

Advocacy on Implementing a “Blended Representation Principle” of Governance for an effective Local Level of Administration in Ghana

December 2019

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BACKGROUND

1. Good Governance is the lynchpin of development as a transformational process. Transparency in decision making and resource allocation, accountability for stewardship, and participation in the governance arrangements are the mechanisms which make development transformational and sustainable. We posit that good governance and sustainable development in Africa can be grounded more firmly in a blend of indigenous and modern knowledge principles and values. We are therefore embarking on promoting policies and frameworks for Ghana to adopt and utilize a **“Blended Representation Principle” (BRP) of Governance for a more effective local level of administration. We believe that the BRP approach would help** cure the “winner-takes-all”, divisive and alienating politics, which are in vogue nationwide. BRP is a fusion of traditional and modern leadership representation systems which could lead to superior capability to communicate, mobilize and organize for the provision and delivery of services to people in their homes and communities. We are currently consulting broadly to finalize the BRP concept note, which will elaborate on the rationale, design features and expected outcomes of the proposed interventions.

2. The BRP concept was first presented as part of the framework to harness knowledge and information for sustainable development within the inaugural Global Knowledge for Development (GKD '97) Forum launched by the late UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan in Toronto, Canada, in 1997 leading to the formation of the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), and later the Global Knowledge Partnership Foundation (GKPF), among other initiatives of the development community, which have helped developing countries to prepare for the information society.

3. The concept was further tested in impact communities in Ghana as part of the World Bank efforts to enhance service delivery, using the Community Enhancement Needs Assessment (CENA) model. Key contextual engagements included: (a) helping to define policy and financing

instruments for inclusion of indigenous knowledge, its principles and values in socioeconomic development programming; and (b) a number of community assessments and development dialogues with a cross-section of impact groups across Ghana to define ways of improving the provision and delivery of social services at the community level through a blended representative system. The dialogues were chaired in the Eastern and Volta Regions by the respective Presidents of the Regional House of Chiefs at the time; and in Kumasi by the then President of the National House of Chiefs.

4. The thrust of the current initiative is to translate the findings and lessons of the dialogues into tangible forms of BRP on the ground.

THE COMPELLING NEED FOR BRP

5. **Conscientious Patriotism:** Ghana has chalked relative successes by electing Presidents and Members of Parliament through peaceful elections leading to successive alternate changes in party-based ruling governments. Regardless of the impressive successes, which have provided the basis for the nation to be branded within the global community with the accolade as the “beacon of democracy in Africa”, Ghana is in dire search of a cure for its winner takes all, divisive and alienating politics in vogue nationwide. At the local level, there is: (a) abysmal level of interest and participation by the vast majority of people in the governance arrangement; (b) lack of transparency in decision making and resource allocation, and inability of the majority to hold local officials accountable for their stewardship; and (c) arrested development aspirations of the communities as the overall gamut of governance arrangement through appointed District Chief Executives, District Assemblies and Unit Committees is unable to provide and deliver services to the satisfaction of the people.

6. Incessant partisanship is increasingly marching the country off the plank and into the abyss. Families and communities have been strangulated and become wary and suspicious of each other along party lines. **Amidst the search for a cure, there seems to be missing the point that the inability of prevailing local governance arrangement to meet the aspirations of the populace is more the result of a systemic leadership design anomaly than either non-partisan or partisan elections of the major actors.**

7. Conscientious interventions are thus needed to calm nerves and remind the public that partisan politics is mainly one form of organizing principles of life in a polity, and should not be construed as the only tool for governance arrangement designs which merit the label of democratic accolade and behavior. Competitive partisan politics per se is not the cure-all for the governance malaise in the country as it has also not led significantly to transparency in decision making and accountability of stewardship at the national level.

8. **BRP as a Transformational Antidote:** BRP provides a potentially viable and robust antidote as it makes room for partisan-based elections and leadership at the national level, and tra-

ditional leadership and representation arrangements at the local level. The Institution of Chieftaincy regardless of its inherent flaws remains the more cohesive governance and leadership structure at the local level with symbiotic capability to communicate, mobilize and organize community members for collective development actions. This home-grown, time-tested leadership institution can be reformed, adapted and weaned off its anachronistic tendencies to hold fort at the local level, and progressively complement competitive partisan politics at the national level to build a nation-state capable of meeting the development aspirations of all Ghanaians regardless of party affiliations.

9. **Network Content on BRP:** Our Network's over two decades of empirical content, professional affiliations and experiences could provide timely and constructive intellectual options and pathways on operationalizing the BRP. Arguably, the backseat role assigned the Institution of Chieftaincy in the local government design and operations is the root of abysmal interest and participation by people in the local structures. The relegation of this institution to purely ceremonial roles may also explain the inability of associated local structures to evolve into a bulwark for ensuring transparency and accountability in national governance operations. Utterances by many critical stakeholders urging involvement of chiefs in local governance are not accompanied with any blueprints on how this essential feat can be pursued and achieved. The BRP approach possibly provides the appropriate watershed solutions pathway.

10. **Your partnership with us on this initiative could be a divine generational responsibility response to assist in institutionalizing conduits for improving effectiveness, transparency, accountability and participation concerning local governance, which have been largely weak and absent in the politics and governance of Ghana at the moment.**

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

11. Some of the immediate actions on the BRP implementation are:

- Inaugural Roundtable Discussions and Public Lecture Series
- Public Sensitization and Awareness Education
- Stakeholder Engagement Dialogues
- Documentation and Codifications of salient traditional rules, practices and values necessary to meet the Conditions Precedent for operationalizing the BRP including issues of:
 - ✓ Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) mechanisms.
 - ✓ Leadership Selection and Removal Methods
 - ✓ Consensus-building and decision making
 - ✓ Rewards for good stewardship
 - ✓ Conflict Resolution / Arbitration
 - ✓ Sanctions and Disciplinary Measures
- Targeted Capacity Enhancement Program for:
 - ✓ Leaders / CEOs / Assembly Members

- ✓ Department Heads / Decision makers
- Citizens Accountability Forums designs and approaches
- BRP pilot Implementation Support and Supervision
- Impact Monitoring and Evaluation
- **Resource Mobilization:** As a cross-cutting activity, the Network will lead and coordinate resource mobilization efforts chiefly through preparing jointly submitted funding proposals to affiliate private sector, government and non-governmental entities. Crowdsourcing funding methods will also be explored as appropriate. One hundred percent of any resource mobilized will be devoted and utilized solely for the purpose intended.

12. Other planned activities include:

- Script writing, Videography, Production and Editorial undertakings.
- Creating visibility on the BRP initiative among strategic target groups, opinion leaders, influencers, champions, and the general populace through tailored advocacy campaigns.
- Organizing BRP-themed events including goodwill meetings, knowledge exchange outreach, planned interviews, bridge-building meetings, breakfast and cocktail meet-to-greet information sharing sessions, expert panel discussions as needed and appropriate
- Convening moderated perspective-sharing debates, discussions and pledges on BRP for representatives of the major political parties.
- Arranging periodic Press Releases, Article Placements, Editorial Commentaries, and Updates for senior editors and journalists at key national publications and media houses.
- Helping to project BRP activities among change agents, enterprise associations, businesses, investors, civil service, the Ghanaian and African community at large, and the Diaspora.

For further information, participation and partnership building, contact:

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