

## PROPOSALS FOR MULTIPARTY LOCAL GOVERNANCE REFORMS

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### Addressing Exclusion and Marginalization of Traditional Leaders: Proposals for the Council for Local Development and Governance (CLDG)

**T**his Council for Local Development and Governance (CLDG) shall be an elite body with functions in the district assemblies reserved for Chiefs and Queenmothers, Statemen and Senior Citizens of noble standing as well as people with professional and technical skills and competencies. This will also ensure that Chiefs and Queenmothers are accorded the dignity and respect that goes with their royalty, by enabling them to be active participants in the running of the assemblies.

Despite traditional leaders being the custodians of the lands at the local levels, they constitute a part of the marginalized groups in society.

The effects of the modern democratic system have rendered Chiefs and Queen Mothers virtually powerless in the 4th Republic local governance system. Their views on issues are regarded as mere opinions and nothing more. As a result, many of them try to associate themselves with partisan politics which often derails the integrity of their titles and stools. Chiefs and Queen Mothers want to play a more prominent role in the development of their districts. Hence, IDEG proposes instituting a Council for Local Development and Governance (CLDG) which will legally assign responsibilities of traditional rulers in the districts and ultimately transform the system. The CLDG will replicate the House of Chiefs setup at the local level and ensure that the custodians of the land are not sidelined at the districts. Queen Mothers are noted for their general wise counsel and strong community engagement and mobilizing attributes. Therefore, the issue of exclusion and marginalization as well as women's rights and safeguards will be championed by them in a reformed system.

Generally, traditionally rulers have the ability to draw large following because they embody ethnic identities and mobilize on an ethnic basis. Their powers come from their ability to either divide or unite their subjects. Political Parties have capitalized on this fact for years in the quest for political power. Therefore, IDEG sees their participation in seeking a reformed local governance system as unquestionable, and necessary in the agenda to build durable consensus.

### Chiefs and Local Government

In the present local government system, the participation of chiefs is marginal. Article 242 (d) of the Ghana constitution provides that not more than thirty percent of all assembly members shall

be appointed by the president in consultation with the traditional authorities and other interest groups in the District. IDEG proposes that a local development advisory committee to be known as the Council for Local Development and Governance (CLDG) be created for chiefs.

## Composition

There shall be a nine-member Council for Local Development and Governance (CLDG) of which not less than five members shall be nominated by the traditional councils within the district, municipal or metropolitan area. There shall be not less than two queen mothers among the nominees of the traditional council. Not less than three members of the CLDG shall be chosen from other professionals such as legal practitioners, clergymen and women, bankers, teachers and others who are either resident of hail from the area of the MMDA.

There shall be a chairman of the council who shall be a nominee of a traditional council.

## Functions

1. The CLDG shall consider and provide advice on any matter that concerns the performance of the functions of the chief executive, the assembly and its committees which may be referred to the CLDG or on its own initiative.
2. The CLDG shall consider and provide advice on plans for the accelerated development of their Metropolitan, Municipal or District Assembly areas.
3. The CLDG shall propose effective ways for the peaceful and expeditious resolution of communal and political conflicts and disputes that are likely to impact negatively on the development and peace of their Metropolitan, Municipal or District Assembly areas.
4. The CLDG shall serve as a linkage between the MMDAs and the traditional councils within the area of the MMDA's jurisdiction
5. The CLDG shall consider and provide advice on any matter relevant to local development and democracy that may be referred to it by governmental and non-governmental authorities that are critical stakeholders in the Metropolitan, Municipal or District Assembly area.

## Tenure

1. CLDG members shall be eligible for a term of five years.
2. The term of a CLDG member may be renewed for another five years.
3. A CLDG member who completes two terms, whether successively or intermittently shall not qualify to be nominated to serve again till a lapse of two terms.
4. At the commencement of each term CLDG members shall elect one of the chiefs as the chairperson.

## Regulation

1. Each CLDG shall compile rules and regulations to regulate its activities and the conduct of its members.
2. The rules and regulations so compiled shall not be valid unless they are approved by two-thirds of all CLDG members.

## Advantages

The CLDG shall create opportunities for chiefs and traditional rulers to bring indigenous wisdom and traditions to bear on local governance. The CLDG mechanism further allows chiefs to honorably contribute to local governance without a direct involvement in debates of elected assembly members.

In a multi-party based local governance system the CLDG serves as a non-party conflict resolution mechanism and moderating influence in the affairs of the MMDAs.

A constructive and substantial role for chiefs in local governance could douse the pressures for the creation of an upper house of parliament or reserved seats in the present parliament for chiefs

A CLDG member shall cease to hold office in the event of death or permanent incapacitation, ill-health or vote of no confidence by members of the Assembly

## Oath of Office

All CLDG members shall take an oath of office administered by the Chief Executive.



**IDEG Publication**

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