

**CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT ON ASSEMBLY BYELAWS IN GA WEST MUNICIPAL**

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**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- "The rate of development in the Municipality is encouraging and with time, the Assembly's development plans and programs will be evident in all Electoral Areas". Ga West MCE
- In terms of participation, 98 percent of respondents have never participated in the budget process.
- To ensure the full participation of all citizens in the governance process, efforts should be intensified to educate the people about the importance of elections.



INSERT: Cross section of participants at the event

**Hon. Sam Atukwei Quaye addressing participants at the meeting**

The African Development Programme (ADP) in collaboration with the Ga West Municipal Assembly (GWMA) has held its 2nd Quarter Town Hall Meeting at the Kuntunse M/A School Park in the Kuntunse Electoral Area.

The aim was to sensitize the citizenry on Processes of Acquiring Permits, Assembly Byelaws and Project Selection. The meeting formed part of the engagement platform under the third component of the Local Government Capacity Support Project (LGCSPP).

Addressing participants at the meeting, the Municipal Chief Executive, Hon. Sam Atukwei Quaye noted

*"the rate of development in the Municipality is encouraging and with time, the Assembly's development plans and programs will be evident in all Electoral Areas"*

Hon. Sam Atukwei Quaye highlighted Ga West's achievement in elimination of the shift system of education, improved road networks in Amasaman and Pokuase, upgrade of health infrastructure, economic development and job creation for women, sanitation, water, security

among others. He said Kuntunse was fast developing and urged the community members to be more responsible for the refuse they generate since the Assembly intends to abolish the concept of placing large refuse containers in communities. This he said will rather be replaced with service providers who will collect refuse from individual homes and encouraged all to register to fulfill government's polluter pay policy as well as prevent sanitation related diseases.

**PROCESSES OF ACQUIRING PERMITS**

The Director for Physical Planning Department, formerly Town and Country Planning, Nana Kwame Agyeman took participants through processes of acquiring building and other temporary structure permits with the first step being proof of title; indenture and search title from the lands.

This is followed by submission of drawings to the Physical Planning Department with applicant contact and other personal information and

payment of the permit fee. After satisfying all the above conditions, a technical committee advises the Statutory Planning Committee who in-turn approves your application for your permit to be issued.

He however, noted that multipurpose structures such as warehouses, malls and high rising building requires other permits at the national level.

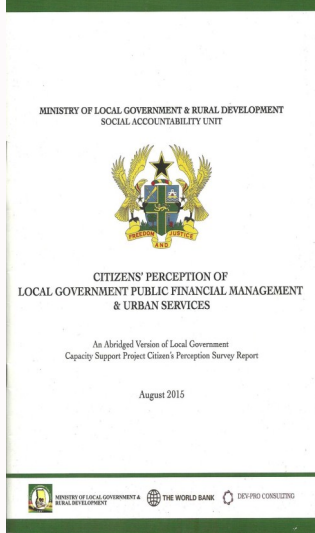
He also stated the consequences of not complying with the Assembly on the above as stipulated in the Local Government Act 462.

The Municipal Budget Officer and Acting Coordinating Director, Mr. Hugh Cobbinah, a legal Practitioner educated participants on the Assembly Bye Laws.

He stated that noise pollution was gradually becoming common concern for most residents and urged them to report offenders to the Environmental Health Department of the Assembly for action to be taken against such offenders.

He also encouraged citizens to walk into any office of the Assembly to demand explanations to any issues they have difficulty with.

# NINETY-THREE (93) PERCENT OF CITIZENS NOT INVOLVED IN THE BUDGET PROCESSES OF MMAS



As part of efforts to improve citizens' participation in the public financial management at the Metropolitan and Municipal Assembly (MMA) level, the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), commissioned a Citizens' Perception Survey with funding from the World Bank under the implementation of Local Government Capacity Support Project (LGCSPP).

Component 3 of the LGCSPP seeks to improve citizens engagement with urban assemblies and their perception of urban management by stimulating demand for accountable governance and service delivery.

Under the LGCSPP, the MLGRD undertook a Citizens' Perception Survey (CPS) in selected districts to provide data on citizens' engagement with urban assemblies and their perception of urban management and service delivery.

In February 2013, the MLGRD commissioned a baseline survey. At project Mid-term a second perception survey with smaller but representative sample to evaluate the seven (7) key baseline indicators and measure the performance of MMAs on Public Financial Management while monitoring changes, if any in the delivery of urban services at the MMA level.

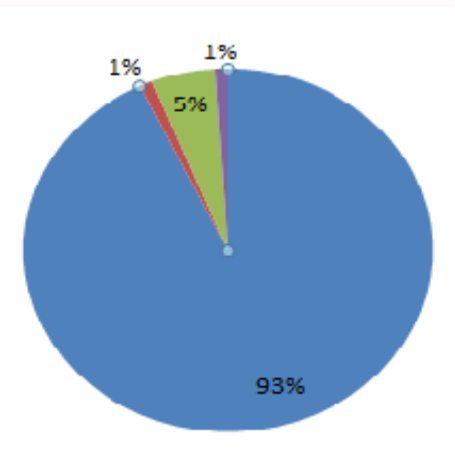
**CITIZENS' UNDERSTANDING OF PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROCESSES**

The survey assessed citizens' understanding of the development planning process. This included the factors affecting citizens' attendance at assembly's meetings, participation in budgeting process, interest in budget process and implementation, financial statements and management processes of MMAs.

It came to light that 12 percent of respondents have participated in a planning meeting of the MMA and got the opportunity to ask question between 2013 and 2015. 71 percent of respondents to the baseline said they have never ever participated in a planning meeting of the MMA. The regional distribution of the participation of the citizens in the meetings of the MMAs also show similar trends; indicating a low level of citizens participation in the planning process. MMAs must therefore educate and encourage citizens to be part of the development planning process.

Majority of citizens 62 percent attributed their inability to participate in planning meetings of the MMA to the fact that they do not get a schedule for these meetings and are not informed on time. MMAs however, indicate that invitation methods have improved through a combination of information van and megaphone, formal letters, traditional methods such as word of mouth and use of instruments.

An overwhelming majority of citizens 93 percent are still not involved in the budget process and don't get the opportunity to see the budget of the MMAs. 5 percent have heard of the budget and 1 percent each have seen and heard respectively.



*In terms of participation, 98 percent of respondents have never participated in the budget process.*

Only 3 percent of respondents have ever seen or heard of the budget in public. Of this number, 6 percent of respondents have seen the budget presented in a pictorial template provided by the Social accountability unit (SAU) of the Ministry of Local Governance and Rural Development (MLGRD), 21 percent heard it on local radio news channels and 64 percent saw it on MMA notice board.

The survey revealed that in spite of the low involvement of the citizens in the MMA budget processes, 30 percent of respondents consider the budget process very important while 77% said MMAs financial statements and reports were important and useful and would want the statements published to enable easy access.

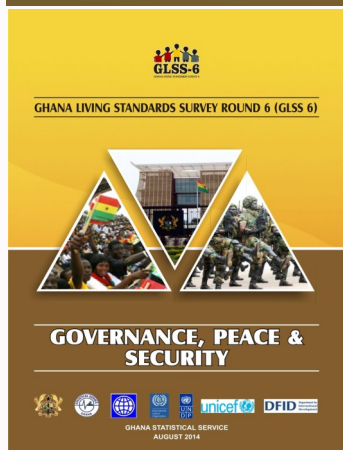
The survey indicated that majority of respondents 64% were of the opinion that financial management processes have not improved over the period since 2013 but noted that planning and budget process can improve.

While the project is on-going, it is hoped that by the end-line survey, the citizens' understanding of public financial management processes will increase even more for better engagements with their duty bearers in the MMAs

## DISSEMINATION OF THE SURVEY REPORT

The MLGRD in collaboration with SNV organized a capacity review workshop for the CSOs implementing the project where the abridged version of the reports was disseminated.

Copies are available in ADP office as well as the social accountability unit of the MLGRD.



their stipulated period in office.

In Ghana for instances, there is growing reason to worry following some revelations of the GLSS-6 on the governance theme which threatens the survival of democratic participation.

Political engagements are those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics. Political engagement extends beyond parties. It encompasses the many activities used by citizens to influence the selection of political leaders or the policies they pursue.

There is also the general perception that, in many public institutions, officials have to be influenced with money before they perform the duties for which they have been employed. People have often looked up to government to

provide for all their developmental needs without the citizenry making any contributions. Respondents during the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) round six (6) were asked about their views on these issues.

Respondents who indicated that they did not vote in the elections were asked reasons why they did not vote. The survey revealed that 27.9 percent did not vote because they were not registered while about one-fifth of the respondents (18.6%) indicated that it was not worth voting.

In the urban areas, nearly the same proportions reported that they did not vote because it was not worth it (22.2%) or that they were not registered (23.0%). About one-third of respondents in the rural areas (35.2%) did not vote because they were not registered.

appreciable proportions of respondents in the Upper West (43.6%), Brong Ahafo (39.6%), Upper East (37.2%) and Northern (34.3%) regions did not vote because they were not registered. The proportions of respondents who indicated that it was not worth voting are high in the Western (21.6%), Greater Accra (28.9%) and Eastern (20.6%) regions.

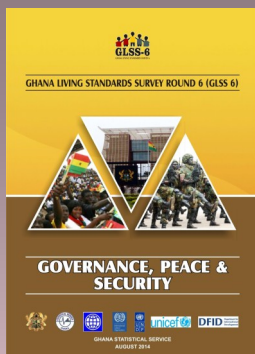
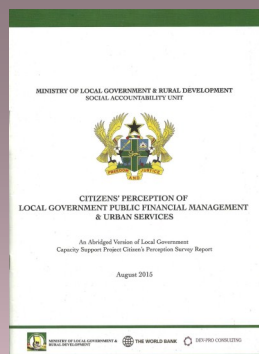
*To ensure the full participation of all citizens in the governance process, efforts should be intensified to educate the people about the importance of elections.*

A high proportion of respondents also indicated that they did not vote because they could not be verified. This is also a worrying situation and the appropriate institutions should improve on the technology for verification in order not to disenfranchise potential voters.

At the regional level,

Most development practitioners have argued that one of the most important feature of democracy is the accountability that elected public officials owe to the citizens. This accountability has been attempted to be achieved in almost all major democracies of the world through the instrument of elections. Periodically held, elections oblige officials to be accountable to the electorate for the policies formulated and actions undertaken after

## RESOURCES



[http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/publications/GLSS6\\_GOVERNANCE,%20PEACE%20AND%20SECURITY%20REPORT.pdf](http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/publications/GLSS6_GOVERNANCE,%20PEACE%20AND%20SECURITY%20REPORT.pdf)

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