



## DEVELOPMENTAL RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN GHANA

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**CSO Partnership**   
for Development Effectiveness

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## ACRONYMS

AGI	Ghana Association of Industries
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECF	Extended Credit Facility
GEA	Ghana Employers' Association
GLSS 6	Ghana Living Standards Survey, sixth round
GMWU	Ghana Mine Workers' Union
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JSNC	Joint Standing Negotiating Committee
NEP	National Employment Policy
NHIA	National Health Insurance Authority
NLC	National Labour Commission
NPRA	National Pensions Regulatory Authority
NTC	National Tripartite Committee
PIAC	Public Interest and Accountability Committee
PURC	Public Utilities Regulatory Commission
SNCs	Standing Negotiating Committees
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
SSPP	Single Spine Pay Policy
TUC	Trades Union Congress (Ghana)

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Social dialogue, i.e. engagements, consultations, discussions and negotiations among social partners on economic and social policies and other issues of common interest is fairly established in Ghana. An elaborate legal and institutional framework and norms exist for tripartite and bipartite social dialogue between the government, employers' association and trade unions. In addition, multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces enable civil society organizations (CSOs) and other interest groups in the country to engage in national development dialogue processes. Social dialogue and multi-stakeholder dialogue in Ghana take place at multiple levels in either structured or *ad hoc* form.

Ghana's social partners, CSOs and other interest groups have actively engaged in the formulation and implementation of national policies, programmes and legislation. This has engendered some positive and inclusive economic, social and political development outcomes. Social dialogue and multi-stakeholder consultations, including public hearings, have characterised the formulation of annual national budget and medium term economic policies as well as other sectoral socio-economic policies in Ghana. The consultation processes have provided opportunities for the public to submit memoranda at public hearings and other consultation meetings. Social dialogue is therefore largely incorporated into the governing structures of public institutions in Ghana. At the enterprise level, trade unions have used social dialogue struc-

tures, including the collective bargaining space to enhance the employment and working conditions of workers.

This paper analyses the relevance of social dialogue for development in Ghana. It focuses on the extent to which social dialogue, multi-stakeholder dialogue and other non-traditional forms of social dialogue influence development policies and legislation in Ghana.

The analysis contained in this paper draws on primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected through questionnaires and face-to-face and telephone interviews with representatives of social partners and CSOs in Ghana. The participants of the study include: the Chief Labour Officer of Ghana, the Director of Industrial Relations of the Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) and the Head of Organizing and Industrial Relations of the Trades Union Congress TUC (Ghana). The other respondents include the Eastern Regional Secretary of the TUC (Ghana) and officers of the following CSOs across the country; PWYP, ISODEC, Social Support Foundation, Civil Society Coalition on Land, WACCAM and Friends of the Nation. Primary data was complimented by secondary data obtained from published documents and data from the sixth round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 6).

<sup>1</sup> The content of this study and its conclusions reflect the role and value of social dialogue in Ghana, focusing mainly on the period from the year 2000 to 2015. It is however important to note that social dialogue, like any form of dialogue, could be broken at any moment and the progress made through the years can shift due to a change in government or in the attitudes of the actors involved. This study has therefore to be taken in its specific context as a snapshot of what social dialogue can achieve with the good will of its actors. The best way to guarantee the contribution of social dialogue to development is by institutionalising it, and even then it is not exempt from obstacles.

## 1. ESTABLISHMENT AND INSTITUTIONALISATION OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN GHANA

Ghana has a long history of social dialogue, pre-dating its political independence. The nature and functions of social dialogue, particularly the relationship between social partners and social dialogue spaces have mostly been shaped by prevailing political economic demands. Over the years, whereas multi-party democracy has promoted spaces for enhanced social dialogue, military dictatorships have stifled social dialogue in the country. The relationship among social partners has thus varied from an adversarial to a cooperative one under different political and economic regimes.

Social dialogue between the early 20th century and independence in 1957 was largely adversarial as workers organised to protest against poor working conditions and later joined the independence struggle movement. Britwum (2007) and Obeng-Fosu (2007) document notable collective actions by workers and workers' militancy in 1919, 1921, 1925 and 1930s. Trade union and workers' struggles for rights and interests were intertwined with the nationalist political struggles for independence. This dynamic shaped the relationship between unions and the immediate post-independence government and subsequent political regimes in the country.

Immediately after independence in 1957, the nature of social dialogue and relations among social partners changed significantly. During the first decade of independence, cooperation between the government and the TUC (Ghana) characterised social dialogue in the country. Subsequently, the methods, intensity and emphasis of social dialogue have varied. Over the years, the relations and engagements between the TUC (Ghana) and

governments have been shaped by political and economic orientations of the various governments (Britwum, 2007).

The current legislative and institutional framework for social dialogue in Ghana is defined by the 1992 Constitution, the Labour Law (Act 651) and other established practices such as *ad hoc* consultations. International conventions, including some of the conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO) also influenced social dialogue in the country. Ghana has ratified the Tripartite Consultation convention (C144) and Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise convention (C087).

The constitution of Ghana provides guarantees for effective participation in the development processes, including rights to form associations for the promotion and protection of rights in relations to the development process (CEPIL, 2008). The Labour Act (Act 651) guarantees the right of both workers and employers to form trade unions and associations respectively, for the promotion and protection of their interests and establishes institutions for the conduct of social dialogue in the country.

The National Tripartite Committee (NTC) and Standing Negotiating Committees (SNCs) or Joint Standing Negotiating Committee (JSNC) are among the key social dialogue structures at the national and enterprise levels, respectively. The other key institutions and structures for social dialogue in Ghana include the Labour Department, National Labour Commission (NLC), trade unions led by the Trades Union Congress (Ghana) and employers represented by the Ghana Employers' Association. These have mostly focused on national level and enterprise level industrial relations.

## 1. ESTABLISHMENT AND INSTITUTIONALISATION OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN GHANA

In Ghana, CSOs and other interest groups are largely exempt from the above social dialogue structures. However, CSOs, policy think tanks and other traditional authorities and hierarchies have participated in development dialogues in

Ghana through *ad hoc* mechanisms such as public hearings and consultations. The country's decentralised political system also enables citizens to influence decisions through their representatives at local assemblies.

## 2. LEVELS AND FORMS OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN GHANA

Social dialogue in Ghana is mostly tripartite and bipartite, and as indicated earlier, multi-stakeholder dialogue is also not uncommon. The dialogues take place at multiple levels such as the national, subnational, sectoral and enterprise levels. Consultations, discussions and negotiations among social partners in Ghana are either structured and predictable or *ad hoc*. The social dialogue agenda in the country varies widely. It includes national economic and social policies and programmes, legislation as well as wages and working conditions. While some social dialogue outcomes, such as consultative dialogue, are not binding or legally enforceable others, such as outcomes of collective bargaining, are binding. Whereas traditional tripartite and bipartite social dialogue is backed by law, multi-stakeholder dialogue and other CSO engagements lack adequate legal backing.

### 2.1. NATIONAL TRIPARTITE SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The present form of tripartite consultations in Ghana began in 1972 (Baah and Akrosu, 2007). Currently, tripartite social dialogue in the country is established by the Labour Act through the NTC which is mandated, among other things, to determine the national daily minimum wage, advise on employment and labour market issues and consult with partners in the labour market on matters of social and economic importance.

Alby *et. al.* (2005) argue that in most parts of Africa, tripartite cooperation is defined by improved labour relations, increasing productivity and consensus building among social partners on socio-economic issues. Consistent with Alby *et. al.* (2005), tripartite consultations in Ghana have significantly improved the relationship among the social partners. In the last fifteen years, NTC negotiations have resulted in a significant increase in the national daily minimum wage from GH¢0.42 (US\$0.11) in 2000 to GH¢7.00 (US\$1.74), representing an increase of over 1,500%.

However, consensus building on socio-economic and productivity increase are less attributable to tripartite consultation in Ghana. The NTC has, over the years, focused almost exclusively on minimum wage determination, with only minimal attempts at tackling other areas of its mandate. A trade union official intimated that:

*the scope of their [National Tripartite Committee's] work is highly limited... because beyond determination of minimum wage and wage related issues, they do not [focus on other issues]. My understanding is that the tripartite should go beyond these issues to include major policy discussions on the economy, on employment generation, on whole lot of other issues... Unfortunately, that is not the case.*

Furthermore, although the labour law provides that NTC sub-committees may be established at regional and district levels, tripartite social dialogue in Ghana is highly centralised at national level. A participant of the study from the Eastern region of Ghana be-

moaned that “for tripartite, we don’t have it in the regions for now... the tripartite is centralised in Accra”. This is despite the need for and potential benefits of tripartite dialogue at regional and district levels.

## 2.2. NATIONAL BIPARTITE SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In addition to the above, bipartite social dialogue involving consultations and discussions between two of the social partners is also established in the country. Twerefou (2014) asserts that the TUC (Ghana) and the GEA have developed a bipartite relationship through regular meetings at which matters of mutual interests are discussed. National level bipartite social dialogue in Ghana is usually consultative, *ad hoc*, voluntary and focused on matters of mutual economic and social interests. Positively, national bipartite social dialogue in Ghana has promoted a shared understanding and mutual cooperation among social partners in the country. It also generates lighthouse effects for social dialogue at various levels, i.e. enterprise, sectoral, regional and district levels. In the words of a participant of the study:

*[bipartite social dialogue] is a kind of voluntary arrangement made by employers and trade unions [social partners] to help them close the gap between them on issues before even they take it further to the tripartite. It is good because it ensures that before we get to the tripartite, we are not at extreme ends, our gaps are narrow and we are able to reach consensus early.*

In 2011, the TUC (Ghana) met the government’s economic management team, headed by the Vice President of Ghana, to discuss the union’s suggestions for the annual budget and economic policy. The suggestions emphasised a move away from inflation targeting towards economic policies that tar-

geted employment, increased investment in labour market institutions and improved social protection. Although inflation targeting continues to guide economic policies, some improvements have been made in social protection coverage in the country.

Its importance notwithstanding, national bipartite social dialogue is consultative, lacks adequate legal backing and its outcomes are largely not binding and therefore not legally enforceable. Hence social partners may act in ways contrary to consultations and discussions. A participant of the study lamented that:

*some of them [social dialogues] are consultative and they do not have any commitment that you can hold people to. So even though we have the right to speak, the politician has the right to go their own ways. Opportunity is created for the people to talk but you cannot hold people to account on what is discussed.*

And like tripartite, this form and level of social dialogue is limited to the government, employers’ association and trade unions.

## 2.3. ENTERPRISE LEVEL SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Arguably, one of the most established forms of social dialogue in Ghana is enterprise level social dialogue; specifically, collective bargaining is the most important form of social dialogue for workers. Bipartite enterprise level social dialogue determines wages, working conditions and work organization at the enterprise level. Social dialogue structures such as the SNC or JSNC, disciplinary committees, occupational health and safety committees exist at the enterprise level to deal with various issues. While some of these structures are *ad hoc*, others are permanent and established by legislation.

## 2. LEVELS AND FORMS OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN GHANA

An elaborate legal and institutional framework exists for the conduct of social dialogue at the enterprise level. Ghana has ratified ILO Convention 98 on the right to organise and collective bargaining and the country's constitution and labour law guarantee enterprise level social dialogue. Article 21(e) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees "freedom of association, which shall include freedom to form or join trade unions or other associations, national and international, for the protection of their interest". Industrial relations institutions such as the Labour Department and the NLC have also been established to promote enterprise level social dialogue.

The above notwithstanding, enterprise level social dialogue in Ghana is not pervasive. This is largely due to low trade union density in the country. The GLSS 6 data show that in 2012-13, only about 29% of workers were employed in unionised establishments.

Ghanaian trade unions have utilised the collective bargaining space to enhance the legislated rights, establish non statutory benefits and promote interests of workers. Additional benefits have also been gained through the collective bargaining process. Pillinger (2011) stresses the importance of trade unions in achieving better salaries for health workers in Ghana. The GLSS 6 data shows significant difference in the average earnings, access to both statutory and non-statutory benefits, job satisfaction and employment security in unionised establishments compared to average earnings in non-unionised establishments.

In addition to wage and working conditions, enterprise level social dialogue has promoted a shared understanding and mutual respect among workers and their employers. This has enhanced the relationship among social partners and has contributed to a positive industrial relations atmosphere in the country. A representative of GEA who participated in the study submitted the following:

*At the enterprise level, social dialogue has gone a long way to actually bridge the gap, eliminate some suspicion among parties; now there is respect, there is confidence and now it has also increased participation of workers in decision making. So on the decisions which affect them, they always have the opportunity to input. It has actually promoted joint consultation. The arbitrariness of management has also subsided.*

Also, enterprise level social dialogue in Ghana provides spaces for workers to influence the work organization and management of their enterprises. Specifically, this manifests itself in the involvement of workers and their trade unions in conflict and dispute management and in decision making on work organization at the enterprise level. According to the Chief Labour Officer "At the enterprise level, the unions and the workers play various roles in the management of institutions [and] in terms of dispute resolution, it is [done] through dialogue.

### 2.4. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

Since the return to multi-party democracy in 1992, multi-stakeholder dialogue has characterised the formulation of economic and social policies and the passing of legislation in Ghana. Although largely *ad hoc*, national, regional and district level multi-stakeholder dialogues have engendered collective and shared consensus on critical national issues.

In 2014, the government of Ghana, in response to calls by the TUC (Ghana) and other CSOs, called a multi-stakeholder national economic forum aimed at fostering a common understanding and agreement about the challenges facing the Ghanaian economy and how best to address them. The planning forum involved the TUC (Ghana) and the Ghana Association of Industries (AGI) and brought together stakeholders from the



public sector, the private sector, political parties, CSOs, policy think tanks, professional associations, traditional leaders, the security services, the judicial service, religious groups, some key individuals and the media. The outcomes of the forum dubbed the *Senchi Consensus* is said to have influenced the current Extended Credit Facility (ECF)<sup>2</sup> programme between the Government of Ghana and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Although multi-stakeholder dialogue is mostly *ad hoc*, the annual national budgeting processes has institutionalised multi-stakeholder engagements through budget hearing sessions. These provide a platform to stakeholders and other interest groups to discuss proposals from non-state actors for annual budget and economic policies in plenary. Through these processes, CSOs and other interest groups have managed to influence the government's annual economic policies. The Ministry of Finance incorporated some CSOs' proposals into the 2015 budget.

National multi-stakeholder dialogue has promoted some cooperation among Ghanaian CSOs. *Ad hoc* cooperation and loose networks are sometimes established to respond and deal with specific issues of shared national interest. A notable example of this is the cooperation of civil society groups through the Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas – Ghana (made up of over 100 individuals drawn from CSOs across the country) under the leadership of the TUC (Ghana) to campaign against the removal of the Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC)<sup>3</sup> from the Petroleum Revenue Management Bill. So far, PIAC reports have generated national discussions on the use of revenues from oil.

The importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue notwithstanding, lack of defined structures and procedures have constrained multi-stakeholder dialogue in Ghana. Dovlo (2005) argues that social dialogue mechanisms which do not have agreed structures and procedures have limited potential outcomes. This partly explains the failure of multi-stakeholder dialogue to achieve some desired outcomes, at least from the perspective of non-state actors.

Also, multi-stakeholder national dialogue is constrained by external influence. The TUC (Ghana) has criticised the influence of development partners in setting macroeconomic targets and the exertion of influence by these partners on important national issues, leaving little space for public participation (Twerefou, 2014). The failure of multi-stakeholder dialogue to adequately influence economic policy directions as anticipated by non-state actors may also be explained by external influence on these policies. In the last three decades, IFIs such as the IMF and the World Bank have exerted significant influence on Ghana's economic policy decision making. These external influences have largely proven resistant to countervailing ideas and pressures from local non-state actors. In 2003, through its budget statement and economic policies the government of Ghana introduced tariffs on rice and poultry imports to support domestic production of such commodities. But according to Aidoo (2014) intervention by the local IMF representative led to the suspension of the enforcement of the tariffs and the subsequent repeal of the act despite its approval by the Parliament of Ghana.

<sup>2</sup> Agreement between the government of Ghana and the IMF for a medium-term economic reform program (2015-2017) support.

<sup>3</sup> PIAC is made up of civil society representatives. It was established by the Petroleum Revenue Management Act to monitor the compliance by the government and its agencies in the management of petroleum revenues in Ghana.

## 2. LEVELS AND FORMS OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN GHANA

### 2.5. PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATION IN DIALOGUE

In Ghana, dialogue typically takes place through discussions, negotiations and consultations. However, trade unions and other CSOs have used protests, demonstrations and other channels, particularly the media – press conferences and press releases – to communicate their concerns. Although these may not be dialogue forms in the strict sense, they have been used as tools to either trigger social dialogue or back on-going social dialogue.

Some of these tactics have elicited responses. In February 2014, the Ministry of Finance issued a press release in response to the TUC's press statement on the general economic situation in Ghana. In 2014, trade unions in Ghana, led by the TUC (Ghana) organised one of the biggest nationwide demonstrations in the country in protest against worsening economic and social conditions in the

country. Some community groups have also used demonstrations to raise their concerns. Aidoo (2014) documents some demonstrations in Ghana since 2010: the demonstration by the people of Agyemankwanta over the health implications of a landfill site and the demonstration by some residents of Ashaiman over poor social conditions in the municipality. In addition to specific community issues, demonstrations were also held over political issues such as the voters register and the energy crisis.

Importantly, the democratic dispensation in the country has created spaces for varied forms of social dialogue including demonstrations and protests. Social partners and other interest groups have harnessed these spaces to exert or attempt to exert some influence on Ghana's development policies. But as previously indicated, the prevailing socio-economic milieu in the country has also influenced social dialogue in Ghana.

## 3. ROLE AND IMPACT OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN GHANA

As outlined above, the importance of social dialogue for inclusive economic and social development outcomes cannot be overemphasised. In Ghana, social dialogue has had varied influence on legislation, economic and social policies and outcomes at the national, subnational and enterprise levels.

Since the return to constitutional rule in 1992, discussions and consultations have characterised the

legislative processes. In practice, bills to the parliament of Ghana are largely sponsored by the executive arm of government but opportunities, such as consultative meetings at national and subnational levels, arise for individuals and interest groups to engage in a discussion before laws are passed. ACET (2014) asserts that typically, committees in parliament encourage the inclusion of public memoranda in bills and parliament also holds public hearings when a bill is presented for consideration. A participant in the study agreed with this assertion by stating that *"you know government is the initiator when it comes to legislation...The other social partners bring their expertise to bear on whatever is being discussed. And they are able to advise on issues"*.

In recent decades, extensive multi-stakeholder, national and subnational consultations and discussions have characterised Ghana's constitutional review processes. The Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) is described as a negotiated law due to the active role social partners played in its passage. Twerefou (2014) mentions that the TUC (Ghana) and GEA played significant roles in the formulation and implementation of the labour act. And according to Dovlo (2005), the process of developing the labour law was a very good example of social dialogue in practice. Concerns raised by trade unions and workers led to the passage of the National Pensions Act, 2008 (Act 766) which reformed pensions in Ghana and introduced a contributory three-tier pension scheme for enhanced pensions in the country.

In addition to legislation, socio-economic policies in Ghana have been influenced by social dialogue. Like legislation, national policies largely emanate from the government, but social partners have opportunities to input. Twerefou (2014) highlights the importance of social dialogue in the formulation of medium-term economic policies in Ghana, including the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). National and subnational consultations as well as engagements with trade unions and other specific interest groups have characterised the development of medium-term economic policies in Ghana.

Again, extensive consultations and discussions between government, trade unions, employers' association and other interest groups helped shape the newly adopted National Employment Policy (NEP) of Ghana. Around 13 representatives of trade unions, employers' association, research institutions and CSOs participated in the inter-sectoral consultation on the NEP (see NEP document, 2015). The development of the national youth policy also involved similar stakeholder engagements. In addition, social dialogue is playing an important role in shaping the national social protection policy currently being formulated.

In Ghana, social dialogue on public policy has encouraged shared consensus among social partners. This has been useful in policy implementation. A participant of the study observed that *"people generally accept national policy decisions because they feel that they have been contacted in good faith and that not one person [decided on the policies], it is not an imposed decision. Once social partners agree on policies, it promotes confidence in the system"*. The relationship among social partners has therefore also been enhanced through social dialogue platforms. Twerefou (2014) asserts that there has been consistent improvement in industrial relations as a result of the increasing role of government, employers and trade unions as social partners. This has engendered a better reception and greater general ownership of such policies.

In addition to general policies, social partners in Ghana have engaged on specific issues of collective national interest such as utility tariffs and petroleum product pricing. Major reviews of electricity and water tariffs by the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) have involved consultations and discussions between the PURC, utility companies and interest groups.

Social dialogue on utility tariffs has, in the past, contributed to mitigating the effects of utility price hikes in Ghana. In 2013, as a result of campaigns by trade unions and dialogue among social partners, the government of Ghana reduced the announced electricity tariff by 25 percentage points. This represented a subsidy of about GH¢400 million (US\$100 million). This was however not solely achieved through consultation and negotiations. Aidoo (2014) argued that the 10-day ultimatum (with a threat of industrial action) issued by the TUC (Ghana) to the government of Ghana and pressures from other labour unions led to the government's decision to lower prices of electricity and water.

### 3. ROLE AND IMPACT OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN GHANA

Ghanaian trade unions have not only promoted the interests of their members but also national interests through social dialogue. The TUC (Ghana) and its affiliate, the Ghana Mine Workers' Union (GMWU), have utilised the social dialogue space to promote mining revenues for national development. Minter (2014) suggests that the active involvement of the TUC (Ghana) has generated policy space for discussions on taxation of natural resources and that, thanks to proposals made by the TUC (Ghana) and the mining union, a windfall tax was imposed and moves towards a retracting of agreements were initiated.

As previously detailed, social dialogue has characterised wage determination, including the national minimum wage in Ghana. In addition to the significant increase of the national minimum wage, trade unions have demanded and were granted the exemption of minimum wage earners from the payment of income tax through national social dialogue. The unions' contribution to the processes leading to the introduction and implementation of the Single Spine Pay Policy (SSPP) for public sector workers in Ghana is generally recognised. As demonstrated earlier, through collective bargaining, unions have achieved relatively better pay and improved working conditions.

In addition to legislation and economic and social policies, social dialogue largely characterises the governing structures of public institutions in Ghana. This is done through representation of social partners on the governing boards of public institutions. Currently, unions in Ghana have a representation on around 20 governing boards, councils, commissions and committees in the country. These include the National Tripartite Committee (NTC), Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), National Pensions Regulatory Authority (NPRA), Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT), Population Council, Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURC), National Aids Commission, and Public Interest Accountability (PIAC). In addition to trade unions, some of the public boards and commissions, such as the PIAC, have CSO representatives on their governing boards.

Representation within such bodies has become an important part of the strategies by trade unions to influence decisions that affect workers and their families. It gives unions the opportunity to contribute to corporate governance in the public service and to ensure that such decisions are consistent with the broader societal goals. Through their participation in governance of national institutions, unions have been able to resist policies that they consider inappropriate for social and economic development.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research demonstrates that social dialogue is well-rooted in Ghana. The existence of a legal and institutional framework for social dialogue has created spaces for trade unions, CSOs and other interest groups to engage with other significant actors on varied issues. But some challenges persist. Enterprise level social dialogue is minimal due to low trade union density in the country. Furthermore, the lack of defined structures and procedures for multi-stakeholder national dialogue detract from its effectiveness.

Challenges notwithstanding, tripartite, bipartite and multi-stakeholder consultation, discussion and negotiations at national, subnational and enterprise levels have led to some positive and inclusive economic and social development outcomes.

For non-state actors, the developmental outcomes of social dialogue in Ghana may not be as desired. However, the consequences of the absence of social dialogue are unimaginable. Shared understanding and consensus on national and enterprise level policies have been possible largely due to social dialogue. The inclusive economic growth outcomes in Ghana, albeit below expectations, have been made possible due to social dialogue. Social dialogue is therefore a pre-requisite for the economic and social development of Ghana.

On the basis of this analysis, the following recommendations are made.

- The analysis shows that multi-stakeholder dialogue is lacking in form and has weak outcomes in Ghana largely due to its non-binding and non-legally enforceable nature. To achieve greater impact, reforms are needed to define structures and procedures and to establish at least an annual multi-stakeholder dialogue. Furthermore, such reforms must make outcomes of multi-stakeholder dialogue binding and enforceable.
- Although Ghana has elaborate legislation for social dialogue, institutions of social dialogue created by such legislation are weak and unable to effectively execute their mandate. Significant investment is therefore needed to enable these institutions to effectively support social dialogue in the country.
- As shown above, low trade union density has limited the benefits of enterprise level social dialogue to the few unionised workers in Ghana. Trade unions need to ensure that the benefits of social dialogue are extended to as many Ghanaian workers as possible through improved organizing in order to extend trade union coverage and for that matter enterprise level social dialogue.

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