



## **Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO)**

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### **STATEMENT DELIVERED AT A MEDIA AND STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING ON THE PREPARATIONS BY THE COALITION OF DOMESTIC ELECTION OBSERVERS (CODEO) TO OBSERVE GHANA'S DECEMBER 7, 2020 PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

**Date:** Sunday, December 6, 2010

**Venue:** Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC)

**Delivered by:** Shiekh Arimaywo Shaibu, Acting Chair of CODEO, on behalf of CODEO Advisory Board

#### **Salutation**

Our friends in the Media; and,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

#### **Introduction**

Ladies and Gentlemen, on Wednesday, December 3, 2020, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) launched its National Information Center (NIC) located here at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC) as part of preparations to deploy its members as non-partisan citizens' election observers for the December 7, 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections. We have invited you again to this briefing to share with you our readiness to deploy 4000 of our members in all 275 constituencies in the sixteen (16) regions of Ghana on Monday, December 7, 2020 when Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC) will conduct the election of a president and 275 members of parliament to govern the country for the next four (4) years. On behalf of CODEO, I welcome you all, and we are grateful to you for honoring our invitation to this media briefing.

#### **CODEO and its objectives**

CODEO's primary and broad objective is to complement the efforts of Ghana's Electoral Commission (EC), and indeed all stakeholders, and as well mobilize citizens as active participants in ensuring transparent, free, fair, inclusive and peaceful elections in the country.

#### **The December 7 2020 Elections and CODEO Election Day Observation**

Our dear country, Ghana, will go to the polls on Monday, December 7, 2020, the eighth time since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1992 as part of the processes of democratic governance, which we have committed ourselves to promote and preserve. We are aware that elections provide opportunities for citizens to democratically select their representatives to govern and manage the affairs of the society on their behalf. It is, therefore, imperative that this democratic right of exercising one's franchise is conducted in a manner that the processes and outcomes are generally deemed credible and acceptable. It is for this singular reason that CODEO was established in 2000 (now in its 20<sup>th</sup> year) to mobilize citizens to observe the conduct of elections. We all acknowledge

that the country has made tremendous gains since 1992 in improving the conduct of elections. And yet, we also recognize that challenges remain, including mistrust and mutual suspicion among major stakeholders. Certainly, 2020 is no exception. Indeed, in addition to recurring and new challenges that have confronted this year's election, the conduct of the election is occurring in an extraordinary circumstance with the COVID-19 pandemic.

As in previous elections, CODEO's election observation activities have covered the pre-election phase, including observation of the compilation of a fresh biometric voters' register, observation and reporting on the pre-election campaign and voter education environment, election/polling day phase, and post-election phase.

#### *CODEO Election Day Observation Deployment*

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to announce that CODEO will deploy close to 4,400 observers throughout the country on polling day, tomorrow, December 7, 2020 as follows:

- *Polling Station Stationary Observation: CODEO Rapid Response Observers*

The total number of CODEO 4000 observers will be deployed as Rapid Response Observers (RROs) to a representative sample of polling stations located in all the 275 constituencies across the 16 regions of the country. Out of this number, 1502 are deployed as Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) Observers.

- *Roaming/Mobile Observation: CODEO Roaming Observers*

In addition to CODEO stationary observers, CODEO will deploy its Regional Coordinators, Constituency Supervisors (CS), its General Assembly and Board Members as Roaming/Mobile Observers (ROs) in all the 16 regions.

- *Observing the Constituency Collation Centers*

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

#### *CODEO's Deployment Plan*

CODEO's deployment and observation plan makes it possible for CODEO's presence across the entire country. Applying statistical principles of stratified random sampling procedure to select polling stations where CODEO's RROs will be stationed makes it possible for CODEO's visibility to be felt in every region and constituency, including the remotest and difficult to-reach- parts of Ghana, generally referred to as 'overseas.'

#### **Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)**

As already stated, CODEO, in addition to traditional observation, will employ the PVT methodology to enable it provide the most comprehensive and accurate account of the set-up of polling stations, voting and counting process. The PVT is a proven methodology used by independent, non-partisan citizen observers to assess the quality of the election process across the country. As an advanced observation methodology that builds on the traditional election observation method, and using time-tested statistical principles, the methodology will enable CODEO to independently verify the accuracy of the vote tabulation process and the official

presidential results declared by the EC. It is the hope of CODEO that by implementing the PVT, the confidence of citizens, voters, and presidential candidates will be boosted in the electoral process and outcomes, and that voters will be assured that their vote will be counted and properly tabulated.

### **Preparing CODEO Polling Day Observers for December 7, 2020**

Preparations toward CODEO deployment commenced in October 2020 with a national training of trainers (ToT) for its Regional Coordinators (RC) in Accra. This was followed by training of CODEO Constituency Supervisors (CS) in October; and concluded with the training of its 4000 Rapid Response Observers (RROs) in November.

To be sure that CODEO observers were adequately trained and prepared, they were taken through the legal framework for elections, code of conduct for observers, what to observe at the polling stations and collation centers, COVID-19 pandemic safety precautions, and personal security, among others. The 4000 observers were also taken through simulation exercises during the trainings, and as well on December 3 and 5 ahead of the polling day. Officials from Ghana's Electoral Commission were present to offer training on voting procedures and what observers should be looking out for during observation. All trained CODEO observers were recruited from member organizations and precautions were taken to ensure that recruited members were strictly non-partisan and professional. All CODEO Observers have received accreditation from the EC. CODEO appreciates the support and collaboration it has received from the Electoral Commission in training its observers and for the accreditation process. Indeed, CODEO received many requests from ordinary Ghanaians wanting to participate as observers, and the enthusiasm is truly appreciated.

CODEO is a member of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM), and thus subscribes to the "*Declaration of Global Principles for Non-Partisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations.*" CODEO observers were trained on these global principles as part of the preparations, and all CODEO Observers were made to sign a pledge of neutrality and non-partisanship, which has been documented. We at CODEO are very 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.

### **Observing and Reporting CODEO Observation Findings**

Ladies and Gentlemen, all CODEO polling station observers and mobile observers will wear blue T-Shirt and/or a dark blue jacket boldly embossed at the back with CODEO's name. They will also have CODEO White Caps. The CODEO observers will also be carrying a CODEO embossed black bags. CODEO stationary RROs will report at their assigned polling stations at 6:00AM and stay at the polling stations until the end of official declaration of the ballot count. They will observe the polling station and process set-up, voting and counting procedures, declaration of votes count, and also file reports on any incidents they observe throughout the day. Similarly, CODEO Mobile Observers will visit a number of polling stations where there are no deployed CODEO stationary observer in assigned constituencies and file regular observation reports based on their findings. CODEO will also observe Constituency Collation Centers and report on the processes of collation of results.

On the polling day, CODEO observers will report their findings using *Short Message Service* (SMS) technology to the CODEO National Information Center (NIC) located at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC). From the NIC, CODEO will be releasing regular statements on the observation of the polling process. CODEO has developed a system where CODEO observers will be able to rapidly transmit their observation reports at designated time periods to the CODEO National Information Center. This system of reporting will enable CODEO to quickly and thoroughly analyze the conduct of voting around the country.

- *Critical Incidents*

CODEO will set up a critical incident desk at the National Information Center to receive infractions, irregularities, disruptions, and other malpractices that may occur during the voting process. These reports will be filed by both the stationary and mobile observers as and when they occur. Once verified, CODEO will share these critical incidents to relevant stakeholders, such as the Election Security Task Force and the Electoral Commission for appropriate actions and any corrective measures. In addition, CODEO will be collaborating with institutions, such as Dubawa, Ghana Facts, Penplusbyte, Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), and the National Media Commission (NMC) to conduct instant fact checking and counter misinformation in an effort to curb traditional and new media reportage on the elections that potentially can trigger violence and conflict.

- *Dissemination*

Based on the reporting system and observation findings, CODEO plans to make available to the general public three statements within 24 hours following the start of voting. CODEO will issue a “midday situational statement” at a press conference at the National Information Center here at KAIPTC. CODEO also plans to issue a press release after the close of polls on voting day. On December 8, 2020, CODEO will organize a press conference to share its preliminary observations of the polling as conducted on December 7, 2020. CODEO’s PVT statement on the verification of the official results as declared by the Electoral Commission on the Presidential election will be shared subsequently.

CODEO’s long standing experiences with citizens’ election observation and the preparations made so far have positioned CODEO as a reliable source of credible, non-partisan and objective information on Ghana’s electoral process, and indeed, for the 2020 elections for both Ghanaian and international stakeholders. We intend to fulfil this promise to Ghanaians.

### **Highlights of CODEO Observation of the Pre-Election Environment**

Ladies and Gentlemen, as it has already been stated, CODEO’s comprehensive observation activities covered the voter registration exercise as well as other pre-election environment electoral activities, including political parties campaigning. CODEO has already made public its observation findings on the voter registration exercise as conducted by the Electoral Commission. CODEO has also made public three monthly pre-election observation findings conducted by its Long Term Observers (LTOs) for the months of September, October and November. Overall, our observers noted the following:

- That the campaign period witnessed a generally peaceful electoral environment, with political parties focusing their campaigns on policy and developmental issues;
- That the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the two dominant political parties, continued to dominate campaign activities in the observed constituencies;
- That the campaign period, overall, witnessed a few incidents of use of abusive or inflammatory language, destruction or removal of party/candidate paraphernalia, and other election-related violence as compared to previous elections;
- That violent clashes among supporters of the NPP and the NDC were reported by our long-term observers (LTOs) in some of the observed constituencies resulting in various degrees of injuries, with notable ones occurring in the Ododododio Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, Pru West Constituency in the Bono East Region, and Banda Constituency in Bono Region;
- That civic and voter education campaign activities as well as election peace promotion campaign by non-state actors were quite low in the selected observed constituencies; however, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and the EC intensified their civic and voter education campaigns as the election day drew closer; and
- That few people adhered to the social distancing protocols and wore face masks during campaign activities and other electoral activities organized by stakeholders.

*‘Special Voting’ Exercises by the EC on December 1, 2020*

- On Tuesday, December 1, 2020, CODEO LTOs also observed the Special voting exercise conducted by the EC for personnel who would be on election duties on December 7, 2020. Observers reported of a generally smooth exercise. Observer reports showed that Biometric Verification Devices (BVDs) performed quite well with very few instances where a few people could not go through fingerprint. There was also good enforcement of the COVID -19 health and safety equipment protocols at the centers for voting on election day.

**Peaceful and Credible Elections on December 7, 2020**

Ladies and Gentlemen, CODEO continues to remind and urge all Ghanaians to uphold the democratic principles of peacefully selecting our leaders into government. CODEO is encouraged of the few recorded violent incidents during the campaign period, and hope that the stakeholders take into the voting process attitude of non-confrontation and resort to the rules of the electoral process to resolve any differences or dispute. CODEO further applauds the commitment of the presidential candidates of the NPP, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, and of the NDC, John Dramani Mahama, to promote peace during and after the elections as demonstrated by the peace pact ceremony that took place on Friday, December 4, 2020.

CODEO, for its part, assures Ghanaians that it will play its role as independent, impartial and objective observers during the process. It is our firm belief that CODEO’s presence at polling stations will contribute to having a moderating influence on key actors and help ensure electoral integrity. CODEO will continue to collaborate and cooperate with the EC, political parties, like-minded civil society organizations platforms, international observers, the media and other stakeholders with similar goals in order for Ghana to achieve, once again, a peaceful, credible and successful 2020 elections.

## **Appeals**

CODEO makes the following appeals:

- To all contesting political leaders and their supporters to do all in their power to help maintain the peace in our country.
- 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.
- To agents of political parties to respect the electoral laws and behave responsibly on polling day by assisting the EC officials to execute their duties effectively and efficiently.
- To the Election Security Task Force to approach their duties on polling day with maximum professionalism, fairness and utmost respect for the Constitution of Ghana.
- To the media to be professional and circumspect in its coverage and reportage of the elections.
- To all other domestic observers as well as international observers to support the polling exercise in an impartial and objective manner so as to ensure peaceful and election integrity.
- To voters to dutifully abide by the COVID-19 health safety protocols as announced by the EC. It is critical for us to remind ourselves of the risks posed by the COVID-19 and to ensure adherence to all relevant health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of the virus as we go out there to vote.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, CODEO urges all registered voters to actively participate in the elections by going out to vote. CODEO urges voters to comport themselves during the polling process by following the laid down rules and procedures, including social distancing and other COVID-19 safety protocols. We further require all Ghanaians not to allow themselves to be used for any violent acts during this period and beyond. CODEO implores the security forces deployed for election duties to keep to their professionalism by focusing on the security of the ballot process, voters, independent observers, and indeed all Ghanaians, and to undertake these crucial duties in a lawful and non-partisan manner. To the media, it is important to note that your platforms, particularly the radio, and social media, are not used to create violence on Election Day and beyond. Finally, we must, as Ghanaians, use this occasion to demonstrate to the entire world of our determination to stay on this path of democratic and accountable governance by electing our leaders and representatives in a participatory manner and peacefully.

**Acknowledgement**

CODEO acknowledges with gratitude the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union and STAR Ghana, the UK Aid for making it possible to deploy over 4000 observers on Election Day, tomorrow, Monday, December 7, 2020. CODEO further expresses gratitude to the Washington DC-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) for their continuous technical assistance to CODEO's election observation activities over the years. Finally, we also cherish the collaboration with the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center and for making its facilities available for our use in this election once again.

May God Bless Ghana!  
Thank You.

Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu  
Acting Chair, CODEO  
*(For and on Behalf of CODEO)*

Sunday, December 6, 2020

## **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).

### *Objectives of CODEO:*

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.

### *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 is managed by a fourteen-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 twenty (20) years of its existence, CODEO has accomplished the following:*

- Deployed its members to observe the 2000, 2004, 2008 (including presidential run-offs), 2012 and 2016 elections.
- Deployed its members to observe local government elections in 2002, 2006, 2010, 2015 and 2019 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 and 2016, 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 electoral support activities since its establishments through the generous financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UK Aid, STAR Ghana, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), STAR-Ghana, the Ford Foundation, 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