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**REPORT ON THE
FIRST ADVISORY BOARD MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN ELECTION
AUTHORITIES (AAEA)**

July 29-30, 1999, Accra, Ghana



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Executive Summary

The Association of African Election Authorities held its first Advisory Board meeting in Accra, Ghana on July 29-30, 1999. The meeting was convened by K. Afari-Gyan, AAEA Executive Secretary, and was attended by representatives of nine out of the eleven members of the Advisory Board.

Sié Jean de la Croix Pooda, Permanent Secretary of the Independent National Election Commission of Burkina Faso, was elected Chairman of the Advisory Board. Mr. Pooda will serve as Chairman for the two years remaining on the tenure of this Board.



AAEA Advisory Board and IFES staff pose for a picture at the La Palm Beach Hotel in Accra.

During the two-day meeting, Advisory Board members met the goals set for the meeting and focused on the following issues:

- Formulation of an action plan of priority activities for the AAEA;
- Formal establishment of the AAEA Secretariat;
- Production of a quarterly newsletter;
- Development of a fundraising strategy;
- Establishment of membership dues and membership recruitment strategy; and
- Development of rules of procedure to govern Advisory Board proceedings.

Minutes from the meeting were sent to all members of the Advisory Board after the conclusion of the meeting. This report will be distributed to AAEA members, donors, regional election-related organizations, and other election authorities in Africa. The next Advisory Board meeting will be held in 2000.

The Advisory Board meeting was conducted in English and in French with simultaneous interpretation. The meeting was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Proceedings of the Advisory Board Meeting

The Association of African Election Authorities held its first Advisory Board meeting at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana on July 29-30, 1999. The meeting was convened by K. Afari-Gyan, AAEA Executive Secretary and was attended by representatives of nine out of the eleven members of the Advisory Board. (See Appendix II for the list of participants.)

The Advisory Board is comprised of eight full members and three associate members. Full membership is open to African election authorities and grants full voting rights in General Assembly proceedings. Associate membership is extended to election-related nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) upon approval of the General Assembly. The Executive Secretary of the Association is the Secretary of the Advisory Board and a non-voting member. The Advisory Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly;
- Oversight and supervision of the Executive Secretary;
- Approval of personnel and budget of Executive Secretary; and
- Implementation of matters arising between meetings of the General Assembly.

(See Appendix III for the relevant articles of the Charter on the Advisory Board.)

The meeting opened on July 29 with introductory comments by Dr. Afari-Gyan, Executive Secretary of the AAEA and Secretary of the Advisory Board, Thomas Bayer, IFES, and Flora Nkurukenda, Chairperson of the AAEA General Assembly and Advisory Board member from the Electoral Commission of Uganda.

Dr. Afari-Gyan welcomed participants and thanked the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and IFES for their support for the Association. He stressed that the Advisory Board should use the meeting to discuss ways to diversify its funding base and attract new donors to the Association.

Mrs. Nkurukenda provided an overview of AAEA participation in official and non-official activities since the General Assembly meeting in August 1998. Over the past year, AAEA members have been involved in the following official AAEA activities:

- Participation by Dr. Afari-Gyan and Mrs. Nkurukenda in the Global Electoral Organisation (GEO) Network conference in Ottawa;

Advisory Board members compiled a list of potential donors for the Association to pursue and agreed to raise awareness of the Association with donors in each respective country. It was determined that AAEA members would interface with the Executive Secretary to share contacts, leads and ideas for new funding.

Finally, it was agreed that the Executive Secretary would embark on a membership drive to follow-up on interest expressed by a few countries such as Nigeria and Congo (Brazzaville) and to generate interest among countries who are not yet members. The Advisory Board also discussed ways to work more closely with the SADC Electoral Commissions Forum.

AAEA Priority Activities

- Establish AAEA Secretariat
- Produce quarterly newsletter
- Designate information desk in each member organization
- Catalog training needs of AAEA members
- Prepare inventory of available human resources in member organizations
- Diversify funding sources
- Collect membership dues
- Expand membership
- Produce study on campaign finance regulations in Africa

The meeting concluded with remarks from Mr. Pooda, Mrs. Nkurukenda and Mr. Bayer. Mr. Pooda summarized the priority activities that were selected by the Advisory Board and charged members with the responsibility of implementing each activity within the timeframe established for each. Mrs. Nkurukenda thanked Mr. Pooda for his leadership during the two-day meeting. Mr. Bayer lauded the Advisory Board for high level of commitment to producing a feasible and reasonable action plan. He also offered the services of IFES to continue to maintain updated information on the Association on the IFES website (<http://www.ifes.org/afrassoc/index.htm>).

In the coming months, the Executive Secretary will embark on a membership recruitment drive and a campaign to collect membership dues from current AAEA members. The first quarterly newsletter of the Association will also be produced and distributed to all AAEA members, donors and other interested organizations and individuals. Within the next twelve months, the Executive Secretary, with the input of AAEA members, will develop a survey to assess the training needs of each member organization. At the same time, the survey will identify the human resources available in member organizations to address some of these needs. The next Advisory Board meeting will be held in 2000 and the next General Assembly meeting will be held in 2001.

Background on the AAEA

The Association of African Election Authorities (AAEA) was conceived in an effort to promote and institutionalize the professional nature of African election authorities through regional exchanges and networking. The Association grew out of the Colloquium of African Election Authorities held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe in November 1994 and attended by more than 60 election officials and leaders of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from across Africa. At Victoria Falls, participants established a working group to examine the feasibility of forming an association of African election administrators and election-related NGOs. That working group developed and discussed a draft charter at meetings in Cape Town in 1995 and in Windhoek in 1996.

In 1997, the founding conference of the AAEA was held in Kampala, Uganda, where African election administrators and NGOs revised and approved the Charter, marking the formal establishment of the Association. They also selected Amare Tekle of Eritrea as the AAEA's Interim Executive Secretary and charged him with enrolling members in the Association and with organizing the first General Assembly conference.

The inaugural meeting of the AAEA General Assembly was held in August 1998 in Accra, Ghana and was hosted by the AAEA Interim Executive Secretariat and the Electoral Commission of Ghana and coordinated by the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). Participating in the three-day meeting were election officials from 24 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations, donors, and vendors of election equipment and services. The General Assembly meeting:

- encouraged the professionalization of African election administration through a regional exchange of ideas, networking and professional development sessions;
- formally inducted AAEA members who ascribed to the Charter; developed a work plan to foster the sustainability of the Association; and
- presented an International Exhibition of Election Equipment and Services.

During the first two days of the conference, participants discussed campaign finance, demarcation of constituency boundaries, voting abroad, and the administration of local elections in both plenary and working group sessions. On the final day of the meeting, K. Afari-Gyan, Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, was elected Executive Secretary of the Association. Also, election authorities from fifteen countries signed onto the Charter to become full members of the AAEA and six NGOs became associate members. AAEA members also elected an Advisory Board of the Association. (See Appendix I for a list of AAEA members.)

The General Assembly meeting concluded with a discussion on the future of the AAEA, with participants attending working groups on possible AAEA activities in the areas of organization and development, information sharing and networking, and training and professional development.

The meeting of the AAEA General Assembly was funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, the Electoral Commission of Ghana, International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), and the United Nations Development Program. Operational support to the AAEA is currently being provided by USAID.

Proceedings of the Advisory Board Meeting

The Association of African Election Authorities held its first Advisory Board meeting at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel in Accra, Ghana on July 29-30, 1999. The meeting was convened by K. Afari-Gyan, AAEA Executive Secretary and was attended by representatives of nine out of the eleven members of the Advisory Board. (See Appendix II for the list of participants.)

The Advisory Board is comprised of eight full members and three associate members. Full membership is open to African election authorities and grants full voting rights in General Assembly proceedings. Associate membership is extended to election-related nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) upon approval of the General Assembly. The Executive Secretary of the Association is the Secretary of the Advisory Board and a non-voting member. The Advisory Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly;
- Oversight and supervision of the Executive Secretary;
- Approval of personnel and budget of Executive Secretary; and
- Implementation of matters arising between meetings of the General Assembly.

(See Appendix III for the relevant articles of the Charter on the Advisory Board.)

The meeting opened on July 29 with introductory comments by Dr. Afari-Gyan, Executive Secretary of the AAEA and Secretary of the Advisory Board, Thomas Bayer, IFES, and Flora Nkurukenda, Chairperson of the AAEA General Assembly and Advisory Board member from the Electoral Commission of Uganda.

Dr. Afari-Gyan welcomed participants and thanked the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and IFES for their support for the Association. He stressed that the Advisory Board should use the meeting to discuss ways to diversify its funding base and attract new donors to the Association.

Mrs. Nkurukenda provided an overview of AAEA participation in official and non-official activities since the General Assembly meeting in August 1998. Over the past year, AAEA members have been involved in the following official AAEA activities:

- Participation by Dr. Afari-Gyan and Mrs. Nkurukenda in the Global Electoral Organisation (GEO) Network conference in Ottawa;

- Joint AAEA/IFES election observation missions for Nigeria's local government elections in December 1998, and the parliamentary and presidential elections in February 1999; and
- Support to the AAEA/IFES Secretariat in Nigeria for the election observation missions by two staff members of AAEA full members.

The contact of AAEA observers with Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials at the national and state level led to interest on the part of INEC to join the AAEA.

In addition, AAEA member organizations have been active in providing technical assistance and support through the following activities organized by individual member organizations or other bodies:

- Training of electoral commission staff in South Africa, Malawi and Nigeria; and
- Participation in the United Nations mission in East Timor for the upcoming referendum.

Following the introductory remarks, nominations were held for Chairman of the Advisory Board. Board members selected Sié Jean de la Croix Pooda, Permanent Secretary of the Independent National Election Commission of Burkina Faso, as Chairman of the Advisory Board. Mr. Pooda will serve as Chairman for two years remaining on the tenure of this Board.

As Chairman, Mr. Pooda led the discussion on the establishment of rules of procedure for the Board. Samuel Kivuitu, Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Kenya, presented a draft set of rules that served as the basis for discussion. Following Mr. Kivuitu's outline, Advisory Board members discussed quorum requirements, voting, conduct of business, recording of minutes, notice of upcoming meetings by the Executive Secretary and distribution of the provisional agenda prior to each Advisory Board meeting. In order to formalize the draft and incorporate comments made during the session, a committee was formed to produce a second draft of the rules of procedure. Mr. Bayer, Dr. Afari-Gyan and Dr. Tekle developed a second draft which was distributed to Advisory Board members for comment and review.

In the afternoon session on July 29, the Advisory Board focused on developing an action plan of priority activities for the Association. By unanimous agreement, the Advisory Board determined that the first activity to be implemented should be the formal establishment of the AAEA Secretariat in Accra. Dr. Afari-Gyan reported that office space and furniture will be donated by Ghana's Electoral Commission, and that interviews for a bilingual secretary to run the day-to-day operations of the AAEA were underway. It is anticipated that the Secretariat will be operational by October 1999. (See Appendix IV for relevant articles of the Charter on the Executive Secretariat.)

A preliminary operating budget for the AAEA Secretariat from August 1999 to December 2001 was presented, discussed and approved. In this budget, funding for the AAEA Secretariat is provided by IFES to January 31, 2000. Beginning in February 2000, the AAEA will have to be funded by alternative sources of funding. Because the budget only covers operating costs for the Secretariat, the Association will also have to find alternate sources of funding for any program activities, including the Advisory Board meeting in 2000 and the next General Assembly meeting in 2001.

The Advisory Board designated the Executive Secretary as the focal point for all information transmission, tasking him with the production of a quarterly newsletter for members on issues of interest to election administrators across Africa. Advisory Board members determined that designating an information desk in each member country would facilitate the distribution of information to the AAEA Secretariat and among members. As a secondary activity, the Advisory Board discussed strengthening connections with other regional election-focused groups.

Functions of the Executive Secretariat

- Preparation and arrangement of General Assembly and Advisory Board meetings
- Recommendation of activities for the Association for consideration by the appropriate organs
- Dissemination of information to members and non-members
- Development of proposals and budgets for Association activities
- Recording of minutes of Advisory Board meeting

Training and professional development were also deemed priority activities. Advisory Board members decided that the Association should focus on cataloging the training needs of each member organization and preparing an inventory of available human resources within each member organization. This would be accomplished through a survey to be developed by the Executive Secretary with input from Advisory Board members. The survey outcome will enable the Advisory Board to develop a training plan for the Association.

The Advisory Board also determined that the Association should undertake a compilation and study of campaign finance regulations in sub-Saharan Africa. Board members discussed ways that the Association can partner with similar initiatives currently underway in several African nations.

On July 30, Advisory Board members focused on developing a strategy to secure funding for the Association, setting membership dues and increasing Association membership. Membership dues were set at \$5,000 per annum for full members and \$2,000 per annum for associate members to be paid by December 31, 2000. Some Advisory Board members reported that they had already budgeted membership dues in anticipation of this meeting. These members were encouraged to pay their membership dues by December 31, 1999. Membership dues will be collected by the Executive Secretary.

Advisory Board members compiled a list of potential donors for the Association to pursue and agreed to raise awareness of the Association with donors in each respective country. It was determined that AAEA members would interface with the Executive Secretary to share contacts, leads and ideas for new funding.

Finally, it was agreed that the Executive Secretary would embark on a membership drive to follow-up on interest expressed by a few countries such as Nigeria and Congo (Brazzaville) and to generate interest among countries who are not yet members. The Advisory Board also discussed ways to work more closely with the SADC Electoral Commissions Forum.

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APPENDIX I:
AAEA Officers

AAEA Officers

Executive Secretary

K. Afari-Gyan
Chairman, Electoral Commission of Ghana

Chairperson of the General Assembly

Flora Nkurukenda
Deputy Chairperson, Electoral Commission of Uganda

Advisory Board

Taofiki Aminou (GERDDES-Benin)
Fatma Baldeh-Njie (the Gambia)
Cecelia Bannerman (Institute of Economic Affairs-Ghana)
Thierry-Leon-Clotaire Bemolinda (Central African Republic)
Erik Essousse (CERCUDE-Cameroon)
Paul Guah (Liberia)
Cheikh Gueye (Senegal)
Samuel Kivuitu (Kenya)
Sekara Mafisa (Lesotho)
Flora Nkurukenda (Uganda)
Sié Jean de la Croix Pooda (Burkina Faso)

APPENDIX II:

**Advisory Board Meeting
List of Participants**

**AAEA Advisory Board Meeting
July 29-30, 1999
Accra, Ghana**

List of Participants

AAEA Executive Secretary

K. Afari-Gyan

Advisory Board Members

Fatma Baldeh-Njie, Independent Electoral Commission, The Gambia

Cecelia Bannerman, Institute for Economic Affairs, Ghana

Paul Guah, Elections Commission, Liberia

Cheikh Gueye, Ministry of the Interior, Senegal

Jean Ngou, Centre d'Etude de recherches et de la prospective sur la démocratie,
la culture et du développement, Cameroon

M. Khaebana, Independent Electoral Office, Lesotho

Samuel Kivuitu, Electoral Commission of Kenya

Flora Nkurukenda, Electoral Commission of Uganda

Sié Jean de la Croix Pooda, Independent National Electoral Commission,
Burkina Faso

Guests

Thomas Bayer, IFES

Valeria Scott, IFES

Amare Tekle, Interim Executive Secretary (1997-1998)

APPENDIX III:

**Composition and Functions of the
Advisory Board**

AAEA Charter
Composition and Functions of the Advisory Board
(selected articles)

Article 6 The Association shall have the following organs:

- (a) The General Assembly;
- (b) The Advisory Board; and
- (c) The Executive Secretariat.

Article 11 The Advisory Board shall be accountable to the General Assembly.

Article 12 (a) The Advisory Board shall be composed of representatives of member organizations. It shall be composed of a chairperson, who shall be a full member of the Association; the Executive Secretary; and ten other members elected by the General Assembly from among the members of the Association. Three of the members shall be elected from among associate members.

(b) The Chairperson and the members of the Advisory Board shall be elected on the basis of geographical, language, and gender factors.

(c) The Members of the Board shall be elected for three years but shall not serve for more than two terms.

Article 13 The Advisory Board shall be responsible for:

- (a) acting on any matter referred to it by the General Assembly and for making recommendations to the General Assembly in conformity with the present Charter;
- (b) ensuring the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly;
- (c) considering proposals from members and the Executive Secretariat regarding the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly;
- (d) approving the personnel and budget of the Executive Secretariat and the auditor's report in the operation of the budget;
- (e) approving the internal rules and regulations of the Executive Secretariat;

- (f) determining control mechanisms for supervising the financial activity of the Executive Secretariat;
- (g) overseeing the Executive Secretariat in implementing the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly;
- (h) performing other functions arising from the present Charter and from the recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly;
- (i) acting on matters which need to be addressed in the period between the meetings of the General Assembly; and
- (j) taking any action which it may deem expedient in the general interest of the Association.

Article 14 The Advisory Board shall meet once a year and shall hold extraordinary meetings when convened by the Chairperson.

Article 15 The Advisory Board shall establish its own rules of procedure.

APPENDIX IV:

**Composition and Functions of the
Executive Secretariat**

AAEA Charter
Composition and Functions of the Executive Secretariat
(selected articles)

Article 6 The Association shall have the following organs:

- (a) The General Assembly;
- (b) The Advisory Board; and
- (c) The Executive Secretariat.

Article 16 The Executive Secretariat is the permanent organ of the Association. It shall perform the functions assigned to it in the present Charter and shall carry out the duties entrusted to it by the General Assembly and the Advisory Board.

- Article 17**
- (a) The Executive Secretariat shall consist of the Executive Secretary and other such personnel as may be necessary for the execution of the functions entrusted to it.
 - (b) The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the General Assembly for a period of three years and shall be the Secretary of the Advisory Board.
 - (c) During the temporary absence or disability of the Executive Secretary, the most senior official of the Executive Secretariat shall perform his/her full duties.
 - (d) In the event that the office of Executive Secretary becomes vacant, the Advisory Board shall appoint a replacement whose appointment shall be certified at the next meeting of the General Assembly.
 - (e) The Advisory Board has the power to recommend the removal of the Executive Secretary on grounds of proven misbehavior, incapacity, neglect of duty or other like cause, after he/she has had an opportunity to make representations to the Advisory Board against such an action. The Advisory Board convenes an extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly to resolve such a matter.

Article 18 (a) The Executive Secretary shall be the chief officer of the Association. He/she shall represent the Association in its relations

with the officials of member institutions and other regional electoral associations as well as with other international and regional organizations.

- (b) The Executive Secretary shall be a non-voting member of the Advisory Board, but shall not participate in any of its meetings where action in accordance with Article 17(e) of this Charter is being discussed.

Article 19 The Executive Secretary and the personnel of the Secretariat shall not seek or take instructions from any Government or from any authority outside the Association and shall refrain from any action that may be incompatible with their position as representatives of the Association or compromise the integrity of the Association.

Article 20 The Executive Secretary, subject to approval by the Advisory Board, shall:

- (a) create such departments at the Secretariat as may be necessary to fulfill its duties; and
- (b) determine the number of officers and employees of the Executive Secretariat, appoint them, and regulate their powers and duties.

Article 21 The Secretariat shall be responsible for the administration and financial affairs of the Association and shall inter alia:

- (a) submit a report on the Association's activity and its financial condition to the regular sessions of the Advisory Board;
- (b) be responsible for the preparation and arrangements of meetings of the General Assembly and the Advisory Board;
- (c) prepare recommendations concerning the work of the Association for consideration by the appropriate organs of the Association;
- (d) prepare surveys, studies, information and guidance on legal and political matters of common concern to and essential for broadening and deepening cooperation among member institutions;
- (e) prepare draft proposals and agreements on matters arising from the decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly and the Advisory Board;
- (f) prepare the budget of the Association and, upon the approval of the Advisory Board, submit it to the General Assembly;
- (g) serve as the custodian of the Association's documents;

Appendix IV

- (h) establish relations of cooperation, in accordance with decisions reached by the General Assembly and the Advisory Board, with other regional and international electoral organizations or any other organizations which are concerned with electoral processes;
- (i) notify members of the dates of meetings of the General Assembly;
- (j) prepare minutes of the General Assembly meetings; and
- (k) facilitate and coordinate the cooperation of the members of the Association with each other.