



CODEO GHANA
Coalition of Domestic Election Observers

CONTACT

Secretariat: +233 (0) 244 350 266/ 0277 744 777

Email: info@codeoghana.org

Website: www.codeoghana.org

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CODEO Condemns Partisan Appointments to the Electoral Commission, Calls for Immediate Reconsideration, and Demands Structural Reforms to Safeguard Electoral Independence

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), comprising over 41-member organizations, expresses strong disapproval regarding the appointment and swearing-in of Ms. Emelia Affi Agbenyo as Deputy Chairperson of the Electoral Commission (EC) of Ghana on October 12, 2026.

While CODEO recognizes the President's constitutional authority over appointments, public evidence of Ms. Agbenyo's active political engagement with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) during the 2024 general election campaign directly compromises the public perception of the independence, impartiality, and institutional credibility of the Electoral Commission.

As a primary stakeholder in Ghana's democratic process, CODEO asserts that the integrity of the Electoral Commission depends not only on the actual neutrality of its commissioners, but on the public's absolute confidence in that neutrality.

Publicly Documented Political Engagement of Ms. Emelia Affi Agbenyo

In August 2024, the NDC publicly announced Ms. Emelia Affi Agbenyo among its sectoral spokespersons for the party's 2024 election manifesto, under the governance [portfolio](#). As part of her key achievements in her bio on [LinkedIn](#), she confirmed her role as a spokesperson for the Governance Sector during the NDC Campaign.

Ms. Agbenyo's partisan political activities were also evident online. On 20th September 2024, she posted on her Facebook page a [video](#) featuring the then NDC presidential candidate, accompanied by the party's campaign song, Asempa by NACEE, and the hashtags #a_democracy_to_salvage and #voteforchange2024. On 31st October 2024, she posted a [photograph](#) of John Dramani Mahama, the then NDC presidential candidate, with the caption: "To salvage our democracy, to restore good governance, reset our nation on the path of thriving democracy." The post included the hashtags #voteJM2024 and #voteforchange2024. Again, on 2nd December 2024, she published a post on her [X account](#) stating: "I will be voting against a government that ridiculed the pains of the people. Imposing a nuisance levy on citizens is not a thing to celebrate. Governance is no joke, citizens are not your enemies." The post included the hashtags #salvageourdemocracy, #voteforchange2024, #VoteJohnMahama2024, and #EndTyranny.

CODEO's Consistent Position on Electoral Commission Appointments

Since the exit of Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan as the founding Chair of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), CODEO has consistently called for a broader consultative process in the appointment of the members of the EC beyond the dictates of Article 70 (2) of the 1992 Constitution while the country waited for meaningful constitutional reform. In 2014 and 2018,

CODEO made these calls in the appointments of Ms. Charlotte Osei and later Mrs. Jean Mensah, Dr. Bossman Asare and Mr. Samuel Tetteh. The appointing Presidents did not heed to the calls. In [2023](#), together with STAR-Ghana Foundation and Civic Forum Initiative (CFI), CODEO called for the resignation of Dr. Peter Appiahene over concerns about his partisan affiliation with the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The appointment of Dr. Peter Appiahene rightly generated condemnation from many groups, including the National Democratic Congress, prompting its then Presidential Aspirant, now President John Mahama, to call for urgent [reforms](#).

The appointment of another member of the EC with known partisan affiliation also calls into question the role of the Council of State. In the unique case of the appointment of members of the Electoral Commission, the Constitution requires the President to appoint **on the advice of the Council of State and not in consultation with**. The Council of State's consistent failure to develop any transparency process for the public to assess how it carries out its constitutional duties signals a breakdown in the current constitutional architecture.

CODEO's concerns about Ms. Agbenyo's appointment are not about her professional qualification or technical competence. Rather, it reflects a consistent principle of the Coalition that the independence and credibility of the Electoral Commission must be protected, and its leadership must inspire public confidence in its impartiality, regardless of which political party is in government.

Unfortunately, the failure to mitigate these perceptions of bias by individual members of the Commission has severely affected citizen trust in the Commission, reaching its lowest ratings in 2024, according to the Afrobarometer. The repeated failure to use the Presidential appointing power to reset the politics around the appointment of members to the Commission for the good of the country is extremely disappointing and frustrating.

CODEO's Call

In [March 2023](#), President John Dramani Mahama, while in opposition, criticised the appointment of persons he described as "known party activists" to the Electoral Commission and called for an amendment of Article 43(2) of the 1992 Constitution to require parliamentary approval of new Commissioners. He also affirmed his commitment to these reforms.

CODEO considers this position relevant to the present circumstances. The concerns President Mahama raised in opposition about partisan associations and the safeguards for the Electoral Commission's independence are now directly relevant to appointments made under his own administration. The principles he advocated in 2023 must be applied consistently while in government. The credibility of electoral institutions demands that the same standards be upheld regardless of which political party holds power.

In view of the documented political engagement of Ms. Emelia Affi Agbenyo, CODEO:

1. Calls on Ms. Emelia Affi Agbenyo to honourably resign as Deputy Chairperson of the Electoral Commission in the interest of protecting public confidence in the Commission's impartiality and institutional credibility.
2. Calls on President John Dramani Mahama to demonstrate consistency with his previously stated position by urging Ms. Agbenyo to resign. The President must demonstrate that the principles he advocated in opposition remain applicable under his own administration.

3. Calls on the Government to advance reforms that strengthen the independence of the Electoral Commission, ensuring that future appointments are transparent, merit-based and capable of commanding confidence across the political divide.
4. Calls on the Council of State to urgently take steps to develop processes for citizens to obtain information about how it discharges its national responsibility credibly, to engender trust amongst citizens.

Conclusion and a Call for Reforming the Appointment Process

CODEO reiterates its call for reforms to the appointment process for the leadership of the Electoral Commission. The Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) recommended an open, competitive and merit-based process involving a reformed Council of State, the Public Services Commission and prior parliamentary approval. However, the Government's Position Paper rejected the proposed changes to the existing appointment arrangement, while indicating that the President could adopt transparent, merit-based procedures.

CODEO urges the Government to reconsider its position and pursue reforms that introduce independent scrutiny, transparent selection criteria and meaningful parliamentary oversight. Such safeguards would help address concerns about actual or perceived partisan influence before appointments are made, rather than after controversies arise.

The concerns surrounding Ms. Agbenyo's appointment underscore the urgency of these reforms. The independence of the Electoral Commission must be protected not only by constitutional provisions but also by a clear commitment of the political class to an independent and impartial electoral management body.

Signed:

Co-Chairs of CODEO

October 15, 2026

For more information, please contact:

Daniel Selormey
Assistant Communications Specialist
Telephone: +233 59 691 3690

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 41-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.