



(Volume 2)

NATIONAL ORIENTATION COMMUNIQUÉ

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE SERIES OF TWO-DAY NATIONWIDE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF METROPOLITAN, MUNICIPAL AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES (MMDAs) HELD AT 257 TRAINING CENTRES ACROSS THE 16 REGIONS OF GHANA, FROM WEDNESDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2024 TO TUESDAY 22ND OCTOBER, 2024.

1. We, the members of the 261 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs):
 - 1.1 having successfully participated in the 2024 Nationwide Orientation and Training for Assembly Members held from September 25, 2024 to October 22, 2024 at the respective MMDAs and designated training centres;
 - 1.2 taking due note of the presentations as well as views expressed by the participants including elected and appointed members, members of parliament, chief executives and coordinating directors, practitioners, traditional authorities and other key stakeholders who were present at the events;
 - 1.3 recognising the opportunities provided for us to interact, seek clarifications and build networks for personal and professional support as well as the tremendous facilitation roles of the resource persons and organisers; and
 - 1.4 having been equipped with competences to enable us transition effectively into our new roles and responsibilities as well as being acquainted with the emerging issues and ideas for enhancing democratic and developmental local governance; and
2. Whereas, we have deliberated on key governance issues, capacity needs, and challenges impeding the effective execution of our mandate; and
3. Also reflected on our mandates as well as the emerging roles and responsibilities of Assembly Members to:
 - 3.1 Maintain close contact with the electoral area of the District Assembly, consult the people of the electoral area on issues to be discussed in the District Assembly, collate their views, opinions, and proposals [section 16(1)(a) of Act 936];
 - 3.2 Present the views, opinions and proposals of the electorate to the District Assembly [section 16(1)(b) of Act 936];
 - 3.3 Attend meetings of the District Assembly and meetings of sub-committees [section 16(1)(c) of Act 936] and; Meet the electorate before each meeting of the District Assembly [section 16(1)(d) of Act 936];

- 3.4 Report to the electorate the general decision of the District Assembly: and actions taken to solve problems raised by residents in the electoral area [section 16(1)(e) of Act 936 of Act 936];
 - 3.5 Draw attention in general debate to national policies that are relevant to the subject under discussion [section 16(1)(f) of Act 936];
 - 3.6 Actively participate in the work of the sub-committees of the Executive Committee [section 16(1)(g) of Act 936];
 - 3.7 Bring to bear on any discussion in the District Assembly the benefit of our skill, profession, experience or specialised knowledge [section 16(1)(h) of Act 936];
 - 3.8 Maintain frequent liaison with organised productive economic groupings and other persons in the district [section 16(1)(i) of Act 936]; and
 - 3.9 Take part in communal and development activities in the district [section 16(1)(j) of Act 936].
4. Now therefore, present to the Minister for Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development and the relevant stakeholders the following resolutions which represent our collective aspirations and aimed at deepening local governance, strengthening decentralisation, and improving service delivery at the grassroots level:

4.1 Governance and Institutional Effectiveness

- 4.1.1 Strengthen collaboration between Assembly technocrats and Assembly Members to ensure effective decision-making and the smooth functioning of the MMDAs.
- 4.1.2 Include traditional authorities, religious bodies, and non-governmental organisations in the governance process to foster inclusive and participatory development.
- 4.1.3 Prioritise regular training for Assembly Members, Unit Committee members, and other local governance stakeholders, including chiefs and opinion leaders, to enhance their capacity and roles.
- 4.1.4 Amend the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) to streamline procedures, including the election of Presiding Members and changes to penalty units under the law to promote efficiency.
- 4.1.5 Ensure consistency and effective conduct of by-elections of Assembly Members especially, to replace deceased Assembly Members.

4.2 Welfare and Remuneration of Assembly Members

- 4.2.1 Introduce monthly salaries and improved emoluments for Assembly Members, funded through the Consolidated Fund, to enhance their effectiveness and commitment.
- 4.2.2 Establish an **Electoral Area Development Fund** to empower Assembly Members to initiate and execute community projects.
- 4.2.3 Pay ex-gratia for Assembly Members directly from the Consolidated Fund to avoid delays associated with the use of Internally Generated Funds (IGF).
- 4.2.4 Provide life insurance coverage for Assembly Members to mitigate risks associated with the performance of their duties.

4.3 Resource Allocation and Logistics

- 4.3.1 Distribute robust and reliable means of transport to Assembly Members within the first quarter of their tenure. Where motorcycles are provided, they should include registration and maintenance support. Consideration should also be given to upgrading to vehicles on hire-purchase schemes financed by NALAG.

- 4.3.2 Provide office accommodation for Assembly Members, Presiding Members, and sub-committee conveners to ensure efficient administration.
- 4.3.3 Allocate a percentage of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) to support the work of Assembly Members and sub-structures.

4.4 Transparency and Accountability

- 4.4.1 Ensure that all government developmental projects to be implemented at the local level pass through the Assemblies for deliberation, monitoring, and approval.
- 4.4.2 Involve Assembly Members in the final inspection and signing of contract certificates, alongside Presiding Members, to ensure transparency in contract execution.
- 4.4.3 Mandate Assemblies to provide Presiding Members with copies of internal audit reports to enhance accountability.

4.5 Election of Local Government Officials

- 4.5.1 Amend the law to allow for the direct election of MMDCEs to ensure accountability to the people as the appointment of MMDCEs had outlived its usefulness.
- 4.5.2 Revise the election process for Presiding Members to use a simple majority vote, aligning it with the election of MPs and DCEs.
- 4.5.3 Limit the politicisation of Assembly Member appointments to promote impartiality and focus on development goals.

4.6 Strengthening Sub-Structures and Local Participation

- 4.6.1 Operationalise District Assembly sub-structures to improve community-level governance and resource mobilisation.
- 4.6.2 Decentralise key services, such as property rate collection and registration of births and deaths, to the electoral area level, with a portion of revenue retained for local development.
- 4.6.3 Increase female participation in local-level elections and governance through targeted policies and measures.
- 4.6.4 Bring on board all stakeholders, including traditional leaders, religious bodies and non-governmental organization, in decision making process so as to ensure all-inclusive governance.

4.7 Enhancing Capacity Building and Training

- 4.7.1 Institutionalise periodic training for Assembly Members and stakeholders to improve governance, accountability, and transparency.
- 4.7.2 Include modules on conflict management and resolution to address tensions among stakeholders, including chiefs, traditional authorities, and Assembly Members.
- 4.7.3 Extend future orientation programme to three days to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- 4.7.4 Organise Capacity Building and Refresher training programmes periodically for Assembly Members.
- 4.7.5 Subsequent trainings should be organized immediately after the inauguration of MMDAs to ensure smooth conduct of Assemblies' business.

4.8 Additional Recommendations

- 4.8.1 Reward best-performing Assembly Members to motivate improved performance.
- 4.8.2 Resolve challenges associated with gazetting by-laws, including reducing the high costs involved.
- 4.8.3 Adopt parliamentary practices to synchronise the dissolution and inauguration timelines of Assemblies.
- 4.8.4 Resource the MMDAs to enable them to perform their function effectively.
- 4.8.5 Strengthen urban, area and zonal councils to enhance revenue mobilization.

5. In conclusion:

- 5.1 We would like to assure the general citizenry of our due regard to the national interest and the interest of the people in the district we serve, pursuant to section 16(2) of Act 936.
- 5.2 Once again, we thank His Excellency the President, the Honourable Minister responsible for Local Government and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) as well as the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) for the opportunity to learn on the job and we re-affirm our dedication to our common cause and our unflinching commitment to the successful completion of the mandate that the good people of Ghana have entrusted to us.

Dated: 3rd December, 2024

Place: Accra, Ghana