

I wish to nominate Mr Klutse Kafui as an International Recipient of the 2017 Democracy Award.

Mr. Kafui Klutse is a young graduate from University of Cape Coast, Ghana with Bachelor of Arts in African Studies and a Master of Arts in Peace and Development Studies respectively. At age twenty-two (22), he graduated from Peki College of Education as a professional teacher with Teachers' Certificate "A" - Three Years Post-Secondary Course. This young gentleman was a committed teacher that taught Social Studies / Civic Education and Religious and Moral Education for over ten years.

As a self-motivated professional teacher, he was committed to instilling the cardinal tenets of democracy in his students. Kafui successfully partnered with the National Commission for Civic Education and formed Civic Education Clubs in all the schools he taught in. It was not surprising that in 2012, the Ho Municipal Directorate of Education adjudged him as the Best Teacher in promoting Civic and Social Studies Education – General Category.

With the desire to positively affect lives coupled with his educational background, Mr Klutse was appointed as the Assistant Volta Regional Education Planning Officer in 2013. This appointment gave him a wider and higher responsibility to directly contribute to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning activities, projects and programmes at the pre-tertiary level in the Volta Region.

It is worth noting that within three years, Kafui played an instrumental role in the continuous efforts of establishing Civic Education Clubs in some schools across the Volta region. He selflessly laid bare his expertise in coaching and mentoring these young ones so that they can be in a better position to contribute meaningfully towards the promotion of civic right and responsibility in their homes, villages and towns.

Kafui's sustained dedication, selflessness and desire to champion democratic tenets particularly among the youth and the vulnerable groups finally earned him a job at the Electoral Commission of Ghana.

He was appointed the Krachi East District Electoral Officer on 1st September 2016. Within three months, he successfully coordinated the activities of all the ninety-five (95) polling stations with a total of about forty-four thousand (44,000) registered voters in the District during Ghana's 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

As a unifier and a team player, he was fair, firm and impartial in handling all election related challenges in the district to the admiration of all stakeholders. His commitment to public education and sensitisation on electoral policies within this short period prior to the election on 7th December, 2016, paved way for the electorates to have much more confidence in the Electoral Commission and its operations and processes.

Kafui successfully recruited four hundred and seventy-five (475) electoral officials as required, trained and deployed them to all the 95 polling stations; but there came tough resistance from some of the officers deployed to Island communities. However, Kafui adopted strategies to resolve such issues as described below.

INTERVENTIONS ON ISLANDS

Out of the 95 polling stations in the Constituency, 7 are located on islands. Although the commission provided critical safety traveling resources like life jackets, it always takes the desire and the sense of patriotism of the electoral officials to take such high risk to travel with a canoe over an hour across the

Volta Lake in order to reach out to eligible voters. The risks of travelling across the Volta Lake are numerous and always leaves officials in perpetual fear, hence the resistance from the officers deployed to those areas.

The officers were troubled about the lot of tree stamps that are in the Lake and easily perforate these boats anytime they accidentally run over them and result in fatal accidents. On the other hand, the weather condition always leaves the travellers in a prayer mood on the lake; the storm may leave them in a desperate situation while a foggy or misty weather could get them lost on the lake entirely.

The most worrying situation is, these boat/canoe operators may be sympathizers of one political party or the other, so one can just imagine what might be going through their minds if after declaring an election their party has lost, yet they are to convey the electoral officials and the related materials to the overbank.

However, to the surprise of many stakeholders, Kafui's first duty tour was to two of these island communities where two polling stations were located. It is on record that; these island communities do not often participate in national elections due to unwillingness of electoral officers to reach out to them. It is interesting to note that Kafui Klutse spent a challenging one hour on the lake by defying all odds mentioned above to familiarize himself with the area and for the first time educated the electorates/ stakeholders on their roles and responsibilities in ensuring peace and full participation before, during and after the elections.

It is good to place on record that most of the Electoral Officials are not prepared to risk their lives to serve on these islands in election days. It is always a challenge for the Commission to get the required number of officials to serve on the Election Day. This is because there are no insurance policies covering them per the work they do. However, with the tenacity of purpose, and the burning desire to achieve stated goals and results devoid of biases that may result into electoral violence, Kafui made an inspirational inimitable difference.

With high sense of diplomacy and inspirational leadership skills and strategies, he was able to recruit thirty-five (35) Election Officials (the required number), train, counsel, and deploy them without any emotional and or psychological hitch. Indeed, these strategies and plans allowed for a smooth and peaceful election on the islands which hitherto were noted for electoral malpractices and violence or total negligence.

His training in intelligence gathering at Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, empowered him to, for the first time investigate the backgrounds of the boat owners and operations to ascertain their political affiliation and there by deepen fairness and transparency in their involvement in the electoral process.

Kafui Klutse effectively supervised the 2016, December 7th Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in the Krachi East District and declared the certified results from all the polling stations without any related violence in the District.

Having observed the enthusiasm and passion with which he achieves his goals, I am convinced that it is only team players who are committed to achieving results for the larger community at the expense of their lives that can achieve such awesome results within three (3) months. Kafui is a young promising Electoral Officer that needs to be celebrated and encouraged. I therefore recommend and nominate him for consideration as International Recipient of the 2017 Democracy Award.

Thank you.

BELOW ARE SOME PICTURES OF KAFUI WORKING IN ISLAND COMMUNITIES

