



Involving Local Authorities In the programming process of EU Cooperation in Ghana

LOCAL AUTHORITIES ROADMAP FOR THE 2021-2027 CYCLE OF EU COOPERATION



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December 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION	6
PART 1	9
ASSESSING LOCAL AUTHORITIES INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY.....	9
1.1 Main conclusions resulting from the Compendium.....	9
1.2 Main findings from the analytical report	10
<i>a. The Context for Decentralisation.....</i>	10
<i>b. Towards a Territorial Approach to Development (TALD).....</i>	11
1.3 Results of preliminary consultations of National government and EU	14
1.4 Conclusion.....	15
PART 2.....	17
ENHANCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY: ACTIONS EXPECTED FROM DECISION-MAKERS AT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL AND AT EU DELEGATION LEVEL	17
2.1 Introduction	17
2.3 Recognizing the Local Authorities and NALAG as State Actor.....	17
2.3 Involving NALAG in EU Programming: information, consultation, dialogue, partnership measures	19
2.4 Local Government financing mechanisms	21
2.5 Conclusion	23
PART 3.....	24
ENHANCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT IN	24
DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY: ACTIONS EXPECTED FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION	24
3.1 Introduction	24
3.2 Critical political and institutional role of the National Association of Local Government Association Ghana.....	24
3.3 Territorializing of global agendas: the SDGs	26
3.4 National Association of Local Government Authorities Ghana Plan of Action	28
3.5 Enhancing NALAGs meaningful involvement in development and cooperation policy	29
3.6 Conclusion	30
References.....	31

ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

CPESDP	Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies
DACF	District Assemblies Common Fund
DPCUs	District Planning Coordinating Units
EU	European Union
LED	Local Economic Development
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MMDCs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives
MTDF	Medium-Term Development Framework
NALAG	National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NPP	National Patriotic Party
PFJ	Planting for Food and Jobs
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
RCCs	Regional Coordinating Councils
RPCUs	Regional Planning Coordinating Units
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
1D1F	One District One Factory
1V1D	One Village One Dam
1R1DP	One region One Industrial Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this roadmap paper is to review the current status of decentralisation in Ghana with a view to develop local governance that responds to the needs of communities and can harness local resources towards meeting those needs in order to foster holistic development for their areas. The paper envisages support from the European Commission (EC) to strengthen MMDAs in Ghana and NALAG over its programming period from 2021 to 2027.

In Ghana, the role of MMDAs has long been recognised as pivotal to strengthening governance and for the better provision of basic public services. For more than a century there has been some form of local authority administration in Ghana beginning with the indirect rule through to the holistic MMDAs undertaking a wide range of local services. The Government of Ghana has, through enactments at different epochs of its history assigned responsibilities for the provision of public services to MMDAs. At independence from the British in 1957, the new Ghanaian government adopted a policy of decentralisation that not only sought to confer responsibilities and authority to local authorities to undertake public services but also removed the racial orientation of previous colonial regimes.

Part 1 of this report reviews the current status of MMDAs in Ghana's development and their involvement in cooperation policy. This part briefly explores the development of decentralisation policy in Ghana and assesses its import for local governance. Following the adoption of the 1992 Constitution that advocated devolution and decentralisation as the model of governance for the country, the local government Act 1993 (Act 463) and other pieces of legislation and subsequently the adoption of the local governance act 2016 (Act 936) provided the framework for the elaboration of the policy of decentralisation. This Part highlights the existing gaps especially between the policy enactments and its implementation. The increasing rift between the policy and the actions of line ministries that tend to act in ways that contradict the intentions of the decentralisation policy has been the main challenge limiting decentralisation.

Furthermore, despite the EC 2013 Communication recognising local authorities as state actors as distinct from the previous non-state actor status, this concept, while implied in the laws governing decentralisation remains elusive in its implementation on the ground. In Part 2, the paper the considers options for improving the environment for MMDAs, what can be done on the side of the policymakers at national and EU levels to create an enabling environment for enhancing NALAG in participating in the definition and implementation of national development and cooperation policy, highlighting the added value this participation brings into the efficiency and impact of the development and cooperation policy in Ghana. It also addresses the priority

goals of EU cooperation and identifies appropriate mechanisms for MMDAs to access funding to improve their delivery capacity.

The paper argues the importance of recognising MMDAs and NALAG as state actors and the responsibility for the holistic development of their areas. The Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD) facilitates this holistic development and galvanises local resources and entrepreneurship in the development of the local areas. The NALAG, being the representative and voice of local authorities should also be accorded the status of state actor. For this reason the NALAG should partake in the negotiation process as the representative of local authorities. The NALAG should further be accorded the right to receive state funds as well as support from the EC through a Framework Partnership Agreement.

Finally, Part 3 focuses on the way forward indicating what can be done on the side MMDAs to enhance NALAGs involvement in national development and cooperation policy – from addressing possible structural issues to planning advocacy activities. NALAG is the umbrella association of local authorities in Ghana but lacks the institutional housing to operationalise its work. For NALAG to effectively function as the ‘voice’ of MMDAs, it urgently requires institutional strengthening. It is recommended that NALAG sets up its deliberative organs that express the needs of MMDAs and engages in negotiations on all matters affecting them and that it establishes an operational office.

The necessary capacity building for local authorities and the NALAG are elaborated. The operationalisation of the political and technical platforms to harmonise local authorities’ responses to generic issues is vital. Building the capacity of the political leadership as well as the managerial and technical competence of staff is also addressed. Of immediate concern is the capacity to implement the policy changes emanating from the Constitutional provisions and the local governance Act on Devolution and Decentralisation. Also, the resuscitation of the local government learning institutions the country once had is considered of vital importance for supporting the capacity development of local authorities.

In light of the needs for strengthening decentralisation and ensuring its proper implementation, the paper recommends the negotiation for a Framework Partnership Agreement between the EC and NALAG through which the national association can be strengthened and support for local authorities’ capacity development should be channelled and managed.

INTRODUCTION

The Ghanaian Government is committed to decentralisation in order to promote democratic development and the improvement of public services. Indeed, decentralisation in Ghana pre-dates independence as chiefs and community leaders managed various communities. From the period 1988 Ghana rolled out a comprehensive decentralisation policy and introduced local government system including both administrative, fiscal and political decentralisation. This led to the creation of a number of District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies (MMDAs) with powers and responsibilities to take charge of developing their local areas.

After a successful transition to democracy in 1992, Ghana implemented an aggressive decentralisation which has since be largely successful. The 1992 Constitution mandated that Parliament legislate to devolve power and resources to the grassroots. In response, Local Government Act 462 was passed, which formally shifted the responsibility for the performance of some public functions to local government bodies called District Assemblies. From 1993, the number of MMDAs have increased considerably motivated by not only political consideration but also for developmental purposes.

The objectives embedded in the decentralization policy included improvement in the local production and delivery of public goods and services, responsiveness of service providers to popular demands, and the empowerment of officials familiar with local-level problems to tailor development plans to specific needs. It was intended to reduce overload and congestion at the center and speed up operational decision-making and implementation of programs by minimizing the decision-making hierarchies and other bottlenecks associated with the over-centralization of power and functions at the national capital (Ayee 2008; Ahwoi 2010). It was also promoted as a pro-poor policy, designed to reduce poverty through wealth creation and the efficient use of scarce resources.

In 2016 the local governance Act was reviewed culminating into the Local Governance Act 2016 (Act 936). The Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) recognises MMDAs as the highest political authority and confers on them to be in charge of the overall development of their area of jurisdictions. Article 12 (1 to 5) of the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) specifies copiously and comprehensively the functions of the local governments in Ghana. A critical look at these functions gives am impression that most of the responsibilities for the development of Ghana rest with the local government authorities. Local governments are therefore considered as critical in the development architecture of Ghana.

Even though MMDAs are considered relevant to development and are responsible for providing public services, government funding to MMDAs is insufficient and sometimes

unreliable. For instance, the constitutionally mandated DACF – 5% of the total revenue of Ghana to be transferred to MMDAs, has not been only insufficient but highly unreliable and erratic. The potential for mobilising locally raised revenue is not being harnessed. Indeed, decentralisation may contribute to development, but this depends on the developmental nature of the decentralising state, the national policy commitment to territorial development, and the role local authorities may play in promoting it: their autonomy and their accountability.

In order to address issues and concerns relating to the operationalization of constitutional provisions on devolution, capacity development of local governments, and advocacy for necessary reforms to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, the national association of local government plays a pivotal role as interlocutor between central and local governments, collecting and collating issues requiring decisions, and negotiating and championing agreed local government positions. The UCLG Africa recognizes the important role that national associations play in supporting initiatives that improve the environment in which local governments operate to better manage areas under their jurisdiction. By launching this support project, the UCLG Africa seeks to strengthen the association to undertake its role as the representative of the collective voice of local governments in Ghana. The specific focus of this support aims at ensuring that the national associations participate in the EU country programming process for the period 2021-2027.

The European Commission has concluded a new financing instrument, the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) that will guide its next programming of the next 6 years (2021 to 2027). The EU programming exercise is meant to identify strategic and priority areas and sectors for interventions to be financed by the EU cooperation within the framework of a political dialogue to be launched with the central governments, the local authorities and other development actors of (civil society, private sector, etc). The NDICI shifts the main focus and “centre of gravity” of the future EU cooperation to the geographic dimension in order to improve the coherence and efficiency of EU cooperation.

Supported by the 2013 EU Communication on “Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”, this project aims at preparing national associations and the local governments sphere to participate effectively in the programming phase and ensure that they benefit from EU funding to strengthen decentralisation. It is at the programming phase that stakeholders of the partner countries are consulted, and that a dialogue is established with the EU delegation to define the specific priorities and programs of the EU cooperation aligned with the political objectives identified during the pre-programming phase for each country.

Local authorities, through their national association, should therefore be integral part in the programming process alongside the representatives of the national government, in the dialogue with the EU delegations. The project seeks to support the national associations to better represent their members by effectively engaging in the EU programming process in order to benefit their members through creating an enabling environment to better deliver on their mandates as devolved from the centre.

The UCLG Africa project has offered support in producing: (1) a compendium of key reference documents with a summary reader note on the three issues - National Development Policy and Strategies; National Decentralization Policy; Status of EU Cooperation; (2) an Analytical Report appraising the political economy on decentralization; a rapid SWOT analysis of the national association; and the extent to which territorial approach to local development (TALD) had been recognized and applied in the country; and (3) support in the development of a roadmap towards strengthening the national association within the framework of the EU country programming for the 2021-2027 period.

This roadmap is, thus, a culmination of an exploration on and analysis of the environment of decentralisation in Ghana and indicates pointers towards addressing the imperatives for strengthening the national association to become an effective interlocutor for local governments in their relations with central government and other developmental stakeholders.

PART 1

ASSESSING LOCAL AUTHORITIES INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY

1.1 Main conclusions resulting from the Compendium

Since 1988, the Ghanaian government has rolled out a comprehensive decentralization policy based on principles of active citizen participation in national development. This was further enshrined in the 1992 constitution and other legislative instruments. The decentralisation systems recognises MMDAs as key stakeholders in development and argues that development should take a bottom up approach. A National Planning Commission was set up to steer the planning and implementation processes based on this system. Indeed, Ghana's local government system is made up of a four tier Metropolitan and three tier District Assembly system.

The extent of local authority integration into national development and empowerment in terms of the geographical spaces falling under their jurisdiction is relatively established in Ghana. Chapter twenty of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana argued that Ghana shall have a decentralised system of government as far as practicable and entreats parliament to enact legislations to empower and entrust governmental powers and responsibilities to MMDAs. The underlying assumption of the Constitution is, thus, that responsibilities and means will be devolved to the appropriate subnational level.

There is coherence with the European Union policies on this principle. The EC 2013 Communication on "Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes", recognizes local and subnational governments (local authorities) as state actor in their own rights and capacity, working as proximity public authorities besides the central government according to the principle of subsidiarity based on the key dynamics and interaction between the two levels of public governance. Local authorities (MMDAs), through their national association (NALAG), should therefore be integral part in the programming process alongside the representatives of the national government, in the dialogue with the EU delegations.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a priority programme for Ghana. Ghana has mainstreamed the SDGs in National Development Plans and Budgets including expressing a focus on building the capacities of MMDAs to align their policies and strategies to ensure achievement of the Goals. The architecture of the institutional arrangements set up to operationalize the SDGs are primarily central government led and anchored to Office of the President and Cabinet, the highest office in Ghana.

It is clear from the constitutional and other legislative enactments that the political intent of the Government of Ghana is to strengthened devolution of governmental powers and responsibilities that facilitates citizens participation in development as well as maximally utilise local resources to propel local development. The extent to which this positive framework is implemented and how this process is facilitated is the bedrock of the proposals in this roadmap.

1.2 Main findings from the analytical report

a. The Context for Decentralisation

Chapter 20 of the 1992 constitution is titled Decentralisation and Local Government. Article 240(1) provides that Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized. Similarly, Article 240(2a to e) clearly stated the features of the local government system and that fact that parliament shall enact appropriate laws to ensure that functions, powers, responsibilities and resources are at all times transferred from the Central Government to local government units in a co-ordinated manner. This clearly means that not only are functions, power and responsibilities transferred to local government but also transfer of adequate resources to them to carried out the functions that been bestowed on them. Indeed, Article 240(2c) states “*there shall be established for each local government unit a sound financial base with adequate and reliable sources of revenue*”

Chapter six of the 1992 constitution, Directive Principles of State Policy” and specifically Article 36(2d) pontificates that “undertaking even and balanced development of all regions and every part of each region of Ghana, and, in particular, improving the conditions of life in the rural areas, and generally, redressing any imbalance in development between the rural and the urban areas”. Similarly, Article 35(6d) emphasises on making democracy a reality by decentralising the administrative and financially machinery of government to the regions and districts and by affording all possible opportunities to the people to participate in decision making at every level in national life and in government.

The Constitution goes further in Article 252(1) for the setting up of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) and in Article 252(2-3) the allocation of not less than 5% of the total revenues of Ghana, to be distributed among all the District Assemblies on the basis of a formula approved by Parliament. It is important to emphasised that there was a previous local government act, 1993 (Act 462) which was later replaced in 2016. The Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) recognises MMDAs (local governments in Ghana) as the highest political authority. Article 12 (1 to 5) of the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) specifies copiously and comprehensively the functions of the local governments in Ghana.

A critical look at these functions gives an impression that most of the responsibilities for the development of Ghana rest with the local government authorities. Local governments are therefore considered as critical in the development architecture of Ghana. Therefore, the Act in Article 124 specifies the revenues of local governments to include (a) decentralised transfers; (b) internally generated funds; and (c) donations and grants. This is obviously good as functions must be followed by resources in order for development to be realised at the local level. The Local Governance Act 2016 also confers on MMDAs a clear mandate to promote popular participation in planning and implementation through the establishment of structures for stakeholder participation in development planning and monitoring. MMDAs are also expected to promote the inclusion and integration of minorities and marginalised groups in economic development.

Ghana's local governance system is strongly supported by a number of legal and legislative instruments. Among them are: (1) Civil Service Law 1993 (PNDCL 327); (2) Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462; (3) National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994, Act 480; (4) District Assemblies' Common Fund Act, 1993, Act 455; (5) Local Government Service Act, 2003, Act 656; (6) Institute of Local Government Studies Act, 2003, Act 647; (7) Subsidiary legislation including the individual Establishment Instruments of the respective Assemblies and the Local Government (Urban, Town, Zonal Councils and Unit Committees) (Establishment) Instrument, 1994 (LI1589); and Legislative Instrument 1961. Indeed, District Assemblies' Common Fund Act, 1993, Act 455 was promulgated to ensure financial support to MMDAs for local development.

b. Towards a Territorial Approach to Development (TALD)

Ghana has been implementing a decentralisation process of devolving political, administrative and fiscal authority to local governments called MMDAs since 1988. Drawing on the lessons of reforms over the years, MMDAs were designed to be the highest political, decision-making, planning, budgeting and executing body at the local level. Over the years, the MMDA system has evolved through the implementation of incremental reforms designed to strengthen administration and management; deliver local economic development and poverty reduction; and enhance local capacity for social development and accountability.

Article 240 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana stated that Parliament shall enact appropriate laws to ensure that functions, powers, responsibilities and resources are at all times transferred from central government to local government units in a coordinated manner and shall take such measures as are necessary to enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan, initiate, co-ordinate, manage and execute policy in respect of all matters affecting the people within their areas with a view to ultimately localizing those activities. Finally, it also stated in that

as far as practicable, persons in the service of local government shall be subject to the effective control of local authorities (Ayee 2004).

Ghana operates a decentralized system of national planning. The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) was established under Articles 86 and 87 of the 1992 Constitution to advise the President on development planning policy and strategy. Since its formation, the NDPC has worked to ensure the preparation of MTDPs in Ghana. At the national level, the NDPC collaborates with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to develop sector policies and plans that will feed into the general consolidated national policy. At the regional level, the NDPC coordinates with Regional Planning Coordinating Units (RPCUs) whose responsibility is to directly supervise District Planning Coordinating Units (DPCUs).

At the local level, the NDPC coordinates with MMDAs primarily through the RPCUs. The mandate of the MMDAs is to develop local MTDPs that will be fed into the broader national policy frame. The MDAs and MMDAs also serve as the direct points of plan implementation. Indeed, since the 1992 development planning in Ghana has been a bottom-up approach and MMDAs are at the forefront of providing the necessary information and plans that eventually culminates in national development plan. Similarly, implementation of national plans is carried out at the local level by MMDAs who are closest to the people. MMDAs therefore play key role in both development policy making and implementation in Ghana. MMDAs have been assigned with the responsibility for policy adoption within the context of national sectoral policies, local level integrated development planning through sectoral coordination, and implementation of development policies and programs.

In general, central government retains control over policy for service delivery, while the provision of facilities and implementation of policies are shared. For example, MMDAs are responsible for the provision of basic education, but national government retains control over education policy. MMDAs are also responsible for public health, environmental protection, and sanitation. Social welfare is a shared responsibility with national government and planning a shared responsibility with RCCs. In recent years, National Decentralisation Policies and Action Plans (2004, 2010, 2015) were formulated which anticipated further improvements in decentralized service delivery, local economic growth, and social development. It was anticipated that through administrative strengthening, inclusiveness, better coordination and greater collaboration with civil society and local government stakeholders there would be rapid change. The establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee in 2016 has added further momentum to the implementation and expansion of decentralisation.

Several government policies have anchored their implementation on the shoulders of MMDAs. First, the development of the medium term development framework (2018-2021) took a bottom-up approach where MMDAs mandated by the 1992 constitution and the local governance act, 2016 (Act 936) as the highest political authority at the local level and responsible for the overall development of their area provided the needed information for the development of the MTDF (2018-2021). The implementation of the MTDF (2018-2021) will be done by MMDAs. Second, government special initiatives programmes of one district one factory (1D1F), Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ), One Village One Dam (1V1D), One region One Industrial Park (1R1DP), among others whereas designed by the central government, their implementation is largely carried out MMDAs. For instance, in the implementation of the 1D1F initiative, MMDAs are to form district implementation team (DIT) to ensure that right environment is provided for the private sector to established agro-based processing factories.

Third, national sectoral plans policies and strategies such as national health policy (2020), Education Strategic Plan (2010 – 2020), National Gender Policy (2015), Ghana Industrial Policy, Ghana National Climate Change Policy, National Employment Policy (2014), among others have acknowledged the critical role of MMDAs in their implementation. For instance, the National Employment Policy (2014) indicated that MMDAs will take appropriate measures to implement policy interventions that are relevant to the achievement of the NEP. The NEDP further states that MMDAs should ensure that their development activities and investments take account of productive employment and income generation.

Recognising the importance of MMDAs in Ghana's development, the central government has consistently created MMDA as part of attempts to localised development and ensure that local people participate in the governance process. Therefore, in addition to the existing 65 local councils in 1987, the central government created 45 new LG territories under the jurisdiction of district assemblies (DAs) and currently 260 MMDAs. Below the DAs the central establish sub-district authorities, town, area and zonal councils, and unit committees as the lowest structures to provide focal points for discussion of local problems and take remedial action. Again, the central introduced PNDC Law 207, which made LGs the highest political and administrative authority at the local level and responsible for the overall development of local areas.

Indeed, the implementation National Decentralization Action Plan (2010-2015) has seen re-structuring and re-tooling of systems and processes. Some critical steps have included the implementation of LI 1961 (Departments of District Assemblies) Commencement Instrument 2009, which provides for the conversion of departments into departments of assemblies; transfer of functions to relevant departments of assemblies, and further operationalization of the Local

Government Service with the transfer of the staff of the Departments of the Assemblies from the Civil Service; postings and recruitment to fill established gaps. In the running up to the 2016 elections, the ruling government made a promise to create six new regions to accelerate local governance and improve local development and these six new regions were created in 2018, making a total of sixteen regions in Ghana.

Whereas decentralisation is intended to ensure political devolution and effective local participation, this has really been constrained in Ghana. For instance, the most influential personality in the MMDA is the Chief Executive who is appointed by the President instead of by popular election. As a result, the Chief Executive who performs the day-to-day executive and administrative functions of the MMDA and chairs the powerful Executive Committee is a presidential appointee. Similarly, 30% of Assembly members are appointed by the president while 70% are elected based on universal adult suffrage. Several attempts to implement political decentralisation were either abandoned or not successful. For instance, the PNDC feeling insured, considered political decentralization premature and so it also abandoned political decentralization.

Similarly, the ruling NPP government promised to ensure that MMDCEs are elected by the local people through universal adult suffrage. However, attempt to change the law through a referendum so that MMDCEs will be elected by the electorates was unsuccessful. The opposition was not merely on the basis that MMDCs should be elected but the politicisation of the elections where candidates will contest on the basis of their political parties. It is imperative to note that this issue of getting MMDCEs elected is still high on the political agenda.

1.3 Results of preliminary consultations of National government and EU

While there has not been direct formal engagement between NALAG and the Government and EU Delegation on the 2021-2027 Programming Process, preliminary informal contacts have been made. The NALAG has had engagements with the EU office in Accra at the Ministry of Finance. At the time of the visit, the director was not available but NALAG met some key staffs and explain the issue about NALAGs intention to participate in the EU programming for 2021-2027. The NALAG has therefore presented a copy of the EU communication 2013 and specific articles that indicated that local governments are recognised as states on their own and therefore entitled to support from the EU.

The NALAG has also written to the Ministry of Finance requesting for a meeting to explain the issue of the intention to be fully participate in the EU programming for 2021-2027. The Ministry of Finance responded favourably and asked NALAG to engaged with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development on the way forward. Similarly, the NALAG has

engaged with the Office of the Head of Local Government Service and received favourable support and endorsement of NALAGs intention to participate in the EU programming for 20121-2027. Lastly, the NALAG has visited the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) on Decentralisation. Even though, the Executive Secretary was not available at the time of visit, NALAG explain the whole issue of her intention to participate in the EU programming for 20121-2027 and back this action with the Cotonou Agreement and the EU communication 2013. These engagements gave an indication that the ground is fertile for NALAG to be part of the EU programming for 2021-2027.

1.4 Conclusion

Decentralization and local government administration have been the main pillars around which economic, political and social developments are given expression by bringing governance closer to the doorstep of the people. The Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies-MMDAs (Local Authorities) are the vehicles of decentralization and local government administration. Being an integral part of the public administration system, they serve as the interface between the central government and citizens at local level, and are the vehicle for implementing national policies, programmes and projects. They are responsible for the development of their respective districts through the formulation and implementation of medium-term development plans.

The review points that the constitution of the Ghana provides a basis for local governance system in the fourth republic. The spirit behind chapter 20 of the 1992 of Ghana is that central government is far away from local citizens and may not have a comprehensive grasp of the needs of the local people. Therefore, local governments are in position to recognised and understand the needs of the local people and addressed them properly to the satisfaction of the people. However, whereas local governments have been created over the years and functions and responsibilities transferred to them, there appears to be little power and resources transferred to them for implementation.

Whereas many of the policies in Ghana are drafted by the central government in full or partial consultation with stakeholders including MMDAs, the responsibility for the implementation of the actions outlined in national policies relies squarely on the shoulders of MMDAs. Indeed, to achieve most policies in Ghana, MMDAs will be required to prepare and implement their respective medium-term development plans on the basis of the detailed medium-term national development policy framework. The sector and district medium-term plans of

MDAs and MMDAs, respectively, will serve as the basis for the annual national budget during the programme period.

The argument that all development is ultimately “local” is minimally contested. The local level is the place where the global challenges of today’s world (e.g. growing inequalities, job creation, the climate crisis, migration) affect the populations and become real. It is the level where centrally defined policies have to land and be implemented, public services have to be delivered and context-specific opportunities for sustainable development and local resource mobilization have to be identified and exploited.

To enable MMDAs to perform these tasks effectively, a number of reforms have been undertaken over the years in Ghana, including devolution of several departments of central government to local level to serve as departments of MMDAs. They include agriculture, trade and industry, social welfare and community development. Education and health are yet to be devolved to complete the process. Despite, this devolution of functions and powers to MMDA, there is lack of corresponding financial commitment for MMDAs to respond effectively to their functions and roles.

PART 2
**ENHANCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT
AND COOPERATION POLICY: ACTIONS EXPECTED FROM DECISION-
MAKERS AT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL AND AT EU DELEGATION
LEVEL**

2.1 Introduction

The effectiveness of decentralisation, that is, the well-functioning of subnational governmental levels is largely a factor of the policy and legal environment that defines the intergovernmental relations in the country. In Ghana the Constitution defines devolution and decentralisation and sets their overall guiding parameters. The Constitution is further strengthened by other legislative instrument such as Civil Service Law 1993 (PNDCL 327); District Assemblies' Common Fund Act 1993 (Act 455), National Development Planning (System) Act 1994 (Act 479); National Development Planning Commission Act 1994 (Act 480); Institute of Local Government Studies Act 2003 (Act 647); Local Government (Departments of District Assemblies) Commencement Instrument 2009 (LI 1961). While the environment for decentralisation is clearly defined in the policy and legal realms, its implementation or realisation remains elusive. This section explore and highlight the key ingredients for effectiveness and how these have been achieved in Ghana.

2.3 Recognizing the Local Authorities and NALAG as State Actor

Article 240(1) and 240(2a to e) of 1992 Constitution provides that Ghana shall have a system of local government. The intent of the law is to confer State functions to subnational governments. Decentralisation will also include the transfer to resources to the subnational level. District Assemblies in Ghana are run by government appointees and endorsed by opinion leaders to represent their communities to chart local development. This democratic representation gives them political mandate to make decisions on behalf of their communities. For the first time the 2013 EU Communication on "Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" recognized local authorities as state actors. The policy positions of both the Republic of Ghana and EU are congruent on the recognition of local governments. The NALAG is yet to become an integral part of this relational framework. Also, the full realization of the potential policy implications are yet far from being attained by both Ghana of Ghana and the EU.

A holistic recognition of local authorities as state actors must acknowledge their potential to harness the contributions of all territorial stakeholders such as businesses, organized civil

society, and other social and environmental movements in local development in a bottom-up approach rather than the top down technocratic approaches that hitherto have tended to dominate intergovernmental relations. The complexity of development challenges requires a more interactive/ cooperative approach guided by the principle of subsidiarity in which spheres of government engage in co-design and building synergies to ensure coherence and impact. The principle of subsidiarity has informed other countries or regions in guiding their decentralisation policy formulation and implementation. It advocates for devolving responsibility to the lowest level endeavouring as far as possible to manage affairs as closely to the citizen as possible and to depart from this principle only for reasons of absolute necessity. The African Union has proposed a Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development as a guide to nation states in their decentralization effort.

This benchmark provides African governments with a pragmatic tool for ensuring a governance system that responds to the concerns of its citizenry and recognises the right of citizens to choose their own development priorities and organise for their realisation. The top down approaches adopted by central governments fail to recognize the potential of local authorities to mobilize local resources, including from the private sector. In this regard, territorial development approach has distinct opportunities for contributing to national economic growth and social cohesion in that it leverages the potentialities of the territory and overcomes the limitations inherent in top-down approaches and spatially blinded policies.

While the Ghanaian government espoused policy and legal environment confers state actor status, the current implementation practice seems to reflect agency type relationship under which local authorities implement national government policy and have increasingly become projectized, carrying out assignments as delegated by central government. Furthermore, even though local governments are state actors, their representative national association is not accorded such status. The local governments have established NALAG since 1962.

The NALAG is only informally recognized, being accorded ‘sounding board’ status by central government sector ministries and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Local Government. The NALAG is also consulted by other Parliamentary Select Committees. Although regularly consulted, this is not defined by any legislative or policy requirement. If local authorities had a representation in Parliament, this move could have been averted as debate on the matter would have ensued prior to the arbitrary take over with local authorities given a platform to argue their case.

It is recommended that the consultation between NALAG and Parliament represented by the national association is formally structured with a clear mandate to represent the interests of

local authorities. Consideration may, for example, be given to conferring seats in Parliament to represent local authorities. The national association does not receive any funding from central government relying entirely on membership subscriptions.

2.3 Involving NALAG in EU Programming: information, consultation, dialogue, partnership measures

The EU programming process is intended to identify strategic priority areas and sectors for interventions to be financed by the EU cooperation within the framework of a political dialogue with central governments, local authorities and other development actors such as civil society and private sector. It is essential for the local authorities and their national association to be cognisant of the necessary pre-conditions to effectively participating in the dialogue process. Indeed, the EU has, following protracted negotiations with global representatives of local governments, agreed to recognise local authorities as state actors leading to the issuance of the 2013 Communication. However, despite this commitment, the effective participation of local authorities in the EU Development Cooperation has been very limited.

The EU's new Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) under which the EU Country Programming Process for the period 2021 to 2027 is being carried out offers an opportunity to effectively strengthen local authorities' involvement in and benefit from the EU support. It is, thus crucial for local authorities and their national associations to enter into this process with clear goals and objectives in order to derive their deserved recognition and participation in the process. It is the EU Country Delegation that will be responsible for managing the geographic component of the NDICI.

First, NALAG and MMDAs in Ghana should take an active role in the programming process. Beyond the recognition by the EU of local authorities as state actors, the Union has also recognised them as key stakeholders in the implementation and localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Agenda 2030. The following steps are recommended for local authorities to engage in the dialogue process:

Understanding the new EU Programming Environment: The UCLG Africa has conducted an awareness raising seminar involving all national associations in Africa. The information shared and the documents disseminated during the seminar should be widely circulated to local authorities to inform them of the new environment and prepare them to enter this new phase of the EU programming process. The EU programming process is guided by its key policy documents.

Relevant to the local governments, the national associations should insist on the inclusion in the programming guidelines of the following EU policy documents:

- a. The EU Lisbon Treaty section which recognizes the principle of subsidiarity and the Union's own Cohesion Policies -as this would open the door to also promote territorial development in EU external action.
- b. The Communication of 2013 on Local Authorities and related EU commitment to "empower" LRGs as development actors and catalysts of territorial development. This would provide a clear mandate to EUDs to engage strategically with Local and Regional Governments (LRGs).
- c. The Agenda 2030 components that stress the need to "localize" the SDGs (as condition for effective implementation) and on the "5 Ps" (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership). This principle strongly supports the localisation of public services and strengthens the case for local authorities as territorial approach to local development.
- d. The Paris Agreement and the EU Green Deal. Considering the central place of climate related issues in future programming, it will be key to ensure a clear link to the role of LRGs.

Furthermore, three guiding principles could also enhance the relevance of NALAG and MMDAs integration into EU programming (i) the integration of the spatial dimension in programming shifts the focus from vertical 'silo type' planning to holistic territorialisation of public policies; (ii) the effective integration of LRGs in the EU programming in line with the 2013 EU Communication; and (iii) the promotion of territorial approaches to local development, a concept already in sync with EU programming policy. By aligning their support requests to these principles, NALAG and MMDAs enhance the relevance of their support needs to the fundamental approaches preferred by the EU.

Engage NALAG and MMDAs: The NALAG should actively engage their members, provide training and launch a discussion on the strategies and priorities to present to the EU programme negotiating platform. The members will also reflect on the modalities of mainstreaming local authorities in the EU cooperation. In this regard, a seminar should be conducted bringing together local authorities to share information, discuss and produce a position paper on the 2021-2027 EU cooperation.

Engaging National Government. It is essential that NALAG engages the Ministry of Finance that is responsible for coordinating the programming process with the EU Delegation in order to,

inter alia (i) define ways and means to involve NALAG in the definition of priorities aligned to national development policies; (ii) modalities for applying the subsidiarity principle for the implementation of the EU cooperation in the agreed priority areas. Opportunity should be taken to set up a permanent mechanism for engagement to allow NALAG to input the programming process through their national association. The adoption of a place-based approach by the national level aiming at localising public national policies in all sectors of development including SDGs and other global agendas. The adoption of a Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD) would strengthen local authorities preparing them to become strong development centres.

Engaging the EU Delegation: The NALAG and her members as well as central government should engage the EU Delegation and present their position on this issue to the delegation as this is crucial to the programming process. The engagement with the EU should also strengthen the already agreed to EU position on recognising local authorities as state actors in their own right. On the basis of the general mandate for developing their territories normally conferred by legislation on local authorities, NALAG should advocate for the entrenchment of this position to ensure that local authorities are an integral part of the negotiations process leading to the conclusion of the 2021-2027 programming process.

In light of the past weaknesses in realising this goal, NALAG should insist on a roadmap for the strengthening of the local authorities' integration in the definition, implementation and follow up of the country's priorities for inclusion in the 2021-2027 EU cooperation agenda. This roadmap elaborating the implementation of the multi annual cooperation programme would provide for sustainable engagement with the EU and national government. A key component of the resulting EU Cooperation Agenda support for the local authorities and NALAG should be a capacity building programme to strengthen their institutional capacity.

2.4 Local Government financing mechanisms

Territorialization of national plans and sectoral policies is not complete without sustainable financing mechanism through fiscal decentralisation. Performance of district level functions requires adequate funds and appropriate financing arrangements for MMDAs to make them responsive to the service delivery needs of the local population. Decentralization by devolution entails financial autonomy where MMDAs become initiators and implementers of development within their jurisdictions. This requires a regular allocation of adequate funds to meet their development needs and the legal mandate to raise funds.

Until 1994, fiscal decentralisation was very minimal in Ghana's decentralisation system and financial allocations to local governments were based on the discretion of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Before then and especially in 1980s the central government allowed district assemblies to collect some taxes which was previously collected by the internal revenue service and shared to all the districts based on a formula set by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. This was replaced in 1994 by a mandate in the constitution for central government to transfer not less than 5 percent (called District Assemblies Common Fund) of the total national revenue to district assemblies for local development.

Following the implementation of this constitutional requirement, an independent common fund administrator was appointed to develop a formula for sharing out the fund. It is important to note that 10% of the DACF is held centrally as a reserve fund while 90% is shared out. Moreover, not only are these disbursements delayed, central government directives determine 75% of expenditure while only 25% of disbursements are fully discretionary to MMDAs. This limits the financial autonomy and capacity of MMDAs to initiate and implement development programmes and projects for the benefit of the local population. Having realized that the initial allocation of the 5% of the total revenue of Ghana as District Assemblies Common Fund was too meagre to meet the developmental needs of MMDAs, the figure was increased to 7.5% in 2004.

The 1992 constitution and the local governance Act 2016 (Act 936) outlined the powers of MMDAs to charge fees, engage in joint ventures, rate, license, provide services and acquire property. The central government through the Controller and Accountants General Department pays the salaries of MMDA staffs. Salaries of some staff working under the DA are still being paid by the sector Ministries. Amongst others, it made provision for financial management and internal auditing as well as the privileges and immunities of assembly members.

Clearly there is strong political commitment to integrate the spatial dimension in development management of the country. This has been demonstrated through development planning policies, administrative, political and fiscal decentralisation. Specifically, Ghana's decentralization is aimed at empowering communities to be able to effectively participate in the decision-making process that relate to the overall management and development of rural areas. In furtherance of ensuring local participation in development management of the country, MMDAs were given an unprecedented 86 functions, that included planning, finance, budgeting, infrastructural development and security, by their legislative instrument.

However, this financial arrangements for MMDAs is woefully inadequate and impedes the effort of MMDAs to be true agents of developments. Thus, whereas local governments have been created over the years and functions and responsibilities transferred to them, there appears to be

little power and resources transferred to them for implementation. The adverse financial position of local authorities has also been exacerbated by a general tendency for donors to fund development in local areas through civil society organisations and in some cases, private sector. The fragmented funding for development programmes and their implementation largely premised on avoidance of state organs has led, not only to territorial development distortions but increased the perception of local authorities as irrelevant by the citizens. This is setting a dysfunctional precedent in the management of local development. The mono-sectoral approaches now dominating local development are not sustainable.

2.5 Conclusion

The main challenge to Ghana's decentralisation progress seems to be the inability to translate the policies into implementable programmes. The provisions of the Constitution and other legislative instruments provide a solid foundation for effective decentralisations albeit limited in scope by lack of territorialisation of local development. Effort should, thus, be directed at developing and applying appropriate instruments to realise the political ambition of devolution and decentralisation enunciated by the Constitution and introducing citizen protection measures to contain state excesses, especially on tendencies to recentralise devolved functions on spurious grounds.

Limited financial capacity of the local governments in Ghana has impeded the realisation of the true importance of decentralisation. Similarly, the isolation of local governments from direct EU funding has also adversely affected the local governments, being state actors. Funding has been diverted to flow to communities mainly through civil society organisations instead of the local authorities. Consequently, development planning and implementation has been fragmented leading to absoluteness of local and master plans drawn up by local authorities. Clearly, there is need to harmonise relations and restore the legitimate financing framework that recognises local authorities as recipients of aid.

With regard to involvement in EU programming the challenges confronting local authorities and national associations may not emanate from the EU Delegation. Experience has shown the problem does not lie in the EU guidelines as these tend to be very clear on the inclusive nature of programming. The real obstacles lie in (i) resistance from central governments (ii) the structural capacity constraints of LRGs and their associations to effectively engage in programming processes and (iii) lack of tradition and know how at the level of the EUDs on how to dialogue with LRGs. Having perform their functions very well over the years, it is time for MMDAs and their national association – NALAG be giving NALAG a voice in the EU programming process.

PART 3

ENHANCING LOCAL AUTHORITIES MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION POLICY: ACTIONS EXPECTED FROM THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

3.1 Introduction

To be fully involved in the decentralisation system, there is the need for both sides: policy- and decision makers at national level and development partners on the one hand; and LAs and their representative national associations on the other hand. LAs and NALAs should therefore be ready and able to fulfil a proactive and leading role in this process. Different aspects are key when it comes to the development of meaningful LAs involvement.

Due to the adoption and implementation of decentralization across the developing world, local authorities become more and more important, and are having a more and more direct impact on the living conditions of people. This requires that NALAG master different knowledge and capacities, in particular the capacity and resources to communicate with national policy makers and other stakeholders, especially the development partners, including the EU; and to be able to formulate policy messages in a sensible way as well as implementable actions plans. This section discusses the SWOT analysis and critical issues confronting NALAG and suggestions to address some of the challenges of NALAG.

3.2 Critical political and institutional role of the National Association of Local Government Association Ghana

National associations of local authorities (NALA) are organisations established to represent the interests of their members and undertake activities as defined by their constitutions or other establishment statutes. In Africa and elsewhere, NALAs have played a crucial role in steering decentralization policy and the environment of local governments. They have also been instrumental in supporting the growth and effectiveness of their members as well as providing a platform for international cooperation with other world institutions.

National associations of local government play a pivotal role in the strengthening of local governments to provide a good service to their citizens. They perform both ‘upstream’ roles of advocacy and lobbying to establish conducive environments for the effective operation of local governments and a ‘downstream’ role of supporting the capacity development of their members to achieve the same goal. Their collective action is more effective than individuals operating in isolation of others. Advocacy, thus becomes, the most important role of the national association.

Advocacy is about representing the collective views of members in order to influence decisions that affect members by others such as central governments, various national policy platforms, financial institutions, development partners and their platforms, and other significant stakeholders. The voice of local authorities is the organised expression of the aspirations of members and the articulation of negotiations to achieve their desired goals.

In Ghana, the NALA is called National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG). The evolution of the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG) can be traced to 2nd April 1962, where two separate associations (the National Association of Local Councils and the Association of City/Municipal Councils) existed to serve the interest of rural and urban councils in Ghana. On 18th November 1977 the two Associations realizing that there was a similarity in their objectives and that they were performing similar and duplicating roles, merged to form the National Association of Local Councils (NALCO) as an apolitical organization without religious or philosophical pre-occupation or orientation.

Following the restructuring of the system of local government in Ghana in 1988 by the government of Ghana, and in tune with an international designation of Local Governments, NALCO became the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG). NALAG continued to receive government subvention until 1998 when the Association voluntarily decided to opt out of it to give it the independence and autonomy to play its roles more effectively.

Today, NALAG is the umbrella organisation and the mouthpiece of all Local Authorities (Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts Assemblies – MMDAs) in Ghana. The membership of NALAG is compulsory for all the MMDAs established by Law. In this NALAG seeks to promote the development of local government administration and decentralisation in Ghana through advocacy and lobbying. Indeed, Article 1(1) of NALAG's constitution states that “the Association aims to promote the development of Local government and decentralization in Ghana”.

In the performance of its function, NALAG is confronted with several challenges including inadequate financial resources; low human resources capacity; political interference; conflict among members; low women participation at the local level; among others. NALAG therefore needs to be well resource and build the needed capacity to be able to champion the discourse of local governance in Ghana. Since MMDCEs are appointed by the president and are subjected to his control, MMDCEs will be committed to the president rather than the local people. Hence, NALAG as the mouthpiece of MMDAs and by extension the backbone of the local people, NALAG should stand up to the occasion and defence the course of local governance in Ghana.

Having served as the mouthpiece for MMDAs in Ghana over the years, the next important activity is to engage in lobbying activities that seek to influence the position of external

stakeholders to align their own policy with that of NALAG. The results of these lobbying activities signify the success or other wise of NALAG and that of its members’ ambitions. In order to influence central government policy, lobbying effort may be directed at various stakeholders, the general citizenry, through press briefings, discussion forums, non-governmental organisations, periodic general meetings of the national association, the association’s own newsletter bulletins, and other media. An overview of the SWOT analysis of NALAG is shown in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: SWOT Analysis of NALAG

Strengthens	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership • Capacity to engage central government • Good collaboration with many national institutions • Good collaboration with international organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate financial resources • Low human resources capacity • Poor Visibility and Presence • Lack of strong advocacy role • Low research capacity
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional and legal support for decentralisation • Strong decentralisation environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political interference • Membership apathy • Low financial sustainability plan

3.3 Territorializing of global agendas: the SDGs

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs and their 169 SDG targets in 2015 was marked by the realisation that to be effective, SDG implementation has to be bottom-up. This means deploying a multi-stakeholder approach at the heart of which is the concept of localising the SDGs, in particular through local governments. Thus, most SDG targets are closely related to the daily mandate of local governments. Their achievement will largely depend on credible national policies, notably on decentralization, as well as on the existence of empowered local government that can “own” the SDGs and translate them in local public policies and outcomes that are relevant for their local populations. Since 2015, substantial efforts have been devoted to developing and sharing policy and best practices on localising SDGs, accompanied by a plethora of guides and roadmaps.

As part of its effort to demonstrate commitment towards the achievement of the SDGs, the government of Ghana in August 2017 inaugurated a technical committee for the execution of the SDGs and the Africa Agenda 2063. The formation of the committee was the first move in the localization of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. It is therefore expected that the competent authorities’ activities towards localization the SDGs will be reflected in the various Annual Progress Reports (APRs) of the Districts Medium Term Development Plans (DMTDPs) in all MMDAs. Ghana’s

strategy for incorporating the SDGs, involved the Alignment, Adaptation and Adoption of the goals in the existing development plan and monitoring.

In Ghana, national SDG coordination is done through the NDPC and the SDG Implementation Coordinating Committee; the latter brings together key ministries/agencies (including MLGRD and the Ghana Statistical Service) and other stakeholders including CSOs. The SDGs are incorporated in the Medium-Term Development Framework (2018-2021) and Coordinated Programme of Economic & Social Development Policies (2017-2024) alongside the AU Agenda 2063. The decentralised planning system in Ghana requires that the NDPC outlines the guidelines for the preparation of the MTDP and in this outline there is a formal requirement for the MMDAs to align SDGs to their development plans. This affords MMDAs the opportunity to integrate SDGs and targets into the MTDP, annual work plan and programmes.

According to the UNDP (2017) the successful implementation of the SDGs will depend on the ability of MMDAs in Ghana to integrate them into their MTDPs. The UNDP (2017) indicated that there are a number of reasons for mainstreaming the SDGs into the MTDPs of MMDAs:

- MMDAs are positioned to effectively transform the goals and targets in a pragmatic way, fit them into their own particular context and help the local communities to understand how local action contributes to their achievement.
- Mainstreaming SDGs into existing policies, practices and plans at the MMDAs will ensure a more efficient use of scarce resources, help local authorities find synergies between the SDGs and local development plans.
- Their localization therefore presents a fresh opportunity to strengthen the decentralization agenda.
- The implementation of the SDGs will require active involvement of relevant stakeholders, especially sectoral and MMDAs in order to build solid institutional structures and to ensure local ownership and also set out a long-term objective to help MMDAs to contribute to national level implementation and realization of the SDGs by 2030.
- The integration of the SDGs into existing development frameworks offers local MMDAs the opportunity to review existing plans and strategies, to examine how they could be augmented or adapted to achieve more ambitious outcomes; and to mobilize innovative financing and partnership mechanisms to accelerate local development.

In Ghana, climate change is mainstreamed in the MTDPs of MMDAs. The mainstreaming of climate change is the integration of climate change issues the development planning, budgeting,

monitoring, monitoring and evaluation processes of the MTDP. Mainstreaming of climate change into MTDP should not just be adding climate change issues to local development planning and budgeting processes, but rather making climate change issues a “normal thing” and dealing with the trade-offs and maximizing synergies across targets in a complete planning cycle of MMDAs. In other words, making climate change issues a normal thing in the MMDA development planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes (UNDP, 2017).

3.4 National Association of Local Government Authorities Ghana Plan of Action

In order to realise the goals and objectives indicated in this roadmap the following actions are envisaged:

1. Understanding the new EU Programming Environment

Local authorities and national association’s leadership require information on the new programming environment. At a minimum this includes the following elements:

- The import of the new EU Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI);
- The Role of Local and Regional Governments in the EU Cooperation, especially the import of 2013 EU Communication on “Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”
- Initiatives taken by Five International Local and Regional Governments Associations ((AIMF, CEMR/PLATFORMA, CLGF, UCLG, UCLG-AFRICA). The group has developed strong arguments justifying the role of local authorities and their NALAs in future EU programming which all local authorities must be aware of and able to articulate in engagement negotiations;

Methodology: Information circulars and seminars

By Who? The UCLG Africa has offered to provide the required information dissemination for this activity.

2. Engaging and Mobilizing Local Authorities in the EU Programming Process

The organisation of local authorities to effectively participate in the EU programming process is essential to create common understandings on the key issues concerning the envisaged changes.

This engagement should include the following:

- Organisation of dialogue platforms to discuss and agree position paper and strategy
- Assessment of needs of local authorities for support under the programme

Methodology: Meetings and workshops

By Who? National Association should organise and conduct these engagements.

3. Engaging Central Government

The national government is the legal nexus for negotiations with external development partners. There is need for early discourse between local authorities' leadership and central government, firstly, the ministry responsible for local government and decentralisation followed by engagements with the ministry responsible for coordinating with the EU. These engagements will scope the programming process and agree on strategy. It is essential that the local governments, together with the national association work in harmony with central government on any negotiations with the EU.

Methodology: Meetings

By Who? The national association will lead local authorities in these engagements

4. Engaging EU Delegation

Within the framework of an agreed country strategy, local authorities will join national government in the negotiations for the 2021-2027 EU programming.

Methodology: Meetings

By Who? Central government will lead the engagements with the EU Delegation.

3.5 Enhancing NALAGs meaningful involvement in development and cooperation policy

The devolution and decentralisation policy that has been fully adopted by the Government of Ghana through its 1992 Constitution as well as the local governance act, 2016 (Act 936) fully support decentralisation. Experience has already demonstrated the naivety of assuming that policy will be implemented once enacted. Thus, whereas decentralisation is well accepted there has been challenges with the implementation and sometimes some decentralised functions are gradually been recentralised. It is therefore incumbent upon both NALAG and its supporting development partners to seriously develop a programme of action for the genuine implementation of devolution and decentralisation that can be 'seen' by the citizens who expectantly await their full participation in development for their local areas and territories. The following Actions are envisaged:

a. *Fostering a deeper understanding of devolution and decentralisation supported by TALD:* The TALD envisages a paradigm shift in the way in which devolution is applied. In order for this concept to be adopted it will be necessary to conduct learning sessions for both national government and local authorities' leadership and other functionaries.

b. *State Architecture for Decentralisation Implementation - Intergovernmental Relations Definition:* Implementation of Devolution Matrix by MMDAs, NALAG, IMCC and MLGRD: This will entail the organisation of engagement platforms bringing together local and national leaders to consider options for the devolution matrix as organised by the IMCC and MLGRD.

c. *Programme of Action for Implementing Constitutional Provisions on Decentralisation:* The consensus on the practical implications of the Constitutional provisions on devolution and decentralisation will lead to the elaboration of a programme of action with the participation of the relevant national government departments and local authorities coordinated by NALAG. The specific tasks to be performed will be defined during the deliberations on the implementation programming.

d. *Building Urban Resilience, Inclusion and Sustainability:* NALAG will engage in a protracted process of strengthening local democracy through building platforms for citizens' participation in governance; building the capacity of local authorities to operationalise national policies and laws at the local level; developing programmes for enhance the participation of women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups in the governance processes; and taking measures to promote and apply appropriate response to the climate challenges.

e. *Local Government Finance Resuscitation – Fiscal space shrinkage:* NALAG will engage in a process of developing a comprehensive financing system for local authorities in partnership with national government. This will include local revenue sourcing; grants from national government; and loans

f. *Organizing a meaningful and competent voice of Local Authorities:*

g. *Formal Institutions to support capacity building for local governments:* National Framework and Strategy

- Leadership capacity
- Management capacity
- Technical capacity

3.6 Conclusion

Since gaining independence in 1957, successive governments in Ghana have looked to a vibrant local government system to aid the country's development. Ghana's current decentralization programme was initiated in 1988. The process of decentralization continued and

was endorsed by Ghana's 1992 constitution and a number of legislative instruments. As a result, there has been the creation of MMDAs in Ghana over the years and currently stands at 260.

Territorialisation of national plans and sectoral policies in Ghana resides with MMDAs in Ghana. Formulation of MTDPs in Ghana takes a bottom-up approach where MMDAs are mandated to develop local MTDPs on the basis of guidelines issued by the NDPC which eventually feeds into the broader national development plan. Similarly, implementation of national and sectoral plans is carried out at the local level by MMDAs who are closest to the people. MMDAs therefore play a key role in both development policy making and implementation in Ghana. Because of this important role, the constitution of Ghana has made financial provisions to support MMDAs in both policy formulation and implementation through the DACF as well as the autonomy to collect local revenue to finance local development.

Again, all SDGs are mainstreamed into the MTDPs of MMDAs as they are better achieved at the local level and helps leave no one behind. As a result, MMDAs have played a key role in the territorialisation of policy national and international policy agendas. Clearly, as political actors, MMDAs not only implement policies and plans within their jurisdiction, but they also can and should be involved in the definition and influence of policies required to further enhance local development and territorialisation of the development process. This is because MMDAs provide the direct link to citizens and provide the voice and leadership in the development of communities. MMDAs in Ghana are involved in the provision of health, education, social and cultural services that are essential to peoples' livelihood security. Having performed their functions very well over the years, it is time for MMDAs and their national association – NALAG to give NALAG a voice in the EU programming process.

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