

# **REPORT ON CONSULTATION WITH THE FEDERATION OF THE DISABLED**

**CONSULTATIVE FORA ON ASSESSING TWO DECADES  
OF DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN  
GHANA**

**ORGANISED BY: MLGRD, ILGS & GHANA FEDERATION  
OF THE DISABLED**

**SPONSORED BY: GERMAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

**DATE: 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2009**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGES</b>
1.0 Overview of Consultation.....	1
1.1. Background.....	
1.2. Rationale.....	2
1.3. Objectives .....	
1.4. Methodology.....	
1.5. Participants.....	3
1.6. Venue.....	3
1.7. Moderation.....	3
2.0 Opening Session.....	4
2.1 Chairperson’s Remarks.....	4
2.2 Welcome Address by the Director of ILGS.....	
2.3 Remarks by Ashanti Regional President of Ghana federation of the Disabled.....	5
2.4 Remarks by the German Development Service.....	5
2.5 Keynote Address.....	5
2.6 Participants Expectations.....	7
3.0 Presentations and Discussions.....	8
3.1 General Reflections on the Assembly System of Local Governance.....	9
3.2 Proposal to Improve Local Governance and Decentralized Policy by The Ghana Federation of the Disabled.....	9
3.3 Plenary Discussions and Comments.....	12
3.4 Key Areas and Recommendations.....	13
3.5 Individual Submissions.....	13
3.6 Conclusion.....	15

Appendix 1: List of Participants.....	16
Appendix 2: Programme Time Table.....	18
Appendix 3: General Reflection on Twenty Years of Decentralization and Assembly System of Local Governance in Ghana: Issues Arising.....	
Appendix 4 : Consultation with GFD in Pictures.....	

# 1.0 OVERVIEW OF CONSULTATION

---

## 1.1 Background

The assembly system of local governance was introduced in 1988 with the passage of PNDCL 207. This brought into being local authorities known as metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies. Assemblies were given legislating, executing, budgeting, planning and rating authority. Provisions for representation of the people included elected and appointed memberships of assemblies.

These provisions were intended to benefit all sections of the population. In particular, the disabled could have benefited from the appointed memberships, use of local languages in the business of the assembly, the establishment of the sub-structures and the opportunity for assemblies to establish special interest sub-committees. However, twenty years of implementation has not resulted in equal levels of participation of all sections of the population, particularly the disabled. There are also indications that local government programmes should be more responsive to the needs of the vulnerable.

Twenty years of implementation have yielded various results and experiences from the perspective of practitioners as well as the citizenry whose lot the decentralization process was intended to improve. National and international environments and their socio-economic, political, technical and administrative dimensions have also changed considerably over two decades. These developments have put additional pressures for local authorities to innovate and perform even in relation to their original functions. Therefore, for Ghanaian local authorities to respond appropriately and be pro-active in ensuring the well-being of their citizens there is an urgent need to take the changing context into account and adapt efficiently and effectively. .

The government intends to conduct a national stakeholder conference to review and recommend measures for accelerating Ghana's decentralization effort. However, a series of activities are being undertaken to precede the conference, in order to facilitate wider ownership of the recommendations and products.

Specifically, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has identified four sets of activities to be undertaken to provide inputs for the national stakeholder conference. Namely:

- a) consultation of special interest groups;
- b) regional consultations (which are presently ongoing)
- c) identification and analysis of existing literature, reports and documentation and
- d) an ongoing process of generating written memoranda, statements and position papers as inputs for the purpose of reviewing decentralization.

The entire exercise is intended to generate five main outputs:

- (i) an issues paper outlining the key issues as is currently known;
- (ii) a consolidated stakeholder review process report with proposals for the acceleration of decentralization
- (iii) a revised decentralization policy framework
- (iv) a second national decentralization action plan
- (v) inputs on priorities for the envisaged legislative and constitutional review processes.

It is within this context that a consultation with the Ghana Federation of the Disabled was organized.

## **1.2 Rationale**

As one of the Consultations with Special Interest Groups, the Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development organized a meeting with disability-oriented organizations under the auspices of the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD) and with support from the German Development Service (DED) and the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS).

It recognized that representatives of the disability groupings and disability-rights organizations made several submissions on current local government arrangements as well as provided proposals and initiatives to enhance attention to the rights of the disabled in and through the assembly system.

While these yielded useful outputs, it is important to consult activists and advocates further to deliberate on the experiences of twenty years of the assembly system and elicit recommendations on how to proceed in ways that will ensure efficient and sustainable local level development.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Meeting**

The objective of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for participants to contribute to the review process. Specifically, the meeting:

- Reflected on the performance of the assembly system over the past two decades especially in relation to the rights and participation of the disabled– the achievements, the lessons and the priority areas for reform

- Examined the interpretations of concept of decentralization, the issues that have arisen in the different sectoral approaches to its operationalization
- Made recommendations for the way forward.

The intended outcome of the meeting was an assessment of the decentralization process and the assembly system of local governance; good practices and lessons was generated; and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of Ghana's decentralization and local governance processes was provided.

## **1.4 Methodology**

The one-day meeting consisted of submissions and presentations by the moderators and representatives of the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD). The emerging areas of concern will constitute areas for further, thematic discussion to generate solutions and proposals for the way forward.

Though the focus was on reforming decentralization in the foreseeable future, efforts was made to distill issues for proposed legislative and constitutional reform.

The outputs of the meeting were a list of concerns and recommendation provided by participants.

## **1.5 Participants**

A total of forty (40) participants, drawn from partners of the Ghana federation of the Disabled attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached in *Appendix 1*

## **1.6 Venue**

The venue of the workshop was the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) Accra

## **1.7 Moderation**

The meeting was co-facilitated and moderated by Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboagye, Mrs Evelyn Arthur and representatives of the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development. The DED was present and gave some remarks. A programme adopted for the meeting is attached in *Appendix 2*.

## **2.0 OPENING SESSION**

---

The opening session started with an opening prayer led by Johnson Mahama after which dignitaries were invited to the high table. Mrs. Evelyn Arthur was the chair person for the opening ceremony. Mrs. Arthur has been a practitioner in local governance for many years, first as a budget officer and then joined the development sector for the last eight years and became Chief of Party for the Ghana Accountability Improves Trust (GAIT) for four years. She is a member of the advisory committee on decentralization set up by the Minister of Local Government and Rural development.

Other dignitaries on the high table included the Director for Policy at the Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) who represented the Minister, Ms. Daniela Wener, representative of DED and Mr. Atakora Poku, President of the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD) in the Ashanti Region, representing the National President of GFD. Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboagye was also on the high table as the facilitator and moderator of the meeting.

### **2.1 Chairperson's Remarks**

The chair person, Mrs. Evelyn Arthur was introduced and she accepted the position and touched on the fact that both Ghana's constitution and the Local Government Act provides for popular participation and for interest groups to be heard and their concerns and needs addressed. After 20 years of the decentralization program it was important to involve all stakeholders to share their experiences on what has worked, what need to be changed for the system to be effective and achieve its purpose. She elicited their cooperation for a successful meeting.

### **2.2 Welcome Address by the Director of the Institute of Local Government Studies**

The Director of Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS), Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboagye, welcomed participants on her own behalf and on behalf of the Minister and commended them for coming as schedule. She expressed satisfaction with the high number of attendance. She noted that local governance was about everybody and she was therefore happy many are getting involved in the consultation meeting. She thanked all for coming and appealed to them to provide inputs and comments for the review of the decentralisation process which is premised on the provision of opportunities for all sectors of the population of Ghana to participate in decisions that affect their daily lives. She added that when the team was

planning for the current process of the review, they agreed that it would be of speed but was determined to do it well and she was happy it was moving on as expected.

She informed participants that the ninth regional consultation was taking place in Tamale simultaneously. She said they wanted a broad base consultation and that explained why, in addition to the regional consultations, special groups were identified to include Traditional Authorities (TAs), Parliamentarians, Ghana Federation of Disabled (GFD), Women's Coalition and market women.

In concluding, the Dr. Aboagye emphasized that the day's consultation was a great opportunity for the participants to express their concerns, if any, about the local governance experience in Ghana over past two decades. The concerns/ views expressed would be collated for presentation at the national consultation conference to be organized later. She wished them a very productive consultation meeting.

### **2.3 Remarks by Ashanti Regional Chairman of Ghana Federation of the Disabled**

Mr Atakora Opoku, the Ashanti Regional Chairman of the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD), said issues of disability have been put to the back burner for a very long time and it was a good development that they were now being recognised and brought on board to have a say on the review of the Decentralisation Process in country.

He said Persons With Disability (PWDs) do not want any sympathies but involvement and participation in decision making on matters that affect them. He further stated that some PWDs have good knowledge of the assembly system because they have been assembly members before and are happy to be involved in the review process. He, however, noted with dismay the failure of the Assemblies to adhere to the administrative directive to ensure that PWDs were represented in all the Assemblies. He prayed and hoped that their views would be given due consideration this time round.

### **2.4 Remarks by the German Development Service**

Ms. Daniela Wener welcomed all participants on behalf the German Development Service. She expressed her joy in the turn up of participants and said the meeting was about Ghana's Decentralization which involves all gathered. She said the process of decentralization is premised on participation of people as they, because decisions made at the local level affect

them all. She further said she was happy to have the opportunity to hear their thoughts and experiences regarding the assembly system of local governance. She concluded by thanking them and wishing them fruitful deliberations and sharing of ideas on how to make local governance more effective.

## **2.5 Keynote Address**

The keynote address was delivered by Mr. Robert Kuwornu, Director of Policy, of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD). In his opening remarks he said he was happy to deliver the address on behalf of the Honourable Minister, Joseph Yiekeh Chireh who was out of the country. He extended the regrets of the Minister for his inability to be present and offered the message of gratitude to the Ghana Federation of the Disabled for their sincere collaboration in the issue of decentralization.

He placed on record the gratitude of the Minister and the ILGS to the German Development Service (DED), in particular, Ms. Annette Turmann for making the event possible by their sponsorship.

He informed participants that, the government of Ghana embarked on a review of the decentralization programme and the assembly system of local governance which has been practiced for twenty years. The review process which consisted of regional fora as well as consultations with special interest groups is intended to provide inputs for a national stakeholder conference to be organized at a later time.

He further said they decided to undertake an elaborate exercise of engagement with the people of Ghana because decentralization is premised on participation. It is clearly implied in our 1992 constitution in Article 34 section 5 (d) where it says to “make democracy a reality by decentralizing the administrative and financial machinery of government to the regions and districts by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision-making at every level in national life and in government”. He again stated that the Mills Administration illustrates a spirit of inclusiveness and that is why it is important to initiate the review process which provides opportunities for various sections of the population, irrespective of education, gender, location, political affiliation, age, religion or ability, feels able to contribute and have their issues taken into account. He said they have also tried to use the review process to rekindle popular interest in local governance and local level democracy but pointed out that the stakeholder consultation process is not an end in itself but a means to an end meant to improve and accelerate decentralization and deepen local governance.

He mentioned that the Assemblies were expected to be able to facilitate service delivery, promote local economic development, provide opportunities for participation and ensure infrastructural development amongst others. Over the twenty years of implementation, he said the assemblies have had mixed levels of success. Some aspects clearly need corrective measures, such as the functioning and operationalization of sub-structures. Some have excited considerable debate, such as ensuring accountable leadership particularly whether or not to elect chief executives. Some processes have not been completed such as the institution of composite budgeting. All of these have to be taken into account and they have become more aware of the challenges of responding to the needs of the venerable groups.

He said he is aware in the past few years, the disabled made spirited claims on the DACF. He paused and asked a few questions:

- How can the concerns of the disabled be mainstreamed in local governance?
- How can assemblies systematically pay attention to PWDs and, ensuring the inclusion of the disabled in decision-making and benefits from development initiatives as is their right as Ghanaians?

He continued to stress that Persons With Disability Act (Act 715 of 2006) start with the right of people with disabilities to participate in social, political, economic, creative and recreational activities. All of these activities fall into the purview of assemblies. The law makes provision for access to public places and services in sections 6 and 7, which are also binding on assemblies. According to him section 14 of the law, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare seeks to progressively establish rehabilitation centres in regions and districts. This can only be achieved in collaboration with local government structures because the law promotes community-based rehabilitation, again a matter in which local government sub-structures have an interest.

Among other things he stated that Assemblies are also required to collaborate with other institutions to establish and operate health assessment and resources centres in each district (Section 35). He said the law also envisages regional and district offices of the National Council on Persons with Disability.

He indicated that he identified all of the above to demonstrate that even within the context of the law, there is a lot for the assemblies to consider if local government is going to be meaningful to persons with disabilities and responsive to their needs, thereby making decentralization meaningful. He said it is for the above that the meeting has been convened. They have recognized the representatives of the disability groupings and disability-rights organizations that made several submissions on current local government arrangements as

well as provided proposals and initiatives to enhance attention to the rights of the disabled in and through the assembly.

It yielded useful outputs but it is important to consult them further. He said specifically he hoped that the meeting will provide an opportunity to learn from their experiences with the assembly system over the past two decades especially in relation to the rights and participation of the disabled: the achievements, lessons and the priority areas for reform. He concluded by saying that they will like to know what decentralization means to them and also generate recommendations for the way forward. He ended by thanking them on behalf of the Honourable Minister and declared the workshop opened.

## **2.6 Participants Expectations**

The participants indicated their expectations of the meeting. The detailed expectations are presented below.

- At the end of the workshop, action will be taken on the provisions of the law
- Ignite discussions around the participation of PWDs in Local Governance
- Discussions will remind Government of its obligations
- We will be appraised of issues of decentralisation and the public will also be aware of disability issues
- PWDS themselves will get involved in Local Governance processes
- The GFD will get down to the bulk of PWDs most of whom are in the rural areas and will get involved in the 2010 Local Governance elections
- Hopes to come out with strategies of how the media can assist the PWDs to access their portion of DACF

There was also a two point message for the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development from participants through Mr. Kuwornu.

- Policy planning, implementation and monitoring should involve the PWDs at the MMDA level
- Provision of representation of PWDs in the MMDAs should be operationalized

## **3.0 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS**

---

### **3.1 General Reflections on the Assembly System of Local Governance**

The first presentation was by the moderator and facilitator, Dr. Esther Ofei-Aboagye, on the Local Government System. She said the reflection on twenty years of decentralization and the assembly system of local governance will be considered from two perspectives.

First, the performance of the assemblies given their establishment as executive, legislative, budgeting, planning and taxing authorities and second, the extent to which local authorities were empowered to perform the functions, in the light of the constitutional requirements as contained in chapter 20 of the 1992 constitution.

In the light of the first, she stated the functions of the assembly system and the emerging areas of emphasis within the functions. She noted that the constitution in chapter 20 outlines the extent to which local authorities were empowered to perform the functions assigned them as in the second perspective. They included:

- The transfer of functions, powers, responsibilities and resources from the centre to local government
- Measures to build the capacity of local authorities to plan, initiate, co-ordinate, manage and execute policies;
- Establishment of a sound financial base with adequate and reliable sources of revenue;
- Control of persons in the service of local government by local authorities, as far as possible; and
- Creation of opportunities for people to participate effectively in governance to ensure the accountability of local authorities.

She stressed that the assessment needed to consider the extent to which these are in place. She wondered whether the decentralization process had been completed and to the extent to which the objectives are been met? She listed some achievements but was also quick to note some lapses of the system to include staff and structural challenges; political and administrative difficulties; planning and budgeting inconsistencies; issues affecting local government finances; MMDAs revenue flow difficulties; lack of financial management measures; inadequate coordination and capacity building initiatives and human resources complexities.

She also mentioned guidelines envisaged on assemblies' relationships with traditional authorities. They included among others the following:

- Protocol at the Local Level and Issues of Precedence
- Representation of Traditional Authorities on MMDAs
- Relations between Traditional Authorities Unit Committees and Local Government Sub-Structures
- Platforms of Engagement Between Local Authorities (Assemblies) and Traditional Authorities
- Infrastructure Management, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Peace-Building, Security and Conflict Prevention
- Natural Resource Management
- Internal Revenue Mobilization
- Human Right Observance and Reduction of the Practice and Impacts of Negative Socio-Cultural Practice

She also told participants of some emerging issues in legal and policy framework to include to the following:

- Divergence between constitutional indication of decentralization and the actual practices in the country.
- This has been buttressed by contradictory laws and sectoral practice.
- Need for explicit policy or strategy on the fundamental issues- political, legal and financial, institutional and assist between the central government and local government- to regulate the process and demonstrate a way forward.
- Matching planning responsibilities with budgeting arrangements, funding flows and functional assignments to strengthen the authority and autonomy of the MMDAs to strengthen the authority and autonomy of the MMDAs
- Sector priorities and implementation target targets defined substantially by the MDAs Headquarters and resources allocated to meet these targets by them.
- Stronger vertical reporting and accountability rather than horizontal links;
- Promotions are largely automatic, based on years of service rather than performance.
- Little incentive to enhance staff performance in line with local needs
- Capacity building for local governance is fragmented, duplicative and uncoordinated.

- LGs have limited autonomy to plan and manage their own capacity building.
- DDF-FOAT has been introduced which seeks to systematically assess MMDA's capacities through annual assessment exercises and also determine key capacity needs.
- However, DDF system assumes MMDAs can be accountable for their institutional performance which is debatable under the present situation.
- ILGS and LGS are currently underfunded compared to their mandated

She concluded the session by stating that in spite of the achievements and challenges, there appears to be general support for continuing the assembly system but with improvements. Proposals for reforming the assembly system have been made in various reports, studies and draft guidelines. She asked, how can the proposals be strengthened and what recommendations can be made for addressing the indicated concerns and accelerating decentralizations? The full text of her presentation is attached in *Appendix 3*

### **3.2 Proposal to Improve Local Governance and Decentralization Policy by the Ghana Federation of the Disabled**

Mr. Yaw Ofori Debora presented a position paper on issues of disability and local Governance on behalf of the GFD. In his presentation he said PWDs are largely not involved or consulted on issues that even directly affect them. Taking a retrospect glance and doing a comparative study of local governance and decentralization, from colonial period to the present, he said it could well be held that considerable improvement in terms of grass root participation in decision making, project selection and implementation, have been recorded over the past twenty years. He however said zeroing in on the inclusion and participation of persons with disability (PWDs) in local governance; it is unarguable that the record is unenviable. PWDs are largely not involved or consulted in decision making processes even when they are the subject matter of the decision making. He gave suggestions to remedy the shortcomings of the current governance dispensation:

- **Decision-making process:** PWDs should be given opportunities of representation at the district assemblies, area and urban councils as well as unit committee levels. This will enable them make inputs into decision-making, especially when it affects them. Two to three percent of the government appointees of these governance structures be reserved for PWDs since they have very little chance of winning at polls.
- **Adoption of community based rehabilitation concepts (CBR):** the adoption of CBR by all assemblies is mandatory. CBR is a strategy within the general community

development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all PWDs.

- Community Base Rehabilitation (CBRs) centres be implemented through the combined effort of PWDs themselves, families, community based organizations and relevant government and non-governmental agencies like health, education, vocational and social services in all communities. This is because CBR concept will help PWDs to maximize their physical and mental abilities, access regular services and opportunities and to become active contributors to the community and society at large and enhance participation.
- Assemblies should be empowered to enact bylaws, modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against PWDs. They should enact bylaws that take into account the protection and promotion of human rights in all policies and programmes.
- To enable PWDs live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, assemblies should take measures to ensure access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communication including technologies and systems, other facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas. ICT should include electronic and emergency services for PWDs.
- Assemblies should adopt measures to raise awareness of disability and foster respect for the rights and dignity of PWDs. They should ensure to combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to PWDs and promote awareness of their capabilities and contributions to society.

### **3.3 Plenary Discussions and Comments**

Contributions that followed the presentations by participants included the following:

- There is need for an amendment of Act 462 to make it possible for PWDs to be represented in District Planning Coordinating Units (DPCUs) so that they can get involved in decisions that affect them directly. If they are members of the DPCU they will ensure that plans at the MMDA level meet the acceptable specifications. For example, public buildings will only be approved for construction if they meet the specific set standards acceptable by the GFD
- Issues of disability must be handled at community level therefore the setting up of community base rehabilitation centre is important. The centres should be backed up with adequate resources for effective implementation of programmes
- All children including PWDs should have access to education and ensuring their special needs are catered for to make learning effective. Ensuring the availability of

support devices such as white cane, teacher or interpreter for hearing impairment, and wheel chairs for integrating children in main system of education will be helpful

- There are no programmes in the assembly for physically disabled who can do sports. It is imperative also to mainstream PWDs to sports at the higher level.
- Special education unit at Ghana Education Service (GES) focuses more on the visually impaired. There is need for some focused programs for the physically challenged as there are people with hearing impairments and the blind.
- Building regulations should make it mandatory for all structures to have facilities for PWDs. To this end PWDs should be represented in the DA sub-committees on Development planning to ensure that is done.
- The need to create awareness on disability issues among health professionals. In particularly interpretation services should be provided at hospitals and can also be part of the curricula at health training institutions
- The need for all level of government to compile data on the disabled to support inclusive planning
- The need to build assessment centers in all districts to aid in early detection of disabilities in children
- The need to set up a disability desks at the DAs. It is important that disability is recognized as a development and not a charitable issue
- The need for MMDAs to also ensure that PWDs have access to economic opportunities in the districts through programs such as the Social Investment Fund, Rural Enterprises Fund and the Community Based Rural Development Program
- Need to register PWDs into the National Health Insurance Scheme
- Need to institutionalize disability responsive planning and budgeting.
- There is the need to strengthen the capacity of the local government staff
- Superimposing a partisan national government on a non partisan local government system amounts to deception. There needs to be a decision on whether local government elections should also be done along partisan considerations
- The need to provide adequate security for PWDs particularly in conflict situations
- There is need to enforce the administrative directive to the local authorities to appoint PWDs to assemblies. This is because only a few MMDAs adhered to the directive
- MMDAs should design special programmes for PWDs
- MMDAs should ensure that PWDs are catered for in other allocations (2% for HIV/AIDS etc)

- There is need to ensure that PWDs are mainstreamed into Planning and implementation of Economic activities at the MMDAs level
- Factor disability functions in plans, budgets, implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation of MMDAs activities
- Education should be inclusive and special provision for severe cases of disability catered for exclusively
- Issues of disability are cross cutting and are not adequately catered for in the social services committee
- Assembly members orientation should include issues of disability
- Assemblies' communication/information sharing to its clients should be directed by transparent guidelines including PWDs.

### **3.4 Key Areas and Recommendations**

- **Representation**
  - There should be clear guidelines on how consultations are done to ensure the group is properly consulted and duly represented.
- **Capacity Building**
  - The Community Based Rehabilitation Centres should be put up in all districts to ensure that PWDs have access to counseling services and support
- **Participation**
  - Set up desk offices at the DAs so that the desks officers will work with the DAs to ensure that disability issues are mainstreamed into planning and budgeting
  - Need to strengthen Public Relations and complaints unit of the Assembly so that the concerns can be directed to that unit
  - PWDs should have membership in the Planning and Coordinating Unit
  - Mainstream issues of PWD in DCE and assembly membership orientation
- **Education for PWDs**
  - Enroll PWDs in regular schools

### **3.5 Individual Submissions**

Individuals also made submissions during the meeting and they are presented below:

1. District: Okaikoi South

The word “disability” should be reviewed because it creates tension psychologically, if the blind can hear, why he is called disabled.

2. District: There should be inclusion of sign language learning into the mainstream schools and all public sectors; also there should be free publication of disability issues by the media in general.

3. There should be series of such workshops

4. The MDEs should take issues of disables very serious, also the number i.e. Population of the disabled should be known every 10 years.

5. District: Ayawaso East-Accra

The review of decentralization should be accessible to the disabled especially the deaf to enable them take decision at all levels for the development of our dear nation Ghana

6. James Anewenah, Sightsavers International.

Climate change is a phenomenon which has caught up with the world and Ghana is no exception. Natural hazards such as floods, storms, drought, famine etc have serious implications for PWDs since they are a vulnerable group. What steps are the MMDAs taking to address the issue of climate change in order to avert its potential consequences?

7. The programme is very good and it should be organized annually, to help in the identification of the problems of the disabled and addressing it easily.

8. As we are working hard to find suitable solutions to the inclusion of PWDs of today, let us also think of the strategies that would inform and form the next generation.

9. District: Give opportunity to the disabled persons to get employment in the D.As. Members of the D.As should attend workshops and programmes of the disabled to know their problems and help solve them.

10. Local Government should try to reach all the hearing impaired with information through the media i.e. television or sign language interpreters, and include disabled issues in their panel of discussions
  
11. Sign language interpreters should be employed in the government institutions, the government can do this in consultation with the Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GNAD).

## **4.0 CLOSING SESSION**

---

### **4.1 Closing Remarks**

The chairperson, Mrs. Arthur noted that the NDC government has in their manifesto the need to conduct these consultations so that the people of Ghana who live by the process of decentralization will be able to say how it affects them. She further said the consultation results will be collated and sent to the national conference and she said all groups will be represented at the forum. She concluded by saying that there will be an action plan developed to ensure its implementation

## List of Participants

No.	NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS
1.	Godwin Amenumey	GNAD	Box AN 7908, Accra-North
2.	Charles Darko	GNAD	“ “
3.	Attakora A.Y Poku	GSPD	PMB TUC Accra
4.	Sarko Sulla	Sight Savers	Box KIA 18190, Accra
5.	James Anewenah	Sight Savers	“ “
6.	Robert Fimpong M.	Interpreter	Box AN 7908, Accra North
7.	Johnson Mahama	GNAD	“ “
8.	George Pristo	Interpreter	Box GP 20470
9.	Frederick Fosu	GFD	Box AC 430, Accra
10.	Julius Alawla	GNAD	Box AN 7908, Accra
11.	Robert Kuwornu	MLGRD	Box M50, Accra
12.	Michael Boadi	P.A.	Box MP 2989, Mamprobi
13.	Rita K. Kusi	GFD	Box AC 40, Accra
14.	Yaw Ofori Debrah	GFD	Box AC 40, Accra
15.	Evelyn Appiah	GAB/GFD	“ “
16.	Godson Sarpong	GSPD/GFD	Box TUC, PMB, Accra
17.	E. A. Asamoah	GNAD	Box AN 7908, Accra
18.	Israel Donkor	GSPD	Box TUC, PMB, Accra
19.	Patricia Baffre	GNAD	Box AN 7908, Accra
20.	Grace Preko	GFD/GAB	Box AC 40, Accra
21.	Diana Akuamoah	GSPD	PMB. TUC. Accra

22.	Charles Appiah	ADD	Box 306, Tamale
23.	Yaw Darko	“ “	“ “
24.	E. T. Plahar	Disability Consultant	Box OS 1280, Osu
25.	N. A. Halm	GAB	Box AC 496, Arts Centre
26.	Buernorki Plahar	P.A. to Mr. Plahar	Box OS 1280, Osu
27.	Evelyn Arthur	CLUSA Ghana	Box LG 1080, Legon, Accra
28.	Alex Tetteh	CEPD	Box PMB L 44
29.	Komabu Sefakor	CEPD	Legon
30.	Adjei Marku F.	USO	Box AN 6526, Accra North
31.	Emmanuel Abeliwine	USO	“ “
32.	Emmanuel Kodjoe	GSSD	Box GP 2476, Accra
33.	Ephaim Dzani	GSSD	“ “
34.	Bernard Boateng	Inclusion Ghana	Box 122 Naval street, N.K
35.	Nartey Adde	Chieftaincy	Box 1672, Accra
36.	Sukuman Adaw	S.O.A-G	0244122156
37.	Lillian Bruce-Liyle	MOCC, Fed. of Dis.	0243166567
38.	Adongo Atule Jocab	GAB	Jacobatt@yahoo.com,0244684 964
39.	Esther Ofei - Aboagye	ILGS	<a href="mailto:efeiaboagye@ilgs-edu.org">efeiaboagye@ilgs-edu.org</a> , 021-508817
40.	Magdalene Kannae	ILGS	<a href="mailto:mkannae09@yahoo.com">mkannae09@yahoo.com</a> , 021- 508817

## Appendix 2: Programme Time Table

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
9.30am-10.00am	Arrival and registration	MLGRD/ILGS/GFD
10.00 am-10.45am	Opening Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderator's Welcome Remarks</li> <li>• Introduction of Participants</li> <li>• Expectations of Participants</li> <li>• Address by Minister for Local Government and Rural Development or His Representative</li> </ul>	
10.45am-11.00am	General Reflection on the Assembly System of Local Governance	ILGS
11.00am-11.15am	BREAK	
11.15am-11.35am	Overview of Issues of Disability and Local Governance	GFD
11.35am-12.30pm	Plenary Discussions and Submissions	
12.30 pm-1.30pm	Generation of Key Areas for Consideration and Recommendations	Moderator/Facilitator
1.30pm-2.00pm	Way Forward and Closing	Moderator/Facilitator
2.00 – 3.00p.m	LUNCH BREAK	MLGRD/ILGS/GFD

### **Appendix 3: General Reflection on Twenty Years of decentralization and assembly system of local governance in Ghana: Issues Arising**

The reflection on twenty years of decentralization and the assembly system of local governance can be considered from two perspectives:

**First:** The performance of assemblies given their establishment as executive, legislative, budgeting, planning and taxing authorities.

**Second:** The extent to which local authorities were empowered to perform these functions, in the light of constitutional requirements as contained in chapter 20

In the light of the **FIRST**, the functions of the assembly system are as follows:

- Formulation and execution of programmes
- Developing strategies for effective resource mobilization
- Levying, collection of taxes, rates, duties and fees
- Remove obstacles to initiate and development
- Initiate programmes for basic infrastructure
- Provide municipal works and services
- Facilitators of popular participation in governance

**Emerging areas of emphasis within these functions include;**

- Local economic development including public-private partnerships
- Poverty reduction and pro-poor development approaches
- Environmental sanitation/waste management
- Information management
- A social agenda including addressing gender, disability, PLWHIV/AIDs issues
- Managing institutional relationships with central government MDAs and sector agencies, regional entities, projects, traditional authorities, civil society organizations, international and national non-governmental organizations, membership associations, faith-based and community-based organizations

**Second:** The constitution in chapter 20 requires

- The transfer of functions, powers, responsibilities and resources from the centre to local government
- Measures to build the capacity of local authorities to plan, initiate, co-ordinate, manage and execute policies;
- Establishment of a sound financial base with adequate and reliable sources of revenue;
- Control of persons in the service of local government by local authorities, as far as possible; and
- Creation of opportunities for people to participate effectively in governance to ensure the accountability of local authorities.
- OUR ASSESSMENT MUST CONSIDER THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE ARE IN PLACE

**Has the Decentralization Process been completed and to what extent have the objectives been met?**

- The most important achievement has been awareness raising about governance and participation

- Yet there is widespread perception of that there has been an under-utilization of a key opportunity; there has been increasing cynicism
- In the rural areas, it appears the influence of assemblies and members is arguably better felt. In the metros, size, heterogeneity and “national” and regional interests makes it difficult.
- Assemblies have not been as effective as they could be in all of the mandatory areas

#### **Other Achievements:**

- Creation of districts opened the country up for better, targeted and responsive support and appreciation of the need for nuanced approaches (taking geography, history, socio-cultural and economic factors into account) for intervention
- Considerable socio-economic data collected on assemblies (sadly, assemblies do not appear to own or use this).
- The composition of assemblies did have prospects for promoting participation and inclusion. Assembly members were drawn from local communities and known by the electorate
- Affirmative action has been undertaken for women and under-served groups through the.....
- The assembly committee system provides an opportunity for promoting attention to locally-specific issues and problems
- The five statutory ones are broad and focus on generic issues
- Form the opportunity to create other/extra sub-committees, assemblies can prioritize districts’ peculiar development needs
- A number of assemblies have formed women and children’s sub-committees, environmental, productive and gainful employment, etc
- But sub-committees are not able to meet as required; the appointed member system has not met expectations- for infusing technical capacity, interest group representation or as a traditional authority channel

#### **Transfer of powers, responsibilities and resources has mixed achievements.**

- Apart from the wide-ranging planning, budgeting, executing, legislation and taxing powers (through Act 462 of 1994) for assemblies, they have also been assigned 88 statutory functions including preventive and environmental health, water and sanitation, public works, trade and industry, finance, physical planning, food and agriculture, disaster prevention, administration, social welfare and community development.

#### **However**

- Not all assemblies have their full complement of staff
- In spite of local government service law, administrative and technical staff are still managed from outside assemblies; de-coupling still ongoing
- limited control of assemblies over their technical, professional sectoral staff. Control of health, forestry, agriculture and education professionals lies outside the district
- high turn-over of skilled technical people such as planners
- reluctance of some government agencies/other bodies to entrust assemblies with more control over resources and programmes.

- Key, technical structures have not operated effectively. The regional and district planning coordinating units (RPCUs and DPCUs) suffer from insufficient staffing and harmonizing their work with the assemblies, NGOs and development programmes.
- RCCs given coordination, monitoring, information provision, harmonization, back-stopping and evaluation roles; they have extensive protocol, security and joint-area/inter-district interventions. Their location and oversight roles confer responsibilities that do not have corresponding assignment of revenues.
- Need for standardization, strengthening, resourcing the regional level. Clarification of their mandate, adequate financing for assignments
- Practice of allocating 5% of the common fund to the regions for their monitoring and co-coordinating functions is not enshrined in any administrative or legal instrument, endangering the sustainability of regional resources
- Coordination aggravated by delayed integration of decentralized departments at the regional and district levels.
- Challenges of different interpretations and expectations of decentralization within a unitary context
- Legislative support of parallel decentralization efforts that place insufficient obligation on sector departments to build reporting and horizontal accountability relationships with assemblies
- Challenges with fiscal decentralization, composite budgeting versus MTEF budgets

### **Political and Administrative Framework:**

#### **Emerging Issues**

- Confusing lines of accountability at the MMDA level. The Presiding member, the DCE and the members of parliament are all political representatives BUT draw authority and legitimacy from different sources.
- Competition for resources, influence and claims to legitimacy as representatives between them resulting in many instances in conflicts
- Mixed model of representation at the district-level i.e., the appointment of 30% of members and election of the rest may have compromised democracy
- The central appointment of the DCE who is not a public servant but a political appointee establishes the local government as an arm of government within a unitary state.
- The sub district structures are too many, too small, too many members and not fully elected;
- Functions of sub-district structures are unclear and they have virtually no personnel or financial resources to perform
- Historical legacy of local governments operating on a non-partisan basis within a multi-party democratic national environment. Partnership considerations are becoming more paramount overshadowing justifications of stakeholder participation and gender balance- for appointed membership.
- Need for a clearer framework for involving traditional authorities in MMDAs
- Need to clarify the role of the region as a coordinating entity and a de-concentrated layer of administration rather than proper local government
- Central government oversight and support to local governments is currently weak

- NGOs and CSOs more in local service delivery and less in rights, advocacy and local accountability
- Low revenue collection capacity, lack of interaction with citizens and citizen awareness and insufficient support from the central government to improve the IGF;
- Weak capacities at the local level for valuation of properties
- Inadequate monitoring of revenue collectors and contractors due to inadequate knowledge on MMDA revenue potential
- The MMDA borrowing (legal) framework not conducive for MMDA investments

### **MMDA Planning and Budgeting**

- Inadequate linkages between existing MMDA budget cycle and central government budget process
- Preparation of the recurrent and development budget processes are also inadequately linked. The development budget is in reality approved in the middle of the finance year
- There are weak linkages between local level planning, budgeting and funding
- The involvement of the MMDA political actors in budgeting and priority setting processes varies across the MMDAs
- Weak participation of the citizenry in planning and budgeting
- Composite budgeting constrained by structural, organizational, coordination and technical factors
- New procurement guidelines need review to ensure adequate representation of citizens' interests

### **Local Government Finance Issues**

- Various reforms initiatives in fiscal decentralization that are not fully linked nor adequately coordinated
- Need for operational fiscal decentralization strategy linked to overall decentralization policy, outstanding areas for elaboration include budgeting procedures, IGF, (rating and fee fixing), borrowing regulations and accounting procedures (need for MMDA Accounting and Internal Audit Manuals)
- Reform for MMDA funding arrangements to match new functional assignments
- Actions to get a consolidated, reliable and comprehensive overview of MMDA expenditure and revenues e.g. Up-to-date data bases, quality assured, consistent grant figures
- Integration of sector departments under the MMDA structure and the LG Act for clear expenditure assignments and accountability

### **MMDA revenue**

- Need to harmonize funding flows and grant modalities
- Impediments to monitoring of financial management procedures and ensuring strong accountability
- Delays and unpredictability in the grant allocation to MMDAs, hampering local planning and creating inefficiency in spending
- DACF allocation criteria needs to be improved, directives on expenditure abolished strengthening of budgeting procedures and reporting systems

- Weak incentives for MMDAs to improve local financial management and revenue mobilization
- Regulations on IGF rate and fee fixing are outdated, basic rate is 10Gp. Fee fixing practices vary from place to place
- Ceded revenues ceased with the Act. 684 on Internal Revenues, 2005

### **Financial Management**

- The new treasury (accounting and transfer flow) reforms are critical for fiscal decentralization
- MMDA and the MDA charts of accounts differ in practice and cannot be easily consolidated, thus impeding composite budgeting
- Two systems at the local level: the MMDAs' line based budgeting and accounting system and the MDA activity and output based MTEF system thereby creating difficulties in reconciling expenditure and revenue information
- Weak capacity at the MMDA level in financial management and procurement
- Inadequate internal audit capacity in spite of recent efforts
- Lack of follow up on the results from the external audit

### **Coordination and capacity building**

- Present capacity building support to MMDAs in planning, budgeting and financial management not sufficiently linked to MMDA incentives
- Weak institutional coordination of fiscal decentralization initiatives
- Need for framework to build links between reform components and stakeholders

### **Local government human resources issues**

- LGs have at present limited autonomy in managing their human resources. Data on local staff management, staff deployment and qualifications are fragmented at local levels limiting in-depth analysis in to HR issues
- Most departments scheduled for decentralization are centrally managed and report through regions and cannot be effectively coordinated by the DCE and DCD
- The small group of staff within the central administration department are largely centrally recruited, promoted, disciplined and transferred
- Civil servants in the services (education and health, etc) have separate systems
- Only a small group is paid from internally generated revenue and therefore completely under MMDA control. They are often junior and little systematic information is collected on their numbers to apply practical HRM procedures effectively
- Recruitment, appointment procedures and registration on payroll are administratively very slow
- Since there is little consultation of assemblies by central level agencies in relation to transfers, there is often frustration, assemblies may have invested in such personnel
- Attraction and retention of staff is problematic in districts that are considered remote or otherwise disadvantaged

- There is insufficient coordination between OHCS, which approves recruitment requests, and MTEP, which gives financial clearance for MMDAs to engage staff
- There is little incentive for staff retrenchments and limited potential to tailor staff structures to local priorities
- There are weak procedures for staff discipline;

**Guidelines envisaged on assemblies' relationships with traditional authorities in the following areas:**

- Protocol at the Local Level and Issues of Precedence
- Representation of Traditional Authorities on MMDAs
- Relations between Traditional Authorities Unit Committees and Local Government Sub-Structures
- Platforms of Engagement between Local Authorities (Assemblies) and Traditional Authorities
- Infrastructure Management, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Peace-Building, Security and Conflict Prevention
- Natural Resource Management
- Internal Revenue Mobilization
- Human Right Observance and Reduction of the Practice and Impacts of Negative Socio-Cultural Practice

**Emerging Issues in Legal and Policy Framework**

- Divergence between constitutional indication of decentralization and the actual practices in the country.
- This has been buttressed by contradictory laws and sectoral practice.
- Need for explicit policy or strategy on the fundamental issues- political, legal and financial, institutional and assist between the central government and local government- to regulate the process and demonstrate a way forward.
- Matching planning responsibilities with budgeting arrangements, funding flows and functional assignments to strengthen the authority and autonomy of the MMDAs to strengthen the authority and autonomy of the MMDAs
- Sector priorities and implementation target targets defined substantially by the MDAs Headquarters and resources allocated to meet these targets by them.
- Stronger vertical reporting and accountability rather than horizontal links;
- Promotions are largely automatic, based on years of service rather than performance.
- Little incentive to enhance staff performance in line with local needs
- Capacity building for local governance is fragmented, duplicative and uncoordinated.
- LGs have limited autonomy to plan and manage their own capacity building.
- DDF-FOAT has been introduced which seeks to systematically assess MMDA's capacities through annual assessment exercises and also determine key capacity needs.
- However, DDF system assumes MMDAs can be accountable for their institutional performance which is debatable under the present situation.
- ILGS and LGS are currently underfunded compared to their mandated

- In spite of these achievements and challenges, there appears to be general support for continuing the assembly system but with improvements.
- Proposals for reforming the assembly system have been made in various reports. Studies and draft guidelines.
- How can these proposals be strengthened?
- What recommendations can be made for addressing the indicated concerns and accelerating decentralizations?

**Appendix 4: Consultation with the Ghana Federation of the Disabled in Pictures**





