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POLLING DAY OBSERVATION: SITUATIONAL (MID-DAY) REPORT

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Introduction

The Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) has deployed about 4,500 trained, accredited, non-partisan rapid response observers. Of this figure, 1,500 are Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) Observers. These observers are Ghanaians, from every walk of life, who have volunteered their time to help ensure that every registered voter can freely cast his or her ballot on election day. This will enable the people of Ghana to have independent non-partisan information on the conduct of these elections. CODEO PVT Observers are stationed at a nationally representative random sampled polling stations spread across the 275 constituencies located in the 10 regions of Ghana.

This mid-day situational statement (a preliminary report) is based on reports CODEO has received from PVT Observers, Regional Coordinators (RCs) and Constituency Supervisors (CSs). It focuses on the setting up and opening of polling stations.

Below are highlights of field reports received from over 90% of PVT Observers from every region and constituency as of 12:00pm today (i.e. Election Day).

Arrival at Polling Stations

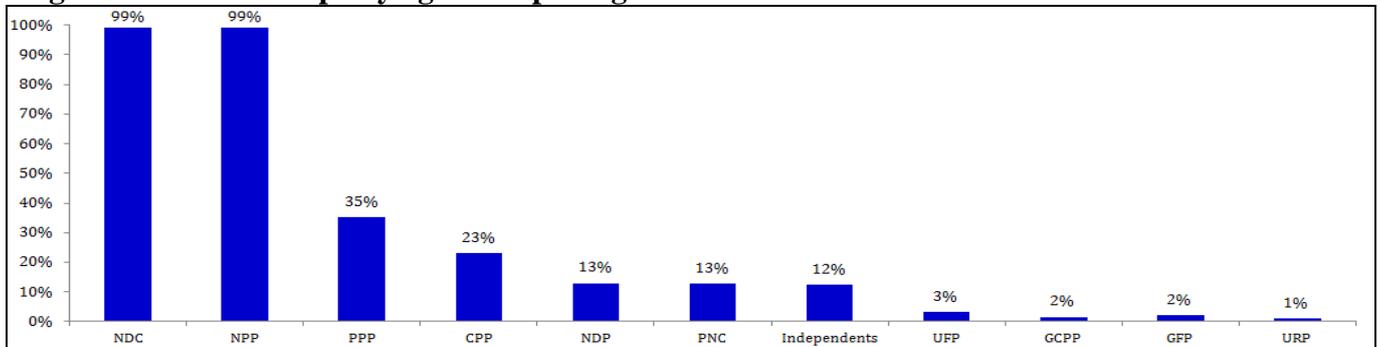
- By 6:00am, **95%** of all CODEO Observers, including PVT Observers, had reported at their assigned polling station.
- **Seventy-seven percent (77%)** of polling stations polling officers were present as required by the Electoral Commission's (EC) regulation that demanded of them to be present at their assigned polling stations by 6:00am. In a little over a fifth (**23%**), the polling officials were not present at the time CODEO PVT Observers arrived.
- In **99%** of the polling stations, the electoral officials respected CODEO PVT Observers' status as EC's accredited election observers and permitted them to observe the polls. Initially, 34 CODEO Observers were not permitted to observe, but as of this mid-day report near all cases had been successfully resolved.

Setting Up of Polls

- Reports from PVT Observers indicate that **86%** of polling stations were set up so voters could mark their ballots in secret. In **14%** however, the set up was not according to the regulations.
- According to CODEO PVT Observers, almost all polling stations (**95%**) were accessible to persons with disability and the elderly.

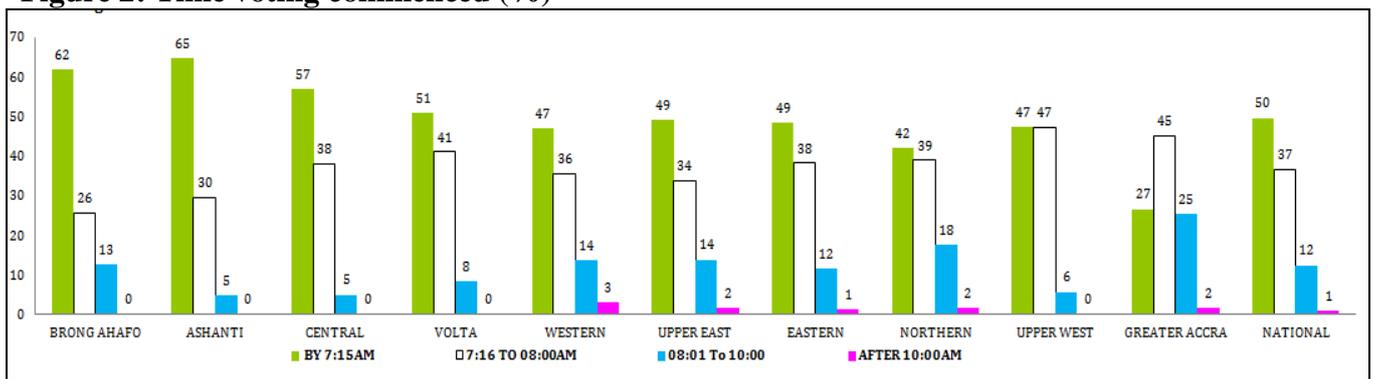
- At the time of set up, the two main political parties - the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) had their polling agents present in almost all polling stations (i.e. NDC, **99%** and NPP, **99%**).
- Polling agents of the other parties were present only in some of the polling stations (CPP, **23%**; GFP, **2%**; NDP, **13%**; GCPP, **2%**; PNC, **13%**; PPP, **36%**; UFP, **3%**; URP, **1%**; and Independent candidates, **12%**). At **35%** of polling stations only NDC and NPP polling agents were present.

Figure 1: Presence of party agents at polling stations



- CODEO PVT Observers reported seeing uniformed security personnel at post at **86%** of polling stations.
- Reports received from PVT Observers showed that in **92%** of the polling stations, all election materials were available at the time of opening. In particular tactile ballots for the blind were missing at **6%** of polling stations, voting screens at **2%** and ballot boxes at **1%** as of 7:30am.
- A critical element of this year’s election is the introduction of biometric voter registration (BVR). Reports received from CODEO Observers indicate that **99%** of polling stations had biometric verification machines at setup.
- In cases where items were reported as not present this could be due to the late arrival of some materials.
- At **99%** of polling stations with CODEO PVT Observers could confirm that the presidential and parliamentary ballot boxes were shown to be empty, sealed and placed in public view before the commencement of voting.
- In general, CODEO Observers reported that voting generally commenced on time. By 7:15am, half (**50%**) of the polling stations had opened. Another **37%** opened between 7:15 and 8:00am adding up to **87%** open by 8am. The greatest delays were experienced in Greater Accra where only **27%** of polling stations had opened by 7:15am.

Figure 2: Time voting commenced (%)



From the foregoing, CODEO in this preliminary situational report can confidently confirm that the arrangements put in place by the EC for setup and opening of polls were adequate for most polling stations.

Conclusion

CODEO is continuing to receive reports from its network of nationally deployed observers and will continue to release updated reports.

Finally, CODEO appeals to all Ghanaians to remain calm and be law abiding throughout the country.

Signed:

Professor Miranda Greenstreet and Justice VCRAC Crabbe,
Joint Chairpersons

(For and on Behalf of the Advisory Board)

CODEO Secretariat, Friday, December 7, 2012