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PRESS STATEMENT

Saturday, December 7, 2024

Accra, Ghana

POLLING DAY OBSERVATION: MID-DAY SITUATIONAL REPORT

Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) on Friday, December 6, 2024, communicated to the nation its intention to again employ the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology to observe the 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections. CODEO has deployed 4,000 trained, accredited, non-partisan observers to fulfill this intention, with Rapid Response Observers (RROs) stationed in 3401 randomly selected polling stations. These observers are Ghanaians from every walk of life who have volunteered their time to ensure that registered voters cast their ballots freely on Election Day. Of the 4,000 observers deployed, 1,500 are Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) observers deployed to a nationally representative sample of polling stations.

As of 10:30 AM today (Saturday, December 7, 2024), 1,499 of the 1,500 PVT observers (i.e., **99%**) in all 276 constituencies across the 16 regions of the country had submitted reports about the setup and opening of polling stations.

Arrival at Polling Stations

- Upon arrival at 6:00 AM, CODEO observers reported seeing election officials in **85%** of polling stations. However, in **12%** of polling stations, CODEO observers did not see election officials when they arrived. In **3%** of polling stations, observers arrived after 6:00 AM.

Opening of Polling Stations

- By 7:15 AM, only **66%** of the polling stations were open. Another **31%** of polling stations opened with a slight delay between 7:16 and 8:00 AM due to the late arrival of polling staff or the absence of some electoral materials. Additionally, **4%** of polling stations opened between 8:01 and 10:00 AM. Only **1%** of polling stations

opened after 10 AM. Regions where CODEO observed a relatively higher number of polling stations opening after 7:15 AM include Northern (**52%** of polling stations), Oti (**49%**), North East (**47%**), Greater Accra (**44%**), and Eastern (**42%**).

- Most polling stations (**90%**) had the minimum number of election officials (5). Another **10%** had one (1) to four (4) officials at the time of set-up.
- In 93% of polling stations where CODEO observers are located, electoral officials respected their status as Electoral Commission's (EC's) accredited election observers and permitted them to observe the polls upon arrival. The remaining **7%** of observers were later permitted to observe.

Set-up for Polls

- According to CODEO observers, the majority of polling stations had a representation of women among Electoral Commission (EC) officials: **14%** had five women officials, **63%** had two or three women, and **17%** had just one woman. However, at 6% of polling stations, CODEO observers reported no women among the EC officials.
- According to CODEO observers, presiding officers in **86%** of polling stations are men. The remaining **14%** of polling stations had women as presiding officers.
- CODEO observers reported that **98%** of polling stations were set up to allow voters to mark their ballots in secret. However, the setup did not ensure vote secrecy in **2%** of polling stations.
- They also reported that **6%** of all polling stations were not accessible to persons with disabilities and older people.
- At the time of setup, CODEO observers reported seeing polling agents of the two main political parties in almost all polling stations (NPP, **99%**; NDC, **99%**). One-third of polling stations also had agents of independent candidates (**32%**) and other parties (**32%**).
- CODEO observers' reports show that all polling stations had a ballot box, ballot papers, indelible ink, validating stamp, endorsing ink, and ink pad, while **99%** had a voting screen and **82%** had tactile ballot papers. However, in certain locations, materials arrived late, delaying the opening of polling stations.
- According to CODEO observers, **74%** of polling stations had the expected number of biometric devices (i.e., two), and **26%** had only one device.

- According to CODEO observers, voter registers were made available at all polling stations.
- In almost all the polling stations (**99%**), CODEO observers reported that ballot booklets had serial numbers in numeric order.
- Before voting started, CODEO observers could confirm that all the presidential and parliamentary ballot boxes were empty, sealed, and in plain view.
- CODEO observers reported seeing roaming and stationed security personnel at **98%** of polling stations. Only **2%** of polling stations were reported to have no security personnel.
- CODEO observers' reports showed that security personnel were unarmed in **78%** of polling stations. However, 20% of the polling stations had armed security personnel.

Reported incidents

CODEO observers have reported a number of incidents at some polling stations. Some of the confirmed incidents so far include intimidation or harassment (14 incidents), violence (13 incidents), violation of voting procedures (8 incidents), vote-buying/bribery (3 incidents), and various other incidents (26 reported and confirmed). Some of the incidents reported so far include the following;

- At the CMB Polling Station Npunpunase in Tano in Tano South in the Ahafo Region, the validating stamp for the parliamentary ballot paper was reported to be faulty, making it impossible to read when ballots were stamped. This halted the voting process for about 1 hour 40 minutes before voting resumed.
- At the D.A. Primary School Tuanikofe in South Tongu Constituency in the Volta Region, parliamentary ballot papers were not available during set-up. EC officials brought the ballots subsequently at 10:45 AM, after which the polling station opened at 10:50 AM.
- At Nkunzesi Primary School at Nabdam in the Upper East, party leaders from both the NPP and NDC were telling voters in line who to vote for. This caused anger among voters and led to some fighting. A police officer later arrived and calmed the situation.
- At the Brekuso Day Care Center 1 in Akuapem South in the Eastern region, a voter was seen videotaping his ballot paper after marking it.
- At the Nungua Polling Station 1 in the Greater Accra Region, two verification machines did not function properly for two hours. Voters were asked to go and

return. At 10:15 AM, the manual verification process was used to commence voting.

- The ballot paper booklets at the Papy School, Santa Maria 2, Anyaa Sowutuom, Greater Accra, contained an inconsistent number of ballots, ranging from 98 to 101.
- In Ledzokuku in Greater Accra, electoral material, including results forms, was damaged due to rain as it was kept outside in the EC district office.

Conclusion

CODEO notes some of the initial challenges that characterized the opening of polls at some polling stations, including the late opening of some polling stations due to late delivery of certain sensitive material. CODEO, however, acknowledges the EC's swift resolution of most of these challenges, which have enabled voting to take place in a normal fashion.

CODEO urges the general public to remain calm and exercise their right to vote if they have not already done so.

End

Signed:

(For and on behalf of the Advisory Board)

CODEO Secretariat, Saturday, December 7, 2024

About CODEO

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 2000 under the auspices of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) to mobilize citizens of Ghana to participate in the electoral process actively and to complement the efforts of Ghana's Electoral Commission in ensuring transparent, free, fair and peaceful elections. The Coalition of 42-member organizations has grown to become the largest and most credible domestic election observer body in Ghana which mobilizes citizens and groups to participate in Ghana's electoral processes.