



# WEST AFRICAN ELECTION OBSERVERS NETWORK (WAEON) NEWSLETTER

2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER (2014)

## NETWORK NEWS

### Introduction

The WAEON newsletter reports on activities organized by the network secretariat as well as activities by network members in their respective countries. This second edition summarizes the activities in the second quarter (April-June) of 2014. It features news on the WAEON Academy workshop. It also captures other election and governance related news from the member countries of the West African sub-region.

### Training Academy and Exchange Visits for WAEON members (May 28 and 29, 2014)

A two-day training academy and exchange visits for WAEON members was organized in Ghana's capital, Accra, from May 28 to 29, 2014.

- *Training Academy*

The first day's training, on May 28, was under the theme "Electoral Reforms in West Africa: the Role of Citizens' Observer Groups". It was attended by diverse sub-

regional elections stakeholders/ participants from Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and development partners such as United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Ghana and Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) as well as the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) Commission.

In attendance was Ghana's Minister for Information and Media Relations, Mr. Mahama Ayariga, who delivered the key note address. The Guest Speaker, Francis Oke, the Head of Electoral Assistance Unit, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria presented a paper on ***Enhancing Election Integrity in West Africa: The role of citizen election observer groups***. Another presenter at the academy included the Deputy Electoral Commissioner of Operations (Ghana), Mr. Amadu Sulley, who presented a paper on ***Understanding the Issues of Reform in all Phases of the Electoral Cycle***.

A communiqué was released at the end of the academy expressing WAEON's commitment to electoral reforms within the West African sub-region and Africa as a whole. (See further information on WAEON website ([www.waeon.org/election\\_updates](http://www.waeon.org/election_updates)))

- *Exchange Visits /Study Mission*

On the second day, May 29, WAEON members embarked on a study mission to selected election stakeholder institutions in Ghana. The members visited four institutions to gain insight/a better understanding of the Ghanaian electoral process and the roles these institutions play in elections. These included, the *Electoral Commission*; the *National Commission for Civic Education*; the *National Peace Council*; and *Citi Fm*, an Accra based radio station. Members had interactions with officials of these institutions regarding the legal framework for elections, standards and procedures, working relations with other related institutions, core responsibilities and financial support among others. These visits provided an opportunity for the WAEON representatives to share their sub-regional experiences with the four election stakeholders.

#### **OTHER NEWS: ELECTION AND GOVERNANCE RELATED NEWS**

- *Ghana's Constitutional Review Process*

In accordance with Article 278 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, a Constitutional Review

Commission (CRC) was inaugurated by the Late Ex-President Mills on January 11 2010, to undertake a review of Ghana's Constitution after close to two decades of constitutional rule. Its establishment was an outcome of many calls by Ghanaians to fine-tune the Constitution in order to advance the key democratic gains made since the return to constitutional rule on January 7, 1993. After a series of workshops and stakeholder engagements, a report with a number of recommendations was presented to the government for consideration by the CRC. However through a government white paper, some of the recommendations were accepted and others rejected.

The government instituted and inaugurated a five-member Constitution Review Implementation Committee (CRIC) to implement the recommendations of the Government White Paper on the Constitution Review Commission. The CRIC is tasked to develop and report on the public reactions to the Government White Paper and the Constitution amendment bills for both the entrenched and non-entrenched provisions of the constitution; to prepare the people for a referendum on the entrenched provisions of the constitution as well as facilitate the passage of the bills for the amendment of the non-entrenched provisions of the constitution. Generally, the main objective of the committee was to implement the recommendations of the Government White Paper on the Constitution Review

Commission. The recommendations and proposals will be subjected to a vote at a referendum.

Ghanaians are currently being educated about the upcoming referendum regarding the nature of questions that will be responded to.

### UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN THE WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION

There are several upcoming district and general elections from 2015 through to 2016 in the sub-region. These elections will surely serve a test for credible, free, fair and transparent exercise in consolidating the practice and culture of democracy in each of the below mentioned countries and, by the same token, across the whole West African region.

- In **Ghana**, the local government (district assembly) elections which is held every four years is slated for January 20, 2015 while Presidential and Parliamentary Elections are scheduled for December 07, 2016
- In **Nigeria**, according to the dates issued by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the elections shall hold as follows:
  1. Presidential/National Assembly Elections - February 14, 2015
  2. Governorship/State House of Assembly Elections - 28th February, 2015.
- The next elections in la **Cote d'Ivoire** are slated for October 2015.

Also, the dates of **Togo, Burkina Faso** and **Guinea** are yet to be announced by the Election Management bodies.

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#### **Note to WAEON Members**

*WAEON Network members are encouraged to submit news entries to the Secretariat for inclusion in the WAEON Newsletter. Kindly send us your views, comments and suggestions on what could be done to improve the network. The next edition will be released by the end of the third quarter*