshop. Most participants expressed their delight and appreciation to CODEO for supporting them with such relevant skills and knowledge.

#### ***4.4. Intervention 3: Election Day Observation***

CODEO deployed nearly 700 election-day observers on the day of elections. All observers were prepared for this observation exercise through a one-day training program for observers and a refresher training necessitated by the postponement of the election from March to September 2015. Among others, observers received training on the CODEO observation checklist and incident forms, the electoral process, local governance in Ghana, and observers' code of conduct. Observer training workshops were organized in all the 10 regional capitals simultaneously for observers in each region. Two separate workshops were organized for the observers due to the postponement of the elections. The first set of training workshops were held in February 2015 in preparation for the elections which had been scheduled March 3, 2015. However, as a result of a lawsuit filed by an aspiring assembly man challenging the legal basis of the EC's preparations for the elections while the Constitutional Instrument regulating the conduct of the elections was yet to be passed in Parliament, the Supreme Court of Ghana ruled on February 27, declaring the conduct of the elections by the EC as unconstitutional. The Court also directed the Electoral Commission to call off the much publicized polls scheduled for March 3, 2015. As a result of the cancellation, CODEO was unable to deploy its trained field workers until a new date was announced by the Electoral Commission of Ghana to conduct the elections on September 1, 2015. In August 2015, CODEO re-organized refresher training for its election-day observers in all the 10 regional capitals of the country. Subsequently on September 1, 2015, CODEO deployed nearly 681 election-day observers to all ten regions of the country to watch the polls. While 70% of these observers were deployed and stationed at randomly-selected polling stations in the selected 86 project districts, the remaining 30% observed as CODEO Roaming Observers (Ros). Also, of the total number of observers recruited, trained and deployed, 49% of them were females, 33% of them were young, and 18% were persons with disabilities.

The polling station observers were required to follow and observe voting proceedings at their assigned polling stations from the start of the polls to the close of polls and counting of ballots. Among others, observers were to observe the quality of the voting process, the conduct of election officials, and the participation of the targeted marginalized groups. The CODEO Roaming Observers moved from polling station to polling station and reported on incidents as and when they came across them.

CODEO used SMS technology to receive rapid reports from observers on election day. A critical incident desk was mounted at the CODEO Secretariat to receive and follow up on observer reports about irregularities, disruptions and other critical incidents. Based on observation reports received from observers, CODEO issued two statements in the course of the polls on Election-Day, a situational statement in the afternoon of election-day and a close of polls statement at the end of the polls. The situational statement provided information to the public about the conduct of the polls in relation to set-up, opening of polls and voting process. The close-of-poll statement provided CODEO's general impressions about the conduct of the elections exercise as at the end of polls. A preliminary statement encapsulating CODEO's overall key findings on the polls was issued on September 7, 2014.

#### ***4.4.1 Highlights from CODEO Election Day Observation***

Below are key findings from CODEO's observation on election-day:

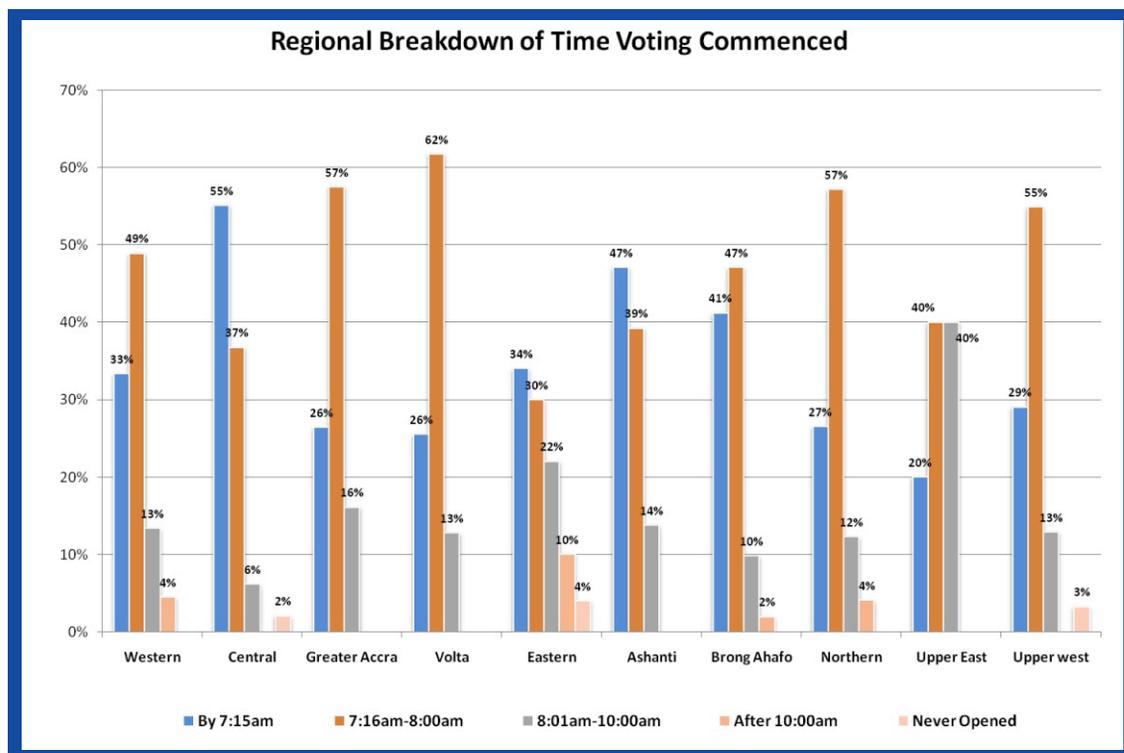
##### **a) Arrival at Polling Stations**

- By 6:00am, 97% of CODEO Stationary Observers had reported at their assigned polling stations
- CODEO Stationary Observers who were present at polling stations by 6:00am reported that in 63% of the polling stations. Polling Officials were punctual and had reported to their assigned polling stations by 6:30am as stipulated in the electoral regulations. In about one-third of polling stations (33%), however, polling officials were not present at the time CODEO Stationary Observers arrived
- Electoral officials respected CODEO Stationary Observers' status as EC's accredited election observers and permitted them to observe the polls

##### **b) Setting Up of Polls**

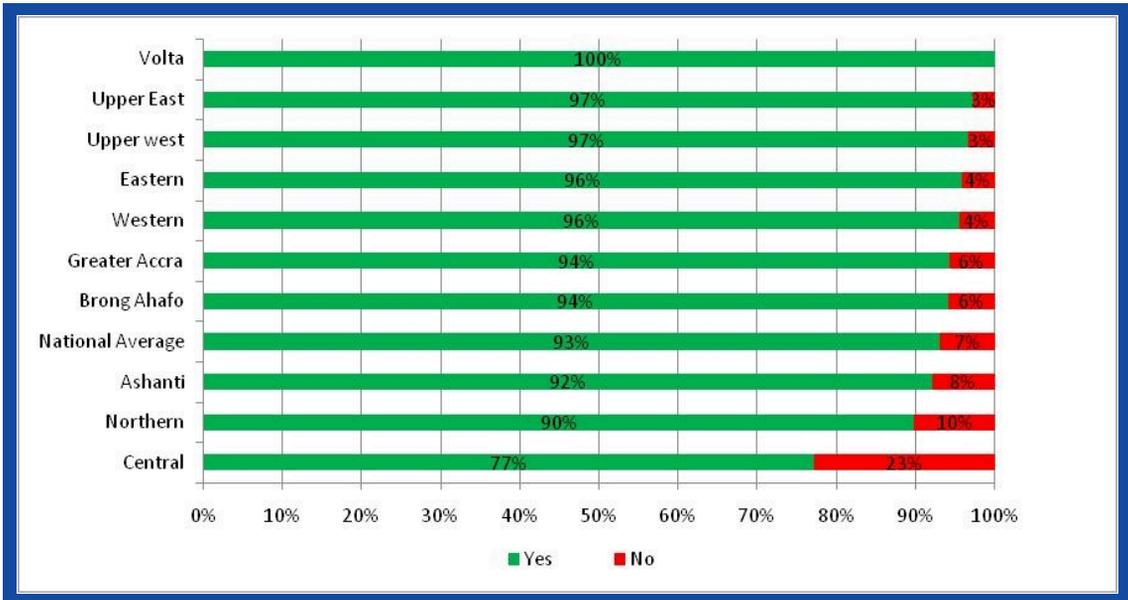
- Most of the polling stations (82% according to CODEO Stationary Observers) had opened by 8:00AM. Of this, 34% had opened by 7:15am and 48% between 7:16am and 8:00am (see Figure 1, for the regional disaggregation of the above descriptive data)

**Figure 1: Regional breakdown of time voting commenced**



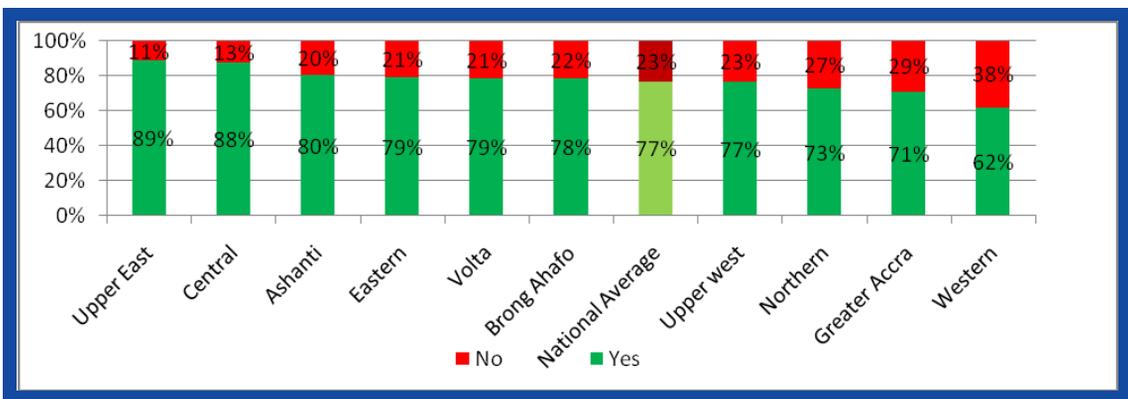
Ninety-three percent (93%) of CODEO Stationary Observers reported that polling stations were set up in a manner that ensured that voters marked their ballots in secret. The Central and Northern Regions had the largest number of polling stations (23% and 10%, respectively) where polling stations were not clearly set up to allow voters to cast their ballots in secret. In the other regions, more than 90% of the polling stations were setup to allow secrecy of ballots (see Figure 2, below):

**Figure 2: Set up of polling station ensured vote secrecy**



- At the time of set up, 95% of CODEO Stationary Observers reported that there were polling agents representing candidates at the polling stations
- CODEO Stationary Observers also reported seeing uniformed security personnel at post in 77% of the polling stations observed. However, the Western Region had the least visibility of uniformed security officials at polling stations (see Figure 3, below)

**Figure 3: Presence of uniformed security officials at polling stations**



- According to CODEO Stationary Observers, 93% of polling stations were accessible to persons with disability as well as the elderly
- Reports received from CODEO Stationary Observers showed that all polling stations

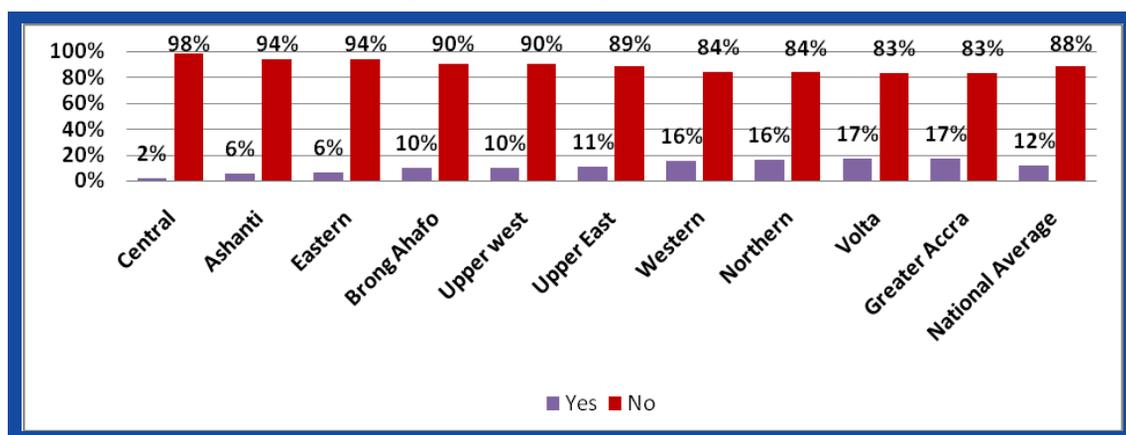
(100%) had biometric verification machines at the time of set-up. Aside the biometric machine, CODEO Stationary Observers also reported that in 78% of the polling stations, all other election materials were available at the time of opening

- In 99% of polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers confirmed that before the commencement of voting, the ballot boxes were shown to be empty, sealed and placed in public view

### c) Voting Processes

- In all polling stations observed, voters’ biometric registration information was verified. However, CODEO Stationary Observers reported the malfunctioning of biometric verification machines at some point in time in 8% of these polling stations
- CODEO Stationary Observers’ reports showed that in 98% of polling stations observed, voters had their fingers marked with indelible ink before voting. Additionally, in 98% of polling stations, CODEO Stationary observers saw ballot papers being stamped with the validating stamp before being issued to voters
- According to the CODEO Stationary Observers, in 88% of polling stations, unauthorized person(s) were not permitted to remain in the polling station during voting. Greater Accra, Volta, Northern, Western and Upper East Regions recorded unauthorized persons in 11% to 20% of their polling stations (see Figure 4 below)

Figure 4: Presence of unauthorized persons in polling stations



- In 94% of the polling stations, there was no reported case of harassment or intimidation of voters or polling officials
- In most of the polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that no voter was allowed to cast ballot when the name was not in the Voter’s Register (97%); or biometric details did not match (94%)

- In addition, at 76% of the polling stations, no voter with a valid voter ID card was prevented from voting by electoral officials
- In addition, in 81% of the polling stations, electoral officials permitted others to assist the blind, disabled and elderly to vote
- In accordance with the electoral rules, election officials in 62% of the polling stations allowed assisted voters to have persons of their own choice to assist them to vote (see Table 1 below)

**Table 1: Conditions under which voters cast ballot**

| Conditions under which voters cast ballot                | None | Few<br>(1-5<br>voters) | Some<br>(6-15<br>voters) | Many<br>(16 or more<br>voters) |
|--|------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Permitted to vote though name was not in register        | 97   | 2                      | --                       | 1                              |
| Permitted to vote despite mismatch of biometric details  | 94   | 6                      | --                       | --                             |
| Not permitted to vote though had Voter ID                | 76   | 20                     | 3                        | 2                              |
| Persons (blind, disabled, elderly etc.) assisted to vote | 19   | 51                     | 21                       | 9                              |
| Permitted to vote without Voter ID                       | 27   | 36                     | 23                       | 14                             |

**d) Counting and Declaration of Results**

- CODEO Stationary Observers reported that in 56% of the polling stations no one was in the queue at the close of polls at 5:00 PM. However, there were between 1 to 15 voters in queues in 40% of the polling stations at the close of polls. In 95% of the polling stations where some voters were found in queues at 5:00pm the electoral officials allowed them to vote
- According to CODEO Stationary Observers, in 54% of the polling stations no one arrived at the polling station after 5:00pm. However, at 40% of polling stations the electoral officials did not allow some voters who arrived after 5:00am to vote
- During the counting, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that nobody harassed or intimidated polling officials at most of the polling stations (96%). The CODEO Stationary Observers also indicated that in almost all polling stations (99%) there was no case of more ballot papers being found in the ballot box than the number of voters who cast ballots
- In 92% of the polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that no candidate agent requested for a recount of ballots. Consequently, observers reported that in most

of the polling stations, candidates' agents (95%) and the presiding officers (99%) endorsed the results declaration forms

#### **e) Critical Incidents on Polling Day**

The September 1, 2015 DLE took place in a generally calm environment. There were no major critical incidents reported by CODEO observers except for the following issues:

- Problems affecting biometric verification devices: CODEO Observers reported cases of malfunctioning devices, which led to the suspension of voting for some time in some areas. For example, at the Saeedia Islamic Primary School polling station in the Sagado Electoral area in the Bawku Municipality in the Upper East Region, the battery of the biometric device run-out; this delayed the voting process for a while until the device was replaced. At the Antoboase JHS polling station in the Obuasi Municipality in the Ashanti Region, two voters could not be verified.
- Problems affecting the voter register: Some voters could not vote because they could not find their names in the Voter Register, even though they presented their valid voter ID cards. For example, at the Presby Primary school at Abepotia in the Abepotia/Odumase Electoral area and the M/A Primary School at Abentensu in the Kwahu Jejeti Electoral area, both in the Kwahu West Municipality of the Eastern Region, old registers were sent to these polling stations, which delayed voting for hours until they were replaced with the correct voter registers. A similar incident was recorded at the RC Primary school polling station in the Nyamekrom Electoral area of the New Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region. In this instance, voting was delayed for three hours until the register was finally replaced.
- Disruption of voting and counting process: CODEO Observers reported seeing thugs invading some polling centers with the aim of either preventing voters from casting their ballots or snatching ballot boxes. For example, at the Sherigu Primary School No. 2 of the Basengo Electoral area of the Bolgatanga district in the Upper East Region, the ballot box got missing for almost 30 minutes before it was found for counting to proceed. Similarly, at the D/C Primary School of the Mosaaso Electoral area of the Wassa Amenfi district in the Western Region, and the Ebenezer 2&3 JHS of the Korle Gonno Electoral area in the Greater Accra Region, thugs invaded the polling stations and tried to prevent voters from voting.
- Protests and demonstration affecting voter turn-out: At the Nkyenkyene Electoral area in the Kwahu South district in the Eastern Region, voting was disrupted because a group of demonstrators demanded that government fulfills promises made to them during the 2012 elections. Though the police managed to bring the situation under

control, the electorate still did not take part in voting.

- Security presence at polling centers: With CODEO observers reporting seeing uniformed security personnel in 78% of the polling stations, some polling stations had no security personnel.

#### ***4.5. Intervention 4: Post-Election Observation and Advocacy***

After the conduct of the September 1, 2015 DLE elections, CODEO re-deployed all its pre-election observers/peer educators to observe and report on the post-election environment. In particular, the post-election observers were to keenly follow the processes for appointment of the 30% assembly members (government appointees) by the President into the various District Assemblies, as required by law.

Away from observation, CODEO in the post-election period also sought to mount a national level advocacy for the enhanced inclusion of marginalized groups in the new assemblies that were to be sworn in after the elections. In this regard, CODEO, in September 2015, formed a Coalition comprising six (6) institutions namely the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), Legal Resources Centre (LRC), Gender Center for Empowering Development (GenCED), Federation of International Women Lawyers, Ghana (FIDA-Ghana) and the Youth Bridge Foundation (YBF). The objective of the Coalition was to work towards the promotion of marginalized groups' participation in local government structures. The Coalition sought to identify strategies for advancing for inclusion of marginalized groups in the local governance structure. The Coalition also sought to create synergy in advocacy efforts for increased participation for women, youth and PWDs in public life.

Towards these objectives, the Coalition wrote to the office of the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) requesting to meet with the Minister to present a petition urging government to work towards having more marginalized groups, through the one-third government prerogative of appointments, appointed into the various district assemblies that were to be constituted. Unfortunately, the efforts of the Coalition in this regard were overtaken by the swift and speedy appointment of members into the district assemblies, thus could not yield the desired results. Accordingly, the strategy to advance increased representation of marginalized groups in the appointment by the President of 30% of membership into the various Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) could not crystallize.

Subsequently, CODEO through its field personnel did analyses of government's appointees into the MMDAs. It was realized that female appointees constituted 27.7% of appointees in the project districts. Below is the breakdown:

- Women (females older than 35 years) who were appointed constituted about 24.7% of the total number that got appointed in the project districts
- Female youth (females who were from age 18 to 35 years) who got appointed constituted 2.6% of the total appointees in the project district

Female Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) who were appointed constituted 0.4% of the total appointees in the project districts.

#### ***4.6 Conclusion***

The conduct of the 2015 district level elections recorded significant successes. The EC's temporary staff generally conducted themselves professionally and followed due process in administering the elections. Counting and declaration of results were also done transparently to the extent that in all the polling stations that CODEO observers were deployed, no candidate objected to the counting of the ballots or refused to sign the results declaration forms. However, general citizen apathy towards district level elections in Ghana remains a major challenge, and this must be continuously addressed.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Accomplishments, Challenges and Lessons Learned

## 5.0 Introduction

CODEO's interventions in support of the 2015 district level elections sought to achieve the following impact:

- Increased participation of women, youth and PWDs in the electoral process as peer educators/mobilizers, assembly member-aspirants and election observers
- Increased knowledge and capacities of women, youth and the PWDs in local government issues to be able to engage with district officials on the decisions of district assemblies, especially those that impact on the marginalized groups
- Enhanced transparency and inclusivity by the Electoral Commission, of the conduct of the 2015 District Level elections
- Increased number of marginalized and vulnerable groups elected/appointed into the assemblies
- Evidence-based informed advocacy for improvement in the local government elections and inclusive participation for a deepened decentralization program

In this chapter, the accomplishments and associated impacts, challenges encountered during project activity implementation and lessons learned thereof are examined and discussed.

## 5.1 Accomplishments

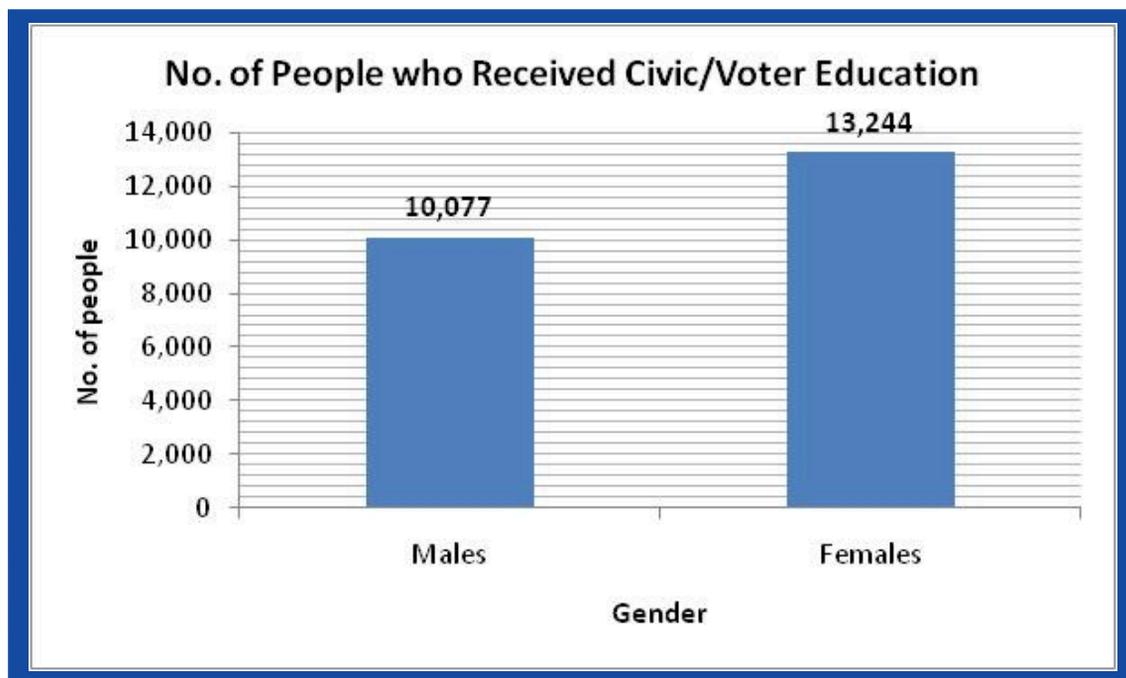
By implementing the various activities identified by CODEO, the Coalition was able to make significant successes and accomplishments. These accomplishments and their related impact are discussed along three stated outcomes.

### **OUTCOME 1: Increased interest and participation of target group (women, the youth and PWDs) in local governance,**

- CODEO's comprehensive involvement in the conduct of the 2015 District Level Election contributed to enhanced citizens' participation in the election process. With the project's primary focus being marginalized groups, specifically women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs), CODEO was able to recruit and deploy 86 women who doubled as pre-election environment observers and peer educators within the 86 project districts;

- The 86 pre-election environment observers/peer educators provided voter/civic education to 23,321 (10,077 males and 13,244 females) eligible voters through in-person contact and other social gatherings (see Fig. 5 below: Number of People Receiving Civic/Voter Education);

**Figure 5: Number Of People Receiving Civic/Voter Education through CODEO Peer Educators**

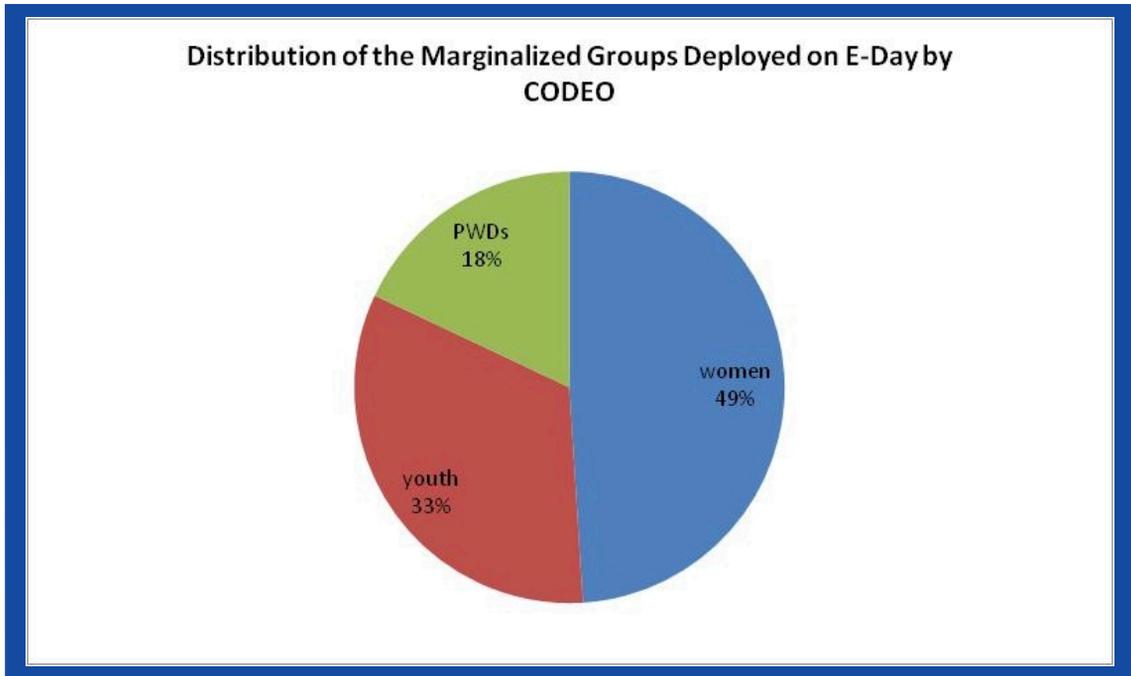


Source: Field Reports filed by CODEO's Peer Educators, 2015

- The target for number of marginalized individuals projected to contest the elections, per CODEO desk analysis, was overwhelmingly exceeded. The project target was 1290 (an estimated average of 15 aspirants from each of the 86 project districts). However, due to the intensive groundwork done by CODEO through its peer educators and media outreach, close to 3,000 persons who fell within the category marginalized (i.e. women, youth and PWDs) within the 86 project districts filed their nominations to contest in the elections. Among them, a total of 2,468 representing 82% benefited from CODEO training and capacity building program which sought to prepare them for elective positions within the local assemblies and enhance their ability to win the elections.
- Overall, 681 (49% women, 33% youth and 18% PWDs) marginalized individuals were directly involved in the electoral process as peer educators and as poll watchers. Some

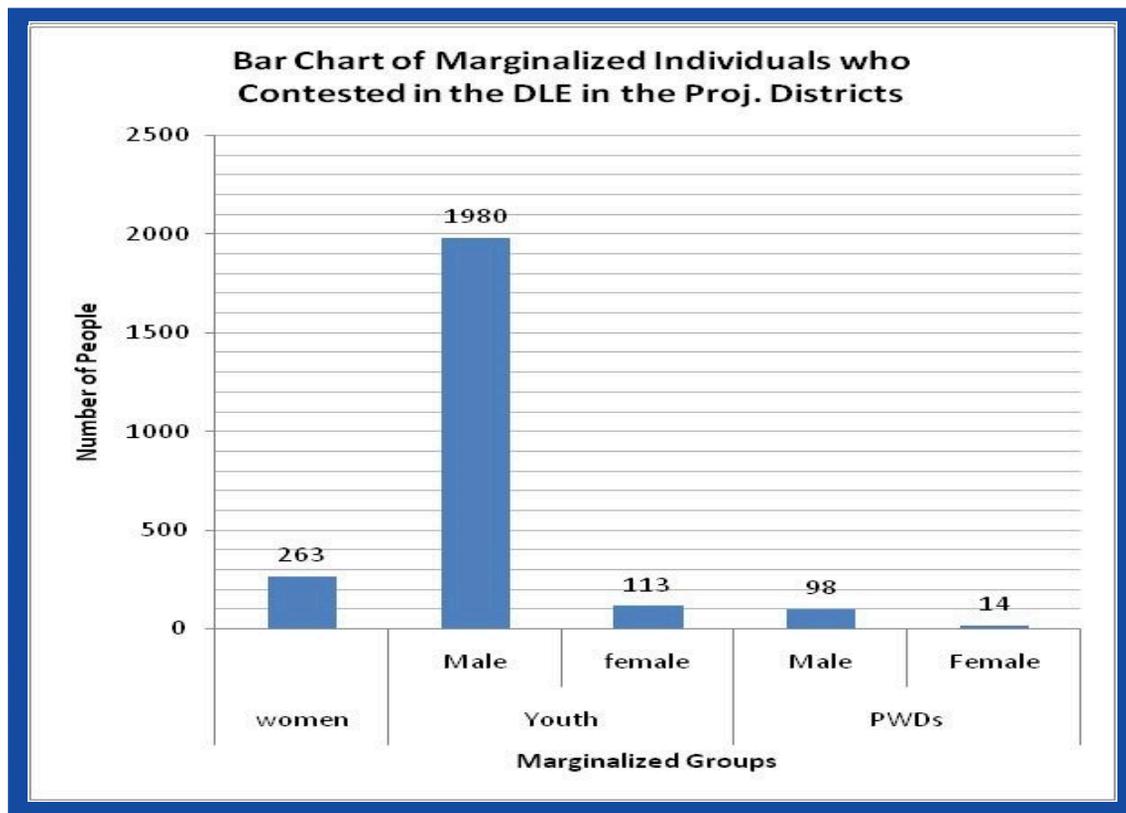
of them were involved in all the 3 phases of the electoral process-i.e. pre-election, polling day phase and post-election phase (see Fig. 6 below: a pie chart showing the distribution of Marginalized Groups deployed by CODEO to observe the 2015 DLE).

**Figure 6: A Pie Chart Showing the Distribution of Marginalized Groups Deployed by CODEO to Observe the 2015 DLE**



Source: CODEO Field Reports, 2015

- Of the 2,468 aspirants, who took part in CODEO's capacity workshop number, 263 were females, 1,980 were male youth, 113 were female youth, 98 Male PWDs and 14 were Female PWDs). Below is a Bar Chart of Marginalized Individuals who contested in the DLE in the Project Districts.



Source: CODEO Field Reports, 2015

- CODEO’s post-election analyses of the outcomes of the elections revealed the following:
  - Approximately 43% of the total elected assembly members in the project district were from the marginalized groups bracket (i.e. males, females and PWDs);
  - 12% of a total 3,430 elected and appointed Assembly members in the 86 project districts, were females (including young females and women with disabilities). A total of 150 out of the 681 female aspirants (representing 22%) who took part in CODEO’s capacity-building workshop for targeted aspirants got elected into the various Assemblies; of a total 748 persons appointed by the President into the various assemblies, 247 (representing 25%) were females;
  - Average voter turn-out in the 86 project districts was 41% and slightly higher than the national average of 36%.

## **OUTCOME 2: The Transparency, Credibility and Integrity of the Electoral Process at the Local Level is Enhanced**

The presence of independent election observers helps mitigate electoral malpractices, conflict and intimidations. Election observation raises confidence in the electoral process, reduces the fear and manipulation at the polling station and contributes to a free and fair election. In addition, election observation provides a mechanism for ensuring that electoral rules are adhered to. Ultimately, observation boosts citizens' confidence and participation in the electoral process.

Throughout the electoral process, CODEO consistently issued regular statements assessing the conduct of the elections and the activities of relevant actors. A total of ten (10) press statements were issued comprising: six (6) press releases covering the pre-election observation activities; one (1) election eve press statement briefing the public of CODEO's preparations for the elections; and two (2) election-day statements covering the conduct of the poll on election day; and one (1) post-election Preliminary statement detailing CODEO's overall findings on the conduct of the 2015 district level elections. In addition to these, a communiqué was issued by participants after a CODEO stakeholders' review workshop on the elections. One key issue that emerged from both CODEO's observation statements and the stakeholders' review workshop was the partisan intrusion by political parties into the local government elections in spite of the fact the elections by law are supposed to be non-partisan. In the ensuing public discussions, it was argued particularly by some political party leaders that in order to make the DLE more competitive and also to increase citizens' participation, the rules guiding the conduct of the DLE should be revised to allow for active political party involvement. Others in the field of local governance and decentralization argued that making the elections partisan the process will defeat the purpose of decentralization.

CODEO's observation statements on the elections received wide coverage in the media and helped stimulate public discussions on the elections.

**OUTCOME 3: Improved knowledge of marginalized groups on electoral processes, local governance issues, communication and campaigning skills** CODEO, throughout the implementation of its activities, contributed to increased knowledge and capacity of target groups on the electoral processes, local governance issues, communication and campaigning. An evaluation exercise conducted with some selected field personnel (pre-election observers/peer educators, election day observers/Rapid Response Observers) who were directly involved in the activities implemented under the project revealed that the project immensely improved beneficiaries' knowledge in the electoral process. During the training workshops organized for the 86 Civic/Peer educators in the pre-election phase:

- 98.8% of the women (Civic/Peer Educators) who completed and submitted their evaluation forms for analysis indicated that their confidence level had been “very well or well” boosted to educate other people about issues affecting women, youth and PWDs;
- 95% also indicated that their confidence had been boosted to demystify common misperceptions about the capacity of women, youth and PWDS to participate in political processes; and
- 98% also indicated that they had gained confidence to raise awareness about the strengths and capacities of women, youth and PWDS as political leaders.

## **5.2 Challenges and Constraints**

CODEO’s implementation of activities in support of the elections faced a number of challenges and constraints which invariably affected the smooth implementation of the project and the ability to achieve desired outcomes. Some of the main challenges faced include the following.

- **Lack of adequate baseline data:** To set appropriate targets for the project and work towards them, it was necessary to have in place a baseline data to guide goal-setting. Unfortunately, even though the challenges confronting the participation of marginalized groups in local governance in Ghana have been well-known, there was inadequate existing data to back the discourse. As a result, CODEO had to devise its own strategies to obtain data to guide project implementation. Pre-project implementation scoping missions were made to all the 86 project districts and to relevant stakeholders to gather information about the representation of marginalized groups in local government assemblies. This enabled the take-off of the project and subsequent implementation of activities.
- **Unclear Timelines for the Elections:** Although the District Assembly elections were expected to take place in October 2014, the elections were finally held in September 2015. It was, however, unclear from the beginning the road map the Electoral Commission was using to organize the elections. From the onset, there was no clear communication from the Electoral Commission regarding the specific timelines for the elections. This affected thorough planning of complementary activities by stakeholders like CODEO who had to go along with whatever time the Commission announced and implemented specific activities like voter registration and exhibition of the voter register.

- **Delays and Postponement of the Elections:** The delays and postponement in the date for the elections as occasioned by the Supreme Court decision affected project implementation in a number of ways. All CODEO election-day observers who had received training just before the suspension of the elections had to be recalled and re-trained after months of suspension of the elections. This presented budgetary constraints and affected observer deployment. CODEO Long Term Pre-Election Observers had to be re-engaged for an extended period prior to the September 1 election although the initial plan was to engage them up till February ending 2015.
- **Selection of aspirants for capacity-building workshops:** Most aspirants who took part in the capacity-building workshop for aspirants mentioned the numerous benefits they derived from the program. Most were, however, quick to point out that they wished they could have benefitted from the program much earlier in the electioneering process than was the case. CODEO had been constrained in planning for the workshop since it could only get data on candidates for the elections from the EC after the nomination process was over. This realistically meant the workshops could not take place much earlier as anticipated.

**Identification and selection of Peer Educators/Pre-election observers:** CODEO encountered some initial difficulties with identifying competent females resident in the project districts, particularly deprived districts, to serve as Peer Educators/Pre-election Observers. However, CODEO was able to overcome this challenge by working closely with its member organizations in identifying competent female members within the various districts. All selected females were taken through a training workshop which equipped them to play their roles as Peer Educators/Pre-election observers. A couple of the trained Peer Educators/Pre-election observers dropped out at the early stages of the project, for personal reasons and created vacuum at their assigned districts.

### **5.3 Lessons Learned**

- Given that over 43% of elected assembly members in the project districts were either women, youthful, and or persons with disabilities, and that average voter turn-out was slightly higher than the rest of the country, CODEO believes that its interventions if scaled up to cover more districts in future elections will encourage more women, youth and PWDs to actively participate in public affairs.
- A major lesson learnt from project implementation is the need to improve on the creation and availability of harmonized gender, age and disability-disaggregated data

on citizen's participation in local governance structures. Data on the participation of women, the youth and PWDs in the MMDAs was nearly non-existent and had to be compiled district by district.

Of the three targeted groups under the project (i.e. women, the youth and PWDs), the youth constituted over 80% elected assembly members who fell within the project target group. This suggests that future interventions should focus more on women and persons with disabilities.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

The activities implemented under the project aimed to deepen Ghana's decentralization process by enhancing knowledge and capacity of citizens to engage in the district level elections and in local governance. Implementation of the various interventions under the project contributed in diverse ways to the overall objective of the project. These include the following:

- Enhanced the knowledge and understanding of target group in electoral processes, local governance issues and effective communication and campaigning. The community level education undertaken by CODEO Civic/Peer Educators promoted general public awareness about local governance and citizens' participation in the project districts.
- Many workshop participants indicated their complete ignorance of most of the laws governing local government elections and their violation of many of those laws as a result. They were thus appreciative of the assistance CODEO offered in the form of training.
- CODEO's capacity-building workshops and civic education activities encouraged and fostered candidates' self-confidence. Many candidates indicated the motivation provided them through the training session, ignited and fuelled them to pursue their ambition of contesting in the district level elections.

As already noted above, CODEO's post-election advocacy activities geared towards influencing the appointment by the President of more women into MMDAs was constrained by a speedy appointment process. Nevertheless, a significant 25% of appointed assembly members within the project districts were from the category of marginalized persons.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

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#### **6.0 Introduction**

CODEO's primary goals and objectives for the various interventions as described in Chapter Two of this report sought to support the conduct of the 2015 District Level Elections. Through the mobilization of citizens, CODEO intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Support the active engagement of women candidates, women, the youth and PWDs in the electoral process and their participation in local government business;
- Contribute to ensuring conformity with the prevailing rules governing the conduct of local government elections, especially the nonpartisanship character;
- Contribute to increase in the number of marginalized groups elected into the district assemblies;
- Contribute to enhancement in the transparency and integrity of the electoral process at the local level; and
- Increase the knowledge and capacities of women, youth and the PWDs to be able to engage with district officials on the decisions of district assemblies, especially those that impact on the marginalized in the administration of the districts.

In Chapters Four and Five of this report, the interventions carried out and the findings as well as the accomplishments, challenges and lessons learned were examined and discussed. In this concluding chapter, key recommendations as gleaned from the interventions, outcomes and lessons learned are put forward for the consideration of the Electoral Commission, key state agencies and actors, civil society organizations and the general public. These recommendations are also to help with a reform agenda for improving the conduct of future district level elections in Ghana, for improving the inclusion of the marginalized, particularly women, youth and PWDs, in the assemblies; and for enhancing the participation of citizens in the local government administration during elections and in between elections.

As part of CODEO's post-election activities and the processes leading to these recommendations, CODEO organized a two-day post-election stakeholders' review workshop at Akosombo in the Eastern region in November, 2015. The objective of the review workshop was to reflect on the general preparations for and the conduct of the elections, and to explore opportunities for enhancing the conduct of future DLEs in Ghana. The workshop, which was

chaired by CODEO's Co-Chairs, Professor Miranda Greenstreet and Justice V.C.R.A.C. Crabbe, brought together representatives from the Electoral Commission (EC), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), civil society, and the media as well as local governance experts and key stakeholders in Ghana's local government system. Based on the discussions at the workshop, and drawing from the findings and lessons from CODEO's activities, the recommendations below are made by CODEO.

### ***6.1 Recommendations for the conduct of future DLEs***

1. The Electoral Commission must develop, publicize and adhere to clear timelines for election activities to help address the growing tendency to postpone District Level Elections.
2. The Electoral Commission must set fixed dates for District Level Elections as done for Presidential and parliamentary elections. Such fixed timelines would help prevent the future recurrence of the present impasse in the District Assemblies. Accordingly, CODEO proposes that a specific day, such as the First Tuesday in September every four years is set as the date for District Level Elections. With the conduct of elections over, CODEO recommends that MMDAs should be inaugurated within two weeks after elections.
3. The Government of Ghana must be timely in the release of funds to the Electoral Commission for the conduct of elections. This would help the EC implement District Level Elections according to predetermined timelines.
4. As part of fulfilling its responsibility, the National Media Commission in collaboration with media houses should be encouraged to provide free air time (as part of their corporate social responsibility) to the Electoral Commission and the National Commission for Civic Education to support public awareness creation about the district level elections.
5. The Electoral Commission must, as a matter of urgency, set up a legal department to enhance its institutional capacity for dealing with legal issues relating to the management of elections in Ghana. This will minimize the rate at which legal objections obstruct election timelines.

6. CODEO entreats the Electoral Commission to, as part of its performance review on the elections, take a critical look at the few challenges recorded during polling, particularly those relating to arrival of polling officials, setting up of polls, and the malfunctioning of biometric devices, to prevent similar occurrences in future elections.
7. The National Commission for Civic Education must actively lead and collaborate with other stakeholders on civic education and the importance of local governance in general, and the District Level Elections in particular. This is expected to significantly increase citizen/public interest and participation in the process.
8. A national level discussion on the concept and practice of decentralization is needed. The recommendations of the Constitutional Review Commission on local governance must be revisited and reconsidered towards strengthening the concept and practice of local governance.
9. The Electoral Commission and law enforcement agencies must be firm in sanctioning political parties and individuals who flout regulations governing the conduct of District Level Elections.
10. Key state agencies, including the National Commission for Civic Education, the Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and other relevant stakeholders must continuously build the capacity of marginalized groups, such as women, youth and Persons with Disabilities towards enhancing their participation and inclusion in District Level Elections.
11. The Electoral Commission, National Commission for Civic Education and relevant stakeholders must proactively address voter apathy during DLEs by intensifying voter education and sensitization and by exploring other avenues for effective voter participation in elections.
12. The Electoral Commission must endeavor to publish on its website results from the DLE as well as gender, age and disability-disaggregated data on candidates and the elected. This will help improve evidence-informed programming and interventions in support of the DLE and participation in local governance.
13. Similarly, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the National Association of Local Government Authorities, and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection must also make conscious efforts to collate, keep and make

available to the general public data on the composition of the district assemblies particularly in terms of gender, age and disability-related break-down. This will help the planning of supportive interventions by other stakeholders to deepen local governance.

14. The Government must develop guidelines to operationalize the relevant provisions in the Constitution and the Local Government Act regarding the appointment of 30 percent of the membership composition into the MMDA.
15. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) must improve service delivery to the citizenry in order to attract their interest and participation in local governance.
16. Civil Society Organizations must enhance their watchdog role by creating opportunities for citizens to engage local government authorities towards the improvement of decentralization.

## **6.2 General Conclusions**

The persistent low voter turn-out in District Level Elections (DLE) is a major concern for CODEO and indeed other stakeholders. CODEO believes this persistent public apathy towards the DLE has implications for effective grassroots participation and inclusive development. Away from that, there is blatant abuse of the laws governing the conduct of the DLE, especially violation of the clause that forbids political parties intrusion in the process, including candidates receiving support or campaigning on a political party platform. During the implementation of CODEO's interventions and partly due to findings CODEO made public, there was intense media and public discussions on the partisan intrusion into the DLE. Interestingly, while sections of the Ghanaian populace argued that making the DLE partisan will have positive correlation on citizens' participation as it will drive citizens' interest others, on the other hand, were against such a move for fear of deepening political polarization.

CODEO believes that the current system for the DLE is not working as envisaged under the applicable laws and provisions, and consequently the country does not seem to be reaping the full benefits of the huge resources invested in the local government elections. Thus, there is the need to do a holistic assessment to find out the reasons for the low patronage and non-conformity with the rules governing the DLE and advance solutions to the challenges.

Accordingly, CODEO calls for a review of the whole DLE concept after several years of implementation. CODEO believes a national conversation is needed to explore the possibility of making the DLE partisan-based, which probably could enhance citizens' interest and participation. Otherwise, it is necessary to ensure that existing rules governing its conduct are strictly adhered to and sanctions applied to those who break the rules.

Apart from the two major challenges identified above, however, CODEO's analyses of reports received from its observers indicate that the conduct of the September 1, 2015 District Assembly Elections was generally consistent with the electoral laws of the country and that arrangements by the Electoral Commission (EC) were adequate to enable eligible Ghanaians cast their votes.

## LIST OF APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: CODEO Statement on the Pre-Election Environment Observation for October/November 2014

#### **Enhancing Citizen Participation in the Up-coming Local Government Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process**

Wednesday, November 26, 2014

#### **Introduction**

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) releases its first pre-election environment observation report on the upcoming 2015 district assembly and unit committee elections. In October, CODEO deployed 86 long-term pre-election observers to 86 purposively selected districts throughout the ten (10) regions of the country to observe and report on the general electoral environment and activities of stakeholders ahead of the elections. The report, which captures observations made in October and November, is based on bi-weekly reports filed by the Coalition's pre-election observers from all the 86 selected project districts (See Appendix A for the list of districts);

#### **Summary of Finding:**

- The EC has begun the recruitment process for various temporary positions for the upcoming elections
- The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) has been sensitizing citizens on the local government elections; the NCCE has also been promoting the participation of women, Persons with Disabilities and the youth in politics, particularly towards the district assembly elections
- Aspiring candidates for election into the various district assemblies have started campaigning for votes even before they officially become candidates
- Very few activities by organized civil society/community-based organizations in support of the local government elections were recorded in the various districts
- Public apathy towards the local government elections is high

#### **Main Findings**

- *The Electoral Commission (EC)'s preparations for the up-coming local government elections*

CODEO observers reported that the EC has been undertaking some preparatory activities towards the district assembly elections. District offices of the Commission have put up

advertisements to recruit staff to fill the various positions that will be required during the election period. In the Amansie West, Tain, and West Mamprusi districts for example, the EC's district offices put up calls for applications for various election-related positions.

- ***The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) promotes awareness on the impending elections as well as the participation of marginalized groups in the elections***

CODEO observers in the various districts reported the NCCE is undertaking a range of public education activities aimed at sensitizing citizens on various issues such as the roles and responsibilities of district assemblies and citizens and who qualifies to be elected to district assemblies, among others. The NCCE also undertook peace promotion activities ahead of the elections. Such activities by the NCCE as reported by the observers were widespread and were conducted in various districts throughout the country including Ga South, Ekumfi Central, Birim Central, Bolgatanga Municipal, Obuasi Municipal, Wa East, Ellebelle and Kassena-Nankana West districts, among others.

The NCCE is also carrying out a series of activities aimed at promoting the participation of women, persons with disabilities and the youth in local governance and their election to the district assemblies. In various communities in districts such as Akatsi South, Adansi North, Nadowli-Kaleo, Bawku Municipal, Berekum and Dormaa, the NCCE has been using platforms such as community meetings/fora, radio programs and street announcements to whip up community support for, and interest of such groups in participating in the elections.

- ***Aspiring candidates' campaigns***

CODEO observers reported that even though nominations for elections into the district assemblies are yet to open, some individuals who are interested in contesting the elections are actively campaigning to be elected to the district assemblies. Such activities were observed in electoral areas such as Oblogo/Tettegu in Ga South, Ahentia in Awutu Senya, Ampedwee in Asutifi and Gausu in Obuasi Municipal. The aspiring candidates have been conducting such campaigns through house-to-house interactions, religious group meetings and the putting up of new posters.

- ***Civil society and the up-coming elections***

CODEO observers also report that civil society organisations are lagging behind in promoting awareness about the upcoming local elections. However, one observer reported that the Northern Sector Action on Awareness Center (**NORSAAC**) is canvassing support for the election of groups like women in the up-coming elections in the Builsa North district. On its part,

CODEO peer educators in the 86 selected districts have been educating women, youth and persons with disabilities on why it is important to get involved in local governance. The peer educators are whipping up the interest of such groups to contest in the local elections and get elected to the district assemblies.

- ***Public apathy towards the elections***

In their peer education activities on the elections, CODEO observers reported that members of the public expressed their lack of interest in the up-coming elections and pointed out they were either not aware of or did not know much about the elections. Other members of the public also displayed limited knowledge on the concept of local governance and consequently the need for them to vote in the local government elections.

### **Commendation**

CODEO commends:

- The NCCE for the efforts it is making to promote the inclusion and participation of groups such as women, persons with disabilities and the youth in local governance.

### **Recommendations**

CODEO recommends that:

- The EC makes available to the general public relevant information pertaining to the conduct of the up-coming elections. In particular, the EC should make public the timelines towards the conduct of the district assembly elections;
- The EC should create sustained awareness about the elections to reduce public apathy towards the elections;
- The NCCE should intensify its public education on the elections. It should also sustain the awareness creation and promotion of the participation of marginalized groups;
- Organized bodies should help whip up the interest of the general public in the elections;
- The Media should take advantage of the upcoming elections and use its platform to promote awareness about local governance and the need for citizens to get involved.

CODEO will continue to inform the general public through monthly press releases on activities and preparations of stakeholders towards the up-coming elections. CODEO's comprehensive observation of the upcoming local government elections has been made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana.

Signed.



Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin  
CODEO Coordinator  
*(For and on behalf of CODEO)*

**CODEO Secretariat**

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## APPENDIX B: Pre-Election Environment Observation Statement for December 2014

### Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government/District Assembly Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process

January 5, 2015

#### Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is pleased to release its second statement on the observation of the pre-election environment ahead of the March 3, 2015 local government/district assembly and unit committee elections. The statement, which follows the first report released in early December, captures observations made by CODEO's 86 long-term pre-election observers deployed to 86 purposively selected districts (See Appendix A below on the list of districts) throughout the ten (10) regions of the country. These observations were made from weekly reports filed by CODEO Observers during the month of December, 2014.

#### Summary of Finding:

- The Electoral Commission (EC) intensified preparations for the 2015 local government elections;
- The EC submitted to Law Courts for prosecution cases of individuals involved in multiple registrations;
- The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) continued with sensitization and education promotion on the participation of marginalized groups in the up-coming local government elections; and
- Interested aspirants picked up nomination forms at the various district offices of the EC; some aspiring candidates also continued with campaigning ahead of being officially declared candidates by the EC.

#### Main Findings

- *The Electoral Commission intensified preparations for the up-coming elections*

During the period of observation, CODEO observed that the EC intensified preparations towards the 2015 local government elections. The EC announced a new date for the elections to be March 3, 2015. The EC also opened and closed nominations for election into the various district assemblies and unit committees. CODEO observers from the various districts reported that some district EC Offices, such as the Kassena-Nankana, Nzema East and Wa West districts promoted awareness regarding the nomination processes in addition to sensitizing the public

about the new date for the elections. In the Dormaa Central district of the Brong-Ahafo region, the EC educated people on how to fill out the nomination forms and encouraged people to contest for the elections. The EC also put up notices of elections and worked on replacement of lost voter ID cards and vote transfers.

- ***The prosecution of suspected cases of multiple registrants***

During the period of observation, CODEO observers also noted that some individuals suspected of engaging in multiple voter registrations were sent to court for prosecution. Some of these individuals found guilty of the offence were fined various amounts of money while others were banned from taking part in electoral activities for a period of two (2) years. In the Assin South district of the Central Region, for example, where some individuals were prosecuted, offenders were charged with fines between 50 to 120 Ghana Cedis.

- ***The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) continued promoting the participation of marginalized groups in the up-coming elections while creating awareness about the elections***

CODEO observers reported from the various districts that the NCCE continued to organize meetings with marginalized groups such as women, persons with disability and the youth to encourage them to take active part in the elections. In the Dormaa Central district of the Brong-Ahafo region, for example, the NCCE promised a sponsorship package for interested women candidates. The NCCE also used its platforms to sensitize local communities about the local government elections and particularly about the newly-announced dates for the elections. Some of the districts where the NCCE carried out such activities included Asutifi North, Berekum, Builsa North, Adansi North, La-NkwantananMadina, Gomoa East, Savelugu-Nanton, and Kassena-Nankana,

- ***Opening of nomination process by the EC and picking of nominations forms by Aspirants***

CODEO observers reported that individuals interested in contesting for assembly and unit committee member positions picked and submitted nomination forms at the various EC offices when the window of nomination process opened.

- ***Campaigning by Aspirants***

Although the EC is yet to confirm and certify aspirants as candidates for the local government elections, CODEO Observers reported that some aspiring candidates in the observed districts continued with their election campaign. In some instances, some of these aspirants were seen making various promises particularly relating to the development of their communities. In the

Sekyere East and Dormaa Central districts in the Ashanti and BrongAhafo regions respectively, for instance, some candidates have been making promises such as providing electricity, street lights and water to their electoral areas.

### **Commendations**

CODEO commends the NCCE for its efforts at advocating for and promoting the participation of marginalized groups in the up-coming elections. CODEO further commends the EC for coming out with clear timelines for the local government elections.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the above findings, CODEO recommends the following:

- The EC should as much as possible stick to the new timelines for the 2015 local government elections to boost public confidence in the local government elections;
- The EC should enhance its public education on the elections to create more awareness about it;
- The NCCE should continue to support awareness creation about the elections while boosting the participation of marginalized groups; and
- The Media should support the promotion of public interest in the elections through their various channels and programs.

CODEO will continue to observe the pre-election environment and inform the general public through monthly press releases on activities and preparations of stakeholders towards the up-coming local government elections. CODEO's comprehensive observation of the 2015 local government elections has been made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana.

Signed.



Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin  
CODEO Coordinator  
*(For and on behalf of CODEO)*

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## **APPENDIX C: Statement on the Pre-Election Environment Observation for January, 2015**

### **Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government/District Assembly Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process**

February 2, 2015

#### **Introduction**

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is pleased to release its third pre-election environment observation statement on the 2015 District Assembly election. The pre-election observation exercise forms part of CODEO's comprehensive project to observe the impending district assembly and unit committee elections. The report captures observations made by CODEO's 86 long term pre-election observers and peer educators (all women) during the month of January. CODEO observers are deployed to 86 purposively selected districts in all ten regions of the country (see appendix A below for the list of districts). CODEO's pre-election observers submit observation reports every fortnight to CODEO's secretariat in Accra.

#### **Summary of Findings**

- The Electoral Commission (EC) has begun the training of its temporary staff across the country for the March 3rd district and unit committee elections;
- The EC completed the transfer of votes and the replacement of lost voter ID cards;
- The EC displayed the names and details of qualified aspirants for the checking of any anomalies;
- The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) continued with its education on local governance and sensitization of women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to stand and be voted for;
- Prospective Aspirants continued with their campaign for votes;
- There were no major visible activities by civil society organizations (CSOs) in support of local government elections in the various districts observed;
- Some individuals or group of individuals are engaged in the destruction of the posters of some aspirants; and
- Discreet political party intrusions were observed in the upcoming district assembly elections.

## **Main Findings**

- ***Activities by the Electoral Commission***

The Electoral Commission during the period of observation replaced lost voter ID cards and transferred names of voters who wished to do so. The EC embarked on recruitment of its temporary officers for the upcoming exercise. The EC also displayed the names of aspirants to check their details such as: pictures and electoral areas.

The EC used various channels to reach out to the general public concerning the impending local level elections. The use of posters was very prominent in the Commission's education and dissemination strategy.

Our observers reported that radio announcements were also used to inform and educate the general public on the 2015 district elections.

In electoral areas where there were no aspirants after the period of filing nominations ended in December 23, 2014, the EC re-opened the process for filing nomination in only those areas. For instance, in the Amenfi West District in the Western Region, the EC re-opened the process for qualified persons to file their nominations in the Akromato, Nkwantatwam, Oda and Hiamatuo electoral areas; and in the Amomaso and OsofuKyere electoral areas in the Berekum District in the Brong-Ahafo Region between January 17 and 18, 2015

- ***NCCE and Civic Education***

CODEO observers reported that the NCCE adopted various medium of communication to educate and sensitize the general public before, during and after the local level elections. Community forums, radio announcements and discussions, posters, information vans amongst others were the means the NCCE used to pass on information to the public. The reports from CODEO observers indicated that the NCCE's activities cut across the entire country. For example, in the Amenfi West district in the Western region, Mfantseman district in the Central region, Tain and Dormaa districts in the Brong-Ahafo region, Ga East district in the Greater Accra region, Ketu districts in the Volta region and Asante Akim North district in the Ashanti region, among others, the NCCE took the populace through democracy education, especially the current Ghanaian democratic dispensation and the need for democracy to be practiced and entrenched at the local level. It further educated the community members on the roles and responsibilities of the Assemblyman and the unit committee member.

CODEO observers also reported that in Amenfi West and Ellembele districts in the Western region, Wa West district in Upper West region, and Bolgatanga district in the Upper East region,

the NCCE, in collaboration with the EC, educated citizens on the importance for the youth, women and people with disabilities to participate and be part of the impending district level election since these groups of people constitute the majority of the Ghanaian population.

The NCCE further sensitized the general public to vote for competent people who will help promote development in their areas. It emphasized the point that the district level elections are strictly non-partisan.

- ***Election Campaign and activities of Candidates***

Following the publication of names and particulars of qualified candidates to contest the district and unit committee elections, CODEO observers reported that some candidates have stepped up their campaigning in their various electoral areas. The aspirants are conducting their campaign using the house to house method, pasting of new posters, holding meetings with congregants of various religious bodies and the market places, clean-up exercises, organizing parties and in some cases radio programme. Contestants in Mpatapo, OsofoKyere, Zongo, Kato, Amangoase Berekum electoral areas all in Berekum in the Brong-Ahafo Region all engaged on a promise spree to the electorates. Some of the promises made include the construction of toilet, markets and roads, the provision of good and portable drinking water and street lights, organizing communal labour for community cleaning and ensuring the clearing of choked gutters and refuse dumps, sustainable and all-inclusive development and attending to the needs of women and children and PWDs through the provision of micro finance facilities.

- ***Defacing of Campaign Posters***

Though the reports filed by CODEO observers generally point to a peaceful and violent free campaign, there are cases of some few faceless individuals who have been engaged in the act of destroying posters of some other aspirants. For instance, in the Kataraga electoral area in Sagnarigu District of Northern Region, a candidate complained of his posters being defaced or removed and in the Nkpor and East Akro electoral areas of Ledzokuku-Krowor District in the Greater Accra region, some candidates also complained about destruction of their campaign posters.

- ***Activities of Civil Society and Media***

CODEO observers reported seeing very little of CSOs activities in support of the district assembly elections during the month of January. Notwithstanding, in Binduri district in the Upper East Region, a local CSO, the Community Development and Advocacy Center (CODAC), has been actively sensitizing the voters to elect women to represent them in the assembly. Further, CODEO peer educators in all the 86 selected districts have been working hard in educating women, the youth and persons with disabilities to present themselves for

election. CODEO observers have also reported of low media coverage of the upcoming district assembly elections. However, Dormaa FM in the Dormaa Municipal Assembly has been educating the public on the district assembly elections.

- ***Promotion of Issues Affecting Women, Youth and PWDs***

On the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the elections, CODEO observers have reported that these groups are actively participating in the upcoming district level elections. CODEO peer educators undertook in all the 86 selected project districts around the country sensitization programs to interest women, youth and PWDs to participate in the upcoming elections. CODEO observers have also reported that the NCCE and EC are also encouraging women and PWDs to present themselves for election in the impending local level elections.

In spite of all these advocacy efforts, CODEO observers have reported of some derogatory remarks being passed by some people concerning women and PWDs as their representatives at the district level. In other cases, electoral areas where women and PWDs declared their intentions to stand for election, they are persuaded to stand down for another aspirant to go for the election.

- ***Undercover Political Party intrusion in the District Assembly elections***

CODEO observers reported instances of political party activities in the otherwise non-partisan nature of the district assembly elections. Contrary to the fact that the district assembly election is by law strictly non-partisan, CODEO observers reported seeing some political party executives and supporters campaigning for their preferred candidates. For instance, in the Ledzokuku-Krowor district in the Greater Accra region, party sympathizers of the two major political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP), were seen wearing party paraphernalia during clean up campaigns organised by aspirants. CODEO observers have reported that these incidents of clandestine political party intrusion have happened at Binduri in the Upper East Region, Ledzokuku-Krowor in the Greater Accra Region; Lawra in the Upper West Region, Amenfi West in the Western Region, Dormaa in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Asante Akim North in the Ashanti Region among others.

## **Commendation**

CODEO commends the EC and NCCE, in particular, for their sensitization and education of the public to vote for marginalized groups like women and Persons with Disabilities in the impending district level elections.

## **Recommendations**

In view of the above findings, CODEO recommends the following:

- The general lackluster attitude exhibited by CSOs towards the impending local level elections is worrying. CODEO urges CSOs, especially women and PWDs interest groups to show more interest in the impending district assembly elections by whipping the interest of women and PWDs to take up leadership positions
- The NCCE should continue to arouse the interest of citizens, especially women and PWDs, to partake in the upcoming elections
- Aspirants should desist from making promises that they cannot fulfil but just to woo voters
- Political parties are cautioned to desist from their discreet involvement in the district assembly election as it is against the law. CODEO is reassured that the EC has taken steps to disqualify aspirants who flout the law with regards to political party affiliation. CODEO urges the EC to strictly apply the law on offending political parties as well to deter others from such acts
- The media should hold more programs concerning local governance to educate the public on the importance of the district and unit committee elections

## **Conclusion**

CODEO will continue to observe the pre-election environment and inform the general public through monthly press releases on activities and preparations of stakeholders towards the upcoming local government elections. CODEO's comprehensive observation of the 2015 local government elections has been made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana.

Signed.



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## APPENDIX D: Statement on the Pre-Election Environment Observation for February 2015

### Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government/District Assembly Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process

#### Introduction

With less than four days to the March 3, 2015 District Level Elections, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is pleased to release its fourth pre-election environment observation statement. The pre-election observation exercise forms part of CODEO's comprehensive project to observe the impending District Assembly and Unit Committee Elections. The report captures observations made by CODEO's 86 long term pre-election observers and peer educators, all of whom are women, during the latter part of January and the month of February. CODEO observers are deployed to 86 purposively selected districts in all ten regions of the country (see appendix A below for the list of districts). They submit observation reports fortnightly to CODEO's secretariat in Accra.

#### Summary of Findings

- The Electoral Commission (EC) has conducted pilot voting in some communities to test its equipment and preparations towards the election
- The EC mounted platforms for all aspiring assembly members in some of the districts observed
- The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) continued with the education of the general public on the need to encourage marginalized groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and women, to be part of the local governance process
- CODEO conducted capacity building workshops on effective campaigning for targeted groups (women, youth and PWD) throughout the country
- There has been a rise in media interest in the lead up to the District Assembly elections
- Campaigning is in full gear by all candidates including PWDs and female aspirants;
- Defacement of campaign posters continued in selected districts observed
- There has been an increase in political parties' clandestine support for preferred candidates

#### Main Findings

- *Activities by the Electoral Commission*

During the period of observation, CODEO observers reported that the EC undertook

preparatory activities before the March 3 election day exercise. For instance, at Ofankor, in the Greater Accra Region, the EC conducted a pilot voting exercise on the February 14, 2015 to test run their machines. In furtherance of that, the EC organized a technical training exercise on the biometric verification device for about 1500 staff at Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo Region.

In the month of February 2015, the EC conducted training exercises for its polling officials on how to complete the declaration of results sheets and other forms, including the tally sheets. In other districts, the EC distributed election manuals that contained detailed information about the elections.

CODEO observers also reported seeing platforms being mounted by the EC. In the Ledzokuku Krowor District, Greater Accra Region, the EC organized platforms for the aspirants at a date suitable for them. As part of its sensitization activities, the EC officers took turns to caution candidates and their supporters on the type of questions they would ask the various candidates during the platform mounting and that the questions, statements and responses should be issue-based, devoid of personality attacks.

Furthermore, the EC has posted notices of polls which indicate how the various aspirants will be arranged on the ballot paper. This led to the realization of a female aspirant in the Adansi South District of the Ashanti Region that her gender had been incorrectly marked on the paper. Also, some candidates in the Beppoh and No. 3 Compound electoral area in the Ashanti Region have complained of their pictures being unclear.

- ***NCCE and Civic Education***

During the period of observation, CODEO observers reported that the NCCE has intensified its sensitization activities across the country. As the election draws closer, the NCCE has adopted a collaborative approach to reach out to voters and aspirants alike. For example, on February 6, 2015, the NCCE organized a forum at Kasapin in the Asunafo North District, Brong Ahafo Region. The aim was to fuel the interest of participants and subsequently, the generality of Ghanaians, to participate fully in the up-coming election. The organizer's focus was on issues that could entice registered voters to turn out and vote in their numbers. Ways of ensuring sanity on campaign platforms to promote peaceful and violence free elections and identifying threats to peace and ways to nip such threats in the bud were identified and deliberated upon during the event. At Hohoe in the Volta Region, the NCCE has mounted platforms for the aspirants of three electoral areas namely, Gbi-Kpeme, Gbi-Bla and Gbi Abansi for them to reach out to the public for familiarization and to sell their campaign messages.

The NCCE has also been meeting with groups to educate them on the upcoming local level elections in the country. CODEO observers reported that the NCCE met with the Federation of the Disabled and Pentecost Women Movement at Saltpond in the Central Region to encourage them to go out and support the female and PWD aspirants and to help improve their representation at the district assembly and promote local governance.

In order to reach out a large audience of the population, the NCCE has been using radio programmes to disseminate information concerning the March 3 district level elections. As well as the use of radio, information vans are another important tool the Commission has been using in the Asante Akim North District, Ashanti Region.

- ***Election Campaign and activities of Candidates***

CODEO observers reported that the campaign is in full gear by all aspiring assembly members throughout the country. Over and above the usual door to door visits, radio announcements, street announcements and community gatherings, use of sound systems and bands, banners, stickers and fliers are being utilized as ways of mobilization supporters. Some aspirants are also maximizing the opportunity provided by the platforms mounted by the EC for all aspiring assembly members in the various electoral areas in the country. These campaign platforms are meant for all candidates to deliver their campaign messages publicly and for the voter to interrogate each campaign message further. However, some aspirants and opinion leaders are using these platforms to demean their opponents. This behavior is especially prevalent among the youth. At a candidate debate platform mounted by the EC at Eshiem in the Birim Central Municipal in the Eastern Region, for example, the incumbent referred to the youth who were contesting him as 'children who do not have any experience'. At Akroso, also in the Birim Central Municipality, the chairman of the candidate debate platform, who happens to be the chief of the town, during his closing remarks, also said the District Assembly is not for children and it is not as the youth see it.

CODEO observers also reported that aspirants are using various promises to persuade voters to vote for them. In the KEEA district in the Central Region, aspirants are assuring electorate of an end to teenage pregnancy in the community. At Shama in the Western Region, other candidates promise they will use their office to get the community additional transformers to reduce power shedding.

- ***CODEO organizes Capacity Building Workshops for Targeted Aspirants***

Prior to the EC mounting platforms for aspirants, CODEO, as part of its comprehensive observation support for the District Assembly Elections, organized capacity building

workshops on effective campaigning for women, PWDs and youth aspirants. The workshops took place in all 10 regions and attracted over 3000 aspirants. The main objective of the workshops was to equip the targeted aspirants with the skills required to contest for election and campaign effectively.

- ***Defacement of Campaign Posters***

CODEO observers once again reported incidence of defacement of aspirants' campaign posters. CODEO observers reported that certain people were engaged in the defacing of the posters and other paraphernalia of their opponents. For instance, in the Gbi-Ahado electoral area in the Hohoe district of the Volta Region, Nsuaem/Darmang electoral area in the Western Region, Nkran/Ngresi electoral area also in the Western Region, DzenAyor(Ogbojo), NiiAshaley, Adenta housing and Otanor all in the Adenta Municipal in Greater Accra Region, the posters of some candidates are being defaced. Also, in the Nkwanta District in the Volta Region, posters of some aspirants have been destroyed and replaced with funeral posters. In LedzokukuKrowor District of the Greater Accra Region, some aspirants have destroyed the paraphernalia of certain candidates and at Nkor area in the LedzokukuKrowor District in the Greater Accra Region candidates have plastered their posters on top of those of their opponents.

- ***Activities of Civil Society and Media***

On the issue of civil society and media interest in the upcoming District Assembly Election, CODEO observers reported that in the Yendi District in the Northern Region, Parambo-Sawaba Youth Associations were engaged in educating the public on the election. Likewise, in Binduri in the Upper East Region, Zuuri Organic Vegetable Farmers Association (ZOVFA) and (EDEG) have been involved in sensitizing electorates to participate in the upcoming District Assembly Elections. Furthermore, CODEO observers reported that the media coverage is on the rise. Radio Gruuni in Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region, Lorlornyo FM and Heritage FM both in the Hohoe District in the Volta Region play jingles and hold talk shows discussing the election. Also in the Awutu Senya District in the Central Region Enyidado FM is involved in the education of electorates whilst in the Pru District in the BrongAhafo Region, Alive FM has designed a programme called 'Assemblymen Corner,' where aspirants are given the opportunity to promote their campaign messages.

- ***Promotion of Issues Affecting Women, Youth and PWDs***

In the Awutu Senya District in the Central Region, Abantu for Development and partners, have printed and distributed stickers encouraging the electorate to vote for women in the District Assembly election. At Teshie in the Greater Accra Region a durbar was held at the Teshie Presbyterian Church by Peace Women Association, Hope for the Living "PWDs", Ghana

National Association of Garages, Teshie Presbyterian SHS and Teshie Central Mosque to discuss issues about the upcoming election. The aim of the activity was to strengthen community action and remove barriers to participation faced by women, PWD's and other marginalized groups in the DLEs.

- ***Undercover Political Party intrusion in the District Assembly elections***

CODEO observers reported that some aspiring assembly members are engaged in the practice of getting assistance from political parties. Political parties, for example, have been observed secretly assisting and campaigning for their preferred candidates throughout the country. In the Binduri District of the Upper East Region, it was observed that political parties were providing direct support to their preferred candidates. Likewise, in Ledzokuku Krowor in the Greater Accra Region, there were reports that some contestants were asked to step aside for others, who are believed to be sharing similar political party sympathy, to contest. In some instances, political leaders have sent delegation to pressurize specific candidates to withdraw their candidature and allow a particular aspirant to contest. Also, some aspirants have nicknamed themselves with political party's candidates. In the Gbortsui electoral area in Ablekuma in the Greater Accra Region, for example, a candidate nicknamed himself one of the Presidential hopefuls whilst campaigning.

### **Commendation**

The EC and NCCE, in particular, are to be commended for continuing with the education of the electorates, especially in their work encouraging marginalized groups like women and PwDs to contest to be voted for in the impending district level elections. CODEO also commends the media and civil society organizations that have increased their advocacy activities to stimulate the interest of the general public in the district assembly elections.

### **Towards March 3, 2015**

CODEO will deploy close to 700 of its observers to sampled polling stations in the 86 selected districts throughout the country on election-day as poll watchers. These observers will be both stationary and roaming. CODEO will observe the set-up, voting and counting process and votes cast while taking note of any incidences that might occur. CODEO Observers will transmit their observation reports via SMS to the CODEO Observation Center (COC). CODEO will issue periodic statements during the voting process as well as a preliminary statement after the polling process.

CODEO will continue to observe the pre-election environment and inform the general public through regular media releases regarding the elections.

CODEO's comprehensive observation of the 2015 local government elections has been made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana.

Signed.



Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin  
CODEO Coordinator  
*(For and on behalf of CODEO)*  
**Friday, February 27, 2015**

**CODEO Secretariat**

*For further enquiries and information, please contact: The CODEO Coordinator, Mr. Albert K. Arhin on 0244746791/0208221068 or Rhoda Osei-Afful, CODEO Secretariat on 0244 350 266/ 0277 744 777*

## **APPENDIX E: Statement on the Pre-Election Environment Observation for July 20 to August 15, 2015**

### **Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 District Level Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process**

August 19, 2015

#### **Introduction**

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is pleased to release the pre-election environment observation statement on the rescheduled 2015 District Level Election (DLE), which comes off on September 1, 2015. This statement is the fourth in the series of pre-election observation reports issued by CODEO since November 2014. The statement covers CODEO's observation beginning July 20 to August 15, 2015.

#### **Summary of Findings**

- Minimal visibility of civic and voter education across the districts observed;
- Aspirants continued their campaign activities after filing their nominations;
- Campaigns have been devoid of violence in almost all districts observed, although some individuals or group of individuals continue to vandalize posters of some aspirants;
- Only a few civil society organizations (CSOs) are engaged in promoting citizen participation in the local government elections in the various districts observed; and
- Covert political party intrusions in the upcoming district assembly elections.

#### **Main Findings**

• CODEO observers reported that the EC had recruited and was preparing to train temporary election officials. In Builsa North District in the Upper East region, for instance, the EC is collaborating with the GES to recruit teachers to serve as temporary election officials. In addition, the Electoral Commission registered new voters who turned 18 and replaced lost voters' identification cards for a fee of GHC 5 for people in the Ketu South District of the Volta Region after verifying their identity and issued them with receipts. Despite the seemingly widespread nature of activities being undertaken by the EC in many parts of the country, our pre-election observers in New Juabeng district in the Eastern region, East Gonja in the Northern region, Suaman and Prestea Huni-Valley districts in the Western region, Awutu Senya East in the Central region, Bongo district in the Upper East region, and Bosomhe-Freho district in the Ashanti region reported the absence of any activities by the EC.

- ***Voter and Civic Education***

Although CODEO observers reported minimal civic and voter education, observers reported that the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and EC have largely been on the forefront of civic and voter education mainly through posters and radio programs across the districts observed. Both the NCCE and the EC were seen educating the public on local governance and the need for the electorate to exercise their civic responsibilities. Key among the messages in the civic/voter education is the need for the electorate to vote on Election Day for the most suitable aspirant(s). The Electoral Commission also has been urging the public to pay attention to the new posters as new candidates have filed to contest in the elections.

Some of the districts with little or no civic/voter education include Awutu-Senya in the Central Region, Bulisa-North and Bongo in the Upper East Region, Ga-South in the Greater Accra Region, New Juabeng in the Eastern Region, Lawra and Wa West in the Upper West Region, Wassa Amenfi West and Shama in the Western Region, Pru in the Brong-Ahafo Region and Bosome-Freho in the Ashanti Region.

- ***Election Campaign and activities of Candidates***

The aspiring candidates have been campaigning using door-to-door strategies, posters, radio programs and other means of campaigning in the various districts of the country. However, although there was vigorous campaign in some parts of the country, there were no visible campaign activities by candidates in some districts such as East Gonja in the Northern Region, Akatsi-South in the Volta Region. Other regions with low campaign activities are Donkorkrom in the Eastern Region, Sekyere East and BosomeFreho in the Ashanti Region, Berekum in the Brong Ahafo Region, and Awutu Senya West and Abura/Asebu/Kwamankese in the Central Region.

CODEO observers further reported that most candidates have conducted themselves well in their campaigns and the use of abusive language has been minimal. There were, however, few reports of the use of abusive language by aspirants against opponents on campaign platforms. For example, supporters of candidates in the Xipe-Ative Electoral Area of Ketu North District in the Volta Region and in the Obuasi Municipality of the Ashanti Region used abusive language on opposing candidates.

Generally, CODEO Observers reported that campaigns have been devoid of violence in almost all districts observed. However, CODEO observers reported the vandalization of posters of some candidates by individuals or groups of individuals in some districts such as Ketu North district in the Volta Region, Awutu Senya in the Central Region, Ledzokuku Krowor Municipal

Assembly in the Greater Accra Region and Obuasi Municipal in the Ashanti Region.

- ***Activities of Civil Society and Media***

The involvement of the non-state actors, such as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in promoting citizen participation in the upcoming 2015 District Level Elections has been minimal in most of the districts under observation. However, there were some impressive interventions by CSOs in some districts. For example, Anchito Foundation for Education and Self-help (AFES-Ghana) initiated a 5-week voter-awareness campaign in the New Juaben District of the Eastern Region and its surrounding communities. Similarly, ABANTU for Development was also reported to have been involved in supporting and promoting women, youth and People with Disabilities (PWDs) to increase their representation in the upcoming Unit Committee and District Level Elections. BIYAC FM in the Birim Central Municipal in the Eastern Region invited experts to speak on air about the electoral laws as well as the District Assembly concept.

- ***Covert Political Party intrusion in the District Assembly elections***

As reported in previous CODEO observation reports, some political parties continue to discretely, or in some cases, support candidates openly. In the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem (KEEA) Municipal and Binduri Districts in the Central and Upper East Regions respectively, CODEO observers reported that some candidates aligned themselves with some political parties, such as the Progressive People's Party (PPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) respectively. CODEO observers also reported open support for candidates from the two major political parties, the NDC and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Asunafo-North district in the Brong Ahafo Region. Similarly, members of the NDC in Sene West district in the Brong Ahafo Region were reported to have visited an aspirant in his house to advise him to step down for another candidate to contest, which the former rejected and went ahead to file his nomination.

## **Recommendations**

With less than two weeks to the September 1 polls, CODEO makes the following recommendations:

- All election stakeholders including the NCCE, the media and CSOs should actively encourage citizen interest in the upcoming elections;
- The media should air educational programs on local governance, the importance of the district and unit committee elections and the need for the electorate to participate and vote in the September 1 elections;

CODEO strongly urges the EC to investigate allegations of political party intrusion in DLE process, as well as aspirants aligning themselves with political parties and apply the law on offending political parties and candidates.

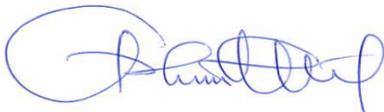
### **Conclusion**

CODEO suspended its observation activities of the 2015 DLE project following the Supreme Court ruling in February suspending the then scheduled March 3 elections. CODEO resumed its observation exercise mid July 2015 following the new calendar announced by the EC. In October 2014, CODEO deployed 86 long-term pre-election observers to 86 purposively selected districts throughout the ten (10) regions of the country to observe and report on the general electoral environment and activities of stakeholders ahead of the elections. CODEO's pre-election statements capture bi-weekly observations filed by the Coalition's pre-election observers from all the 86 selected project districts. CODEO will continue to observe the pre-election environment and inform the public through press releases on activities and preparations of stakeholders towards the up-coming District Level Elections.

### **Towards September 1, 2015 elections**

On September 1, 2015, Election Day, CODEO will deploy close to 700 of its observers to sampled polling stations in the 86 selected districts throughout the country as poll watchers. CODEO will observe the set-up, voting and counting process and votes cast while taking note of any incidences that might occur. CODEO Observers will transmit their observation via SMS to the CODEO Observation Center (COC). CODEO will issue periodic statements during the voting process as well as a preliminary statement after the polling process. CODEO's comprehensive observation of the 2015 District Level Elections has been made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana.

Signed.



Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin  
CODEO Coordinator  
*(For and on behalf of CODEO)*

### **CODEO Secretariat**

For further enquiries and information, please contact: The CODEO Coordinator, Mr. Albert K. Arhin on 0244746791/0208221068 or the CODEO Secretariat on 0244 350 266/0277 744 777

**APPENDIX F: CODEO Press Statement on the eve of September 1, 2015  
district Assembly and Unit Committee Elections, delivered at CODEO Secretariat  
(CDD-Ghana Conference Room) on August 31, 2015**

Our friends in the Media,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.,

On behalf of the Advisory Board of the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), I welcome you all to this press conference ahead of the September 1, 2015 District Assembly and Unit Committee elections. The purpose of our briefing this morning is to inform Ghanaians, through you the media, of CODEO's preparations toward deploying close to 700 CODEO observers for the District Level Elections.

**About CODEO and Election Observation in Ghana**

Before I proceed further, Ladies and Gentlemen, kindly permit me to say a few words about CODEO. The Coalition was formed in May 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana). Its primary objective has been to mobilize Ghanaians to contribute towards the promotion of free, fair, and transparent elections in the country. Since the year 2000, CODEO has become a platform for citizens and groups to participate in the Ghanaian democratic process. It comprises 40 organizations including civic, secular, religious and non-governmental organizations. The Coalition has two co-chairs and is managed by a fifteen-member Advisory Board. CODEO has recruited, trained and deployed its members to observe all general elections, local government elections and by-elections since 2000. CODEO is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) and also a founding member of the West African Election Observers Network (WAEON).

**CODEO's Support Activities towards the 2015 District Assembly Elections**

Ladies and Gentlemen, since October 2014, CODEO, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has been implementing a number of activities in support of the September 1 District Assembly and Unit Committee Elections. Under the theme, Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government/District Assembly Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process, CODEO's broad support for the district assembly elections seeks to enhance election transparency and credibility and to promote equality of opportunity. In this regard, the Coalition strategized to constructively and systematically engage the electoral process by mobilizing marginalized groups, particularly women, youth and persons with disability to encourage them and to deepen their participation in the process as both poll watchers and more importantly as candidates to contest for positions into the district assemblies.

Towards this end, CODEO recruited, trained and deployed 86 women as Peer Educators and Long Term Observers to 86 selected project districts. The roles of these women were to sensitize the general public but particularly women, young people and people with disabilities on the concept of local government and the need for them to get involved. The aim of the sensitization activities was to whip up their interest in the local government elections. To help improve the representation of these marginalized groups in local government, our 86 Peer Educators visited various communities and groups nationwide and encouraged them to contest for the pending elections.

With filing of nominations over, CODEO with the kind cooperation of the Electoral Commission and its District Officers were able to identify and build the capacities of over 3,000 Assembly member aspirants throughout the country through district-level capacity-building programs. These took place from Monday, February 9 to Saturday February 15, 2015. CODEO targeted aspirants who were females, youth, and/or persons with disability for the training workshops. The aim of these workshops was to build the capacities of the aspirants on effective campaigning with a view to enhancing their chances of winning the elections.

### ***Key Findings from the Observation of the Pre-Election Environment***

Ladies and Gentlemen, beginning October, 2014, CODEO's 86 Peer Educators, who also received training in long-term pre-election environment observation, have been closely watching the pre-election phase of the electoral process in the 86 selected districts for which they have been filing bi-weekly observation reports to the CODEO secretariat in Accra. The pre-election environment observation covered activities of key electoral stakeholders including the EC, the NCCE, District Assembly member aspirants, the media and civil society organizations among others. Between October 2014 and August 2015, CODEO issued four pre-election statements detailing our observation findings to key stakeholders and the general public.

### ***Summary of Findings***

- In general, CODEO found from the pre-election observation exercise that the Electoral Commission (EC) steadily undertook preparatory activities throughout this pre-election phase toward the organization of the polls
- The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) also conducted series of voter and civic education, including sensitization of the public, particularly women and persons with disability, on the role of District Assembly and Unit Committee members in the districts that CODEO deployed pre-election observers
- Unlike the extensive civic and voter education observed in the lead up to the then March

3 scheduled DLE, CODEO observers, however, noted that in the run-up to the re-scheduled September 1, 2015 DLE, voter and civic education to whip up citizens' interest and participation was limited in some of the districts

- Similarly, CODEO observed that few CSOs and media houses were involved in related activities aimed at increasing citizens' participation in the upcoming elections. In general, there were no major visible activities by CSOs in support of local government elections in the various districts observed
- CODEO further noted that aspiring candidates were engaged in vigorous campaigning in the districts observed. The aspirants conducted their campaign using the house to house method, pasting of posters, holding meetings with congregants of various religious bodies and the market place and clean-up exercises, among others
- CODEO further noted that aspirants were engaged in promise sprees to the electorate, including the construction of toilets, markets and roads, the provision of good and portable drinking water and street lights, organizing communal labour for community cleaning and ensuring the clearing of choked gutters and refuse dumps, sustainable and all-inclusive development and attending to the needs of women and children and PWDs through the provision of micro finance facilities
- Although the reports filed by CODEO observers deployed in the 86 districts generally point to a peaceful and violent free campaigning, there were reported cases of some few faceless individuals who were engaged in the act of destroying posters of some other aspirants
- CODEO further noted worrying signs of both covert and overt intrusion of political parties in the election process either by supporting a candidate or a candidate associating him/herself with a political party

On the whole, while CODEO notes with appreciation a rise in public discourse and interest in the days leading to the conduct of the polls, whether towards the March 3 or the present September 1 date for the elections. CODEO is, however, equally concerned that citizens' interest in local government elections has been abysmal. CODEO observed during the pre-election phase that members of the public expressed their lack of interest in the up-coming elections and pointed out they were either not aware of or did not know much about the elections. Some members of the public also displayed limited knowledge on the concept of local governance and consequently the need for them to vote in the local government elections. It appears that CSOs and the media have not given the necessary attention to local government elections as much as they give to Presidential and general elections.

CODEO equally expresses concerns with the delays associated with the conduct of this election and wonders if the delays do not have political and legal implications for our local government structures, their performance and governance. Over the years, the country's management of district assembly elections has not been the best and such attitudes affect local governance and undermine effective grassroots democracy. It is important that as a country, we give particular attention to our district level elections and make it more attractive to deepen citizens' participation in local governance.

### ***September 1 Deployment of Election-Day Observers***

Ladies and Gentlemen, CODEO has just finished training about 700 election-day observers who are being deployed to all ten regions of the country to watch tomorrow's polls. These observers include 500 stationed Polling Station observers who will observe the elections at 500 randomly-selected polling stations in our selected 86 project districts. These polling station observers will follow and observe voting proceedings at their assigned polling stations from start to the end of the voting process. In particular, the observers are required to observe the quality of the voting process, the conduct of election officials, and the participation of marginalized groups. The remaining close to 200 observers will constitute CODEO's Roaming Observers and will be moving from polling station to polling station and report of any incidents they might come across.

As in previous elections in 2012, CODEO is deploying technology to receive rapid reports from observers through coded text messages via mobile phones at designated time periods. CODEO observers will provide information to the CODEO Observation Center at CODEO Secretariat at CDD-Ghana's office throughout the polling day. This will enable CODEO receive, analyse and share findings on the electoral process at various stages. This system of reporting by our observers will enable CODEO to quickly and thoroughly analyze the conduct of voting around the country.

A critical incident desk will be mounted at the CODEO Observation Center where reports about irregularities, disruptions and other negative incidents in the voting process received from CODEO Observers will be quickly processed and, if verified as valid, relayed to the Ghana Police Service, the Electoral Commission and any other relevant state institutions for prompt redress.

On the basis of observation findings and incidents filed by our observers, District Supervisors and the Regional Supervisors, CODEO will be in a position to issue regular statements during the day and a preliminary statement within 48 hours of the elections.

### **Post-Election Observation**

CODEO will deploy post-election observers in all the 86 working districts to observe the post-election period. The Coalition will as well undertake advocacy to support the inclusion of more women, youth and PWDs in composition of the 30% appointment to assemblies.

A final detailed report containing analysis of the pre-election environment, the election-day observations, post-election phase observations, as well as lessons learned and recommendations will be prepared and made available to government, the Electoral Commission and other relevant stakeholders as well as the public at a later date.

### **Acknowledgements**

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me at this point acknowledge the kind support and cooperation of institutions without whose support CODEO's 2015 activities towards the 2015 District Assembly Elections would not have been made possible. We are grateful to the Electoral Commission of Ghana and its various District Offices for their kind cooperation towards implementing this project. We are also grateful to the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in the districts that we operated in.

CODEO wants to use this opportunity to encourage all Ghanaians to come out and take part in the elections to make it successful. CODEO also notes with appreciation the preparedness of the Ghana Police Service and other security agencies to provide the necessary security for the conduct of the polls and beyond.

Finally, we also want to acknowledge that CODEO's support activities towards the 2015 local government elections have been made possible with the generous support of the American people through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Ghana.

May God Bless Ghana

Thank You



Justice VCRAC Crabbe  
Co-Chair



Professor Miranda Greenstreet  
Co-Chair

Dated: Monday, August 31, 2015

### **CODEO Secretariat**

*For further enquiries and information, please contact: The CODEO Coordinator, Mr. Albert K. Arhin on 0244746791/0208221068 or the CODEO Secretariat on 0244 350 266/0277 744 777*

## APPENDIX G: Polling-day Observation – Mid-day situational statement



### POLLING DAY OBSERVATION: SITUATIONAL STATEMENT

#### CONTACT

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01 September 2015  
Accra, Ghana

#### Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) has deployed 700 trained, accredited, non-partisan rapid response observers to observe the District Level Elections (DLE). Of this number, 500 are Stationary Observers assigned to 500 randomly selected polling stations in 86 districts located in the 10 regions of Ghana. The remaining 200 are conducting roaming observation within these districts. CODEO's observers are ordinary Ghanaians who have volunteered their time to help ensure that registered voters can freely cast their ballot on Election Day.

This mid-day situational statement is based on reports CODEO has received from its Stationary Observers, Regional Coordinators (RCs) and District Supervisors (DSs) deployed in 86 districts (See Annex A for the list of districts). The report focuses on the setting up and opening of polling stations.

Below are highlights of field reports received from over 200 CODEO Stationary Observers from every selected district as of 12:00 PM today (i.e. Election Day, September 1, 2015).

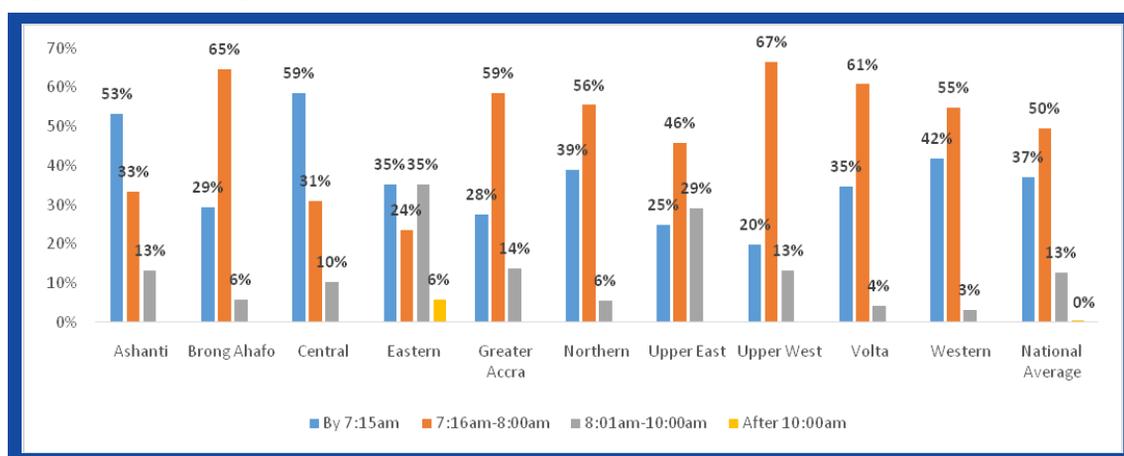
### Arrival at Polling Stations

- By 6:00am, all CODEO Stationary Observers had reported at their assigned polling stations.
- 67% of polling officers were present at the polling stations as required by the Electoral Commission’s (EC) regulation, which requires them to be present at their assigned polling stations by 6:30AM. In a third (33%) of polling stations, the polling officials were not present at the time CODEO Stationary Observers arrived.
- In 99% of the polling stations, the electoral officials respected CODEO Observers’ status as EC’s accredited election observers and permitted them to observe the polls.

### Setting Up of Polls

- Overall, 87% of the polling stations had opened by 8:00AM. Of this, 37% had opened by 7:15AM and 50% between 7:16 and 8:00AM (see Figure 1 below for regional results).

**Figure 1: Time voting commenced**



- Reports from 91% of CODEO Stationary Observers showed that the polling stations were set up so voters could mark their ballots in secret. However, in 9% of polling stations, the set up was not according to the regulations
- According to CODEO Stationary Observers, almost all polling stations (96%), were accessible to persons with disability and the elderly
- At the time of set up, 94% of CODEO Stationary Observers reported that there were polling agents representing candidates at the polling stations

- CODEO Stationary Observers reported seeing uniformed security personnel at post at 80% of polling stations
- Reports received from CODEO Stationary Observers showed that in 82% of the polling stations, all election materials were available at the time of opening. In 16% of polling stations, tactile ballots were not available while 2% of the polling stations had no endorsing ink and ballot boxes, respectively
- CODEO Stationary Observers report that all polling stations (100%) had biometric verification machines at the time of setup
- At 99% of polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers could confirm that the DLE and the Unit Committee Elections (UCE) ballot boxes were shown to be empty, sealed and placed in public view before the commencement of voting

### **General Observations**

Reports received from CODEO Observers suggest that voting started smoothly at all the polling stations in the districts being observed. However, CODEO Observers report minor incidents, such as intimidation and harassment, disruption of the voting process and breakdown of Biometric Devices at some polling stations.

- In general, although CODEO Observers report that biometric voting devices were functioning well at polling stations observed, there are recorded cases of breakdown of the devices at some polling stations. These temporary breakdowns were however, resolved promptly and did not have any major impact on the voting process. The affected stations included RC Primary School polling center in Nyamekrom Electoral area, New Juabeng Municipality in the Eastern Region and the Presby Primary School polling station of the Abepotia/Odumase Electoral area in the Kwahu West Municipality of the Eastern Region
- At MA Primary School polling station at Abetensu of the Nkawanda/KwahuJejeti Electoral area in the Eastern Region, data on the Biometric device did not match the voter's register
- At the Biribiwoman D/A JHS polling station at the Amansie Central in the Ashanti Region, voting was suspended for almost 1 hour because a candidate's name was spelt wrongly

- At Nkyenkyene Electoral area of the Kwahu South district of the Eastern Region, voting was disrupted because demonstrators demanded that government should fulfil promises made to them during the 2012 elections. At the time of filing this report, although the demonstration has been called off, the demonstrators are threatening to deal with anyone who shows up to vote

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, CODEO, in this mid-day situational report can confidently confirm that the arrangements put in place by the EC for setup and opening of polls were adequate at most polling stations. CODEO is continuing to receive reports from its observers and will release updated reports in due course. Finally, CODEO urges all Ghanaians to go and vote in the District Level Elections.

CODEO's district assembly and unit committee elections observation is made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana

Signed.



Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin  
CODEO Coordinator  
*(For and on behalf of CODEO)*

**CODEO Secretariat**, Tuesday, September 1, 2015.

*For further enquiries and information, please contact: The CODEO Coordinator, Mr. Albert K. Arhin on 0244746791/0208221068 or Mr. Paul Nana Kwabena Aborampah Mensah, CODEO Secretariat on 0209 013 585*

## APPENDIX H: Close of Polls Statement



### DISTRICT LEVEL ELECTIONS: CLOSE OF POLL STATEMENT

#### CONTACT

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01 September 2015  
Accra, Ghana

#### Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) deployed 700 trained, accredited, non-partisan rapid response observers to observe the District Level Elections (DLE) organized by the Electoral Commission today, September 1, 2015. CODEO deployed 500 Stationary Observers in 500 sampled polling stations in 86 districts (See Annex A for the list of districts). In addition, close to 200 roaming CODEO observers were deployed in the selected districts. CODEO released a situational statement this afternoon capturing its observers' reports on the setting up and opening of polling stations. This close of polls statement by CODEO is focused on the voting process, security of polls as at close of polls pending counting and declaration of results by polling officials of the Electoral Commission.

#### General Observations

Generally, CODEO Regional and District Supervisors reported that voting took place in a calm and peaceful atmosphere at most of the polling stations. Information from Regional and District Supervisors indicated that no major incidents such as intimidation and violence occurred at the polling stations they monitored. However, there were a few cases of suspension of electoral proceedings, breakdown of Biometric Devices, inability of some voters to verify their bio data and/or having their names missing from the voters' register. For example,

- At the Saeedia Islamic Primary school polling station of the Sagado Electoral area in the Bawku Municipality in the Upper East region, the battery for the Biometric Device ran-out; this delayed the voting process for 45 minutes (from 3:00PM) until it was replaced at 3:45 pm.
- At the Antoboase JHS in the Obuasi Municipality, 2 voters could not be verified. Also 3 voters could not be verified by the device in the BosomeFreho district. Again, in BosomeFreho district, 4 prospective voters could not find their names in the voters' register
- As reported in the CODEO mid-day situational statement, the police increased their presence at the Nkyenkyene Electoral area of the Kwahu South district in the Eastern Region where voting was disrupted because demonstrators demanded that government fulfills promises made to them during the 2012 elections. Though the police managed to bring the situation under control, the electorates still did not come out to vote. As at 3:00PM, only 21 out of 309 registered voters had cast their ballots

### **Conclusion**

CODEO Regional and District Supervisors reports suggest that voter turn-out was generally low across the districts where they observed. CODEO Observers will continue to observe the counting and declaration of results after close of polls and a detailed preliminary report will be issued thereafter.

We appeal to all contesting candidates to remain calm as we await the final results from the Electoral Commission. CODEO also calls on the security agencies to remain vigilant so as to contain any possible disruptions during the processes of counting and declaration of results. CODEO's District Assembly and Unit Committee elections observation is made possible with the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ghana.

Signed:



Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin  
CODEO Coordinator  
*(For and on behalf of CODEO)*

**CODEO Secretariat, Tuesday, September 1, 2015. 6:00PM**

*For further enquiries and information, please contact: The CODEO Coordinator, Mr. Albert K. Arhin on 0244746791/0208221068 or Mr. Paul Nana KwabenaAborampah Mensah, CODEO Secretariat on 0209 013 585*

## APPENDIX I: Preliminary statement on the Ghana's September 1, 2015 DISTRICT LEVEL ELECTIONS



### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON GHANA'S SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 DISTRICT LEVEL ELECTIONS

#### CONTACT

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07 September 2015  
Accra, Ghana

#### Introduction

On Tuesday, September 1, 2015, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) deployed close to 700 observers, comprising 500 Stationary Observers and about 200 Roaming Observers as poll watchers for the 2015 District Level Elections (DLE). The observers were deployed in CODEO's 86 project districts spread across the 10 regions of the country under the project "Enhancing Citizens' Participation in 2014/15 Local Government Elections." CODEO Observers included 500 Stationery Observers who watched the polls at 500 randomly selected polling stations throughout the country. The remaining 200 observers constituted CODEO's Roaming Observers who watched the polls by moving from polling station to polling station in the selected districts.

These observers were drawn from CODEO's 40-member organizations, which include Ghanaian professionals, religious and civic advocacy organizations. The composition of observers included women, youth and persons with disabilities informed by CODEO's "Enhancing Citizen's Participation in 2014/15 Local Government Elections Project" goals. All CODEO observers deployed were trained and received accreditation from the Electoral

Commission (EC). The deployment of these observers enabled CODEO to obtain information relating to the conduct of the September 1 District Level Elections in all regions of the country.

This preliminary post-election statement focuses on CODEO's election-day observation and it is based on reports received from 88% of CODEO's Stationary Observers and Roaming Observers (which included Regional Coordinators, District Supervisors and Peer Educators). It comes as a complete and full update on the findings already shared by CODEO in its Mid-Day Situational Report and Close of Poll Statement press releases issued on polling day (i.e. Tuesday, September 1, 2015).

## **SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION**

Below are highlights of CODEO's observation findings from all regions of the country.

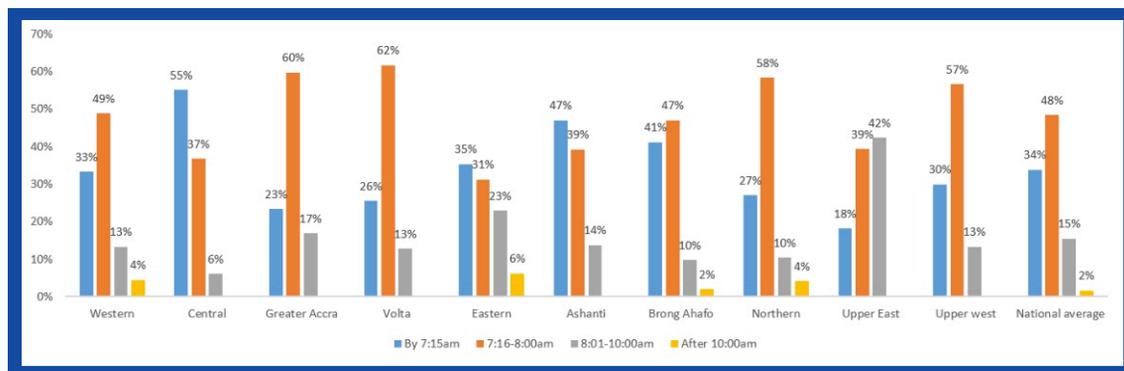
### **Arrival at Polling Stations**

- By 6:00am, 96% of CODEO Stationary Observers had reported at their assigned polling stations
- CODEO Stationary Observers who were present at polling stations by 6:00AM reported that, in 63% of the polling stations, Polling Officials were punctual in accordance with the Electoral Commission's (EC) regulation, which requires them to be present at their assigned polling stations by 6:30am. In one-third of polling stations (33%) however, the polling officials were not present at the time CODEO Stationary Observers arrived
- Electoral officials respected CODEO Stationary Observers' status as EC's accredited election observers and permitted them to observe the polls

### **Setting Up of Polls**

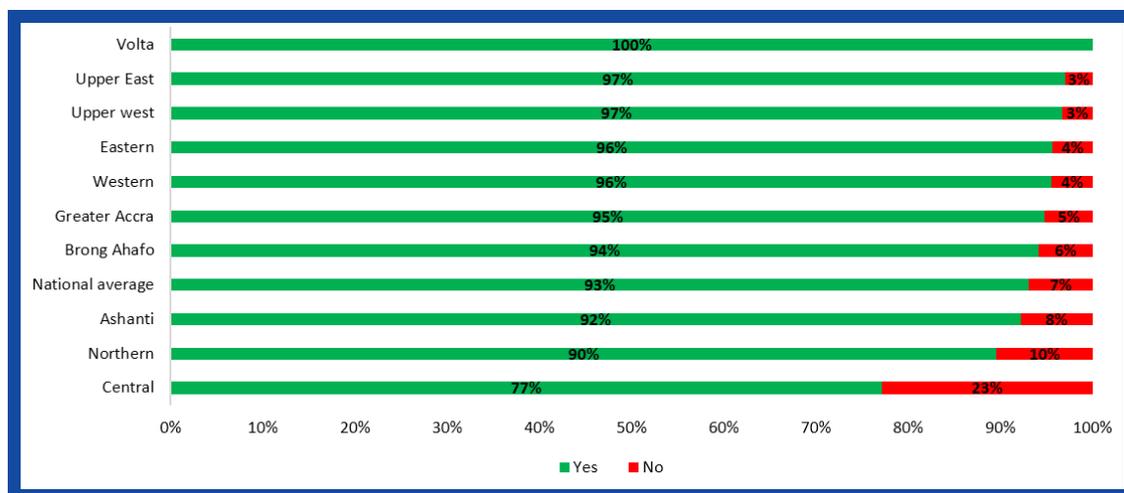
- Most of the polling stations (82%), according to CODEO Stationary Observers had opened by 8:00am. Of this, 34% had opened by 7:15AM and 48% between 7:16 and 8:00AM (see Figure 1, below)

**Figure 1: Time voting commenced**



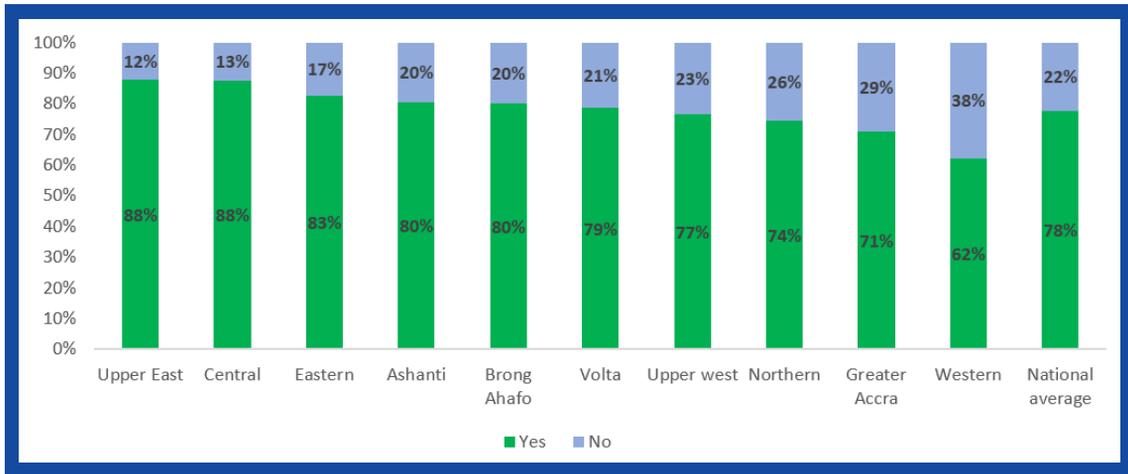
- Ninety-three percent (93%) of CODEO Stationary Observers reported that polling stations were set up in a manner that ensured that voters marked their ballots in secret. Central Region and Northern Regions had the largest number of polling stations (23% and 10%, respectively) where polling stations were not clearly set up to allow voters to cast their ballots in secret. In the other regions, more than 90% of the polling stations were setup to allow voters mark their ballots in secret (see Figure 2, below)

**Figure 2: Set up of polling station ensured vote secrecy**



- At the time of set up, 95% of CODEO Stationary Observers reported that there were polling agents representing candidates at the polling stations.
- CODEO Stationary Observers also reported seeing uniformed security personnel at post in 78% of the polling stations observed. However, Western Region had the least visibility of uniformed security officials at polling stations (see Figure 3, below).

**Figure 3: Presence of uniformed security officials at polling stations**



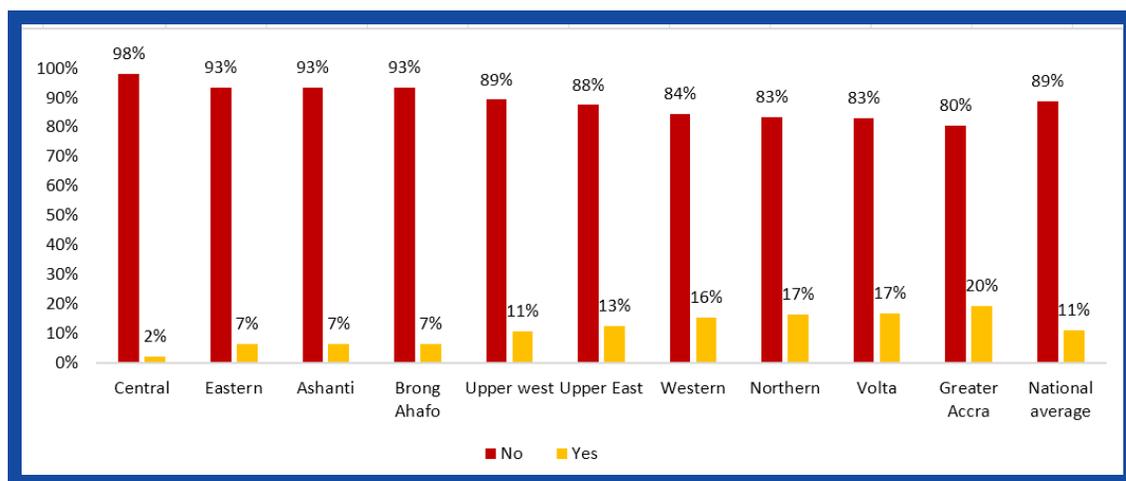
- According to CODEO Stationary Observers, 93% of the polling stations were accessible to persons with disability as well as the elderly
- Reports received from CODEO Stationary Observers showed that all polling stations (100%) had biometric verification machines at the time of setup. Aside the biometric machine, CODEO Stationary Observers also reported that in 78% of the polling stations, all other election materials were available at the time of opening
- In 99% of polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers confirmed that before the commencement of voting, the ballot boxes were shown to be empty, sealed and placed in public view

### Voting Processes

- In all polling stations observed, voters' biometric registration information was verified. However, CODEO Stationary Observers reported the malfunctioning of biometric verification machines at some point in time in 8% of these polling stations
- CODEO Stationary Observers' reports showed that in 98% of polling stations observed, voters had their fingers marked with indelible ink before voting. In addition, in 99% of polling stations, CODEO Stationary observers saw ballot papers being stamped with the validating stamp before being issued to voters
- According to the CODEO Stationary Observers, in 89% of polling stations, unauthorized person(s) were not permitted to remain in the polling station during

voting. Greater Accra, Volta, Northern, Western, Upper East, and Upper West Regions had unauthorized persons in 11% to 20% of polling stations (see Figure 4 below)

**Figure 4: Presence of unauthorized persons in polling stations**



- In 94% of the polling stations, there was no reported case of harassment or intimidation of voters or polling officials
- In most of the polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that no voter was allowed to cast ballot when the name was not in the Voter’s Register (96%); or biometric details did not match (93%). In addition, at 76% of the polling stations, no voter with a valid voter ID card was prevented from voting by electoral officials. Nonetheless, between 1 to 15 people were permitted to cast their ballots without a voter ID in some polling stations. In addition, in 72% of the polling stations, electoral officials permitted others to assist the blind, disabled and elderly to vote. In accordance with the electoral rules, election officials in 61% of the polling stations allowed assisted voters to have persons of their own choice to assist them to vote (see Table 1 below)

**Table 1: Conditions under which voters cast ballot**

|   | None | Few<br>(1-5<br>voters) | Some<br>(6-15<br>voters) | Many<br>(16 or more<br>voters) |
|---|------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Permitted to vote though name was not in register</b>        | 96%  | 2%                     | --                       | 1%                             |
| <b>Permitted to vote despite mismatch of biometric details</b>  | 93%  | 6%                     | --                       | --                             |
| <b>Not permitted to vote though had Voter ID</b>                | 76%  | 21%                    | 2%                       | 1%                             |
| <b>Persons (blind, disabled, elderly etc.) assisted to vote</b> | 19%  | 50%                    | 22%                      | 9%                             |
| <b>Permitted to vote without Voter ID</b>                       | 29%  | 34%                    | 22%                      | 14%                            |

### Counting and Declaration of Results

- CODEO Stationary Observers reported that in 56% of the polling stations, no one was in the queue at the close of polls at 5:00 PM. However, there were between 1 to 15 voters in queues in 40% of the polling stations at the close of polls. In 95% of the polling stations where some voters were found in queues at 5:00pm, the electoral officials allowed them to vote.
- According to CODEO Stationary Observers, in 54% of the polling stations, no one arrived at the polling station after 5:00pm. However, at 41% of polling stations, the electoral officials did not allow some voters who arrived after 5:00pm, to vote.
- During the counting, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that nobody harassed or intimidated polling officials at most of the polling stations (97%). The CODEO Stationary Observers also indicated that in almost all polling stations (99%) there was no case of more ballot papers being found in the ballot box than the number of voters who cast ballots.
- In 92% of the polling stations, CODEO Stationary Observers reported that no candidate agent requested for a recount of ballots. Consequently, observers reported that in most of the polling stations, candidates’ agents (95%) and the presiding officers (99%) endorsed the declaration forms.

## CRITICAL INCIDENTS

The September 1, 2015 DLE took place in a generally calm environment. There were no major critical incidents reported by CODEO observers except some minor issues as captured below:

- **Problems affecting Biometric Verification Devices:** CODEO Observers reported cases of malfunctioning devices, which led to the suspension of voting for some time in some areas. For example, at the Saeedia Islamic Primary school polling station in the Sagado Electoral area in the Bawku Municipality in the Upper East region, the battery of the biometric device ran-out; this delayed the voting process for a while until the device was replaced. At the Antoboase JHS polling station in the Obuasi Municipality in Ashanti region, two voters could not be verified
- **Problems affecting the voters register:** Some voters could not vote because they could not find their names in the Voter's Register, even though they presented their valid voter ID cards. For example, at the Presby Primary school at Abepotia in the Abepotia/Odumase Electoral area and the M/A Primary School of the Abentensu in the KwahuJejeti Electoral area, both in the Kwahu West Municipality of the Eastern region, old registers were sent to these polling stations, which delayed voting for hours until they were replaced with the current voters' registers. A similar incident was recorded at the RC Primary school polling station in the Nyamekrom Electoral area of the New Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region. In this instance, voting was delayed for three hours until the register was finally replaced.
- **Disruption of voting and counting process:** CODEO Observers reported seeing thugs invading some polling centers with the aim of either preventing voters from casting their ballots or snatching ballot boxes. For example, at the Sherigu Primary School No. 2 of the Basengo Electoral area of the Bolgatanga district in the Upper East Region, the ballot box got missing for almost 30 minutes before it was found for counting to start. Similarly, at the D/C Primary School of the Mosaaso Electoral area of the Wassa Amenfi district in the Western Region and the Ebenezer 2&3 JHS of the Korle Gonno Electoral area in the Greater Accra Region, thugs invaded the polling stations and tried to prevent voters from voting.
- **Protest and demonstration affecting voter turnout:** At the Nkyenkyene Electoral area in the Kwahu South district in the Eastern Region, voting was disrupted because a group of demonstrators demanded that government fulfill promises made to them during the 2012 elections. Though the police managed to bring the situation under

control, the electorate still did not come out to vote.

- ***Security presence at polling centers:*** Although CODEO Stationary Observers had reported seeing uniformed security personnel in 78% of the polling stations, some of the Roaming CODEO Observers also reported cases of polling stations that had no security personnel.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

CODEO's analysis of reports received from its observers indicate that the conduct of the September I, 2015 District Assembly Elections were consistent with the electoral laws of the country and that arrangements by the Electoral Commission (EC) were adequate to enable eligible Ghanaians cast their votes.

However, information from CODEO observers showed that voter turn-out across the observed districts throughout the country was generally low even though voting took place in a calm and relaxed atmosphere. This, notwithstanding, the elections recorded isolated cases of disruptions, suspensions and instances of malfunctioning biometric devices.

Based on the analyses of CODEO's Election-Day observation reports from its observers, CODEO makes the following preliminary recommendations:

- CODEO entreats the Electoral Commission to review its performance on election day and take a critical look at the few challenges recorded during polling, particularly those relating to arrival of polling officials, setting up of polls and the malfunctioning of biometric devices, to prevent similar occurrences in the 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.
- While commending the security agencies for professionally conducting themselves to respond to few election-related incidents and disruptions that occurred during the elections, CODEO calls on the security agencies to endeavour to deploy personnel to all polling stations in future elections. CODEO also urges the security agencies to evaluate their deployment for this election so as to learn any lessons that can help inform their preparations towards the 2016 general elections and other subsequent elections.
- The consistent low turn-out in the District Level Elections (DLE) is of concern to CODEO and many Ghanaians. CODEO believes this consistent lack of interest in the DLE has implications for effective grassroots participation and inclusive development. CODEO

believes that the current system for the DLE is not working well and the country does not seem to be reaping the full benefits of the huge resources pumped into the DLE. Thus, there is the need to do a holistic assessment to find out the reasons for the low patronage and advance solutions to the problem.

### **CODEO POST-DISTRICT LEVEL ELECTION ACTIVITIES**

***Post-Election Observation:*** CODEO's 2015 District Assembly Election project, under the theme 'Enhancing Citizen Participation in the 2015 Local Government/District Assembly Elections: Deepening Ghana's Decentralization Process' does not end with the DLE. CODEO will continue to observe all the 86 selected districts and undertake advocacy activities with other like-minded organizations to mobilize support for the inclusion of women, youth and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the 30% appointments to assemblies.

***Post-Election Review and Final Report:*** CODEO will organize a post-election review workshop with stakeholders to discuss the outcomes of the DLE. CODEO's pre-election, Election-Day, and post-election observation findings as well as other DLE related reports and insights will be discussed at this review meeting after which a detailed report containing lessons and recommendations will be prepared and made public. CODEO believes that such a report will engender the needed public discussions about district level elections in future.

***Acknowledgment:*** CODEO wishes to commend all candidates who offered themselves for election in the just ended District Level Elections. The Coalition wishes to congratulate all winners, particularly the young, women and persons with disabilities for bracing all odds and coming out victorious. To Ghanaians who found time to exercise their franchise, CODEO commends you for contributing to developing Ghana's local governance system.

CODEO is grateful to the Electoral Commission of Ghana for cooperating with us to contribute to peaceful and generally free and fair elections. CODEO also appreciates the role played by the Ghana Police Service and other security agencies for ensuring that the isolated cases of disturbances and disruptions that occurred on Election Day were responded to quickly and in a professional manner.

CODEO is most grateful to its observers for volunteering their time and energy as poll watchers and thus ensuring that elections in Ghana are held in ways that make them credible to all.

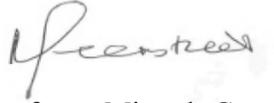
Finally, we want to acknowledge that CODEO's support activities towards the 2015 local government elections were made possible with the generous support of the American people

through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Ghana.  
May God Bless Ghana.

Thank You.



Justice VCRAC Crabbe  
Co-Chair



Professor Miranda Greenstreet  
Co-Chair

Dated: Monday, September 7, 2015

**CODEO Secretariat**

*For further enquiries and information, please contact: The CODEO Coordinator, Mr. Albert K. Arhin on 0244746791/0208221068 or the CODEO Secretariat*

## APPENDIX J: Communique issued by stakeholders at the post 2015 DLE stakeholders review workshop



December 01, 2015  
Accra, Ghana

### **COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY PARTICIPANTS AT A COALITION OF DOMESTIC ELECTION OBSERVERS' (CODEO) STAKEHOLDERS REVIEW WORKSHOP ON THE 2015 DISTRICT LEVEL ELECTIONS IN GHANA HELD AT THE VOLTA HOTEL, AKOSOMBO FROM NOVEMBER 26 TO 27, 2015.**

The sixth District Level Elections (DLE), under the Fourth Republic, was held on September 1, 2015. This year's DLE recorded less than 40 percent voter turnout. Although reports from the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) show that the conduct of 2015 DLE on polling day was generally smooth and peaceful, stakeholders observed a number of challenges relating to the management of the elections, particularly during the pre-election phase. To that end, CODEO organized a post-election review workshop at the Volta Hotel, Akosombo, from November 26 to 27, 2015. The main objective was to reflect on the general preparations and the conduct of the elections and explore opportunities for enhancing the conduct of future DLEs in Ghana. The workshop, which was chaired by Professor Miranda Greenstreet, co-chair of CODEO, attracted representatives of the Electoral Commission (EC), the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), civil society representatives, experts as well as key stakeholders in Ghana's local government system.

Participants, having deliberated on the following topics:

- The 2015 District Level Elections (DLE) in perspective
- Electoral Commission's Preparations and Conduct of the 2014/15 DLE: Lessons Learnt
- Interventions of Civil Society Organizations in support of the 2015 DLE
- The Participation of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Elections in Ghana
- The Delayed DLE: Constitutional and Legal matters arising & Recommendations for improving Future Elections
- The delayed DLE: Impact on District Assembly Performance and Lessons for the Future

And having considered perspectives in the conduct of DLE by various stakeholders, recommend the following:

1. The Electoral Commission must develop and publicize clear timelines for election activities to address the growing tendency to postpone District Level Elections.
2. The Electoral Commission must set firm dates for District Level Elections as they do for Presidential and parliamentary elections. Such time lines would help prevent the future recurrence of the present impasse in the District Assemblies. Accordingly, participants proposed that First Tuesday in September every four years is set as the date for District Level Elections. Following elections, Assemblies must be inaugurated within two weeks
3. The Government of Ghana must release funds to the Electoral Commission for the conduct of elections in a timely fashion. This would help the EC implement District Level Elections according to predetermined timelines
4. As part of fulfilling its responsibility, the National Media Commission in collaboration with media houses should be encouraged to provide free air time (as part of their corporate social responsibility) to the Electoral Commission and the National Commission for Civic Education to create awareness about the district level elections and other electoral processes
5. The Electoral Commission must, as a matter of urgency, set up a legal department to enhance its institutional capacity for dealing with legal issues relating to the management of elections in Ghana. This will minimize the rate at which legal objections obstruct election timelines
6. The National Commission for Civic Education must actively lead and collaborate with other stakeholders to undertake education and advocacy on the importance of local governance in general, and the District Level Elections in particular to significantly increase citizen/public interest and participation in the process
7. There must be a national discussion on the District Assembly concept thus, Government is urged to revisit the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Commission and reconsider its position in the white paper
8. The Electoral Commission and law enforcement agencies must be firm in sanctioning political parties and individuals who flout regulations governing the conduct of District Level Elections
9. Key state agencies, including the National Commission for Civic Education, the Electoral Commission, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and other relevant stakeholders must continuously build the capacity of marginalized groups such as women, youth and Persons with Disabilities towards enhancing their participation and inclusion in District Level Elections

10. The Electoral Commission, National Commission for Civic Education and relevant stakeholders must proactively address voter apathy by intensifying voter education and sensitization by exploring other avenues for effective voter participation in elections
11. The Government must develop guidelines to operationalize the relevant provisions in the Constitution and Local Government Act regarding the appointment of 30 percent to the Assemblies
12. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) must improve service delivery to the citizenry in order to attract their interest and participation in local governance
13. Civil Society Organizations must enhance their watchdog role by creating opportunities for citizens to engage local government authorities towards the improvement of decentralization

Signed.



Mr. Albert Arhin

Coordinator,

CODEO

Website: [www.codeoghana.org](http://www.codeoghana.org)

## APPENDIX K: Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)



December 01, 2015  
Accra, Ghana

Stakeholders Review Workshop On The 2015 District Level  
Elections In Ghana Volta Hotel, Akosombo, November 26 to 27, 2015

### Rapporteur's Report

#### Background to the Workshop

Welcome and opening remarks both sought to set the context for the workshop. This was the sixth district level election under the fourth republic held on the 1st of September 2015. It was noted that while the elections were considered as generally smooth and peaceful, observations by the CODEO regarding the management of the elections as well as the effects of the persistent postponement on aspirants and other stakeholders have necessitated a review of the processes towards enhancing the conduct of future elections. It was suggested that the review would also contribute towards improving citizens' understanding of district assembly elections as well as how to improve upon participation of marginalized groups in district level of governance

#### DAY ONE

##### Morning Session

The first presentation by Nana Kwabena Aborampah Mensah of the CODEO Secretariat provided the context for the 2015DLE. This included the legal challenges that resulted in the changes to the elections timetable and its implications. Some of the implications highlighted included:

- o MLGRD directives to all MMDAs to take full charge of executive and administrative functions of the MMDAs (Friday March 13, 2015)  
MMDAs operated for almost 6 months without the full complement of its memberships (March 15 to September 15, 2015)
- o Cost of the delayed elections on the nation, stakeholders and aspirants and agitations and public outcry over seeming EC's negligence on legal implications of its actions
- o The vacuum created at the various Assemblies due to the delay in the conduct of the elections

- o Continuous legal actions against the EC - effects on government, the EC, aspirants and all other stakeholders. Should stakeholders take action against the EC? Should the EC start to think about its legal capacity?
- o Persistent voter apathy and the future of local government elections/local governance. Is voter education the solution?
- o Unimpressive participation of women and PWDs - what role can stakeholders play on this? should government consider more of them in the 30% appointment
- o Electoral boundary demarcation and matters arising - a national consensus needed? Redefinition and clarification of the law?
- Unreliable EC elections timelines - do we canvass for a fixed date for DLE?
  - o The gradual closing of the period of elections between national elections and DLE- should it be a matter of concern?

#### Comments/Questions/Deliberations

1. The responsibility of the Electoral Commission in ensuring predictable timelines for the conduct of district level elections as well as adequate publicity for DLE.
2. Citizen's perception of the role of local government structures in development and its implications on attitudes towards DLE
3. The need to interrogate and address the causes of voter apathy in DLE and the respective responsibilities of the EC and NCCE for voter education and their level of collaboration
4. The Issue of a partisan DLE and its implications on the quality of candidates

The second presentation touched on the lessons learned from the ECs preparation and conduct of the 2015 DLE. The presentation was organized thematically starting from the pre-election environment to the actual conduct of elections. The key issues flagged included:

- The Supreme Court ruling halting the scheduled elections on 3rd March, 2015 and its role in the evolution of Ci89
- The EC's recognition of challenges of 2012 voter registration and the attempt to rectify such challenges including improved kit and timely procurement and distribution of electoral materials to various districts, replacement of voter id cards, training of electoral officers, revival of the district election security taskforce, publicity arrangement and stakeholder engagement particularly as regards marginalized groups.
- Decisions regarding the BVD including the provision of extra batteries, two BVDs per center and reserve BVDs in the district

- Security of DLE and the revival of district election security taskforce and Rapid Response Teams of police and military

In terms of lessons learnt, the following were suggested:

- The extended training period for electoral officers proved useful for the management of elections on Election Day
- The passing of CI 89 provided a legal framework considered critical to the administration of DLE in Ghana
- The presence of observers contributed positively to the conduct of electoral officials and party agents during the elections.
- Early printing of notices and the compilation of the final register in good time were useful
- Despite non-partisanship, the reverse was noted. The EC actively sanctioned defaulters

Comments/Questions/Deliberations

1. The sanctioning of individual candidates that flouted regulations on non-partisanship without recourse to the full interpretation of the law
2. The EC's perceived complicity in the postponement of the elections
3. The flouting of regulations on partisanship by political parties
4. The quality of personnel recruited for training as electoral officers
5. The quality of ballots relative to national elections and challenges with some electoral officers
6. The EC's effectiveness in dealing with legal issues confronting the management of elections
7. The Media: Observation or Coverage and the need to enhance communication between the EC and the Media

The Third presentation was on CODEO and Civil Society interventions in support of the 2015 DLE. The presentation highlighted key aspects of CODEO's intervention during the 2015 DLE and key observations relating to the conduct of the elections.

With regard to its activities prior to the Election Day, it was noted that CODEO trained and deployed 86 Long-Term Observers/Peer Educators to 86 project districts; organized capacity building workshops for about 3000 marginalized aspirants in the District Level Election and trained a number of Election Observers.

On the day of the election, CODEO deployed a total of 681 Observers made up of 500 stationary polling station observers deployed to randomly selected polling stations and 181 roaming

observers deployed to observe and report on critical incidents in the 86 districts. CODEO also set up a Data Collation Center manned by trained Data Entry Clerks.

## **Key Findings**

### **Pre-Election**

- Limited voter and civic education to whip up citizens' interests prior to the DLE
- There were no major visible activities by CSOs in support of local government elections in the various districts observed
- The media paid little attention to public awareness campaign for the DLE as compared to national elections
- Some aspirants were engaged in promise sprees
- Covert and overt intrusion of political parties in the elections process

### **Election Day**

- As at 8:00 AM, 18% of polling stations under observation were not opened.
- CODEO Stationary Observers also reported seeing uniformed security personnel at post in 78% of the polling stations
- Ninety-three percent (93%) of the polling stations were accessible to persons with disability as well as the elderly
- All polling stations (100%) had biometric verification machines at the time of setup
- During the voting process, voters' biometric registration information was verified in all polling stations. However, CODEO Stationary Observers reported the malfunctioning of biometric verification machines at some point in time in 8% of the polling stations
- In 94% of the polling stations, there was no reported case of harassment or intimidation of voters or polling officials
- In almost all polling stations (99%) there was no case of more ballot papers being found in the ballot box than the number of voters who cast ballots
- In 92% of the polling stations, no candidate agent requested for a recount of ballots
- Consequently, at most of the polling stations, candidates' agents (95%) and the presiding officers (99%) endorsed the declaration forms

### **Critical Incidents**

- Malfunctioning of the Biometric Verification Devices leading to suspension of voting in some polling stations
- Problems arising from the delays caused by the deployment of old registers in some polling stations as well as the inability of some persons to vote because their names did

not appear in the voter's register.

- Disruption of voting and counting in some polling stations by hugs
- Inadequate security coverage in some polling stations

### **Recommendations**

- That the EC reviews its Election-Day performance particularly as regards timely arrival of polling officials/materials, setting up of polls and malfunctioning of biometric devices
- To ensure effective grassroots participation and inclusive development, a holistic assessment of the phenomenon of voter apathy must be conducted
- There is the need for stakeholders led by the NCCE to engage in an extensive public sensitization and education on the local governance concept
- The Electoral Commission needs to crack the whip on individuals as well as political parties who intrude in the DLE

The Third presentation was followed by a brief exposé by the Civic Forum Initiative. This highlighted the CFI's limited observation activities in Accra while stressing that the organization's inability to be extensive was due to the postponement of the elections and the consequent exhaustion of its budget. It was, however, indicated that observations were akin to CODEO's wider field observation. The presentation also raised critical questions relating to the integrity of the Electoral Commission's planning process. It suggested that with the timelines provided in the constitution, the EC should be more proactive in planning for DLEs.

### **Comments/Questions/Deliberations**

1. That, notwithstanding, constitutional provisions, in reality, there is evidence of partisanship during DLE. The 2015 DLE was no exception
2. The ECs' interpretation of specific principles relating to aspirants' use of party regalia or colors as well as age limits and its potential to create legal challenges
3. The quality of ballots relative to those used in national level elections
4. Persisting challenges with BVDs in spite of EC's provisions to the districts
5. The extent of publicity for DLE relative to NLE and the reality that some voters did not know aspirants in their districts
6. The quality of provisions made for PWDs at polling stations
7. Regulations governing support for individual aspirants
8. The extent to which Assemblies are perceived as fronting development and its implications on voter apathy
9. Challenges to securing ballot boxes

10. NCCE/EC leveraging regular activities of faith-based organs, traditional authorities, NGOs and CSOs have to conduct voter education campaigns
11. Constitutional challenges to the implementation of “No Verification No Vote”

### **Afternoon Session**

The afternoon session commenced with four presentations on the participation of Women, Youth and Persons with Disability in the District Level Elections. Reflecting on the objective of CODEO’s interventions, it was noted that the objective was to promote inclusive Citizens participation and equality of opportunity in the elections. To identify beneficiaries for its interventions, CODEO adopted a multi-layered approach involving the Ghana Federation of Disabled and District Coordinating Directors in 86 Districts among others.

CODEO’s interventions included capacity-building workshops for about 3000 selected aspirants and 86 ladies as active participants in the electoral process as both peer educators and pre-election observers, development of election campaign manual for selected aspirants, whipping up citizens/marginalized groups’ interests.

During the day of the Election, CODEO in the spirit of inclusiveness deployed 681 observers made up of women (50%), youth (30%), PWDs (20%) as stationary and roaming observers to monitor the quality of the process, and issues relating to the marginalized (i.e. accessibility, participation, officiating, etc.).

In the aftermath of the elections, CODEO analysis of poll outcomes from 58 out of 86 (67%) project districts (Central (15.4%), Volta (15.3), Western (13.6), Eastern (11.2) and Brong Ahafo (13%) indicated the following results.

- 93% of elected assembly members are males
- Approximately 45% of newly elected assembly members are from marginalized groups and of this, 45%, are male and 2.6% female

### **Impact of Intervention**

- Increased knowledge and enhanced capacities (peer educators, aspirants, some communities)
- Election of marginalized groups still a challenge Lessons learned from CODEOs interventions
- Existence of a great deal of misunderstanding about local governance - rules, the framework of decentralization and people’s understanding

- The impact of a delayed electoral calendar on groups with limited resources
- Persisting socio-cultural beliefs against females and PwDs as leaders
- The window of opportunity offered by the election of young people previously not considered fit for leadership
- Need to roll-out interventions quite early

### **Recommendations**

Based on evidence from CODEOs interventions, it recommends that much more efforts should be directed at increasing the participation of these target groups. These may include, continuous training and capacity building, intensive advocacy campaign, extensive public education and lobbying.

The presentation by the Ghana Federation of the Disabled focused on the participation of PwDs in the 2015 DLE. Preliminary comments by the presenter emphasized the essence of voting as a “badge of dignity and personhood”. It was also stressed that within the disability community, participation in elections goes beyond inclusion to mean participation on equal footing. With regard to the Federation’s activities prior to the day of the election, it was stressed that although capacity building programs were organized for 105 interested members of the Federation, the persistent postponement of the elections in addition to exhaustion of the GFD election.

Project funding frustrated the efforts of these PwDs leading to the withdrawal of some by the election date in September 2015. This, notwithstanding, in terms of its achievements, it was noted that 23 persons won election. Further, following an appeal to the President of the Republic of Ghana, 87 people have been appointed to District Assemblies nationwide.

### **Key Observations**

- Out of 10 polling Stations visited, 8 were somehow accessible and 2 were not accessible - serious issues regarding the participation of PwDs
- Availability of tactile ballot jackets - the tactile jackets must be improved to ensure real secret voting of the visually impaired. The jacket used for the DLE retained tracings of ink that made it easy to determine the vote of the visually impaired. Additionally, there was no assistance for the hearing impaired
- The President’s concession appeared to have targeted PwDs within the party of the President

## **Recommendations**

The EC should work hard to improve accessibility of the polling station, registration and exhibition centers (in terms of physical environment communication) to ensure that PWDs participate effectively in 2016 national elections and subsequent local government elections

The Presentation by Youth Bridge Foundation observed high participation of the youth in DLE. The reasons suggested for this trend included the fact that some youth see the positions as prestigious. It was further iterated that some youth contest on the basis of the misconception that participation in DLE affords some opportunity to make money. The presentation focused on how to harness the palpable energy and determination of the youth to actively participate in local government activities and highlighted the question of when to register first time voters. In particular, there was a call on the Electoral Commission to consider providing a continuous voter registration system to ensure that youth turning 18 prior to any elections are afforded the opportunity to vote. The presentation also highlighted the need for the NCCE and EC to explore systems that would enable the proactive grooming of first time voters especially focusing on youth within the 15 to 17 years age bracket. Civic education must be done in a cycle.

It recommended:

- Innovative approaches to be adopted and not just social media
- CODEO should continue to build the capacity and train the youth
- Explore compulsory voting for the youth

The fourth presentation by Abantu for Development outlined its interventions on the basis of findings from a 2011 research that explored the accountability of local government structures to women's rights. Consequent to findings in 6 districts, it was noted that Abantu established contact with the EC and NCCE to train and equip women to be interested in District Level Elections. It identified stakeholder engagements to sensitize the public to accept aspirants' leadership as positive. This, notwithstanding, it was noted that the lack of a fixed electoral calendar and the botched elections continue to act against the interest and performance of women in DLE. This is in addition to the increasingly partisanship nature of DLE making the absence of resources a key challenge to success.

Comments from Representatives of the Ministry of Gender and Children and Social Protection as well as the Gender Centre for Empowerment and Development reaffirmed the challenges confronting vulnerable groups in District Level Elections and called for the creation of incentive packages to provide women with the resources to actively participate in politics. It also highlighted avenues through which vulnerable groups can enhance skills and knowledge in local governance prior to

contesting district level elections. It observed, for instance, the need to encourage women and other vulnerable groups to take an interest in assembly meetings.

### **Comments/Questions/Deliberations**

- The low participation of marginalized groups in the DLE
- The emphasis on building capacity for women and youth and the neglect of PWD
- The role of Money in Elections
- Partisan nature of the President's appointment into DAs and the need to revisit the essence of that provision
- First time voters and their relevance to the local government process
- Women in Politics: Refining the environment, Identifying role models e s c h e w i n g mediocrity and avoiding needless confrontation with males
- The question of development assistance and the need to explore local resources to fund initiatives

The final presentation focused on the constitutional and legal matters arising out of the delayed 2015 District level elections and recommendations for improving the conduct of the District Level Elections in the future. This was preceded by a discussion of the legal basis for the organization of elections in Ghana including the application of electoral sanctions regime and how it has been negatively affected by the weak legal capacity of the commission.

The following were identified as the legal effects of the delay:

- Various Assemblies lacked the capacity to enter into certain contracts unless they are subsequently ratified by the properly constituted Assembly
- The Public Relations and Complaints Committee (PRCC) and the Internal Auditing work of the Assembly under sections 120 and 27 respectively of the local government Act 1993, (Act 462), Audit Report Implementation Committee (ARIC) under section 30 of the Audit Service Act 2000 (Act 584) and the Executive Committee of the Assembly provided for under article 251 of the 1992 constitution could not be operational.
- The Ministry of Finance was compelled to 'ring fence' the funds meant for the elections and go back to Parliament for an appropriation review to enable them roll-over the funds to 2015
- The loss of colossal amount of money as a result of the initial preparatory activities the EC put into the process
- The unconstitutionality of allowing Assembly members to continue to be in office and work when their tenure had expired

- The difficulties of having to issue a Ministerial fiat from the center to direct MMDCEs to take over the management of the Assemblies under Article 243(2b) which defeats the purpose of decentralization;
- The creation of a lacuna in the administration of the MMDAs by allowing MMDCEs to perform functions otherwise reserved for the General Assembly or an Executive Committee
- Difficulties regarding the approval of District Composite Budgets causing the Minister for Local Government to Amend the model standing orders of the Assemblies when it was becoming difficult for the MMDAs to elect a Presiding member to preside over the approval of their budget for onward submission to the Minister for finance for incorporation into the national budget
- Potential of attracting legal suits from the aspirants and candidates who may have spent on their campaigns and had no money left for their subsequent campaigns.

### **Recommendations**

- EC must improve its capacity to fight its own legal cases arising from elections with occasional support from external solicitors
- EC must set up legal directorates in all regions to be manned by qualified lawyers who understand the operations of EC to support it in operationalizing its mandate
- EC must develop an electoral reform road map. Publish this document in a widely read media to indicate short, medium and long term reform measures accompanied by resource requirements and some plans;
- An elections fund must be established to reduce the perennial effect of fund unavailability to delay elections
- There is the need to properly mainstream IPAC, CODEO and the National Peace Council by providing adequate legislative cover to recognize them as important elections institutions in Ghana to support its operations;
- There is the need to formalize an interagency committee for DLE along the lines of IPAC comprising MLGRD, EC, NCCE and NALAG to provide a forum to discuss electoral issues surrounding the DLE
- EC must work to operationalize its powers of applying the sanctions regime under the local government act for political parties and candidates who violate the electoral laws on DLE
- Guidelines are required to guide the mismanagement of victory and exploitation of incumbency in DLE

- Guidelines on the exact role of the security agencies in elections are critical to avoid a clash of services or misuse of any of the security agencies by any of the aspirants to mar the elections

#### **Comments/Questions/Deliberations**

- Legal and financial cost of the postponement of the DLE and who bears responsibility
- Credibility of Voter Register
- Statutory recommendations for improving electoral processes and the extent to which they are implemented by the EC
- Perception of the credibility of the EC and its implications for elections in general and DLE in particular
- Legal Capacity of the EC
- Issues arising out of the EC's application of its sanctions regime
- Encroachment of powers of District Assemblies by the Executive
- The relevance of DLEs to the local governance system

#### **DAY TWO**

The second day of the Stakeholders Review Workshop featured a presentation in plenary on the implications of the Delayed DLE on the performance of District Assemblies and breakout deliberations on three thematic areas focusing on how to Improve the Conduct of the District Level Election (DLE) in Future; Enhancing Inclusive Citizens' Participation in the District Level Election (DLE) and Enhancing citizens understanding of the local governance concept.

The presentation on Implications of the delayed DLE on the performance of District Assemblies was preceded by a context-setting exposé on the factors accounting for delayed elections. Citing examples from previous DLEs, it was submitted that the causes of delays in DLEs in Ghana had to do with finances, logistics and others relating to planning. With regard to the implications, the facilitator engineered a discussion around multiple issues involving political, administrative and legal ramifications. It was suggested for instance that by their political and legal backing, District Assemblies are considered corporate entities with the capacity to enter into contracts, sue and be sued. Thus, actions such as delays in the processes that empower these assemblies could be sited as evidence of bad corporate governance and generally weak systems - perceptions that can affect the extent to which the District Assemblies can be taken serious by business partners.

Additional implications of the delay on the performance of local governments were identified as follows:

- That local governments operating without „Boards“ or the General Assembly to provide policy guidance and direction signified a weak system of checks and balances
- The absence of the General Assembly to approve the supplementary Budget, the utilization of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) and other major procurements decision affected the performance of the various assemblies
- That Citizens’ rights to be part of the decision making process and to be represented is violated within the period when there are no elections to have assembly members
- The weakening of checks and balances in the absence of the full complement of the Assemblies structures allowed space for the perpetration of corrupt activities
- In the absence of finance and administration subcommittee which has to monitor the review of the financial statements of the Assemblies, the important task of reviewing the financial statements were not performed.
- That Internal auditors quarterly report will have had no one attending to it since it had to be reviewed by the Presiding member. This signified a weakness in internal control mechanisms. A situation that could lead to corruption and mismanagement. The delay period could thus be considered as an audit risk period.
- The weakening of the legislative function of Assemblies due to their inability to institute bye-laws
- The inability of the Assemblies to decentralize development since assembly members may not be available to lobby for projects for their electoral areas
- That a major check and balance institution such as the office of the Presiding Member which acts as a check on the administration of the Chief Executive would have been missing in the Assemblies’ scheme of actions
- That procurement and approval process of the Assembly would have suffered as the main assembly would not be there to monitor and approve various contracts
- That the Unit committees would have also suffered since the unit committees would stand dissolved as their tenure had ended
- That the Districts also lost the communal mobilization spirit required to undertake development projects because the unit committee members and the assembly members who would lead the community mobilization process were not in office

On the basis of the above, among others, it was strongly suggested that delays in DLE be avoided as it does not only constitute a significant drain on the national purse but also negatively affects the functioning of the entire local governance system. A key recommendation offered was for Assemblies to consider periods of postponement of elections as "Audit Risk Periods" and thereby mark all transactions undertaken within the period as material for a 100% audit by external auditors when undertaking the 2015 financial audits of the MMDAs. Other recommendations offered included:

- The need to enact a legislation to guard against a potential future delay or its repercussions. It was suggested that such legislation must clearly indicate dates for District Level Elections
- The need for CSOs to intensify their watchdog roles
- The need for the EC to avoid defensive posturing on matters relating to their autonomy vis a vis their relevance to the citizens of Ghana
- The need for the parliamentary committee on local government to be involved in future CODEO workshops

Subsequent to the above presentation, representatives of the Local Government Service and the National Association of Local Authorities (NALAG) shared their reflections on the implications of delay in holding the 2014 District Level Elections. The reflections identified the limitation engendered by the inability of the NALAG Council to raise a quorum for its council meetings. It further focused on the LGS's responsibility of ensuring that competent officials are recruited to assist the work of the general assembly as a way of taming the effect of the delay on the overall operations of the general assembly.

#### **Comments/Questions/Deliberations**

- Oversight responsibility for the EC - Who holds the EC accountable"
- Voter turnout at DLE relative to quantum of voters and the issue of whether minority decides for the majority.
- Safeguard measures and recommendations for averting future delays in DLEs
- The extent of consultation or communication between the EC, MLGRD and District Assemblies.

## Breakout Sessions

Participants constituted into three syndicates to interrogate three thematic issues relating to District Level Elections and the local government system as a whole. Syndicate 1 was tasked to interrogate ways by which the conduct of District Level Elections can be improved. Syndicate 2 was tasked to explore ways to enhance inclusive citizen participation in District Level Elections while the third syndicate explored enhancing citizen’s understanding of the local government concept.

## Outcomes

### *Syndicate One*

Theme: Improving The Conduct of the District Level Election (DLE) in Future

| Sub Thematic Issue   | Recommendations  |
|--|--|
| Frequent changes in the DLE calendar - Will a fixed date resolve the problem“  | The first Tuesday of September every 4 years must be set aside as DLE day. Upon election, the Assembly should be inaugurated within two weeks.                                   |
| Bridging electoral calendar gap between DLE and general elections: Implications for elections and EC management.                         | Status Quo is not affected. Under the present arrangement, there will be no implications.  |
| Addressing the gap arising out of having an assembly without their representatives: What does the law say and what is the suggestion for | There should be legislation that in the event that elections are not held on the determined date, the term of the existing assembly be extended until a new assembly is elected. |
| Challenges of electoral boundary demarcation   | As much as possible the EC should ensure strict compliance to the provisions on the demarcation of boundaries in relation to creation of constituencies and districts.           |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Avoiding legal challenges and enforcing rules guiding the conduct of DLE e.g. Intrusion of Political parties intrusion, what do we do"</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The need for an adequately staffed in-house legal directorate</li> <li>◆ Enforcing the rules.</li> <li>◆ The President should appoint his 30% as per the intentions of the constitutional provisions.</li> <li>◆ Enhancing the training of Electoral Officers</li> </ul>             |
| <p>Making DLE attractive - How"</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>f</i> Provide remuneration for Assembly Members.</li> <li><i>f</i> Educate and sensitize the voting public about the prospects of an effective local governance system.</li> <li><i>f</i> Make the DA System partisan</li> <li><i>f</i> Support extremely deprived areas</li> </ul> |

***Syndicate Two***

Theme: Enhancing Inclusive citizens' participation in the District Level Elections

| Sub Thematic Issue   | Recommendations  |
|--|--|
| <p>General voter apathy in the local governance elections: way forward</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting specific groups and sensitizing them at least 2 years before elections.</li> <li>• The NCCE and CSOs should conduct evidence-based research and baseline survey to find out the reasons for low citizen participation.</li> <li>• Rekindle discussions on remunerating Assembly Members so they can be more visible and play their roles effectively.</li> <li>• Encourage MMDAs to broaden and deepen the engagement of citizens.</li> <li>• Encourage MMDAs to revamp their PR units and develop their communication strategies.</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Increasing Citizen participation - how**</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The election of DCEs in the long term</li> <li>• Intensive voter education by the EC, NCCE, Media &amp; CSOs</li> <li>• MMDA should be more visible and responsive to the needs of citizens</li> <li>• Make unit committees more functional and effective</li> <li>• Encourage the observation of assembly sitting by students.</li> <li>• Intensify continuous civic education</li> <li>• Organization of mock assemblies at school</li> <li>• Elect DCEs from among assembly members</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Increasing the inclusion of the marginalized in the electoral process &amp; engendering inclusion and participation for marginalized groups in the DLE as contestants and voters.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance to the disability Act</li> <li>• Promulgating the affirmative action bill to law</li> <li>• Relevant institutions involved in the electoral process to frequently engage PWDs, Women, the elderly and deprived communities during District Level Elections</li> <li>• The EC to carry out accessibility audit of all polling stations</li> <li>• The EC to allow enough time for sensitization of its temporal staff on matters pertaining to PWDs during elections.</li> <li>• Parliament to legislate on preferential treatment for the marginalized during elections</li> <li>• Ensure 50 percent of the 30 percent appointees be reserved for women and PWDs</li> </ul> |

**Syndicate Three**

Theme: Enhancing citizens understanding of the local governance concept

| Sub Thematic Issue   | Recommendations  |
|--|--|
| <p>Education and Sensitization on the Essence of Local governance in Ghana's democratic experience</p> <p>Continuous education on the local governance concept</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern social media • Durbars</li> <li>• Town hall meetings • Form clubs</li> <li>• Peer education</li> <li>• Use of Faith-based Organizations &amp; Women groups such as market women, information service department</li> <li>• Develop and manage effectively, dedicated websites for respective districts.</li> <li>• Use of local language as well as pictorial education</li> <li>• MLG should elaborate with other key stakeholders to prepare</li> <li>• Modern social media</li> <li>• Durbars</li> <li>• Town hall meetings</li> <li>• Form clubs</li> <li>• Peer education</li> <li>• Use of Faith-based Organizations &amp; Women groups such as market women, information service department</li> <li>• Develop and manage effectively, dedicated websites for respective districts.</li> <li>• Use of local language as well as pictorial education</li> <li>• MLG should elaborate with other key stakeholders to prepare education materials in local governance</li> <li>• NSS should post personnel to the district assembly to be used as educators on local governance</li> </ul> |
| <p>Inclusion of the local governance concept in the Basic, JHS, SHS curriculum</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of local governance week in JHS/SHS</li> <li>• Project citizen showcase</li> <li>• Quizzes to highlight on local governance</li> <li>• Civic club/ social activity</li> <li>• GES should incorporate local governance into the curriculum in the tertiary/JHS/SHS and again compulsory course such as citizen</li> </ul>  |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| The role of NCCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCCE should mainstream education in local governance into existing main program.</li></ul> |
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### **Closing Remarks**

Subsequent to the discussion of the syndicate reports, participants discussed and agreed on a communiqué. This marked the formal end of the workshop. In her closing remarks, the Co-Chair of CODEO lauded the high level of participation by participants. She further praised the CODEO secretariat for planning the conference observing that the platform created by CODEO through the setting of thematic areas and guiding questions and the assembling of facilitators provided the opportunity for an intellectual engagement by all stakeholders. The Co-Chair stressed the need for the Secretariat to release the communiqué in a timely manner.

## APPENDIX L: List of Project Districts

| <b>Western Region– 9 districts</b>     | <b>Central Region– 9 districts</b>   | <b>Greater Accra Region – 8 districts</b> |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| WassaAmenfi East                       | Mfantsiman                           | Adenta                                    |
| Ellembele                              | Awutu Senya East                     | Ga East                                   |
| SuamanDadieso                          | Awutu Senya                          | La-Nkwantanang-Madina                     |
| Sefwi-Bia-West                         | Abura-Aseibu-KwamanKese              | Shai Osudoku (Dodowa )                    |
| Nzema East                             | Ekumfi                               | Weija (Ga South) Municipal                |
| Jomoro                                 | Assin North                          | Ablekuma (AMA)                            |
| Shama                                  | Gomoa East                           | Ga West                                   |
| Prestea/Huni Valley                    | Assin Central Municipal              | Ledzokuku/Krowor Municipal                |
| WassaAmenfi West                       | Komenda-Edina-Egyafo-Abi             |   |
| <b>Volta Region</b>                    | <b>Eastern Region– 9 districts</b>   | <b>Ashanti Region– 10 districts</b>       |
| Ho Municipal                           | Kwahu East                           | SekyereAfram Plains                       |
| Hohoe Municipal                        | Asuogyaman                           | Obuasi                                    |
| Ketu South                             | Birim Central                        | Asante Akim North                         |
| Keta Municipal                         | Kwahu South                          | BosomeFreho                               |
| North Tongu                            | Birim South                          | AfigyaKwabre                              |
| Akatsi                                 | New Juaben                           | Adansi North                              |
| Krachi West                            | Kwahu West                           | Sekyere East                              |
| Nkwanta South                          | YiloKrobo                            | Offinso South                             |
|  | Kwahu North                          | Amansie Central                           |
|  |                                      | Adanse South                              |
| <b>BrongAhafo Region – 9 districts</b> | <b>Northern Region – 9 districts</b> | <b>Upper East Region – 8 districts</b>    |
| Asunafo North                          | Nanumba North                        | KasenaNankana West                        |
| Asunafo South                          | Chereponi                            | Binduri                                   |
| Asutifi North                          | Central Gonja                        | Talensi                                   |
| Techiman Municipal                     | Yendi Municipal                      | Bolgatanga                                |
| Dormaa Municipal                       | Mamprusi West                        | Bawku Municipal                           |
| Berekum Municipal                      | Sagnarigu                            | Builsa North                              |
| Pru                                    | Tamale Metro                         | Bongo                                     |
| Sene                                   | SaveluguNanton                       | GaruTempane                               |
| Tain                                   | East Gonja                           |   |
| <b>Upper West Region – 7 districts</b> |                                      |   |
| Wa West                                | Lawra                                | Dafiama - Busie - Issa                    |
| Wa Municipal                           | Jirapa                               |   |
| Nadowli/Kaleo                          | Wa East                              |   |

## **APPENDIX M: List of CODEO Member Organizations during the 2015 DLE**

1. Ghana Trades Union Congress
2. Amnesty International
3. Ghana Bar Association
4. Ghana Journalists Association
5. Ghana National Association of Teachers
6. National Association of Graduate Teachers
7. Christian Council of Ghana
8. Federation of Muslim Councils
9. Ghana Federation of the Disabled
10. Ghana Integrity Initiative
11. Int. Federation of Women Lawyers
12. Legal Resources Center
13. Women in Law and Development in Africa
14. Ghana Muslim Mission
15. Ghana Muslim Academy
16. Ghana Pentecostal & Charismatic Council
17. Center for the Development of People
18. National Network of Local Civic Unions
19. Regional Council for Islamic Education
20. Ghana Registered Midwives Association
21. Islamic Council for Development & Humanitarian Services
22. Ghana Muslim Mission
23. Ghana National Association of Teachers
24. Ghana Registered Midwives Association
25. Ghana Registered Nurses Association

26. International Association for the Advancement of Women in Africa
27. Ghana Medical Association
28. Center for Human Rights and Advanced Legal Research
29. Office of the National Chief Imam
30. Hedge-Ghana
31. Youth Bridge Foundation
32. Ghana Institution of Surveyors
33. University Teachers Association of Ghana
34. Junior Chamber Int.-Dansoman
35. Association of Ghana Industries
36. Civil and Local Government Staff Association, Ghana
37. Council of Independent Churches
38. Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana
39. Ghana Center for Democratic Development

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