OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS & INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

• 8 years as a Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana
• Served on various Select and Standing Committees
• Immediate past Chair of the Select Committee on Defense and Interior
The Republic of Ghana (Regions & Capitals)
Parliament

- Parliament: 275 members who elect a Speaker every new term
  - Speaker is not a Member of Parliament
  - Speaker assisted by 2 deputy Speakers (MPs from different political parties)

- Business in parliament is undertaken mainly on two fronts
  - Plenary sitting in the Chamber: often in full view of public
  - Committee meetings: normally held in camera

- 2 main types of Committees:
  - Standing Committees
  - Select Committees

- Committees established at 1st meeting of every session
- Parliament of Ghana: 14 Standing Committees and 16 Select Committees
Parliament (Continued)

Ghana’s Constitution mandates Parliamentary Committees with “powers, rights and privileges of the High Court or a Justice of the High Court” at a trial for:

a) Enforcing the attendance of witnesses and examining them on oath, affirmation or otherwise;

b) Compelling the production of documents;

c) Issuing a commission or request to examine witnesses abroad (Act 103, Article 6)
Parliamentary Select Committee On Defense & Interior

Ministries, Departments & Agencies under Select Committee:

- **Ministry of Defense**
  - responsible for Ghana Armed Forces—Army, Navy and Air Force.

- **Ministry of Interior**

- **The Ministry of National Security**
How does Parliamentary Select Committee On Defense & Interior work?

• 19 members—10 from majority caucus, 9 from minority parties
• Majority group provides chair and vice-chair
• Minorities provide ranking and deputy ranking members
• Decisions mostly through deliberations and consensus
• Regular visits made to Ministries, Departments and Agencies
• Meetings also held with Command staff, other ranks and personnel
• Some committee members travel to countries were Ghanaian contingents are deployed.
Institutional Memory and Training

• Members of Parliament are a transient group
• Retention of institutional memory is vital to work of parliament
• Clerks of Parliament are well qualified and subject to constant training
• Daily record of sittings—the Hansard—is a valuable source of information for Committees
• Committee members attend conferences and seminars
Oversight Institutions Outside Parliament

**National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)**
- Presidential appointees and representatives from key government agencies
- “to make proposals for the protection of the natural and physical environment” and to “monitor, evaluate and coordinate policies, programs and projects.”
- A strategic partner and participant in every sphere of government endeavor
- Plays a major quality assessment and assurance role in governance system, including defense and security sector

**Auditor-General’s Department**
- Function: to audit every public entity
- The Auditor-General’s annual report is used by Public Accounts Committee in Parliament to investigate anomalies and malfeasance.

**Civil Society Organizations and the media**
Challenges

• Unbridled political partisanship
• Large numbers of unemployed youth who can easily be recruited to exacerbate civil strife
• Weak government institutions starved of the necessary logistics and inputs thus making them functionally ineffective,
• Wanton corruption which leaches much needed resources for implement policies and projects for positive national development.
Conclusion

• Constant interaction with all major stakeholders concerned: the military, police and other security agencies.
• Formal and informal meetings with Ministers, top brass, security personnel and the general public
• Fact-finding and inspection visits to facilities, areas of operations, etc.
• Parliamentarians should also avail themselves of opportunities to meet with and exchange ideas with colleagues from other regions
• Monitoring and evaluation mode of parliamentary work can be enhanced by employing qualified backroom and research staff and seeking the input of specialists and experts in relevant fields of endeavor.
• There must be sustained upgrading of knowledge base of all stakeholders.
• Finally, Parliament must seek consensus amongst members, based on the work of its committees.