

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' FORUM

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1. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

MMDCEs	Metropolitan, Municipal & District Chief Executives
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal & District Assemblies
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
TUC	Trade Union Congress
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
MLGRD	Minister for Local Government & Rural Development
MPs	Members of parliament
MMPR	Mixed Member Proportional Representation
DCs	District Commissioners
CPP	Convention People's Party
DLEs	District Level Elections
DACF	District Assemblies Common Fund
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EC	Electoral Commission
MDC	Multi-party Democracy Commission
PR	Proportional Representation
LDAC	Local Development Advisory Council
ISD	Information Service Department
NCCE	National Commission on Civic Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NEC	National Executive Committee
CFI	Civic Forum Initiative
CODEO	Coalition of Domestic Election Observers
GJA	Ghana Journalists Association
RTI	Right to Information
CBOs	Community Base Organization
GMA	Ghana Medical Association

WENGO.....

BANGO.....

LOGNET Local Government Network

2. INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

After extensive stakeholder consultations, President Nana Akufo-Addo in his February 2018 State of the Nation Address, announced his government's intent to amend Article 55 of the 1992 Constitution, which will enable political parties to participate in decentralized local governance through the election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) and membership of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Apart from deepening the practice of democracy in Ghana, the participation of political parties in local governance will promote greater accountability at the local level. Currently, political parties are constitutionally prohibited from participating in district elections and although there has been a general understanding that local government officials should be elected, this has been without political parties' involvement. It is only through participating in elections that all political parties can access the Executive arm of government albeit at the district level.

Against this backdrop, the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG) held a two-day National Civil Society Organizations' Forum at the International Students Centre, Teiman, near Abokobi, Accra on the theme: ***Civil Society's Role in Transformational Local Governance Reform in Ghana***. The event took place from Wednesday, 27th to Thursday 28th June 2018. It was attended by over 130 participants drawn from representatives and leaders of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from all the ten administrative regions of Ghana; media practitioners, representatives of professional bodies, Trades Union Congress (TUC), Christian Council, Association of Ghana Industries and religious leaders.

The rationale for the forum was to create a common Civil Society platform and coordinate their activities to facilitate the implementation of President Akufo-Addo's decision and other consequential reforms triggered by the decision.

3. OPENING OF FORUM

Chairman's Statement and Remarks

Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey, Executive Director of IDEG welcomed all participants and thanked them for their show of support and commitment to Ghana's current drive towards achieving a transformational local governance system. He noted that Civil Society actors play a key role in providing a crucial linkage between governments and the ordinary people. Therefore, their crucial role in ensuring successful implementation of important decisions and policies cannot be under-estimated. According to him, the implementation of the President's decision to

amend Article 55 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, which will enable political parties to participate in decentralized local governance and elections at the grassroots, will suffer a severe setback without the active support and participation of Civil Society actors. He therefore stressed the need for Civil Society leaders to embrace the President's decision and work together to support its implementation. In his view, it is imperative for more power and resources to be devolved to Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in order to achieve rapid social economic development in the rural areas and the participation of political parties in local governance would be helpful in achieving the needed local development. He argued that it is also possible to achieve the local governance reforms expected to take place within the time frame given by the President in view of the fact that studies point to increasing public support for political parties' participation in decentralized local governance.

4. REMARKS BY DEPUTY MINISTER, MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Kwasi Boateng Agyei, deputy minister for Local Government and Rural Development commended the IDEG for convening the stakeholder forum. He noted that even though significant achievements have been made in Ghana's decentralized local governance system, there are key challenges that ought to be dealt with in order to devolve more power to the people and to promote local development. He noted that it is the resolve of the government to push for the popular election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) on party lines as a way of deepening accountability and promoting rural development. According to him, the MLGRD has developed a roadmap to guide the implementation of the proposed reform and currently there are sensitization tours across the ten regions of Ghana to educate Ghanaians about the proposed reforms and their role in ensuring their successful implementation. He commended the IDEG for sustaining the crusade to deepen decentralization over the past decade and expressed the hope that IDEG activities would contribute to securing a positive outcome of the referendum to amend Article 55 of the 1992 Constitution. He called on CSOs to appreciate the fact that achieving a successful amendment of Article 55 to deepen decentralization and promote rural development is a collective responsibility.

5. KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The keynote address for the Forum was delivered by the Rt. Hon. Professor Aaron Michael Oquaye, Speaker of Parliament of the Republic of Ghana. He thanked IDEG for the opportunity given him to share his thoughts on the theme. He noted that he has followed the advocacy of

CSOs especially IDEG on decentralized local governance in Ghana and admitted that some of the progress made in local governance are the result of such advocacy. He therefore congratulated IDEG and other CSOs for their advocacy in influencing public policies in the country.

According to the Speaker of Parliament, it has always been his conviction that policy advocacy is solution-based. Instead of solving a problem for one person at a time, or simply raising awareness about a problem, in policy advocacy CSOs analyze the causes of a problem and develop policy-based solutions to address them in a manner that creates sustainable and enduring change. The mission of advocacy is therefore to create a society that is fair and just, where the needs and interests of marginalized individuals or groups are represented and addressed. This cannot be ignored and therefore CSOs must be supported to continue to promote their advocacy.

He stressed the importance of the Forum in promoting a common CSO platform that will mobilize broad-based support for the forthcoming national referendum process triggered by the February 2018 Message on the State of the Nation by His Excellency, President Nana Akufo-Addo for the amendment of Article 55 of the 1992 Constitution. Although the President directly tied the constitutional reform to the election of MMDCEs, the Speaker noted that, its broader objective, however, is to formalize the participation of political parties in local governance for the first time in 30 years.

Prof. Oquaye noted that articles 290 and 291 of the Constitution set out the amendment process for both entrenched and non-entrenched provision respectively and the role that Parliament should play in the process. According to him, there is no doubt that the President's decision on local governance reform has implications for Parliament as a law-making body. For instance, the amendment of Article 55, an entrenched provision, will have to go through Parliament in addition to the consequential amendment of the non-entrenched provisions on decentralized local governance. He gave the assurance that Parliament is ready to work with the Executive to set in motion the amendment process if the Bill for Amendment is laid before the House as early as possible and within its timetable taking into consideration that the public referendum to amend Article 55 will be held together with the district level elections which are scheduled for the third quarter of 2019.

In order not to lose out as far as the time table for the local governance reform is concerned, the Speaker indicated that Parliament will have to develop an appropriate and feasible strategy on how to work towards getting the draft Constitution Amendment Bill ready for gazetting by the end of the year (2018).

Even though the participation of political parties has been a vexed issue since the return to constitutional rule in 1993, the Speaker noted that his own view which has also been articulated in his publications on decentralization and governance, is that formalizing the participation of the political parties is a much more better option than the current practice which has excluded them. In this connection, one of his conclusions in his book, *Politics in Ghana, 1982-1992: Rawlings, Revolution and Populist Democracy* that “decentralization did not proceed much beyond cosmetic changes in local government structure and the deployment of some key officials to the Districts. To enable meaningful decentralization the centralist pull had to cease” (p. 274) is still valid today.

As Speaker of Parliament, Prof. Oquaye noted that he has been preoccupied just like his predecessors did, with the importance of Parliament to become a strong autonomous institution in relation to the executive. According to him, one of the ways to make Parliament stronger is a multiparty local governance system that is capable of strengthening Parliament, in improving lawmaking, representation and oversight functions. Currently, Parliament has lost 50 percent of its MPs largely through the political parties’ primary elections – a situation which is counterproductive to institution building as it has led to a loss of institutional memory and vibrancy. In some cases, the sitting MPs were defeated by MMDCEs, who were scheming in the absence of the MPs while busy performing their legislative responsibilities. This situation according to Prof. Oquaye, has led to insecurity as some MPs have not been able to use the time profitably on their core mandates (law-making, representation and oversight) but rather tended to be more preoccupied with retaining their seats in Parliament. The constant tension and conflict between some MPs and MMDCEs are diversionary and in some cases have led to institutional paralysis at the local level, which has also affected the performance of some MPs and MMDCEs. Accordingly, the participation of political parties in local governance will strengthen Parliament through the reduction of the tension and conflict between MPs and MMDCEs as there will be a calming assurance of the security of tenure for some MPs and a reduction in the ambition of MPs to become MMDCEs as they are also guaranteed security of tenure in a multi-party local governance system in contrast to the current practice of they being fired by the President at any time.

The Speaker of Parliament stated that the implication of the President’s decision to amend article 55 of the 1992 Constitution makes it imperative for Parliament to design a more ingenious way to strengthen the devolution of more power and resources to the districts, regions and localities and restore its power of the purse as a complementary mechanism to the local governance reform. In other words, the relevant standing committees of Parliament must become sharper, more probing and demanding more accountability to strengthen the

constitutional principle of an effective system of checks and balances in Ghana, which some academics have taken with a pinch of salt given the current negative perception of the weakness of Parliament in holding the Executive in check and accountable.

Prof. Oquaye, however noted that the forum should not overly concentrate on the amendment of Article 55 that allows political parties to participate in local governance. The forum must rather brainstorm on all the challenges that weaken local governance and prevent it from playing a role of countervailing authority in the state. Local governance systems are required to take care of the citizen from the “cradle to the grave”. This can be achieved when decentralized structures are deepened in a manner that rolls back the frontiers of executive power interference in local affairs. He expressed regret in the fact that the only strong institution in Ghana seems to be the presidency and urged the forum to brainstorm on ways to strengthen local governance beyond the participation of parties to ensure effective devolution of powers to the sub-governmental units. He noted that the practice whereby about 20 percent of the District Assemblies Common Fund is kept by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to be used as it deems fit is a paternalistic tendency that undermines decentralization. He called for an increase in the allocation of funding for the MMDAs and argued that not less than 20 percent of the national budget must be allocated to them to enable them become more viable as agents of local development. Prof. Oquaye further pointed out the fact that the creation of more districts by the executive arm of government undermines decentralization as it strengthens the executive’s hold on the districts.

In conclusion, Prof. Oquaye expressed the hope that the forum will achieve its objectives and come out with concrete and pragmatic recommendations that will guide the implementation of the process for amending the constitution as indicated in the 2018 Message on the State of the Nation by His Excellency the President and the consequential constitutional, legal, institutional, financial and capacity building reforms. In his view, even though the participation of political parties in local governance may seem to some people as a small reform, it will have transformational impact, as it will positively affect the strengthening of Parliament, boost the capacity of the political parties and, more importantly, local development and improved services. He ended by calling on all Ghanaians and Civil Society leaders not to allow the current practice, which has been in existence for the past 30 years to continue to divide the country and undermine inclusion and local development. He urged all Ghanaians to support the reform with a massive turnout on referendum day and vote positively. This notwithstanding, he emphasized that the quest for effective decentralization must not only be limited to achieving political parties’ participation in local governance but also an analysis of other challenges that have undermined the expected countervailing role of decentralized local governance to the executive powers of the country.

6. BUSINESS SESSION ONE

Political Parties' Participation in Local Governance in Ghana: The Debate and the President's 2018 Decision

This session was chaired by Dr. Dorcas Coker Appiah, Executive Director of the Gender Centre. Professor Joseph Atsu Ayee, University of Ghana and Senior Research Fellow, IDEG made a presentation on the topic, **“Political Parties' Participation in Local Governance in Ghana: The Debate and the President's 2018 Decision”**. He noted that political parties were part of local governance from 1957-1959. But this resulted in growing authoritarianism, over-centralization, fragmentation of the local government units, poor service delivery and limited financial resources. There was also lack of clear definition of the role of District Commissioners (DCs) and other functionaries of the then Convention People's Party (CPP). Councillors also resented against the encroachment on their powers by local party officials. Finally, there was lack of cordial relations between DCs and councillors.

In building a new local governance system in 1988, political parties were excluded from actively participating in decentralized local governance. Prof. Ayee outlined several reasons for this. These *inter alia*, include the fact that in the past, elected central governments in Ghana cynically exerted influence on local government bodies to win political advantage. Also, parties were excluded as a way of facilitating the mobilization of people and building consensus among the grassroots on issues affecting them. Furthermore, parties were excluded because it was realized that they did not have the ability to mobilize adequate resources to organize district level elections. Most of the political parties had very weak financial position and could not therefore fund the elections of their members. Also, political parties were excluded because local level development is about specific concerns that should transcend party interests and requires team-work. Finally, no political parties were in existence in 1988 and the non-party system was incorporated into the 1992 Constitution to satisfy those against multi-party politics.

Prof. Ayee discussed the main issues bothering on whether political parties should participate in local governance or not. He highlighted some of the reasons why some have argued for political parties to stay away from local governance system. These include the argument that the nation is not ready for political party participation in local governance; potential politicization and violence; sabotage of the President by sitting Metropolitan, Municipal and

District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) who do not come from the ruling party; corruption; and the fact that a non-performing MMDCE cannot be dismissed by the President until he has completed his term of office.

Prof. Ayee, however, pointed to the indirect political party participation in local governance and district level elections in support of the case for parties to participate in local governance. He also pointed out the contradiction between articles 35(6d) and 55 (3) of the 1992 Constitution to make a case for party participation on local governance. References were also made to the 2018 Afrobarometer survey and the 2015 study conducted by the National Commission for Civic Education that pointed to about 70% Ghanaians supporting the election of MMDCEs. More importantly, it was pointed out that engagement with Civil Society including IDEG and the Civic Forum Initiative from 2012 to 2017 show a shift in support for inclusion of political parties. Finally, Prof. Ayee noted that the participation of political parties in local government elections and decentralization would reduce tension, winner-takes-all politics, feeling of marginalization, promote accountability, and increase voter turnout in local government elections.

According to Prof. Ayee, in order to implement the President's decision to have MMDCEs elected on party basis, article 55 of the 1992 Constitution should be amended through a referendum in view of its entrenched nature. For the judicious use of resources, the President proposed that the conduct of the referendum together with the district level elections (DLEs) of 2019.

The conduct of the referendum however comes with some potential risks. These according to Prof. Ayee include difficulty in reaching bipartisan consensus; politics of equalization by the minority to pay back the ruling party for its failure to support the amendment of the day of election from December to November; political parties taking advantage of the joint DLEs and referendum in 2019 to be openly and more involved in the DLEs in spite of Article 55(3) prohibiting them; sharp division among the electorate into those for and those against leading to further polarization; difficulty in getting a 75 percent "YES" vote approval at the referendum; and financial cost to both the Electoral Commission and political parties.

Prof. Ayee ended his presentation by calling on all to embrace the change and defend it in order to deepen political accountability, local governance and rural development. He quoted the Sixth Chapter of Nicolo Machiavelli's book, *The Prince* (1513) to buttress the possible resistance that will be encountered in the implementation of the President's decision as follows:

“ We must bear in mind ... that there is nothing more difficult and dangerous, or more doubtful of success, than an attempt to introduce a new order of things in any state. For the innovator has for enemies all those who derived advantages from the old order of

things, whilst those who expect to be benefited by the new institutions will be but lukewarm defenders. This indifference arises in part from fear of their adversaries who were favored by the existing laws, and partly from the incredulity of men who have no faith in anything new that is not the result of well-established experience. Hence it is that, whenever the opponents of the new order of things have the opportunity to attack it, they will do it with the zeal of partisans, whilst the others defend it but feebly, so that it is dangerous to rely upon the latter."

Discussion/Questions and Contributions

Following the presentation by Prof. Ayee, there were several contributions, questions and responses. Below are some of them:

- Participants supported the election of MMDCEs and District Assembly members on party lines and noted that this is already happening, albeit in a clandestine manner.
- Some participants noted that the election of MMDCEs will provide them with security of tenure to guard against the situation where they can easily be dismissed by the President.
- Some participants wondered how elected MMDCEs would be sanctioned for non-performing. In response, it was noted that their tenure must end before they are shown the exit, just like any other elected official of state.
- Others wondered whether the 30 percent government appointees in the MMDAs would remain but in response, it was noted that all members of MMDAs should be elected.
- Some participants expressed disappointment about the weak capacity of political parties to contest elections at the local level. They therefore called for political parties to be strengthened to be able to work both at the national and local levels. It was noted that there must also be adequate institutional and financial support for the new local governance system being advocated for.
- Some representatives from the media called for the effective use of the media to promote Ghana's democratic gains. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development must therefore work in tandem with the media to sensitize the people

about the reform and the changes in order to secure the needed support from the media to prosecute an effective sensitization agenda for public ownership and buy in.

- Some participants also were not sure whether it would be possible to garner the needed 40 percent voter turn-out and 75 percent approval at the referendum. It was agreed that the apprehension and fear among many Ghanaians seem to have given way to support for political parties' participation in local governance. With intensified education by CSOs, the nation is likely to undergo a successful local governance reform. The high voter turnout at national elections is partly as a result of the participation of political parties in the elections. Voter turn-out is likely to improve with political parties' participation in local elections.
- Some participants also feared the replication of partisanship and polarization at the local level and stressed the need to deal with them. It was noted that if political parties are the “heart and soul” of every democracy, they must play a role both in national and local level politics.
- The point was made that a huge chunk of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) goes into bureaucratic procedures and uses that do not directly promote local development. A new decentralized system must ensure the proper use of money by elected officers for local development. In Kenya for instance, about 20 percent of the national budget allocations go to the local counties. In this regard, an electoral defeat at the national level in any Kenyan election does not necessarily mean a defeat at the local level elections and the financial suffocation of local authorities. In Ghana, the DACF is distributed erratically but an elected MMDCE would likely sue the government for irregular disbursement of funds in a manner that may compel the central government to ensure regular disbursement of funds.
- There should be a cap on the creation of districts to prevent the creation of non-viable districts.
- Affirmative action proposal must also be factored in determining the membership of MMDAs and young people must also be encouraged to participate in the decentralized local governance system.

Pre-Conditions and Potential Benefits of a Multi-Party Local Governance System

The second paper presented under this session was on the topic, ***“Preconditions and Potential Benefits of a Multiparty Local Governance System.”*** It was presented by Mr. Kwesi Jonah, Senior Research Fellow, IDEG. He noted that the election of the MMDCEs on party lines is only one important requirement to deepen democratic devolution in Ghana. Nevertheless, the proposed amendment of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to allow the entry of political parties into local governance will be the most far-reaching constitutional reform since the current phase of constitutional rule was ushered in January, 1993. The non-party based local governance system we seek to reform has been in existence for thirty years. In his view, it will be unrealistic to expect that simply legislating party entry into local governance and politics will be the silver bullet that will usher Ghana into the golden age of democracy and development for which the vast majority of our people are hoping. For the proposed reform to have any meaningful impact we should be seriously reflecting on the appropriate conducive environment to make the desired effect happen.

One of the conditions that must be considered is to strengthen the party and the electoral system. This can be accomplished in the following ways:

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1. Reduce the overload of elections in the system. In Ghana we literally “eat and drink” elections. So many elections are dispersed throughout the four-year political cycle that there is very little time and space to think through and find solutions to the crisis of day to day living which our people helplessly have to confront without much help from the state. They include youth unemployment, high cost of living, housing shortage, etc.

In addition to the presidential and parliamentary elections we hold DLEs, currently two years apart and numerous party level elections which sometimes are indistinguishable from national elections, party executive elections at all levels plus presidential and parliamentary primaries. There should be ways of bringing elections together to create the time and space for thinking and creating development.

2. Strengthen the regulation of the electoral cycle. In Ghana’s democracy the Electoral Management Body (EMB) does not regulate the electoral cycle. There is no defined electoral campaign period. Every day of the four-year political cycle can be a campaign day. There is the need to declare a campaign period for all elections and parties must submit their manifestoes with the Electoral Commission (EC) before the campaign season opens. An indefinite and interminable campaign season is distractive to development.

3. Ensure better regulation of political parties. The EC of Ghana is overloaded with functions. Therefore, it is unable to perform all functions equally well. In addition to its core mandate of demarcating electoral boundaries, registering voters and conducting elections it is also saddled with the regulation of political parties. Not surprisingly, the EC's regulation of the political parties is its weakest point and it is absolutely incapable of helping build their capacity. The time to change this situation has come, especially as the parties are on the threshold of imminent entry into local governance politics. It is suggested that hiving off the party regulatory functions of the EC for a new body, Multi-party Democracy Commission (MDC) will help improve not only our national level democracy but local level democracy as well. The new body can then help build the capacity of the political parties both at the national and district levels.
4. Provide public funding for specific political party activities. As political parties prepare to enter district level politics some public funding to support their development may be necessary. Public funding can support their research departments and annual forums, which should be meant to propose solutions to national problems and other important activities. Towards this objective a Multi-party Democracy Fund should be established with contribution from various sources.
5. Encourage parties to prepare for local governance politics. Party participation in local governance is very different from party participation in national politics. Local governance involves devising solutions for problems of populations in smaller territories. Solutions must be carefully tailored for locally specific problems. Parties cannot rely on national manifestoes to solve the problems peculiar to each one of the 256 districts. Parties must prepare themselves to confront new challenges in the districts.

Mr. Jonah further noted that a new party based local governance can succeed only if it is supported by an efficient professional and meritocratic public service institutions, in this case the Local Government Service. This requires depoliticization and continuous training of the service personnel in order to build and maintain their capacity for efficient public service delivery. Therefore, there should be improved governance such that elected politicians can confidently rely on the public institutions to drive the long-term transformation of the economy.

The mechanisms IDEG proposes for making local governance more inclusive include the introduction of a Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMPR) into district elections

and the institution of a Local Development Advisory Council (LDAC). The MMPR is an electoral system which combines the majoritarian or first past the post system with a Proportional Representation (PR) system in order to ensure greater inclusiveness. For example, the 30% government appointees under the current system could be abolished and reserved for women and other disadvantaged groups to contest on the basis of the PR system. The representation of women and other disadvantaged groups would increase tremendously. The LDAC that IDEG proposes will be a small body of chiefs, queen mothers and other professionals in the MMDA charged with the function of advising the MMDCEs, Assembly and its principal officers and resolving conflicts.

According to Mr. Jonah, IDEG as a think tank has consistently argued that amending the 1992 constitution to enable political parties to participate in local government is the most strategic decision to make at this point in the Fourth Republic. This decision would have a domino effect on the democratic and economic system. It would trigger transformative reforms in the public service, the political parties, promote accountability and inclusiveness and bring a new kind of inter-party collaboration and competition.

In conclusion, Mr. Jonah noted that IDEG does not believe that the mere election of MMDCEs on the ticket of political parties will be the magic wand that will bring the much needed economic and political transformation. If this reform is to have the desired impact we should, as a nation, muster the political courage to do everything that is necessary for the reform to be effective.

Discussions/Questions and Contributions

Mr. Jonah's presentation also generated discussions, comments, questions and responses. Below are a few of the issues raised:

- A participant wanted to know what the position of Regional Ministers will be if MMDCEs are elected. In response it was noted that the Ministers will work in consultation with the various MMDCEs. The Regional Ministers would now be required to build consensus with MMDCEs particularly those from different political parties. This would improve interparty dialogue, tolerance and democracy.
- Another participant called for proactive measures to promote inclusivity at the grassroots in a multiethnic population of a district. This must be dealt with whether MMDCEs are elected or not.
- The National Commission for Civic Education must be adequately resourced to help sensitize the people to ensure a successful referendum.

- Even though the election overload must be dealt with, it will be difficult to deal with campaigns at funerals and other social engagements by politicians.
- Some participants wondered whether there would be policy discontinuities at the local level as is currently the case at the national level following a change of government. It was noted that parties must be made aware of the imperative imposed on them by the Directive Principles of State Policy to continue projects initiated by their predecessors.
- Political parties' participation in local elections would reduce the work load and burden of the President in appointing MMDCEs and deal with the national hypocrisy that has engulfed the nation. It was suggested that IDEG replicates the forum at the regional and local levels.
- MMDCEs must have term limits but we need to be careful so that this does not fuel the conflict between MPs and MMDCEs.
- Affirmative action to empower women to play a role in the local governance system is aimed at removing the artificial barriers and socio-cultural hindrances that undermine their participation.
- The proposed reform will ensure that political parties have control over resources and power in their strongholds even when they lose elections at the national level. This is one of the fairest ways to deal with the marginalization of parties after elections.
- It was suggested that chiefs must play a role in the new local governance reform. They could be made the ceremonial heads in the various MMDAs. It was however pointed out that chieftaincy disputes and conflicts are likely to undermine the role they could play in the local governance system.
- A participant noted that the Electoral Commission may still be able to function to regulate political parties. A Multiparty Democracy Commission may merely duplicate the functions of the Electoral Commission. However, in response, it was noted that the Electoral Commission is over-burdened with many functions and must be relieved of some of them.
- The appointive system in the local governance system must be abolished to make all positions elective.

7. BUSINESS SESSION TWO

Implementing the President's Decision: Technical Actions

This session was chaired by Prof. Kwesi Prempeh, Executive Director, Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana. In his brief remarks he indicated that CDD-Ghana supports the proposal to elect MMDCEs on party basis and to improve democratic devolution in Ghana. He indicated that democracy is believed to have started from local communities but regrettably, much attention has been given to national level politics to the near neglect of the local level.

He introduced Prof. Kofi Quashigah, Dean of the University of Ghana School of Law to present his paper on the topic “**Implementing the President's Decision: Technical Actions**”. Prof. Quashigah referred to the President's address promising to deepen decentralization by amending article 55 as a way of giving true meaning to article 35(6d). He noted that constitutional amendments are an accepted process of any constitution. There are two traditional categories of provisions in any constitution. These are the entrenched provisions which flow from the historical experiences of the people and can only be amended through referendum and the non-entrenched provisions which parliament can easily amend. Prof. Quashigah outlined the steps to be followed in amending a non-entrenched provision of the constitution. This essentially requires the approval of two-thirds majority of all members of parliament and then assented to by the President.

For an entrenched provision, a bill must be referred to the Council of State by the Speaker and the Council of State must give its advise on the bill. The bill must be published in the gazette for six months and then introduced to parliament for first reading and be submitted to the people in a referendum. Voter turnout must be 40 percent and 75 percent must vote to approve the motion. Parliament shall then pass the bill and be assented to by the President. All these processes require public education and sensitization.

Prof. Quashigah highlighted the dangers of some implied amendments and noted that all amendments to the constitution must not be implied. He noted that the amendment of an entrenched provision cannot automatically affect provisions that are not entrenched. He identified articles 243 and 242 as non-entrenched provisions that can be easily amended but this would still not allow political parties to play a role in district level elections (DLEs). To enable political parties to participate in DLEs, article 55(3) must be amended through a referendum because it is entrenched. He also noted that article 246 (1) could be amended to

make it possible for all elections at the district and national level to be held at the same time as is the case in Kenya.

Prof. Quashigah noted that the role of Parliament in the amendment of entrenched provisions is quite confusing and silent. He referred to article 290 that allows a reading of the long title of the bill by the Clerk of Parliament as constituting the first reading of the bill and this is virtually the role of parliament in the amendment of entrenched provisions of the constitution. He was however of the opinion that the first reading must also involve a referral of the bill to the appropriate committee as stated by article 103.

Generally, he noted that there is lack of clarity on the exact role of parliament in the amendment of entrenched provisions of the 1992 Constitution. This makes the executive the only entity that could determine the subject matter for the amendment of an entrenched provision. To deal with this challenge he outlined the following two options:

1. The Supreme Court to interpret the exact role of Parliament in the amendment of entrenched provisions of the constitution under article 290.
2. Get a biparty agreement from parliament and the executive to have an understanding about the role that parliament could play.

The way to go, in his view, is to seek bi-party support of the process to ensure a high voter turn-out and the 75 percent approval of the proposal. He recommended the need to put together a team of elderly statesmen to dialogue with the political leadership to secure cross-party ownership, buy-in and support. Other issues could be added to the referendum, including the separation of the Attorney-General's Office from the Minister of Justice. In his view, since the two main parties are in support of this proposal, it would be easy to secure their support.

He outlined a tentative or an estimated timeline for the process of amending the entrenched article 55 (3) as follows:

- April 2018 – Bill Ready
- May 1- Bill sent to Speaker
- Latest by 30th May -Bill sent to the Council of State
- June 30- Council of State returns the bill to Speaker
- July 1-31st December - Bill Gazette
- End of January, 2019 – First Reading

- February 1-April 30th -Sensitization on Referendum
- May 2019 -Referendum
- June 2019- Parliament passes the bill and President assents it
- September 2019 - Referendum

He noted that the processes take time and require the support of all to achieve the amendment of article 55 (3) of the constitution.

Discussions/Questions and Contributions

The moderator of the session summarized the presentation and opened the floor for contributions, suggestion, questions and answers. The following issues came up:

- The competence of the members of the Council of State. In response, it was held that some of its members have the requisite experience and competence to play a role in ensuring successful devolution of power. Its role unfortunately is purely advisory and its advice is not therefore binding on the President.
- Participants wondered whether the timeline of 2021 for MMDCEs election is achievable. In response, it was noted that the essence of local governance reform supersedes timelines. A Civil Society and biparty support of the implementation process as well as the willingness and courage demonstrated by the President to ensure democratic devolution would ensure a successful reform of the local governance system. Once the support and public ownership are garnered, the timelines would be met.
- Participants wondered what will happen to the process if the 40 percent voter turnout and 75 percent approval is not secured in the referendum. In response, it was noted that the participation of political parties could shore up voter turnout and secure their approval. Nevertheless, it was agreed that much work must be done in dialoguing with political elites and key stakeholders to secure a biparty support of the amendment process.
- There is a great virtue in amending the constitution to allow political parties' participation in DLEs. However, it is not going to be easy unless there is a great mobilization of support for the amendment. Apathy among the citizenry may not be helpful. There are many people even within the ruling party who do not like the idea of direct election of MMDCEs on party basis since it will put an end to political

patronage. The crucial thing to do is to encourage citizens to fully support the proposal and vote for it in the referendum.

8. BREAK OUT SESSIONS

Participants were clustered into three groups to respond to the following questions:

- **Group A**- How can we exceed the 40 percent turnout and the 75 percent approval in the 2019 national referendum?
- **Group B** – What are the challenges and risks involved in conducting non-partisan district level elections jointly with the national referendum in view of a potential violation of the law (Article 55(3)) – Recommendations for a best approach to ensure desirable outcomes?
- **Group C**- How can bipartisan collaboration be secured for the constitutional amendment bill to be gazetted before parliament rises in December 2018?

Group Presentations

Group A – Referendum is a popular vote held to decide a single issue of key political importance. At this forum we have established that a referendum is needed to amend an entrenched Article (Article 55(3)) in the Constitution to pave the way for the election of MMDCEs at the district level. We have also acknowledged that there already exists a situation of clandestine involvement of political parties in DLEs. Thus, in providing recommendations as to how to exceed the 40% turnout and the 75% approval in the 2019 National Referendum, the following three broad key approaches come to the attention of the group:

- Political Education
- Political Party Participation
- Media Sensitization

An explanation of the three broad strategies are as follows:

1. Education of the citizenry is key, and it should be structured in a way that promotes better understanding of the processes leading up to the referendum. We should adopt strategic examples that worked for us from the past. For example, the 2016 elections had spoilt

ballots reduced due to the massive level of education. The approach to education must also involve a great amount of sensitization and advocacy campaigns and this is where we recommend that, the CSOs' Network is used to reach out to MMDAs to sensitize and educate them on the process and importance of the referendum.

2. We admit that one cannot ignore soliciting the buy-in of political parties. Their involvement is crucial for the success of our collective efforts in attaining increased turnout rate on the day of referendum. We, thus, recommend the use of the structures of the political parties to get them to mobilize people to vote. A programme to thoroughly and systematically educate political parties on the opportunities or benefits they stand to gain, as well as the risks of not seeing this process of amendment and consequent referendum through will also be key. In this respect, development of key messages for persuasion for political parties and citizens must also be part of efforts to educate.
3. We also recommend the use of the NCCE's well established systems and structures at all levels of our decentralized system for civic education for this important national assignment. The engagement of the EC to fashion out a programme that will ensure the process of voting to be made more accessible and easier must be encouraged.
4. We should strengthen state institutions such as the EC, NCCE and Information Services Department (ISD) to assist in effectively delivering the various education, advocacy and sensitization campaigns and also using the National Service Secretariat and its personnel. Strengthening these state institutions should include advocating for an increase in budgetary allocation.
5. The recommendation to strengthen the EC is to ensure that they can effectively use their systems to make elections more convenient, easier and accessible.
6. Through the process, Government interventions to make voting accessible to the people will be crucial.
7. Best practices should be used as reference points for the recommended strategies to be effectively employed and used.
8. Stakeholders to be identified should include traditional authorities and faith-based organizations.

9. Developing a comprehensive communication strategy should involve the use of traditional and new media, that is, the use of social media for advocacy and sensitization.

Group B – Article 55 (3) of the constitution of Ghana prohibits political parties from engaging in DLEs. In order not to violate the laws of Ghana, there is ideally, the need for the law to be amended first, so that political parties can legally and freely participate in DLEs. Nevertheless, to save cost, the two can be held the same day with intensified public education and sensitization of political parties and the general citizenry about the need to respect the law banning political parties from DLEs. With the needed cross party support, political parties can be educated to refrain from taking advantage of the referendum in politicizing the DLEs.

Civil Society must engage in advocacy for the due process of amending the entrenched clause of Article 55 (3) so that political parties can participate in DLEs in 2021. In this regard, the following actions should be undertaken:

1. Identification of stakeholders who would facilitate or bring about the desired change needed.
2. Getting all stakeholders to be involved and to own the process, which should not be left to IDEG alone. It is for all to get involved.
3. Supporting the development of a coherent media strategy and media engagement at all levels especially at the community and district levels to educate, respond to questions and address the issues that make people fearful of party politics at the local level.
4. Engaging in lobbying with the various stakeholders especially the political parties for consensus.
5. Identifying eminent Ghanaians to engage with the political parties to build consensus for the amendment of the constitution in good time.

6. Facilitating mass education of Ghanaian citizens, so that they will get their MPs to vote for the draft bill on the amendment and also for them to turn out and give a massive YES vote at the referendum.

The following were also recommended by the group as targets of advocacy action:

1. **Political parties** should be encouraged to build consensus and put the interest of the nation first to ensure the successful amendment of Article 55.
2. **Parliamentarians** should vote in favor of the amendment and on time for the successful processing of the bill when it is before the House.
3. **The President** should intensify his commitment to the process by engaging the relevant ministries to ensure a successful implementation of his promise to amend Article 55. For example, the Ministry of Finance should provide adequate resources to the NCCE to educate and disseminate information to the public. In addition, the EC should be provided with adequate financial and logistical support to ensure a successful referendum.
4. **The Media** should ensure coherent and non-partisan discussions of the issues as well as updating and educating the general public on the processes. In addition, the media should encourage citizens to support the amendment.
5. **Unit Committee members** should support CSOs with capacity building to enable them function properly in informing and communicating the concerns of their people as these processes as ongoing. Some concerns of the citizens who are not reached by the media can be addressed at that level especially when the people live and trust the media.
6. **CSOs** such as religious bodies, NGOs, NCCES, media, ministries (such as education), etc. should all be involved to incorporate the sensitization exercise in their plans to educate and reach out to all within their respective jurisdictions.

Group C - The following were identified as ways to build bi-party collaboration in order to secure successful gazette of the Bill before parliament rises in 2018:

1. CSOs should have a consultative meeting with the leadership of the political parties.
2. CSOs should lobby key/ National Executive Committee (NEC) of the political parties.
3. CSOs should engage the grassroots of the political parties.
4. CSOs should have effective collaboration with the media and the political parties' leadership at the grassroots.
5. CSOs should commit key leaders/NEC of the political parties to engage their leadership at the branch, constituency and regional level.

9. BUSINESS SESSION THREE

Implementing the Constitutional Amendment and Referendum: Panel Discussion on the Role of CSOs & Media

Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboagye, the chair of this session noted the need to move in deepening Ghana's democratic credential. She called on CSOs to communicate the issue of sustaining the engagement effectively to the public.

After her remarks, a panel was constituted to discuss CSOs' coordination and strategic actions. It was made up of the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI), represented by Major General Nii Carl Coleman (rtd.); the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) by Dr. Kojo Asante; and the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) by Dr Roland Affail Monney. The following are their submissions:

CFI: Major General Coleman (rtd.) said that the CFI is the coming together of various think tanks, CSOs, TUC and other faith-based organizations to provide democracy supporting services such as maintaining credible voters roll and monitoring elections. The headship of constituent bodies forms the Steering Committee of the CFI and takes charge of the operations of the body. He pointed out that the CFI has structures across the ten regions in Ghana, with established links for the implementation of its decision at the district levels. The links can be used to educate people at the grassroots as to why it is necessary to secure the 40 percent turnout and the 75 percent "Yes" vote for a successful referendum. Coordination of activities of the CFI is a serious challenge but through constant dialogue and engagement, differences are buried in thinking about the larger picture for a majority decision at meetings. Resource mobilization and lack of information sharing among CSOs also continue to affect ability to coordinate the CFI's activities.

CODEO: Dr. Kojo Asante stated that CODEO is a 22- member organization which is overseen by a 13-member board. He noted that CODEO builds coalition among its member organizations to observe elections and to perform other related functions that improve upon the credibility of elections in Ghana. CODEO has a Secretariat hosted at the Centre for Democratic Development - Ghana, that provides technical support for the Coalition. In order to keep people engaged, CODEO stipulates clear roles for its members and appropriate channels of communication to ensure proper coordination of activities.

The GJA: Dr Roland Affail Monney noted that the media and all journalists in the country have a role to play in securing “Agenda 40-75”. To this end, the GJA is resolved to outline targeted messages to educate Ghanaians and to sustain discussions about the relevance of achieving “Agenda 40-75”. This will help generate public interest and whip up enthusiasm in support of the amendment. The GJA would also ensure a strategic balance between the quest for commercialization to make profits and the need to sensitize people on the amendment process, using both social and traditional media portals.

Discussions/Questions and Contributions

The discussions centered around the model of CSO coalition to be built to support the attainment of a successful referendum and a “Yes” vote. The following were suggested:

- There should be a uniformed media and communication strategy that all CSOs may use. It may be appropriate to sponsor a few things including attention to content analysis to shape opinions.
- Guided by the consultative process in the drafting of the 1992 Constitution, CSOs must secure the commitment of professional bodies to gain their commitment at the institutional level.
- CSOs must operate in an inclusive manner, representing all segments of the population, and with a united front and leverage from existing models like the Right to Information (RTI) Coalition or the CFI. There should be no duplication of functions and roles among CSOs.
- IDEG has to work with CSOs, CBOs, National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and professional bodies in the regions and districts that are very effective to carry out educational campaigns to secure Agenda 40-75. At the national, CODEO, CFI, GJA and other allied CSOs can coordinate their activities that can support the amendment process. IDEG must therefore serve as the Secretariat and also

establish a Coordinating Committee at the national level that brings together diverse CSO leaders. This Committee may take strategic decisions and circulate among the districts and regions through district and regional coordinators. This should be a loose alliance but with strong coordination, in order to accommodate the time of the respective organizations.

- For effective communication, the media and CSOs must put in place arrangements to have a sign language interpreter during their sensitization and educational programmes.
- The GJA together with CSOs must train all media practitioners including those who have no formal education in journalism about the amendment process and the issues surrounding it to enable them report and sensitize the citizenry about them appropriately. The GJA must also work with all media houses to ensure that they also receive education about the amendment process and support it.
- Given the polarized nature of media ownership, GJA will have to ensure that the issues and education drives are supported by media house owners who do not support the amendment. It was noted that there already exists a string of collaborations between the GJA and media owners of media houses.
 - Media must be made to participate in the planning process of activities aimed at achieving “Agenda 40-75” to enable them own and understand the issues thoroughly.
 - Interventions aimed at achieving “Agenda 40-75” must also target key experts and social commentators whose views on national issues are carried by the media in the news.
 - Generally, it was held that there should be a coalition of CSOs in support of the amendment process and to achieve “Agenda 40-75”. There should be a secretariat to run the activities of the Coalition. Alternatively, a secretariat may be set up to push the activities while some members of the coalition may also perform some of the roles of the Coalition. However, there should be a central and focal coordinating unit.

10. BUSINESS SESSION FOUR

Youth and Transformational Local Governance Reform

The session was chaired by Prof. Atsu Ayee, University of Ghana and Senior Research Fellow, IDEG. Under this session a presentation on the theme, “***The Youth and Transformational Local Governance Reform***” was presented by Prof. Ransford Gyampo, University of Ghana and Senior Research Fellow, IDEG.

In his presentation, Prof. Gyampo noted that the youth constitute the bulk of Ghana’s labor force and voting population and are the core agents of change. Therefore, they cannot be excluded from any meaningful discourse on development. He noted that the youth are the present and future productive members of society as well as the fulcrum around which any development process must revolve. They are not only the future leaders and those to receive the baton for what is begun today but are also the life wire connecting the past to the present and the present to the future. Any democratic reform and its implementation must necessarily include them to ensure success.

Young people are, however, confronted with two main challenges, namely, unemployment and lack of quality education. These challenges have resulted in streetism, and other social evils including drug addiction, prostitution, armed robbery and drug peddling among the nation’s future hope. Prof. Gyampo asserted further that the jobless nature of young people has made them manipulable and predisposes them to be deployed as agents of intra and inter-party electoral conflict. These dangers sustain the threats of Ghana’s youth bulge and deepen the fear that the nation is sitting on a time-bomb that could explode any time.

The quest for transformational local governance reform has a lot of benefits that direct deals with the challenges of the youth. This is because the direct election of MMDCEs on party lines would compel political parties to be developmental in outlook in implementing concrete projects that develops the local areas and benefit all, particularly the youth. The reform of decentralized local governance would also grant sovereignty to the youth in deciding who must lead them at the local level; reduce the threat of violence associated with winner-takes-all politics with the youth as both agents and victims; compel political leaders to build offices across the districts in a manner that could serve as a training ground for young people in the ideals of democracy, leadership and good governance.

Prof. Gyampo therefore urged CSOs to sensitize the youth about the potential benefit of “Agenda 40-75” to the youth. He called on the youth to form a constituency that transcends

partisanship; educate their peers about the benefits of direct participation of parties in local government elections; and mobilize massive support for a “Yes” vote in the 2019 referendum.

Prof. Gyampo admitted that there could be serious risks such as difficulty in getting biparty support for the reform proposals; difficulty in obtaining 75 percent “Yes” vote; and polarization of the grassroots into those for and against the reform. Nevertheless, a united voice of young people in supporting the reform proposals and their determination to secure a “Yes” vote in the referendum could offset the risks and ensure a successful reform and democratic devolution that benefits all citizenry, particularly the youth. Young people must therefore support and actively educate the citizenry as well as campaign positively for the reform.

Discussions/Questions and Contributions

After Prof. Gyampo’s presentation, the following were discussed:

- Young people have been excluded from decision making at all levels. To be able to participate in local governance, their capacities must be built.
- Some young participants wondered the tangible benefits of “Agenda 40-75” for them. It was argued that their participation in the referendum to ensure a resounding “Yes” vote was crucial in ensuring the implementation of development projects by political parties at the grassroots that would improve the living conditions of the youth.
- Other participants highlighted the general challenges that further marginalize young people in all spheres of life and undermine the use of their potential, energy and zeal for national development.
- In achieving the quest for a youth constituency, it was reported that the Ghana Youth Federation had been formed and could help unite young people. It was, however, noted that the formation of a youth constituency that transcends partisanship was crucial in dealing with youth challenges; keeping regimes on their toes to better the lots of young people; and promoting ownership and acceptance of the reform proposals to be triggered by “Agenda 40-70”.

11. APPENDICES

1. COMMUNIQUE

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS FORUM HELD AT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS GUEST CENTRE, TEIMAN-ABOKOBI, GREATER ACCRA REGION

WEDNESDAY JUNE 27 -THURSDAY JUNE 28, 2018

PREAMBLE

We, the representatives of Civil Society Organizations drawn from all regions of Ghana participating in the National Civil Society Organizations Forum, convened at the International Students Guest Centre (ISGC) at Teiman-Abokobi in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana after thoroughly discussing and deliberating on the following important issues:

- I. The strategic national decision to amend Article 55 of the Ghana 1992 constitution to enable political parties to fully participate in decentralized local governance and elections;
- II. The potential benefits and costs of this strategic national decision;
- III. Critical consequential reforms necessary for the full and effective participation of political parties in decentralized local governance;
- IV. The technical actions pre-requisite to the successful implementation of this strategic national decision to open up participation in local governance to Ghana's political parties;
- V. The most effective ways to mobilize broad based support of people and national leaders; and

VI. Strategies of building an all-party support for the decision to provide political parties' entry into decentralized local governance.

HAVE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. We express sincere appreciation to the President of the Republic of Ghana for the bold and transformational decision to widen the frontiers of Ghana's democracy by calling for the amendment of Article 55 of the Constitution to enable political parties participate in local governance and devolve more power and resources for accelerated local development;
2. We appeal to the President, Parliament and the Minister responsible for Local Government and Rural Development to do everything in their power to ensure the timely and efficient management of the processes and procedures required to guarantee that the referendum planned for 2019 is held according to schedule;
3. We commend the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) for the bold and imaginative initiative to convene a forum of Ghana's civil society organizations and forge consensus around this strategic national decision to open up local governance to political parties;
4. We agreed to commit our collective efforts to ensure the successful implementation of the strategic national decision on party participation in local governance;
5. We are committed to engage the political parties, national leaders, traditional authorities and other important stakeholders to actively contribute their time and energies to ensure the successful implementation of the President's decision;
6. We agreed to engage the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Media and other stakeholders to disseminate adequate information on the full benefits of the President's decision to Ghana's democracy and appeal to the government to equip the Information Services Department to play an active role in this endeavor;
7. We agreed to support the amendment of Article 55 not as an end in itself but as the essential first step to broader transformational local governance reforms to democratic development;
8. We further agreed to support the women of Ghana to participate fully and play leading roles in the devolved local governance system that would result from the proposed reform;

9. We will collaborate to build an all-party support for the successful implementation of the decision;
10. We agreed to mobilize and socialize the youth and People with Disability to appreciate the potential benefits of “Agenda 40-75” to them and to secure their support;
11. We agreed to support the National Peace Council to work actively to maintain the peace before, during and after the referendum;
12. We commend Ghana’s Developmental Partners for their substantial contribution to local governance, democracy and development and appealed to them to sustain their noble effort as local governance undergoes far-reaching reforms; and
13. We finally resolved to stick together as a Civil Society Coalition with a coordinating committee committed to the successful implementation of the strategic decision to open up local governance to participation by Ghana’s political parties.

Issued this day 28th June 2018 at the International Students Guest Centre, Teiman-Abokobi in Accra.

2. MEDIA REPORTAGE OF FORUM

The Forum was covered and extensively published in both the print and electronic media. The following are some of the links to the stories:

MEDIA HOUSE	CAPTION	DATE	SOURCE
3fmonline.com	IDEG wants EC split for new entity to regulate political parties	June 28, 2018	http://3news.com/ideg-wants-ec-split-for-new-entity-to-regulate-political-parties/
GNA.org	Proliferation of districts poses a danger to local government-Speaker	June 27, 2018	http://www.ghananewsagency.org/politics/proliferation-of-districts-poses-a-danger-to-local-government-speaker-134807
Dailyguideafrica.com	Speaker Wants Local Gov’t System Strengthened	June 28, 2018	http://dailyguideafrica.com/speaker-wants-local-govt-system-strengthened/

Primenewsghana.com	Proliferation of districts poses a danger to local gov't – Speaker	June 28, 2018	https://www.primenewsghana.com/general-news/proliferation-of-districts-poses-a-danger-to-local-gov-t-speaker.html
Ghanabusinessnews.com	Proliferation of districts poses danger to local government – Speaker	June 28, 2018	https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2018/06/28/proliferation-of-districts-poses-danger-to-local-government-speaker/
Brytfmonline.com	Pre-referendum Activities Kick Off For MMDCEs Election – Minister	June 28, 2018	https://www.brytfmonline.com/pre-referendum-activities-kick-off-for-mmdces-election-minister/
Daily Graphic	Civil Society Actors Must Ensure Good Governance- Speaker	June 28, 2018	Page 17

3. ADOPTING A SUITABLE MODEL FOR ACHIEVING THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Options to Consider

- Adopt a uniform media or communication strategy that all civil society organizations may use. It may be appropriate to sponsor a few things including attention to content analysis to shape opinions.
- Guided by the Consultative processes for the 1992 constitution, they can secure the commitment of the professional bodies. This may be necessary to engage or gain commitment at the institutional level and have consultations with them to input into the processes.
- Civil Society should move with a united front. They can therefore leverage on existing models that have worked, such as the Right to Information Coalition.
- Civil Society contributions to the United Nations reports have resulted in better country reviews. This is a basis for their sustained involvement.

- Aside from concentrating on constitutional amendment, attention should also be focused on some important global and national initiatives including the localization of Sustainable Development Goals. CSOs have to critically analyze how they can optimize the opportunity to address some key issues impacting on local governance effectiveness.
- CSOs must agree to form a coordinating team in order to focus on the same goal. It was proposed that IDEG should lead in the coordination effort in order to avoid duplication; whereby the maximum impact of Civil Society will not be felt.
- There is the need to decide on the type of organization – loose? Registered? Is IDEG going to house a secretariat? Is there going to be a steering committee?
- Since this is a campaign, there must be a catchphrase – that would be catchy, attractive, and impactful. The “Agenda 40/75” was proposed.
- There is already the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) –the group can utilize this to achieve the set objectives. IDEG started a process in 2017 – with specific mandates to CSOs, which could still be relevant going forward.
- The involvement of the “silent” professionals should be engaged on a more sustained basis for this effort. The involvement of the Ghana Bar Association, for instance, in some of the legal aspects is matter of great importance.
- There is the need to harvest the ideas of people at the grassroots; to be able to tailor our messages, resistance should be anticipated and accordingly addressed.
- The initiative may have had some precedent. It would be important to examine previous strategies that have worked. For example, the Right to Information (RTI) coalition, CIVICSOC of the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative (SAPRI), to inform our next strategy.

Feedback/Reactions Dr. Akwetey

- The history of the Bar Association and other professional associations wanting to play a critical role – for instance, the Ghana Medical Association (GMA), Institute of Planners, Ghana Institute of Engineers, Institute of Surveyors, etc., wanted to be part of the CFI. Therefore, there is a form of alliance already in existence. This kind of arrangement gives members the flexibility and ability to continue to respond to the needs. A loose alliance to accommodate their time constraints and other imperatives may be appropriate.
- Every campaign has a peculiar character and to anticipate that peculiar challenges, the CSOs should develop strategies to accommodate them as such. What CSOs seek to do is to bring different experiences on board and whether loosely or firmly, mobilize to reach out to constituencies in which CSOs may not be necessarily present or ordinarily engaged. If there are 254 districts, we need members to reach out to each of the districts.

Strategy:

- Schedule meetings and deliberate on how best to organize ourselves – assess and work with the strengths.

Meet when we necessary but there is the need to invest in exchanging ideas and information.

CFI can handle the political and social issues while CODEO can focus on mobilizing election observers. Similarly, the network provided by the faith based organizations can be used to reach the masses.

- Engaging the different governmental institutions requires different strategies.
 - Information must be credible and timely.
 - To start a new organizational structure will involve a lot of time and money in the midst of reduced funding from donors.
 - In order to secure sponsorship, we must be innovative. The forms of support can include contributions from members as well as sponsoring particular or targeted events.
 - It would be important to ensure monitoring and coordination of funding in order to maintain good record of the use of resources to maintain the credibility of the campaign.
 - Civil Society must anticipate the negative campaigns intended to counter their efforts and must have the mechanism to counter them. The coordination machinery must be able to respond to possible campaigns issues.
1. We need a Secretariat - for fund-raising, quality assurance etc. IDEG has the capacity to spearhead the process.
 2. We need a coordinating committee at the national level to bring in diverse parts of civil society for strategic decisions and coordinating messages.

At the regional and district levels, there should be regional coordinators and district coordinators. Particular institutions can be assigned to perform the coordinating function. The alliance must keep loose to allow CSOs the flexibility to engage. The coordination function should also include timely feedback, simplicity and nimbleness which should allow us move to achieve our strategy.

3. It will be of interest for CSOs to collaborate with state institutions (such as the NCCE and EC) that have a presence in all districts or on the ground as they have district offices. Some of them are also engaged in public education functions.
4. There are a lot of networks such as WENGO, BANGO; where these coalitions are active on the ground (e.g LOGNET) they can be engaged.

4. PARTICIPANTS LIST

There were about 130 participants whose names are listed in the Table 1. A breakdown shows that there were ... men and ... women. About 75% of participants were from the Greater Accra Region. The regional breakdown of participants is contained in Table 2.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT	REGION	GENDER	INSTITUTION
Ali Tanti Robert	Ashanti	M	Youth Alliance for Development
John Kwadwo Owusu	Ashanti	M	EPAG
Khadijah E. Ahmed	Ashanti	F	A.M.W.A
Kwame.O Asante	Ashanti	M	WUNF-GH
Emmanuella Ansere	Ashanti	F	LOGNET
Osei Bonsu Aning	Ashanti	M	SWEDEC-GHANA
Oxford Osei Bonsu	Ashanti\G.Accra	M	GIFNet
Baffour-Mensah Amos	Brong Ahafo	M	Resource Link Foundation
Emmanuel Kwashie Fugah	Brong Ahafo	M	CYDEF
Rev. E.T Barrigah	Brong Ahafo	M	GHANA
Rev. Martin Amankwaa	Brong Ahafo	M	B/A IDEG SECRETRIAT
Sey Abigail	Brong Ahafo	F	BEREKUM SEN. HIGH SCHOOL
Yaw Afrifa	Brong Ahafo	M	ELDA
Bright Nat	Central	M	HST
Dorcas Awortwe	Central	F	GEDECOM
Duke Kenneth	Central	M	Human Service Trust

Martina Woetsa Afetsrom	Central	F	IDEG Focal Person Awutu Senya West
Samuel Annan	Central	M	Foundation For Future Christians Workers Int.
Timothy Mensah-Smith	Central	M	Roots Link Africa
William G. Mantey	Central	M	GIFNET C/C
Ephraim Afedu-Forson	Central	M	Count GFI
STEPHEN OSEI AKYIAW	Central	M	University Of Education Winneba
Kwamena Boakye	Central\Western	M	GIF
Edmund Quaynor	Eastern	M	GJA/GIFNET
Kenteman Nii Laryea	Eastern	M	PRINPAG
Nana Yaw Akuamoah	Eastern	M	Edu-Media Ghana
Yaw Ofori- Debrah	Eastern	M	GFD
Davor Emmanuel	Eastern	M	GFD (ASSIST)
Freda Opata	Eastern	F	GNAT/GIFNET
Abigail Osaah Sarfo	G.Accra	F	ABANTU
Abubakar Yusif Zenuwah	G.Accra	M	Office of the National Chief Imam
Affail Monney	G.Accra	M	GJA
Afua Addotey	G.Accra	F	FIDA
Ahmed Abakah	G.Accra	M	Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth
Akumun Solomon	G.Accra	M	POS FOUNDATION
Albert Dwumfour	G.Accra	M	GJA
Alex Tetteh	G.Accra	M	CEPD
Alice Mensah	G.Accra	F	University Of Ghana. Political Science Dep.
Anthony Adarkwah	G.Accra	M	GFD
Audrey Dekalu	G.Accra	F	GJA
Augustina Lop	G.Accra	F	SYPPA
Bright Sowu	G.Accra	M	GHCC
Chibeze Ezekiel	G.Accra	M	SYND
Christopher Agbega	G.Accra	M	G.F.D
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Kofi Yeboah	G.Accra	M	
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Margaret Brew-Ward	G.Accra	F	Action Aid
Mary Mensah	G.Accra	F	GJA
Mawuena Horyibor	G.Accra	M	DANIDA
MOSES AKUTEY	G.Accra	M	GPRTU
Mr. Daniel Lartey Oppong	G.Accra	M	GFD
Nana A. Afadzinu	G.Accra	M	WACSI
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Yabuku Samuel	G.Accra	M	GIFnet
Nelson Mandela R	G.Accra	M	GNECC
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Cyril Fayose	N/A	M	CCG
Fred Duhoe	N/A	M	JOURNALIST
Gifty Amemasor Doe	N/A		Africa Emmanicipation Movement
Kesavubu Mordzi	N/A	M	CARD
KWADWO ANKOMAH	N/A	M	LGSD
KWASI AFRIYIE	N/A	M	KCTC
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Obenewah Benedicta	N/A	F	SYND
Saeed Abdul-Wahab	N/A	M	FASEMPA
Winfred Kudelo	N/A	M	Strength For All

ABADJIVOR MAKU REGINA	Northern	F	GNAT /TAMALE
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Lillian Kuutiero	Northern	F	GFINENT
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Chief Ahuah Thomas	Upper East	M	A.DIOO
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Margaret Avedzi	Volta	F	GIFNET
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Antoinette Doe	Volta	F	CODHERG
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Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Ansah	Western	M	CFI
Vera Addo	Western	F	Verado Foundation/WILDAF
Grace Commey	Western	F	Sariando Foundation
Delasi Amable	Western	M	NECPAD
Nana Kwesi Bennie II	Western	M	GIFNET Juaboso
Rev. Timothy Koomson	Western	M	GIFNET

Table 2: Regional breakdown of Participants

Ashanti	Brong Ahafo	Central	Eastern	Gt. Accra	Northern	Upper East	Upper West	Volta	Western	Others	TOTAL
				97							

