

Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)

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STATEMENT DELIVERED AT THE MEDIA CONFERENCE ON THE PREPARATIONS BY THE COALITION OF DOMESTIC ELECTION OBSERVERS (CODEO) TO OBSERVE GHANA'S DECEMBER 7, 2016 PRESIDENTIAL AND GENERAL ELECTIONS BY PROFESSOR MIRANDA GREENSTREET AND JUSTICE V.C.R.A.C. CRABBE (JOINT CO-CHAIR OF CODEO) ON TUESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2016 AT THE KOFI ANNAN INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING TRAINING CENTER (KAIPTC)

Salutation

Representatives of the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana;

Representatives of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE);

Representatives of Political Parties;

Representatives of the Security Services;

Representatives of the Diplomatic/Donor Missions;

Representative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID);

Representative of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands;

Representatives of International Observer Groups;

Representatives of International Observer Groups;

Representatives of the Domestic Election Observer Groups;

Our friends in the Media; and,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

Introduction

On behalf of the Advisory Board of the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), I welcome you to this media conference ahead of Ghana's December 7, 2016 presidential and general elections. We are grateful to you for honoring our invitation to this media briefing.

As you are all aware, tomorrow, Wednesday, December 7, 2016, is an Election Day in our dear country. This Election, i.e., Presidential and Parliamentary, will be the seventh since the return to multi-party democratic constitutional rule. While elections are not synonymous with democracy, they remain central to democratic governance. Elections provide opportunities for citizens to indicate their approval or disapproval of elected officials, and renew commitment to the democratic process and willingness to participate in it. Elections are conducted for the people, and thus the people must be actively involved in all phases of the electoral process. This is the reason for the establishment of the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) in 2000 with the singular objective of complementing the efforts of the Electoral Commission (EC) to ensure transparent, free, fair and peaceful elections.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have invited you to this briefing to share with you our preparations to deploy approximately 8000 of our members in all 275 constituencies in the ten regions of Ghana on Wednesday, December 7, 2016.

Objectives of CODEO

As you may know, CODEO's primary and broad objective is to complement the efforts of Ghana's Electoral Commission and indeed all stakeholders in ensuring transparent, free, fair and peaceful elections in the country.

CODEO also seeks to:

1. Promote free, fair and transparent elections;
2. Promote issue-based campaigning;
3. Build public confidence in the electoral process;
4. Encourage citizen participation in the electoral process;
5. Prevent and/or manage conflicts; and
6. Lend legitimacy and credibility to electoral outcomes.

To enable us keep to our focus of sharing with you our preparations for the Election Day Field Observation and Deployment, we have attached to this briefing a note on the history and achievements of CODEO in participating in Ghana's general elections since we were set up in year 2000.

Preparations for Election Day Field Observation

CODEO's preparations for Election Day field observation, including the deployment of Rapid Response Observers (RROs) and Roaming Observers (ROs) commenced in September with a national training-of-trainers workshop for its 30 Regional Coordinators (RCs); followed by training of 550 Constituency Supervisors (CS) in October; and concluded with the training of its 7000 stationery RROs in November.

At each level of the training, CODEO observers were taken through the legal framework for elections, code of conduct for observers, what to observe at the polling stations, and personal security, among others. The observers were also taken through simulation exercises during the trainings, ahead of the Election Day. All trained CODEO observers were recruited from member organizations and precautions were taken to ensure that recruited members were strictly non-partisan and professional.

CODEO appreciates the support and collaboration it has received from the Electoral Commission in training its observers. As a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM), CODEO subscribes to the "Declaration of Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations." Accordingly, each CODEO observer was made to sign a pledge of neutrality and non-partisanship, which has been documented. At this stage, we are confident that our observers have been given the best of training. They have been duly accredited by the Electoral Commission to undertake this important national assignment - with competence and integrity.

CODEO Election Day Observation Deployment

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to announce that with support from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of the Netherlands, CODEO, under the banner '*Civil Society Advocacy and Support of Credible 2016 Elections-A CODEO Project*', will deploy close to 8000 observers (including 1500 Parallel Vote Tabulation Observers) throughout the country on Election Day.

- *Polling Station Observation: CODEO Stationary and Roaming Observers*

Out of the total number of observers, CODEO will deploy 7000 Rapid Response Observers (RROs) to a representative sample of polling stations throughout the country. In addition to the 7000 RROs, CODEO will deploy close to 1000 of its Regional Coordinators, Constituency Supervisors and General Assembly Members as Roaming Observers (ROs) in all the 10 regions

- *Observing the Constituency Collation Centers*

CODEO will deploy its observers to all the 275 Constituency Collation Centers as well as the National Results Collation Center (NRCC) in Accra to observe and report on results collation, tabulation, and declaration.

- *Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)*

On Election Day, CODEO will employ the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology, just as it successfully did in the 2008 and 2012 polls. The PVT is an advanced observation methodology that builds on the conventional election observation method. It involves deploying trained and accredited non-partisan and independent 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 election process across the country.

The PVT methodology will enable CODEO to independently verify the accuracy of the tabulation process and the official presidential results declared by the EC. In accordance with our standing protocols and abiding by the laws of this country, CODEO will share its findings on the Presidential results with the public after the declaration of the results by the Electoral Commission. We hope that the implementation of the PVT by CODEO will boost citizen and voters confidence in the electoral process and outcomes and assure them that their vote will be counted and properly tabulated.

CODEO's Deployment Plan

CODEO's deployment and observation plan makes it possible for CODEO observers to be in every region, every constituency, and every electoral area in Ghana. Applying statistical principles of a multi-staged random sampling procedure to select polling stations throughout the country, CODEO RROs will have visibility in every constituency, including the remotest and difficult to-reach- parts of Ghana, generally referred to as 'overseas'. Furthermore, CODEO has oversampled constituencies and electoral areas in six regions (Ashanti, Volta, Central, Brong-Ahafo, Greater Accra and Western) and EC identified flashpoint (hotspot) constituencies. This means that CODEO observer presence in these regions will be more prominent.

Observing and Reporting

Ladies and Gentlemen, all CODEO polling station observers will wear white T-shirts boldly embossed at the back with CODEO's name, and CODEO caps. And they will be carrying CODEO embossed black bags. CODEO volunteers will report at the polling stations at 6:00AM and stay at the polling stations until the end of official declaration of the ballot count either at the polling station or at the constituency collating center, as the case may be. CODEO observers will observe the polling station and process set-up, voting and counting procedures, and also file reports on any incidents they observe throughout the day.

These highly trained CODEO observers will observe and report, using Short Message Service (SMS) technology to the CODEO National Observation/Information Center here at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC) in Accra from where CODEO will be issuing regular statements on the election process. A system of reporting has been devised by

CODEO to enable observers to rapidly transmit their observation reports at designated time periods to the CODEO National Observation Center. This system of reporting 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 National Observation Center where reports about irregularities, disruptions, and other negative incidents in the voting process received from RROs will be quickly processed and, if verified as valid, relayed to the Ghana Police Service, the Electoral Commission and other relevant state institutions for prompt redress. CODEO will also collaborate and exchange relevant information with other observer groups, local and international.

CODEO will be in a position to issue three statements based on observations and incident reports filed by our 8000 observers within 24 hours of the elections. 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. On the day of election, a “situational statement” will be delivered at a press conference here at KAIPTC. This will be followed by a press release after the close of polls on voting day. CODEO will issue a preliminary statement on the conduct of the elections on Thursday, December 8th, 2016 at KAIPTC. CODEO’s PVT statement providing information on the Presidential election results estimates will be made public following the official declaration by the Electoral Commission. A final detailed report containing analysis of the pre-election environment, the election-day observations, as well as lessons learned and recommendations will be prepared and made available to stakeholders and the public at a later date.

‘Special Voting’ Exercises by the EC on 1st and 4th December, 2016

CODEO observed the ‘Special Voting’ exercises organized by the EC on 1st and 4th December, 2016, and noted with concern some of the challenges that were experienced, particularly with some eligible voters not able to cast their votes. While this may have been a challenge for the EC, we urge Ghanaians not to be discouraged by this, but rather continue to have trust in the EC and its ability to organize a credible election on December 7, 2016. We appeal to all political parties and Ghanaians to remain calm throughout the electioneering process. We hope that the EC took critical lessons from the lapses and has taken steps to address all issues as we go to the polls tomorrow.

The December 7 Polls and Ghana’s Democratic and Developmental Agenda

Ladies and Gentlemen, tomorrow’s election presents yet another opportunity to test our democratic institutions, affirm our commitment to the path of democratic governance we have chosen for ourselves, and above all consolidate the democratic and electoral gains made so far. Our dear country has often been touted as a beacon of democracy in Africa. And yet, every election season presents a challenge to our democracy. Thus, going to the polls tomorrow, the one challenge the country will face will be whether Ghana can hold another reasonably credible, peaceful and transparent election, whose outcomes are accepted by the main contestants and all Ghanaians.

Notwithstanding the above, the December 2016 Polls offer Ghanaians another opportunity to rise above these challenges and prove to ourselves and the global community that we are determined to stay on the democratic path and deepen the development of our democracy. We must use this opportunity to elect our leaders and representatives to demonstrate our willingness to participate fully in the democratic process, and, above all, our commitment to accountable governance.

To be sure, there is every reason for Ghanaians to be proud of our achievements and the significant progress made in developing a stable and highly competitive multi-party democracy. There is, however, more to be done. The success of the 2016 polls will help deepen Ghana's democratic development and the creation of an enabling political environment for national development and prosperity for its citizens. It is critical that the Electoral Commission, and indeed, all stakeholders in the electoral process play their roles diligently and with integrity to ensure that the process and its outcomes enjoy widespread public acceptance.

As part of its stakeholder engagements ahead of the polls, CODEO met with the leadership of the Electoral Commission and Ghana Police Service, and is reasonably pleased to hear of their level of preparedness and commitment to ensuring that the elections are conducted in a transparent and credible manner, and in a peaceful atmosphere. We can only encourage and urge them to remain professional, neutral and objective in their work.

For our part, we hope that the presence of CODEO observers at polling stations will have a moderating influence on key actors and help ensure electoral integrity. CODEO believes that non-partisan citizen participation in the electoral process is vital for enhancing transparency, credibility and ownership of electoral outcomes, and thereby ensuring peaceful outcomes. CODEO will collaborate and cooperate with the EC, political parties, like-minded civil society organizations platforms, and other stakeholders with similar goals in order to promote successful, peaceful and credible 2016 elections.

Conclusion and Acknowledgement

In conclusion, CODEO makes the following appeals:

- We make a special appeal to all contesting political leaders and their supporters to do all in their power to help maintain the peace in our country. CODEO commends the National Peace Council and its partners for making all efforts to promote peace during and after the polls.
- We appeal to the EC, its temporary polling officials, returning and presiding officers to be firm and apply the electoral rules in an impartial and objective manner. We ask all the party agents to respect the electoral laws and behave responsibly on polling day by assisting the EC officials to execute their duties effectively and efficiently.
- While commanding the Ghana Police Service and, especially the Election Security Task Force, for its contribution to the maintenance of a generally peaceful pre-election environment, we urge you to approach your duties on polling day with maximum professionalism and utmost respect for the Constitution of Ghana. We implore you to keep your professional focus on the security of the ballot process, voters, independent observers, and indeed all Ghanaians, and to discharge these crucial duties in a lawful and non-partisan manner.
- We appeal to the media to be professional and circumspect in its coverage and reportage of the elections. It is important that the media platforms, particularly the radio, and social media are not used to mobilize and instigate violence on Election Day and beyond.
- We appeal to all other local observers as well as international observers to support the polling exercise in an impartial and objective manner so as to ensure peaceful and successful elections.

- Finally, we encourage all Ghanaians, especially voters, to actively participate in the elections by coming out to vote. We appeal to voters to comport themselves during the polling process by following the laid down rules and procedures. In order to facilitate orderliness at the polling stations, we urge voters to leave the polling station environs after casting their ballot, and if they, so wish, return to observe counting of ballots. Above all, we appeal to Ghanaians not allow themselves to be used for any violent acts during this period and beyond.

CODEO wishes to express appreciation to all its supporters and funders for its work. Once again, we acknowledge the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands for making it possible to deploy close to 8000 observers on Election Day, tomorrow, Wednesday, December 7, 2016.

On behalf of the Advisory Board of CODEO, I wish to express our gratitude and appreciation for the enthusiasm and dedication of the large number of CODEO member organizations who have volunteered for the CODEO project. This is the 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 principles of maintaining independence from partisan associations and promoting an image of impartiality, communicating clearly and regularly, and ensuring the integrity of its undertaking in the execution of this electoral mandate.

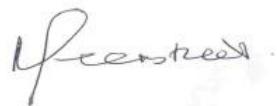
CODEO further wishes to place on record its gratitude to the National Democratic Institute (NDI) for the generous technical support it has given to CODEO's election observation activities over the years. We also want to thank the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center for its continued collaboration, and, once again, for making its facilities available for our use in this election.

May God Bless Ghana!

Thank You.



Justice VCRAC Crabbe
Co-Chair



Professor Miranda Greenstreet
Co-Chair

Tuesday, December 6, 2016

About CODEO and Election Observation in Ghana

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) is an independent and non-partisan network of civil society groups, faith-based organizations, and professional bodies, which observe Ghanaian elections. It was established in the year 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) to mobilize citizens of Ghana to actively participate in the electoral process and to complement the efforts of Ghana's Electoral Commission in ensuring transparent, free, fair and peaceful elections. With twenty-two founding organizations in 2000, CODEO currently comprises 42 organizations (*See CODEO Brochure for the list of CODEO member organizations in your folders*) CODEO has become a platform for citizens and groups to participate in the Ghanaian democratic process. CODEO is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM). CODEO is also a founding member of the West African Election Observers Network (WAEON).

CODEO Management Structures

CODEO has four principal institutional structures through which it implements its election activities. These include the CODEO Advisory Board, the CODEO General Assembly; the three (3) CODEO Sub-committees (*which are in charge of Recruitment, Training and Deployment of observers, Procurement and Logistics for observer deployment, and Drafting and Reporting of CODEO findings*); and the CODEO Secretariat, located at the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) provides technical and administrative support. The CODEO Advisory Board acts as the policy and executive decision-making body for CODEO. Currently, the Coalition, which has two co-chairs, is managed by a fifteen-member Advisory Board, composed of representatives of member organizations and selected eminent Ghanaian citizens (*See the Profile of CODEO Advisory Board Members in your folders*). CODEO's General Assembly is the platform for all the representatives of the 42 member organizations and has the overall responsibility of reviewing and approving CODEO activities, and, significantly, serves as a pool from which CODEO observers are recruited.

Key Accomplishments of CODEO

Ladies and gentlemen, throughout the sixteen (16) years of its existence, CODEO has accomplished the following:

- Deployed its members to observe the 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012 elections (including presidential run-offs).
- Deployed its members to observe local government elections in 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014/2015 as well as by-elections organized by the Electoral Commission.
- Deployed its members to observe political party primaries.
- Introduced systematic and innovative ways of tracking abuse of incumbency, and monitoring election violence.
- Introduced and successfully implemented the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology for domestic election observation for the first time in Ghana, in 2008 and repeated in 2012, to independently verify the accuracy of the results of the Presidential polls.
- Promoted the inclusion of marginalized groups in the electoral process and governance, particularly women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

CODEOs interventions and constructive recommendations in its observation reports, which are based on rigorous and objective analysis of the electoral environment and electoral administration, have enhanced electoral transparency in Ghana.

Partners and Donors of CODEO

CODEO has been able to make this impact through the cooperation and tremendous support from Ghana's Electoral Commission, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the national security agencies, the media and other key election stakeholders in its election observation programs. CODEO has been able to implement its activities through the generous financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), now the UK Aid, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF). CODEO has also received technical assistance on the implementation of the PVT from the Washington DC-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) since 2008

In addition to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), CODEO's Election 2016 activities are funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), STAR-Ghana and the Ford Foundation.