

# AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

## SECOND QUARTER REPORT ON SPEFA, 2014

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	2
1.1 Brief Background.....	2
1.2 Objectives of the Project.....	3
1.3 Approach.....	3
2.0 IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES .....	4
2.1 Activities for Second Quarter .....	4
2.1.1 SPEFA Forum .....	4
2.1.2 Town Hall Meeting.....	4
2.1.3 ADP-GEMA Planning Meetings .....	6
2.2 What Worked Well .....	6
2.3 What Needs Improvement .....	6
3.0 ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES .....	6
4.0 LESSONS .....	7
5.0 ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER/HALF YEAR .....	7
6.0 CONCLUSION .....	7
ANNEX .....	8

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The African Development Programme in its implementation of the Social Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (SPEFA) project in the GA East Municipal Assembly has been successful in its initial phase. This report outlines activities undertaken during the second quarter of the project in the district.

This activity report has been prepared in fulfilment of the requirement under the contract between SNV-Ghana and ADP the organization responsible for the implementation and management of the project in the Ga East Municipal. The report has therefore been designed specifically for SNV-Ghana as well as Ga East Municipal Assembly.

### **1.1 Brief Background**

The Government of Ghana in collaboration with the World Bank initiated a project titled “local Government capacity Support (LGCSP)” for forty-six (46) Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies in Ghana. The implementation of the LGCSP involves three key MDAs: the Ministry for Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Local Government Service Secretariat (LGSS). The project is aimed at providing capacity support to improve the accountability and effectiveness of basic service delivery in the MMDA.

The Social Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (SPEFA) process is the third component of the Local Government Capacity Support Project and SNV-Ghana has been awarded a consultancy service to lead a consortium of Civil Society Organisations for the organisation and implementation of this project, SPEFA is a Social Accountability mechanism aimed at improving citizens’ perceptions of urban management and increase their engagement with the Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies across the country.

The key objective of local governance is to improve resource allocation and service provision by not only bringing service providers’ closer to the citizens but by also making the citizens’ part of the decision-making and management process. Local governance is therefore expected to encourage government responsiveness to citizen participation and, in the end, greater effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. However, research has shown that the decentralization of governance structures alone does not automatically facilitate the increased participation of civil society or an improvement in the accountability of government. Decentralization is more beneficial if it is accompanied by pro-active efforts to involve citizens and stimulate pro-accountability processes.

Social accountability is a governance mechanism or tool that is applied to the development management process with the aim of ensuring adherence to rules, efficiency in performance and the achievement of targets for all stakeholders. As a governance mechanism, it employs a broad range of actions and tools including participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, monitoring of public service delivery, investigative journalism, public commissions

and citizen advisory boards. Social accountability is a mutually reinforcing mechanism because it publicly involves the rights and obligations of all stakeholders who affect and are affected by a development intervention. It therefore brings both duty-bearers and rights-holders together to engage directly and openly on developmental issues

## **1.2 Objectives of the Project**

The general aim of SPEFA is to improve the perception of the people in the selected 46 MMAs across the country on urban management and increase their engagement with the Municipal assembly.

### Specific objective:

1. To provide consistent and high quality support for the development and operationalization of civil society-led SPEFA processes in the MMAs;
2. To build the knowledge and capacities of civil society organisations (CSOs), community based organisations (CBOs) and communities in LGPFM to equip them to engage MMAs and their sub-districts structures on these issues;
3. To strengthen CSOs/CBOs/NGOs, Members of Parliament and Traditional and Community Leaders to effectively engage with the MMAs and sub-district structures on public financial management issues;
4. To support and underpin the government's Decentralisation Policy Framework and associated Policy Implementation Framework and Action Plan on social accountability.

## **1.3 Approach**

Several approaches were undertaken in the implementation of activities in the second quarter. Approaches used were

- Phone calls: Calls were made to SPEFA group members first to thank for their participation in the Launch and to inform them of subsequent meetings. Later when the date was confirmed, SPEFA members were called and given date and venue of the program.
- E-mails: Emails of itinerary was shared with the Planning department of the Assembly.
- Meetings with staff of the assembly particularly key actors for the project (Planning officer, Municipal Coordinating Director among others, Media) were held to finalize preparation for SPEFA forum and Town Hall Meeting

## **2.0 IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1 Activities for Second Quarter**

#### ***2.1.1 SPEFA Forum***

The second SPEFA forum was organised on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 at the Mt Zion Methodist Church Dome. The programme although slated at 10:00am, started at 10:30am. The programme attracted a total number of 125 people (see annex for details of participants). These included SPEFA group members and staff of the Planning Department. The platform was to give community members the opportunity to learn about the processes of planning and budgeting at the assembly so that community members could effectively engage the assembly in the planning process during discussions at the town hall meeting. Mr Charles Abbey informed participants of the purpose of gathering. He made it clear in his speech that this platform was a follow up to the SPEFA launch that was done in July and subsequently we would be engaging once a quarter to learn more about the assembly's processes.

The Municipal Deputy Planning Coordinated, Mr. Alex Amoah took participants through the various planning stages of the assembly. The Planning Department is in charge of coordinating the planning of programs for the assembly. This they do by first engaging the people to find out their needs. Citizens in various communities outline their needs example, school, market etc. This planning is done at the Zonal and Council level. A public hearing is organized where all zonal councils would bring their plans for discussions. Various needs of communities are matched to the Assembly's over-arching plans and objectives given to them by the government. Some of the community needs aligns with national objectives, and those that do not but are urgent for the community members are prioritized in the Medium Term Development Plan by the assembly in conjunction with community members.

Nii Momli, chief of Seseme was grateful for the learning platform given to them. He thanked the organisers. He then added that he wasn't aware and never heard of the first gathering of zonal council and community members to identify needs so they could be factored into the assembly's plan. He requested that subsequently the information should be widespread.

#### ***2.1.2 Town Hall Meeting***

The Town Hall meeting was also organised on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 at the Dome Mt Zion Methodist church. The meeting started at 1:30pm with a total number of 180 participants (see annex for more details). In attendance were the Assembly members, Unit Committee members, Citizen Groups, GEMA Planning and Budgeting Staff, Municipal Chief Executive, Municipal Coordinating Director, Municipal Finance Officer, Municipal Internal Auditor and the SPEFA group members. The Chairperson for the occasion was Hon Benjamin Okai (Dome Zonal Council Chairman)

The Planning Officer gave the statement for gathering. He mentioned that the assembly together with citizens have drafted the Medium Term Development Plan for 2015 and the assembly was there to inform them of the activities that have been captured in MTDP and budget. The MCE gave a speech on the state of implementation of projects in the assembly.

The MCE, Hon. Kwao-Sackey shared with community, assembly and council members the state of programs and projects that the assembly has been implementing since January to June 2014. The highlights of his presentation were the construction of culverts for Kwabenya gutters and Haatso ECOMOG bridge which were underway. He also mentioned the construction of Teachers bungalows underway at Damfa. The Assembly in conjunction with the GETFUND have started building a storey building school for the people in Ashongman village. The ground floor has been completed to enable pupils learn from the classrooms. The assembly is working hard in terms of revenue mobilisation to bring the school building to completion. Another 18 unit school building is being constructed at Taifa.

The MCE advised community members in the various communities that in monitoring contractors they should lodge any complaint and concerns they have to the assembly. According to him the contractors do not have any contract with citizens; hence going to them with their concerns on construction of projects would be wasted efforts.

The Municipal Budgeting Officer took participants through the plans the assembly has for next year as well as the budget they have available. He began by making participants know the various sources of finance of the assembly. The assembly receives the district assembly's common fund from Central government. This he mentioned was not enough to fund all the assembly's project. The greater chunk of funding for projects in the assembly is the Internal Generated Fund (IGF). However he was quick to add that IGF was not coming in as it ought to. Citizens are not paying their taxes and property rates. Hence the assembly has projects that they do not have money to finance. He encouraged citizens to pay their taxes and rates so that the assembly can get money to finance their projects.

Among the projects earmarked for 2015-2017 is the construction of 5 CHIPS compounds in selected communities, market at old Ashongman, Construction of 1 No. 3bays market shed at Abokobi, Establishment of Oil Palm Plantation at Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) lands, Repair and reconstruct the bridge at Ashongman main road. The Clearing of road to create access from Ashongman to Boi, construction of speed rumps to reduce speeding of vehicles, provision of street light within the Abokobi community, Construction of road from Abokobi through Pantang Village to Oyarifa among other projects.

Participants asked questions on mobilisation of funds for assembly's projects, fee fixing and why the assembly always has a lot of programs planned without marching funds for implementation.

### **2.1.3 ADP-GEMA Planning Meetings**

Series of meetings were held with the assembly. The discussion bothered on what would be discussed at the Town Hall Meeting and when the Assembly proposes to have the Town Hall meeting. The Assembly shared its schedule with us and we also did share with what the next plan of action for SPEFA was. The 17<sup>th</sup> of September was fixed for the SPEFA forum and the 24<sup>th</sup> September for the Town Hall meeting.

Team ADP and the assembly finalized discussion for topics to be treated during the SPEFA forum and the Town Hall Meeting. The presentation for the SPEFA was developed in partnership with ADP. The planning department offered to facilitate the SPEFA forum.

Due to an equally important assignment, the SPEFA forum had to be rescheduled. After consultations with the Municipal Planner and Municipal Coordinating Director, it was agreed to have the SPEFA forum and the Town Hall meeting on the same day. The morning would be used for SPEFA forum and the afternoon for the Town Hall Meeting.

### **2.2 What Worked Well**

The collaboration between the assembly and the Coordinating CSO, ADP has been very cordial. The assembly assisted in getting the venue and collaborated by sending out invitations to invitees both for the SPEFA forum and the Town Hall Meeting. The Municipal, Planning Officer, Deputy Planning Officer and Municipal Budgeting officer had their presentations ready to facilitate in the SPEFA forum.

### **2.3 What Needs Improvement**

The SPEFA forum was interrupted with a speech from the MCU. The language for discussion was a debatable issue as the facilitators couldn't speak Ga. Due to lights out and challenges with generator hire, the SPEFA forum was done without the presentation of Power Point.

## **3.0 ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

The second quarter chalked some successes as well as some challenges which have been listed below.

#### *Achievement*

- SPEFA group members participated actively in the SPEFA forum
- Members were able to apply knowledge learnt in the town hall meeting

#### *Challenges*

- SPEFA group members found it initially difficult to identify the SPEFA forum as a learning platform and were interested in bringing concerns that should be discussed at the town hall meeting.
- The learning forum dragged more than the two hours that was allotted for it

#### **4.0 LESSONS**

The major lesson learnt is that the Assembly is doing well to engage community members in their planning, although participation from most community members has not been impressive. A joint collaboration through SPEFA will equip community members so they would be able to engage the Assembly effectively for better development outcome.

#### **5.0 ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER/HALF YEAR**

The following activities have been provisionally scheduled by ADP and the Assembly for the next half of the year.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> SPEFA Forum – January / February 2015
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Town Hall Meeting – February 2015
- 4<sup>th</sup> SPEFA Forum – April 2015

#### **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The meeting helped establish a common ground of understanding in terms of how the implementation process is to be managed between ADP and the Assembly. There was also clear understanding of the role the assembly will play.



## ANNEX 1- PICTURE GALLERY 2nd SPEFA FORUM



Dep. Municipal Planning Officer GEMA facilitating at the SPEFA



Mrs. Sarah Agbey, SNV, National Coordinating Unit contributing during the SPEFA forum



A cross-section of participants at participating at the SPEFA forum



An Assembly Member and Mr Abbey, ADP engaging participants

## TOWN HALL MEETING



Above: Budget Officer presenting plan and budget during the Town Hall Meeting



Left: Mr Agbeve, Planning Officer GEMA responding to questions during Town Hall Meeting



Left: A participant asking a question



Left : The MCE of GEMA, Mr. Kwao-Sackey responding to questions from citizens



Left: A cross section of Traditional Authorities and Assembly Members

