

# STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

March 2021



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## Dr. Esther OFEI-ABOAGYE



It is an honour to present an account of our stewardship for 2020 to you. 2020 was a very challenging one in various ways for STAR-Ghana Foundation. During the year under review, the organisation completed its transition from a Programme to Foundation, including a relocation of offices from the Labone premises to Sunflower Street in East Legon. All contracts with the programme personnel were concluded and staff recruited for the Foundation. Technical support from Christian Aid and the Consortium of consulting firms ended, though they have retained good relations with us.

Changes in the United Kingdom's development assistance policy, the transition from the Department for International Development (DfID) to the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic were a few of the factors that affected the implementation of the plans we outlined to you a year ago. The Foundation anticipated an Accountable Grant of Two Million Pounds (£2m) to provide initial support for its work, after a due diligence assessment. We have weathered changing development partner priorities, challenges with fund-raising and the need to adapt and to adopt new methods of functioning.

However, the pressures imposed by the pandemic on Ghana's public service infrastructure, the partnerships that were forged in the wake of the crises, events associated with the conduct and results of the Parliamentary and Presidential elections, persisting and re-emerging human rights concerns and the challenges associated with natural resource extraction and management assure us that now, more than ever, the mission and work of the STAR-Ghana Foundation remain important. The details of our achievements, challenges and plans are outlined in the Executive Director's Report.

In the course of the year, Her Ladyship Prof. Henrietta Mensah-Bonsu was appointed to the high office of Justice of the Supreme Court of Ghana and therefore, understandably, resigned her membership of the Governing Council and its Committees. We are grateful to her for her diligent service and her assurance of support of the work of the Foundation and delighted with her appointment.

Now, it is my duty to tell you how the organization has been governed and the responsibilities of the Governing Council are as follows.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

Among others, the Governing Council is responsible for the following:

1. Providing strategic direction and oversight of the Foundation between general meetings; for this purpose the Council approves and oversees the formulation and efficient implementation, and updating of the Foundation's strategic plan;
2. Setting the policy framework between general meetings for the activities of Foundation;
3. Ensuring the efficient and effective use of resources of the Foundation to achieve the objects of the Foundation;
4. Establishing the framework and rules for payment of all expenses incurred by the Foundation;
5. Approval of the organisational structure and appointment of key officers of the General Secretariat;
6. Ensuring adherence to the values and guiding philosophy of the Foundation within the organisation and in its interface with external stakeholders;
7. Establishing the framework for approval of grant to grant partners/civil society, and ensuring compliance;
8. Nomination of new members of the Council following engagement with key stakeholders;
9. Establishing sub-committees, made up of both Council members and co-opted persons, to enhance and facilitate the performance of its functions;
10. Appointing a Secretary, an auditor or auditors, and attorneys and other agents of the Foundation;
11. Developing guidelines for the General Consultative Meeting, and the use of insights and resolutions from the meeting; and
12. Taking such other lawful initiative as may be required for the effective and efficient performance of its functions and in the best interest of the Foundation.

## GOVERNING COUNCIL AND MEMBERS

The Governing Council has executed its functions through the following committees and members:

### Fundraising & Financing Committee

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu (Chair)  
Hamdiya Ismaila (Vice Chair)  
Hajara Mohammed  
E. Gyimah-Boadi  
Audrey Gadzekpo  
Rev. Opuni-Frimpong  
Ethel Cofie

### Gender & Social Inclusion

Agnes Apusiga – Chair  
Francis Asong – Vice Chair  
Hajara Mohammed  
Peter Yaro  
Rose Mensah-Kutin

### Finance & Audit

Abdul-Nasir Yusif – Chair  
Hamdiya Ismaila – Vice Chair  
Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu (resigned)  
Deodat Adenutsi  
Peter Yaro

### Grants & Projects

Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu – Chair (resigned)  
Kobina Yeboah Okyere – Vice Chair  
Agnes Apusigah  
Sulemana Abudulai  
Steve Manteaw

### Programme/Programme Quality

Audrey Gadzekpo – Chair  
Charles Abugre – Vice Chair  
Nana Asantewa Afadzinu  
Kobina Yeboah Okyere  
E. Gyimah-Boadi  
Takyiwaa Manuh  
Mohammed Awal  
Franklin Cudjoe

### Transition Committee

Esther Ofei-Aboagye – Chair  
Charles Abugre – Vice-Chair  
Francis Asong  
Abdul-Nasir Yusif  
Ellen Hagan  
Akoto Ampaw

## ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMITTEES AND THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

### Fundraising & Financing Committee

With the guidance of the Fundraising and Financing Committee, the Foundation developed a number of strategies and policies including the Financing and Fund-Raising Strategy, Fund Raising Plan, Ethical Fund-Raising and Investment Policy and the Endowment Fund Strategy.

A Technical Committee has been established to support the operationalization and implementation of the Endowment Fund Strategy. The Fundraising and Financing Committee has also facilitated the Foundation's engagements with Foundations and Grant-Making Institutions.

### Gender and Social Inclusion

The Gender and Social Inclusion Committee led the Foundation in the review the Safeguarding and Code of Conduct policies for the Foundation. All members of the GC and the Secretariat have signed unto these policies.

The Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Strategy, initially developed under the STAR-Ghana Programme, was revised and approved. Work is ongoing to align the GESI Strategy with the relevant policies of the Foundation and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework.

### Finance and Audit

Under the auspices of the Finance and Audit Committee the Risk Register was reviewed and updated. The Committee also reviewed the first audit of the Foundation and worked with the Secretariat to ensure implementation of the recommendations.

The Committee also guided the Foundation to adopt the accrual accounting method over the cash accounting method in order to cover the Foundation's entire assets. Again, the Governing Council (GC) was advised to adopt the period, January to December, as the Foundation's financial year.

### Grants and Projects

With the support of the Grants Committee, the Foundation continued its support to partners under the various funding windows. The Foundation completed collaborations initiated under the Programme. In all, fifty-four (54) grant partners were involved, made up of thirty-eight (38) strategic and innovative partners and sixteen (16) local partners. The calls were in the areas of Gender and Social Inclusion, Media, Strategic Opportunities, Anti-Corruption, Local Governance, Parliament and State Institutions.

## Programme / Programme Quality

The Programme Quality Committee reviewed and assured the Foundation's Foundational Political Economy Analysis (PEA). This was subsequently adopted by the GC as an SGF Working Document around which future programming would be developed.

## Transition Committee

Governing Council's Transition Committee supervised the transition process from the STAR-Ghana Programme to the STAR-Ghana Foundation and managed the implementation of the Transition Plan. The work of the Committee ended in September 2020 with the closure of the STAR-Ghana Programme. The Committee also oversaw the development of the Foundation's Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Foundation's Risk Register was also finalized and has since been approved by the Governing Council.

## Future Outlook

Distinguished Members of the Foundation, there is no doubt that our mission of working to increase citizens' and civil society effectiveness is critical at this point of Ghana's development. Our approach of convening, catalysing, coordinating and learning has considerable prospects for fostering the equitable and inclusive society we want as well as promoting gender equality, social inclusion and building strategic partnerships to this end.

Though the Foundation has gained acceptance as a national facilitator of the required social change, there is more to be done to establish it firmly and sustain it. The present funding environment is very challenging and the pressure is on for the Foundation to be resourceful and innovative. Our efforts to promote the culture and practice of local philanthropy should inure to our benefit as well as contribute to a new way of sustaining democratic governance practice. We are still very optimistic that the STAR-Ghana Foundation will fulfil the vision that called it into being.

An urgent business is to replace Her Ladyship Prof. Henrietta Mensah-Bonsu on the Governing Council. We hope this meeting will consider the nominees that we shall present for your attention and make an appointment in her stead.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Governing Council and my own, I would like to express sincere gratitude to you for your support and goodwill. You have always provided us with the assistance we needed. Our appreciation also goes to the Management and Secretariat under the able leadership of Alhaji Ibrahim-Tanko Amidu. They have really worked hard to set the Foundation on a strong footing, in spite of funding challenges, endless proposal writing, COVID scares and small staff numbers. Their dedication to duty in a very difficult year must be commended.

We are grateful to the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, the European Union and all our other funding partners for their support in 2020. We are also indebted to the wide range of organizations in civil society, public and private sectors as well as individuals who have shown faith in us and worked with the Foundation on various projects, convenings and engagements. Together, we have worked to make Ghana stronger. We are appreciative of various service providers whose contributions have made us an organization. Finally, I must thank my colleagues on the Governing Council and the Secretary, Mr. Akoto Ampaw (Esquire). Your commitment has been admirable and we look forward to strengthening the Foundation for good work together.

**THANK YOU.**



ESTHER OFEI-ABOAGYE (PhD)