

## **POSITION ON THE ELECTION OF MMDAs CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

### **THEME-ELECTION OF MMDCEs ON MULTI PARTY BASIS- RETIONALE, PROCESS AND EXPECTED ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS**

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Given the space for the citizens to elect qualified candidates based on administration management competencies and not driven on party loyalties of affiliation. To make Participation practical in response the constitutional provision in the Act 936 of 2016 , Local Governance Network- LOGnet has the view that, Election of MMDCEs should **NOT** be in partisan basis as elections of candidates at the sub structures levels are not partisan lines.

Local Governance Network – is an umbrella or network of CSOs promoting effective and efficient local Governance throughout the country functioning as an intermediary between civil society and decision-makers as well as between civil society and the international community, serves as the voice of the poorest and most marginalized citizens,

LOGNet, for some time now, has been strengthening CSOs through capacity building and advocacy as well as creating spaces for dialogue and discourse on developments issues to ensure that decentralisation concept is practised by all citizens.

Over the three decades,(1988-2018) Ghana has come far to entrench decentralisation and to make meaning in practical terms for citizens to decide on how and with whom to plan for development. Even though there have been some progress in development yet much needs to be done to ensure the citizens own and participate in the entire development process of the MMDAs.

With the understanding of what true decentralisation is all about giving the space for the citizens to make their own decisions and plans, are the surest ways to allow plans to respond to the needs of the people for whom the development is made.

The provision for local government is made in the 1992 constitution Article 35(5d) requires the state to take appropriate action to ensure that, the administration and financial machinery of government are decentralized. It also requires the state to give appropriate opportunities to people or citizens to participate in decision making processes at every level of national life and for government to govern.

It is truism that over years of decentralization in Ghana, The chief executives of MMDAs are not elected by their own people and making it very difficult if not impossible to respond to and therefore UN accountable to the citizens in their constituencies. This is because their powers or mandates to services are determined by the constitutional provisions of the Presidency leading to local Government democracy being controlled by the central Government.

There is no doubt that, active citizen participation is a key to building an empowered community that is able to hold duty bearers accountable to ensuring quality and effective service delivery to the people and therefore local democracy is achieved .

If the Ghana's decentralization is intended to promote a more consultative and participatory approach towards the realization of social and economic development at the local level, the need for electing MMDAs chief executives is paramount.

It is clearly seen that, the Local Governance Act 936 of 2016 has stated a lot of provisions on ownership and local decision making on resource mobilization and utilization for the benefit of the local citizens.

The provisions in this Act and The 2030 Agenda calls for the meaningful and active participation of people and stakeholders at all stages, from the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national strategies, to implementation, and national monitoring and review; and highlights the importance of participatory approaches for sustainable development

It is realized and most visible that, the decentralization policy is intended to bring is the opening up of political space at the sub national levels through the creation of accessible platforms for citizens' engagement in the decision making process.

According to the new local Governance Act 936 of 2016 -**section 40**- the District Assembly shall enable the residents and other stakeholders in the district to participate effectively in the activities of the District Assembly and the sub districts, structures in the district Assembly include a report on stakeholder participation in the activities of the District Assembly –thus including the election of administrative management personnel.

**Section 42** of the Act 936 of 2016 clearly explained the modalities and platforms for participation of which election of MMDAs executives are no exception in giving true to decentralization concept..

The Act has also indicated how the District Assemblies shall facilitate the establishment of the structure for stakeholder's participation in all aspects of development of MMDAs.

For Good governance, a key aspect of measuring state- citizens relationship is the involvement of citizens in the decision making process. Participation of citizens at public fora keeps citizens well informed about community activities and is better able to engage with duty bearers.

As we , the CSOs endorse the rationale of the Election of the MMDAs chief executives , it is seen that, The Election of chief executives will likely therefore allow the citizens to elect the most competent person to administer the district local economic development, creating local citizens space on development innovativeness to enhancing internally generated fund and the improvement in resource base for development and not to over relying on the District Assembly common fund as we witness in most districts today. We want to emphasize on the managerial and administrative competency of the candidates to be elected as chief executives devoid of party affiliations...

The election of MMDA Chief Executives would also ensure the security of tenure to enable them develop medium and long term development plan for their MMDAs in sound environment, which will propel development in respond to the needs of the districts.

With the adverts of the **Government infrastructure for poverty Eradication Programme (IPEP)** or "flagship projects", Ghana needs people with skills, know-how and development oriented attitudes to manage the MMDAs.

For this policy on decision for the establishment of one district one factory, one village one dam, one million dollars per constituency per year projects, the '**leave no one behind**' concept is key and therefore not to limit

participation to few individuals for the establishment of such projects as this could breed apathy and non-inclusiveness and noninvolvement in planning and implementation of projects and programmes, that could lead to waste of resources and deepening poverty.

It is seen that, with all participatory inputs approach by electing MMDAs chief Executives, **the flagship projects** will be owned and belong to the people and therefore promote sustainable local economic development in addressing the livelihood challenges at the MMDAs levels

As CSOs complement the Government development agenda through promoting the sustainable development goals ( 17 SDGs) , we want to appeal to Government to establish CSOs led stakeholder forum to ensure inclusiveness and involvement of all irrespective of political affiliation, geographical and cultural as well as religious backgrounds on initiatives of developments.

Furthermore, As the various Governments creates new districts and Regions to decentralize the Governance system, much reflections should be given to the availability of resources, ability to create the needed human and material resources, the ability to block revenue leakages, and effective and efficient utilization of the resource, Social accountability mechanisms for quality service delivery.

.We the members of the CSO /NGO on Local Governance Network-LOGNet urge all citizens of Ghana to join hands in drawing the attention of the president with strong respect for the Local Governance System to ensure the full adherence to the Local Government Act 936 of 2016. We urge governments to renew their political will to urgently address the gaps in the 1992 constitution by ensuring needed education and awareness creation to the public on the constitutional amended issues before calling for referendum.

The level of Mandate of the Presidency on the appointments to local governance has drastically reduced the ownership in the context decentralisation at the MMDAs at the local Governance levels.

The time has come to amend the constitutional provisions(Article 55(3) that impedes the elections of the MMDAs chief Executives and also to ensure that, citizens act for development when elected devoid of political affiliation or royalty since the fruits of development are enjoyed by all.

We therefore call on Government to reconsider the issues on election of MMDCEs on Partisan basis. deepening relationship and recognition , and further open up to civil society organizations to play effective roles for ensuring that, SDG platforms and networks play critical roles *in the election of MMDAs, creating reliable and unbiased data collection environment, support to the CSOs in facilitating social Accountability and transparency mechanisms* as well as provide the needed space for CSOs at all levels of development.