

PROPOSALS FOR MULTIPARTY LOCAL GOVERNANCE REFORMS

PB7 | May 2023

Addressing Political Parties Financing

Regulation and Support of Political Parties

The functions of the Electoral Commission (EC) fall under two broad categories – one directly related to elections and the other purely regulatory. Since its inception, however, the EC has never found the right balance between the two. Somehow, directly election-related functions such as demarcating constituency boundaries, registration of voters, managing the electoral roll, and conducting the various elections have taken precedence over the registration and regulation of political parties and election candidates.

Political parties and election candidates, their campaigns, financial expenditures, and fundraising have gone largely unchecked and are not accountable to anybody. The kind of rule-based, well-regulated democratic electoral politics Ghanaians expect is largely missing. Equally absent is the statutory body that will not only regulate but more importantly build the capacity of political parties to function effectively in a consolidating democracy such as Ghana. It is now becoming increasingly clear that the non-election functions of the EC have to be hived off for a separate independent body such as a Multiparty Democracy Commission (MDC) to take over those responsibilities.

Public Funding for Parties and Candidates

Public funding for political parties and candidates constitutes one of the ways of supporting the growth and sustainability of democratic political systems and is a regular practice in many countries, developed and developing alike. In the 1990s, Ghana developed a scheme for supporting political parties with a few campaign vehicles based primarily on the number of parliamentary candidates fielded. Additionally, the EC, in collaboration with some civil society organizations (CSOs), prepared proposals for public financing of political parties. Unfortunately, the discussion of public support for political parties dropped out of public discourse and now features regularly in EUOM reports and a few CSO advocacy activities.

Public funding minimizes the excessive monetization of politics, levels the election playing field for smaller parties and independent candidates and holds in check the ever-present danger of a few rich financiers or 'money bags' capturing control of party decision making and potentially national policy formulation as well. In principle, a country can have government financing, which is fully funded by the taxpayers, or public financing contributed by government, international bodies, corporate entities, and willing philanthropists.

IDEG Publication

For further information contact:
The Information Management Officer
Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG)

No. 45 Garden road, intersection Okine Lane
Ambassadorial enclave, East Legon
P. O. Box CT 5767, Cantonments, Accra - Ghana

Phone: +233 (0) 054 357 752
Email: edsoffice@ideg.org /
info@ideg.org
Website: www.ideg.org