

NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

EVALUATION REPORT ON THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

DRAFT, JULY, 2025
SUBMITTED BY: DR KOJO IMPRAIM

1. Executive Summary

On 7 December, 2024, Ghana conducted the ninth consecutive presidential and parliamentary elections. The elections uplifted Ghana's 32 years democratic credentials which began in 1992. The elections though peaceful, recorded some violence in nine major constituencies during the collation of results. Subsequently, the results of eight out of the nine that were in disputes were collated and declared though some faced legal challenges. The parliamentary election at the Ablekuma North Constituency was embroiled in legal and multiple reschedules. The election was rerun on 11 July, 2025.

Electoral violence and tension were influenced by a number of factors including proliferation of the media. Evidence abounds that political ownership of media houses was a contributory factor and skewed electoral discourse to their advantage including deployment of hate speech and other forms indecent language and behaviours in their media spaces. Youth were also used by political parties and politicians as conduit for fomenting electoral violence during registration of voters, counting and collation of elections results, as well as attacking political opponents physically, and through the media (on both traditional and social media).

Prior to the 2024 elections, a number of significant activities were initiated by diverse state and non-state actors to ensure a peaceful and credible elections. The National Peace Council (NPC) with state mandate to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution and to sustain the peace of the country, initiated some strategic activities to achieve this. To foster a culture of peace and enhance cross-party collaboration and peaceful elections, the NPC in partnership with the United Nations, organised Regional Peace Dialogues. There were also capacity programmes for the political parties in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms to address inter-and-intra-party conflicts at the national and regional levels. The NPC also offered insider mediation training to political party leaders aimed at helping them to settle intra-party differences. Further to this was a general sensitisation of the political parties on political tolerance and hate speech. The NPC also engaged 30 hotspots constituencies leading to some parliamentary candidates and constituency executives committing to peace by signing peace pact at the constituency level. This was climaxed with the signing ceremony of a national level peace pact committing all the 12 presidential candidates for the 2024 elections to peace. There were also programmes organised to sensitise the media on conflict sensitive reporting and information disorder. The intervention also aimed at promoting peace by increasing citizens knowledge of existing laws and conventions. Citizens were also offered training and sensitisation on the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999), and the Code of Conduct of Political Parties.

After the political transition on 7 January, 2025, the NPC together with its partners, namely UNOWAS / UNDP / UN, WANEP, and CDD-Ghana facilitated a three-day post-elections dialogue to evaluate the 2024 elections. The post-election dialogue was held on 3 to 5 June, 2025. It provided the platform to effectively assess the elections, ascertain the best practices and challenges, built consensus and sought for recommendations to improve peace, security, and governance around the conduct of elections in Ghana. What went well, the challenges, and lessons were also assessed, and views were solicited on what could be done to enable effective

and efficient organisation of more peaceful and credible elections in the future. The dialogue was guided by the following specific objectives; to:

- identify critical issues that impacted on the 2024 elections and governance in general,
- build consensus and trust in political and governance stakeholders towards a peaceful election in the future, and
- make recommendations for addressing any challenges identified or best practices.

The dialogue targeted about 90 strategic stakeholders who had expertise or work around peacebuilding, conflict management, security, elections, governance and media. The core participants were drawn from the Parliament, Judiciary, Ministry of the Interior, National Security, Ghana Police Service, Electoral Commission (EC), National Commission on Civic Education, National Media Commission (NMC), Political Party Leaders, Political Party Youth, Traditional Leaders, Religious Leaders, Identified Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)/Groups, Media and Development Partners.

The report is categorised under three main headings: a) executive summary, b) sessional speeches, c) panel discussions, and d) outcome statement. There were 15 panel discussions including the development of roadmap. These are as follows:

Section 2: Strengthening elections governance: the Ghana model

Section 3: Preparing for election day – integrity of voter register, nomination process, election logistics (ballot printing) & general procurement

Session 4: Post-election results management and declaration and stock-taking of election - related violence in the 2024 general elections

Session 5: Post-election complaints, disputes & adjudication

Session 6: building consensus for violence-free election in Ghana: the journey so far, prospects and consolidating the gains

Session 7: Reforming the governance structures of judiciary, EC & the police (appointment, decision making of the commission, tenure)

Session 8: Tackling the monetisation of politics and political corruption (vote buying and abuse of incumbency)

Session 9: Inclusive governance: strengthening mechanisms for intra-and-inter-party dialogue and greater political tolerance

Session 10: Harnessing religion & tradition for national cohesion and harmony: effective deployment of traditional and religious mechanisms for building sustainable peace in Ghana

Session 11: Gender & youth inclusion – lessons from other countries for stronger democratic dividends in Ghana

Session 12: The media as catalyst for peaceful political discourse collaboration and tolerance building progress and challenges

Session 13: Key uncertainties: navigating pathways to building the future that we want

Session 14: developing a roadmap towards greater political tolerance and nation building (recommendations from working groups)

Session 15: Developing a roadmap towards greater political tolerance and nation building (presentations and recommendations from the working groups)

The national dialogue reflected on the democratic achievements Ghana has made along the following parameters: progress, lessons, mis-opportunities, challenges and recommendations. The 7 December 2024 presidential and parliamentary reaffirmed Ghana's reputation as a

beacon of stability in West Africa. It contributed to strengthening Ghana's path towards building social cohesion, inter-faith harmony and democratic consolidation. Ghana's electoral system is one of the best electoral jurisprudences in Africa.

1.2 Notable progress

The successes were built on notable strengths. These included the following:

- a. Peaceful transfer of power which reinforced Ghana's democratic trajectory.
- b. The Electoral Commission maintained a transparent and professional posture. This contributed to building on its reputation and independence in conducting elections.
- c. The 2024 Peace Pact once again, demonstrated commitment of the political parties to ensuring peaceful and credible elections.
- d. The early concession by ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) demonstrated a true meaning to the parties' commitment to the peace pact and prevention of conflict. This symbolises a growing political maturity in Ghana.
- e. The Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) continue to serve as a consensus building platforms and a mechanism for election participation and electoral reforms.
- f. The Election security task force performed creditably, particularly in joint police-military deployment.
- g. The pivotal role of political parties, EC, NCCE, judiciary, security agencies, CSOs, media, traditional and religious leaders, women and youth, and international and domestic observers, and development partners in the elections, particularly, in policy influencing for electoral reforms, voters' education, election observation, fact-checking and conflict prevention are indispensable.

1.3 Key lessons

- a. Ghana's election is voter-based. Therefore, inclusivity, transparency, monitoring and observation are key to a credible and peaceful outcome.
- b. There is the need for all year-round voter education.
- c. Deploy technology and tech platforms to enhance the credibility of the elections. The future is Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- d. Building strong democratic institutions and political culture is a never-ending process.

1.4 Key challenges

The 2024 elections were not challenge-free. The challenges to participatory, transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections (credible election) continue to demand collective responsibility and enduring commitment. The following challenges were pointed:

- a. The EC faces some operational challenges which hurt the maintenance of a transparent elections and integrity. For example, post-election results management process continued to be characterised by violence in some constituencies. Also, the rules on collation and recollation which was contained in the Aide memoire, issued, later by the EC was not followed through consistently.
- b. The declaration of the Presidential results without nine constituencies due to what the EC described as illegal collations and declarations. The collation center processes in most of these constituencies were disrupted by party supports and other groups which overwhelmed the police; and in some cases, Returning Officers were cohesed and threatened to proceed to collation.

- c. Trust deficit in the electoral processes at different layers and levels present a threat to election integrity.
- d. Allegations of bias and weak transparency in some institutions, including the judiciary and security services.
- e. Insecurity and vigilantism remain red lines but are often crossed by political vigilantes. Vandalism remains a threat to election integrity and election security. Destruction of results materials, vehicles, burning of some collation centres were recorded. Unfortunately, the youth continue to serve as instrument of violence in the hands of some politicians and political parties. These include incitement of the youth for electoral crimes and violence posing a risk to peaceful election and political stability. Often, the problem is not the commission of crime, rather impunity, which emboldens current and future offenders of electoral crimes.
- f. The 2024 elections saw a surge in false narratives, modified videos, and partisan reporting. Misinformation and disinformation (MDI) proliferated across social media, threatening to erode public trust.
- g. The political climate was inundated with inflammatory rhetoric, abuse, and unsubstantiated claims against political opponents.
- h. Weak institutional collaboration. For example, limited partnership for voter education by the EC, NCCE and CSOs. This was a factor of high rejected ballot papers and voter apathy, and low voter turnout of about 7 million. At the same time NCCE is constraint financially to carry nationwide and continuous voter education
- i. Low female representation remains a persistent challenge. Women make up less than 15% of the 9th Parliament, an outcome that mirrors the 8th parliament. Although, Ghana has made history with female vice president representing an important milestone.
- j. The nomination process though generally smooth had its fair share of disputes.
- k. The death of a Presidential candidate and processes to deal with her name on the ballot against the economic cost of reprinting of ballot papers.
- l. State capture and unethical materialism have translated into allegation of vote buying, vote selling, corruption, abuse of incumbency and state resources which affects the level playing field, and commercialisation of the election and campaign financing. Political party financing, monetisation of politics has raised the cost of elections. Campaign financing connives with illicit financial flows. Actors of state capture and unethical materialism have systematically appropriated the dividend of democracy at the expense of the vulnerable (political coalition).
- m. Regime protection by the police undermines police legitimacy

1.5 Key outcomes

The dialogue highlighted the following key issues:

- i. The 1992 constitutional architecture offers excessive concentration of constitutional powers and control to the executive president (against the other constitutional branches of government).
- ii. Again, the constitution gives excessive appointing power to the President of the Republic. Critical concerns are around appointment, financing and executive oversight over independent constitutional bodies which undermine the independence of these bodies in practice.
- iii. Revise the structure of the Council of State. How do we create a Council of State that mirrors the wisdom and moral authority of the traditional councils of elders, rather than mimicking the executive cabinet dynamics?
- iv. Politicisation of the appointment of chairperson of the Election Commission and demonisation of the Electoral Commission undermines its independence and public confidence. Independence, technical and moral credibility of the Electoral Commission are so important to democracy. The Electoral Commission has become a primary target of influence and primary target of capture of the political processes by the political elites.
- v. We are supposed to be practicing democracy, and in a democracy, the election management body is the most important institution through which we achieve the key goals of democracy. But our democracy is persistently and increasingly defective in delivery on all the three principals ends of good governance.
- vi. The winner-takes all system of governance has dismantle multi-party politics in the interest of duo-poly, political polarisation and politics of vocation and politics of exclusion. We are battling with democracy and state capture and unethical materialism in Ghana.
- vii. Political party financing and monetisation of politics have raised the cost of elections which undermines the credible election and exclude women and youth. We need to interrogate the veil between political party financing and financing of candidates.
- viii. The Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) is relevant in terms of the growing dynamics of the political landscape in Ghana. And we must propose measures to make it fit for purpose.
- ix. Intra-party conflict disputes and conflict appears more worrying and a threat to national cohesion, than inter-party conflict and between the NDC and NPP. Particularly, in the selection of party leaders and flagbearers, and centralisation of power in political party executive, with limited avenues to address internal party grievances.
- x. In every electoral cycle, the Electoral Commission is faced with limited timelines to pursue electoral reforms.
- xi. The challenge of unexplained wealth and corruption in Ghana.

1.6 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made at the dialogue:

- a. Reform the appointing authority and power of the Executive President. For example, the appointment of the Chief Justice, the appointment process of the Council of State, the appointment of the Inspector-General of Police, appointment of Metropolitan, Municipality and District Chief Executives, etc.
- b. Reduced the influence of the President in the partisan appointment of the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission is appointed on the advice of the Council of State. This advice must be applied perfectly, and the legibility criteria should be complex and robust. And enhance the independence and credibility of the Election Commission.
- c. The moment to review the 1992 Constitution is now. We have made two attempts. We need strong political will to implement the recommendations that will come out of the current Constitutional Review Committee to help us cure the challenges of the 1992 Constitution.
- d. Revisit multi-party democracy to encourage the smaller political parties to gain representation in parliament. This should include the consideration for adopting proportional representation.
- e. Revisit the proposed reforms on election of MMDCs to cure some aspects of the duo-poly
- f. De-couple the Attorney General from the Ministry of Justice to help deal with the electoral violence, crime and impunity.
- g. Establish Multi-Party Commission to play the regulatory role of the political parties in order to enable the Electoral Commission to play its core role of conducting elections in Ghana; Consider modelling the Kenya example of Register of Political Parties.
- h. Legislate to regulate the political party campaign expenditure, financing, commercialisation of elections and cost of elections campaigns to enhance the overall transparency and accountability of political financing. A mix model of state and commercial funding of political campaigns (0.3% state fund of election in Kenya as an example).
- i. Define campaign period. Perpetual campaign mode affects the space for governance.
- j. Fully implement the Ayawaso West Wougon bye-elections report. Also, the law enforcement agencies should ensure strict and comprehensive implementation of Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) to dismantle vigilante groups, vandalism at election collation centres, prevent violence and impunity.
- k. Legislate the IPAC as a formal structure of electoral politics in Ghana. Decentralise IPAC to the regional and constituency levels.
- l. Carry out national conversation on politics, governance, morality and values. Codify the core values of Ghanaians in the Constitution and enforce them.

- m. Pursue strong asset declaration regime to deal with corruption. Declare both the asset and liability and publish them.
- n. Pursue lifestyle audit and beneficial ownership law to cure the problem of corruption of political appointees and public officials.
- o. Establish specialised court for anti-corruption.
- p. Fully operationalised Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Act, 2024 to enhance women's participation and representation particularly in legislature. This should include quota system and safe seat for women in addition to the number of MPs elected through constituency elections to ensure that women and young people are adequately represented within Ghana's governance architecture to promote gender-sensitive electoral reforms
- q. Operationalise youth parliament.
- r. Strengthen civic engagement and participation in the democratic process.
- s. Strengthen the role of traditional and religious bodies in governance by promoting greater inter-faith and inter-cultural harmony and platforms to promote dialogues, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and
- t. Build synergies between national policy agenda and political party manifestoes and national development.

PART TWO: SESSIONAL SPEECHES

2.1 Welcome Address: Delivered by Most Rev. Emmanuel Kofi Fianu, Chairman of the Governing Board of the National Peace Council

H.E. The President, John Dramani Mahama,
Hon. Ministers of State,
The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General, H.E. Dr. Leonardo Santos Simão,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Heads of Governance Institutions,
Respected Members of Parliament,
The Electoral Commission Chairperson,
Heads of Security Agencies,
Our Partners from UNDP, UNOWAS, the European Union, WANEP, CODEO,
Traditional and Religious Leaders, Civil Society Actors, the Media, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured and profoundly grateful to address you today on behalf of the Governing Board of the National Peace Council. We are gathered at a critical juncture in our country's democratic journey. Not to merely recount the events of our recent Presidential and Parliamentary elections, but to evaluate, to reflect, to analyse, to heal, and most importantly, to forge a common path forward.

Permit me to first express sincere appreciation to our partners — the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union, WANEP, CDD-Ghana and all collaborators for their invaluable support in organizing this crucial post-election dialogue. Your commitment to the peace and democratic stability of Ghana is both timely and commendable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
In 2021, the Council organised a similar gathering following our 2020 general elections and expressed concern over the loss of lives due to electoral violence. Today, in 2025, it grieves me that I must once again acknowledge the painful fact that we lost six precious lives during the 2024 elections. It is unfortunate that we recorded 76 incidents of which 24 cases were destruction, seizure, vandalism and invasion of public facilities in constituencies such as Offinso North, Awutu Senya East, Damongo, Tolon, and Nsawam.

These are not just statistics. These were Ghanaians: fathers, brothers, sisters, and children with prospects, who had the right to life, but their only misfortune was being caught in political tempests. We extend our deepest sympathies to their families. The pain they feel is a national wound we must all bear, and eventually heal.

Your Excellency, although 132 suspects have been arrested so far, of which 45 were remanded in custody, 71 on police enquiry bail and 16 on court bail, we must ask ourselves, why must elections in Ghana, a beacon of democracy in the sub-region, still result in violence and bloodshed?

Despite commendable gains in democratic consolidation with peaceful transfers of power, judicial resolution of electoral disputes, and vibrant political pluralism, the persistence of

election-related violence poses a serious threat to our national cohesion and democratic resilience.

According to the 2025 Global Peace Index, Ghana ranks 61st globally and 7th in Africa with a score of 1.898. While this indicates that we remain one of the most peaceful nations on the continent, it also marks a three-place decline from the previous year. In 2024, Ghana ranked 55th globally and 4th in Africa with a score of 1.938. Let us be reminded: peace is not permanent. It is perishable, fragile and therefore must be preserved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The National Election Response Group (NERG), established by WANEP in collaboration with the Peace Council and partners and supported by the EU, reported a total of 76 violent incidents following the 2024 elections. These included incidents of intimidation, destruction of property, attacks on electoral officers, and in some cases, gunshots.

We also observe with great concern the voting trends over the years. From an initial low turn out of 50.2% in 1992, the turn out increased to 85% in 2004. Twenty years down the line, the turn out took a nosedive to 60.9% in the 2024 elections. A high number of spoiled ballots and voter apathy also characterised the 2024 elections.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are not merely anomalies or statistics; they are symptomatic of deeper structural tensions and mistrust among key actors in our electoral ecosystem.

It is in this context that the National Peace Council, WANEP and CDD, have convened this post-election dialogue under the theme “*Dialoguing for a Stronger Democracy and Social Cohesion.*”

Our objectives of this dialogue include:

- a. To evaluate the conduct of the 2024 general elections, drawing lessons and identifying reform pathways for more peaceful and credible future elections.
- b. To rebuild trust among political actors, electoral institutions, the security sector, and the citizenry.
- c. To generate strategic recommendations that address the root causes of post-election violence from monetization of politics, mistrust in institutions, hate speech, to weak accountability systems.
- d. And ultimately, to co-create a national roadmap for building inclusive governance and lasting or sustainable peace.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

While we commend the Electoral Commission for managing a largely peaceful and transparent voting process, the challenge lies in results management and post-election communication at the constituency level. The declaration of results, especially in close contests, has become flashpoints of contestation and triggers for unrest. This must change for the better.

We must also reflect critically on the role of political parties both in restraining their members and in cultivating a spirit of democratic tolerance. Our democracy must never be reduced to a winner-takes-all contest where the stakes are so high that violence becomes an option.

The conduct of political party youth wings must come under sharper scrutiny. It is our youth who are recruited into policing ballot boxes, manipulated by propaganda, and sacrificed on the

altar of political expediency. We must invest more in civic education, youth political dialogue, and the creation of nonviolent pathways for political expression.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our security services deserve a word of gratitude for providing security before, during and after the 2024 elections. The visibility strategy at the polling stations gave assurance to many citizens to go and vote. Response to cases of violence was swift but at times inadequate due to lack of personnel. It is important to continue to build greater confidence and collaboration between the security services and civil society.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me also commend the efforts of our traditional leaders, religious bodies, and civil society organisations, whose tireless engagement across the country — from voter education to mediation and monitoring — contributed significantly to our national stability before, during and after the 2024 elections.

It must be emphasised that *peace is not the absence of war, but the presence of justice, dialogue, inclusion, and accountability*. It must become a permanent national value, infused into our education systems, our political discourse, our media spaces, and our policymaking efforts.

In pursuit of the above, I propose the following:

- a. The proposals by the Interparty Advisory Committee (IPAC) ahead of the 2024 general elections must be revisited, and with consensus settle on the areas that require attention.
- b. That Parliament expedites consideration of any outstanding legislative reforms, including electoral dispute resolution and political party financing.
- c. That our security agencies continue to enhance professionalism and impartiality, especially in election-related deployments.
- d. And that we, as citizens, reject hate speech, disinformation, and incitement in all forms, whether online or offline.

Honourable Ministers, Development Partners, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is growing less peaceful. The 2025 Global Peace Index warns that militarisation is on the rise, while peacebuilding investment is declining. Conflicts are becoming more complex and internationalised (Rusia-Ukraine, Isreal-Palestine-Iran wars). Ghana cannot afford to be complacent. Ghana cannot take peace for granted.

We must remain an example of how African democracies can conduct elections without bloodshed, transition power without turmoil, and govern with accountability. Let me end by quoting the late revered H.E Kofi Annan, who once said: *“Peace is not just the absence of conflict. Peace is the presence of conditions that allow justice and hope to thrive.”* Let this gathering today mark the beginning of a renewed national commitment to peace, not as a slogan, but as a shared responsibility. Not as a reactive measure, but as a sustained civic duty.

On behalf of the National Peace Council, I welcome you all warmly to this dialogue. May our deliberations be bold, sincere, and transformative.

May God bless our homeland Ghana,

May God bless the National Peace Council,

And may God bless us all.

Thank you.

2.2 Special Guest: H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, former SRSG, UNOWAS

Honorable Muntaka Muhammed Mubarak, Minister of the Interior; Most Reverend Emmanuel Kofi Fianu, Chairman of the National Peace Council; distinguished members of the Council of State Defence; dear friends—all protocols observed.

I would like to congratulate the chairman and members of the National Peace Council on the assumption of this high office. The National Peace Council has won recognition as a crucial pillar of the peace and security architecture on account of its commendable work over the years. Successive councils have worked assiduously across the country, through regional and district peace councils, to prevent and mediate conflicts and to preserve the valuable peace that has prevailed in Ghana. Your appointment to the Council by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, no doubt reflects your wide experience, skills, and abilities—and the confidence he reposes in you individually. I have every assurance you will consolidate the gains made by your predecessors.

When the African Union adopted the initiative of “Silencing the Guns in Africa,” it did so determined to achieve the goal of a continent free of conflicts and to make peace a reality for all our people. Fundamental to those lofty ideals is a secure, peaceful, and prosperous Africa, anchored on democracy and good governance.

As the African Union’s High Representative for Silencing the Guns, I have the pleasure of championing these ideals through dialogue, advocacy, mediation, and preventive diplomacy. That is why I appreciate the invitation extended to me and this opportunity to address you today from Abidjan, where I am attending a previously scheduled conference. I have had the privilege of collaborating with previous National Peace Councils, and I look forward to continuing with yours in my new capacity as the African Union’s High Representative for Silencing the Guns. Elections are the bedrock of democratic societies, serving as the most fundamental mechanism through which citizens exercise their right to choose leaders and shape the destiny of their nation. The quality of elections—how well they are conducted—plays an equally critical role in ensuring that this process remains fair, transparent, and legitimate. A well-conducted election is more than just an administrative formality; it is a cornerstone of building trust, stability, and progress.

Ghana’s 2024 elections were yet another remarkable milestone in our democratic journey in the Fourth Republic: the ninth peaceful election and the ninth time power has alternated from one political party to another in the Fourth Republic with guns silenced. This was widely acclaimed as peaceful, inclusive, and credible, with minimal violence before, during, and, to some extent, after the elections. It is important to mention that, regrettably, post-election violence and vandalism remain a challenge, and 2024 did not escape this troubling canker. That notwithstanding, a cursory reading of the various reports of election observer missions deployed to monitor the elections revealed a common thread: Ghana once again demonstrated her exemplary democratic credentials.

The African Union commended “the spirit of collaboration and patriotism among electoral officials, party and political-party agents, the voters, and security personnel deployed to the polling stations, as they worked together—respecting their different roles but ensuring seamless and transparent voting and counting processes with the necessary checks and balances.” The AU also commended the threshold of 749 voters per polling station, which ensured adequate electoral materials and limited the possibility of long queues.

For its part, the report of the Commonwealth Election Observation Mission commended the use of the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) as a platform for inter-party dialogue, noted its broadcasting of the committee's proceedings to the general public, and praised its success in bringing the parties to the table to address crucial electoral issues. The Commonwealth also praised the people of Ghana for the atmosphere of calm that prevailed before and during the elections.

The ECOWAS mission observed on Election Day that priority to vote in almost all polling stations was given to pregnant women, lactating mothers, persons with disabilities—including albinism—the elderly, and any others who could not stand for long in the queue due to any condition. Indeed, as part of inclusive measures, ECOWAS noted that persons with disabilities were involved as polling station officials or presiding officers in the December 7th general elections.

The critical role of civil society organisations was also noticeable, as reflected in ECOWAS's mission report: "Within the context of the 2024 general elections in Ghana, civil society played a vital role in promoting transparency, inclusivity, and the overall credibility of the electoral process. It was instrumental in conducting civic and voter education to enhance public understanding of the electoral process. It also served as a watchdog for the democratic process." And while the UN did not observe the elections, UNOWAS commended the National Peace Council and partners for facilitating the signing of the peace pact on December 27th, 2004, calling it a significant step towards ensuring peaceful, transparent, and credible elections. Despite these commendations, the observer reports offered a few useful recommendations to various institutions involved in the electoral process, including the following:

- a. Ghana should ensure effective and comprehensive implementation of laws against violence, especially the Anti-Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 999 of 2019.
- b. To ensure the Affirmative Action Act is fully operationalised, especially for the next general elections.
- c. Commence electoral reforms to develop comprehensive campaign-finance legislation to regulate campaign financing, limit the use of state resources in political campaigns, and ensure a level playing field.
- d. Review the electoral law provisions on voter registration to improve the collection of disability particulars during voter registration and the quality of the data provided.
- e. The Electoral Commission should consider measures to mitigate the production of counterfeit ballot papers by improving the security features on ballot papers.
- f. Ghana should consider introducing a quota for women to be elected to Parliament, in addition to the number of MPs elected through constituency elections.
- g. The current age requirements for contesting the roles of President and MP could be lowered to include young persons, who constitute a significant proportion of the population.
- h. It is recommended to enhance systems to ensure data protection and privacy, particularly as a significant amount of personal detail is captured and made available to polling agents on Election Day.

All procedures relating to personal information should comply with Ghana's data-protection legislation.

To conclude, let me emphasise that, despite the high praise received for the conduct of the 2024 elections, it is important that we undertake a critical assessment of what went well, what did not, and how we can make it even better. How can we stop the post-election violence that consistently rears its ugly head in every election?

Post-election evaluation dialogue—such as the one you are engaged in—is an opportunity for lessons to be learned. Dialogue should be undertaken with a view to correcting causes where there were lapses and adopting best practices identified in our evaluation. Undertaking this review so early in the tenure of the current National Peace Council is a sign of the seriousness and urgency with which you take your important national assignment.

I wish you successful deliberations and a successful tenure of duty in the National Peace Council. I also wish to congratulate and thank all participants, partners, and civil-society think tanks—all of you gathered at this important 2024 December Elections Review meeting. Once again, I regret that I'm unable to join you personally due to a prior engagement, and I'm pleased to have this opportunity to share a few thoughts with you.

Thank you.

2.3 Keynote Address: Barrie Lynne Freeman, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and Deputy Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS)

Honorable Muntaka Mohammed-Mubarak, Minister for Interior and National Security
Most Rev. Emmanuel Kofi Fianu, Chairman of the National Peace Council,
Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns and Former Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for West Africa and the Sahel ,
Esteemed members of the National Peace Council,
Representatives of political parties, civil society, youth and women groups,
Distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Dear colleagues of the United Nations,
Representatives of ECOWAS and the African Union Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen.

I bring you warm greetings from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of UNOWAS, Leonardo Santos Simão, who could not be here today due to unforeseen last-minute obligations.

I am honored to participate, on behalf of the SRSG, in this post-election conference, which seeks to assess the 2024 electoral process and chart the path towards strengthening social cohesion and consolidating democracy in Ghana. Today's event presents participants with yet another opportunity for dialogue. It bears witness to the excellent and longstanding partnership between the United Nations and the National Peace Council. I wish to thank the Council and other stakeholders who made it possible for us to gather here today. The conference is not only timely but will also set an example for other countries in the region.

The 7 December 2024 general elections were Ghana's ninth since the return to multiparty democracy in 1992 and marked a pivotal moment in the Ghana's democratic journey, one that

reaffirmed the country's reputation as a beacon of stability in West Africa. As we look ahead to the next electoral cycle, it is paramount to reflect on the democratic achievements, but equally on the challenges that continue to demand our collective attention and commitment.

Chairperson, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

From all accounts, the general elections of December 2024 were conducted in a context of economic challenges, political polarization, and heightened public scrutiny. Yet, once again, Ghanaians demonstrated their enduring commitment to democratic governance by participating in elections that were regarded as transparent, inclusive and peaceful.

The success of the 2024 presidential and parliamentary elections were built on notable strengths. Allow me to mention a few of them:

- a. The Electoral Commission maintained a transparent and professional posture, building on its reputation for independence and integrity, despite some operational challenges.
- b. The participation of all parties in the IPAC, which has served as a dialogue platform for all the political parties to engage and agree on pertinent issues such as the adoption of the electoral calendar and electoral register.
- c. The signature by all parties of the Peace Pact promoted by the National Peace Council has demonstrated, yet again, to serve its role of defusing tensions, calling for calm, ensuring peaceful elections.
- d. The early announcement of the then ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) to concede defeat symbolizes the importance of now such a pact promoted political maturity.
- e. Civil society organizations, groups of youth and women, played a vital role in voters' education, election observation, fact-checking and conflict prevention.
- f. The peaceful transfer of power has been exemplary in marking Ghana's fifth consecutive transition, reinforcing the country's democratic trajectory and credentials.

However, elections were not challenge-free:

- a. Misinformation and disinformation proliferated across social media, threatening to erode public trust.
- b. Isolated incidents, including the tragic loss of lives, underscored the persistent threat posed by eruption of violence during elections.
- c. Allegations of bias and lack of transparency in some institutions, including the judiciary and security services, raised concerns among segments of the population.

Political actors are guardians of peace and stability. Political leaders bear responsibility, not only during electioneering campaigns but throughout the electoral cycle. In 2024, many actors demonstrated commendable restraint and a willingness to engage in dialogue. Peace pacts were signed, and public commitments to nonviolence were made. Yet, we must acknowledge that inflammatory rhetoric, unsubstantiated claims, and the incitement of the youth for partisan vigilantism which continue to pose a risk to political stability.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Political parties must lead by example, avoiding recourse to violence, respecting institutions, and accepting electoral outcomes in good faith. Institutional neutrality is the foundation of public trust. The credibility of elections hinges on the transparency of processes and the impartiality of electoral governance bodies, the judiciary, and security institutions. To preserve and deepen public trust, these institutions must not only be independent but be seen as independent. Enhancing the operational independence of these institutions remains key to

achieve transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making. The current constitutional review processes could be used to enhance the independence of the Electoral Commission. Media and fact-checking are at the frontline against disinformation which can undermine democracy. In an age of digital disruption, the media could either be a watchdog or become a potential vector for misinformation. The 2024 elections saw a surge in false narratives, modified videos, and partisan reporting.

The Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition and other media oversight platforms deserve praise for their tireless efforts. It is hoped that more will be done. To promote democracy and peace, Media houses should not be politicized and partisan, but adhering to impartiality, and fact-checking as standard practice. Institutionalizing partnerships between media, civil society, and tech platforms will likely help to detect and counter electoral disinformation in real time. Insecurity and vigilantism remain red lines not to be crossed. The recurrence of election-related violence, often involving politically affiliated vigilante groups, remains of concern, despite the commendable work of Law Enforcement Agencies. Strengthening the implementation of the 2019 Vigilantism and Related Offenses could enhance election-related security. Security agencies could adopt a zero-tolerance approach to political violence and hold perpetrators accountable, regardless of political or any other affiliations, while aiming at dismantling the vigilante groups. Often in such circumstances, the problem has not been the commission of crime. The problem has been impunity which embolden current and future offenders.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Gender equality is a democratic imperative. Democracy cannot thrive when one half the population is underrepresented. The passage of the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Act in 2024 was a landmark achievement. The 2024 elections, once again, revealed the need for improvement in female representation at the political party level and participation in national governance structures. Women make up less than 15% of the 9th Parliament, an outcome that mirrors that of the 8th parliament. While the election of a female Vice-President is a significant milestone, much more needs to be done to ensure that women and young people are adequately represented within Ghana's governance architecture to promote gender-sensitive electoral reforms.

Chairperson, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

This is a shared responsibility. Ghana's democracy is a collective achievement, built by its citizens, protected by its institutions, and nurtured by its leaders. Its consolidation requires vigilance, humility, and courage. UNOWAS is willing and ready to pursue our collaboration with the National Peace Council, contributing to consolidate and advance Ghana's democratic gains. This Dialogue Conference is a precious opportunity to engage constructively and meaningfully in our collective effort to enhance Ghana's electoral processes, towards the development and realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I wish you all fruitful deliberations. And I thank you for your kind attention

2.4 Hon. Muntaka Mohammed-Mubarak – Minister for the Interior

Your Excellency, the President, Distinguished guests,

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to His Excellency the President for making time to attend this important closing ceremony. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all our development partners for their continuous support to the National Peace Council—support that has made this post-election workshop possible.

It is often said that the absence of war does not necessarily imply the presence of peace. Since independence, successive Presidents have worked tirelessly to ensure that we coexist peacefully as a nation. Today, the National Peace Council continues to carry this important mandate—promoting peaceful coexistence not only in our urban centers but also throughout our rural communities.

Your Excellency, during the swearing-in ceremony of the Peace Council, I made a point that I would like to reiterate today. One of the most pressing challenges facing our country is the issue of chieftaincy. Despite our many national concerns, chieftaincy remains a significant source of tension.

As of last month, reports indicate that there are approximately 338 active hotspots or high-risk cases across the country. Alarming, nearly 190 of these are related to chieftaincy disputes. This is a clear indication that the time has come for a national dialogue or conference on chieftaincy—to rethink and redefine our approach to resolving such matters more effectively. While this workshop primarily focused on elections and the electoral process, it is equally important to broaden our scope and consider other threats to national peace and stability. With our development partners present here, I believe this is the right moment to emphasize the need to address underlying issues such as chieftaincy conflicts, which could jeopardize our peaceful coexistence.

Regarding elections, it remains our collective aspiration that Ghana should be able to conduct elections without the loss of a single life. The best way to achieve this is through continuous reflection and review. We must build upon our successes, improve where needed, and learn from our mistakes to avoid repeating them in the future. This is the true purpose of this post-election engagement.

Over the past three days, participants and invited guests have engaged in rich discussions and shared insightful presentations. It is our hope that the lessons learned, the dialogues held, and the understanding generated will not simply remain on paper. Rather, we must return home and, with the support of the Ministry and the government, transform these insights into actionable strategies. This will enable the Peace Council to carry out its mandate more effectively and help ensure that future elections are even more peaceful than those we have witnessed before.

Your Excellency, I once again welcome you and your delegation. I look forward to your continued support as we work together to strengthen the capacity and impact of the NPC. Thank you all for the opportunity.

2.5 H.E President John Mahama, Guest of Honour

The Most Rev. Emmanuel Kofi Fianu, Chairman of the National Peace Council, Members of the Peace Council, Honourable Ministers of State, senior government officials, stakeholders, and participants of the Post-2024 Elections Evaluation Dialogue, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

It is an esteemed honour for me to address this closing ceremony of the post-election conference, held under the compelling theme: *Dialoguing for a Stronger Democracy and Social Cohesion*. I commend the organizers and participants for their tireless efforts and deep reflection over the past few days.

As mandated by Article 35(6) of our 1992 Constitution, the State is enjoined to actively promote the integration of the peoples of Ghana and prohibit discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of place of origin, circumstances of birth, ethnic origin, gender, or religion. This constitutional obligation goes to the heart of national unity and peaceful coexistence—bedrock of our democracy. I often say that peace is as indispensable to national development as salt is to a good soup.

Without peace, we cannot create jobs. We cannot expand opportunities, improve education, attract investment, or build a just society. This is why our founding President, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, and all successive Presidents, made the pursuit of peace and national unity a central pillar of governance. In this same spirit, during the recent inauguration of the new governing board of the National Peace Council, I emphasized the enduring importance of its role in safeguarding Ghana's peace—before, during, and after elections.

Dr. Nkrumah's commitment to peaceful, non-violent pathways to change remains profoundly relevant today. In a world increasingly plagued by instability and polarization, Ghana must hold firmly to the principles of tolerance, dialogue, and peaceful dispute resolution. The 2024 Global Peace Index ranks Ghana 55th globally out of 163 countries—a four-place drop from our 2023 position. While we remain fourth in sub-Saharan Africa, we continue to hold the number one position as the most peaceful country in West Africa.

This ranking should be a wake-up call—a signal that we must be even more vigilant, proactive, and committed to addressing the root causes of discord in our society. The government, in collaboration with the National Peace Council and civil society, has implemented a range of interventions aimed at deepening national consensus, strengthening conflict prevention mechanisms, and fostering public trust in the institutions that underpin our democracy, particularly those responsible for elections, investigations, and the prosecution of electoral offenses.

Elections are, by nature, high-stakes events. They represent a contest of ideas and ideologies, influenced by deeply held convictions and competing visions for national development. While Ghana once again demonstrated its democratic resilience in the 2024 elections—culminating in a largely peaceful transfer of power—we cannot ignore the fact that the process was marred by isolated incidents of violence in some constituencies.

I take this opportunity to unequivocally condemn these acts of violence and to call for swift and transparent accountability for the perpetrators. I urge the Inspector General of Police to expedite investigations into these acts and to ensure that justice is served. The Attorney General is also preparing a report to be presented to Cabinet, proposing adequate compensation for victims and families affected by the violence.

I commend the Electoral Commission, our security services, civil society organizations, political parties, and the electorate for their collective role in ensuring that Ghana's democratic credentials remained intact after the 2024 elections. But we must go further. Our political differences must never become tools for division, mistrust, or violence.

The disbandment of party vigilante groups through the passage of the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act, 2019 (Act 999), was a commendable step. It has contributed to reducing politically motivated violence to some extent. The National Peace Council and its partners have

built upon this legal framework by rolling out public education campaigns, strengthening the capacity of electoral management bodies, and mobilising youth and civil society actors to promote peace before, during, and after elections.

However, violence thrives where grievances are unresolved, institutions are perceived as biased, and political discourse becomes toxic. These challenges must be confronted openly—we must not sweep them under the carpet. We must investigate how authentic Electoral Commission ballot papers and other materials fall into unauthorized hands during general elections. The future we seek cannot be built on division. It requires a trinity of purpose: respect for diversity, and constructive engagement across party lines, religious beliefs, and ethnic identities. This administration prioritizes inclusive governance, respect for the rule of law, and a culture of listening.

No nation can prosper in an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, and exclusion. This National Dialogue, which brings together political parties, religious leaders, and social sector actors, is both timely and necessary. Through dialogue, we cultivate mutual understanding, reduce tensions, and build shared commitments toward the Ghana we all desire.

I urge all participants here today to rise above partisanship, reaffirm our shared destiny as Ghanaians, and rekindle the spirit of national service—whether we wear red, blue, green, or any other colour.

We must always remember that we all stand under one flag: red, gold, and green, with a black star—our symbol of hope and unity.

As this conference draws to a close, I charge you to ensure that the outcomes of your deliberations do not remain within these walls. The themes you have engaged with—electoral integrity and trust-building, post-election violence, misinformation and disinformation, accountability, governance, youth engagement, and media responsibility—are all central to the health and future of our democracy. I hope your recommendations will be formally submitted to the relevant institutions, including the Constitutional Review Committee, for study and implementation. Ghana must continually improve its democratic architecture—not only through elections but through deliberate reforms that reflect the aspirations of our people.

In conclusion, peacebuilding is not an event—it is a journey. A perpetual process requiring continuous effort, vigilance, and sacrifice. As the great Nelson Mandela once said, “*Great anger and violence can never build a nation.*” Let us leave here today with renewed conviction. Let us reject the politics of hate. Let us empower our youth to believe in dialogue over violence, cooperation over conflict, and service over self-interest.

As President of the Republic, I reaffirm my unwavering commitment to strengthening our democracy, preserving our peace, and upholding the dignity of every Ghanaian. Let this dialogue mark a turning point—a new chapter of healing, cooperation, and shared purpose.

I assure you that I will do everything within my power to ensure that the recommendations of the Constitutional Review Committee are implemented.

Thank you for your patriotism, your wisdom, and your participation in this all-important effort. May God bless us all.

May God bless our beloved nation, Ghana.

Thank you very much.

PART THREE: PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Session 2: Strengthening Elections Governance: The Ghana Model

2.1 Session overview

The 2024 elections revealed a mix of progress and persistent challenges, particularly with regard to voter register, results management and election security. The EC enhanced voter registration, transparency and reliability of the biometric verification devices, and reduced delays at polling stations. Civil society played an active watchdog role in observing and reporting on the process. Inter-agency collaboration under the National Election Security Task Force (NESTF) improved coordination and early response in many constituencies. Despite these gains, several challenges emerged. These included: election-related violence and intimidation recorded in multiple constituencies, especially during collation and results declaration phases. While the judicial process was available for resolution, delays and perceptions of bias undermined public confidence.

This panel provided a platform for stakeholders who played key roles in the 2024 electoral processes to engage in, and critically reflected on lessons learned on the overall conduct of the lessons. The panalists proposed concrete reforms that can enhance the credibility, transparency, and integrity of future elections. The discussion focused on the following issues:

- a. Reflection on what worked well in election administration (including logistics, and compilation of the voter roll) and security.
- b. Examination of election-related security lapses and how these impacted public confidence.
- c. Discussion on post-election tensions and institutional responses.
- d. Explored priority reforms to strengthen transparency and accountability, inclusion, trust and election security to prevent future violence, particularly, related to results collation, transfer of votes,

2.2 Presentation by Dr. Eric Bossman Asare, Deputy Commissioner, Electoral Commission

Key features of Ghana's electoral model: Ghana's electoral system is regarded as a cornerstone of its democracy, earning recognition as one of Africa's most stable democracies. Central to this success is the Election Management Bodies (EMBs), which has consistently demonstrated a commitment to credible, inclusive, and transparent elections. A strong legal and institutional framework—grounded in transparency, fairness, inclusivity, accountability, and peace—has elevated the EC as one of the best in election management on the continent.

Institutional independence: A vital feature of Ghana's electoral management model is the independence of the Commission. The EC is an independent EMB, free from the direction or control of any person or authority, as enshrined in Article 46 of the 1992 Constitution. This independence has been critical in bolstering trust among the electorate, political parties, and domestic and international observers. The security of tenure enjoyed by members of the Commission ensures institutional memory and provides the experience necessary to adopt policies that improve the quality of elections in the country. The EC's expenditures are charged to the Consolidated Fund (that is, Article 54), which ensures funding autonomy. Once Parliament approves the budget, the EC has full authority to use it funds for its operations;

strengthening public trust in the process. While there are occasional delays in fund releases, the EC has still implemented interventions that strengthen election management.

Regulatory authority: Article 51 of the Constitution empowers the EC to make regulations through Constitutional Instruments (CIs). This flexibility enables the EC to address emerging challenges effectively. For example, the Commission is considering a new CI to ensure greater accountability in political party campaign financing.

Public education and voter awareness: The Commission recognises that a well-informed electorate is vital to successful elections. It therefore prioritises public education before every election; educating citizens on voting rights, responsibilities, and procedures. Targeted education also includes political party agents, security forces, civil society organisations, and the media. To improve transparency, the Commission launched the “Let the Citizen Know” initiative to share timely and relevant information across traditional and social media. Documentaries in local languages were launched covering the entire electoral process, including nominations, balloting, voting, and result declarations. These initiative significantly reduced political tension and reinforced the EC’s impartiality.

Transparency measures about IPAC processes: In 2024, the EC opened the IPAC meetings to the public through national media. This promoted public understanding of IPAC deliberations and enhanced transparency.

The credibility of the voter’s register: In response to allegations about the credibility of the voters’ register, the EC re-exhibited the register online until Election Day. It provided templates for political parties to report discrepancies. No discrepancies were identified or reported.

Biometric voter registration: Ghana’s register-based elections require biometric voter registration, introduced in 2012. This innovation has virtually eliminated multiple registrations and identity fraud. Any registration challenges are addressed by District Registration Review Committees, ensuring transparency and inclusivity. The registration coverage now exceeds 97%, surpassing most West African countries, except Cape Verde.

Filing fee reductions: The Commission reduced the filing fees for women and persons differently-abled in the 2024 elections. This was aimed at encouraging broader participation. Female presidential and parliamentary candidates paid 75% of the standard filing fee. However, there was no significant increase in the number of female candidates. To further encourage participation, the Commission maintained the 2020 filing fees in 2024—GH¢100,000 for presidential, and GH¢10,000 for parliamentary candidates—despite inflation.

Media and observer accreditation: The EC granted free accreditation to all media outlets and collaborated with the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) and the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA). For the first time, media were granted access to the National Collation Centre to observe the collation of presidential results. Updates were provided every three hours. The EC also accredited over 19,000 observers from CSOs, religious groups, and diplomatic missions.

Transparent electoral system: Ghana’s system is designed to prevent, detect, and correct fraud at every stage. Political parties are involved in all critical processes, from registration to vote counting. Ballot tracking is comprehensive, and polling station results are verified and publicly displayed.

Election day procedures: Vote counting is done at polling stations in the presence of candidates' agents, the media, and the public. Results are certified and publicly posted. Mistakes are addressed immediately. Elections are won at the polling station.

Presidential results declaration: The 2024 presidential results were declared within 48 hours, adhering to CI 127, Regulation 38. The Commission does not declare winners based on polling station results alone, but, through a multi-stage process involving constituency and regional collation centres. This approach ensures legal compliance and accuracy.

2.3 Lessons learned from 2024 elections

The following lessons were gleaned from the 2024 elections:

Low voter turnout: Turnout dropped from 79% in 2020 to 63.97% in 2024. Ghana may consider adopting compulsory voting, as done in countries like Australia and Argentina.

Enhanced voter education: The EC will launch year-round voter education in collaboration with the NCCE, CSOs, and the media.

Deployment of technology: Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools will be explored to counter mis/disinformation in order to improve election information integrity.

Collaborations with IPAC and security agencies: IPAC and the National Election Security Task Force played key roles in supporting the EC. However, challenges remain, particularly with voter education and electoral violence during collation.

Security enhancement: Security agencies must strictly enforce anti-vigilantism laws, notably Vigilantism and Other Offences Act, 2019, (Act 999). Military presence may be necessary at collation centres. The prosecution of perpetrators of electoral violence must be pursued seriously. Political parties must educate supporters to prevent violence.

Real-time results backup: The EC is exploring alternative ways to collect results directly from polling stations for verification in case of disputes.

Building democratic culture: All stakeholders must commit to building a democratic culture based on tolerance and peaceful dispute resolution.

Sustained excellence: Ghana's electoral governance model is a shining example of democratic growth in Africa. It is characterised by fairness, transparency, and peace. The success must not lead to complacency. The EC must continue striving for excellence. Continuous improvement—especially in transparency, rule of law, and civic trust—is necessary to maintain Ghana's global leadership in electoral integrity.

2.4 Discussants: Dr. Kojo Asante (CDD), Albert Yelyang, WANEP – Ghana, & Bishop Dr Suzanne Nti, Chairperson of Crusaders Against Corruption

2.4.1 Progress

A smooth voting process: for the third election in roll beginning 2016, voting was smooth and most voters had finished voting before 5pm closing time. CODEO's PVT statistics confirm a smooth voting process shown in the table below:

Some indicators of election observation: Third election in roll beginning 2016

Electoral checklist	Result
Polling stations had opened by 8am, an hour after official opening	97%
Election opened by the official time	66%
Relevant electoral logistics available in super majority of polling stations	Majority of polling stations
BVDs work perfectly in 87% of polling stations.	87% of polling stations.
In 94% of polling stations no recount was requested.	94%
No mistakes in the results sheet in 90% of polling stations	90%
In 99% of polling stations political party agents and presiding officers signed the pink sheet	99%
Voting procedures were followed in a supermajority of cases.	Majority of polling stations
The Election security task force performed creditably, particularly in the use of the army as promised they were not deployed to polling stations.	Majority of polling stations

Source: CODEO, 2024 Elections

2.4.2 Mis-opportunities

Election 2024 and mis-opportunities: The CDD-Ghana and Coalition for Domestic Elections Observation (CODEO's) preparations for the 2024 elections began two years ahead of the elections. The 2020-post election dialogue organised in May 2021 by CDD-Ghana and CODEO and NPC in June 2021, both events in Aqua Safari, Big Ada, Greater Accra Region, laid out the key gaps in electoral integrity, peace and proposed key recommendation for reforms. Notable among them was need for the EC to engendered trust in the face of dwindling trust in the EMBs. Again, the election day voting is generally smooth, but post-election results management processes are generally characterised by violence and chaos in some constituencies and collation centres.

To cure this problem, the CODEO recommended a re-look at the structure, set and procedures at the collation centers, and publication of polling stations data. The CODEO report also pointed to the need to enable continuous registration and a robust process to eliminate ineligible names from the voter register. The report also recommended prosecution of perpetrators of electoral crime in order to ensure that justice for citizens killed during the elections.

In 2023, CDD-Ghana/CODEO with other collaborators like the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) began implementing an European Union (EU)-Ghana supported electoral reform project. The project aimed to pursue reforms in the election results management. Particularly to develop clear protocols for correcting mistakes on election results sheets across the chain, and ensure timely electronic transmission of results and publication of results. Also, the reforms sought to

facilitate a change in the rules to reduce the timelines for the parliamentary petitions and advocate the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill.

The reform started late in 2023. CODEO wanted clear rules on the processes for correcting mistakes on the results sheets at all levels, publication of results disaggregated to polling station level, reduced timelines for parliamentary petitions and affirmative action. Advocacy should have also focused on formal transmission of results, which would have addressed a lot of the issues with destroyed pink sheets.

Reforms on aid memoires: The year 2023 offered the period to canvass CDD-Ghana/CODEO's position on the above issues and courted the interest of the EC and the judiciary in initiating and implementing reforms to resolve them. CDD-Ghana/CODEO submitted memoranda to the EC on these matters. The memoranda also counseled against implementing a formal system for electronic transmission because of the legal and policy processes required for a safe process.

The EC did issue aid memoires on some of these issues, but came in late, and was buried in the EC website. The EC published aide memoirs on the following: Request for re-count of ballot papers; setting up the constituency collation center; access to security at collation center; collation process; and correction of errors on election results sheet/form. These were posted on 6th December, 2024 at 10.18pm. the eve of election night. These should have been be part of the training of party agents.

2.4.3 Challenges

Electoral governance deficit: By failing to tackle some of these issues earlier, the 2024 elections were conducted with a deficit which has been the typical approach to election reform in past years.. The EC started work on the continuous registration process early in 2021 but was insistent on its positions in spite of all the evidence and advise from stakeholders. Efforts to implement the continuing registration process was block over the EC insistence on using the Ghana Card alone as the Idendity Card (ID) for registration. The justification was to do away with guarantor system being abused by the political parties. However, it was also clear the Ghana Card availability was a problem. Though the EC had tried to lay a CI on this as early as 2021/2022, Parliament blocked it. Subsequently, the old CI that was used for the local government elections and was used for the national elections.

As a stop gap measure, the EC concentrated the registration at its District offices to reduce the abuse of the guarantor system and other vices like underage and foreigners registering. However, this created a problem for first timers. Eventually an adjustment was made to add hard-to-reach areas. Also, the usual challenges with communication affected the movement plans. The issues emerged in the exhibition and preparation of the provisional register.

Additionally, the cleaning procedure (Regulation 27) became difficult to apply since it did not cover distortions thrown out by the IT system being used. Eventually, these matters were resolved through IPAC, including online re-exhibition after the cleaning. However, this was not grounded in law. It is important to mention that there was violence again during the transfer of votes when parties were asked to observe.

The nomination process though was generally smooth had its fair share of disputes. A new challenge was the death of a Presidential candidate and processes to deal with her name on the ballot against the cost of reprinting. Besides, printing of ballots became another issue as suppliers were either late in delivery or could not guarantee the security of the printed ballots. This costed the nation a lot of money. Also, new challenges with accrediting new CSOs to observe elections by requiring prior experience.

Challenge also emerged during the constituency collation period and announcement. The EC declared the Presidential results without nine constituencies for what it termed as illegal collations and declarations. In a number of these constituencies in questions, the collation center processes were disrupted by large groups by overwhelmed the police. The ability or inability of the police to provide security became a stumbling block for the EC work. It gave the police discretion in determining whether a parliamentary results was going to be determined or not. Violent groups destroyed ballot papers and results sheets in some of those places. And in some cases, Returning Officers were cohesed and threatened to proceed to collation.

Although, destruction of results sheets of the EC was not a new phenomenon, it rendered the referee unable to umpire the process and created a stalemate. It has also given incentive candidates and political parties to disrupt electoral processes if does not go in their away. A lot of the resolutions were not grounded in law but based on consensus. The rules on collation and recollation which was contained in an Aide memoire later issued by the EC was not followed consistently.

Session 3: Preparing for Election Day – Integrity of Voter Register, Nomination Process, Election Logistics (Ballot Printing) and General Procurement

Discussants: Rev. Dr. Fred Deegbe (CODEO), and Mrs. Linda Ofori Kwafo

3.1 Session overview

The period ahead of the 2024 elections was a crucial test of transparency and resilience in the country's democratic dispensation. While it highlighted inclusion and responsiveness in the conduct of the EC, it also exposed critical weaknesses in implementation, institutional integrity and public trust in the EMBs. It begs the question as to whether or not the challenges with the voter register, candidate nomination processes, election logistics—particularly ballot printing—and procurement in the 2024 elections, are a recurrence of the longstanding challenges identified in the pre-election periods of earlier elections or new challenges were being encountered.

The voter register, a key element for credible elections, became a source of significant pre-election dispute. Delays in releasing the provisional register meant political parties had limited time to scrutinise the voters' register. The disqualification of 11 of 24 candidates in the nomination process due to procedural errors, raised concerns about fairness and clarity. Leakage of ballot papers and serial number mismatches meant ballot papers had to be reprinted at the last minute, while the inclusion of a deceased candidate's name underscored procedural challenges.

This session highlighted these challenges alongside emerging best practices and drew on lessons learned to provide recommendations. Key themes discussed included the need for enhanced data integrity, transparent procurement, timely stakeholder engagement, and legal

reform. The discussion also contributed to enhancing national dialogue and institutional reforms to strengthen electoral credibility in future cycles.

3.2 Guided questions

a. Integrity of the voter register

- Have we addressed the longstanding problems with the voter register?
- Are we encountering new problems with the voter register?
- How do we ensure that the voter register is of the highest quality standards, and that, it is released to the public in a timely manner?

a. Candidate nomination

- How well have we addressed the challenges and the gaps identified with candidate nominations in the past?
- What reforms are needed to ensure transparency and fairness in the nomination process?
- What reforms are needed to ensure transparency and fairness in ballot position allocation?

b. Election logistics and ballot management

- What lessons do we learn from the challenges that were identified with election logistics, especially regarding ballot printing?
- What reforms are needed to overcome all identified challenges?

c. Procurement and institutional transparency

- What are the protocols and best practices for procurement for election purposes?
- How do we ensure transparency and accountability in election-related procurement?
- What recommendations or reforms are required?

3.3 Panel discussion

An assessment of the 2024 election: acknowledging the electoral progress since 1992: Ghana's democratic journey has been marked by notable improvements since its first multiparty elections in 1992. It is important to acknowledge the progress we have made as a country beginning with the first multiparty elections. Ghana has advanced in its electioneering processes – at very stages – before, during and after election day. The period between 1992 and 1996 is worth highlighting with significant milestone: the formation of IPAC in 1994 the comprehensive registration exercise in 1995, the shift to transparent ballot boxes, cardboard voting screens, and improved voter turnout—reaching 78.3% at one point reflecting public confidence in the evolving processes have significantly improved credibility and participation.

Despite years of significant investment aimed at improving electoral processes, the 2024 elections witnessed the reemergence of long-standing and grey issues that require improvement. For instance, the voter register, candidate nomination, election logistics, ballot management, procurement, and institutional transparency remain a challenge.

Persistent challenges with the voter register: Do challenges with the voter register remain despite progress made? Certainly, the events of the 2024 elections confirm this. Issues with the voter register continue to undermine trust. The 2024 elections were marred by allegations of

illegal transfers, and allegations of register bloating prompting nationwide protests in September, 2024, led by the main opposition party, NDC. We recall the pre-election disputes surrounding the voter roll, that cannot be swept under the carpet. While the EC suspended a district official and made corrections. Again, delayed in releasing the provisional voter registers left political parties and independent candidates with inadequate time to review and contest its content. The confusion eroded trust and invited suspicion, undermining public confidence.

Decline public trust in the election: the EC sometimes loses the trust battle, even though public suspicion is difficult to overcome. Trust in the EC has clearly declined, and the voter register is a contributing factor. Public confidence in the register remains shaken. Afrobarometer data reflects this: public trust in the EC declined. In 1999, only 3% of surveyed individuals expressed trust in the Commission. Trust peaked in 2005 at 75% but declined sharply to 33% by 2022. This mistrust has become more pronounced, as evidenced by public reactions in 2024. This underscores the fact that the voter register is fundamental to any election. If there is mistrust in the register, the entire process is compromised. If we do not address the issues with the register, that mistrust will persist. Even though the EC eventually suspended the District Director and made corrections, the distrust remains. Trust in Electoral Systems remain fundamental. And a credible voter register is foundational to electoral integrity and legitimacy of the results.

Inadequate voter education A critical issue in 2024 was the limited voter education, especially in rural communities. Many citizens were unaware of basic changes, such as voting without ID cards. Even informed individuals, including professionals, faced confusion at polling stations. Voters despite encouragement to vote, were turned away due to unverified names. This gap undermines participation and contributes to the high number of rejected ballots—nearly 240,000 nationally, though slightly from previous election. There is the need for institutional collaboration such as the NCCE, CE and CSOs to overcome the challenge.

Register accuracy and the case for an independent audit: The register still contains names of the deceased, like “Lizard Memory,” who passed in 2018. The presence of deceased individuals on the voter roll, such as the case of “Lizard Memory,” illustrates systemic flaws. Procedural improvements, including an independent audit of the register, as practiced in Senegal and Kenya, would enhance credibility. If such measures are already in place, they should be expanded and more rigorously applied.

Candidate nomination and experiences from other jurisdiction: Ghana’s legal framework—outlined in Articles 63 and 94 of the Constitution and CI 127—clearly defines nomination procedures. The disqualification of 11 out of 24 candidates due to procedural errors was not only unfortunate—it exposed deeper flaws in the clarity and uniform application of the rules.

Lessons from Senegal: Judicial vetting and tight deadlines: Senegal’s model, where the Constitutional Council conducts a strict, multi-stage vetting of candidates, and tight reviews and multiple deadlines, offers a potential reform path to improve transparency. An independent judicial review board could depoliticise disqualification decisions and increase transparency. Eleven out of 24 presidential aspirants disqualified in 2024—were largely due to unclear guidance and procedural errors. Moreover, the current five-day window to correct nomination errors is insufficient. Despite the process being transparent, accusations of favoritism continue.

In our highly competitive and polarised environment, small mistakes are often misinterpreted and politicised. Civil society, including CODEO, has called for clearer processes, real-time error notifications, and nomination support centers in all regions.

Enhancing transparency in ballot positioning: Although the current process for assigning ballot positions is technically transparent, it continues to attract allegations of bias. Civil society groups like CODEO have advocated improvements, such as digital nomination submissions, real-time error notifications, and livestreaming of ballot draws. Also, regional nomination support centers could further reduce errors and build trust.

Procurement irregularities and allegations of missing materials: Procurement during the elections remains a contentious area. Allegations involving missing laptops and electoral kits cast doubt on the EC's operational integrity and cannot be ignored. While the Commission is independent, it must operate with greater transparency and accountability, especially concerning the use of public resources. Procurement procedures should be clearly outlined, with transparent selection criteria, public contract announcements and open communication to build public trust. The EC should also establish clear, published procurement procedures and provide timely information to prevent misinformation. And proactive stakeholder engagement is essential for restoring and maintaining public trust.

Reduction of filing fees: While the reduction in fees for women and persons with disabilities is commendable, the GHC100,000 fee for presidential aspirants remains excessive.

3.4 Sessional recommendation

- a. Institutionalise an independent external audit of the register before final certification.
- b. Enforce statutory timelines without exception. This will help us avoid last-minute complications and the panic that often comes with redistribution.
- c. Leverage technology to publish the provisional register online, so every citizen can easily access and verify their details
- d. Develop clear, publicly accessible nomination guides—complete with templates and checklists—to help aspirants avoid errors. If we are encouraging people to run for office, they need to understand what to do. If they fail, at least they will understand why.
- e. Organise pre-nomination clinics or training sessions for aspirants and their teams. They might even be willing to pay a small fee to participate. Maybe even give them symbolic “doll babies” to care for—so they understand the weight of governance responsibilities.
- f. Ballot position transparency: Ballot position allocation should be automated and live-streamed to ensure transparency and fairness
- g. Transparent procurement is crucial. Therefore, the EC should:
 - Proactively publish all procurement plans and award of contracts related to elections.
 - Involve CSOs and independent observers in procurement oversight to build public trust.
 - Strengthen regulations and impose clear sanctions for breaches of procurement rules and conflicts of interest.
- h. Enforce statutory timelines prescribed by law and enforced without exception.
- i. Prior to the certification of the final voter register, an independent external audit should be institutionalized to enhance the credibility of the register.

- j. Leveraging technology to publish the provisional register online to ensure broader access for citizens to verify their details; whether access is free or facilitated through third-party payments.
- k. Clarifying rules and empowering aspirants on candidate nomination processes. Develop and disseminate clear nomination guidelines, templates, and checklists, and organise pre-nomination clinics or training sessions for aspirants and their representatives.
- l. Live stream ballot position allocation to enhance transparency and dispel myths surrounding the process.
- m. The EC should strike a fair balance between independence and collaboration. True independence should not exclude consultation, collaboration, or consensus-building. Legal frameworks distinguish between “consultation with” and “acting on the advice of,” and it is critical that institutions understand and apply this nuance correctly. As public servants and legal entities, we must avoid weaponising independence in a way that isolates institutions from the very public they serve.
- n. Credible elections are not merely procedural milestones—they are foundational to national legitimacy, societal stability, and public trust. Thus, credibility of our elections does not rest on any single institution. It is a shared responsibility that demands learning, reform, and continuous improvement. We must recognise the progress we have made while confronting the gaps that remain, and resolve them to protect the integrity of Ghana’s elections and strengthen our democracy.

Session 4: Post Elections Results Management and Declaration, and Stock-taking of Election-Related Violence in the 2024 general elections: Lessons Learned; Lessons Shared

Panelists: Mr. Benjamin Bano-Bioh (EC), George Sarpong (NMC), Christian Tetteh Yohuno, (IGP)

4.1 Session overview

The declaration of results is one of the most sensitive phases in the electoral cycle, with implications for transparency, trust, and peace. The period following voting saw renewed attention on the credibility of collation processes, the transparency of results transmission, and the management of electoral disputes. While the elections were generally peaceful, notable incidents of violence during collation and post-declaration periods exposed systemic weaknesses that require attention. This is the third election in a row where there has been a marked difference between voting and results periods.

This panel session analysed in-depth two interlinked issues: results management and declaration, and the nature and patterns of post-election-related violence. It also provided a space for stakeholders to reflect on how these issues were handled, what lessons can be drawn, and what reforms are needed to prevent recurrence.

4.2 Guided questions

- a. **Results management and declaration**
 - How transparent and efficient was the collation and results declaration process?
 - What worked well in the EC’s results architecture, and where were the credibility gaps?
 - How did delays or misinformation during results declaration affect public trust?

b. Election-related violence

- What were the key triggers and hotspots of violence, especially during collation and post-declaration?
- How effective were security interventions before, during, and after the elections?
- What early warning signs were missed, and how can response mechanisms be strengthened?

c. Lessons learned

- What practical improvements can be made to collation procedures, results communication, and dispute resolution mechanisms?
- How can Ghana build a more violence-free and transparent electoral future?

4.3 Panel discussion

The 2024 election demonstrated strength in structured polling-station-level procedures. But, it also exposed systemic weaknesses in aggregation (coalition centres), dispute adjudication, information integrity, security coordination, post-election accountability, and incentive structures within political parties. Misinformation/disinformation (including foreign interference), legal bottlenecks in prosecuting electoral violence, and erosion of trust further complicated the environment.

Results management process: At the polling station, the voting and result process were largely procedural and successful: Voting closed at 5:00 PM, with those in queue allowed to finish. Completion of result forms (Form 8B for presidential, Form 8A for parliamentary) preceded counting. Counting followed three stages: reconciliation (validating ballot issuance and stamps), sorting by candidate, and tallying. Endorsements by the Presiding Officers and party agents, distribution of copies, and transmission to Returning Officers at coalition centres occurred per protocol. Political parties frequently obtained early copies via scans/photos and conducted internal collation ahead of official aggregation.

4.4 Challenges

Electoral violence: This included intimidation of voters and officials, destruction of materials, attacks on vehicles and offices, burning of boxes, shootings, arson of some district offices, and inability of several constituencies (12 total, with one unresolved) to conclude collation locally.

Coalition Centre vulnerabilities: Coalition centres, unlike polling stations, became flashpoints due to crowding, misinformation-fueled mobilisation, limited controlled visibility, and lack of sufficient access protocols.

Trust and perception dynamics: The EC's perceived alignment with incumbency (e.g., court-related media visibility during petition processes) eroded public trust independent of actual conduct. Also, media ecosystem imbalance crowded out neutral institutions (EC, NPC). Again, the absence or delay in publishing granular (polling-station) data fueled anxiety and rumor proliferation.

Misinformation/Disinformation Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI): Domestic misinformation (e.g., “not fit for purpose” narratives) persisted even after public clarifications. FIMI targeted social stability institutions (clergy, EC, NPC, chiefs) using decontextualised or amplified content. Local actors (“pushers”) magnified harmful content, creating viral feedback loops.

Preventive efforts and fact-checking: Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition contributed to electoral information integrity.

Political party incentives: Parties often rewarded individuals involved in disruptive or violent conduct, normalising and incentivising harmful behaviour. Disproportionate attention and resources were deployed to high-profile (presidential) disputes at the expense of regional/parliamentary cases, creating accountability gaps.

Post-result accountability fatigue: Stakeholders (political parties, donors, regional bodies) frequently disengaged after initial result announcements, resulting in weakened follow-through grievances, prosecutions, and reforms.

Dispute sources and adjudication frictions: Disputes stemmed from impersonation, double voting, eligibility issues, result challenges, ballot positioning confusion, and operational sabotage (alleged deliberate ballot spoilage).

Judicial reform efforts (iterative election manuals, time-bound petition and judgment processes) improved the framework, but procedural mistakes and unclear interfaces between collation and litigation introduced uncertainty.

Security architecture and institutional independence: Multi-tiered deployment (Police Stations, Coalition Centres, Mobile Patrols, Rapid Response) existed, but clarity in command-and-control (especially between Task Force, Regional Security Councils, police, and military) was insufficient. Political interference (real or perceived) in police deployment undermined professionalism. And limited public knowledge on the standard operating procedures inhibited their ability to support or hold security actors accountable.

Voter registration and balloting operational weaknesses: Registration centers exhibited perceived partisan segmentation, limited continuous engagement, and poor upfront planning. Ballot paper design and placement produced confusion, which, without clear communication, became suspicion vectors undermining secrecy and fairness.

Institutional memory and implementation deficit: Past evaluation recommendations (from EU 2016, CODEO 2020, National Peace Council, etc.) were not consistently acted upon, leading to repetitive cycles of identified problems without closure.

4.5 Sessional recommendation

- a. **Digitalise result transmission and publish disaggregated polling-station results:** to enhance transparency and reduce agitation at coalition centres.
- b. **Formalise the coalition–adjudication interface:** with clear procedural guidance for political parties and candidates.
- c. **Establish a post-election accountability tracking mechanism:** (at both supply and demand sides) for grievances, prosecutions, and reform implementation, including a publicly accessible compendium of past recommendations and status.
- d. **Insulate and clarify the security architecture:** including protections for police professionalism, joint police-military SOPs, and hotspot data processes.
- e. **Create an integrated misinformation/disinformation response unit:** that incorporates fact-checking coalitions and addresses FIMI proactively.

- f. **Reform incentive structures in political parties:** to stop rewarding unlawful behaviour and ensure internal accountability.
- g. **Expedite and streamline prosecutorial pathways:** for election-related violence (AG's office turnaround, and statutory deadlines).
- h. **Standardise voter registration, balloting modalities, and public education:** to minimise procedural confusion and perceived bias.
- i. **Institutionalise coalition centre access control with outward transparency:** (e.g., external display screens) while securing results.
- j. **Operationalise past evaluation recommendations:** through ownership, timelines, and periodic public reporting.

Session 5: Post-Election Complaints, Dispute and Adjudication

Panelists: Ms. Georgette Francois (President, GHACMA), Paul Nana Aborampah Mensah (CDD-Ghana)

5.1 Sessional overview

Ghana's 2024 general elections, while largely peaceful and procedurally credible, were not without tensions surrounding the resolution of complaints and disputes. The CODEO Election Observation Mission noted several incidents of intra-party and inter-party clashes, delays in resolving pre-election nomination disputes, and post-election grievances over results collation and declaration processes in constituencies like Tema Central, Okaikwei Central, Techiman South, and Ablekuma North. These issues point to persistent gaps in the electoral justice system—particularly in transparency, accessibility, and timeliness of adjudication mechanisms.

For instance, the 2024 elections witnessed:

- Complaints about inconsistencies in results collation at some constituency collation centers.
- Allegations of misconduct by some Returning Officers.
- Lack of clarity among voters and party agents regarding the formal process for lodging and resolving complaints at polling stations.
- Concerns over the role and capacity of traditional security and dispute resolution channels such as the District Security Councils (DISECs).

These recurring challenges raise critical questions about the responsiveness and credibility of Ghana's dispute resolution framework and the role of key institutions such as the EC, the Judiciary, and political parties.

5.2 Guiding questions

General reflections and assessment on:

- The types of complaints and disputes most prevalent in the 2024 elections and how effectively did the EC, security agencies, and the courts respond to these issues? (procedural, collation, violence)?
- Were the legal and institutional frameworks adequate for timely adjudication? (what does the law say? C.I 127)
- How do other democracies manage electoral complaints efficiently (best practices)?
- What can Ghana adapt or adopt to enhance electoral dispute resolution?

Institutional roles and accountability

- What role did the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) and the Peace Council play in preventing or managing disputes?
- How can the EC improve its internal complaints-handling mechanisms?

Legal and policy reforms

- What reforms are necessary in Ghana's electoral laws to better handle disputes?
- Should there be a dedicated Electoral Offenses Commission or Tribunal?
- Should Ghana adopt alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms?

5.3 Panel discussion

Findings on Dispute Adjudication

Judicial infrastructure: Election manuals (laws, precedents, procedural CIs) and training have improved the adjudication ecosystem, promoting faster responses and judgments.

Timelines: 21-day filing window, expedited pleadings (~10 days), and judgment delivery expectations (within 7 days post-hearing) exist, but procedural noncompliance (late filings) still voids petitions.

Hierarchy: Parliamentary disputes stop at the Court of Appeal; presidential matters go through the Supreme Court.

Interface ambiguity: The relationship between coalition results collation and the legal escalation path remains insufficiently codified, causing discretionary interpretations and confusion among parties.

5.4 Sessional recommendations

Transparency & Information Integrity

- a. **Publish disaggregated polling station results:** promptly and reliably to reduce anxiety and suspicion.
- b. **Digitalise result transmission:** from polling stations to constituency, regional, and national coalition centres with redundancies to prevent manipulation or destruction.
- c. **Mainstream fact-checking:** Institutionalise the Ghana Fact-Checking Coalition (and similar mechanisms) into official election communication structures and ensure their visibility.
- d. **Develop clear public education materials:** on dispute redress pathways, security SOPs, voting rights, and expectations of police/military to enable citizen partnership in integrity.

Dispute and Adjudication Process

- a. **Codify the coalition–adjudication interface:** Issue explicit procedural guidance that delineates when and how coalition-collected data relates to legal petitions and escalation to avoid arbitrary interpretation.
- b. **Strengthen petition compliance support:** Provide advisory help for filing to avoid cases due to technicalities (e.g., late submission).

- c. **Establish a post-election grievance tracking dashboard:** with supply (institutions providing status) and demand (citizens/victims able to query) visibility, including deadlines and accountability owners.

Security and institutional resilience

- a. Insulate security institutions (police) from partisan interference through formal protections, independent oversight of deployments, and clarity on career security to preserve professionalism.
- b. Clarify and publish joint SOPs for police-military coordination, including hotspot identification methodology and response triggers, with simplified communication to the public.
- c. Formalise restricted but transparent coalition centre access: candidate-designated agents only, layered buffer zones, external public viewing (giant screens), and controlled material transfer.
- d. Require pre-election alignment protocols between major parties for contested areas to reduce the need for heavy enforcement and prevent escalation.

Accountability and legal reform

- a. **Streamline prosecutorial pipeline:** Define and legislate reasonable maximum timelines for the Attorney-General office to act on election violence dockets; ensure feedback loops to victims and public record of progress.
- b. **Reform political party reward systems:** Discourage celebration or elevation of individuals involved in unlawful or violent acts; embed internal accountability mechanisms.
- c. Institutionalise a living repository of past recommendations with named custodians, implementation status, and regular public updates (compendium).

Operational reforms

- a. Revise voter registration logistics to remove perceived partisan segmentation.
- b. Institutionalise continuous early engagement, and explore multi-use of voter ID to deepen civic ownership.
- c. Standardise balloting modalities early in the electoral cycle, and ensure booth designs protect secrecy, and audit/prosecute deliberate operational sabotage (e.g., ballot spoilage).
- d. Optimise personnel flow in collation: Adjust staffing ratios (e.g., for constituencies with high polling station counts) to reduce backup and unnecessary material carriage when no request has been made.

Session 6: Building Consensus for Violence-free Election in Ghana: The Journey so far, Prospects and Consolidating the Gains

Panelists: Dr. Imurana Mohammed (NCCE), Dr Edward Ampratuwm (UNDP), and Albert Yelyang (WANEP)

6.1 Session overview

Ghana's 2020 and 2024 elections were marred by worrying levels of electoral violence, raising critical questions about the use of force, public safety, and accountability. In 2020, the country recorded 61 election-related incidents, resulting in five fatalities and 19 injuries. By 2024, the

number of incidents had risen to 76, with six confirmed deaths and 46 injuries from shootings, stabbings, arson, and vandalism.

A major concern in both elections was the deployment of the military to support police operations. In 2020, military involvement—resulted in civilian deaths, highlighting the risks of using the army not trained in crowd control for electoral security duties. In response, 2024 saw important reforms. Authorities restricted military presence at polling stations and positioned the armed forces as support only upon police request. The Ghana Police Service also developed a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) focused on de-escalation and accountability. However, gaps remain. The SOP has not been made public, no harmonised military-police operational framework exists, and there is still no accountability for past fatalities. In light of the outstanding challenges, what is the way forward in building consensus around this issue? How do we get a hand on election violence? What lessons have we learnt?

This panel explored the evolution of election security in Ghana. It evaluated the effectiveness of current reforms, and proposed steps to enhance transparency, build public trust, and prevent future electoral violence.

6.2 Guided questions

a. Electoral violence trends and impact (2020–2024)

- Who are the perpetrators and what are the triggers of the violent election-related clashes, especially during collation and post-declaration?
- What do the socio-political and regional hotspots have in common?

b. Reforms and progress made by 2024

- The Ghana Police Service's new SOP: goals, strengths, and limitations
- De-escalation training and conflict prevention mechanisms: what's working?

c. Gaps and outstanding challenges

- How do we contrive a harmonised police-military framework for joint operations?
- Where are we regarding accountability for deaths and abuses from previous elections: where are the investigations?

d. The way forward: Building consensus and institutional reform

- What lessons have we learnt so far?
- What is the role of political parties, civil society, media, and security agencies?
- What early warning signs were missed, and how can response mechanisms be strengthened?
- What practical improvements can be made to collation procedures, results communication, and dispute resolution mechanisms?
- What are the recommendations for policy, legal reform, joint training, and public accountability?

6.3 Panel discussion

Blurred line of communication between “why” vs “how” citizens must vote: The distinction between empowering citizens with the value of voting (“why”) and instructing them on the mechanics (“how”) is poorly operationalised and communicated to the electorate. A significant factor of voter apathy, low voter turnout and high rejected ballot papers,

IPAC lack statutory backing: Despite the democratic value of IPAC, it lacks formal legislative authority. It is also over-centralised, and lacks structured outreach below the national level, reducing its ability to preempt and resolve local tensions.

Absence of post-election peace pacts: Existing Peace Pacts are predominantly pre-election and do not sufficiently govern post-election behavior or dispute de-escalation.

Overreliance on judiciary and unclear mechanisms for dispute resolution: There is insufficient intermediary structures and avenues (e.g., community or conflict management committees) to resolve post-election disputes before legal adjudication. Disputes frequently escalate directly to the courts rather than being mediated early. This leads to delays, frustration, and the entrenchment of conflict and antagonism.

The IPAC while important for consensus building, lacks institutional grounding. Its role should be formalised to promote binding decisions on the political stakeholders.

Weak inter-agency collaboration among institutions like the NCCE, EC, and CSO on civic and voter education. Addressing this requires clearly defined frameworks for coordination, especially on civic education and election security.

6.4 Sessional recommendations

- a. **Legislate and Empower IPAC:** Provide IPAC with a formal legal mandate and designate it as a permanent secretariat for consensus intelligence, equipped to interface with the EC, political actors, and observers.
- b. **Decentralise IPAC and its functions:** Establish regional and constituency-level IPAC nodes to address localised tensions early and feed them into national conflict resolution mechanisms.
- c. **Develop post-election peace pacts:** Standardise and institutionalise peace pacts that bind actors to agreed to positive political behaviour and conducts after results are declared, including specific dispute-resolution protocols and community validation mechanisms.
- d. **Create conflict management committees:** Pilot multi-stakeholder, non-judicial committees (inspired by regional models like Zambia) to mediate and resolve disputes early, in order to reduce pressure on courts and tamping down escalation.
- e. **Reform voter education:** Institutionalise a joint EC–NCCE voter education framework. Co-create a formal roadmap clarifying complementary roles, shared content development, synchronised campaigns, and joint accountability metrics (covering both “why” and “how” voting is a civic responsibility and accountability tool).
- f. **Launch a working group between EC and NCCE** to produce a unified plan and standardised content for voter education.
- g. **Invest in long-term civic literacy and transformative educational programme** targeting youth, schools, and community groups to deepen understanding of democratic values beyond election cycles.

- h. Address youth disillusionment about democracy, solve youth bulge and youth unemployment and foster transformative civic literacy.

Session 7: Reforming the Governance Structures of Judiciary, Electoral Commission and the Police (Appointment, Decision making of the Commission, and Tenure)

Panelists: Justice Jones Dotse (CODEO-ERMAG), Prof. Gyimah-Boadi (CODEO), Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey (IDEG)

7.1 Session overview

Strong democratic institutions rest on independence, transparency, and accountability. Critical governance institutions such as the judiciary, the electoral commission, and the police service are central in ensuring rule of law, credible elections, and public order. However, persistent concerns over how leaders of these institutions are appointed, how decisions are made, and how secure or vulnerable their tenure is have raised questions about their perceived and actual independence.

This panel explored the governance frameworks that underpin these three institutions. The panelists interrogated the current appointment mechanisms, examined internal decision-making processes, and assessed how tenure provisions affect public trust and institutional autonomy. The session also provided a platform for cross-institutional reflection and reform-oriented dialogue on how best to insulate these institutions from political interference while ensuring accountability.

7.2 Guided questions

a. Appointments: Who appoints, and how?

- Are existing appointment processes sufficiently independent, inclusive, and transparent and how did they impact the 2024 elections as regards trust in the institutions?
- What models exist elsewhere in Africa or globally that Ghana might consider adapting?

b. Institutional decision-making

- How inclusive and transparent were decision-making processes within the EC and police?
- To what extent are key decisions (e.g., election calendar, security deployments, and judicial rulings) seen as collective or centralised?

c. Decision-making: independence vs. influence

- Were key decisions during the 2024 elections—like security deployment and the announcements by the Electoral Commission—made independently?

d. Tenure and accountability

- Did tenure protections help or hinder the independence of the institutions during the 2024 elections?
- Were there concerns about political interference or reshuffles?
- How can Ghana balance secure tenure with performance accountability?

7.3 Panel discussion

Concentration of power in the executive: Ghana's judiciary faces a fundamental governance crisis rooted in constitutional design. The problem is inherent in those constitutional provisions that concentrate significant power in the executive branch while undermining institutional independence. Between 1969 and 1979, there were series of amendments to constitutional provisions in 1957, (including the challenge of coup d'état) which took away most of the democratic powers of the judiciary. The First Republic, for example, enacted a law that enabled the President to dismiss the Chief Justice and remove other justices of the Supreme Court. This cycle created a long period of constitutional instability.

The Fourth Republic Constitution, which we are enjoying now, has come about as a result of the experiences under the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) and previous constitutional amendments. One can therefore understand the concentration of power in the hands of the executive. From the time we were exiting from the PNDC era, much political power was concentrated in the hands of one person. And to convince that regime to return to constitutional rule, we had to placate it. It appears that, that is the reason why a lot of power has been given to the executive branch of government as against the other professional branches. We should therefore bear that in mind when we are talking about constitutional amendment. Because that is a constitution that has had the longest term since 1992.

Judiciary independence: The judiciary must not only be independent but be perceived as independent. Yet, critical concerns around appointments, finance, and oversight of the judiciary as well as other constitutional bodies undermine the independence in practice. The current constitutional framework, though well-intentioned, has created systems that independent institutions such as the judiciary functions as executive appendage than as independent guidance of justice. For example, Articles 153 to 154 of the Constitution establish a Judicial Council that is seemingly diverse in representation. All key appointments to the judicial service are made in consultation with or on the advice of the Council of State.

Yet, a closer look at the appointment and representation shows that the President, through the Attorney General, controls quite a number of the appointments to the Judicial Council. An interesting feature in the constitutional architecture is that, even though the Judicial Council appears to be powerful by the number of people on it, its functions under Article 154, are merely to propose ideas for the consideration of President.

In effect, what powers does the Judicial Council have if it performs its functions in consultation with the executive? There might be a good reason why the constitution gives wide powers to the President or to the executive branch of government—because of our past history. But is it serving us well? Can we continue with that, or is it time for us to think of reducing the powers of the executive?

Critical questions for reflection: Can we meaningfully discuss judicial independence when the President controls appointments in the judiciary? Can we meaningfully discuss judicial independence when the President controls appointments, funding, and oversight structures? Would it not be beneficial to determine whether seniority serves as a merit-based criterion in selecting the Chief Justice, or should we reward demonstrated leadership through objective measures? How can we create a Council of State that mirrors the wisdom and moral authority of traditional councils of elders, rather than mimicking executive cabinet dynamics? Could we

not explore how to make financial independence enforceable rather than merely aspirational, while maintaining appropriate mechanisms for democratic oversight of judicial spending?

Practices from other jurisdictions: Nigeria practice a system whereby the seniority rule and preside over the judiciary/Court—so once you are the most senior, even if it's two months or two weeks, you will be appointed as the Chief Justice, unless there is something very serious against you. The same practice applies to India. The disadvantage in those systems is that they lack effective planning. The turnaround of Chief Justices in those regimes varies, without a fixed term. In other jurisdiction like Kenya, the Judicial Service Commission interviews candidates and selects a maximum of three, who are recommended to the President for selection. So, the President's power is limited compared to what we have in Ghana.

The independence of the police service: Article 202 of the 1992 Constitution gives the President, the executive powers to appoint the Inspector General of Police (IGP) in consultation with the Council of State. The IGP, however, is subject to the control of the Police Council (responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Police Service), which is also chaired by the Vice President, with other members also appointed by the President. A number of concerns has been raised about the true independence of the IGP and the police service, particularly in the context of regime protection over civilian protection and police governance.

A relook of the architecture of the Council of State: Although the 16 members of the Council of State are voted in through regional elections, the government of the day can use their party machinery to elect their preferred candidates from the regions to be appointed to the Council of State. Therefore, if such an important institution like the Council of State is also compromised, how can we ensure, for example, that the police can perform their assigned constitutional mandate fairly?

How do we reform some of these appointments through constitutional amendment? Despite the concentration of power in the hands of the President, we have had longevity from 1992 to date. How should this sensitive constitutional amendments be driven—granted that all previous attempts to amend the Constitution have not succeeded? We cannot be stick to the status quo, but to amend the constitution. We must see a real implementation that will emerge from the consultation by the Constitutional Review Commission (CRC).

Decouple the Attorney-General from the office of the Ministry of Justice: The past experiences show that much could have been gained in the administration of justice if the Attorney-General is separated from the Ministry of Justice. The two authorities should be decoupled. We need an active Attorney General who is a technocrat. We also need a Minister who looks at the broader policy issues around justice—from international to regional to national. Once, the Attorney General is political, prosecution of electoral offenses will continue to be a nightmare. Electoral offenses are checked by the Attorney General before they are prosecuted. Why should electoral offenses—most of which are misdemeanors—have to be seen by an Attorney General, with political interference? If we have a strong Attorney General with a strong Department of Public Prosecution, we can address election violence headon.

Systematic state capture of democratic institutions: The roots of this flaw lies in the organised capture of key democratic institutions by a narrow elites comprising government leadership, political parties, senior state bureaucrats, media elites, media owners and personalities, private sector operators, actors in secular, religious and civil society, and traditional leaders. They have systematically appropriated the dividend of democracy at the

expense of the vulnerable (i.e., political coalition). The Electoral Commission and the processes it oversee are central to this problem. Elections serve as the gateway through which political parties and candidates gain access to state power and its benefits. Thus, control of the Electoral Commission is a primary objective of political elites seeking to capture the state.

The role of EMBs in democracy: In a functioning democracy, the EMBs are the cornerstone to achieving democratic objectives of: a) Government of the people, which requires that every vote counts; b) Government by the people, which means ensuring fair and equitable representation, and c) Government for the people, where all citizens enjoy the social, political, and economic dividends of democracy.

Despite these ideals, the current democratic system has become increasingly flawed. A commentator once observed that Ghana's democracy is plagued by embedded corruption, impunity, monetised politics, excessive executive power, institutional capture, moral decay, and unethical materialism. This observation accurately reflects the state of our democracy.

Safeguarding the Electoral Commission's independence and credibility: Achieving independence, technical soundness, and moral credibility of the Electoral Commission (and EMBs) is of critical importance and requires more than legal provisions. It calls for deliberate reforms in appointment procedures, eligibility criteria, tenure management, decision-making processes, and professional competence. These efforts are essential if we are to restore public confidence in the EC and move toward a more equitable and inclusive democracy.

The appointment process of Electoral Commissioners: The Constitution mandates that Electoral Commissioners to be appointed on the advice of the Council of State—distinct from other appointments made in consultation with the Council of State. However, the degree to which this constitutional provision is upheld remains unclear; whether the appointments have followed the advisory or consultative route. This ambiguity has led to widespread perceptions of partisanship, casting doubts on the credibility of the appointees and the processes. The persistent belief that commissioners are loyal to appointing authorities undermines their independence and the legitimacy of the Commission.

This raises a larger philosophical question of: how do we balance the Electoral Commission's independence with the need for collaboration and consultation? Are you fiercely independent, or selectively independent? At what point do you consult, and what does that consultation mean? Remember, the courts distinguish between “consulting with” and acting “on the advice of.” And the EC can shift positions when it suits it—often to the detriment of the public.

Historical precedents and missed opportunities: During the tenure of the former Electoral Commissioner, little attention was paid to the manner of his/her appointment. However, when he vacated the position, some stakeholders recommended a more inclusive and transparent process. Unfortunately, these recommendations—meant to mitigate polarisation and build public trust—were ignored. We must ask ourselves whether it is time to institutionalise a more open, consultative, and deliberative appointment process to enhance public confidence in the Commission.

The issue of tenure: Another matter of concern is the fixed tenure of the commissioners. In Ghana, voluntary resignation on ethical or health grounds is rare. This cultural norm can result in long-serving officials who outstay their relevance; potentially compromising credibility and

institutional independence. We must review tenure policies to strike a balance between experience and accountability.

Inadequacy of eligibility criteria: This minimal standard is inadequate. It was proposed that the bar is raised by considering candidates with backgrounds in conflict resolution, arbitration, or similar areas requiring impartial decision-making. Such individuals are more likely to bring fairness and discernment to their roles.

Decision-making processes at the Electoral Commission: It is unclear whether the Commission's decisions are made collectively or by the Chair alone. Understanding whether decisions require a majority, super-majority, or unilateral is essential. Collective decision-making tends to yield better and more transparent outcomes. If the Commission does not operate this way, reforms should be considered.

Importance of competence and integrity: Even with formal independence, the credibility of the Commission hinges on its competence. Decisions must be lawful, well-reasoned, and well-documented. Incompetence, even without overt bias, can erode public trust. For instance, the Commission previously attempted to register Ghanaians abroad but ended up registering only select official groups. This inconsistency can be perceived as political manipulation, even if it was not.

Session 8: Tackling the Monetisation of Politics and Political Corruption (Vote Buying and Abuse of Incumbency)

Panelists: William Nyarko (ACILA/CW), Hon. Edem Senanu (AUABC), Mrs Mary A. Addah (Exec Dir. GII)

8.1 Sessional overview

Ghana's 2024 elections, like previous polls, were marked by persistent concerns over the increasing monetisation of politics and entrenched political corruption. Key issues such as vote buying and abuse of incumbency (i.e., the use of state resources for partisan gain) continue to undermine the integrity of electoral processes, distort citizen choices, and weaken democratic accountability. Despite various advocacy and institutional efforts, these practices appear to have become more pervasive and sophisticated.

CODEO's 2024 Election Observation Reports highlighted numerous instances of vote inducement across the country. These included distribution of cash, food items, and other material goods during campaign periods and on election day. The misuse of incumbency advantages also ranged from the use of official vehicles for campaigning to the commissioning of public projects. These became political campaign tools, and raised concerns about the uneven playing field for political competition.

This session explored systemic drivers of monetisation of politics. It also discussed the existing legal and institutional safeguards, and proposed reform options, including campaign finance transparency, enforcement of electoral laws, and citizen-led accountability mechanisms to tackling monetisation of politics and political corruption.

8.2 Guiding questions

The panel was guided by the following questions:

- What specific forms of vote buying and abuse of incumbency were documented during the 2024 elections?
- What are the systemic drivers behind the increasing monetisation of politics in Ghana?
- How effective are Ghana's current laws and institutions in deterring these corrupt electoral practices?
- What lessons can be drawn from the enforcement gaps during the 2024 elections?
- What best practices from other democracies and jurisdiction could inform Ghana's response to political corruption?
- How can citizens and civil society strengthen social accountability and reduce tolerance for vote buying?
- What is the role of the EC in tackling monetisation of politics and political corruption?
- And how do we foster collaboration among stakeholders including the EC, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), political parties, CSOs, and law enforcement bodies in the fight against corruption?
- What priority reforms should be pursued by state and non-state actors before the next election cycle?

8.3 Panel discussion

The persistence of political corruption and monetisation of electoral processes presents a critical challenge to democratic consolidation in Ghana. This session interrogated the structural, legal, and socio-cultural underpinnings of vote buying and the abuse of incumbency. The session also highlighted the corrosive impact of these practices on public trust, electoral competitiveness, and inclusive governance. Participants emphasised the need for comprehensive reforms to curb the influence of money in politics, promote ethical leadership, and safeguard the integrity of electoral processes.

Abuse of incumbency: Abuse of incumbency/state resources for electoral advantage has been a recurring problem since 1992 election. When a party is in opposition, it complains about abuse of incumbency/state resources. When the party forms the government it does the same or similar to what it had complained of. Abuse of state resource (ASR)/incumbency occurs in many forms. It includes, but not limited to, an incumbent's use of financial, enforcement, and regulatory and institutional resources of the state which are not typically available for use by opposition candidates. The practice has a lot of negative impacts on electoral integrity. The crux of the problem lies in a legal vacuum. Despite constitutional provisions such as Article 284 addressing conflicts of interest, there is no explicit prohibition on the abuse of incumbency. Addressing this deficiency requires legislative intervention to codify restrictions against the use of state resources for political advantage.

CSOs such as IEA, CDD-Ghana, Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), among others have done extensive work on abuse of incumbency /ASR but state does not take corrective action. The key challenge to addressing abuse of incumbency/ASR is a lack of legal prohibition. Prohibition on public office holders' avoidance of conflict of interest in Article 284 of 1992 Constitution and upcoming CoPO Bill do not address abuse of incumbency/ASR

Normalisation of vote buying: While vote buying is not new to Ghanaian politics, it has gained alarming prominence in recent election cycles. Vote buying is also a recurring problem negatively impacting on electoral integrity. Historically, from 1992 until about 2008 elections,

vote buying was not such a hydra-headed problem as supporters and voters seemed content with a party or candidate T-Shirt.

What has changed? In a research report by the CDD-Ghana in 2022, voters say politicians take big money from public purse and since they hardly see them after voting for them, they will also take big money from them before casting their votes. Other public perception surveys have revealed a rationalisation of vote buying, with some voters asserting that politicians enrich themselves once elected and, therefore, deserve to be financially ‘taxed’ prior to gaining office. Vote buying has become a big problem in both intraparty and inter-party elections. In intraparty elections through delegate system with fewer voters makes it easier to bribe voters with money and items such as fridges, TV, bicycles among others.

Findings from election monitoring efforts by the CHRAJ revealed that while some voters acknowledged receiving gifts from candidates, many expressed reluctances to report such incidents—citing fear of being attacked after reporting. The recently concluded National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP I) did not address electoral corruption.

Although existing legislation such as PNDC Law 284 criminalises vote buying in public elections and referenda, it fails to extend these prohibitions to intra-party contests—where the cost of securing nominations is often exorbitant. Vote buying, selling, treating is a crime under PNDC Law 284, Section 33 and 34. But it is only a crime in public elections and referendums. It does not cover intraparty elections. In national elections, vote buying is also an issue. Expanding the scope of vote-buying legislation and enforcing it consistently is essential.

Monetisation of politics: There is a growing trend regarding the rising expenses associated with conducting political elections. Recent research by CDD-Ghana indicates that the expenditure associated with campaigning for the presidency amounts to 100 million USD. The escalation of monetisation in electoral processes results in the marginalisation of women, youth, and other demographics lacking the financial resources necessary for competitive participation. In addressing this matter, it is essential to identify the following fundamental drivers:

- a. The absence of a regulated campaign period, which allows protracted and costly political campaigning.
- b. Filing fee structures that favor dominant parties, with partial reimbursements linked to vote thresholds.
- c. Persistent economic hardships that incentivise voter susceptibility to inducement.
- d. Inadequate enforcement of laws governing political party financing.
- e. Weak civic education and public awareness on illegality and long-term cost of vote trading.
- f. Societal value erosion and limited public knowledge of Article 41, which outlines citizens’ responsibilities.
- g. No ceiling/limit on contributions
- h. No spending limits
- i. No required verification of the identity of donors or disclosure of donors
- j. Constitutional requirement for publication of party accounts and return versus enactment
- k. Prohibition on receiving funding from a non-citizens applies to political parties, not candidates
- l. No prohibition on abuse of state resources/incumbency
- m. High cost of politics, vote buying and remediation

n. Illicit sources financing of candidates and political parties

Monetisation of politics and exclusionary effects particularly on women, youth, persons who are differently-abled affect credible election. The WFD and CDD-Ghana 2018 study revealed that it cost \$85, 000 to run as Member of Parliament (MP) (416, 500 Ghs @xchange rate of 4.9Ghs/\$, an increase of 59% from the 2012 to 2016 estimate. 4m Ghs (\$693,000) for MP at an exchange rate of 5.75Ghs = \$1; an increase of 104% from the 2018 estimate. Put the caveat that the 4m Ghs in the 2021 study comprised 2m Ghs estimated for nurturing the constituency before the primaries and 2m Ghs for the general election (2mGhs of which the WFD/CDD-Ghana 2018 575m Ghs (\$100m) to run for president;

8.4 Sessional recommendations

- a. Legal and regulatory reform: amend the Political Parties Act, 2000 (Act 574) or replace it with a comprehensive law. Legal reforms should include amending the Political Parties Act to introduce mandatory disclosure of campaign financing sources. Such measures must also apply to individual candidates, including MPs.
- b. The establishment of specialised anti-corruption courts, as seen in Kenya, may expedite adjudication of political finance violations.
- c. Prohibit abuse of state resources/ASR as part of reform of Political Parties Act, 2000 (Act 574) or electoral campaign financing law to be enacted.
- d. Amend law/enact law as part of legal reform to criminalise vote buying in intraparty elections
- e. EC to conduct intraparty elections as a form of public funding
- f. Require candidates to submit a financial report detailing contributions/donations received towards the electoral campaign
- g. Require verification of identity of donors or disclosure of donors (for donations above stipulated threshold)
- h. Place a ceiling on how much an individual or an organisation can contribute to address potential state capture
- i. Fully implement constitutional requirement for publication of political parties' accounts and application of sanctions regime
- j. Ensure that fundraising events overseas are properly regulated to enable verification of identity of donors and prohibit foreign funding
- k. Consider a mix model of private and state funding and condition state funding on promoting state objectives to increase participation of marginalised groups (women, youth, persons who are differently-abled)
- l. The recently concluded NACAP I did not address electoral corruption. NACAP II presents an opportunity to mainstream political finance transparency and accountability into Ghana's broader anti-corruption agenda.
- m. Prosecution of offenders to act as deterrence
- n. Continuous public education and research by state and CSOs
- o. Define a campaign period in legislation. For example start with 90 days per EC approval/disapproval of candidates in Sept. Reference to example from other jurisdiction: Kenya 68 days, Nigeria 90 days, and Cabo Verde.
- p. Replace EC filing fees with signatures or a combination of signatures and filing fees,
- q. Address discrimination against smaller parties who cannot make 12.5%, 25% for refund
- r. Intraparty elections costs: replace delegates system with universal party suffrage (with a role by the EC to conduct elections),
- s. Review filing and nomination fees
- t. Prohibit and enforce criminalisation of vote buying, and introduce spending limits

- u. Civic engagement, reporting mechanisms, and public trust. These can be achieved through: functional and anonymous whistleblower systems; increased publicisation of investigative outcomes, and civic education that reinforces values of honesty, patriotism, and democratic responsibility.
- v. Enhance asset declaration regime: Mandatory pre-and post-office declarations, subject to verification.
- w. Lifestyle Audits: Routine audits to validate consistency between public officers' declared income and actual wealth.
- x. Implement beneficial ownership register law: To expose and prosecute hidden beneficiaries of illicit assets.
- y. Reversal of burden of proof: Legislative adoption of a framework where unexplained wealth places the onus on public officials to prove legitimacy.

Session 9: Inclusive Governance: Strengthening Mechanisms for Intra-and-Inter-Party Dialogue and Greater Political Tolerance

Panelists: Dr Rashid Draman (ACEPA), Bridgitte Dzogbenuku (PPP), Peter Mark Manu
Speech

9.1 Session overview

The imperativeness to consolidate the democratic gains in Ghana hinges on fostering a more inclusive, tolerant, and dialogue-driven political environment. This session examined the critical role of intra-and inter-party dialogue in promoting inclusive governance, and reducing the growing trend of political polarisation, mistrust, and winner-takes-all politics.

Drawing on findings from the 2024 elections, the session interrogated how political parties engage internally with their members and structures, and externally with opposing parties and institutions (particularly the EC, courts, security, media, and CSOs). Discussions also explored existing mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration, highlighting best practices, while assessing the gaps that hinder sustained political tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

9.2 Guided questions

- a. What is the role and opportunities for reforming the IPAC?
- b. How effective are current platforms for political party dialogue at the national and local levels?
- c. What institutional or legal reforms are needed to encourage inclusive decision-making within parties?
- d. How can political parties be incentivised to engage in constructive, and non-confrontational dialogue in the elections circle (pre and post-elections, election day)
- e. What role can civil society, traditional authorities, and the media play in facilitating greater political tolerance?
- f. Beyond elections, how can Ghana embed dialogue and tolerance into everyday governance (e.g., parliamentary processes, and local governance)?

9.3 Panel discussion

Selective interpretation of rules of governance: Inconsistent, selection interpretation and application of laws and rules of governance remains a persistent issue and a threat to democratic consolidation in Ghana. The question is: *Are the political leaders truly sincere—to themselves*

and to all of us? It is not uncommon for political actors to adopt a particular interpretation of the law when in government, only to reverse that interpretation once they move into opposition. This pattern of behavior has, over time, eroded public trust in key state institutions, reinforcing a perception that these authorities are not neutral but rather serve partisan interests. There appears to be no shared understanding of the laws that govern us.

Why should institutions such as the police, EMBs, and other public offices be perceived through a partisan lens? Where do we draw the line between public service and party allegiance? These are questions that merit national reflection and honest dialogue. Having dealt with many of our leaders—particularly in Parliament—whether in opposition or in power, we have observed this pattern repeatedly. This selective approach is eroding the credibility of key institutions in the country, leading to the widespread perception of partisan control. Why should we have an “National Democratic Congress (NDC) IGP” or an “New Patriotic Party (NPP) IGP,” or an “NDC Electoral Commissioner” or an “NPP Electoral Commissioner” or an “NPP Chief Executive Officer (CEO)” or an “NDC CEO? Where do we draw the line?

Diminished commitment to national interest: Another major concern is the growing erosion of commitment to the national interest. Statements made recently by senior political figures reveal a troubling mindsets and are detrimental to democratic prospects. The Majority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Mahama Ayariga, recently stated: *“That opposition parties sometimes do not want ruling parties to succeed—because such success may harm their own political prospects.”* Also, just a few days ago, Hon. Eugene Enchi, former MP, said on Citi 97.3 FM, *“I don’t want President Mahama to succeed, because, the chances of the NPP becomes dim.”* Statements like these call into question the sincerity and priorities of our political leadership. When leaders fail to put national interests above partisan gain, the very foundations of our democracy are weakened.

Let us remember national progress benefits all: when the country fails, we all suffer. And when it succeeds, we all benefit. If public healthcare improves, it serves everyone, regardless of political affiliation. Conversely, when national systems fail, all are affected—including those in leadership. Leaders must remember that their actions and inactions—have real consequences on every citizen, including themselves.

Leadership readiness: There is a pressing need to re-evaluate how leadership is identified and selected into the political spaces. Too often, individuals ascend to positions of authority based on popularity, financial influence, or political expediency—rather than on competence, vision, or moral integrity. We must ask ourselves difficult questions: *Are political parties prioritising competence—or simply popularity?* Stated differently, many people in Parliament do not belong there. By extension, many of those in leadership roles are not qualified to lead. Too often, leadership is determined by electability rather than expertise or vision. Leadership selection often depends more on: *“The size of one’s wallet than the capacity of one’s brain”, once upon a time remarked by Hon. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu.* Leadership should not be conferred by wealth or charisma alone. A shift toward merit-based leadership is essential for sustainable national development.

Internal party structures and dispute resolution: Party structures such as National Councils of Elders, Disciplinary Committees, and Party Congresses are key to internal dialogue and dispute resolutions, particularly around, leadership contests and candidate selection—which often lead to factionalism, defections, and sometimes violence. These must be managed better

to safeguard party unity and national stability. Intra-party democracy suffers from centralisation and opacity. This reduces effective dialogue

Commercialisation of politics: The highly commercialised nature of politics in Ghana is no secret. Political campaigns are driven by money. And access to political platforms is increasingly transactional. We have seen a video illustrating this. Unfortunately, the political class cannot be relied upon to address this challenge—they are the primary beneficiaries of the confusion surrounding it. Consequently, there has been little progress in reversing this dangerous trend. While this observation is not new, it remains profoundly relevant.

9.4 Sessional recommendations

- a. Resolve the broader issue of political polarisation, by encouraging political leaders—both within and outside Parliament—to participate in constructive dialogue.
- b. The NCCE, EC and CSOs should intensify civic education on political tolerance, emphasising that political opponents are not enemies but partners in nation-building. This will reduce polarisation and encourage responsible political culture and behaviour.
- c. The credibility of our democracy cannot rest on any single institution or actor. It is a shared responsibility that requires honesty, humility, and a commitment to continuous improvement. For example, we must recognise that credible elections and principled leadership form the bedrock of democratic legitimacy and social cohesion. We must resolve to work collaboratively across political divides and institutional boundaries to secure the integrity of electoral processes.
- d. Strengthen the oversight role of the Parliament. Including initiatives to support parliamentary capacity to foster dialogue among political stakeholders, both within and outside the legislature. Embrace and respect each other regardless of political, social, religious, or ethnic backgrounds. As one country unity must remain our guiding principle.
- e. Political tolerance also refers to the willingness to extend civil liberties and political rights to those with opposing views. Dialogue—both internal and external—is crucial to cultivate trust, minimise conflict, and build a robust pluralistic society. Research confirms that the quality of democracy improves when political actors engage in peaceful contestation and inclusive negotiation.
- f. Strengthen mechanisms for intra-and-inter-party dialogue and foster greater political tolerance. Tolerance is essential in every political system. To address this, we must ensure transparency, inclusion, and consistent participation in platforms like IPAC. Empirical evidence shows that regular inter-party dialogue platforms like IPAC helps to diffuse electoral tensions, promote inclusivity and transparency and facilitate inter-party dialogue consensus on electoral reforms.

For example, South Africa's 1991 National Peace Accord created multi-party platforms that effectively managed political violence during the democratic transition. Evidence from other jurisdiction shows that the intra-party dialogue demonstrate inclusive decision-making processes and actors are better at accommodating diverse perspectives, reducing factionalism and defections. In Nigeria, robust intra-party conflict resolution mechanisms enhance cohesion and limited electoral violence.

- g. Pursue a strong legal framework with clearly defined rules for party competition, campaign conduct, and dispute resolution. At the IPAC, the Electoral Commission and political parties should enforce these rules impartially. The Electoral Commission must act as a neutral convener, and grievances should be addressed swiftly and fairly. Internally, parties should also adopt codes of conduct to ensure that internal elections promote unity and cohesion.
- h. Democratic consolidation in modern societies depends heavily on the ability of political actors to engage in constructive dialogue and practice political tolerance. Both intra-party and inter-party dialogue mechanisms reduce polarisation, build consensus, and reinforce the legitimacy of political processes.
- i. Capacity building and leadership training are essential. Political parties must invest in equipping their Council of Elders and leaders with leadership, negotiation and dispute resolution skills. Sustain investment in such mechanisms to protect democracy and ensure social harmony. Organisations like the CDD-Ghana, IEA) and the NPC are instrumental
- j. The Political Parties Act (Act 574) and related laws must be enforced to promote transparency and accountability.
- k. Consider separating party regulation from electoral operations. In Kenya and Sierra Leone, independent registrars of political parties handle this responsibility, allowing the electoral commissions to focus solely on elections. Ghana should consider a similar model.
- l. Democracy and social cohesion require the independence of constitutional bodies. We must ensure that key institutions are insulated from executive overreach. Just as central bank governors in some democracies enjoy fixed terms, Ghana must consider constitutional reforms to safeguard institutional autonomy. We must reclaim our democracy.

Session 10: Religion and Tradition for National Cohesion And Harmony: Effective Deployment of Traditional and Religious Mechanisms for Building Sustainable Peace in Ghana

Panelists: Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyina, Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu, Nana Effah-Apenteng

10.1 Session overview

Since Ghana's 2012 presidential election, religious and traditional authorities have played pivotal roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. From mediating local disputes and leading reconciliation processes to supporting national peace accords and election monitoring, these actors have proven essential in promoting social cohesion. During crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, they mobilised communities effectively, highlighting their enduring influence at the grassroots level.

However, public trust in these institutions has steadily declined. Surveys, including Afrobarometer findings, indicate a drop in trust in religious leaders from 38% to 17% between 2014 and 2023. Factors contributing to this include perceived politicisation, corruption, and

diminished moral authority. Traditional leaders, once viewed as neutral guardians of community interest, are increasingly seen as aligned with political elites.

Despite this decline, these actors remain uniquely positioned to contribute to electoral peace and civic education. Their deep community ties can be leveraged to support voter education, counter misinformation, and encourage non-violence.

This panel explored the evolving roles of Ghana's religious and traditional institutions. The panel also assessed the challenges to their legitimacy, and identify strategies to maximise their contributions to peaceful and credible elections. Key questions included: How can these actors reclaim their influence in a polarised environment? What mechanisms can ensure their neutrality and accountability? And how can they effectively support voter education ahead of future polls?

10.2 Guided questions

Historical role and continued relevance religious and traditional authorities

- How have religious and traditional leaders have contributed to peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Ghana's elections?
- What has been their unique influence in grassroots mobilisation, community dialogue, and post-election reconciliation?
- What have been their key moments of national impact: elections, COVID-19 response, local dispute mediation?

Declining public trust and legitimacy

- What has been the trend of public trust in religious and traditional authorities (e.g. Afrobarometer data: dropped from 38% to 17% in trust for religious leaders)
- What have been the root causes of declining trust: perceived politicisation, corruption and moral lapses
- What have been the consequences: weakened moral authority and reduced credibility in national conversations

Current and future roles in electoral peace and civic engagement

- How can these actors can support peaceful elections: monitoring, conflict de-escalation, and dialogue facilitation
- Leveraging their platforms (churches, mosques, durbars, palaces) for civic and voter education
- Combating election misinformation and political manipulation in communities

Strategies to restore trust and strengthen impact

- The importance of neutrality, transparency, and accountability in public life
- Capacity-building for religious/traditional leaders on electoral processes and civic roles
- Institutionalising their roles in peace architecture: formal partnerships with the Electoral Commission, National Peace Council, and civil society

Critical questions for the panel

- How can these actors maintain neutrality in a politically polarised context?
- What institutional reforms or safeguards can protect their credibility?
- How can they be effectively engaged in voter education ahead of future elections?

10.3 Panel discussion

Religion and tradition embedded in the national psyche offer powerful and culturally resonant tools for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Religion also ensures moral values formation. Religion shapes moral values, fosters community bonds, guides ethical and moral behaviour, and promotes a shared sense of purpose, belonging, and charitable acts. By operationalising the following pillars, Ghana can weave religious conviction and customary wisdom into a resilient peace architecture in order to prevent violent conflict, and nurture enduring national cohesion.

Enhance the role of religion in peacebuilding and as a moral compass and social influence:

With over 90 percent of citizens adhering to Christianity, Islam, or African traditional faiths, religious leaders possess considerable moral authority. Their teachings on justice, love, forgiveness, and mutual respect create fertile ground for tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Faith-based organisations also serve as routinely mediators of electoral and communal disputes. By formalising early-warning mechanisms, these bodies can detect rising tensions, deliver civic education, and counter extremist narratives.

Strengthen national cohesion through traditional authority: Ghana's enduring unity and social harmony hinges on the effective integration of traditional institutions into the national governance framework. Under the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization, and Religious Affairs, both faith-based and customary bodies uphold a shared mandate: to nurture mutual respect, resolve conflicts, and foster a common sense of belonging. The National House of Chiefs, established in 1969, occupies a central role in this architecture. It exercises three complementary functions:

- i. **Judicial Appellate Authority:** It hears appeals in chieftaincy disputes via regionally-balanced Judicial Committees. The Authority faces chronic underfunding. Courts convene only when government releases permit.
- ii. **Advisory capacity:** Counsels Parliament and the Executive on customary law reforms and chieftaincy policy. It also lacks direct budgetary control, resulting in delayed stipends and meeting schedules.
- iii. Customary law research: Documents, codifies, and recommends revisions to outdated traditions. It draws expertise from 80 paramount chiefs; five from each of 16 regions.

10.4 Lessons from African jurisdiction

- Rwanda's Gacaca Courts: Community tribunals combining restorative justice with local custom, facilitating confession, reconciliation and collective healing.
- South Sudan's Peace Forums (*Ajaweed*): Customary assemblies of elders mediate resource and boundary disputes, and restore trust through respected local authorities.

10.5 Sessional recommendations

Interfaith collaboration: Strengthen inter-denominational and interfaith networks to enable coordinated responses to national crises. Joint statements and shared relief efforts amplify messages of unity and give voice to marginalised communities.

Strengthen the role of traditional institutions: Paramount chiefs and elders command deep respect in matters of land tenure, kinship, and succession. Traditional councils leverage restorative-justice ceremonies and arbitration rituals—often more effective than punitive

measures—to heal communities and reconcile adversaries through customary authority and dispute resolution

Strengthen cultural unity and identity: The include festivals, proverbs, and rites of passage reinforce shared values across ethnic lines. Embed peace messages within these cultural expressions to foster long-term social integration and intergenerational harmony. A multi-pronged approach is essential to harness religious and traditional mechanisms effectively

Strengthen interfaith and intercultural platforms

- Establish and empower permanent dialogue and forums at national, regional, and district levels. And ensure they operate continually, not only in moments of crisis.
- Promote community-based interfaith groups, and equip them to adjudicate local disputes swiftly and prevent escalation.
- Convene regular regional forums for proactive grievance resolution.

Invest in capacity building programmes

- Develop tailored training curricula in conflict analysis, restorative mediation, and human-rights principles for Chiefs, Imams, Pastors, and other faith custodians.
- Facilitate peer-learning exchanges between regions so that successful mediation practices can be adapted across diverse cultural contexts.

Engage and mobilise youth in conflict prevention

- Establish youth parliaments and intercultural exchange programme under the mentorship of religious and traditional elders.
- Launch faith-inspired volunteer initiatives—such as community service days and peace-building projects to channel young people’s energy into nation-building.

Policy and planning

- Institutionalise seats for traditional and religious representatives on local government and national development committees.
- Require that all major development and peace-building plans incorporate culturally sensitive outreach strategies, leveraging faith networks for community buy-in.

Leverage media partnerships

- Forge alliances with faith-based radio stations, community theaters, and online platforms to broadcast culturally resonant peace messages.
- Produce and distribute short dramas, testimonials, and round-table discussions that model tolerance and intercommunal cooperation.

Facilitate constructive political engagement

- Mediate regular, non-partisan dialogue sessions between political party leaders and faith/traditional authorities. These should be anchored on shared values of truth, justice, and unity.
- Convene pre-election peace pacts, backed by respected clergy and chiefs, to discourage hate speech and promote issue-based campaigns.

Uphold integrity and accountability platforms

- Embed public commitments such as community oaths or faith-led pledges to honesty and transparency in political and traditional forums.

- Empower religious and traditional leaders to call out disinformation and propaganda, and reinforce a culture of trust and ethical leadership.
- Establish community peace centers anchored in customary practice.

Revive respect for elders

- Launch structured mentorship programs linking youth with elder custodians of tradition.
- Promote cultural rites that reinforce intergenerational bonds.
- Embed youth and women representatives in all mediation and peace committees.
- Elder-Youth Mentorship: Revitalise intergenerational programs that leverage elders' wisdom for conflict prevention

Champion multicultural education

- Respect for diversity, understanding the dynamics of multiculturalism, which is based on the existence of multiple groups within the society. Each characterized by its unique identity, norms and practices.
- Acknowledging rights without discrimination, exclusion or marginalisation.

Guarantee funding

- Establish a ring-fenced budget for the Judicial, advisory, and research mandates of the National House of Chief

Build capacity

- Launch tailored training in mediation, negotiation, and conflict analysis for both chiefs and local peace actors.

Legal recognition

Codify chiefs' arbitration roles in national dispute-resolution statutes to ensure procedural authority.

Institutional partnerships

- Forge formal liaison channels between the House of Chiefs, the Peace Council, and the Land Commission.

Session 11: Gender and Youth Inclusion – Lessons from Other Countries for Stronger Democratic Dividends in Ghana

Panelists: Dr Festus Aubyn, (WANEP), Prof. Akosua Adomako Ampofo. (University of Ghana), Ms Adelaide Yiriyelleh (Catholic Relief Services)

11.1 Sessional overview

Despite incremental progress, Ghana continues to grapple with underrepresentation of women and youth in political and decision-making processes. The 2024 elections offered another opportunity to assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at enhancing inclusive democratic participation. The elections produced a few new young faces (first time MPs). Unfortunately not much progress with women in the past few elections. With the passage of the Affirmative

Action Law, how do we leverage on the provisions and the schedules to critically reflect on the gains and gaps in gender and youth inclusion; especially, young women.

Drawing on comparative experiences from other democracies, particularly within Africa and other Global South contexts, the session spotlighted practical and scalable models that will lead to improved outcomes in gender equity and youth empowerment in governance. It also sought to identify actionable policy and institutional reforms that Ghana can adopt to foster a more inclusive and responsive democratic system.

11.2 Guided questions

The session was guided by the following questions:

- What lessons can Ghana learn from other countries that have achieved significant representation of women and youth in politics?
- How did gender and youth inclusion manifest in the 2024 electoral cycle? (with a focus on gender-based violence)
- How do we ensure the full implementation of the Affirmative Action Law (including challenges, strategies and opportunities)
- What policy or legislative reforms are needed to address persistent barriers to participation?
- How can political parties, the EC, and civil society better support inclusive governance post-elections?

11.3 Panel discussion

Drawing on international experiences, participants examined institutional mechanisms, legal reforms, and sociocultural shifts necessary to address systemic exclusion and foster meaningful women and youth participation and representation. Key issues included the following:

Quota systems: Categorisation and comparative application of gender and youth quotas across different democratic contexts. The selection of a quota model must consider Ghana's unique political, cultural, and institutional landscape, ensuring that whatever mechanism is adopted is both enforceable and socially resonant. Three main types of quotas emerged as strategic instruments to foster inclusive representation (see sessional recommendation below).

Structural barriers to inclusion: Persistent structural impediments – including economic disenfranchisement, cultural norms, and elite political gatekeeping – continue to undermine full participation and representation of women and youth in governance. Also, high campaign costs, restricted access to influential networks, and disproportionate media representation further exacerbate exclusionary dynamics.

Gender disparities in media representation: Women's representation in politics and governance remains constrained by both quantitative underrepresentation and qualitative stereotyping. The challenge is further deepened by social, cultural and economic factors. Also, limited airtime and issue-based coverage of female candidates have accounted for underperformance in elections. Again, framing of issues and political messaging that emphasise personal or domestic traits over competence remain a concern. Besides, heightened online abuse and cyberbullying have worked to disadvantage some female politicians.

11.4 Sessional recommendations

- a. **Policy and legislative reforms:** The following quotation systems were discussed:
 - i. **Reserved seats:** Constitutionally or legislatively designate and set aside reserved seats for underrepresented groups. This model guarantees minimum representation regardless of electoral outcomes. Countries like Rwanda and Uganda have employed this mechanism to significantly increase the number of women in parliament, making them global leaders in gender representation.
 - ii. **Legal candidate quotas:** Legislate to compel political parties to include a minimum percentage of women and youth in candidate selection lists. These quotas are usually enforced through electoral laws backed by sanctions for non-compliance. Sri Lanka and Peru serve as notable examples, where legal requirement for gender-balanced candidate lists have prompted parties to broaden recruitment efforts and political diversity.
 - iii. **Voluntary party quotas:** As self-imposed measures adopted by the political parties as part of their internal policies and ideological commitments. Though not legally binding, these quotas can be influential when backed by strong party leadership and public accountability. Cyprus Nicaragua illustrate the effectiveness of this model, where progressive party cultures have translated into higher levels of inclusion within political leadership.

Lessons **from comparative contexts:** Each quota type carries its own advantages and contextual challenges. Evidence from other democracies revealed that although quotas system are paramount, they are in themselves alone not insufficient mechanisms. Successful outcomes hinge on enforcement mechanisms, financial incentives, public education campaigns, and civic engagement programmes that address deeper institutional and societal barriers.
- b. **The role of technology: An enabler or a threat?** Technology presents a double-edged sword. While digital platforms have expanded participation, particularly among women and youth, they have also intensified exposure to cyberbullying, gendered disinformation, and online harassment. Deliberate policy responses are therefore essential to protect vulnerable groups while leveraging technology for inclusive participation, engagement and representation.
- c. Provide performance-based public funding to political parties that meet inclusive representation thresholds.
- d. Amend the Political Parties Act to mandate gender (women) and youth inclusion in executive structures and internal decision-making.
- e. Institutionalise civic education programmes that address gender stereotypes and promote women and youth political engagement and representation.
- f. Support mentorship and capacity-building initiatives targeting aspiring female and youth leaders.
- g. Enact comprehensive digital rights legislation to protect against online violence and safeguard democratic participation and representation.

Session 12: The Media as Catalyst for Peaceful Political Discourse Collaboration and Tolerance Building: Progress and Challenges, and What needs to change

Panelists: Braimah Sulemana, Executive Director, MFWA; Kofi Yeboah, General Secretary, GJA), Esq., George Sarpong, Executive Secretary, NMC); Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo, Dean of Communication Studies, University of Ghana

12.1 Session overview

The media plays a pivotal role in shaping political discourse, informing the electorate, and holding institutions accountable. The 2024 elections once again highlighted the critical role of the media in shaping public opinion, facilitating political dialogue, and promoting civic engagement. The media became a central actor in informing voters, spotlighting party manifestoes, hosting debates, covering election-day developments and collation of electoral results by the EC. Yet, the election period revealed deep challenges some of which were inflamed by the media. These included partisan bias in political commentaries, spread of mis/disinformation, and deployment of media platforms to fuel tensions rather than encouraged greater political tolerance and social cohesion. As Ghana seeks to consolidate its democratic gains, a deeper reflection on the media's performance in the 2024 electoral cycle was essential.

This panel assessed the media's conduct during the 2024 elections, drawing attention to both its positive contributions and areas of concerns. It also explored reforms needed to enhance the media's role as a catalyst for peaceful political discourse, collaboration, and national unity.

12.2 Guided issues

- Assessment of the impact of the media—positive and negative—on Ghana's 2024 electoral environment.
- Lessons learned for improving media professionalism, ethical standards, and impartiality in political coverage.
- Recommendations to enhance the media's contributions to peace and tolerance ahead of future elections.

12.3 Panel discussion

The media serve as one of the potent vehicles for public opinion mobilisation: Electoral campaigns are essentially about public communication to convince voters on why one political party/candidate is better placed to serve the interest of voters than other competitors. The media – both legacy and digital media – are most potent vehicles for such public opinion mobilisation. The power, influence and relevance of the media in electoral campaigns and democracy as a whole, has long been acknowledged.

In recognition of the influence of the media, some scholars have referred to the media as “the lifeblood of democracy.” It is also said that whoever controls the media controls the minds of the masses. A further affirmation of the power of the media is the assertion that “the media can make the guilty innocent and the innocent guilty.” An analysis of the role of the media in the 2024 elections and recommendations for strengthening future elections and democratic consolidation therefore becomes necessary.

The media landscape in Ghana: Ghana has a vibrant and pluralistic media landscape backed by constitutional guarantees of freedom enshrined in the 1992 Constitution. According to the

data by the National Communications Authority (NCA), which is in charge of issuing and regulating radio frequency authorisations, Ghana, as at the end of 2024, had 549 operational radio stations out of 805 frequency authorisations granted. There are also 133 television stations operational out of 181 TV authorisations that have been granted.

There are over 40 newspapers and dozens of news websites and blogs. On the digital front, Ghana has an internet penetration rate of about 78%. There are some 38 million active mobile phone subscriptions and more than 15 million people are on social media. Figure 1. below, shows the regional distribution of radio stations that are operational (on air) and those that are not operational (off air).

The media ecosystem in Ghana is certainly one that is good for democracy. The geographic spread of radio and TV stations across the country makes it possible for people to access and consume media in their own local language. Such a condition also makes it possible for more people to participate in electoral and governance discourse in local languages.

The significant internet penetration and access rate, and widespread use of social media are additional enablers to participatory and inclusive public discourse and debate, which are essential ingredients for a vibrant democracy.

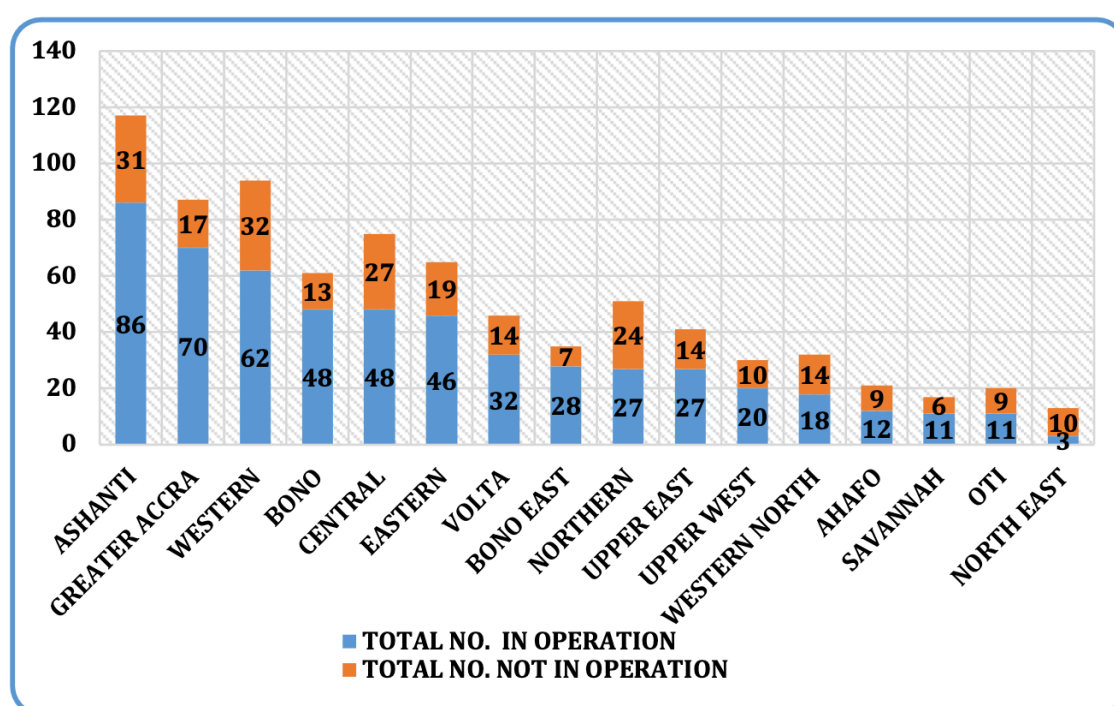


Figure 1: Source: NCA - Quarterly Statistical Bulletin on Communications in Ghana. Volume 9, Issue 4, October – December, 2024.

12.4 Challenges

Despite the modest progress, the media landscape is bedevilled with challenges that can undermine the media's role in strengthening Ghana's democracy and promoting peace. Below are some of the major challenges:

- a. **Partisan media ownership:** Radio and television remain the biggest sources of news and information among Ghanaians. Majority of radio and television stations (about 80%) are

set up and owned by active politicians as outlets not for profit but as political tools. Media ownership patterns also mirror partisan interests, leading to editorial bias.

- b. Unprofessionalism in media practice:** As result of the partisan ownership of the media and other factors, there is widespread unprofessional practices as journalists and programme presenters seek to satisfy their political owners at the expense of professional ethics. Again, due to partisanship, it is very common for media houses, especially radio and television stations to resort to insult of opponents, use of abusive and divisive comments and other forms of behaviours. These behaviours promote political polarisation and divisiveness rather than promoting social cohesion and peace.

Ahead of the 2024 elections for example, from June 2024, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) selected just 30 out of the 549 radio stations to track and document incidents of indecent campaign language which were categorised into: *insulting and offensive language; remarks calling for violence; unsubstantiated allegations; inflammatory and provocative expressions; expressions calling for divisions; and tribal slurs.*

From June 2024 to February 2025, a total of 814 incidents of indecent language was documented. More than half of the incidents (460) were insults and offensive comments; 211 incidents of unsubstantiated allegations; 42 incidents of remarks calling for violence; 32 incidents of inflammatory and provocative remarks; and 23 incidents of comments promoting divisiveness. In all sensationalism and click-driven narratives compromised factual integrity and public trust in the media. Figure 2. presents the top 14 radio stations that recorded incidents of indecent expressions.

Radio Station	Frequency	Percent
Oman FM	192	23.6
Power FM	177	21.7
Accra FM	88	10.8
Radio Tamale	46	5.7
Haske FM	42	5.2
Wontumi Radio	37	4.5
Ashh FM	32	3.9
Adom FM	24	2.9
Radio Justice	22	2.7
Shaft FM	20	2.5
Kesben FM	19	2.3
Radio Gold	19	2.3
Oyerepa FM	17	2.1
Onua FM	16	2.0

Figure 2: *Source: Media Foundation for West Africa, 2024 elections monitoring report*

The gloomy part is that the people who preside over programmes on radio stations as programme hosts are often the lead perpetrators of the unprofessional conduct. And where they were not the perpetrators, they either urge on the perpetrators or do not anything to discourage such conduct by their panellists.

Also, almost 80% of the radio programmes on which indecent expressions were recorded were programmes that were streamed live online mainly through social media, predominantly on Facebook and sometimes on YouTube, which make the programmes accessible to people outside the coverage area of the radio stations and even beyond Ghana.

- c. **Media financial viability:** Weak financial viability couple with poor remuneration of journalists.
- d. **Safety of journalists:** These include threats, physical attacks, arrest of journalists, among others
- e. **Proliferation of Mis/Disinformation (MDI):** While proliferation and use of social media enable public participation, they have also become potent tools for the spread of MDI especially during elections with associated potential damning consequences. The two main political parties in Ghana, the ruling NDC and the main opposition NPP have recruited what is commonly referred to as “social media troops” or “cyber battallions.” Such people, mainly the youth, tend to put out a lot of MDI in their bid to counter each other and downplay the messages of their opponents. The problem of MDI is not new. But a number of factors including the following make the problem more alarming: a) increased access and use of social media, b) the ease with which information can be shared, c) the diverse techniques that can be used to manipulate information, d) the diversity and proliferation of MDI actors, e) the deliberate recruitment of social media troops by political parties, and f) foreign malign actors.
- f. **The digital broadcasting present emerging threats to media pluralism:** The migration to digital broadcasting—though technologically beneficiaries—has introduced new risks to press freedom. Also, centralisation of signal distribution allows for potential content control. Again, regulatory ambiguity over responsibilities between distributors and content creators may facilitate censorship. Without legal safeguards, the infrastructure intended to modernise broadcasting may inadvertently undermine its independence. This highlights the urgent risks facing Ghana’s broadcasting and internet freedom landscape. It also highlights the structural transformations currently underway in media transmission, and raises critical concerns regarding content control, regulatory gaps, and foreign influence in Ghana’s digital broadcasting ecosystem.
- g. **Content producer–distributor relations:** There is currently no legal framework governing the contractual relationship between content producers and signal distributors. If a distributor, particularly during an election period, refuses to transmit a broadcaster’s content for subjective reasons, the only recourse is a civil lawsuit. This gap in regulation creates a vacuum where arbitrary decisions can stifle political discourse and journalistic independence. Therefore, there is a compelling need to legislate clear parameters to define and protect the relationship between content producers and distributors.
- h. **Threat to independent broadcasting.** If the current trajectory is not reversed, there may be no independently operating broadcasting stations in Ghana by the end of the decade. The increasing consolidation of content distribution under a single channel digital box system poses a serious threat to media freedom. All television stations are gradually being required to transmit their content through this centralised platform, which is controlled by external actors with the power to terminate transmissions unilaterally. This development enables

governments or affiliated entities to silence dissenting voices simply by switching off their access—something that previously required physical presence at broadcasting facilities.

- i. **Liability in cases of content infractions:** A key emerging challenge is determining liability in cases of content infractions. Should responsibility lie with the signal distributor or the content producer? While a dual-responsibility model might seem appropriate, it inherently gives the distributor the authority to censor any content deemed risky. This transforms signal distributors into censors, particularly if they are aligned with the government or other political interests. Such a setup enables the pre-emptive silencing of media houses under the pretext of risk aversion, and will undermine editorial independence.
- j. **Foreign influence and strategic control:** Another serious concern is the growing foreign dominance over signal distribution infrastructure. Data indicates that Chinese companies control a majority of the signal distribution networks across Africa. This concentration of technological infrastructure in foreign hands makes African governments vulnerable to external influence and potential manipulation.
- k. **Absence of effective media regulatory mechanism:** Despite the growth, influence and importance of the media in Ghana's democracy and stability, the industry is largely unregulated. Unprofessional media conduct could have a devastating consequence on national progress and stability. The National Media Commission (NMC), which is the statutory regulator arguably do not sanction media organisations that flout the laws. The Commission has also not been largely effective in its oversight responsibilities. Again, the NMC while constitutionally mandated, remains under-resourced and lacks punitive authority, limiting its capacity to curb these unethical broadcasting. There is also a regulatory problem in which the National Communication Authority (NCA) in charge of issuing broadcast frequency authorisations do so without a regulatory responsibility over the conduct of broadcast stations in terms of content.
- l. There is the absence of a comprehensive broadcast law which leaves a critical media governance gap.

12.5 Sessional recommendations

To preserve the media's democratic role and expand its contribution to peace and national development, the following pathways for reform and institutional renewal were recommended:

- a. Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue involving the government, civil society, academia, and media institutions to co-create solutions to address the challenges confronting the media. this can take the form of a national forum on media freedom and media accountability along the lines of the national conference on deregulation of the broadcasting sector held in 1993. Such a national forum can focus on topics such as: a) media freedoms and responsibility in Ghana; b) management of broadcasting frequency in Ghana, c) media regulations, d) the role and functions of the NMC versus the NCA, e) financing of private media in Ghana, and f) big tech and media sustainability in Ghana
- b. Intensify media literacy efforts including possibility of inclusion in the school curriculum
- c. Engage big tech in social media regulation
- d. Intensify peace journalism efforts through capacity building for journalists including training on ethics, disinformation, election coverage, and strengthening the national values system

- e. Enact a comprehensive broadcast law and revise existing frameworks to reflect the digital era.
- f. Establish newsroom policies on gender equality, harassment prevention, and equitable coverage.
- g. Establish a legal framework governing the relationship between signal distributors and content producers.
- h. Assign responsibility for content infractions to avoid unintended censorship.
- i. Protect against political misuse of centralised distribution systems.
- j. Monitor and regulate foreign control over national broadcasting infrastructure.
- k. Strengthen media's capacity for inclusive political dialogue. For the media to act as a credible arbiter of democratic discourse, it must be strengthened through strategic reforms, robust legal protections, independence, and institutional support.
- l. Enhance media's capacity to foster inclusive political dialogue, deepen public trust, and enhance democratic resilience.

Session 13: Uncertainties: Navigating Pathways in Building the Future We Want

Panelists: Most Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Asante, Dr. Osei Bonsu Dickson, Dr. Angela Dwamena-Aboagye

13.1 Sessional overview

In an era marked by rapid change and shifting global and national dynamics, uncertainty has become a defining characteristic of political and social landscapes. This session examined the implications of uncertainty on Ghana's democratic development. It also identified proactive strategies for building a resilient and inclusive future. Additionally, the discussion focused on systemic risks, institutional reforms, the evolving role of technology, and the relevance of inclusive governance and peacebuilding.

13.2 Panel discussion

Understanding uncertainty in democratic governance: Uncertainty was framed as the unpredictable emergence of complex and poorly understood challenges, that, if left unaddressed, could significantly undermine democratic progress, national cohesion, and development. The dialogue emphasised that democratic stability cannot be assumed; it must be nurtured through deliberate and coordinated actions.

13.3 Key threats to democratic stability

The key threats to democratic stability and consolidation included the following:

Political polarisation and erosion of trust: Increasingly, political polarisation is eroding the spirit of consensus (building) and replacing it with a high-stakes "winner-takes-all" politics. This trend weakens trust in democratic institutions, notably the EC, judiciary, and security agencies. The mistrust feeds public skepticism about the efficacy of current governance model.

Identity-based politics: The use of ethnic-based political narratives continues to deepen societal divisions and fragment national unity. Identity-based politics often manifests strongly in strongholds regions and constituencies of the political parties. Such political labelling reinforces exclusionary politics. To address this, requires interventions aimed at structured political dialogue at the grassroots level which mirrors national trust-building efforts.

Decline in civic and democratic values: The quest to democratic consolidation is being challenged by a decline in patriotism and volunteerism, tolerance, accountability, and civic values. Increasingly, democratic ideals and political discourse have shifted away from nation-building ideals towards zero-sum political competition that is characterised by winner-takes-all” governance. This negative political cultural undermines democratic consolidation.

Electoral violence and impunity: continuous national failure to prosecute electoral crimes and violence...

Digital information environment: Technology is a double-edged sword. While it enables real-time communication and civic participation, it also facilitates rapid spread of misinformation and manipulated narratives. Social media platforms—particularly, those affiliated with political actors—are increasingly deployed to disseminate disinformation. Unchecked spread of false narratives during elections, poses a threat to public order and electoral information integrity.

Unregulated political show programmes: There are concerns about the structure of political shows, which often prioritise sensationalism over substance. Programmes are frequently designed to generate social media attraction creating an environment where MDI thrives, rather than fostering informed debate. Some media personalities contribute to toxic public discourse through inflammatory language, and biased moderation—particularly toward women panelists.

Weak parliamentary oversight and independence: the constitutional arrangements that influence the balance of power between the executive and legislature needs to be reexamined. And the fundamental questions of appointing ministers from Parliament, and how that affects legislative independence of parliament and its oversight functions.

13.4 Sessional recommendations

Ghana’s democratic journey faces real and emerging uncertainties—but also that there are practical pathways for navigating them. Building a future anchored on democratic stability, institutional integrity, and inclusive participation will require coordinated action across all sectors. Key recommendations include the following:

- a. Addressing the root causes of political polarisation and identity-based politics.
- b. Enhancing civic education and civic values.
- c. Adopt innovative approaches to peacebuilding that prioritise community-based peacebuilding and grassroots involvement. This also include multi-generational platforms that involves the youth, women, and elders as effective mechanisms for conflict resolution, resilience-building and social cohesion.
- d. The Electoral Commission must increase transparency and adopt open communication
- e. Judicial processes must be demystified to reduce perceptions of biases.
- f. Offer specialised training to security services in digital intelligence to respond to election-related digital challenges.
- g. Adopt multi-agency digital risk management mechanism to deal with unforeseen cybersecurity challenges including electoral threats in real time.
- h. Be intentional and promote gender equity. Existing frameworks such as the Affirmative Action Law and Ghana’s National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325—provide clear guidance, but implementation has been inconsistent. There was a strong call for stakeholders to assess and act on these frameworks to ensure meaningful inclusion of women and youth in decision-making and governance.

ANNEX 1: OUTCOME STATEMENT

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL AT THE POST-2024 ELECTION CONFERENCE AT CAPITAL VIEW HOTEL - KOFORIDUA

H.E MR JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA, the President of the Republic of Ghana

Ministers of State

Members of Parliament present

Eminent Members of the National Peace Council

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corp here present

Distinguished Representative of Civil Society

The Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Governing Board and Management of the National Peace Council I wish to welcome the President of the Republic of Ghana to the closing ceremony of this three -day stock-taking conference that discussed and reviewed the 2024 general elections with the objective to:

- Evaluate the 2024 general elections and make recommendations for reforms to ensure violent free elections in the future.
- Build consensus and trust among the political actors, EC, the Judiciary, Security Agencies, traditional and religious leaders and youth groups
- Make intervention proposals for policy and practice reforms to engender the required trust and confidence in Ghana's future elections, security and institutions

We use this opportunity to thank His Excellency for signing the Peace Pact ahead of the 2024 general election and to congratulate you on winning the December elections.

Mr. President, to respond to challenges associated with the 2020 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections the National Peace Council Instituted **Post Election Dialogues** and in furtherance of this objective, organised the first National Stakeholders' Dialogue at Ada in July 2021. The Dialogue was attended by the leadership of the political parties, the Electoral Commission (EC), Leadership of both sides of Parliament, the Judiciary, and key Ministries, the media and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working around governance and political leadership.

The dialogue recognised the necessity to strengthen consensus among the political parties, the Electoral Commission, the security agencies, civil society and the media to strengthen mechanisms for greater national cohesion, political tolerance, conflicts prevention, peacebuilding leading to national stability. The proposals that emerged from the dialogue enhanced the conduct of a credible and violent free elections in 2024. These included:

- a. strengthening election governance, transparency and credibility;
- b. improving election security;
- c. promoting national cohesion, peaceful coexistence and greater political tolerance;
- d. recognising the supremacy of national interest over partisan political goals;
- e. enhancing the mechanisms for intra-party and inter-party dialogue, adjudication, and sanction regime to deal with impunity;
- f. strengthening the traditional and religious mechanisms for building sustainable peace;

- g. promoting inclusive participation of women, youth and persons with disability in political governance, and
- h. improving capacity and orientation of the media towards promotion of peaceful political discourse.

The National Peace Council was tasked with specific responsibilities and among them:

- a. To take steps to facilitate the return of the NDC to the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC).
- b. To facilitate engagement with the Electoral Commission for trust building and restoration of healthy relationships between the NDC and the IPAC.
- c. To facilitate mechanism for collaborative partnership among the political parties.
- d. To help build capacity of political parties and assist them to build intra-party mechanisms for adjudicating internal party disagreements and conflicts,
- e. To partner with other institutions to provide platforms similar to the Ghana Political Parties Forum previously facilitated by the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) for continuous and regularized national dialogue among political parties and other stakeholders for consensus building and harmony.

Your Excellency, the NPC, is happy to report to you some of the steps that were undertaken together with our partners to address these issues.

- i. The NPC facilitated the return of the NDC to IPAC in December 2023, ahead of the elections.
- ii. In response to the assignment to facilitate mechanism for collaborative partnership among the political parties and provide them platform for dialogue, the NPC established the political party trust building programme to provide platform for discussing key national issues among the political parties, and this conference is one of such programmes.
- iii. Further to this, the NPC has in collaboration with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) built capacity of the political parties on inter and intra-party conflict resolution mechanisms which has strengthened the parties' capacity to manage first inter-party and inter-party conflicts.
- iv. The NPC engaged extensively with the Judiciary and stakeholders to find acceptable limits to Parliamentary election dispute adjudication. The process could not be completed because of the closeness to the elections.

Your Excellency, this year's Dialogue, which is being closed today, has been very productive. Some of the key outcomes are the following:

1. The 1992 constitutional architecture offers excessive concentration of constitutional powers and control to the executive president (against the other constitutional branches of government)
2. Again, the constitution gives excessive appointing power to the President of the Republic. Critical concerns are around appointment, financing and executive oversight over independent constitutional bodies which undermine the independence of these bodies in practice.
3. Revise the structure of the Council of State. How do we create a Council of State that mirrors the wisdom and moral authority of the traditional councils of elders, rather than mimicking the executive cabinet dynamics?

4. Politicisation of the appointment of chairperson of the Election Commission and demonisation of the Electoral Commission undermines its independence and public confidence. Independence, technical and moral credibility of the Electoral Commission are so important to democracy. The Electoral Commission has become a primary target of influence and primary target of capture of the political processes by the political elites.
5. We are supposed to be practicing democracy, and in a democracy, the election management body is the most important institution through which we achieve the key goals of democracy. But our democracy is persistently and increasingly defective in delivery on all the three principals ends of good governance.
6. The winner-takes all system of governance has dismantle multi-party politics in the interest of duo-poly, political polarisation and politics of vocation and politics of exclusion. We are battling with democracy and state capture and unethical materialism in Ghana.
7. Political party financing and monetisation of politics have raised the cost of elections which undermines the credible election and exclude women and youth. We need to interrogate the veil between political party financing and financing of candidates
8. The IPAC is relevant in terms of the growing dynamics of the political landscape in Ghana. And we must propose measures to make it fit for purpose.
9. Intra-party conflict disputes and conflict appears more worrying and a threat to national cohesion, than inter-party conflict and between the NDC and NPP. Particularly, in the selection of party leaders and flagbearers, and centralisation of power in political party executive, with limited avenues to address internal party grievances.
10. In every electoral cycle, the Electoral Commission is faced with limited timelines to pursue electoral reforms.
11. The challenge of unexplained wealth and corruption in Ghana.

Your Excellency, the following recommendations were made at this year's post-elections dialogue:

12. Reform the appointing authority and power of the Executive President. For example, the appointment of the Chief Justice, the appointment process of the Council of State, the appointment of the Inspector-General of Police, appointment of Metropolitan, Municipality and District Chief Executives, etc.
13. Reduced the influence of the President in the partisan appointment of the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission is appointed on the advice of the Council of State. This advice must be applied perfectly, and the legibility criteria should be complex and robust. And enhance the independence and credibility of the Election Commission.
14. The moment to review the 1992 Constitution is now. We have made two attempts. We need strong political will to implement the recommendations that will come out of the current Constitutional Review Committee to help us cure the challenges of the 1992 Constitution.
15. Revisit multi-party democracy to encourage the smaller political parties to gain representation in parliament. This should include the consideration for adopting proportional representation
16. Revisit the proposed reforms on election of MMDCs to cure some aspects of the duo-poly

17. De-couple the Attorney General from the Ministry of Justice to help deal with the electoral violence, crime and impunity.
18. Establish Multi-Party Commission to play the regulatory role of the political parties in order to enable the Electoral Commission to play its core role of conducting elections in Ghana; Consider modelling the Kenya example of Register of Political Parties
19. Legislate to regulate the political party campaign expenditure, financing, commercialisation of elections and cost of elections campaigns to enhance the overall transparency and accountability of political financing. A mix model of state and commercial funding of political campaigns (0.3% state fund of election in Kenya as an example)
20. Define campaign period. Perpetual campaign mode affects the space for governance.
21. Fully implement the Ayawaso West Wougou bye-elections report. Also, the law enforcement agencies should ensure strict and comprehensive implementation of Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) to dismantle vigilante groups, vandalism at election collation centres, prevent violence and impunity.
22. Legislate the IPAC as a formal structure of electoral politics in Ghana. Decentralise IPAC to the regional and constituency levels.
23. Carry out national conversation on politics, governance, morality and values. Codify the core values of Ghanaians in the Constitution and enforce them.
24. Pursue strong asset declaration regime to deal with corruption. Declare both the asset and liability and publish them.
25. Pursue lifestyle audit and beneficial ownership law to cure the problem of corruption of political appointees and public officials.
26. Establish specialised court for anti-corruption
27. Fully operationalise Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Act, 2024 to enhance women's participation and representation particularly in legislature. This should include quota system and safe seat for women in addition to the number of MPs elected through constituency elections to ensure that women and young people are adequately represented within Ghana's governance architecture to promote gender-sensitive electoral reforms
28. Operationalise youth parliament
29. Strengthen civic engagement and participation in the democratic process
30. Strengthen the role of traditional and religious bodies in governance by promoting greater inter-faith and inter-cultural harmony and platforms to promote dialogues, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, and
31. Build synergies between national policy agenda and political party manifestoes and national development.

Conclusion

Your Excellency, the 7 December 2024 presidential and parliamentary; the ninth since the return to multiparty democracy in 1992 reaffirmed Ghana's reputation as a beacon of stability in West Africa. The successes were built on notable strengths. The peaceful transfer of power reinforces the country's democratic trajectory and credentials. The Electoral Commission maintained a transparent and professional posture. This contributed to building on its reputation in conducting elections in Ghana. In the midst of this glory, we are still faced with numerous challenges that poses existential threat to the foundation of constitutional governance. Recognising the challenges, and this Dialogue has resolved to support government to implement these recommendations in order to advance democratic consolidation, economic growth and development.

Thank you for your attention.