

NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE



TRANSFORMING RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES AND EXPERIENCES FOR SOCIAL COHESION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: A REPORT ON LESSONS LEARNT & BEST PRACTICES FROM AN INTERFAITH COOPERATION FOR THE 2016 ELECTIONS ENGAGEMENTS IN GHANA



SUPPORTED BY:



**STAR
Ghana**

Strengthening Transparency,
Accountability and Responsiveness

Edited By: Samuel Zan **AKOLOGO**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- ADR** – ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION
- FAITH** – FORUM FOR ACTIONS ON INCLUSION, TRANSPARENCY AND HARMONY
- EC** – ELECTORAL COMMISSION
- NCCE** – NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION
- FBO** – FAITH BASED ORGANIZATION
- EWSR** – EARLY WARNING SIGNAL REPORT
- CECOTAPS** – CENTRE FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEACE STUDIES
- MCRC** – MARIAN CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTRE
- GCBC** – GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
- ONCI** – OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CHIEF IMAM
- AMM** – AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION, GHANA
- CCG** – CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA
- GPCC** – GHANA PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC COUNCIL
- FOMWAG** – FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN GHANA
- CMA** – CHRISTIAN MOTHERS ASSOCIATION
- IGIs** – INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS
- MAREDES** – MARSHALLAN RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
- IFYC** – INTERFAITH YOUTH CORE
- PSC** – PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE
- TOR** – TERMS OF REFERENCE
- NCS** – NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT
- NGO** – NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
- IGP** – INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE
- EU** – EUROPEAN UNION
- STAR- GHANA**: STRENGTHENING TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS
- IFC** – INTERFAITH COOPERATION
- RLs** – RELIGIOUS LEADERS
- UNDP** – UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
- CSD REFORM** - CENTRE FOR SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT REFORM

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This report is a documentation drawn from an interfaith cooperation project implemented by the National Catholic Secretariat of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference from April 2016 to June 2017. The project is titled **“Forum for Actions on Inclusion, Transparency and Harmony (FAITH)”** in Ghana's 2016 Elections and was fully funded by STAR-Ghana.

STAR-Ghana is a pooled donor funding mechanism working to increase the influence of Civil Society and Parliament in Ghana. STAR-Ghana's programme is funded by UK Aid, DANIDA and the European Union (EU). The National Catholic Secretariat on behalf of the interfaith cooperation wishes to express gratitude to STAR – Ghana for supporting our initiative with funding and capacity enhancement.

This project involved a number of stakeholders and actors whose participation contributed significantly to the overall project outcome. We wish to thank the following religious institutions whose participation and contribution to the interfaith cooperation made this outcome a reality; The Office of the National Chief Imam (ONCI), The Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana (AMM), the Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES), Christian Mothers Association (CMA) and the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Ghana (FOMWAG).

We wish to also thank the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana; Mrs. Charlotte Osei and her Deputies for supporting this project from the level of project development through a formal letter. The participation of the Electoral Commissioners in our dialogue meetings was a huge value addition to our project. We also wish to thank the out-gone Minister of Interior; Mr Prosper Douglas Bani, the out-gone Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr. John Kudalor and all Service Commanders who took part in our Review and Action Planning meetings on the Early Warning Signal Reports with Faith Leaders.

We also acknowledge the technical contribution from the Centre for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies (CECOTAPS) based in Damongo and led by Rev. Fr. Dr. Clement Aapengnuo for carrying out the surveillance studies and submitting early warning signal reports to faith leaders. Worthy of mention is the Marian Conflict Resolution Centre (MCRC) at the Catholic University College of Ghana (CUCG) in Fiapre for facilitating the Alternative Dispute Resolution Training for selected representatives of faith groups across the country.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Catholic Secretariat of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference facilitated the implementation of the FAITH in Ghana's 2016 Elections project with the aim of ensuring that all Political Parties that participated in the 2016 elections accepted the outcome declared by the Electoral Commission of Ghana and also to propose a framework for the formalization of the interfaith cooperation platform for public policy advocacy in Ghana.

Historically, religious leaders have contributed to nurturing Ghana's democratic growth since 1992. Religious leaders contributed to Ghana's Electoral process through election monitoring and dialogue. The previous engagement of faith leaders was however ad hoc and not anticipatory, resulting in “fire fighting” approaches to electoral disagreements.

The strategic involvement of faith leaders in the 2016 elections under the FAITH in Ghana's 2016 Elections project adopted a different approach through anticipatory and reconciliatory strategies which resulted in the holding of high level dialogue meetings, strategic meetings with eminent Statesmen, the use of surveillance reports as basis for dialogue, information dissemination using community radio and the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution to mediate election related disagreements. The project was implemented to also help chart a framework for the formalization of interfaith cooperation for election and public policy engagements in Ghana. The fifteen (15) month interfaith cooperation has shown great prospects and has put forward key recommendations on how multi-faith groups can work together to promote a common purpose. The report acknowledges that the formalization of interfaith cooperation will not be an event; it will be a process that will require nurturing, accompaniment and sustainable support to make it functional.

The potential of interfaith cooperation as manifested in this report are enormous and could be used to engage other Public Policy issues that confront the Country and sub-region. Given that the West Africa sub-region remains volatile with pockets of religious extremism and conflicts, the interfaith cooperation can be a model for the promotion of sub-regional peace and security.

The lessons learnt and best practices report is structured into five chapters. Chapter one focuses on the background to this project, chapter two of the report delves into the conceptual framework of faith-based organizations which is also referred to as Literature review. Chapter three of the report is on the structure, protocol and approach of the interfaith cooperation project, this represents the methodology used to arrive at the project's outcome. The fourth chapter outlines the key lessons learnt and outcomes from the interfaith cooperation project. Chapter five which is the last chapter presents the conclusions drawn and the recommendations put forward for the consideration of various stakeholders.

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE INTERFAITH COOPERATION PROJECT

Ghana has made significant progress on its democratic development journey by holding successive democratic elections since 1992. Even though a lot of progress has been made in the area of organizing free, fair, credible and transparent elections, various actors in the elections, especially the losing political parties have had cause to blame institutional weakness of the Electoral Commission or incumbent abuse/rigging for their defeat. The involvement of religious leaders in Ghana's election processes predates 1992 when Ghana finally returned to democratic governance after series of military takeovers. The involvement of religious leaders in previous election engagements was largely focused on the monitoring and observation of the conduct of elections and occasionally responding to crisis situation. The tension and contention that came with the 2012 General Elections resulting in an eight-month long litigation in the Supreme Court of Ghana, contributing to loss of productivity and pushing the Country to the brink of conflict, was a major wakeup call to religious leaders in Ghana. It is from this background that this project framework was developed to facilitate cooperation of interfaith leaders for the 2016 election engagement.

The 2016 General Elections provided an opportunity to strengthen existing healthy ties among interfaith leaders and also to initiate processes for the formalization of an interfaith cooperation in Ghana. The National Catholic Secretariat, on behalf of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, led the process of facilitating an interfaith cooperation to engage the elections process through an array of strategies, ranging from the use of evidence-based early warning surveillance reporting, action planning and review meetings on early warning signal reports, dialogue meetings with Independent Governmental Institutions (IGIs), peace messaging and public education using community radio and using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to mediate election related disagreements.

STAR-Ghana a pooled donor funding mechanism supported the National Catholic Secretariat of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference to implement this 15-month Elections intervention with an overall project outcome of “at the end of Ghana's 2016 elections, peace and security would be achieved marked by all (100%) participating political parties accepting the election results”.

Key Faith-based organizations that participated in this interfaith cooperation included the Office of the National Chief Imam (ONCI), Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Ghana

(FOMWAG), Christian Mothers' Association (CMA) and the Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES). All these Faith-based organizations agreed to join the cooperation through formal letters of support¹.

This interfaith cooperation is not entirely new. Faith leaders have cooperated in the past to engage key national policy issues around the elections. The current interfaith cooperation drew lessons from the past to set up a mechanism that will anticipate threats and take precautionary measures to nip the looming danger in the bud. This approach contributed to the peaceful and successful nature of the 2016 Elections and also boosted the credibility of religious leaders' engagement through the evidence-based approach. A separate but complementary report on how the interfaith platform influenced the 2016 electoral process is also available.

This report on experiences from the interfaith cooperation is aimed at improving knowledge management by comprehensively documenting key lessons learnt and best practices aimed at formalizing the interfaith cooperation for key national level Policy engagements.

¹See *Profiles of participating institutions in Appendix*

2.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

2.1 OVERVIEW OF FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

According to the Presbyterian Interfaith Research and Resource Centre (PIRRC), Faith-based organizations (FBOs) are “organizations that derive inspiration and guidance for their activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within that faith”. They comprise a range of religious charitable organizations affiliated with one or more faith and spiritual traditions, which may include:

- Religious congregations (such as churches, mosques, synagogues or temples);
- Charities sponsored or hosted by one or more religious congregations;
- Non-profit organizations founded by a religious congregation or based upon faith and spiritual traditions; and
- Coalitions that include organizations described above.

Faith itself is the unwavering belief in a religion based on spiritual conviction².

2.2 RELIGIOUS LEADERS (RLs)

Religious leaders (RLs) are men and women with a formal affiliation to a religion or spiritual path who play influential roles within their communities and the broader civil society. Examples include priests, imams, rabbis, clerics, monks, nuns, lamas, etc.

2.3 INTERFAITH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

To place the issue of interfaith in the context of the FAITH Project, it will be useful to have a universal definition of interfaith. A working definition has been adopted from the Presbyterian Interfaith Research and Resource Centre (PIRRC) as “relating to members of the community of different religions or relations between different religions. Interfaith establishes a moral common ground by focusing on the similarities between faiths, understanding of values, and commitment to common humanity”.

2.4 INTERFAITH COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

To understand Interfaith Cooperation, the project drew a working definition from a Harvard scholar Diana Eck (2006), of the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC). She articulates interfaith cooperation as the active engagement of religious diversity to a constructive end. Diana Eck

²*Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 11th Edition, Revised (2009). Edited by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson.*

(2006) further suggests that for interfaith cooperation, which is interchangeable with “religious pluralism,” to be successful, the following three essential components are necessary, these are:

RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOUS OR NON-RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Respect for identity means that everyone can bring their full identity to the table. Interfaith cooperation is not syncretistic or relativistic; no one has to concede exclusive truth or claims to be part of it.

MUTUALLY INSPIRING RELATIONSHIPS

Interfaith cooperation builds relationships that move toward authentic friendships even as space emerges for real conversations about disagreements and difference. “Mutually inspiring” also means that each person gains and grows from the relationship.

COMMON ACTION FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Common action is integral to building stronger communities. Motivated by shared values across religious and non-religious traditions, interfaith cooperation can both foster community change and spur interfaith conversation and reflection. This is where interfaith cooperation has the potential both to create broad-minded individuals and transform communal relations in a diverse society.

2.5 ENGAGING FAITH COMMUNITIES

Due to the homogeneous nature and the diversity of norms, values and beliefs of the religious community, it was useful to review relevant literature on why and how faith communities should be engaged as a benchmark to assess the appropriateness of the FAITH project's operational guidelines. According to the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), intercultural and interreligious dialogue begins at community level, where cultural and religious groups interact with each other most directly in everyday situations – but also where tensions between them are the most tangible. Local authorities therefore play a key role in creating conditions for such dialogue and fostering it. Faith Communities can make particular contributions to the work of Local Authority and provide important capacities and capabilities in supporting the provision of services. They should be regarded as key communities and important resources with which local authorities and government can engage.

Faith community leaders offer a unique mix of competencies that can add value to local statutory service providers:

- i. They are embedded in the local community and directly engaged with a wider range of people than statutory agencies.
- ii. Leaders who are well established within their communities utilize indigenous

knowledge, personal contacts and networks across the faith sector.

- iii. They have an important role in promoting social cohesion.
- iv. They have a trusted position of guidance and reassurance.
- v. They have access to channels of communication with cross-sections of the local community which local authorities cannot readily access.
- vi. They have access to a range of voluntary social care agencies.

This demonstrates that faith communities, through their leaders, can help reach vulnerable communities with which statutory service providers may not have direct contact. (For example, refugees and asylum seekers may attend religious services and events but may not be known to statutory agencies). It also shows that faith community leaders are key people to engage with, if the resources and capabilities of faith communities are to be harnessed for the purpose of promoting integration and social cohesion at local level.

Local Interfaith structures are of great importance: they have a major contribution to make in helping to create an integrated and cohesive community, at ease with diversity and secure in a sense of common purpose.

2.6 FIGHTING POVERTY WITH INTERFAITH COOPERATION

The FAITH in Ghana's 2016 elections project has a direct relation to reducing poverty. It is a well known fact that prosperity thrives in environment of peace and security. There is therefore the need to explore how interfaith cooperation can be used as a tool in the fight against poverty. The project provided a common interfaith space as an opportunity for the religious and political leadership to deliver on what lies at the core of their respective beliefs: preserving and advancing human dignity.

The challenges we face today have unique dimensions. It is therefore important that the interfaith cooperation is structured innovatively in a way that allows it to respond as directly and as quickly as possible to the compelling demands of human suffering. Just as human suffering manifests itself in multiple forms, the interfaith cooperation should also go beyond its conventional form, issues and agendas. For example, a big part of human suffering relates to basic needs and services, much of which could be provided for with a wise and sustainable deployment of financial resources. An interfaith cooperation working towards a broad range of economic development initiatives could be a very timely (albeit unconventional) response.

2.7 POPE FRANCIS' STANCE ON INTERFAITH COOPERATION

Pope Francis has received considerable praise for his focus on human suffering and acceptance. He has spoken out against the way contemporary capitalism seems unable to promote and preserve human dignity and social justice for all. He has also responded to critics of the Catholic Church by leading Vatican reforms. As he continues to win more support for his courageous stances, he has also made some historic gestures to other faiths, opening up a new universe of possibilities.

Recently, while in the Blue Mosque of Istanbul, Pope Francis made an unprecedented gesture of interfaith cooperation towards Muslims worldwide. With his hands clasped, he turned toward Mecca and observed silence as the Grand Mufti of Istanbul offered an Islamic prayer. In his encyclical letter – **Laudato Si** on care for creation, Pope Francis has drawn and quoted profusely from the teachings of other Faiths on the need to care for creation and the earth, which he refers to as 'our common home'.

There are striking similarities between the Pope's mission to end human suffering and Islam's central focus on the socio-economic welfare of human life and preserving human dignity. The possibilities of interfaith cooperation have long existed but today they not only appear more compelling but also more pragmatic.

2.8 IMPORTANCE OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION.

Below are two quotations that highlight the urgency and need for interfaith cooperation. The first is taken from an address made by Pope Benedict XVI to Ambassadors from Muslim countries in 2006 in which he said:

Box 1

"Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue between Christians and Muslims cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is, in fact, a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends" (Catholic News Agency, 2006).

The second quotation is from a letter signed by 137 Muslim Scholars and Leaders from across the Muslim world and sent to Christian leaders in 2007. It says:

Box 2

"Muslims and Christians together make up over half the world's population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians" (Gerard Forde, 2013).

In 2015, the world also witnessed the positive influence of interfaith cooperation on the Paris Climate Agreement. Locally, the Religious Bodies Network on Climate Change (RELBONET) has been a platform for sensitization and engagement of Religious Leaders on climate change issues in Ghana.

2.9 SOME MODELS AND GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING FBOs

This literature is aimed at drawing lessons from other jurisdictions within the continent on the role FBOs played in the electoral process.

2.9.1. KENYA'S EXPERIENCE

The foundational principles of operations of FBOs and having seen the contribution of such bodies including their leaders in Kenya's electoral violence situation, the question should then be asked, what then is the real role of FBOs in electoral processes including promoting free and fair elections? The following were proposed from the Kenyan experience in a conference under the theme "Meeting the Challenge of Religion and Pluralism in Africa" in June 2009 and facilitated by Trust Africa³ (Trust Africa, 2009).

- Identification of common issues without considering self-interests is the first step of FBOs to initiate mutually acceptable role. In brief, the role of FBOs can be stated as Mediators, Facilitators and Advocates of truth.
- The FBOs, through inclusive platforms, can facilitate communication between parties by helping them to acknowledge existing challenges and, together with them, navigate through such situations. The FBOs can only do this by seeing themselves above those issues. Remember, you cannot see the picture if you are inside the frame. The frame here simply means having vested (whether personal or institutional) political and other interests. So, first remove yourself from such a frame and then see the bigger picture. The facilitative role must be structured and has to gain and enhance acceptance by all.

³Trust Africa is an independent foundation that works to secure the conditions for democracy and equitable development throughout the continent. Led by Africans, it convenes dialogues, catalyzes ideas, and provides grants and technical assistance to organizations working to advance these goals.

- As religious people, we must engage in determining the future of the country through offering steadfast advice to the citizens while promoting the culture of acceptance and mutual respect. These can be done through worship times, linking good citizenship and prosperous society to religious teachings and identifying the roles of respective faith adherents in ensuring that principles of truth and love are practiced.
- Use religious principles. During each and every election times, each political party and candidates would unveil their manifestos and principles of development they would implement if elected. These keep on changing and sometimes, they are copy and paste. On the other hand religious principles do not change. If something was considered inhuman thousands of years ago, it is still not right today.
- It is important for FBOs to encourage co-operative problem-solving and discourage the parties from taking entrenched positions. People in the society tend to become emotional and sometimes lose focus given positions taken by their political leaders. This is normal. However, it becomes dangerous if these issues touch on their very nature of life such as religion, economics and systems of justice. FBOs must find ways of offering platforms for discussions and not debates and leadership for inclusive approach. Look and work for common good of the society. We must endeavor, at all costs, to determine what the differing parties or persons have in common, compatible and conflicting interests and where appropriate, selectively share information with all.
- The roles of FBOs in elections do not start during the electoral processes such as campaigns. It should start well before. In this case, religious leaders, through respective and joint platforms, must engage policy experts to examine and challenge various political portfolios of different political structures and personalities. These will ensure that the political party that comes to power holds values that would promote unity, positive relations, and peaceful coexistence between and among people.
- Since it is the desire of religious communities to have a well-structured meaning to the lives of people in the society, FBOs must ensure that competitive electoral processes produce a 'win-win' situation between the competing parties. This can only be achieved if the enmities between them are addressed beforehand rather than after. Leaders of FBOs, are therefore called upon to stretch your hands of friendship and invitation for dialogue to all parties involved and streamline national agenda either beyond or within respective political agenda.
- Religious leaders and FBOs when addressing issues of national importance such as promoting free and fair elections must ensure that they send the right messages to people across the board. This must also be done in unity and, sometimes, together. When top religious

leaders of a country issue or read a statement on particular matters together, people tend to align themselves with each other as they consider the leaders as pillars of guidance. This is different from when they, the leaders, speak and issue statements in their respective locations. People tend to lose faith in you when there seems to be open antagonisms.

2.9.2 INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

The Interfaith Conference (IFC) of Metropolitan Washington proposes Key ground rules to facilitate interfaith dialogue and cooperation as follows (Winter, 1983):

- We are here as individuals, not as official spokespersons of our faith. Some views may well represent the official doctrine while others may not.
- As individuals, be mindful of the use of terms “I” and “We.” “I” refers to personal beliefs and thoughts, while “we” refers to those of a group.
- Speak when it is comfortable for you to do so; you have the right to “pass” on a question or comment.
- Please be respectful of each participant. Anonymity and confidentiality are essential tools for building an environment of trust that enables everyone to speak freely. Share what you have learned from the dialogue without identifying persons by name unless they agree.
- With this in mind, use this environment to share your heart and mind. Be honest, speaking the truth as you experience it, in love.
- Be gentle with each other's differences. One can disagree without being disagreeable.
- Do not be afraid to ask others to clarify their comments or questions; we are all here to learn. Often we respond before understanding.
- Among this gathering of faiths and cultures, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience to be shared in a limited time. Be respectful of others and give everyone an equal chance to speak. If the facilitator has to interrupt, do not take it personally.
- Listen to really understand what the other person is saying. Listening without judgment does not mean you have to agree with what is shared.

2.9.3 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) GUIDING PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGING FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS (RLs)

To tap into approved global guiding principles for engaging the faith community, we sort to explore UNDP's recommended guiding partnership principles for engaging faith-based organizations and their leaders⁴. UNDP proposes a few core principles of engagement needed to be borne in mind to engender a trusting relationship with faith actors and sustain respect:

a) IMPARTIALITY AND TRANSPARENCY

It is important to remember that all development actors – even secular ones – have their own prejudices and make assumptions about their partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. When partnering with FBOs and RLs, it is imperative to maintain a non-judgmental attitude about beliefs and practices that are different from your own, and seek impartiality when partnering with more than one faith. Engaging religious actors alongside secular ones helps to create a truly representative coalition and minimizes the importance of religious differences.

b) TRUST AND MUTUAL RESPECT

Establishing a sense of trust among development actors, stakeholders and beneficiaries requires a common vision, mutual respect and integrity as well as operational capacity. To maximize mutual ownership and inclusion, there is the need to demonstrate respect for the diverse faith and spiritual traditions of FBO partners. The element of trust is especially important in fragile states. Establishing trust in these settings is a long-term commitment requiring sustained cooperation that is not disrupted by political pressure. Mutual trust is particularly crucial in situations where harmful practices are challenged or when reconciliation is required to prevent violent reprisals.

c) STRATEGIC ENTRY POINTS

Although belief systems may vary, religious and secular actors can recognize the benefits of collaboration based on similar objectives. For instance, engagement around issues of economic justice, including poverty eradication and the reduction of excessive inequality is in itself an entry point for collaboration. Since not all faith actors address all development issues,

⁴UNDP Guidelines on Engaging with Faith-based Organizations and Religious Leaders, October 2014

partnerships need to be based upon comparative advantages. For instance FBOs and RLs may be natural partners to advocate for comprehensive social protection programmes. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that many FBOs and RLs already deliver critical services.

d) COMMON GROUND

In new relationships, trust develops over time, and with experiences working together and through open communication. A common technical language can be developed to share common concerns and priorities. Instead of minimizing the voices of faith leaders and religious communities, sound partnerships are built on honest dialogue about what each party hopes to achieve and whether there is common ground for action. This strengthens the capacity of FBOs and RLs.

3.0 STRUCTURE, PROTOCOL AND APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the framework used to engage religious leaders under the interfaith cooperation project. The chapter explains the methodology used in the cooperation and highlights the information sources and participatory approaches used. The National Catholic Secretariat of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference having played a key role in election engagements for almost two decades since the return to multi-party democracy adopted participatory approaches to project implementation.

One key strategy was hinged on the use of evidence-based early warning signal reports generated by a professional peace building institute as basis for dialogue meetings with election stakeholders for review and action planning by religious leaders. The use of Early Warning Signal Reports as grounds for dialogue gave a great booster to the image and credibility of the project's engagements.

The second arm of the project strategy heavily relied on the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to manage election related disagreements. As a backup to the use of ADR, the project also carried out massive information dissemination of messages of peace using places of worship and the pulpit.

3.2 PROJECT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The legal holder of the project is the National Catholic Secretariat of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference. As part of efforts to encourage active participation of all faith groups in the cooperation, an interfaith Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established with clear terms of reference. The Project Steering Committee met at regular intervals to review progress and also plan for key interventions. The PSC was chaired by Hajia Ayishetu Abdul-Kadri representing the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Ghana (FOMWAG) who effectively provided leadership till the project closure.

3.3 MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

The project provided for a ten-member Steering Committee drawn from the project partners as a means of improving project governance and inclusive participation.

The Steering Committee members, apart from representing partner institutions, were also chosen for their technical ability to provide strategic leadership, express informed opinion on implementation and to exercise effective governance over the FAITH Project. The project partners' operational planning meeting considered a broadly representative Committee to be composed as follows:

NO.	INSTITUTION	NAME OF MEMBERS
1	National Catholic Secretariat (NCS)	1. MR. SAMUEL ZAN AKOLOGO 2. MR. DAVID ISSAKA
2	Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC)	MR. ERNEST ASIGRI
3	Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission (AMM)	ALHJ. AHMAD S. ANDERSON
4	Office of the National Chief Imam (ONCI)	SHEIKH ARMIYAWO SHAIBU
5	Christian Council of Ghana (CCG)	Was not able to nominate a representative
6	Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES)	MRS. ELIZABETH ANDERSON - YEBUAH
7	Alternative Dispute Resolution Expert	REV. SR. MARGARET - MAVIS ANKAMAH
8	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Ghana (FOMWAG)	HAJIA AYISHETU ABDUL-KADRI
9	Christian Mothers' Association (CMA)	MADAM JOANA JULIET APPIAH

3.4 ROLE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE DERIVED FROM TERMS OF REFERENCE

The specific responsibilities of the Steering Committee were to:

- Meet from time to time to review project implementation.
- Encourage participation from partners.
- Review Project's quarterly monitoring reports and advise Project Secretariat accordingly
- Make recommendations on project implementation strategy and activities
- Serve as contact persons for project partners
- Available for consultation on any relevant issues pertaining to project implementation.
- May be requested to represent the project interest in relevant networking platforms.

- Review and approve terms of reference for their effective functioning.
- Approve allocation and recommend participation of partners' ADR Peace Teams.
- Approve draft proposals from Technical partners for services.
- Elect a chair among themselves for the purpose of presiding over meetings of the committee.
- In the absence of the elected chair at any particular meeting, members by consensus or a simple majority may nominate and elect one member to chair that particular meeting.

3.5 OTHER TERMS

- Membership of the committee is based on continuous affiliation with the body represented.
- Strive for consensus building in all matters before the committee and agree on amicable settlement on any disputes.
- Cost of members' participation in steering committee meetings and other project activities will be reimbursed as per approved project budget lines.
- The Committee may by consensus co-opt any individual or institution if necessary to provide specialized expertise to facilitate its work.

3.6 PROCEDURES FOR STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The procedures of the Steering Committee shall include the following:

- The quorum for any Steering Committee meeting shall be Five(5) member institutions
- Individual members must be committed and must ensure continuity in participation in all meetings.
- The Steering Committee will aim to achieve consensus on decisions made. In the event this proves impossible, decisions may be made by simple majority vote amongst members present at that particular meeting. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson will have an additional casting vote;
- The Steering Committee is expected to meet quarterly and members will need to devote some additional time reviewing project documentation;
- The FAITH Project Management Secretariat shall provide secretarial services to the Steering Committee. These will include;
 - o Circulation of relevant material to members in good time for preparation for each meeting.
 - o Drafting of agendas for agreement with the Chairperson.
 - o Keeping of minutes and recording of decisions made.
 - o Reporting on progress with all aspects of the FAITH Project implementation.
- The authority of the FAITH Steering Committee will be final on all operational matters.

4.0 KEY LESSONS LEARNT AND OUTCOMES FROM THE INTERFAITH COOPERATION

The project documented a significant number of lessons. These are drawn from the quarterly progress reports submitted to STAR-Ghana. Among the most significant lessons learnt include:

- **EFFICACY OF THE INTERFAITH PLATFORM AS A TOOL FOR NATIONAL CONSENSUS BUILDING AND POLICY ADVOCACY.**

The interfaith cooperation for the 2016 Elections engagement revealed that there is huge potential to use the FAITH platform to hold high level Public Policy dialogues with key Policy making institutions to improve Policy delivery for the poor and vulnerable. This lesson became evident following the successful convening of high profiled meetings. The convening capacity was drawn from the credibility of the participating faith organizations in the cooperation.

- **GENDER INCLUSION**

The hierarchy of over 90% of faith organizations is dominated by men. This gives the false impression that faith organizations might not be sensitive to the needs of gender groups. However, the appointment of a woman as Chairperson for the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and her discharge of the duty with competence and ability proved a point that faith organizations are not gender blind and can lead an advocacy for gender empowerment in Ghana.

- **USE OF EARLY WARNING SIGNS REPORTS AS BASES FOR ENGAGEMENT WITH ELECTION STAKEHOLDERS**

Previous Election Engagements by faith leaders were not grounded by evidence which gave room for citizens to interrogate the basis for the engagements. With the use of Early Warning Signal Reports as a basis for engaging with Election stakeholders such as the Electoral Commission, The Interior Ministry and Political Parties, faith leaders have boosted further their credibility.

- **CONVENING CAPACITY OF THE PLATFORM**

Civic voice has influence depending on who is reached with the message and at what level of policy space. Dialogue is possible only if the advocating partner has the capacity to convene policy makers to the discussion platform. The ability to bring policy makers together was the trump card of the interfaith platform. During the critical periods of pre-election engagements

and post-election activities, the interfaith platform was able to hold dialogue meetings with key policy makers such as; The Chairperson of the Electoral Commission with the Deputies, The then Minister of Interior with Service Commanders, Leaders of Political Parties, out-going and in-coming Presidents, etc. These point to the fact that public policy engagements will be effective and efficient if FBOs are supported to facilitate the dialogue process.



Religious Leaders' with Interior Minister, Inspector General of Police and Service Commanders after dialogue meeting (October, 2016).

- **ESTABLISHMENT OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MODUS OPERANDI**

Due to faith differences of the members of the interfaith platform, the potential for distractions and misunderstandings were huge, therefore, the development of a joint Terms of Reference (ToR) that defined the role and responsibilities of each participating Faith Organization was seen as a very useful approach to work. As a result, neither conflict nor disagreement was recorded among the participating FBOs for the 15-month long project implementation.



Some members of the Project Steering Committee after a regular meeting.

4.1 KEY OUTCOMES FROM THE INTERFAITH COOPERATION

The Interfaith cooperation achieved some outcomes as a result of the 15-month engagements. These outcomes have implications for future interfaith cooperation due to the solid foundation laid by the FAITH Project. Key among the outcomes documented and worth sharing with our stakeholders includes:

- **SIGNED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INTER-FAITH PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE**

The cooperation resulted in the signing of a Terms of Reference that served as a guide to regulate participating FBOs efforts. This outcome attests to the fact that FBOs in Ghana have a singular purpose and are using Religion as a rallying point for the promotion of peace, effective policy delivery and national social cohesion. The signed Terms of Reference will be a reference point to facilitate future interfaith cooperation.



Formation and inception meeting of the interfaith Project Steering Committee.

• **THIRTY-TWO FAITH-BASED LEADERS' CAPACITY BUILT IN ADR ADMINISTRATION.**

The training of 32 representatives of FBO Leaders drawn from the ten (10) Regions of Ghana in the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution as a tool for mediating electoral disputes has popularized ADR and will contribute to peace in communities in line with Ghana's Chief Justice's recommendation⁵. The trained ADR Animators will also lead the process of driving further inter Religious dialogue at the local level to promote Religious tolerance.



A group photo of faith leaders whose capacity was built in the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to mediate Election disputes and disagreements.

⁵Page 55 of Daily Graphic of Ghana, Tuesday, March 14, 2017.

- **ISSUED TWO EARLY WARNING SIGNALS REPORTS AS BASES FOR DIALOGUE AND ACTION PLANNING.**

The interfaith cooperation facilitated the issuance of two (2) Early Warning Signal Reports. Religious Leaders held Action Planning and Review meetings over the reports to strategize on how to nip the early warning signs in the bud. Religious Leaders also used the Early Warning Signal Reports to hold dialogue meetings with key stakeholders in the 2016 elections.



Religious Leaders after a Review and Action Planning Meeting on the Early Warning Signal Report

- **OVER 12 MILLION GHANAIS WERE REACHED DIRECTLY BY THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FBOs THROUGH THE USE OF COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS AND PLACES OF WORSHIP.**

The interfaith cooperation reached over twelve (12) million Ghanaians with peace messages through the use of Community Radio and also places of worship. The messages disseminated focused on securing Ghana's peace before, during and after the 2016 General Elections. The estimation is based on the coverage of the 20 Community Radios and Audiences at places of worship. This approach adopted by the interfaith cooperation contributed to the overall peaceful nature of the 2016 Elections.



In-studio radio dissemination of peace messages by interfaith Leaders in Ho.

• **DIALOGUE MEETING WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE ELECTION**

The Interfaith cooperation for the 2016 Elections Project successfully held dialogue meetings with key stakeholders in the 2016 Elections. The dialogue meetings recorded the participation of high profile stakeholders such as the Minister of Interior, The Inspector General of Police, Service Commanders of the Security Agencies, The Chairperson of the Electoral Commission with all her Deputies and the media. The dialogue meetings were centered on the hotspots mapped out from the Early Warning Signal Reports and also for the interfaith cooperation to receive updates on the level of preparedness of the Election stakeholders.



A group photo of FBO Leaders' dialogue meeting with the Electoral Commission. (October, 2016)

- **STRATEGIC MEETINGS WITH EMINENT STATESMEN**

The interfaith cooperation successfully held separate strategic meetings with Former President John Dramani Mahama and President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo right after the declaration of the election results. The strategic meetings by the religious Leaders ensured that both leaders made firm commitments to uphold good democratic principles by facilitating peaceful political transition.



Meeting of FBO Leaders with President Elect Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (December, 2016)



Meeting of FBO Leaders with the out-going President John Dramani Mahama (December, 2016)

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

The interfaith cooperation project has achieved its overall project outcome and has contributed to guaranteeing that ALL participating Political Parties accepted the outcome of the 2016 Election results. This feat was made possible as a result of effective, well organized and credible civic infrastructure which was underpinned by faith. The results documented from this interfaith cooperation suggest that interfaith cooperation remain very central and critical in nurturing and sustaining Ghana's electoral gains.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the enormous benefits and lessons learnt from this interfaith cooperation for elections engagements, the following recommendations have been put forward for consideration by all stakeholders interested in Ghana's democratic efforts. The recommendations can be addressed at both policy level and the operational levels in the Regions and Districts.

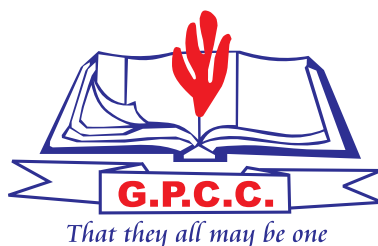
- At the National level, religious leaders should take steps to formalize the interfaith cooperation with a governing board providing strategic leadership. This will ensure that the influence of faith leaders is leveraged for improved policy delivery and election outcomes. The FAITH Project has provided a broad framework to facilitate the formalization of the interfaith cooperation.
- Also at the Policy level, the Electoral Commission should deeply involve the interfaith cooperation in its public education drive during registration of new voters, exhibition of voters' register and electoral laws and regulations. The involvement of religious leaders will help the Electoral Commission reach out to people through the massive network of FBOs. In this singular effort, the project reached over 12 million people.
- To deepen citizen's participation in the District Assembly Elections, there will be the need to involve religious leaders through the interfaith cooperation. This project reached out to a whopping 12 million citizens through information dissemination, supporting the point that the involvement of faith leaders remains critical.

- Development Partners should consider supporting the formalization process of the interfaith cooperation. The formalization will take some time to enable deep consultations and negotiations on the cooperation document. This will require a considerable amount of time and resources to be able to develop this sustainable framework for election engagement and public policy advocacy.
- The role of faith groups, especially working together, must be explored in other elections like District Assembly and Primaries of Political Parties to select their frontrunners. This will contribute to minimizing the degree of tensions, rancor and conflicts often associated with these events. Post-election incidences including political transition at the decentralized level also need the attention of Faith Groups.

APPENDICES:

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPATING FAITH GROUPS

Appendix I: GHANA PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC COUNCIL



The Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) is a Faith Based Organisation and an umbrella body of over 200 Pentecostal and Charismatic Christian church denominations and para-church organisations in Ghana, established since 1969 but registered and recognised as a legal entity in 1971 to unite the body of Christ to propagate the gospel and to meet the spiritual and socio-economic needs of its members and Ghanaian in general. Representing over 28% of the Christian Community in Ghana (2010 census) with over 15,000 local church branches spread in almost every part of Ghana and well-equipped offices in each of the ten regional cities, we are well placed and resourced technically, human resource wise, financially and logistically to undertake a number of development initiatives in Ghana, with a unique advantage in Community Mobilisation for social action and development.

Over the years, the GPCC has collaborated with the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference to provide a Prophetic voice to the nation on many occasions. Joint consultations have been planned to provide the Church's viewpoint on some important national issues. In our interfaith dialogue and collaborations, the Council in 2012 partnered with the Office of the National Chief Imam (ONCI) in the implementation of the PLUS Ghana peaceful elections Project with funding support from STAR Ghana.

The GPCC over the last few decades has mobilised, facilitated and coordinated the implementation of a number of national and community based development interventions in the specific areas of Education, Health, Water and Sanitation, HIV/AIDS Awareness Anti-stigma and discrimination campaigns and Community based counselling and support services, Community based Human Rights Advocacy, Community based Participation and Representation in Governance, Peacebuilding and Election Monitoring among the few. We have two major ongoing projects in Ghana, namely The Ghana Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Project and The Collaborative E-Waste Project, both of which involve community based mobilisation and communication. It has in the past received funding support from notable development partners such as USAID, the European Union, STAR Ghana, and Ghana AIDS Commission among the few.

The Council in its peace and governance advocacy also works in partnership with other non-faith based civil society organisations, such as the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), the Civic Forum Initiative (CFI) and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA).

Appendix II: FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN GHANA



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FOMWAG

A handful of privileged Ghanaian Muslim women educationists, some decades back thought that there would be the need to organize and mobilize themselves to assist the majority of Muslim women who never had the opportunity and access to formal education and adversely affecting their marital lives, reproductive health, economic and social development. The high level of illiteracy and disunity among Muslim women in Ghana and the negative impact that is trickling down to affecting the education of the Muslim Girl-Child became issues of concern. High poverty rate in many Muslim communities has pushed many women to the periphery of the society. Many Muslim girls do not go to school as their parents cannot afford to cater for their educational needs and as a result give these girls out in marriages at their early ages, leaving many of them without any vocation, entrepreneurial skills, academic qualification or certification to enhance their future development.

One main objective among the lot is to campaign against illiteracy and poverty and to create a national platform for Muslim women to share and discuss issues militating against their welfare and development and finding solutions to them, by speaking with one voice. By the will of Allah (SWT), FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS IN GHANA (FOMWAG) as an umbrella Muslim women's organization nationally was established and inaugurated in December, 1997 which was unprecedented in the history of Ghana. FOMWAG is currently the nationally recognized Muslim women's organization, championing the welfare of the ordinary Ghanaian Muslim woman and the education of the Muslim Girl-Child. FOMWAG has branches in all ten regions of Ghana with each Region having its Regional coordinator who oversees the actively functioning activities in over two hundred districts with over 6,000 active members all over Ghana.

VISION

Establishing structural framework of transforming Ghanaian Muslim women for entrepreneurial skills and sustainable development through holistic education and empowerment in an enabling environment by utilizing scarce resources effectively and efficiently.

MISSION

Creating opportunities and support for the Muslim Girl-Child and women to realise and harness academic and economic potentials towards improvement of their living conditions to benefit the family and the society through secular education and good Islamic moral teachings.

OBJECTIVES

- To give holistic education to the needy Muslim Girl-Child through scholarship for promising future
- To be the mouth-piece of all Muslim women in Ghana
- To educate and speak against all forms of domestic and gender-based violence
- To build an ultra-modern educational boarding complex Senior High School facility for Muslim girls in Ghana
- To collaborate with well-meaning NGOs and institutions that share our vision and have similar aspirations to share ideas on national issues
- To educate Muslim women on reproductive and general health care and quality life for empowerment and sustainable development
- Team up with our male counterparts in training and proper moral upbringing of our children to produce quality future leaders from among Muslims

FOMWAG has been engaging in a lot of Social and religious activities in Ghana with a lot of collaborative projects with other organizations; the recent collaboration has been with the National Catholic Secretariat and other Religious bodies which together formed the Forum for Actions on Inclusion, Transparency and Harmony (FAITH). The purpose of FAITH is to ensure nationwide peaceful 2016 Elections before, during and after the elections. Based on that, it offered the opportunity for some selected FOMWAG members across the country to participate in training workshop on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR.) The essence of the training is to enable trainees to be alert and observe various flash points of election violence in their communities for interventions. The training has broadened our horizon and deepened the understanding of political tolerance and peaceful co-existence which has added up to and expanded our scope of operation beyond our environment. FOMWAG for the first time has been part of election observers because the beneficiaries of the workshop were at various election centres to monitor and observe the voting process and admonished those who had wanted to create chaotic scenes.

Appendix III: CHRISTIAN MOTHERS' ASSOCIATION



The Christian Mothers' Association (CMA) Ghana, a national women Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) established by some Nuns and highly spirited women in the Catholic Church in the early 40s of the last century, has the vision to offer a holistic ministry to the women, thereby making them well-organised, self-reliant, self-sustaining, able to support the family up-keep, and more importantly to know their civic rights and responsibilities and being part of decision making at all levels.

The Christian Mothers' Association (CMA) is a faith-based women Association in the Catholic Church in Ghana. With a total membership of 24,189 dues paying members on our roll and operates in 17 out of the 20 Dioceses in Ghana, we have over the past years been working in the area of creating a voice for all women including the marginalized.

As a broad-based democratic organisation, CMA operates within the confines of its constitution, where we use the bottom-top approach in decision making. The core activities include the provision of civic, health, formal and non formal education and teaching of social and moral values, and also supporting the income generating activities of women. For the last decade, CMA has undertaken many development projects in the areas of poverty reduction, entrepreneurship, micro-finance and spearheading environmental and societal issues, and also raising leaders to take part in Ghana's decentralization process.

Appendix IV: OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CHIEF IMAM (ONCI)



Chief Imam of Ghana is a de facto title for the highest Muslim religious authority in Ghana. Not necessarily leader of any Islamic sect, holder of the office represents the Ghanaian Muslim community in national affairs, build bridges between the country's many faiths and "support development programmes that sensitize people to their social responsibilities. The Office of the National Chief Imam is involved in the establishment of institutions and organizations for providing services that address the humanitarian needs and empowerment of the Muslim youth in and outside Ghana. The Office of the National Chief Imam has sponsored hundreds of needy Muslim children mostly from the disadvantaged and vulnerable Muslim communities in Ghana. The Office of the National Chief Imam is the representative of the Muslim face in national affairs and continues to support development programmes that sensitize people to their social responsibilities and build bridges between Islam and other religions. The result is that we are a member of the National Peace Council. The Office of the National Chief Imam has also played key roles around national elections and dialogue.

The SONSETFund

The Office of the National Chief Imam (ONCI) also operates the SONSETFund. The SONSETFund is a Ghanaian registered NGO committed to supporting education in deprived communities in Ghana. SONSETFund provides support for individuals at different levels as well as supporting the youth in literacy and skills training to attain higher education. We:

1. Support primary schools
2. Support secondary schools
3. Support for higher education
4. Provide capacity building for organizations and community groups.
5. Undertake research (programmes geared towards solving indigenous problems or providing solutions)
6. Support students.

Human beings have the choice over everything except two things, they cannot choose. The choice of parents and the geographical location they were born. Some People have been born to very poor, illiterate parents in very deprived communities of Ghana. The child born into ignorance, illiteracy and poverty gives that innocent child a negative perception and mental attitude in life. The child grows as an offspring and a by product of his negative environment.

SONSETfund therefore seeks to provide opportunities for these deprived communities and individuals a sense of hope. We therefore say that a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

The ONCI has promoted inter-religious dialogue on issues that affect the well-being of Ghanaians. Over the years, we have worked with both the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Christian Council of Ghana on common issues of education and livelihoods of the poor. We have been involved with broader civil society networks to promote peaceful elections in Ghana since 1996.

Appendix V: AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION, GHANA



The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a sect in Islam that stands strongly by the Islamic fundamental teachings of peace; peace with our Creator, the Almighty, peace with His creation and peace with ourselves

It is a Missionary oriented sect that embarks on a number of outreach programs. In line with the Islamic teachings of ensuring that the propagation of this message of Islam is carried out with wisdom and goodly exhortation and not confrontation and aggression.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community as an international religious organization does not only believe in peaceful coexistence but also makes it a duty to work towards establishing and maintaining peace everywhere in the world on the basis of the teachings of the Holy Quran.

Here in Ghana, apart from using its pulpit to preach peace and educate its adherents to live in peace with themselves and with their neighbors, the Mission also works in collaboration with faith based organization and other stake holders to ensure that we protect the relative peace we enjoy in this country.

Since 1992, when the nation was ushered into the forth Republic, party political activities have been characterized by conflicts and tensions which have the potential of plunging the nation into chaos and wars. As a stakeholder, and as a community that believes that people should be free to choose their leaders, the leadership of the Mission have tirelessly worked in the open and behind the scenes to ensure that the right and peaceful atmosphere is created for Ghanaians to freely exercise their franchise and that power is transferred (when necessary) peacefully and without rancor. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community worked with others like the National Catholic Secretariat, Christian Council of Ghana, the Office of the National Chief Imam and other peace loving organizations in this regard.

It was for this purpose that during the 2016 general elections, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community accepted to work with Catholic Secretariat and other faith based organizations to ensure that peace prevails before, during and after the elections. This was a project executed under the sponsorship of STAR – GHANA. The programs and activities organized under this project included the training of persons in Alternative Disputes Resolution (A D R). It is important to state that the mission has benefited immensely from the training of these persons. Apart from engaging them in mediation during the political campaigning, they have become great assets to the community helping in resolving internal conflicts.

Under the STAR – GHANA project the mission organized conferences at various levels making peace the subject of the themes. The Mission also used its wing organizations (i.e. the youth Association, The Women's Organization and the Elder's Association) to organize peace talks and peace matches before the 2016 elections.

Appendix VI: CARITAS GHANA



CARITAS GHANA

BRIEF HISTORY

Caritas Ghana is a Charity Organization of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) and member of the global Caritas Confederation. It operates under the National Catholic Secretariat.

Caritas Ghana works in four thematic areas namely; Social Development, Livelihood promotion, Social services, Promotion of Social and Environmental Justice, Public Policy Advocacy, Promotion of Pro-poor policies and Action Research.

Work on public policy advocacy on behalf of the poor and the promotion of the common good is central to Caritas Ghana. One example is its effort to include the 'Right to Health' in the National Constitution Review. Other high level advocacy initiatives of Caritas Ghana include the launch of a campaign on the 'Right to Food' as part of the Caritas Internationalis global campaign.

Presently, Caritas Ghana is registered in Ghana as a Non-governmental Organization with the Registrar of Companies under the Registrar Generals Department of Ghana with a certificate of incorporation and a certificate to commence business.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES,

- To promote effective institutional structures and functioning of the Church's service of charity at National, Diocesan and Parish levels
- To promote the Catholic Church's Socio-pastoral work as a means of expressing the gospel message and the social doctrine of the church.
- To contribute to the enhancement of the dignity of the human person; especially the poor and the marginalized through their direct empowerment and their representation where they are excluded.
- To undertake social action research as a means to improving social-service delivery.

MISSION STATEMENT

Caritas Ghana is to implement the decision and policies of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference through its relevant sectors and units for the spiritual and human development of the people of God. We are inspired by 1 Timothy 6:18 hence our motto: "Good works, Generosity and Sharing".

VISION STATEMENT

To work for and support the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference to help the people of Ghana to live in Freedom, Peace and Dignity and achieve their developmental potentials through socio-political empowerment based on the Teachings of Christ.

OUR VALUES

We are guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, Caritas Confederacy Management Standards and Code of Ethics. Our identity is intrinsically Church-based but act altruistically without any discrimination based on gender, religion, ethnicity and race or social circumstances. The following are some key value considerations:

- Integrity
- Honesty
- Sanctity of life and work
- Empathy
- Respect
- Promote Sustainability
- Build Families and Communities
- Stewardship
- Partnership
- Witnessing
- Justice and Peace
- Ethics.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND STRENGTHS

- Wide out-reach and community presence
- Fulfill both statutory and ecclesial authority regulations
- Adherence to high ethical and value standards
- Effective, open and transparent decision-making and governance
- Long standing experience in the delivery of social services especially for rural and deprived people
- Maintained and sustained trust of ordinary people and Development Partners – both State and Non-state.

Appendix VII: Marshallan Relief & Development Services (MAREDES)



HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Knights and Ladies of Marshall is a Catholic Friendly Society with the Supreme /Grand headquarters in Sekondi / Kumasi, Ghana respectively. The Marshallan Relief and Development Services (MAREDES) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and the development wing of the Knights and Ladies of Marshall committed to the needs of society. MAREDES provides relief and development services in line with the fundamental principles and tenets underpinning Catholic Social Teaching. The idea behind MAREDES is to provide a framework to harness the legal, organizational and technical competencies of the Noble Order of the Knights and Ladies of Marshall spanning over 90 years to undertake and render services more effectively and efficiently to society.

The Noble Order of Knights and Ladies of Marshall was started by some 13 lay men in Sekondi, Ghana in 1926 and in 1965 brought the women on board as a national Society of Catholic men and women. It has over the years established branches in Togo, Benin, Liberia and the United Kingdom.

The governing body of the Noble Order is “The Supreme Council” with its headquarters in Sekondi, Ghana, West Africa. The Ladies of Marshall, the ladies wing has also grown rapidly over the years and has its own governing body called “The Grand Court” with its headquarters in Kumasi, Ghana, West Africa.

The Noble Order of the Knights and Ladies of Marshall has over 10,000 members in units referred to as Councils (Men) and Courts (Women) spread throughout Ghana, Liberia, Togo, Benin and the United Kingdom.

The Noble Order of the Knights and Ladies of Marshall has endeavored to pursue its twin-mandate of “bringing together Catholic lay persons for effective lay apostolate” and to provide a “friendly social forum” for its members. The Noble Order engages in CHARITY, a virtue which the Catholic Church defines as “To love God Almighty above all things for his own sake and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God”. Through MAREDES, the Society will deliver more effectively on its mandate of practicing Charity and contributing to the 'Common Good' of society.

VISION

MAREDES is inspired by the Marshallan mission to “take Christ to the World' as one of its fundamental pillars of CHARITY. In this light, MAREDES' vision is to help create 'a community where the poor, the distressed and needy find friendship, love and practical support as a human being in God's own likeness”

MISSION

The mission of MAREDES is to harness available charitable human, financial and material resources to empower and strengthen the life coping capacity of vulnerable individuals and communities”

VALUES

- i. Our operations are guided by the social teachings of the Catholic Church
- ii. Uphold the values and ethics of the Catholic Church
- III. Support for the poor, the marginalized and the disadvantaged.
- IV. Spirit of patriotism and civic responsibility
- v. Generosity and spirit of philanthropy
- vi. Practice of Sympathy and Empathy

OUR ORGANIZATION'S GOAL

To provide complementary development and social services to communities and the marginalized in Ghana

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. To provide physical, spiritual, economic and social relief to persons and groups affected by poverty, conflict, disaster and political circumstances.
- II. To promote education and awareness on migration in Ghana
- iii. To undertake relevant research necessary to influence policy change and practice in Ghana especially in areas of interest to the organization, the Catholic Church and the Noble Order of the Knights of Marshall.
- IV. To undertake training and other capacity building initiatives with the aim of empowering poor people and communities.
- v. To raise funds both locally and externally from Individuals and corporate entities to support the objectives of the organization
- VI. To network with relevant agencies of civil society organizations, public sector, private enterprises and other international institutions in areas of common and mutual interest and benefit.

MAREDES has over the years partnered with the Department of Human Development of the National Catholic Secretariat on several common advocacy issues including migration, right to health, land rights and the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana. The elections project was yet another opportunity for partnership to advocate for peace.

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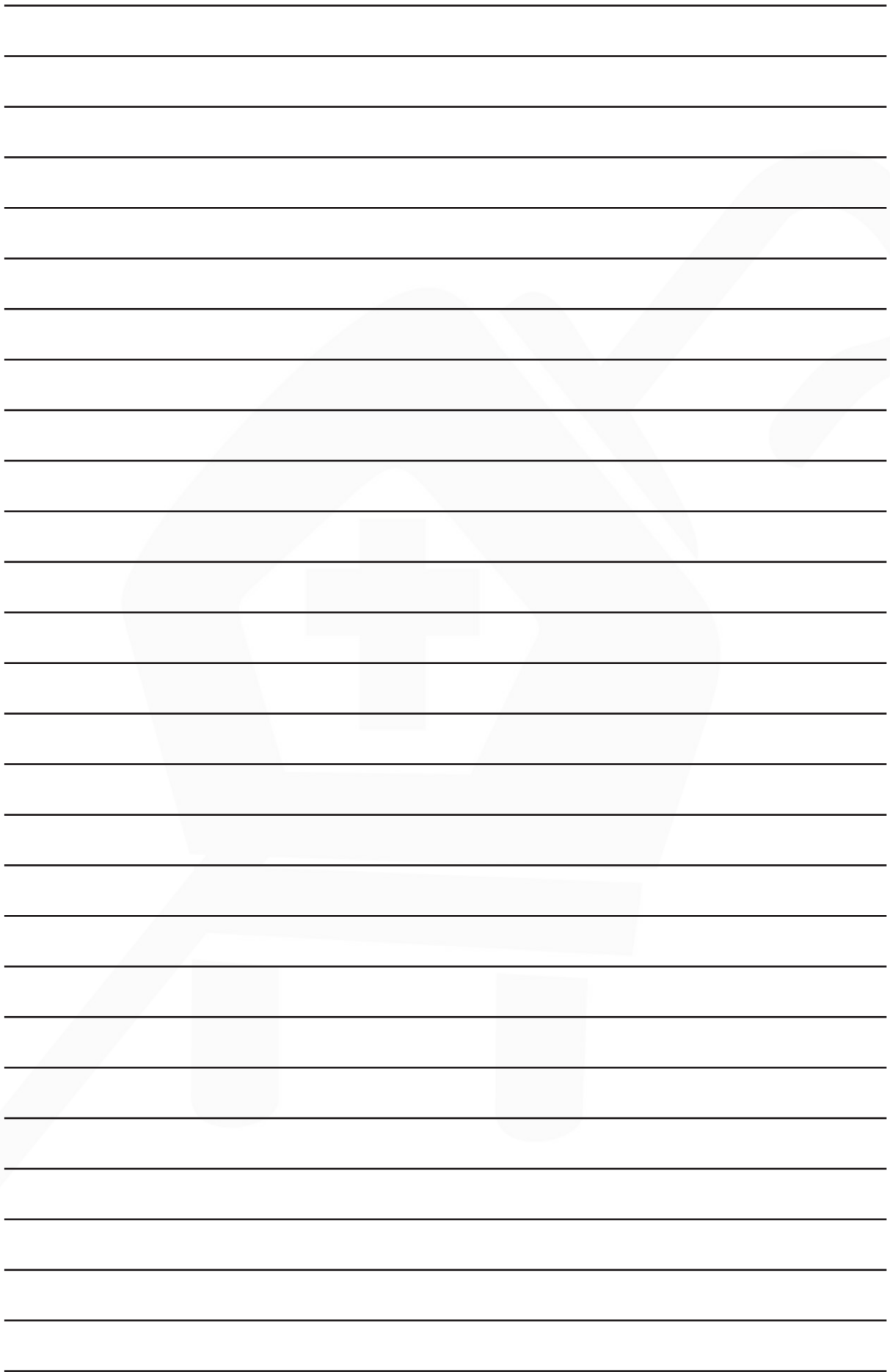
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NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

Department of Human Development

P. O. Box KA 9712, Airport - Accra



0307010368



dhdncs@gmail.com



www.cbcgha.org



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