



**PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 2019 DISTRICT LEVEL
ELECTIONS AND UNIT COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

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Introduction

On Tuesday, December 17, 2019 the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) conducted District Level Elections and Unit Committee Elections nationwide. The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), in line with its objective of promoting transparent and credible electoral processes and outcomes, deployed a total of 1,100 Election Day Observers. The Observers comprised 800 Polling Station Observers and 300 roaming Observers. The 800 Polling Station Observers were deployed to a randomly selected national representative sample of polling stations from where they observed the entire Election Day processes from opening to close of polls. This Preliminary statement is based on analyses of reports received from 84% of the 800 Polling Stations Observers regarding the opening and voting processes as at 7pm on Election Day.

Reports from CODEO Observers across the country indicate that generally, the polls opened on time and officials adhered to setting-up and opening protocols. The voting processes were also largely peaceful and incident-free.

Summary of Findings

Opening and Set-Up

- All (100%) CODEO Observers were granted access to polling stations and were able to carry out their observation duties on Election Day.
- Observers reported that 47.84% of polling stations opened by 7:15am, while another 39.59% opened between 7:16am and 8:00am. One in 10 polling stations (11.04%) opened between 8:01am and 10:00am. Far fewer polling stations opened after 10:00am (0.13%) or never opened (1.40%).
- Observers indicated that 92.39% of polling stations were set up in a manner that ensured that ballots were cast in secret. However, in 7.62% of polling stations this was not the case. These included City Plaza Video Centre polling station at Ayawaso North, M/A JHS at Maakro in Suame, Ameyaw Preparatory JHS polling station at Techiman and Nana Buabasa Area, Ash Town polling station in Kumasi.
- About 92% of polling stations were seen to be accessible to persons with mobility challenges and the elderly, while approximately 8% were not.

- Approximately 88% of polling stations had male Presiding Officers while female Presiding Officers constituted 12%.
- The elderly, pregnant women, nursing mothers and people with disabilities were given priority in the voting queue at 93.15% of polling stations.

Voting Process

- CODEO Observer reports indicated that at 99.23% of polling stations, ballot papers were stamped with the validating stamp. This was however, not the case at some 0.77% of polling stations.
- Biometric Verification Devices (BVDs) functioned well at 93.29% of polling stations, while 6.71% of polling stations encountered instances where the BVDs failed to function at some point in time on Election Day.
- At 61.11% of polling stations, Observers indicated that no eligible voter had their fingerprints rejected by the Biometric Verification Devices. At approximately 30% of polling stations, a few (1-5) eligible voters had their fingerprints rejected by the BVDs. Such polling stations included; Lutterodt International School, Sogakope polling station in South Tongu; D.A Primary School, Aflukakpoe in North Tongu; Methodist Primary School, Aboabo in Adansi Asokwa; D/A Primary School, Fomena in Adansi North; and Dispensary polling station at Kumbungu.
- At 95% of polling stations, voters who had challenges with biometric verification were allowed to go through manual verification to be able to vote.
- Four in 10 Observers (41.71%) reported “minor” problems encountered during the voting processes, while close to six in 10 (57.36%) observers said they did not encounter any problems. Observers reported “major” problems encountered during the voting processes at 0.90% of polling stations.

Closing of Polls

- As at 5:00pm when voting was ending, there was no one in queue at 53.70% of polling stations. In other polling stations, most voters who were in queues by 5:00pm were allowed to cast their ballots.
- Observer reports showed that there were no attempts to harass or intimidate officials, voters, nor poll agents at most (99.35%) of polling stations during counting.
- Nine in 10 (88.31%) of polling stations had sufficient lighting during counting while the remaining 11.69% of polling stations did not.
- Candidate agents were permitted to observe the counting process at 96.76% of polling stations observed.
- At 98.18% of polling stations, CODEO Observers agreed with the vote count for the District Assembly Elections. Candidate agents also endorsed the results declaration form for the District Assembly Elections at 93.90% of polling stations.

- There were requests for recount of ballot papers for the District Assembly Elections at 3.37% of the polling stations, and for Unit Committee Elections at 1.1% of polling stations.
- At 83.27% of polling stations, the official results of the elections were posted for the public to see.

Reported Incidents

CODEO Observers reported a total of 84 incidents on Election Day. These include:

- Voter boycotts of the elections in a community in the Juaboso district (Sewum)
- Violent confrontation between some candidates and supporters in the Krowor district
- Suspension of voting in some electoral areas in the Awutu-Senya-West district due to mix-up of candidate pictures for the Unit Committee Elections
- Treating and alleged reports of vote-buying at a few polling stations such as Asokwa Old Town polling station and Nuriya Primary School polling station in Bimbilla.
- Absence of canopies to provide shade from sun for voters at polling stations.

CODEO takes the opportunity to call on supporters of both winning and losing candidates to remain calm and to advise those with grievances to use due process to seek redress. CODEO is undertaking analyses of all observation data and will later share a comprehensive report with the public.

CODEO expresses its appreciation to all Observers for participating in this observation exercise. CODEO also acknowledges the generous support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which made its observation possible.

Signed:



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National Coordinator

(For and on Behalf of the Advisory Board)

CODEO Secretariat, Wednesday, December 18, 2019