



NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AUTHORITY

15th May 2020

For immediate release

NIA RESPONDS TO NDC CLAIMS

The following constitutes the responses of the National Identification Authority (NIA) to the claims made by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) at its press conference in Accra on Thursday, 14th May 2020:

NDC CLAIM #1: NIA and EC are acting in concert to rig the 2020 elections

Ken Attafuah-led NIA and Jean Mensa-led Electoral Commission have conspired to rig the 2020 elections in favour of the NPP and are executing that criminal design.

Response: NIA is not part of the election management architecture in Ghana. There is no conspiracy between NIA and EC to rig the 2020 elections. Election rigging is a serious criminal matter with dire political, economic and social consequences for any nation. Any person, party or institution alleging such a criminal conspiracy has a duty to report same to the police and provide the requisite evidence to support investigations and/or prosecution.

The governance architecture of NIA goes beyond the current Chief Executive Officer, i.e., Prof. Ken Agyemang Attafuah. The day-to-day administration and management of the affairs of NIA is led by the Executive Secretary, but policies governing the operations of NIA are set and regulated by the NIA Governing Board, which also reports to the President of the Republic through a Minister of State at the Presidency – in this instance, the Hon. Dr. Anthony Akoto Osei, MP, Minister for Monitoring and Evaluation and Minister responsible for the National Identification

System (NIS). It must be noted that the NIA Governing Board comprises the Chief Executives of various statutory agencies involved in identity management or that require accurate, reliable, complete and up-to-date data for efficient service delivery, such as SSNIT, NHIA, Statistical Service, GRA, Births and Deaths Registry, and Ghana Immigration Service. It also has two eminent academics – a Professor of Law at the University of Ghana Business School, and a Professor of Agricultural Economics from Central University, and chaired by a distinguished retired public servant. The members of the Board are women and men whose individual and collective integrity and decency are beyond reproach.

Thus, “the Ken Attafuah-led NIA” cannot just act as it pleases; on the contrary, it is subject to the policy direction and control of the NIA Governing Board. Thus, a decision to collaborate with any state institution such as the Electoral Commission in any enterprise must be directed or approved by the Governing Board, which also directs or approves the commencement, discontinuation or resumption of a mass registration exercise in any region.

NDC CLAIM #2: Exclusion of the Voter ID as Ghana Card registration requirement was both unlawful and illegitimate

Response: This claim is most astonishing. The amendment of section 8 of Act 750 to exclude the Voter ID Card, Driver’s License, Baptismal Certificates and weighing Cards as valid registration requirements was effected by Parliament without a whimper of opposition or protest from any member of Parliament. The exclusive reliance on Birth Certificates, Passports and Certificates of acquired Citizenship was supported by the NDC in Parliament. Indeed, the amendments received the unqualified endorsement of the Minority MPs in Parliament, and the MPs who spoke on the Bill were mainly from the Minority side, with each of them enthusiastically support for the amendments. Indeed, as Hon. Innusah Fousseini put it, the MPs were satisfied that ample provision had been made in the Bill to cater for those Ghanaians who had neither a birth certificate nor a passport, namely the "vouching for" process. In these circumstances, the exclusion was both legal and legitimate, having been passed by the Ghanaian Parliament and on sound legal and social grounds.

By virtue of L.I. 2111 passed in 2012, the Ghana Card is the ONLY identity card to be required and produced whenever identity must be established or proved. By law, there are 17 mandatory uses of the Ghana Card, and failure to produce the card will result in the denial of a service, facility, right or opportunity to which a person may otherwise be entitled.

For the record, the mandatory uses of the Ghana Card as contained in the said Legislative Instrument include application for and issuance of a passport; application for and issuance of a driver's licence; opening individual or personal bank accounts; transfer and registration of land by an individual; transactions pertaining to individuals in respect of pensions; transactions specified under the National Health Insurance Scheme; purchase of a SIM card; transactions relating to pensions, transactions relating to insurance policies, transactions that have social security implications, registration as a voter; acquisition of a SIM card; payment of taxes; consumer credit transactions; and applications for public or government services, facilities, approvals, permissions or benefits. The inclusive development needs of the nation demand that all Ghanaians be enabled to register for and be issued with the Ghana Card.

NDC Claim #3: NIA has only registered 11 million Ghanaians and issued only 7 million cards.

Response: NIA under the current Government has done remarkably well given the initial challenges that confronted it, namely, limited technical capacity (1050 MRWs instead of 2500) and financial resource constraints. Starting with a daily average of approximately 30,000 registrations per day in late April 2019, NIA's latest daily average registrations stand at over 120,000 due mainly to invigorated equipment capacity and the attainment of operational excellence by the technical staff.

With this significant boost in daily throughput, a minimum of 100,000 applicants can be registered each day. Thus, NIA can register 3 million Ghanaians in approximately 30 working days, and the overall national target of 12million would have been met by 27th March 2020, when the nationwide mass registration exercise would have ended. The national target of 16.7million people would have been achieved in the subsequent mop-up exercise that was planned to end in June 2020.

NDC CLAIM #4: Instant Issuance has failed

Response: The instant issuance strategy is an innovation introduced by NIA to address its perennial inability to issue printed cards over the years. Network connectivity permitting, *instant printing* is the preferred mode of card printing, followed by the second option of *deferred printing*, and lastly *centralized printing*. Nationwide, over 70% of all cards are issued instantly, with the Volta Region having the best experience.

It is noteworthy that, between 2008 and 2016, NIA issued only 900,000 Ghana Cards. In less than one year – between 29th April 2019 when mass registration started and 20th March 2020 when the exercise was truncated – NIA issued 7,091,769! A total of 127,723 are in various stages of adjudication. NIA has printed the majority of cards in backlog (3,683,955), and is ready to issue them to Ghanaians once NIA resumes its field operations.

NDC Claim #5: Suppression of registration in NDC strongholds

Response: There is no truth to this allegation. NIA does not operate on the basis of political strongholds. Our operations planning is based on population statistics obtained from Ghana Statistical Service. There has been no deliberate effort to prevent applicants in any region to register.

NDC Claim #6: The Sworn-Oath Option has been slow and cumbersome

Response: While it is true the exclusion of the voter ID card as a primary registration requirement has increased the number of applicants needing to be vouched for, this process has been a part of our electoral practice under the Fourth Republic. The only difference now is that requirement that the oath be sworn before a Commissioner for Oaths or Magistrate. This ensures greater document integrity as guarantors appreciate the consequences of perjury in swearing the oath of identity. NIA ensures that a Commissioner for Oaths is available at every registration centre, at no cost to the applicants. Indeed, over 70% of applicants for the Ghana Card used this method to validate their citizenship nationwide.

NDC Claim #7: NIA mobilized unprecedented numbers of equipment and personnel into Ashanti Region.

The NDC alleges that, while NIA deployed an average of 2000 MRW's in all the NDC strongholds, it miraculously acquired and sent 5,092 MRW's, 800 Card Printers, 3,192 MRW's into the Ashanti Region, which is NPP's stronghold.

Response: It is not true that NIA deployed over 5000 MRWs into the Ashanti Region. The maximum number ever deployed was 3,600, as some of the old equipment had become faulty and some of the new ones were kept at the Head Office and used for hot-swapping when some of the equipment fails.

It is true that a larger number of Mobile Registration Workstations and other ancillary equipment were deployed into the Shanti Region relative to Greater Accra, Volta, Oti, Savanna, North East, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Ahafo, Bono, and Bono East Regions. But the same number of equipment sent into the Ashanti Region was also sent to the Western, Western North, Central (clustered as one NIA Operational Region) and the Eastern Region. As noted earlier, these decisions were influenced solely by population density and equipment availability. Based on operational realities on the ground, NIA requested for additional equipment in July 2019 in order to scale-up its operations, and received same in October 2019. Some of the new equipment were deployed to the Upper East, Upper West, Bono, Bono East and Ahafo Regions (clustered as one NIA Operational Region) as soon as they were assembled, loaded with software, tested and readied for use in late October and November. By the start of the mass registration exercise in the Ashanti Region on 11th December 2019, most of the equipment were technically ready for use.

The concept of “strongholds of NDC and strongholds of NPP” has never been in NIA's contemplation or operational planning. The figures used by NIA for setting its registration targets figures were obtained from the Statistical Service and not from the EC.

It must be emphasized that 50% of registration officials engaged by NIA were recruited from the regions where the registration exercise was being undertaken. It is hard to contemplate that such officials will condone an agenda to disenfranchise their compatriots as the NDC seeks to suggest.

NDC Claim #8: NIA jumped from Greater Accra straight to Northern Region for improper political reasons

The NDC queries why NIA did not go straight to the Eastern Region which is the most proximate region to Greater Accra region, but rather went straight to the Northern Region. The NDC claims that it is curious that Eastern Region was the last and Ashanti the last-but-two regions to be registered, and that, this was deliberately orchestrated to procure electoral advantage to NPP to the disadvantage of NDC.

Response: The Volta Region is just as proximate to the Greater Accra Region as the Volta Region is. In 2008, NIA started the mass registration exercise in the Central Region in July 2008, proceeded to the Western Region, went next to the Eastern Region, and then the Volta Region in June/July 2009. This was during the tenure of Prof. Ken Attafuah as Executive Secretary between July 2008 and July 2009. Following a lull in operations, NIA resumed operations in Greater Accra, went to Ashanti and, eventually, finished the exercise in the three northern regions in 2013. This time round, in 2019, NIA elected to start the mass registration exercise in Greater Accra, and proceeded anti-clockwise to the Volta, Oti, Northern, Savannah, North East, Upper East, Upper West, Bono, Ahafo, Bono East, Ashanti, Western North, Western, Central and, finally, Eastern region. In 2008, there was no political calculation in this operational design, just simple logical flow to reduce cost, taking into account the nation's topography, transportation network, population density and such related appropriate considerations. There was no mischief or malevolence, and no advantage to any political party or administrative region.

It must also be emphasized that the Management and Staff of NIA are drawn from all parts of this country, and they all appreciate the benefits of all Ghana having a credible National Identity System. This sound appreciation of the tremendous benefits of the Ghana Card to citizens and the nation is what drives NIA Management and Staff to execute our mandate with dedication and

loyalty to the nation. Voting and elections do not form part of NIA mandate, and do not drive what we do at NIA.

The NIA Governing Board, Management and Staff are well aware of the impact their success will make in Ghana's development. We wake up every day determined to achieve just that. Contrary to the NDC claims against NIA, the following are the values, realities, ethos and considerations that drive and motivate NIA Governing Board Members, Management and Staff in the discharge of their duties:

1. Meeting the sustainable development goals of providing legal identity for all Ghanaians and qualified foreigners in Ghana.
2. Contributing to the nation's effort to decrease Cybercrime and Internet fraud. A credible national ID system has great potential of removing anonymity from our country.
3. Supporting the Ghana Immigration Service in Immigration Enforcement activities. Ghana's immigration officials on enforcement duties will be able to easily identify nationals and foreigners.
4. Providing effective and reliable identity verification and data exchange platforms to enhance business transaction in the country. At the Results Fair held at the International Conference Centre early this year, the Banks represented at the open forum expressed keen interest in seeing NIA's verification models come on board for easy verification of the Ghana Card.
5. Facilitating the smooth usage of a credible, robust, dependable and modern smart Ghana Card with tremendous functionalities. The NHIA and SSNIT have decided to stop issuing ID cards to their members and rather piggy-back on the Ghana Card because of the utility, quality and value of the Ghana Card. NIA welcomes any other state institution that would want to use one of the 14 loadable applets on the chip embedded in the Ghana Card. If the EC decides to make the Ghana Card one of its primary registration documents, that would further prove the quality and dependability of the data NIA is collecting.

6. Removing the difficulties encountered by passport applicants. The Ghana Card, which is also an ECOWAS CARD, is a passport for use within the West African sub-region. Thus, 16.7 million Ghanaians will be issued with a passport for free by the end of the mass registration and mop-up exercises. Using the Ghana Card will make on-line applications for paper passports as easier and quicker.
7. The National Identity Register will facilitate the generation of credible data for national development planning purposes. We can tell from the data, for instance, which category of professionals we need to train and encourage for national development, and the number of persons who are vulnerable, and in need of special assistance.

The Way Forward

NIA has used the opportunity afforded by the lock-down induced by the COVID-19 pandemic to print most of the cards in backlog and to adjudicate the hundreds of thousands of applications that had gone into “adjudication” because of conflicts and inconsistencies in personal information provided by some applicants to the NIA in previous and the current registration exercises. The data released are being printed, and all cards in backlog and adjudication should be printed by end of May 2020 for issuance to the applicants.

At the appropriate time, NIA will resume and complete the mass registration exercise in the Eastern Region. It will then undertake a mop-up mass registration exercise in the Greater Accra Region during which time it will also issue the cards to those Ghanaians whose cards are ready. In addition, NIA will undertake a mop-up exercise in five (5) Regions which had the lowest registration results, namely Upper East, Upper West, Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions, and issue all the printed cards to the applicants resident in those regions. Finally, NIA will set up Regional, Municipal and District offices across the country to ensure continuous registration and issuance of the Ghana Card.

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