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**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON GHANA'S
DECEMBER 7 TO 8, 2012 PRESIDENTIAL AND
GENERAL ELECTIONS**

CONTACT

Theodore Dzeble
CODEO Public Affairs Coordinator
+233 (0)244215736

Website: www.codeoghana.org

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INTRODUCTION

On Friday, December 07, 2012, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), which comprises 40 professional, religious and civic advocacy bodies, deployed about 4,500 trained, accredited, non-partisan rapid response observers. Of this figure, 1,500 were 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 enabled the people of Ghana to have independent non-partisan information on the conduct of these elections. CODEO PVT Observers were stationed at 1,500 nationally representative sample of polling stations spread across the 275 constituencies located in the 10 regions of Ghana.

This preliminary post-election statement reflects CODEO's observations on the conduct of the presidential and general elections. It incorporates some of the observations noted in the two statements issued by CODEO on election-day regarding the setting-up, opening and closing of polls, and the overall voting and counting process on Friday, December 07 and on Saturday, December 08, 2012 respectively.

CODEO has received reports from **99%** of its observers. This statement is a synthesis of reports filed by the 1,500 PVT observers, the Constituency Supervisors (CSs) and Regional Coordinators (RCs).

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION

Preliminary analysis of reports from CODEO PVT Observers suggests that the December 07, 2012 Presidential and General elections were conducted largely in accordance with the electoral laws of Ghana. Relatively few problems and lapses were encountered in the set-up and opening of polls.

CODEO Observers reported a number of incidents of biometric machine malfunctioning during the voting process.

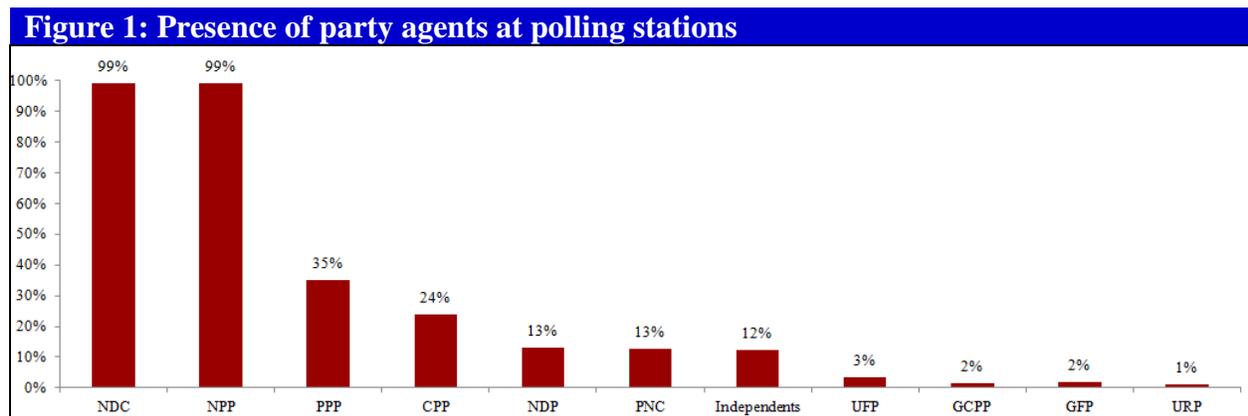
Below are highlights of field reports received from CODEO PVT Observers from every region and constituency during the elections.

Arrival at Polling Stations

- By 6:00am, **95%** of all CODEO Observers, including PVT Observers, had reported at their assigned polling stations.
- At **78%** 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 (**22%**), the polling officials were not present at the time CODEO PVT Observers arrived.
- In **99%** of the polling stations, the electoral officials recognized the status of CODEO PVT Observers as EC accredited election observers, and permitted them to observe the polls. Initially, 34 CODEO Observers were not permitted to observe, but nearly all cases were successfully resolved by the CODEO Constituency Supervisors and Regional Coordinators in the course of the day.

Setting Up of Polls

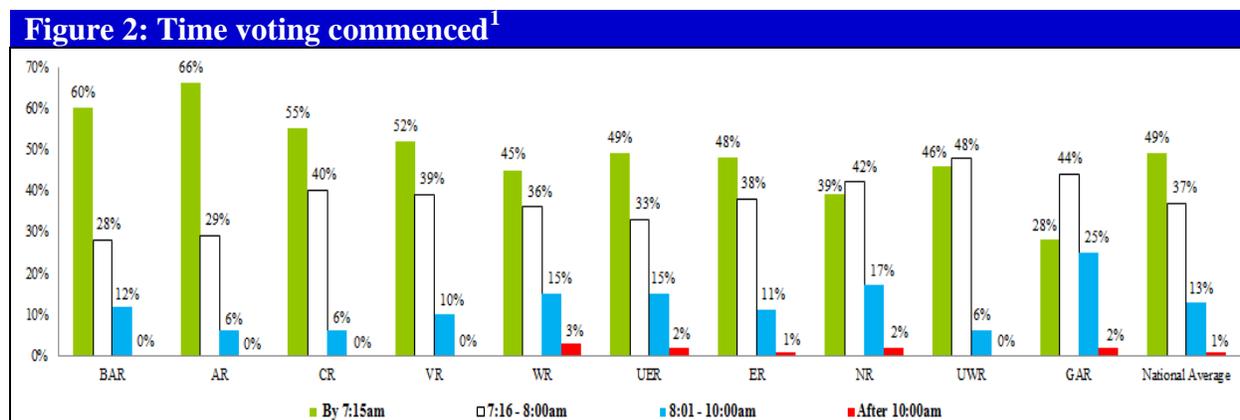
- Reports from PVT Observers indicate that at **87%** of polling stations had been set up in a manner that enabled voters to mark their ballots in secret. In **13%** however, the set up was not according to the regulations.
- According to CODEO PVT Observers, **95%** of polling stations were accessible to persons with disability and the elderly.
- 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%**) at the time of set-up.
- Polling agents of the other parties were present only in some of the polling stations (CPP, **24%**; GFP, **2%**; NDP, **13%**; GCPP, **2%**; PNC, **13%**; PPP, **35%**; UFP, **3%**; URP, **1%**; and Independent candidates, **12%**). At **35%** of polling stations the polling agents of these parties were absent.



- CODEO PVT Observers reported seeing uniformed security personnel at post at **85%** of polling stations.
- A critical element of this year’s election was the use of biometric machines to validate the identity of voters. Biometric verification machines were available at set-up at all polling stations according to CODEO observers.
- Reports received from PVT Observers showed that in **93%** of the polling stations, all election materials were available at the time of opening.

However, tactile ballots for the blind were missing at **6%** of polling stations as of 7:30am. Voting screens (**2%**), ballot boxes, ballot papers, voters’ register, indelible ink, validating stamp, endorsing ink and ink pad (**1%** each) were not available at some polling stations at set up.

- CODEO Observers reported that voting generally commenced on time. By 7:15am, **49%** of the polling stations had opened. Another **37%** opened between 7:15am and 8:00am. Thus, **86%** of polling stations were opened by 8am. The greatest delays were experienced in Greater Accra where only **28%** of polling stations had opened by 7:15am.



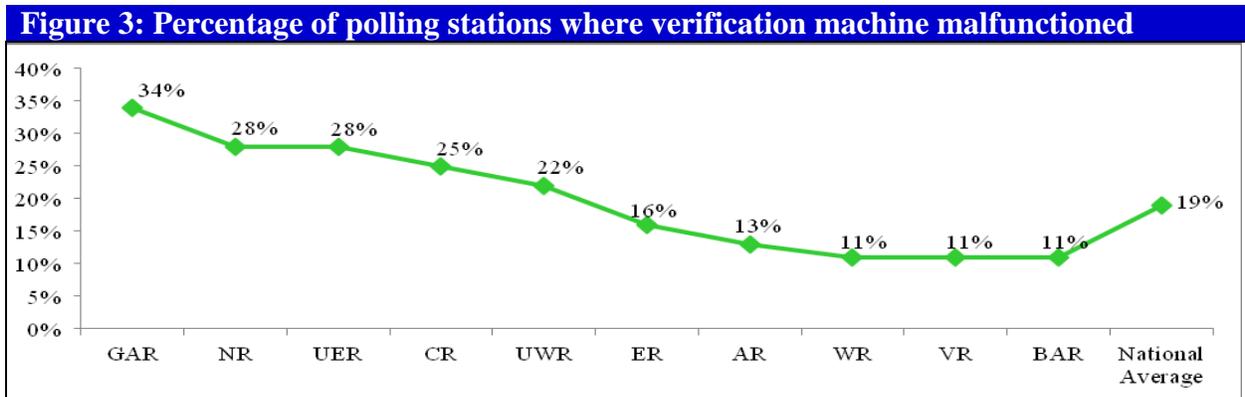
- At **99%** of polling stations, CODEO PVT Observers confirmed that the presidential and parliamentary ballot boxes were shown to be empty, sealed and placed in public view before the commencement of voting.

Data on Voting

- CODEO PVT Observers confirmed that the biometric information of voters was verified prior to voting at all the polling centers (**100%**). HOWEVER, the biometric verification

¹ Note: WR=Western Region; GAR=Greater Accra Region; CR=Central Region; VR=Volta Region; ER=Eastern Region; AR=Ashanti Region; BAR=Brong Ahafo Region; NR=Northern Region; UER=Upper East Region; and UWR=Upper West Region.

machines failed at some point during voting at **19%** of polling stations. Problems with the biometric verification machines were most frequent in polling stations in Greater Accra (**34%**), Northern and Upper East (**28%** each), Central (**25%**) and Upper West (**22%**).

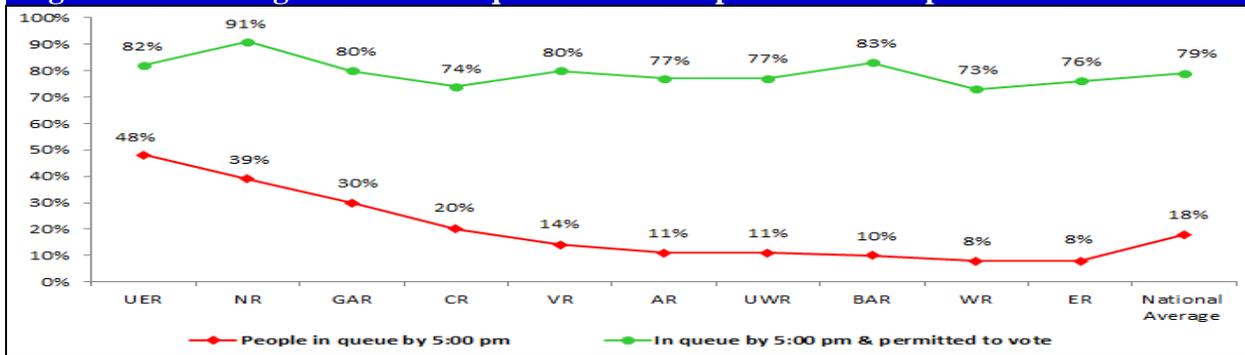


- At **98%** of polling stations, the fingers of voters were marked with indelible ink. And at **99%** of polling stations ballot papers were validated.
- Unauthorized persons were present during voting at **8%** of polling stations.
- Incidents of harrassment and intimidation were witnessed at **7%** of polling stations.
- At **12%** of polling stations CODEO PVT Observers witnessed some people being allowed to vote without voter ID cards.
- At **95%** of polling stations, those whose names appeared in the manual voters' register and whose biometric details could be verified were allowed to vote.
- At **83%** of polling stations, one or more persons with disability or elderly persons were assisted to vote.
- At **70%** of polling stations, assisted voters were allowed to select persons of their own choice to assist them.

Counting and Collation of Votes

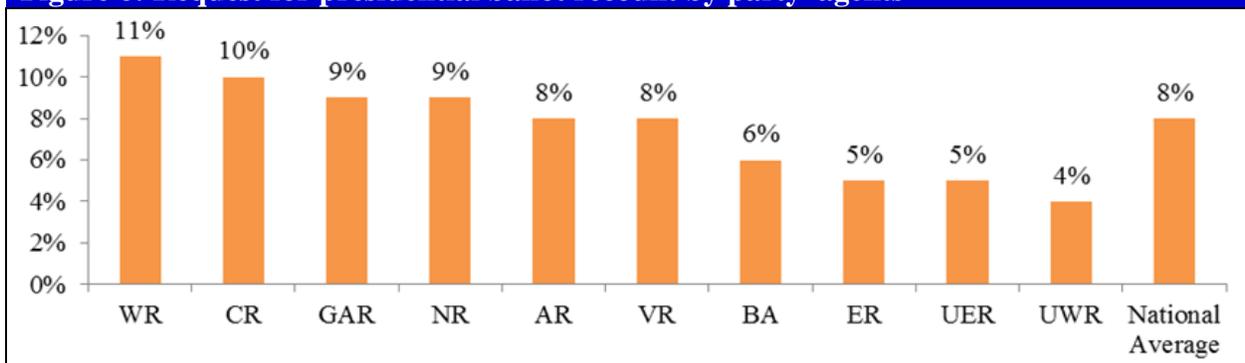
- At the close of polls on December 7, CODEO Observers in all the ten regions reported that there were still many people (i.e. 16 or more) in queues waiting to cast their ballots. This situation was more prevalent in Upper East (**48%**), Northern (**39%**), Greater Accra (**30%**) and Central (**20%**). Majority of these late voters (i.e. **79%**) were given the opportunity to exercise their franchise.

Figure 4: Percentages of voters in queue at close of polls and those permitted to vote



- The process of counting and collation of ballots was generally orderly. In most polling stations (**97%**), the number of ballot papers tallied with the number of votes cast. In **92%** of the polling stations, no party agent requested for ballot recount. Only in **8%** of polling stations did they do so.

Figure 6: Request for presidential ballot recount by party agents



- Furthermore, party agents of NDC, NPP and the other parties in **98%**, **97%** and **69%** polling stations, respectively, readily endorsed the presidential result declaration sheet. Also, in **97%** of polling centers, all the party agents present endorsed the parliamentary election results.
- Nearly all CODEO PVT Observers (**99%**) agreed with both the presidential and parliamentary vote count at the polling stations where they were deployed.

Critical Incidents

CODEO operated a critical incident hotline for observers, constituency supervisors and regional coordinators throughout election-day. The observers sent in reports on all serious issues that arose during the day. These reports were then verified by our Critical Incident Team.

- A total of **137** critical incident reports were received from all over the country at the opening of and during voting. The largest number of reported incidents came from Ashanti, Greater Accra and Northern Regions. The most frequently reported critical incidents were the suspension of voting, intimidation/harassment, and violation of voting procedures.

| Table 1: Summary of critical incidents reported by CODEO Observers | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| | AR | GAR | CR | NR | ER | UWF | VR | WR | UR | BAR | Grand Total |
| Voting suspended | 14 | 21 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 | | 2 | | 56 |
| Intimidation or Harassment | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 17 |
| Violation of voting procedures | | | 2 | 3 | | 5 | | | | | 10 |
| Violence | 3 | 2 | 2 | | | | | 1 | | | 8 |
| Unauthorized person in polling center | | | | 1 | 2 | | | | | | 3 |
| Polling agents refused to sign declaration | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Vote buying/bribery | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 2 |
| Eligible voter not permitted to vote | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | 2 |
| Not permitted to observe | | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Other incidents | 11 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 35 |
| Regional Totals | 36 | 36 | 17 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 137 |

- Other miscellaneous incidents which were reported by CODEO Observers include the following:
 1. Absence of security at polling station,
 2. Harassment of EC officials because of late start of voting;
 3. Malfunctioned of verification machines and associated challenges;
 4. Misunderstanding between party agents and Presiding Officers over placement of seals on ballot boxes;
 5. Arguments between Presiding Officers and voters leading to delayed voting; and
 6. Fighting among voters in the queue and subsequent disruption in the voting process.

While these critical incidents reported by CODEO observers may have impeded the opportunity and perhaps infringed on the rights of some Ghanaians to vote, they did not fundamentally undermine the overall credibility of the process.

Extension of Voting

The announcement by the Electoral Commission to extend voting provided an opportunity for those who could not vote on December 7 to exercise their right to vote on December 8. That was an important step for ensuring that the problems that occurred on the first day of voting did not undermine the overall integrity of the voting process.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings above, CODEO concludes that the problems and lapses in the voting process on December 7 which resulted in adjournment did not fundamentally undermine the overall integrity of the conduct of polling, counting, and collation of ballots. In this preliminary statement, in spite of the logistical and technical challenges, CODEO is of the view that the December 7 Presidential and General Elections have been well-conducted.

Once again, Ghanaians have been offered the opportunity to elect their leaders in a generally free, fair and peaceful environment. Indeed, CODEO PVT estimates a voter turnout of **78%** with a margin of error of +/-0.1% compared to the official turnout rate of approximately **70%** in the first round of elections in 2008. Accordingly, CODEO commends Ghanaians for turning out in their numbers to express their political will and affirm their fundamental right to choose their leaders.

Post-election observation and PVT Estimates on Presidential Results

Ladies and Gentlemen, CODEO will continue to monitor and observe the post-election environment. CODEO has finalized its PVT estimates for the presidential elections and will make it public as soon as the Electoral Commission makes an official declaration of results. A detailed report with recommendations for further improvements in our electoral process will be published early 2013.

In the meantime, CODEO makes the following recommendations:

- That, the Electoral Commission takes seriously recommendations made by domestic election observer groups to improve the delivery of Election-Day logistics to polling stations. This election has confirmed that some of the lessons learnt and recommendations made by observer groups in previous elections have not been implemented;
- That, if Ghana is to continue with the use of the biometric verification system for voting, then the Electoral Commission must procure adequate biometric logistics and associated protective measures and back-ups to forestall malfunction during polling. The EC should the training of staff (permanent and temporary) a top priority in its programmes;
- That, the Electoral Commission must undertake early and comprehensive voter education on changes in voting laws and procedures ahead of the polling date (e.g. splitting of polling booths according to alphabetical order at polling stations);
- That, the Electoral Commission must be more proactive in the provision of information on its work to the political parties, observer groups and the Ghanaian public in a timely fashion to avoid uncertainties, misrepresentation and anxiety;
- That, the Electoral Commission must collaborate more closely with domestic civil society observer groups. It must continue to facilitate access and accreditation of domestic groups to enable them to observe polls at collating centers, including the 'Strong' room at its headquarters. It is regrettable that some EC officials at regional and district levels deny access to domestic observers even when they possessed valid EC accreditation;

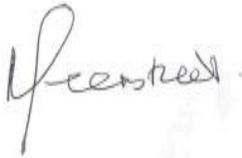
- That, the Electoral Commission must revisit and possibly restore early voting status to observer groups and media; and
- That, the Commission must ensure that adequate numbers of tactile ballots are made available for the visually impaired in future elections;

CONCLUSION

CODEO wishes to commend our country men and women, the political parties, the security services, the media, civil society and all stakeholders for their overall comportment in this election which has, so far, been considered successful and peaceful. CODEO appeals to all Ghanaians to remain calm as the EC completes the tabulation of results. We also urge all political parties to avoid creating needless tension by making public pronouncements and taking actions that preempt those of the Electoral Commission, such as premature declaration of victory. CODEO hopes that the transparency that characterized the conduct of the polls will remain throughout the collation process until the final declaration of results.

The 2012 election campaign has underscored, once again, the extreme political polarization in Ghana, especially between the NDC and the NPP. Now that the polls are nearly over and even after the inauguration it is absolutely necessary that our political parties, their leaders and the entire political class take adequate measures to bridge this gap and reduce the tendency for winner takes all politics. We need this for the sake of peace, unity, good governance and sustained socio-economic development.

Thank you and God Bless Ghana



Signed:

Professor Miranda Greenstreet and Justice VCRAC Crabbe,
Joint Chairpersons

(For and on Behalf of the Advisory Board)

CODEO Secretariat, Sunday, December 09, 2012