

KUAPA KOKOO ELECTIONS 2010

Kuapa Kokoo has used election as a means to strengthen its democratic process since its inception. In the early days, the process was mainly conducted by head count, that is, all people who favored the selection of a particular person were counted and the one with majority support emerged as a winner.

The process has however seen a vast improvement over the years- In 1998 secret ballot was introduced and ballot boxes were used at both district and National levels. In 2006, a Committee was set up to develop the modalities for the elections from the Society level to the National level. The committee introduced innovative procedures like the compilation of voters registers, picture ballot papers, central voting at the Delegates Congress with representation from all societies of good standing and an election campaign at the operational Areas i.e. all the National Level candidates (for all functional positions) were introduced to the Electoral College at the Area level before the final election in Kumasi.

Though the conduct and the process of election was successful, it was evident that further improvements were needed to strengthen the organization's structure even further especially when membership is increasing and the entire structure becoming more complex.

One of the outstanding recommendations from a study conducted by the R&D Department was the review of the existing constitution to meet such complexities. Upon several consultations both within and without Kuapa Kokoo, the old constitution was reviewed and adopted during the 15th Annual Delegates congress held at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi on July 30th, 2009.

In order to strengthen democratic processes within Kuapa Kokoo even further, the new constitution makes a provision for an Independent Electoral Committee (INEC). The INEC consists of the following members:

- Mr. Francis Opoku of the Electoral Commission of Ghana who is the chairman
- Mr. Ransford Oduro of the Department of cooperatives
- Mr. Kwame Antwi of the National Commission on Civic Education
- Mr. Nicholas Adjei – Gyan, manager of the Research and Development of Kuapa Kokoo and
- Mr. Frimpong Darko who is a farmer

The INEC has a mandate to draw up modalities, rules and regulations for the conduct of Society, District and National level elections of the Union. It also has the mandate to compile the voters' register at the district and national level elections. The INEC has come up with these general guidelines for elections 2010:

General Guidelines for Elections 2010:

- Candidates must have been at least 3 years in his society.

- All Candidates for any executive position must prepare their farm plans and submit them to the office before they are elected.
- Where a husband and wife vie for executive positions within the same society, one of them must drop.
- Where the land belongs to a paramount chief who does not allow members to make their own farm plans, the chief of the town can guarantee on behalf of the nominated members
- For unopposed positions, there should be a secret ballot where people will vote “Yes or No”. Where the person loses, the re-election should take place at a later date.
- For effective democracy, there should be contestants and not only one person.
- INEC or its representatives should help society members to select two delegates out of the Executive members elections
- Only District executives can file for nominations within the National Executives Council.
- Nomination forms will be used for District and National Elections while instant nominations will be done for society level.
- Nomination is to be designed to include personal records, passports size.
- Personal Records must be attached to the nomination form. Such records must include following: name, age position, signature, etc.
- Delegates for ADC should be two members, one man and one woman. These delegates should be nominated by the society members and their names should be submitted to the INEC or its representatives conducting the elections.
- Immediately after the close of each poll, the Electoral Officer(s) in charge of that poll shall, in the presence of the candidates or their representatives count the ballot papers.
- In the district and national level elections, the Electoral Officer presiding over the poll and the candidates or their representatives shall sign a declaration stating the total number of voters entitled to vote at the poll and the number of votes cast in favor of each candidate.
- The Electoral Officer presiding shall then proceed to declare in the presence of the candidates or their representatives the results of the voting.
- The refusal of a candidate or his representative to sign the declaration stated above shall not prevent the Electoral Officer presiding from declaring the results of the voting.
- A candidate who refuses to sign the declaration of results shall file a petition as provided for by the constitution (Kuapa Kokoo Farmers’ Union)

Conclusion

It is anticipated that these modalities and guidelines will be adhered to closely in order to ensure a successful general elections.