

FORUM FOR FORMER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (FFMP): BRIEF HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 2009-2012.

COMPILED BY HON. KOSI KEDEM (FORMER MP FOR HOHOE SOUTH)

1. REGISTRATION

The FFMP is a fully and duly registered NGO with the Registrar General's Department of Ghana with registration no. D.S.W/4388. The date of registration is 8th Jan. 2010. It is also registered with the Department of Social Welfare

2. BRIEF HISTORY

Members of the Third Parliament of the Fourth Republic, 2001-2005, while in office did not enjoy any condition of service and they were only paid on account. This was because the President of the Republic failed to activate Article 71 of the Constitution to determine salaries and condition of service for MPs. By the end of their tenure, government was owing the MPs of 2001-2005 huge arrears. Strangely enough, government, after the Hesse Committee Report was published, was reluctant to pay the MPs their arrears. Individual members made efforts to retrieve their arrears but government would not budge. Since individual efforts were not yielding any results, some MPs led by Hon. Kosi Kedem suggested and, in fact, urged the formation of an association to lead the fight for the retrieval of the arrears. Fortunately this suggestion was accepted and a loose association was put in place. This association, with the help of a team of lawyers, successfully persuaded government to settle the MPs arrears in full.

3. TRANSFORMATION OF THE ASSOCIATION INTO A FORMIDABLE DEMOCRACY ORGANIZATION

After the successful retrieval of the arrears, the association risked becoming redundant. Members realized that there was strength in unity and therefore reasoned that they could transform their energy and unity into promoting the welfare of all former MPs and, above all, mount sustained programme to advance the cause of parliamentary democracy in Ghana. The idea was to create a political space for the former MPs to engage in public debate, influence public policy,

promote parliamentary democracy and create awareness on the role of parliament in our new democratic dispensation

SUPPORT FROM PARLIAMENT OF GHANA

Consequently, the formation of the Forum was formalized and it quickly took steps to register with the Registrar General's and the Department of Social Welfare. It sought recognition from Parliament and got it without hesitation. In fact, Parliament did not only recognize the Forum but went ahead to provide it with accommodation as well as an annual subsidy to help the Forum operate its secretariat. Parliament also assigned one of its junior clerks to help the Executive Secretary run the secretariat.

As the relationship between the Forum and Parliament grew, an MOU was submitted to the Parliamentary Service Board for consideration and approval. Thus an amorphous group of former MPs formed to fight for the retrieval of members arrears was transformed into a dynamic, formidable organization to promote parliamentary democracy and promote the welfare of Forum members. It is important to remark here that the major concern of the Forum is the sustenance of parliamentary democracy because from the lessons learnt from countries like Mali which were once considered model democracies, it is not enough to install democratic governance. The biggest challenge is how to sustain it.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUM

The main objectives of the Forum could be summed up as follows:

1. To promote knowledge and practice of constitutional, legislative, economic, social and cultural aspects of parliamentary democracy in Ghana in particular and the world at large
2. To Promote, sustain and strengthen parliamentary democracy in Africa
3. To promote the interest of and see to the welfare of former MPs in Ghana
4. To initiate the formation of Network of Former MPs of Africa

5 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE FORUM, 2009-2012

1. The first cogent and practical achievement of the Forum is that it has been able to bring together most of the former MPs who hitherto were scattered. Under the umbrella of the Forum the potentials and competences of members could be identified and mobilized for the development of Ghana
2. The forum has been very active in creating awareness and promoting constitutional democracy through the media, conferences, seminars, and workshops. More than that it has also engaged and interacted with other democracy promoting NGOs like IDEG, IEA, CDD, AWEPA
3. Former MPs have been engaged by Parliament as Resource Persons for orientation programmes organized for MPs
4. The FORUM has successfully organized some seminars/ conferences as indicated below:
 - (i) The Role of Former MPs in Promoting and Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Ghana (22 October, 2008)
 - (ii) Seminar on the Role of Former MPs in Promoting Democracy and Good Governance in Ghana (20 April, 2009)
 - (iii) Seminar on the 1992 Constitution Review (17 March 2010)
 - (iv) Submission of recommendations for the amendment of the 1992 Constitution to the on Review Commission
 - (v) Symposium on "That the Action or Inaction of the Media and the Courts can Precipitate Constitutional or Political Crisis in Ghana" (26 July, 2012)
 - (vi) Seminars on "The Role of Parliament in a Multiparty Democracy" at
 - (a) Koforidua Polytechnic
 - (b) Accra Polytechnic
 - (c) St. Teresa's College of Education, Hohoe
 - (d) St. Francis College of Education, Hohoe
5. Perhaps, our greatest achievement has been the organization of the "**First Promoter of parliamentary Democracy Awards Night March 17 2010**" to recognize and honour civil society organizations that have been active in promoting parliamentary democracy in Ghana. This Awards Night was held

in the Banquet Hall of the State House, Accra. In all nine(9) of such organizations were recognized and honoured with awards and citations

6. OUR FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME

The Forum has identified two major projects as constituting its flagship programme for 2013/14.

0.1. FORMATION OF NETWORK OF FORMER AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR DEMOCRACY (NeFAP-D).

One of our objectives is to *“Promote, Sustain and strengthen Parliamentary Democracy in Africa”* This is crucial for, as Dr Nkrumah prophetically observed, “The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa” In the same vein a democratic Ghana is meaningless unless the whole of Africa is democratized. We are strongly convinced about this. We have, therefore, set out to form a pan-African Association of former MPs to be known as *“The Network of Former African Parliamentarians for Democracy (NeFAP-D)”* so that together we can promote and, above all, sustain democracy in Africa. This is a big project and we have kindly requested the Institute of Democratic Governance (*IDEG*) to help us execute it

LESSONS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Associations for former MPs are well developed in other countries like USA, Canada, Germany and the UK. Indeed, we also have continental associations of former MPs like **AWEPA** in Europe. The uniqueness of AWEPA lies in the fact that its membership is derived from both former and sitting MPs all over Europe. It is noted for, and must be commended for, the tremendous role it is playing in promoting and strengthening parliamentary democracy in Africa.

We can also justify the formation of NeFAP-D by pointing to organizations like Inter Parliamentary Union (**IPU**), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (**CPA**), Parliamentarians for Global Action (**PGA**) and African Parliamentary Union (**APU**) which are actively helping Parliaments all over

the world to strengthen Parliaments and build capacity for sitting MPs to enable them to do their work more efficiently and competently. Logically, Former African MPs also need an association to identify their potentials, harmonize and utilize them for the development of Africa

0.2. MENTORSHIP FOR NEW MPs

Interested *new MPs* will be encouraged to link up with former MPs for one-on-one practical transfer of parliamentary experiences and procedures. Parliament has just organized a five-day orientation programme for MPs. The Forum would like to take part in such mentorship and orientation programmes. A proposal on this project has been submitted to the Leadership of the House for consideration and approval.



