



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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McCANTS: This is an interview with Mr. Albert Kofi Arhin at the Electoral Commission in Accra, Ghana. It is August 19, 2008. Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this interview.

ARHIN: *Thank you.*

McCANTS: We have about 90 minutes to talk and I have a number of questions but you may wish to indicate the subjects on which you have the most to say and feel free to add or skip questions as you see fit. I always like to begin these conversations by learning more about a person's personal background. Can you describe the position that you hold at the Electoral Commission, explain your job and what the goals are of your position?

ARHIN: *Currently I am the Director of Operations of the Electoral Commission of Ghana and I have been in this position for the past ten years. My role specifically is leading the commission and its operational work. By saying that I mean I initiate actions on the conduct of elections, registration of voters and the demarcation of boundaries for the Electoral Commission. So basically this is what I do. I am in charge of about ten, fifteen people at headquarters here and again the original directors who are in the various regions also fall under this department. So that every regional director is under the Elections Department by way of duties. So I mean the work that I do here.*

McCANTS: Can you tell me more about the jobs you held before you took this position and when your work with election administration began?

ARHIN: *I actually joined this commission straight from the university. I started as an electoral officer at the headquarters and then was moved to the northern part of this country to be the deputy regional director for the northern region. Basically that was to assist whoever was in charge of that region by way of the operational duties of the commission. I did that for about eight years and then I was promoted to the rank of regional director and then posted, at the same time, to the northern region. I acted as the regional director for the northern region for some time. I then was posted to the eastern region. From the eastern region I spent about eight years and then was called to Accra, the national capital, to take up the position of the Director for elections for the whole country. So that is how I started and where I've gotten to at the moment.*

McCANTS: What would you say are the biggest challenges arising in this election environment?

ARHIN: *It is challenging in the sense that if you are in charge of the operational aspect of an election it is like you are running the engine room of the whole elections department. Anything that falls the way operational planning puts the whole election administration into jeopardy because you draw, for example, the timetable for elections in this country. You are basically in charge of the logistics distribution, logistics planning and many other things. You make sure that the regionals work according to the main plan, the national plan. All the inputs fit into the national plan. So it is challenging in the sense that any faults or any mistake that comes by way of operational direction will symbolize danger for the country.*

McCANTS: So have you encountered logistical challenges or other challenges in this environment?

ARHIN: Yes, there have been challenges in the sense that for example some of the items that we import for this exercise, for all exercises, most of them come from foreign countries. It means the timing for each delivery should be well done. You should do it in such a way that it doesn't arrive at a time when it is not needed. So when you are planning for logistics you need to make sure they arrive well on time into the country before you start the distribution. You wouldn't want to distribute items when it is about a week to the time of election. So offshore items, it is a challenge for you to make sure that you order them on time, so they come for you to use them at the right time.

There are other ones that I have secured locally so you would need to synchronize your time in such a way that all of them come maybe a month or two ahead of the scheduled program. So you distribute to all corners of the country and then you'll be done. The challenge is that the money should come at the right time. If government for example should leave monies for procurement, then it should be timely so that you will be able to order in time for you to distribute for the work to be done. So the biggest challenge is money and then the planning.

McCANTS: Can you describe the decision process that produces the timeline and schedule and how that timeline may be amended as the process moves forward?

ARHIN: What we do here at the Elections Department is that we draw a timetable. You draw a timetable and this timetable you discuss with your colleagues. Even before you even draw the timetable you need to have input from your colleagues in the region. So they also tell you exactly what they want done. Then you need also to let the Commission know because the Commission is the final decision making body of this Commission. So you need to let them know your plans before hand, let them discuss your timetable, accept it and take it on board.

When you have the timetable accepted by the Commission, then of course, from time to time it is reviewed, it is revised to take in other issues as they come in their stride. So they need to have the timetable written down and then discussed, reviewed, and if there are certain changes as time rolls on then it has to fit into the general framework of the program.

McCANTS: Have there been concerns expressed about how things were timed or sequenced during these discussions?

ARHIN: Yes, some concerns have been raised. You may not have a perfect timetable most of the time. So concerns will be raised for example as to, arrival of funds. The weather, for example will have something to do with your programs and your draw. Then criticism may also come from the political parties comparing the program you drew with the previous time which didn't work so well and they want to raise concerns about it. We did a program at a certain point in time and we felt that it was wrongly timed so they want to caution you that this time do it in such a way that it cannot bring about the same problem again.

Let me give you an example. If you time that you are going to do a registration exercise in the rainy season where for example you know that the rains might disturb the operational aspect of the work, the next time I'm sure if you do it in that same manner, nobody will ask you to go ahead with that same program again. They will tell you to go back and look at it, re-examine it and then do it at a time when it will be dry and then everybody will be on board to assist. That is how it looks like.

McCANTS: Do you have any general advice to offer people in similar settings about how election activities and events should be timed and sequenced?

ARHIN: *The advice is that the program should be in such a manner in such a way that it will be acceptable to all stakeholders and stakeholders here we will talk about the voters. The stakeholders remain the government, the government is the major stakeholder. The stakeholder will mean, for example, the donor community in this country. Are you going to ask for funds at a time when the donor communities have their doors to giving fund shut. You need to have all discussions on this done. So you don't go to ask for money from donors however for example they cannot give it to you. So my advice to everybody is to make sure you plan in such a way that everything that you do will be beneficial to the stakeholders while we are building a trench so that you will be able to get everybody on board so you can achieve maximum of whatever you want to do.*

McCANTS: Can you describe the accessibility of funds for the Electoral Commission? Has your cash flow been available on a timely basis?

ARHIN: *Yes, these days I would say it is improved a lot. Government is doing very well this time around releasing funds, not releasing all the moneys as you go but, for example, the commission is advised to program in such a way that for example if you are doing an election in a year you do it in such a way that every registration that you are doing, you go for the money for registration. You program it maybe on a monthly basis, on two monthly basis, three monthly basis or whatever. So if you need it for registration, you do the budget as you go and you take it. When it comes to exhibition of the voters' registrar you send a budget for it to go for it and take it. That is how we do it. We program it. We send the budget to the government for the moneys to be released as it is needed.*

For example, we just finished registration. I believe the moneys for the exhibition of the voters' register for the nominations and other things have all been taken care of now because we've sent a request for their release, so they are released in tranches. If you do it that way of course, you will be able to plan. You may not get from our part of the world, you may not get the government to release all moneys pertaining to election in billions to you are to go. So you need to let the government know that at this time, at this period I will need this money and I will want to have it maybe a month before the program or two months before the program. So government will supply and get it done for you.

McCANTS: Have there been cases where the government has postponed or withheld allocations to the Electoral Commission?

ARHIN: *No, but there have been cases where government has been late in releasing funding. Not in this particular year but in previous years.*

McCANTS: How do you overcome that obstacle?

ARHIN: *You need to drive home to the government that when those things happen they delay programs and when programs are delayed it causes tension in the country. Political parties are not comfortable. It delays programs for the Commission itself and then it puts stress on the implementers of the program. Everything is done in a rush and then even that is done in a rush, may not be done properly. So in the final analysis you may not be able to achieve your target. That is how I look at it. So it is always good to have moneys released early. You can prepare with it and then you can achieve your targets.*

McCANTS: What kind of financial accountability structures are in place? Has the use of financial resources for personal purposes been a problem?

ARHIN: *No. Financial accountability, lets take the procurement for example. The program we have is a whole committee that does procurement. The Commission has its procurement body. Parliament is represented on it, the Attorney General's office is represented on it. Apart from the fact that there is a committee that even works out the modalities for procurement, that we're all responsibility of the commission, that will cease what the procurement does. So, for example we approve a bid to procure indelible ink, to procure ballot papers, it is not the final decision of the procurement body. The Commission is the final arbiter. They can decide that we want this firm to print ballots, we want this man to do this and that. So there are checks and balances for everything that we do.*

Money that are released onto the field are also strictly accounted for because the auditor is always there. They do the payments. For example, in the just ended registration exercise that we did, it is not the officers who recruited them that are doing the payments. It is the accounting section of the Commission that is going around the whole country, from region to region, making payments to the officers who undertook the exercise. This is being done so that nobody does anything untoward by way of downsizing somebody's payment or trying to cut corners with things that are not allowed. So there is supervision by the Commission as regards the release of funds and the control of funds.

McCANTS: Elections are expensive but costs can vary greatly across settings. Do you have any ideas on how to make the electoral process less expensive to conduct the next time?

ARHIN: *Yes, let me give you an example. Ghana used to have presidential and parliamentary held on different dates. To cut down costs we realized at a point in time that there is a need to do the two elections at the same time. So the parliamentary and presidential elections are at this time held in this country on the same date. What are the benefits? We cut down costs by way of personnel. If we would have done it on different dates you would have employed a different number of people. For example, 84,000 you used for the parliamentary and you would again use 84,000 for the presidential. But if you do the two at the same time using two ballot boxes with half the people you are cutting down costs.*

We are also trying as much as possible to make sure that local materials are used to a very large extent. Using local materials we mean that things are not imported so you conserve foreign exchange for development. We are using the Indian indelible ink for example, but the last procurement meeting that we held it came to light that the University of Science and Technology in this country is developing, or has been developed a vial of indelible ink which can be used locally. We are asking the standards board of this country to test it. If it is found to be very convenient, very well done so that we can use it for elections, then of course we will stop importing it and use it locally. These are ways of cutting down costs when it comes to elections. So this is the way we are looking at. As much as possible we are trying to cut down costs. We are restricting ourselves to the use of local materials in elections.

McCANTS: How are staff members recruited for the national election office and then how are poll workers recruited?

ARHIN: *Let me start with the staff on the Commission itself. When I joined the Commission, before anybody, recruiters, especially senior staff, your background*

was researched. People go into your houses to ask about your integrity, how you're schooled, how your integrity can be measured. Then if there is nothing found then you are employed.

In the case of the temporary staff, you know we engage a lot of temporary staff for elections. Return officers for example, we recruit them through interviews. We go around the whole country and we didn't even need to do this because they are going to be referees for election. They need not to be partisan. So you need to interview the person, the fellow, to ask whether he doesn't, for example, belong to any political party by actions, utterances, and other things. You need to have that background of the person. If you are satisfied then of course—you don't even stop there. You publish the name in the papers. You give the names to the political parties for their comments. If they are found to be satisfactory then of course they are engaged.

Talking about presiding officers, poll workers and other things, we recruit them sometimes through seminars, like we even sometimes turn to handwriting. If you are going to do registration, you are going to write people's names. So we put you through certain tests, spelling of names, for us to ascertain whether you are able to spell Ghanaian names. We go through this ritual. There are too many so we cannot interview all of them, but the key ones as I said we interview. So recruitment is done strictly and if anybody is found to be not satisfying the Commission's we don't employ them.

McCANTS: Have you found that your staff size has been adequate and have you found that there are certain skills that were in short supply?

ARHIN: *Staff of the Commission itself?*

McCANTS: Yes.

ARHIN: *We do recruitment and we do staff assessment. For example, if it is found that at the end of the day there is a need to strengthen maybe the human resource base of the Commission this is assessed and then advertisements are put into the national papers. People apply, they are interviewed and they are recruited and they are put on board.*

McCANTS: How are poll workers trained?

ARHIN: *The poll workers, their training is taken very seriously because we have a training department of the Commission. Poll workers are not just picked and then put into a room and we go through the motion, for example, reading through a manual and asking them to imbibe what is being done. We push them through hands-on-deck training. If you are going to do an election, you need to let the person who is going to be in charge of the polling station know exactly what he was to do. So you would want to let him rehearse beforehand what is going to take place at the polling station. So there is a two-day training, a serious two-day training for both the poll workers, if it is a camera man who is going to handle the camera, he is trained seriously on the camera itself. There are manuals printed and they go through the full rigors of training for that particular assignment. They rehearse. But we believe in the hands-on-deck training. That is what has been working very well for us. We do it in such a way that for every police station for example, the presiding officer's job could be done by any one of the people. We believe that one of them can be sick, somebody can go and eat, and while there eating, somebody is going to take over. So we train all of them to be able to do whatever is supposed to be done at this polling station.*

McCANTS: How is the performance of poll workers evaluated?

ARHIN: *The poll workers?*

McCANTS: Yes.

ARHIN: *What we do is that we have monitors that go around. Each time there are elections we have monitors. While we are training them there are monitors. So as we go around we assess it. The presiding officers are specifically targeted because they are in charge of the centers so they should be seen to be performing above average. So whoever is a monitor that goes around—you look at the center, you look at the performance and then you are able to know whether this is a very good polling center or not, it depends on the way the person is working.*

Not only that, observers also go around. Observers from various countries, whether it is international or domestic, they all go around polling centers. Party agents are there. Political party executives are all there. They go around and at their report, it gives a reflection of the work that is being done in various areas. So we base our assessment of our poll workers on the reports that come from the field, from the international observers and domestic observers and from us ourselves. So then if someone is found wanting, then we don't engage that person anymore.

McCANTS: How are staff members who work in the field, away from headquarters, how are they monitored for compliance with rules and protocols?

ARHIN: *We have our officers in various areas, district offices. At the end of the year there is an assessment form and everybody who has to report on each worker. Not only report on the worker, the worker will also have to be able to agree to whatever you have said about him or her. In my office, for example, at the end of the year I will need to assess all workers that are working under me. And when I assess them, through a form that has been provided, there is a column for the worker to look at what I have said about him and then also pass comments on what I've said about him or her. If he doesn't agree with what I've said about him then he will need to write it down. Or whoever—after assessed, to know that this is what I said about my worker, that he is a latecomer, but he also thinks that that is not right because there are certain things that he does and that is why he did this and that at a particular point in time. So you give your worker the chance to also explain his actions, about the report that you are writing about him or her. So this is what we do.*

McCANTS: What steps are taken to protect poll workers from threats?

ARHIN: *We do that through meetings with the political parties for example, through meetings with the general public. For example, through education. Sometimes our workers are prone to violence from the political parties. Some are slapped, some are booted. Sometimes some violent actions come from parties. So the need to protect them, so through interviews we talk to—not interviews but meetings with the political parties, about the dangers that our people are prone to. So we ask them to exercise restraint and we even go to the extent of giving them risk allowance. Our workers here take risk allowance because anything can happen to them on the field.*

McCANTS: Do you think, how well do you think that these steps to prevent threats to poll workers, how well do you think that they have worked. Do you think that there are other things that might be done?

ARHIN: *Yes, because of these threats we believe that people in the position should be paid well. See poll workers should be paid well. Why in the position should be paid well is that this work is dangerous. At the same time it is tempting because if you don't satisfy their demands you will subject them to take bribes. Every political party should go to a polling station and start offering bribes to everybody there to everybody there. What is going to happen? It is going to help in rigging elections if you don't make sure that they are well catered for.*

You see for example, if you put them out onto the field for a day, you don't have any allowance for them by way of providing minerals, by way of drinks and maybe snacks. You are not helping them. Then you are throwing them into the hands of the wolves who will come, provide these things and dictate to them what they should do, so these are very important.

McCANTS: Often are there are difficulties in boundary delimitation or districting prior to an election. Can you describe how the boundary delimitation process works in Ghana?

ARHIN: *Boundary delimitation is one of the major assignments of this Commission. I would say that in elections procedures that is the first thing that is done. In this country for example, what we do is that any time there is any boundary delimitation or demarcation to be done we involve the stakeholders, the parties. For example if we happen to be in a district where it is going to take place we need to inform the people in the village, the district, its chiefs, the administrators. See because boundaries are such that if you don't demarcate them well, they help in gerrymandering. Gerrymandering means that you are twisting, shifting a boundary to give advantage to a particular party or candidate for him to benefit in the election.*

So I remember there used to be a very big committee at the national level, that was formed at the time when the government wanted to take development to the grassroots of this country. Previously development was, it wasn't even called, it was, not from top down. This time it is from the bottom to the top, it used to be top to down. So government formed a committee called Public Administration, Restructure, Implementation, Demarcation Committee. This committee was to go down to the grassroots, to the regions, the districts, demarcate the whole country, get them into unit committees and districts, into area councils, unit councils. This was done—we could not have done all this without the various committees in the villages, the chiefs, the administrators and so on.

So in this country, every structure that had been put in place has the hand, the participation of the local people. Street names were given to various streets by the committees and the Commission had to take them down. If, for example, you were naming a district capital you needed to consult the people in the various communities. So demarcation had been taken seriously and because of that, in this country at the moment, you can visit a village and you can have the smallest unit called the unit of 500 people who can undertake development projects. That is what has happened in this country.

In our election parlance if you put two units together they form a polling station of about 1000 people. So we take demarcation very, very seriously and we involve the local people in demarcation. Why we take it seriously is that you may have

certain villages, in certain communities, communities that belong to maybe a certain chief, and belongs to a chief who may be about thirty, forty kilometers away. But he wants to administer that village closer to a certain administration. So you administratively put it together for it to benefit from a particular administration. So you tell the chief that I'm taking your land and for administrative purposes it is going to belong to district A or B. But the land is still yours. The people can pay homage to you, we are only using it for administration purposes. So that the people here can benefit from the schools, from the markets, from the toilets, whatever, but it is still your land. Okay? So this is what has happened here.

McCANTS: What kind of operational or logistical obstacles do you encounter during the boundary delimitation process?

ARHIN: *Normally we have problems with movements. See it is a vast areas and in the vast areas you to travel across the length and breadth of the various communities. There are areas where for example you need to have boats. You hire boats because of the inaccessibility of the area. There are some areas you cannot reach by car, bicycle or whatever. These are all problems that we encounter. So there is a need for vehicles to be provided, canoes to be provided, sometimes helicopters to take people to certain areas. These are the challenges that we face in demarcation.*

McCANTS: Have there been occasions when delimitation has been contentious or disruptive in an election?

ARHIN: *It has, it has and it is always a problem. I'll give you an example. A land belongs to a particular chief. We've got to demarcate it and give it to another chief. You see, now you are telling the chief that it is only for administrative purposes. He doesn't see it that way. He thinks that you are taking the land away from him. So these are the problems that we encounter.*

McCANTS: So what steps do you take to produce reconciliation or understanding?

ARHIN: *What we do is that you meet the people concerned, the parties. You tell them that you are doing this work for administrative convenience. You want the area to develop. You see? So there is a need for them to agree to the arrangement that is on the ground because the argument is that you are not taking the person's land away from him; you are only saying that you want development to take place, to benefit everybody. So there is a need to cooperate, to make it a success, that is what has been happening. Land is a very precious thing so far as chiefs and other people who live in this country are concerned. So we need to explain vividly, explain quietly to them so they know exactly what is happening and that is how it works. When you meet the parties and explain to them they understand.*

McCANTS: Can you describe how the registration of voters takes place in terms of eligibility, identification and allocation to polls and constituencies?

ARHIN: *In the first place in this country before you are registered you must be a Ghanaian, of sound mind and you must be residing in the area before you are going to register, you reside there. We register people in this country on a yearly basis. There is a law that every year, those who turn 18 should have their names put on the voters' role. People who didn't take advantage in the last, the previous registration should take advantage of it. So the law says that every year people should be put on the roll. Apart from that, every ten year period this Commission*

should register everybody afresh. So that if we have a register and it is ten years old we discard the entire register and the fact also remains that people change. After every ten years you won't be the same as you used to be ten years back. So we need to have a picture of you every ten years, so we do that.

*When there is a major census exercise that takes place in the country, after the census exercise we automatically have to do demarcation, not demarcation but no I think I'm mixing the two. For the census exercise it is demarcation—
[interruption, end of file 1]*

McCANTS: Sorry—.

ARHIN: *With the registration it is done every ten years. Then what I said again was that after every census exercise you need to register the people.*

McCANTS: What controls are developed to prevent multiple false or erroneous registrations?

ARHIN: *First of all, when you are registered at every polling center party agents are there. Political parties have their representatives, and we also recruit people within the various localities to undertake the registration exercise. If we are going to village B, I would want to have people doing the registration to come from the village. They know the people very well. So that if Mr. A is not of a sound mind, is not coming from Ghana, is an alien or whatever, they will know it better. Apart from that there are measures put in place by way of a challenge. We have what we call a challenge form. If I come to a registration center and I am not of age, I'm a minor, anybody who is 18 years and above and a Ghanaian, I mean they can say Mr. Arhin you are not a Ghanaian, I am challenging you so you cannot register. But the mere challenge does not prevent me from registering. What happens is that you are given a challenge form to fill. I am challenging Albert that he is not a Ghanaian. These are my grounds. He is not a Ghanaian, he is not of sound mind, he is a minor.*

Then whoever is making the challenge is asked are you prepared to go to a court of law to substantiate the challenge you are making? If they say yes, then we tell the challenged and the challenger, that on such and such a date, the registration review committee will sit and we did have a registration review committee made up of political parties who are in the district. If there are five political parties then the membership of that committee should have five political parties, we should have the district place commander being a member of the committee. The district magistrate should be a member of the committee. Sometimes the district's education director also is a member.

After the registration exercise they meet over these challenges. They sit in court, look at all the challenges, adjudicate and then come out with their findings. Those who are found to have been minors, non-Ghanaians, not—you know—their registration is declared null and void. But those that are—you know declared to be okay. We go through the motion, their ID cards are issued to them and their forms are then sent to the IT section for scanning. It means that when you are challenged your form is not sent at the end of the day to the headquarters. It is held for some time before the committee comes out with its findings. Then they can process it.

McCANTS: How effective do you think these controls have been and do you think that they will be sufficient enough to cleanse the voter role after the most recent registration exercise?

ARHIN: That has only been ended. You see at the end of the registration review committee, we exhibit the voters' role. The voters' role is exhibited, one, for people whose names have been omitted from the register to come and ask for insertions to be made. Two, corrections in the spelling of names are made. Three, the dead are also reported and their names are removed from the register. People are still challenged, even on the exhibition date, or the exhibition period. If people are still convinced that you are not a Ghanaian because maybe you slipped through, they didn't notice you at the registration period, you still can be challenged. So the exhibition in a way is the final measure of making sure that the register that is coming out for the election is very clear, so that is how it is.

McCANTS: How is the integrity of registration lists safeguarded after the lists are compiled? What steps are taken to prevent tampering?

ARHIN: Yes, what we do is we have the registers keyed, everything is put in a database. For this country every registered voter is having a picture, addresses of the parents, whatever, everything is in the databank. For every time we have a backup. Okay? A backup in the sense that we can have a fire break out, anything can happen to the register here. So if we have a backup safely put in a vault at a bank or somewhere, if for example fire guts. There is a fire outbreak in the IT section and the whole place is burnt up, we can still reproduce all the data because we have kept it somewhere. So we make sure we also always have a backup in case of emergency and then we bring it out.

McCANTS: What kind of logistical and operational obstacles have been encountered in voter registration exercise and how have you overcome these?

ARHIN: It has been very difficult for example to predict how many people are going to register. So that has always been a problem for us, to be able to predict accurately how many are going to turn up for registration. So the challenge has always been that you may not be able to accurately predict the number of forms that you want to use. You may want to rely on the census figures. You may want to rely on the growth rate. These are the areas where you may look up to. For example, how many people will be 18 and above in the year 2010 or whatever. You may sometime have a shortfall, so these are challenges, to be able to predict accurately the number of forms you should print, to be able to predict accurately the number of people who are going to turn up for registration. This is something that you can always guess. So these are the challenges that we face.

McCANTS: Who prints the ballots and how is the chain of custody in the production, transportation, warehousing and distribution guaranteed by the Electoral Commission?

ARHIN: In this country ballots are printed by local printers in this country. We never send our ballots outside for printing. After receipt of nominations for every election ballots are printed by the local printers and we ask political parties to bring representatives to the various printing houses. If it is going to be printed within a two-week period [end of file 2]

We send information to all political parties to bring representatives to the various printing houses. They are there 24 hours, they are on shift. We provide security internally. We have our own internal security system, we provide security. We also ask the government to give us police personnel for security and they all go to the printing houses. We run shifts day and night until we finish printing the ballots.

When the ballots are printed we pack them. When we are packing them the political parties take the serial numbers of all the packages, of all the booklets. They take them one by one and write the serial numbers of all of them. So to particular regions, party agents completed, everything is written down. When we have done everything and it is ready to be dispatched to various regions, to various districts, to various polling stations, they are accompanied as well to the regions. In the regional capital they are kept at the various police stations where political parties are there to receive it together with the Electoral Commission staff. They put their seals on them and they are kept. At the time that we are ready to take them to various polling stations they are there, to inspect seals and then make sure that they are not broken.

After that they are taken to various regional centers of the Commission where they are put into the various ballot boxes in the various polling stations and they are accompanied by the police personnel or security personnel to the various polling stations. So they are manned 24 hours until the ballot is taken. So this is how we do it.

McCANTS: I'd like to talk a little about activities that occur at the polling station and at the central electoral offices. Can you describe the system of polling centers and stations that are set up and how well that you think the system works?

ARHIN: *Yes. At the polling center we set up the area in such a way that we have room for the political party agents to observe proceedings. We make sure the presiding officer takes center stage. We make sure that the polling station set up is such that it doesn't impede the flow of the voters. We tape, we demarcate the polling station so that people don't just come in there to cause confusion. We do it in such a way that those who queue move in through a particular line or gate, and then move out at a particular point. So there is an orderly flow of voters to check ballots, check the particulars, go for presidential ballot, parliamentary ballot and then you go out.*

We give them clothing to identify them. For example if you are presiding officer, you should wear presiding officers clothing. If you are polling agent, you should have an introductory letter from your party. You should wear a badge that you are a polling agent. So that anybody entering the center should be able to identify you. We wouldn't want to have to have posters of parties littering the whole place. The area should not be centered around the drinking bar, about 50 meters away. So polling centers should not be close to drinking bars. They should not be close to a political party office and they should not be in a chief's house, in a party chief's house or whatever so that nobody would have cause to complain that they are being partisan so this is how we go about it. And there is security 24 hours for whatever we are doing on the polling day.

McCANTS: How many voters are the polling stations configured to serve?

ARHIN: *The rural polling station we normally put in place about 800 voters, the maximum is about a thousand. In the advance centers about 1200 or 1300. In the big towns or cities, 1500 to 2000.*

McCANTS: How many poll workers at each station?

ARHIN: *We have about five on the average. The presiding officer, the shaper and the laminator. Is it a shaper? No, the marker. There is somebody, in the case of the polling we have somebody at the register, somebody who marks the finger with indelible ink, somebody who gives out the ballots and then there are five.*

McCANTS: Are there any ballot security measures put in place at polling stations to inhibit vote fraud by election officials or by party contestants?

ARHIN: *Any measures put in place to prevent people from—?*

McCANTS: To prevent election officials or party contestants from—.

ARHIN: *You know what happens at the polling center? There is something we call a statement of the poll. At the beginning of every poll in this country the presiding officer will have to open the ballot box empty and show it to the public, the observers, agents, whatever. Then you need to show the statement before the poll. This is how many ballots have been issued to the center, how many people are supposed to vote at this center. How many ballots by way of percentage increase was put on the ballot paper at that center? So they pick up this information. At the beginning of the poll I had 300 ballot papers as against 250 voters. Okay.*

At the end of the day there is what we call the statement after the poll. How many ballots have been put into the box. How many have been ticked in the register. How many were on transfer list, how many on proxy list. All these things at the end of the day should tally. It is like working in the bank. You should be able to balance the equation. I had 300 ballots, 200 voted, 100 is remaining, 2 were spoiled. All explained and there are envelopes for these things to be put in. The voting is done in the open so that you vote in the open, everybody sees you. If you have any ballot paper hiding in your pocket or whatever, you cannot put your hand in your pocket and push it in anywhere because you are voting in public. Everybody sees what you are doing.

Unlike certain places where I know people vote in a dark room somewhere, here you select your ballot in the open and you vote in the open. Counting is also done in the open at the end of the day. So there is no way maybe people can cheat. If you want to cheat then of course you must be a magician.

McCANTS: So do you think that all of these methods are effective and what would you recommend to other places?

ARHIN: *It is effective and I would think that people should emulate our example because I have been to places where ballots are counted in a secret room, in a room that is not open to everybody. In this country you can even ask the opinion of the people around the polling station about a certain ballot, whether you think it should be accepted or not. Of course the final decision rests with the presiding officer. So the openness of the system should be, should be saying that everybody should learn to do a thing like that. It is so open that it should be monitored by everybody.*

McCANTS: How then do you preserve the secrecy and the integrity of the ballot?

ARHIN: *The secrecy and integrity.*

McCANTS: Yes.

ARHIN: *The secrecy and integrity is in the fact that there is a screened compartment. I take my ballot, I go in there. When I am voting my back is turned against the public. When I'm doing my selection nobody sees me. When I'm marking the ballot nobody sees me. So the integrity of the ballot is maintained because when*

I'm making a ballot choice nobody sees me. The ballot box itself is also transparent. When I put the ballot in I fold it in a way that nobody can even see the mark I made. You are taught how to fold the ballot. If you cannot fold it, somebody does it for you, the presiding officer. So your ballot is folded if you cannot fold it. You put it in the box. Nobody sees the marking I've made. So the integrity is still there.

McCANTS: Are ballots counted at the polling station or are they shipped to a regional center?

ARHIN: *Ballots are counted at the polling stations throughout the country and the results are declared at the station for every particular polling station.*

McCANTS: And have there been any steps for introducing automated ballot tabulation?

ARHIN: *No, not yet. Maybe in the future we may be going in that direction.*

McCANTS: In the conduct of voting, as well as in prior stages in the administration of an election, there may be several types of logistical challenges and I would like your observations on these. First, how are communications between headquarters and the sub-national offices organized?

ARHIN: *On election day?*

McCANTS: Election as well as the prior stages of planning and preparation.

ARHIN: *You realize that maybe, I don't know what they did in this country for some time now, but we have regional offices, district offices and we have the national headquarters. We are linked to every regional office, every district office. We have telephone numbers of every district office in this country. We have radio connection to every district office in this country so that even if there is any message to be sent, I can sit here and talk to a district officer on radio or on the phone. But for the hierarchy I could be directly dealing with district officers but I need to talk to regional directors first before we send messages. So we are in touch with all our offices.*

So if there is any information we send them to every corner of this country and this helps us very much in the administration.

McCANTS: Are there maps or mapping services available to the election organizers?

ARHIN: *Yes, anybody who comes into this country would want to maybe have a map for districts. We have what we call demarcation section, the delimitation section where maps are drawn. Then if, for example, you are going to observe elections in the Ashanti region, in the Brong-Ahafo, you can draw a map from it. Then you can read the details of what you are looking at and then you can take it along with you. So there is a mapping section in this commission.*

McCANTS: You mentioned some difficulties with transportation and the need to use boats or vehicles. Are there other logistical challenges that you've encountered with regard to transport and retrieval of election materials and how do you solve those problems.

ARHIN: *Yes, these are problems because whenever we have an election, you know the magnitude; there is a large demand for vehicles. The Commission cannot, for example, buy all these vehicles. So what we do is we rely on the ministries, the*

government departments. When there is an election there is a special appeal made to every departmental head and their vehicles are released temporarily to us to help us cart men and materials. For example, we go to the Air Force Station to ask for helicopters to send materials to inaccessible areas. We hire boats from private owners to cart people to certain areas where we cannot reach because of the rivers. So we sought the assistance from the general public. Sometimes we even go to the GPR team, Ghana Public Road transports, but there we are very cautious because some of these people are linked to political parties. If you are not careful they will use—they help you and demanding from them to their advantage, so we are very careful where we want to go to them. We use it as a last resort.

Generally the government departments are heavily relied on for this kind of assistance. Now what I am trying to say is that we on our own cannot meet the special transport requirements, so we go for other people's help.

McCANTS: What responsibilities does the election commission have for regulating the role of political parties?

ARHIN: *There is a code of conduct for parties but that is not our business. What we do is that we register political parties. We audit political parties or we cause an audit to be taken by the various audit commissions. We inspect the offices of political parties to make sure that internal democracy prevails in the parties. So we supervise elections when they are having their congresses, when they are having their primaries for parliamentary election, we supervise these elections. When they are electing their flag bearers. We supervise these elections.*

So from the constituency to the region to the national, from time to time we inspect are these offices being properly run throughout the year? Do they have the requisite number of people manning the offices? Are they having the requisite number of furniture that they are supposed to have? Do they have computers? Should we call them political parties by the way they perform. Political parties for example should have offices in 2/10th of the total amount of districts in this country. Are they adhering to these requirements? These are the things that we look out for. Then we write reports on them. We warn them. If they are not adhering to these we sanction them, they are supposed to be sanctioned.

Sometimes they have been withdrawn their certificates if they are found to be not adhering to what we - the lay down procedures.

McCANTS: Are there any rules in place that require political parties to register the dates and the times and the places of their campaign rallies?

ARHIN: *They are not supposed to record these things and give them to us. But at least the Commission is informed that I am doing this, I'm doing that, so that we should also be in the picture.*

McCANTS: Are parties required to disclose their sources of revenue and expenses?

ARHIN: *Yes, they are actually to declare the assets, especially in an election year, six months after the election year is supposed to come out, tell the Commissioner that this is the budget that I used for the election; this is what I have in my coffers. These are the assets that I need to declare.*

McCANTS: If you were providing advice to other countries about the steps you've taken here in regulating political parties, what advice would you give?

ARHIN: *To the country? What I would say is that one, it would be advisable to regulate the number of parties in the country. You see, I have been to countries where, for example, because of the funding that government gives to political parties. You may have a country with a population of two million voters and they have 500 political parties registered. This does not auger so well for democracy. People just want to access the political funding and because of that everybody forms a political party. You would need to follow the activities of the parties, to regulate the mixture that internal democracy in that party is maintained. By so doing you'd be able to regulate and be able to churn out in that country people of substance to take part in politics. If you just leave it open, anybody forms a party, anybody who goes into it if it is free and anything goes there.*

So the Electoral Commission should be working to make sure that internal democracy works in every political party and that none—. I mean they should not be that mushrooming, we shouldn't get the mushrooming of parties in every country. There should be quality in the formation of parties. For example in this country if you want to contest to form a party, you should have a founding father from every district, two founding fathers from every district of this country. So it is not just of taking the nomination, to fill in and then bring it to us. You should travel every corner of this country and get the address and the consent of multiple responsible people to be the founding fathers of your party. This is our recommendation to any country so that your party will have a base and not just be a sectional party, but a party that commands respect throughout the country.

McCANTS: Can you tell me more about how the Electoral Commission employs the media? For example can you give some examples of at what stage and for what purpose doe the Electoral Commission involve the media?

ARHIN: *Yes, we involve the media. For example, this year I have been part of a committee that is drawing a program for election reportage in this country. I have been there to assist them to be able to draw a program for the media. How do they report on elections? How do they follow political parties? How should they do it? How, for example, should election results be relayed to the public? There are examples of the media just going haywire. They just get results, not confirmed by the Commission and then they are put into the public domain. So there is a need to teach them how they should go about it and because of this we organize seminars for the media on election reportage. We go from region to region, meet the GJA, Ghana Journalist Association membership, talk to them on how we think they should work in collaboration with the Commission to serve the public. This we do every election year. This year is no exception, it is going to be done.*

McCANTS: How effective do you think that the Electoral Commission's campaign has been in helping people to understand the voter registration process, where to go, what to do when they got there.

ARHIN: *We have been organizing public education on our own as a Commission on a district basis using the public address system that we have and street announcements. We address the public at dawn and maybe when they return from their places of work. We talk to them about how registration should be done, who qualifies, who does not qualify, how they should challenge people. We go around to tell them all this. Apart from that we use the radio jingles. We use the FM stations to talk about the role we expect the general public to play as regards registration for elections. Sometimes we use drama to demonstrate how some of things are done. We use the NCCE here, National Commission for Civic*

Education. They also come in. As we are talking about the how of our election education they also go around to talk about the why, the civic aspect of it. So we still work within the commission and the civic educators.

So sometimes we mount joint efforts and we do this together. In the villages, in the hinterlands where we cannot reach, we gather people who work, who use bicycles, motor bicycles and we give them a kit having all the information that they desire, flyers. We are giving them posters to pass it around depicting—different roles are actually played by different people. You understand? That is how we go about educating the people. Apart from that we ourselves engage the civil society, opinion leaders. We go to churches on Sundays for example. There is a very serious program, talk to the church members about activities that we are undertaking. We sometimes go to the market places around market days, talk to the people, especially in the northern part of this country and we talk to the market women. These are the tricks that we use to get—even the Moslem community, we go to the mosque and we talk to the people at the mosque. If it is students, we go to the schools, we talk to the students.

McCANTS: Are there any tactics that you think you could employ to make the campaign more effective?

ARHIN: *Yes, the tactics are dependent on the audience. For example, the voting, you would want to demonstrate it through a drama. You can use drama to demonstrate how the election process should be explained to the people. Sometimes you want to use the cinema. You go to a rural area, you want to teach the people how to vote. You show them a film, a very beautiful film, not even happening to do with the election itself. As they're watching the film, in the middle of it you break and you talk about elections. You would have caught the attention of the people. The film is so beautiful they don't want to miss it so you catch them there and then in the middle you bring in your message. Then you get everybody to understand.*

This works very well in the various communities and villages in the hinterlands. In the cities there is also, there is a tactic to be used, you can use drama, and such things, street announcements, and you talk to the people.

McCANTS: Is there an assessment of threats against the process before the election occurs?

ARHIN: *Yes we do assess this. You would need to know what are your weaknesses, for example what threats face you as you go into the election. That is why we engage in security for example. You see, for example, we know that it is a do and die for the parties and any of us can get maimed or harmed if you're not careful. So there will be a need to auger security people to guard us, to be able to go with us to places so that people don't harm us. So we ask for protection.*

McCANTS: And when you do these kinds of threat assessments do you identify who will be likely victims, who will be likely perpetrators and what their motives are?

ARHIN: *Yes. You know there are security meetings at the national level and the regional level and the district level. There are national security meetings, we have started already. For example, they have asked me to provide them with all flashpoints in this country. Polling stations were, for example, there is the likelihood of violence, so we have all of this mapped out, leading to national security to be able to assess and plan. [end of file 3]*

McCANTS: What, how do you identify what might be a potential flashpoint?

ARHIN: *From experience, we have seen that and of course depending on the personalities for example who are engaged in politics in that area. There are certain areas that are known from time memorial to have been flashpoints because of the nature of the people in the area. Okay? They are violence prone. So, and of course also the parties that are on the ground in that vicinity. If you look at the campaign that goes on in that area and the way people are so sentimental about what has happened, it tell you that you need to be very carefully when it comes to their chiefs.*

Let me give you an example. In Sukhum in the eastern region when the primaries were being held from the New Patriotic Party, they've gone three times, voted, and each time people are throwing stones at their own party people. You see, this gives an indication that you need to be very careful when you are holding elections in an area like that. Because even among they themselves they can fight. So how much more when they meet the opponent. See these are the indicators. That tells you that you need to be very careful. And from experience we know that every time there is an election in a particular area people are fighting. That tells you that any little thing that can spark violence in that region, so we need to forestall it by putting more men on the ground.

McCANTS: Do your predictions about where there might be election violence, do they turn out to be right most of the time?

ARHIN: *Most of the time, not many areas. But there are areas that I know for example in this country that if you don't beef up security you end up having problems. Let me give you – the Northern Region, Tamale for example. The two parties that are there, in a certain polling station that I know, you always need to be very careful. Any little thing, the slightest thing, any misunderstanding can spark controversy there.*

McCANTS: Do your security partners meet with you at the Electoral Commission to develop scenarios or contingency plans in advance of the elections?

ARHIN: *We do that.*

McCANTS: Can you describe that process?

ARHIN: *Yes, for example at a typical regional security meeting the regional security commander will assemble all his men and then they will brief at the meeting what has been happening. For example, during campaigning, during rallies, what has been happening. They will tell of potential dangers in those communities, what can bring violence. You see you need let the meeting know and then tell the meeting what measures you think should be put in place to forestall such imminent threats. So from the security point of view the commanders are told to brief the meeting what they consider as potential dangers. Then the Commission will also be told to also come out with its preparations by way of supplies, logistics, to forestall some of this. Some of these things come about because of shortages.*

If for example in a very election violence prone area you go and tell people that your ballot paper in the middle of the voting is short. You are what is it heading for danger. So you need to plan logistics in such a way that nobody will have any cause to run short of anything and bring about a fight. These are the sort of things that we discuss.

McCANTS: Can you give me an example of a security problem that you think was handled very successfully and then a security problem which you would have handled differently?

ARHIN: *There was a problem in a polling station in the Northern Region for example where results were declared and a party felt that they should have won and they didn't win, so they should destroy all the material there. So all the ballot boxes were burnt. The only luck we had was that the party agents were able to go away with the declaration of results sheets in a tamper proof envelope, so they took them away. They thought they had destroyed all evidence. We were able to get the results from that particular area by just consulting the party agents. So we rely very much on the integrity of the party agents and the way they keep these results for us. In case of any danger, any problem, that is the last resort.*

The other question, the other side, a security problem that was unable to be resolved wasn't it? Yes, we sometimes have to go in for re-election because we are badly briefed, that we are unable to get what we want to put things together. If it happens that way then we need for that election to be cancelled and then a fresh one conducted. These are some of the security risks that we have.

McCANTS: Can you describe the adjudication process by which election disputes are resolved?

ARHIN: *Okay. Election disputes in this country are resolved one, through petitions that are lodged 21 days after the election results have been declared. If you are not satisfied with the results of the election, as soon as the results are declared, within 21 days you should lodge your complaints. Then the high court will take it up. I am not happy with this arrangement because I am always advocating, and I think in other jurisdictions this is done, we should have a timeframe in this country sometime later that six months, or three months after the elections, all election disputes should be handled and taken care of.*

But because we don't have any time here if you are a government in power and maybe your party has a problem, you would want to delay. By delaying the court process and it has happened. Somebody who won election was, they maneuvered that he stayed out of parliament through a four-year process. Meanwhile he had actually won the election. If they had quickly gone into the adjudication process he would have won and would have gone to replace the guy who went there by mistake. But because they don't have a timeframe within which election disputes are handled, the court is delaying at their pleasure. I think this is not good enough.

So some of us have been advocating that government or the Electoral Commission should put forward something to say that after every election, within two months, all election disputes should have been settled. Okay? That I think would be going a long way to helping to solve the problem as I know in the US this is done. All election disputes are settled within a certain timeframe and then they are just done with. But here you cannot say that it is one year, two years, three years, it is just at the pleasure of whoever is handling it which I don't think is good enough. That is my personal view.

McCANTS: Can you describe how the Electoral Commission shares its responsibility for voter education with civil society and other organizations, maybe the NCCE as well?

ARHIN: *We share what?*

McCANTS: Responsibilities for voter education.

ARHIN: *With them?*

McCANTS: Yes.

ARHIN: *I would want, I told you in the course of this interview that at a point in time the Commission and the NCCE, the civic aspect, we share platforms together. We meet as the two bodies in charge of this education to compare notes and mount common platforms if possible. But this does not being done at the moment. You see they mount their platform somewhere, we also do it at a different point. But if we are going to mount a certain, a common platform at some point in time we should meet in our delivery. That is what I think ought to be done.*

McCANTS: How do you go about crafting the kinds of messages that you need to convey? Some messages might be instructional telling people what to do or some might be telling people not to impersonate another voter or some might be encouraging people to come out and vote. How do you develop these messages? What considerations do you take into account?

ARHIN: *We develop these messages taking, for example, the community, their personalities. It is like you're developing—you take women for example. You want to send a message to women to participate in registration. You would need to develop posters laying the emphasis on participation of women. Sometimes we come out with posters depicting the disabled. You need to craft it in a way that any person who is disabled looking at it can say this is me, I am to take part in this election and this is the right poster for me. So we look at the environment, at the people who are the centerpiece of the message we want to send and develop a message around them. We send messages on disabled, we send messages to students.*

We say that for example students participate in elections and there is a way of going about it. Farmers, you draw a picture of a farmer, holding the hoe, holding the cutlass and then you weave the message around it so that they also know that they have not been left off, they are all involved. So we get around everybody, depending on the role you play in this society.

McCANTS: At which point in the process are the messages released?

ARHIN: *The messages are released—for example we are embarking on voter education on the election you would want to educate them two months, three months ahead. Let them know that you need their assistance, you need them to cast their vote you need them to prepare their minds, before they go in there. So it is better to do it a month, two months ahead of the time prepare their minds and let them go in there.*

McCANTS: How do you measure the effectiveness of the voter education activities?

ARHIN: *You need to send feelers around. You need to let people do follow ups randomly, going around the communities, asking their opinion about what is going on in their communities. After the education you need to measure the level of acceptance of the message, the level of understanding. Then you will be able to measure how your message is getting down to the people. Apart from that, at the*

end of it all, when the election is over, you would want to measure how the message went down by even turnout.

For example, if you did education on the proper marking of the ballot, you would want to know at the end of the day how many ballots were marked correctly in a particular environment, how many were marked correctly so that next time this will give you an idea as to how your education went. If at the end of the day you had a hundred voters and eighty of them couldn't mark the ballot properly, it means there is something wrong with the education and you need to go back and look at what you did.

McCANTS: You mentioned attempts to use posters to encourage the participation of women or the disabled or young people. Have you taken other steps to make sure that these groups were able to fully participate in the election process?

ARHIN: *Yes, apart from the fact that we develop these posters, we need to meet them as a group. You see, we target groups, women's groups. We target market women, we target maybe assembly women, we target disabled women. You need to develop a strategy for every type of group. While you are holding the poster, the poster alone may not be enough so you talk to them. At the end of the day when you are finished talking to them you give them the poster, the fliers, things that they can read or just by looking at it understand or indeed this is what was being talked of. It has been presented pictorially to me. Apart from presenting it pictorially we need to explain it. Then the message gets across quickly.*

McCANTS: Do you think that these have been effective methods or have you encountered any obstacles in trying to get the participation of these groups?

ARHIN: *Yes, it has been very effective, if it is done properly with face-to-face interactions and then following up with the posters and everything. But it is not enough to just put posters around, you need to talk and not just talking, making street announcements, there is a need from making door-to-door campaigns, visiting them in their homes, getting them—during functions, in churches. When the priest is talking you ask for a slot in the church and then you explain the voting process to them in the church. This is how it works.*

McCANTS: Can you describe the use of election monitors and the goals for monitoring established in this election?

ARHIN: *The format?*

McCANTS: For example what is the role of election monitors, what goals have you established for their participation in the election?

ARHIN: *Election monitoring is very necessary here because it is election day, I go around. For example are all forms that are needed for the election in place? Did the poll start early? Are the presiding officers and their polling staff up to the task of it? Are they interpreting the rules of the game correctly? How are they treating the public? Are they customer friendly? The monitors need to do all this. When you have monitors who are able to go around, ask questions, know what is going on, it helps you to plan better elections next time.*

McCANTS: How do you determine how many monitors or observers are needed?

ARHIN: *For a particular event?*

McCANTS: Yes, for the entire election.

ARHIN: *It depends on the size of that election, the size of the polling stations, how many polling stations do you have. If for example I have 100 polling stations and I want to share it to the monitors, how many do I give to a particular group or particular person. For example at the end of the day how many places can I visit? It depends on the terrain, you see. If I am sending you to the seas area where it is very difficult and you are going by boat, I don't expect to have many people going to such places. You have to limit it because the terrain is not friendly. So it will depend on the terrain and the environment that you are visiting. That will actually give you a picture as to how many people should be deployed in a particular area.*

McCANTS: Do you have any advice to offer to others about how monitors and observers should be effectively used and managed?

ARHIN: *Yes, the advice I'd give to the other countries is that it is very necessary always to have observers and monitors in the elections because the elections are such that you give authenticity to the elections when people follow up. When you do it in a vacuum, I mean everybody is doing elections in the dark, nobody comes to see what you have done, at the end of the day you don't give credence to what you have done yourself. Other people from the outside should come in and when they say that for example the elections that were conducted in Ghana were free and fair, not only from the domestic observers but from the international observers, it gives credence and credibility. It gives international recognition to what you have done.*

So you open up your doors to everybody. If you know what you are doing, the right thing, let people see it. You see as many people as possible should be able to see what you are doing and to be able to criticize and give advice. When you have observers into a country, at the end of the day they write a report. They look at the rules and regulations that you use and if some are not good, they give corrections, they give advice. They make an opinion on this in every country when observers come for example. They talk to them. They tell them that this is what the government in power is doing and we don't like it. So the observers internally also meets with the ruling government and says that this is what you are doing, you are being a dictator. The other side is not happy about it. So you open up your doors. This is what happens in and it helps.

McCANTS: Our program aims to help citizens and policy makers have more effective institutions such as election administration whether or not there is international involvement or not. Sometimes relationships within international organizations and between donors can affect the people, the ability of people like you to do their jobs effectively. Sometimes foreign assistance can create its own problems.

ARHIN: Yes.

McCANTS: I'd like to hear if you have any advice to pass along to others to help improve donor – partner country relationships. Are there two or three mistakes that you commonly observe in the way that donor countries or international organizations make with respect to their relationships with their local counterparts?

ARHIN: *There have been a few. For example I remember there was a time that donors came in to assist us with the printing of ballots. Because they came in to assist they wanted to have a say in who prints the ballots. They were going to open it to the whole of the Commonwealth for example. Bids should open to the*

Commonwealth, and we were to write to the bids, documents in French, in various languages, and see who won. When you come into a country to assess us, fine. Remember that when you are printing ballots you are giving employment to the people of the country itself. If you bring in money and then you are saying that for example I am bringing in money to you, go and by indelible ink from my country. Then in a way you're not helping the country to generate funding or to even give it employment. Okay? So if you bring the money and you bring in a tag like buy from my country, indelible ink. Like somebody some time ago did. Then you are not helping the process.

I believe it is nice that you bring in your help and then you leave it open for a decision to be taken as to how this money should be utilized. But you bring in the money and you say by all means buy this from my country, then it means that there are strings attached. That is what sometimes we find very difficult to accept. You bring in the donor assistance and you think that certain people should come from within your country to be at the helm of affairs of the management control of the actual thing that is to be done. Sometimes it happens this way and you find that there is some kind of friction between the donor community and the recipient country. This is where sometimes we find it very difficult to accept. Okay?

McCANTS: If you could offer others advice about how to work effectively with donors or international organizations, what advice would you give?

ARHIN: *The advice I would give is that it should be a mixture of donor assistance and local initiative. I'm bringing a counterpart to assist in the Electoral Commission but I am working with the local counterpart so that I impart my knowledge. After I have left the person who understudied me should be able—after all donors come in and at a point in time they stop. In this country for example donor fatigue is setting in because they believe that Ghana is of age now to be able to handle its own election affairs. So if they are coming in—they come in by way of training of party agents—the assistance is not omnibus, like it used to be in those days. It is now restricted to a certain area. But when we started it was only omnibus, everything was been provided. Now, assistance by way of personnel is almost out because it has been realized that the people who are helping, or who are monitoring the election administration in this country are saying that we don't need to bring anybody else to come and assist them again. This is what is happening now.*

So I believe donors should come in, help develop the capacity of the people in the local community so that they should be able to handle their own affairs, you know sooner or later. But if you just come in to teach them how to fish every day without asking them to fish themselves, then you're not helping the process.

McCANTS: Thank you very much.

ARHIN: *It was a pleasure to meet you.*