



Report on Ghana's National Consultation on Localization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda



0. BACKGROUND

A first round of national consultations took place in 50+ countries in 2012-13 to solicit the priorities that should be the focus of the post-2015 agenda (the what). Ghana was one of the countries selected to host a national consultation. During the national consultations, participants were keen not to just to express their views on the content of the agenda, but were also interested in understanding how it would be implemented, including the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. Some of the key implementation issues raised included ownership, localization, participation, capacities, monitoring and accountability systems and partnerships. A second round of consultations on the post 2015 was launched in April 2014. The focus was on the means of implementation and six themes were proposed: Localizing the post-2015 agenda; Participatory Monitoring for Accountability; Partnerships with Civil Society; Engaging with the Private Sector; Helping to Strengthen Capacities and Build Effective Institutions; and Culture and Development. During this second round, Ghana was selected to host a national consultation on the theme of localizing the post-2015 agenda.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second round of national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda in Ghana, which was on the theme of localization, was organized by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) in partnership with the UN Country Team, other relevant ministries and stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels. The consultation which took place at national, district and community levels was organized in June 2014.

Stakeholders at the consultations raised a number of critical issues including the low levels of awareness about the MDGs as well as limited collaboration between relevant stakeholders. Other issues raised included inadequate funding, untimely release of funds in order to deliver social

services on time, transportation and logistical challenges, and inadequacies with regard to effective systems and processes that could facilitate transparency, accountability and monitoring and evaluation amongst others. More specifically, recommendations focused on the need to:

- Effectively communicate and sensitize stakeholders on the global development agenda and how it is mainstreamed and localized in the Ghanaian context;
- The need to consult widely and involve the community, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Youth groups, Traditional Authorities, Religious Groups **and** *to engage them in the design and implementation of the development agenda.*
- Strengthen decentralization and take the agenda itself forward, through strengthening the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) especially through fiscal decentralization and human resource capacity development.
- Ensure timely disbursement of funds and measures to ensure that funds are effectively deployed and support is provided to MMDAs to raise resources locally as well;
- Strengthen systems and processes to ensure timely data to assist in identifying gaps, progress and accountability;

2.0 DESCRIPTION

As Ghana had *mainstreamed* the MDGs into its national planning frameworks and district medium term plans as well as undertaken a process of *localization of the MDGs*, the objective was to draw on these experiences to identify lessons and to stimulate inclusive dialogues on the challenges and priorities for more effectively achieving the post 2015 development agenda. The different levels of government, private sector and civil society were consulted and the organizers also sought to proactively engage Ghana's media¹. The consultation included the following:

1. **ANALYSIS OF GHANA'S EXPERIENCE & LESSONS LEARNED:** there were three main sources of information for this reflection: (i) a questionnaire was sent to each of the local government technical personnel (7 key development agents within the local assembly system, including planning officers, finance officers, town & country planner,

¹ On the 16th June, 2014, the UN system together with the NDPC held a media encounter at the NDPC. The aim was to interact with the media on the consultative process and to get them engaged on the reportage of the process, as well as educate the general public on the post 2015 development agenda.

etc.) to which responses were received; (ii) NDPC's reflections on its own experience of mainstreaming the MDGs in Ghana's medium term policy frameworks, (GPRS I & II, and GSGDA); and (iii) a review of the localization of MDGs initiative supported by UNDP;

2. **A NATIONAL CONSULTATION:** A one-day meeting with focus groups and stakeholders was held in Accra on Thursday, June 19, 2014. It was facilitated by the joint GoG-UN team.
3. **THREE LOCAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS:** With a view to deepening the dialogues on themes and issues identified through the national consultation held in Accra, community level engagements/town hall meetings were held as follows in:
 - **Wa** municipality in the Upper West Region,
 - **Kumasi**, a metropolitan area in the Ashanti Region; and
 - **Ekumfi**, a newly formed district that was predictably facing some developmental challenges in the Central Region.

3.0 QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF PARTICIPATION

1. Community Consultations: Ghana's Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development's financial and Organizational Assessment Tool (FOAT) informed the selection of the locations where community consultations took place along with geographical location, performance of the MMDA and representation across type of MMDA. Participants were drawn from the municipal assembly, zonal councils, area councils, NGOs, private sector, persons with physical challenges, religious representatives, and youth associations.

2. MMDA Consultations to draw lessons learned on mainstreaming and localizing MDGs: The consultation relied on a nation-wide orientation programme organized by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) with support from partners including UNDP to orient Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (MMDAs) representatives on the preparation of their District Medium Term Development Plans (DMTDPs) 2014-2017². Questionnaires were administered to the district representatives in the second week of June 2014.

²Districts and Sectors develop their Medium Term Development Plans (MTDP) based on the Nations Medium Term Development Policy Framework. To facilitate the preparation of the plans, the NDPC prepares the Planning Guidelines through a participatory approach and orient the districts (and sectors) on the guidelines.

A total of two hundred and sixty six (266) questionnaires were received and analyzed from eight out of the ten regions of Ghana³.

Women were under represented as 84% of the respondents were males. Almost 99% of the respondents had the tertiary education with about 39% of them having attained post graduate qualifications. A majority of them held the positions of planning officers and district directors, and other analogous positions and had an average of 6 years' experience working in their respective positions. The average age of the respondent was 42 years with the minimum age being 22 years and the maximum age being 60 years.

National Consultation: This was held on the 19th June 2014 at the La Palm Beach Hotel and it was attended by a total of about 144 participants. It was organized in three phases. The first phase involved the official protocol observance, then presentations on the Ghana's experience on the mainstreaming of the MDGs into the national and local plans as well as the UN localization of the MDGs. The second phase was breakout sessions and the third, a plenary session at the end where major highlights from the breakout groups were presented and discussed. Participants were drawn from Local governments (3), National government and representatives of Ministries Departments and Agencies (48), National and sub-national Civil Society (40), International cooperation/development partners (30), Academic institutions (4), Religious Groups (1) Media (18). Out of the total 144 participants, 45 (31%) were females. The Director General of NDPC gave an opening speech; the UNDP Country Director on behalf of the UNCT gave the opening address and a Key Note Address was delivered by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development. Technical support, guidance and direction were provided by Kodjo Mensah-Abrampah from UNDP Head Office. There was good participation in the national and the community consultations at the sub-national level.

³ Upper East and Western regions which received the questionnaire via mail and had not responded as at the time of analysis

1.1 National: 126 people;

Stakeholders Group	Frequency	Percent	Gender	Frequency	Percent
Local governments	3	2.4			
National government and representatives of MDAs	48	38.4	Female	42	33.33
National and sub-national Civil Society	40	32	Male	84	66.67
International cooperation/development partners	30	24	Total	126	100
Academic institutions	4	3.17			
Religious Groups	1	0.8			
Total	126	100			

1.2 Ekumfi District =48 – women under-represented

Stakeholder groups	Participants
Private Sector (Trade Unions and Associations)	5
Assembly members	6
Youth Groups	7
Religious and Faith Based Organisations	3
Traditional Authority	1
Opinion Leaders	3
District Assembly	3
Civil Society Organisations	4
Representatives from vulnerable groups & community members	16

1.3 Wa Municipality = 44 – women under-represented

Stakeholder Group	Participants
Municipal assembly	19
Representative from the palace	1
Private sector	2
Non-governmental organisations ⁴	5
Persons with disability & blind teacher from School of the Blind	3
Youth organisations	2
Zonal councils	12
total	44

1.4 Kumasi Metropolitan Area =100

Stakeholders	Frequency	Percentage
Zonal Council Members	1	2.5
Community Member	3	7.5
Civil Society Group	12	30
Unit Committee Member	4	10
Private Sector Institutions	5	12.5
Assemblymen	4	10
Vulnerable and Excluded	2	5
Youth Organizations	7	17.5
NGO	1	2.5
Public Service	1	2.5
Total	40	100

⁴ NGOs included: Send-Ghana, Pronet-North, CDA, Baoba Network

4.0 A RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

a. Process/Methodology

Community Consultations: This took place concurrently on the 25th June 2014. 3 teams of 3 members from the UN and NDPC were deployed to the communities to facilitate the processes at the selected locations which were: the Wa Municipal Assembly as a good Municipal Assembly in the Northern Belt, Ekumfi for being a poor performing district in the Southern belt and Kumasi Metropolis for its good performance in the Middle Belt. The consultations were facilitated by the NDPC and the UN system represented by UNDP (and UNICEF in Wa). Community consultations took the form of Town hall meetings in Wa municipality and Kumasi Metropolitan Area. In Ekumfi it took the form of a Community group discussions held in Essarkyire, capital of Ekumfi District.

MMDA consultations took the form of a survey. A questionnaire was designed to solicit opinions of district level technical workers as regards their experiences with the MDGs. Also Ghana's experience of mainstreaming the MDGs into the National Development Framework was documented by NDPC and a review of the localization of MDGs initiative supported by UNDP was done by the lead consultant of the localization project.(attached in supplementary);

The National consultation held in Accra combined plenary discussions with breakout sessions to delve deep into the following: (i): Lessons and challenges with respect to MDGs; (ii) Stakeholders engagement and coordinated implementation; (iii) Implementation Issues; (iv) Participation and inclusiveness in implementation processes; and (v) M&E, Accountability and Governance Issues;

b. Substantive findings of the consultative process

i. Main views, ideas and suggestions of the people consulted

Community level Views, Ideas and Suggestions:

In Kumasi there was a consensus on the need to implement the Global Development Agenda at the local level. Participants deemed localization extremely important as it ensured ownership of the development goals, fosters local development, ensures the effective implementation of the Global Development Agenda. Further, it helps to focus attention on and helps the poor by catalyzing the eradication of extreme poverty. In their opinion despite the fact that the district

performed well, major challenges included: the lack of funds and the untimely release of funds for MDG related projects, low levels of local participation and involvement because stakeholders were not consulted, politicization of developmental issues and the lack of transparency and accountability at the Metropolitan assembly.

At Wa, participants highlighted the importance of addressing local cultural perceptions and ‘soft issues’ such as the importance of tackling cultural perceptions and traditions through stakeholder engagement but more specifically through sensitization campaigns that need to accompany the focus on quality service delivery. This is particularly important as health issues, especially maternal and child mortality, are critical areas where Ghana and the municipality are lagging.

At Ekumfi, participants agreed that there is a well-functioning substructure in place i.e. the Unit committees are functioning well and they play active roles in plan preparations and the development of community action plans. There is still some level of ‘*esprit de corps*’, which could be enhanced to ensure participation and inclusiveness in development agenda settings.

Challenges, on the other hand include, limited knowledge of the MDGs and its processes. There is low level of transparency on governance issues, development is often alienated to the community members as it is often government (or outsider) driven. M&E systems to ensure accountability and strict compliance among others were also mentioned as weakness.

MMDA level Views, Ideas and Suggestions: There was a general consensus on the need for government to commit to the Global Development agenda and enhance the capacity of MMDAs to implement all the goals. Processes that will ensure an effective implementation of the Global Development Goals according to district officers are by effectively communicating and sensitizing stakeholders on the global agenda. Secondly, the importance of community consultation and participation in implementation of the global agenda at the local level must be reinforced. Another effective process was identified as working with all stakeholders including the often overlooked Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), (NGOs and CSOs), Youth groups, Traditional Authorities, Religious Groups. Other relevant processes mentioned were engaging local structures like the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies; ensuring flow of budgeted finances; Human Resource Capacity building; Monitoring and evaluation; and Fiscal Decentralization.

Main challenges faced with the implementation of the MDGs were inadequate and untimely release of funds, transportation and logistical challenges, low stakeholder awareness and consultation. Other challenges mentioned were inadequate complementary support from the Departments and Agencies, inadequate human resource, difficulty with monitoring and evaluation, poor geographical access/ spatial challenges, transparency and lack of consultations.

National Level Views, Ideas and Suggestions:

Challenges faced at the National Level: Inadequate Resource Mobilization, Inefficient Coordination, Weak Capacity for Planning, Data challenges, No Collaboration from local government to NGOs, Perception/ Adaptability of community to change, Infrastructure and their linkages to Service Centers, National Planning Implementation and Focus Drive, Governance Issues, Leadership at all levels, Weak Enforcement, Failure to respond adequately to urbanization.

Lessons learnt from the Stakeholder Engagement and Coordinated Action Discussion:

- The need to minimize or overcome ‘political colours/affiliation’ and the potential to have chief executives be elected positions where possible to ensure an environment that is non-partisan and that is able to tackle apathy and non-engagement of stakeholders;
- Build on local knowledge and ways of doing things to enhance ownership of messages and relevance of proposed project interventions;
- Adopt bottom-up approach including consultation and engagement of local stakeholders in the design of interventions to ensure ownership and sustainability in implementation.
- Establish data and resource repositories at national and sub-national levels to facilitate timely tracking of results and to ensure accountability.

Suggested mechanism and processes for implementation

- District assemblies system is still key but needs further strengthening and decentralization of processes
- Traditional authorities can be strengthened in the areas where they perform important functions

- Rallying people across common religious, cultural and social grouping through educational and sensitization campaigns that ‘localize’ the development goals in terms of symbols and local relevance of issues.

ii. Good practices that exist at the national, local and other levels on localizing the development agenda

In sharing their experiences on what works in the implementing the global development agenda at the local level, participants recognized the positive contribution of these factors amongst others:

- Involvement of critical but often overlooked stakeholders such as Civil Society Organizations, NGO, youth groups, traditional leaders and religious leaders.
- Enforcement of laws especially when it involves the collection of tax.
- Active engagement of the Assembly men and women and communities.

Participants in Wa mentioned that their municipal assembly performed well because

- It was organized into 7 functional unit committees which meet on a regular basis to coordinate work;
- Involvement of traditional authorities in decision making and grassroots organizations in plan preparation and implementation processes;
- Transparency by way of making information available in an accessible fashion by displaying information outside the assembly hall; other types of information dissemination; weekly media engagement
- Ensuring easy access to municipal authorities - through meetings, phone and social media;
- Strong focus on coordination with stakeholders - mapping out of activities of NGOs, CBOs and engagement to hold them accountable;
- High level of religious and cultural tolerance and willingness to talk about cultural issues which have a strong bearing on the delivery of the development programmes and the MDGs

Lessons and findings from Ekumfi District

This is a relatively new district. While there is a well-functioning substructure in place i.e. the unit committees are functioning well and they play active roles in plan preparations and the development of community action plans; however, the participants also pointed to the important role of community mobilization and awareness raising. They also suggested that resource persons from within the community could be trained as trainers of trainers to champion the advocacy for the post 2015 goals in the community.

As it was a new district, there were a number of governance related issues that also needed to be addressed such as putting in place a good M&E system to ensure accountability and strict compliance among others were also mentioned. Leaders should have reporting schemes to the communities – time to report on the activities of the assembly, where this reports to be available to all concerned, breakdown of activities and expenditures, etc. Certified data and information by the Ghana Statistics Service should be available at the district assembly offices for easy access. There is the need to harmonize data to ensure uniformity and comparability.

Discussants pointed to the importance of devolution and decentralization concept (including financial decentralization) and indicated that the use of existing traditional structures for development could yield good results. Given the fiscal crunch, outreach and educating communities to understand the need for and benefits of local government mobilizing resources through levies, tolls and property rates for development work was emphasized as well as through supporting business activities like car/lorry parks, restaurants, guesthouses, market etc. to generate revenue. These projects should be undertaken through Public-Private Partnerships.

Lessons and findings from Kumasi Metropolitan Area

There was broad support and recognition of the importance of localizing the development agenda from the perspective of fostering (i) greater ownership (33%), (ii) strengthening the focus on development issues at the national level (26%), (iii) fostering local development (18.5%) within the context of contributing to realizing the implementation of the Global Development Agenda (14.8%), (iv) empowering the youth (3.7%) and (v) generally focusing

attention on and helping the poor by eradicating poverty (3.7%). The participants recognized the importance of localization in focusing attention on the following success factors:

- i. Involvement of critical but often overlooked stakeholders such as Civil Society Organizations, NGO, youth groups, traditional leaders and religious leaders;
- ii. Local governance and participation - active engagement of the Assembly men and community members
- iii. Enforcement of laws especially when it involves the collection of taxes.

Challenges that hindered the implementation of the MDGs, included.

- i. The lack of and untimely release of funds to work on projects.
- ii. Low levels of local participation and involvement as local stakeholders were not consulted
- iii. Politicization of Developmental Issues across party lines
- iv. Lack of Transparency and Accountability at the Metropolitan Assembly

District level Good Practices:

Respondents affirmed that their districts implemented specific interventions towards the achievement of the MDGs. Generally, these interventions were contained in the District Medium Development Plans as indicated by 86% of the respondents. As to how the interventions were mainstreamed into the Medium Term Development Plans about 33% of the respondents indicated that interventions were mainly mainstreamed through concrete programmes to address the MDG challenges such as the provision of school facilities to address shortfalls in education and provision of health facilities to cater for the health needs of the districts. Other interventions were through the annual action plans for the districts plans as identified by 21% respondents. About 15% of the respondents, said interventions were incorporated in policy guidelines, whilst almost 14% said through stakeholder consultative fora. About 10% of the planning officers also indicated that interventions were through district performance review and profile. Needs assessment and data collection were also identified by about 5% of the respondents as how some of the interventions were mainstreamed into the medium term development plans. Sensitization and education was the least form of mainstreaming the interventions in the medium term development plans as was identified by about 5% of the respondents.

National level Good Practices: Practical cases (local cases, agency cases, country cases) were employed to bring out the challenges and lessons learnt. Major challenges highlighted were inadequate resource mobilization, weak capacity for planning, inefficient coordination, data challenges, poor linkages of infrastructure to service centers, ineffective enforcement of laws, failure to respond adequately to urbanization, leadership and Governance issues. As part of the good lessons learnt, organizing the MDGs around themes was lauded because it makes it easier to work with as it defines the targeted area.

iii. Best way for existing good practices to be integrated into global development agenda implementation framework

Community Level: According to participants in Wa the best way for existing good practices to be integrated in the global development agenda includes:

- Non-partisan environment: community members pointed to the importance of creating a non-partisan environment; e.g. the district chief executive is well respected but the political appointment of the chief executive was viewed as not helping in the development process, particularly in the lead up to elections; the issue of electing municipal chief executives rather than having them as political appointees is an issue that has also been raised;
- Progressive decentralization: While decentralization is clearly articulated in the constitution there is a need to expedite the progressive implementation of the decentralization process in order for the municipality to be able to be fully responsive to local issues;
- Through stakeholder meetings and sensitization campaigns that need to accompany quality service delivery;

At Ekumfi notwithstanding good stakeholder engagement and coordination, they mentioned that the local government should

- Support individuals to pursue technical and service delivery trainings so that they come back to serve in the communities after the training. There is the need to give them an appropriate pay so as to ensure that they do not go on strikes and that they serve out their terms.

- Also, there is the need to ensure that civic responsibility as norms and ethics are daily part of life. It can be ensured through education and social advocacy activities. Last but not the least, there is the need to streamline efforts or activities of various stakeholders (i.e. CSOs, NGOs, FBOs etc.) to avoid or minimize duplication.
- *Implementation and Resource Mobilization:* Development should be devolved from the center to the local level and a full meaning should be given to the decentralization concept (including financial decentralization) and use of traditional structures for development where relevant.
- *Outreach:* Radio stations, letters, Unit Committees, Area Councils, Floats, durbars, use of local language and posters to disseminate the MDGs in the awareness creations. Resource persons from within the community to be trained as trainers of trainers to champion the advocacy for the post 2015 goals in the community.
- *Sensitization and education:* There is need to educate the communities to understand that the local government needs to mobilize resources through levies, tolls and property rates to generate resources for development work.
- *Income generating activities and resource mobilization:* Assemblies could get into some income generation activities like operating car/lorry parks, restaurants, guesthouses, market etc. to generate revenue. These projects should be executed through Public-Private Partnership schemes.
- *Participation and inclusiveness of implementation process:* Local level development agenda needs to be discussed with the communities (beyond only the assembly members) for their inputs and support to implement it. This would help to monitor the projects and also effectively engage all stakeholders to ensure completion of the project. The district assembly also should continue its open door policy for the people to freely walk in to share their views and comments.
- *Transparency and Accountability:* All stakeholders should monitor programs/projects. And all stakeholders should be involved in the concept and implementation of the program/projects. By-laws should be enforced and be fair in execution to ensure transparency and accountability. Leaders should have reporting schemes to the communities – time to report on the activities of the assembly, where this reports to be available to all concerned, breakdown of activities and expenditures, etc. Certified data

and information by the Ghana Statistics Service should be available at the district assembly offices for easy access. There is the need to harmonize data to ensure uniformity and comparability.

MMDAs Level:

Respondents affirmed that their districts implemented specific interventions towards the achievement of the MDGs. Generally, these interventions were contained in the District Medium Development Plans. As to how the interventions were mainstreamed into the Medium Term Development Plans, the majority of respondents indicated that interventions were mainly mainstreamed through concrete programs to address the MDG challenges. Other interventions were through the annual action plans for the districts plans, interventions incorporated in policy guidelines, through stakeholder consultative, also interventions through district performance review and profile. Needs assessment and data collection were also identified by some respondents as how some of the interventions were mainstreamed into the medium term development plans. Sensitization and education was also employed to mainstream the interventions in the medium term development plans.

National Level:

Recommendations from the national level consultation included:

- **Data, M&E and Accountability:** The need to collect and facilitate access to disaggregated data for planning, implementation and monitoring and accountability; to improve on Accountability and Monitoring & Evaluation of the implementation of the Global Development Agenda these recommendations were made:
 - Harmonize data – templates should be designed by relevant data users to make useful and accessible the data collected for specific use.
 - Right to Information law which is not yet passed must be passed. Legal backing made the difference in for instance India where citizenry have the right to which ever information they require according to the law.
 - Archiving of data – data storage should be improved by creating a repository.
 - Periodic Update of data – outdated form of makes it difficult to plan ahead. NGOs and CSOs involved in data collection should liaise with the Ghana Statistical Service

to gather harmonized and current data to avoid contradiction of the reliability of data they collect.

- **Planning and decentralization:** Rule by Manifesto should be replaced with a Long Term Development Plan; and decentralized planning system and fiscal decentralization Fiscal Decentralization would also help to wean the assemblies from too great a reliance on central government funding and create opportunities for them to negotiate with donors, raise internal funds based on comparative advantage, etc.
- **Inclusive implementation, engagement with local communities and actors:** Bottom-Up Approach to development –local consultation, involvement and participation and innovative ways of solving local problems should be explored; strengthen *Collaboration* – CSOs and NGOs collaborate with District Assemblies to avoid duplication of efforts of bring development to the local level and also to ensure efficient distribution of resources amongst communities with needs; effective use of volunteers – involvement of the youth as volunteers to collect data and also to solve basic community challenges
- **Strengthened focus on inclusive local development:** i.e. prioritize Local Economic Development; inclusive Urban Planning and Management/Slum Upgrading; Social Safety Nets for the poor, disabled, refugees and the disadvantaged in our communities and country at large.
- **Effective Resource allocation, mobilization, and spending:** introduction of a *flexible budget system* instead of annual fixed one (January-December) to allow for overruns in the budgeting period to end the rush in spending that comes with the last lap of the year; specific remedies targeted at solving budgeting and resource mobilization challenges faced were: budgeting process should commence from the community level to the district assembly – community members should identify challenges that could be solved with support and take the necessary action. Sanitation (area the country lags) problems for instance could be addressed; private sector participation *Public Private Partnership* – make practical the country’s initiative of partnership to solve service delivery challenges; volunteerism as form of resource mobilization – cut down on cost in providing services through volunteerism and engaging the youth; *Improve efficiency in the use of scarce resources* – over inflating cost for projects should be checked by supply of accountability and citizens demanding accountability.

The following issues and proposals were highlighted with regard to core planning institutions and processes

- Importance of institutional coordination, inter-sectoral coordination, and that NDPC led plan should feed all other agencies and be informed by specific districts needs assessments
- Rule by Manifesto should be replaced with a Long Term Development Plan.
- NDPC should perform its role and occupy its central role as per its mandate as the development planning and M&E institution for the country,
- Planning and M&E guidelines of NDPC should be sent on time to all agencies
- NDPC is crucial in this, to ensure that development happens at local level, strengthen local /to spearhead development;

Other proposals on accountability, data systems and decentralization have been highlighted above. In terms of localizing the development agenda and ensuring inclusiveness, a proposal was also made to use local languages at assembly meetings.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

i. Key messages from local and national stakeholders

At the community level, stakeholders expressed great satisfaction with the process of consulting and giving them a voice in shaping the implementation of the next Global Development Agenda, and taking on board their concerns and priorities on the issue of development. For the participants, the MDGs helped to shape the medium term development agenda of the country and plans at the sub-national level their communities; they hinted there were good policies and strategies but that not everything could be done mainly because of funding constraints. They reiterated the need for the international institutions and the powers that be at the global level to hold national governments accountable to deliver development to their people.

ii. Recommendations from local and national stakeholders

Stakeholders at the consultations at national and sub-national levels raised a number of critical issues regarding implementation. Major challenges faced during the implementation of the MDGs at national and sub-national levels were related to the low levels of awareness and collaboration between relevant stakeholders, inadequate funding and untimely release of funds in

order to deliver social services on time, transportation and logistical challenges, and inadequacies with regard to effective systems and processes that could facilitate transparency, accountability and monitoring and evaluation amongst others. Specific recommendations focused on the need for:

- ***Strengthening Involvement, Ownership and Effective Engagement:*** The need to consult and involve all local stakeholders including the youth, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, traditional leaders, religious leaders and the marginalized in society at every stage on of the implementation was deemed the key to sustainable implementation of the successive Global Development. Communicate and sensitize stakeholders on the global development agenda and how it is mainstreamed and localized in the Ghanaian context; more importantly, *engage them in the design and implementation of the development agenda.*
- ***Enabling Environment for implementation:*** participants highlighted the need for government to create the enabling environment by passing the necessary Legislative Instruments (LI), providing infrastructure, assisting relevant institutions by supervising their implementation of projects. Also the need to depoliticize developmental issues at the district by electing the District Chief Executives was highly recommended. There were strong recommendations to take the decentralization agenda itself forward, through strengthening the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) especially through fiscal decentralization and human resource capacity development and ensuring timely disbursement of funds and measures for funds to be effectively deployed; in addition support needs to be provided to MMDAs to raise resources locally as well; at the national level there was also a proposal for the introduction of a *flexible budget system* instead of annual fixed one (January-December) to allow for overruns in the budgeting period to end the rush in spending that comes with the last lap of the year
- ***Transparency and Accountability at the District levels:*** It was agreed that greater transparency ensures commitment from all levels of Stakeholders including individual community members. Strengthen systems and processes to ensure timely data to assist in identifying gaps, progress and accountability;