



WANEP STATEMENT ON THE GHANA 2012 ELECTIONS

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding wishes to make its statement on the Ghana 2012 elections based on observations it conducted in all the regions of Ghana. Beginning 2011, WANEP developed and published the **Election Dispute Management Practice Guide for West Africa**, which was officially launched in February 2012 by the Most Reverend Emmanuel Asante, the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana and Chairman of the National Peace Council. The Practice Guide was designed to assist in the peaceful management of electoral processes based on WANEP's experience in responding to election disputes across the sub region. Since the launch, thousands of copies have been distributed to all the Electoral Commissions in West Africa and specifically to the National Commission on Civic Education, Political Parties, the National Peace Council, the media and civil society organizations in Ghana.

In the build up to the Ghana election, WANEP regional secretariat and its national network in Ghana developed electoral dispute indicators and through its Peace Monitoring Center monitored, analyzed and reported on the electoral processes countrywide. The information generated through the monitoring mechanism was shared with relevant stakeholders including the ECOWAS Directorate for Early Warning with the aim of preventing and or mitigating electoral violence. WANEP trained and facilitated the intervention of 20 eminent persons selected from the 10 regions of Ghana who engage in dialogue and mediation based on the information from the Peace Monitoring Centers.

Additionally, WANEP deployed local and regional election observers on voting day to monitor incidents related to electoral disputes and report same through our toll free lines to the WANEP situation room for analysis and response.

Similarly, in an effort to build consensus among the political parties in monitoring election results with the purpose of reducing tensions and anxiety on disputed figures, WANEP and the Catholic University College in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program created a joint monitoring platform with five political parties; the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New

Patriotic Party (NPP), the Convention People's Party (CPP), the People's National Convention (PNC) and the Progressive People's Party (PPP). A Memorandum of Understanding to define the rules of engagement for the Joint Party Election Results Monitoring (J-PERM) was signed in Accra by the political parties, WANEP, UNDP and endorsed by the Electoral Commission of Ghana.

WANEP is therefore delighted that these efforts and those of various stakeholders have paid off as Ghana again excelled in the deepening of its democratic culture and we make the following observations:

- Having participated in the ECOWAS observers mission, we endorse the findings and recommendations of the President Obasanjo led ECOWAS Observer Mission
- The preparatory phases of the election met internationally acceptable standards and provided the ground for a transparent election
- The political parties demonstrated high level of decorum in running their campaigns which were considered to be more of issue-based as compared to the 2008 election.
- Ghanaians demonstrated high sense of responsibility by voting peacefully and being patient and tolerant in the face of long delays and some technical hitches in the voting process.
- There was high voter turn-out and the election was conducted with full and active participation of all stakeholders, especially during vote counting
- The security agencies demonstrated high level of professionalism in the discharge of their duties and provided further credence to the process including the way and manner they dealt with the skirmishes that arose in some parts of the country

WANEP notes the following challenges and call on the Electoral Commission and incoming Government to address them in order to improve on the effectiveness of subsequent elections:

- Late arrival of election materials and EC officials in some parts of the country
- Breakdown of the biometric verification devices at some polling stations during voting and also the malfunctioning of the back-up verification devices which led to the postponement of voting in some polling stations to Saturday, 8th December.
- Huge concentration of voters in some polling stations led to long queues and late voting

- Insufficient communication by the electoral commission on polling stations affected by the malfunctioning of the biometric verification devices
- Burning of ballot boxes and attempted ballot box snatching in some areas
- Insufficient education of polling officials on the use of biometric verification devices (BVD) and on the electoral laws

In the light of the above, WANEP recommends the following:

- Political parties and candidates to accept the verdict of the people and resort to legal means including prioritising dialogue and mediation in dealing with the disputes.
- Review electoral laws in Ghana aimed at addressing incidences of electoral violence
- Creation of more polling stations to reduce the high concentration of electorates in one polling station
- Increase the number of security officers per polling centre to prevent ballot box snatching and curtail incidences of violence
- Ensure proper and adequate education of polling officials on the use of voting equipment and on electoral laws and procedures

In congratulating Ghanaians for exercising their franchise in a way that strengthens the democratic credentials of the country, WANEP is of the view that the challenges experienced do not constitute a factor that could discredit the integrity of the election outcome. WANEP appreciates its partners in the 2012 election including the eminent persons from the 10 regions of Ghana, the ECOWAS Commission, members of the Civic Forum Initiative, STAR-Ghana, the Swedish International Development Agency, the UNDP, partners at the J-PERM and WANEP national networks across the sub region.

WANEP remains committed to working with the people and government of Ghana and indeed all the ECOWAS Member States in the realisation of the ECOWAS dream of economic development and regional integration.