



**PRESS STATEMENT ON CODEO 2016 ELECTIONS INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES ON
THE THEME: 'CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT FOR CREDBLE 2016
ELECTIONS-A CODEO PROJECT'**

**DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR MIRANDA GREENSTREET AND JUSTICE V.C.R.A.C.
CRABBE, JOINT CO-CHAIR OF CODEO**

DATE: 6TH SEPTEMBER 2016

VENUE: ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE

Salutation

Hon. Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the President
The Chairperson, the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana,
Representatives of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE),
Members of Local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
Representatives of political parties,
Representatives of the Diplomatic/Donor Missions,
Representative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID),
Our friends in the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen...

On behalf of the Advisory Board of the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), I welcome you all to this event to share with you our plans and preparations for the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections. We shall also share with you our preliminary observations of the pre-election environment ahead of the December 7 Polls. We very much appreciate you honouring our invitation to this event.

For the 2016 elections, and as we have done in past elections, CODEO is implementing four inter-related comprehensive interventions. CODEO will mobilize its member organizations to undertake several support activities spanning all the three phases--pre, during and post-- of the electoral cycle with the broad objective of contributing to an inclusive electoral process, a transparent, credible, and peaceful elections outcome.

CODEO and Election 2016

With twenty-two founding civic, secular, religious, professional bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in 2000, CODEO currently comprises 42 organizations as we prepare for the 2016 polls (*See CODEO Brochure for the list of CODEO member organizations*). The CODEO Advisory Board, which has two co-chairs, has been reconstituted with sixteen members (16), composed of representatives of member organizations and selected eminent Ghanaian citizens (*See the Profile of CODEO Advisory Board Members in your folders*). The Advisory Board acts as the policy and executive decision making body for CODEO. Supported by three standing committees-- Recruitment, Training and Deployment, Drafting and Reporting, and Logistics and Procurement--, the Advisory Board manages the day-to-day affairs of CODEO. The Secretariat of CODEO is housed at the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), which provides technical and administrative support. CODEO's General Assembly is the platform for all the representatives of the 42 member organizations and has the overall responsibility of regularly reviewing and approving CODEO activities, and, significantly, serves as a pool for the recruitment of CODEO observers.

Election 2016: CODEO's Support Interventions

Ladies and gentlemen, for the 2016 election cycle, as indicated earlier, CODEO is implementing four inter-related support interventions under the banner '*Civil Society Advocacy and Support for Credible 2016 Elections - A CODEO Project*'.

These interventions are as follows:

- Advocacy for the Implementation of Electoral Reforms
- Domestic Election Observation
- Implementation of a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)
- Promotion of Civic/Voter Education at District Levels

As always, CODEO's four-inter-related activities will be implemented in all the three phases of the election cycle. These support activities are grouped as follows:

1. Pre-Election Phase

a) Advocacy for the Implementation of Electoral Reforms

CODEO is currently observing and tracking the implementation of the twenty-seven (27) electoral reforms accepted by the Electoral Commission (EC). The objective of this intervention is to provide constructive advocacy towards ensuring inclusive and credible implementation of the electoral reforms. As you may be aware, the Electoral Commission recently made known steps taken to implement these 27 accepted reforms, and we commend them for this effort. To undertake this advocacy exercise, CODEO is collaborating with other independent and non-partisan civil society organizations to monitor the implementation of the proposed reforms. Constructive strategies will

be adopted to engage the EC on the implementation of these reforms so as to ensure credible and peaceful elections before, during and after the December 7th polls.

b) Long-Term Pre-Election Observation

CODEO has deployed 138 trained long-term observers (LTOs), since July 15, in purposefully selected constituencies throughout the country to observe and report on the pre-election environment until the eve of the December 7 Election Day, which is 4 months. For the first time in the history of CODEO, it is undertaking long-term observation in 50% of the total 275 constituencies. These 138 LTOs are expected to send bi-weekly reports using SMS text which will be analyzed and the findings shared with the general public on a monthly basis.

Already, and as part of the pre-election observation, CODEO deployed 250 of its accredited members to observe the Electoral Commission's organized limited voter registration exercise from April to May. Similarly, 262 CODEO observers were deployed during the recently concluded voter register exhibition exercise. In both exercises, in spite of minor administrative lapses observed, CODEO was generally satisfied with the outcomes and congratulate the EC for a job well done. Copies of the final reports are included in your information packs and can be found on our website.

c) Civic/Voter Education at the District Level

To complement the efforts of EC and NCCE, CODEO will embark on district level civic and voter education as part of the pre-election phase interventions. CODEO's civic/voter education will focus on electoral rules and regulations, information on the implementation of electoral reforms, election procedures with a strong emphasis on how to correctly cast a ballot, and the need for election peace, among others.

CODEO will recruit and train community civic/voter educators to undertake such exercises in all the 216 districts. CODEO will include braille versions of a civic education manual to promote accessibility for the visually-impaired. The expected outcome of this intervention is to deepen citizens/voters understanding on civic and democratic issues and on the electoral process, and also to foster peaceful election.

2. Election- Day Phase

a) Stationary Observers at Sampled Polling Stations

On Election Day, December 7, 2016, CODEO, at the moment, is planning to deploy 4000 EC accredited stationary observers at statistically sampled polling stations throughout the country. These highly trained CODEO observers will observe and report, using SMS technology, the set-up of polling stations, voting procedures, close of polls, counting, and also on any incidents that may occur at polling stations.

b) Implementation of a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)

Ladies and Gentlemen, just as we did for 2008 and 2012 polls, CODEO will implement a PVT for the 2016 presidential polls. The Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) is an advanced election observation methodology. It involves deploying trained and accredited non-partisan observers to a nationally representative sample of polling stations. Using time-tested statistical principles, the methodology will allow CODEO to provide the most comprehensive and accurate account of the voting and counting process as well as the quality of the process across the country. The PVT methodology will as well enable CODEO to independently verify the accuracy of the tabulation process and the official presidential results declared by the EC.

We shall employ a multi-staged, random sampling procedure to select polling stations spread throughout the country. CODEO will rely on SMS-technology to rapidly receive information from deployed election observers for timely analyses to make a precise estimate of the outcome of the presidential polls. Just as we have done in the past and in accordance with our standing protocols, we will share our findings with the public following the declaration of the results by the EC, We hope that the implementation of PVT by CODEO will boost citizens' and voters confidence in the electoral process and outcomes and assure them that their vote will count.

c) Observing the Constituency Collation Centres

In addition to the above, CODEO will deploy its observers to all the 275 Constituency Collation Centres as well as the National Collation Centre in Accra to observe and report on results collation, tabulation and declaration.

Reporting on Election Day

As in previous elections, CODEO will design a system of reporting to enable its observers to rapidly transmit their observation reports at designated time periods to the CODEO National Observation Centre at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra. From this Centre CODEO will be issuing regular statements on the election process. CODEO will position itself as a reliable source of credible, non-partisan and objective information on the 2016 elections for both Ghanaian and international stakeholders.

3. Post-Election Phase

a) Observing the Post-election Environment

The final phase of CODEO's 2016 election observation project will be the post-election phase after the final declaration of results has been made by the EC. CODEO will continue to update the public on what is happening in the post-election environment. The focus will be on observing all actions and inactions of political parties, post election adjudication process, if any, and the general political and post-election environment.

USAID Support

This set of activities elaborated above, some already initiated and others yet to be rolled out by CODEO, has been made possible with the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Ladies and Gentlemen, in addition to the above, CODEO is partnering with the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) to organize:

- public debates for aspiring parliamentary candidates in fifty (50) selected constituencies throughout the country with support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA);
- public education against vote-buying and for electorates to be guided on policy issues on their vote choice in selected constituencies with funding from STAR Ghana; and
- public education and observation in selected difficult to reach electoral areas with support from Ford Foundation.

CODEO hopes that this comprehensive program of activities to be implemented in all the three phases of the electoral cycle will contribute and complement the efforts of key election stakeholders, particularly the EC, in ensuring peaceful and credible electoral outcomes. CODEO is of the firm belief that its 2016 election support interventions will contribute to the following:

- smooth and effective implementation of electoral reforms;
- improved administration of the 2016 elections;
- enhanced electoral participation particularly for marginalized groups such as women and People with Disabilities (PwDs);
- a better-informed electorate and citizenry on democratic citizenship;
- increased transparency in the conduct of the 2016 elections;
- increased national capacity to prevent or manage conflict/violence and achieve peaceful elections; and
- enhanced credibility of the electoral process and key stakeholders' acceptance of election outcomes.

Political and Pre-Election Environment: CODEO's General Observation

As noted above, CODEO officially started its observations of the pre-election environment with the limited voter registration and the voter register exhibition exercises early this year, both organized by the EC, detail findings of which were shared with the public and relevant stakeholders. However, we must point out that CODEO's monitoring and observation of the pre-election environment dates back to 2015. Accordingly, CODEO notes the following events and observations thus far:

- *Controversy over the Credibility of the Voter Register*

CODEO monitored and observed the public debate and judicial litigations that surrounded the integrity of the 2012 voter register and its usage for the 2016 polls. CODEO is happy to note that the issue with the voter register appears to have been settled to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. CODEO commends all stakeholders, particularly the petitioners, the EC panel on the voters register, the EC, and the Judiciary, among many other stakeholders, for resorting to the rule of law

and dialoguing in the resolution of the matter, and thereby putting the matter to rest ahead of the December 7, 2016 polls.

- *Conduct of the Limited Voter Registration and Voter Exhibition Exercises as well as NHIS Card Holders Re-registration*

CODEO notes with appreciation EC's successful organization of both the limited voter registration and voter register exhibition exercises as part of the efforts to produce a voters' register for the 2016 polls. CODEO also observed the re-registration exercise provided for the National Health Insurance (NHIS) Card holders following the Supreme Court judgment for the deletion of those who used the card to register in 2012. While, in all the exercises, the EC carried out its mandate professionally, albeit with a few administrative lapses, CODEO also noted some concerns, especially the general apathy of citizens and political party interest in the voter register exhibition phase of the voter register preparation cycle.

- *Implementation of Accepted Electoral Reforms*

CODEO acknowledges with delight the EC's recent announcement informing Ghanaians on steps taken to implement the 27 accepted electoral reforms, including enhancing transparency of results tabulation and transmission, a proactive communication EC, and a more updated website, its swift attempt to deal with temporary officials who flout electoral laws and procedures, and activation of the continuous registration process. CODEO is particularly happy to note that the EC has finally started implementing the 'Continuous Registration' process, something the Coalition recommended in its final observation report of the 2004 elections. CODEO, however, also noted the decision of Parliament not to amend the election date from December 7 to the first Monday of every November of an election year.

- *Issues related to Election Security*

CODEO has observed the early preparation by the security agencies, led by Ghana Police Service, towards Election Day. This is very commendable, and we note the recognition by Ghanaians in a recent CDD-Ghana pre-election survey that rated the Police and the Army as the most prepared of all the key election stakeholders and institutions for the December polls.

- *The Media and Election 2016*

On the whole, CODEO has observed that the media has rolled out many election intervention programs and focusing on developmental policy issues that affect Ghanaians. We have as well noted some indiscretion on the part of some media personnel, indecent language on media platforms by host and panellist, with the recent 'Montie 3' case being an extreme example of this phenomenon. CODEO condemns such abuse of media platforms, which should be an avenue for public education on democratic citizenship.

- *Abusive Language on Election Campaign Platforms and Disruptive behaviour by Politicians*

In the pre-election period, CODEO has also observed the use of abusive language on campaign platforms by some politicians, for example, Hon. Kennedy Agyapong's recent remark about the EC Chair at a campaign rally in Kumasi. We also note of disruption of the electoral process and tearing into pieces a photo album which was being used for a political party parliamentary primaries by a member of the party, Mr. Kofi Jumah, who has, subsequently, been sanctioned by the courts. CODEO equally condemns such commentaries and remarks as well as the behaviours of politicians as these things do not have a place in a civilized democratic space.

- *Judicial Responsiveness on Election Related Cases*

CODEO further observed the promptness that the Judiciary has brought to election related cases. We commend the Judiciary for upholding the law and ensuring that the rule of law prevails and election matters brought before it are not unduly delayed.

Ahead of December 7, 2016

Ahead of December 7, 2016 polls, and drawing from some of the observations from the pre-election environment, CODEO makes the following recommendations that we deem necessary to contribute to the general success of the polls and ensuring election credibility:

To the EC:

- Should continue to work to enhance its public image, trust and credibility by making transparency, inclusiveness, accountability and proactive communication guide its work. CODEO has taken note of the favourable citizens view of the EC in the recent CDD-Ghana pre-election, where 60% of respondents applauded the EC for its performance during the limited voter registration exercise, and where 63% believe that the EC performs its duties as 'neutral body guided by law'. The EC should be guided by these favourable ratings to strive to scale up its performance come December 7, 2016. However, the survey also showed that some Ghanaians are sceptical about the credibility of the vote count process with 46% reporting that they do not believe the accurate results will be announced. We encourage the EC to intensify public education on the national vote tabulation process particularly the electronic transmission of results to educate such people.
- Should continuously engage the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) to build consensus toward election day, and as well work closely with like-minded civil society partners to foster cooperation towards a credible and peaceful election outcomes.
- Should draw lessons from the recent past preparatory activities, such as the limited voter registration and voter exhibition exercises, and conduct thorough performance checks on administration of elections, equipment, so as to ensure that they are fully prepared for election day.

- Should continue to work to improve its guidelines and training of temporary officials and continue to apply the strict measures to enforce compliance. CODEO welcomes the recent announcement of engaging professionals, such as members of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA) and members of Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG) on election day. CODEO however advises that such groups have to be also vetted to ensure that they can perform their task in a non-partisan and competent manner.
- Should conduct a thorough accessibility audit of all polling stations so as to improve accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). This recommendation comes in the light of CODEO findings from the just ended Voter Exhibition exercise in which 12% of all polling stations observed by CODEO were not accessible to PwDs.
- Should take advantage of all platforms available to it to advance education on electoral processes to the general public. CODEO has taken note of the EC's communication strategy launched recently and commend them for it.

To the Political Parties:

- Should take cognizance that every activity on the EC's calendar is equally important in helping to ensure the credibility of the electoral process and its outcomes, hence they should not be selective in their participation. CODEO entreats them to fully participate in and constructively engage in all activities that have been delineated by the EC;
- Should take the right steps in ensuring that they provide improved training (if any) for their party agents to ensure they use laid down channels to resolve any grievances that may come up during the electoral process in order to ensure that their actions do not undermine any other activity of the EC as well as on the election day process;
- Should promote decent electioneering campaign, fair playing field for competition, and focus on policy issues that will contribute to the development of the country;

To the National Media Commission, Ghana Journalist Association, Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association and other media accountability organisations

- Should as a matter of urgency build consensus on a code of conduct to regulate media programming online and offline and to promote fair and decent reporting before, during and after the 2016 polls, particularly in the light of Montie 3 affair. We expect that these institutions will play their expected roles towards a peaceful and credible election 2016 polls.

To the Security Agencies: Election Security Task Force:

- Should continue to step up its preparatory activities and ensure that the law applies equally to all offenders of electoral rules and perpetrators of violence, irrespective of political party affiliation;

To the General Public:

- Should actively participate in any activity that forms part of the electoral process being carried out by the EC. The public should comport themselves during the electioneering campaign, engage parties and candidates on policy issues, and come out to vote on Election Day.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, once again Ghanaians have been presented with yet another opportunity to determine the course of the democratic enterprise that we embarked upon from 1992. The December 7, 2016 elections, coming on the back of the post 2012 presidential election results petition at the Supreme Court, present another challenge for us to show the world that we are determined to move ahead with this democratic project. Indeed, Ghana has made significant progress in developing a stable and highly competitive multi-party democracy. Election 2016 offers an opportunity to further consolidate our democratic and electoral gains based on lessons learned from 2012. Therefore, there is every reason for Ghanaians to sustain this path. The success of the polls will reinforce Ghana's record as a democratic nation and thereby creating the enabling political environment for national development and prosperity for all Ghanaians.

For us in CODEO, we will continue to do our part in preparation towards election-day. CODEO's 138 LTOs will continue to observe and report on the pre-election environment of election preparatory activities by the EC and other stakeholders and will share its findings with key stakeholders and the public. Through this long-term pre-election observation, we shall highlight what is working well and need to be continued, what may not be working well that requires strengthening, and where caution is needed we shall bring to the attention of stakeholders.

On polling day, we hope that the presence of CODEO observers at polling stations will have moderating influence on key actors and help ensure electoral integrity. CODEO will collaborate with the EC, political parties and other stakeholders in order to promote successful, peaceful and credible 2016 elections.

To be sure, CODEO notes with satisfaction the creative efforts of civil society groups and media to promote issue-based campaigning, peacefulness and overall credibility of the 2016 polls. CODEO will partner with such like-minded civil society organizations platforms to ensure maximization of efforts to achieve a common goal.

The main challenge facing the country on December 7, 2016 elections is whether Ghana can hold another reasonably peaceful and transparent election, whose outcomes are considered credible and accepted by the main contestants and all Ghanaians. It therefore beholds on the EC, and indeed, all

stakeholders involved in the electoral process to play their parts diligently to ensure that the process is acceptable to all. For CODEO, non-partisan citizen participation in the electoral process is vital for enhancing transparency, credibility and ownership of electoral outcomes, and thereby ensuring peaceful outcome. This is a task CODEO has set for itself since 2000, and is poised, once again, to undertake on December 7 2016. As always CODEO will uphold its principle of non-partisanship, objectivity and neutrality in the execution of this electoral mandate. For the avoidance of doubt CODEO is a signatory to the declaration of global principles of non-partisan election observation.

As CODEO launches its 2016 election support activities, we make a special appeal to all contesting political leaders and their supporters to do all in their power to conduct themselves properly during this electioneering campaign and help achieve credible elections and maintain the peace in our country. CODEO further urges the NCCE, the EC and all interested parties to team up and deepen civic and voter education efforts in the lead up to the December 7 elections.

To the security services, we urge you to approach your duties with maximum professionalism and utmost respect to the Constitution. We encourage you to be non-partisan and focus on the security of the state and of all Ghanaians in a lawful manner.

CODEO further appeals to the media to be circumspect in its coverage and reportage on the elections. The role of the media is to provide accurate information and education to Ghanaians and we expect them to discharge this function in an objective and professional manner.

Finally, CODEO wishes to express appreciation to all its supporters and funders for its work, and in particular for the 2016 polls. Since it was established, CODEO has enjoyed cooperation and tremendous support from Ghana's Electoral Commission, other key election stakeholders, the media, and Ghana's development partners.

Once again, we acknowledge the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which has over the past elections remained an important partner. CODEO further acknowledges STAR Ghana, OSIWA and Ford Foundation for their diverse support for its 2016 election programs.

May God Bless Ghana

Thank You.

Justice VCRAC Crabbe Co-Chair

Professor Miranda Greenstreet Co-Chair