

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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TI-Ghana and CDD-Ghana Lead the Charge for Political Finance Reforms in Ghana

The correlation between unregulated Political Party Financing and rising corruption has long been recognised by both political actors and citizens all over the globe, hence the inclusion of Article 7(3) into the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). Article 7.3 of the UNCAC stipulates that *"Each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures, consistent with the objectives of this Convention and in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law, to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties."*

On the African continent, Article 10 of the African Union Convention on Prevention and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC) also calls on state parties to:

- 1. Proscribe the use of funds acquired through illegal and corrupt practices to finance political parties; and*
- 2. Incorporate the principle of transparency into the funding of political parties.*

All these conventions notwithstanding, the integrity of Political Party Financing in Ghana continues to be of grave concern. Political party actors and good governance stakeholders generally have complained publicly about the draining effect of the cost of electoral campaigns, with the latest being the Majority Leader in the ninth Parliament.

In spite of the challenges candidates of political parties face, they continue to pay lip service to the issue of campaign financing reforms, hence the need for CSOs' interventions. The call by CSOs for Political Party Finance reforms made at a multi-stakeholders' forum in Accra on 27th June, 2025 was therefore being made because various studies during each national elections since 2012 continue to show exponential rise in the cost of election campaigns namely media (traditional and digital) cost, logistics (including vehicles and hotels), rallies, filing fees and treating of delegates and potential voters among others.

The concerns being raised by well-meaning political actors and CSOs are further informed by observed weaknesses in the enforcement of existing regulations, that is, Chapter 7, Article 55 (14-25) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and the Political Parties Act, 2000 (Act 574). The combination of weak enforcement and the non-compliance of the Political Parties and candidates contributes to the rising cost of campaigning for political office, the risk of illicit wealth flowing into political campaigns and the limiting of opportunities for women, the youth and persons living with various disabilities to participate in national elections.

It is currently estimated that it costs GHC 4 million (that is, \$693,000) to contest parliamentary primaries and elections. CDD-Ghana also estimated that between the year 2012 and 2016, the cost of campaigns rose by 59 per cent. The cost estimate is worse under Presidential campaigns, where CDD-Ghana estimated the cost of prosecuting a presidential campaign at US\$100 million (at an exchange rate of GHC5.75 per \$1- it cost GHC575 million).

Earlier calls for regulating Political Party Financing have been met with the suggestion that the state must fund political parties to enable the state to control the cost of campaigning. However, those against state funding of political parties have also rejected the idea due to weak accountability and a lack of transparency of political parties in the country.

To reduce the expected partisanship around the issues of electoral integrity, accountability and Transparency, CSOs together with other key stakeholders in the state and society are leading the charge of mobilising citizen's and other relevant views and validating the views with international standards and principles and subsequently develop a model Political Party Financing Law for the adoption by government.

Among the reforms CSOs are demanding are:

1. A law which defines the campaign period to forestall the four-year cycle of campaigning;
2. The proposed Political Party Financing law must provide for the accountability of the candidates as well as the political parties
3. As an international best practice, CSOs call for strong regulations, including the disclosure of funding sources, limits on foreign donations, and regulation on the abuse of incumbency to promote fairness in the use of state resources
4. To prevent the potential for state capture, a ceiling must be placed on how much can be contributed by an individual or an organisation
5. Consider decoupling the political financing regulatory functions from the electoral management function of the EC
6. Even though the current law provides for the filing of accounts by the Political Parties, it falls short of the requirement for publication, which is the global standard for transparency in Political Party Financing. The proposed law must ensure that there is a requirement for the publication of accounts of the political parties and their candidates.

7. There is a need to use regulations to promote the participation of marginalised groups such as women, the youth and differently abled persons. Where state support is offered, it must be conditioned on the percentage of participation of women, the youth and differently abled persons.
8. The proposed reforms must promote the enforcement of provisions in various laws that criminalise individuals or groups of individuals who knowingly solicit, accept, or confer substantial political funding that is the result of illicit activity.
9. The identities of donors to political parties must be verified, or a mechanism must be put in place for contributors' due diligence.
10. Ensuring state neutrality means that the proposed Political Finance legislation must forbid the use of state resources to campaign or for political advantage by the incumbent government or party

Conclusion

In conclusion, TI-Ghana and CDD-Ghana, in addition to leading the charge for Political Party Financing reform, also join the international community to encourage the government to co-sponsor the tabling of a resolution on Article 7.3 of the UNCAC at the 2025 Conference of State Parties (CoSP 11) in Doha, Qatar.

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