



17th February 2014

**Joint declaration by the National Chess Federations of
Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria
regarding the 2014 FIDE presidential elections**

We, the Presidents of the National Chess Federations of Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria have recently shared views on the subject of the forthcoming FIDE elections. Following our various discussions, we have agreed to sign the following declaration to express our concern with the campaign strategy and tactics currently being employed by certain members of the Executive Board of FIDE in the context of the forthcoming elections for the role of President of FIDE.

Over the course of the last several weeks, we have been approached, like many of our neighboring African chess federations, and requested to either host or participate in "visits to our countries" by Mr. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, President of FIDE since November 1995. Almost everywhere, such visits are being officially presented as the occasion to launch "Chess in Schools Programs" in the countries being visited. In actual fact, these visits are being used to exert significant political and financial pressures on the local chess federation Presidents to cast their votes for Mr. Ilyumzhinov, who will be running for his fifth term as FIDE President in the 2014 FIDE elections.

As members of a new generation of African leaders and managers, we believe that these campaign strategies and tactics are illustrative of the "Good Old Way Of Doing Business" (GOWODB) with Africa's governments, and with its public, private and civil society organizations. We believe in particular that the GOWODB is based on a concept of "Elections in Africa" which is not only insulting and demeaning for all Africans, but also totally out of touch with the vibrant reality of our continent which has engaged in an irreversible process of political transformation and economic development.

As the presidents of the national chess federations of our respective countries, and as former candidates to these elected positions ourselves, we believe that each election should serve as an opportunity for all the members and constituents of any organization to take part in an open, inclusive, serious and intelligent discussion about:

- i) the purpose of the organization;
- ii) the implicit and explicit objectives it seeks to achieve in the short, medium and long terms;
- iii) the environmental constraints under which it will have to operate;
- iv) the principles, rules and standards that must be enforced in the management and utilization of the resources available / required to achieve its objectives; and
- v) the ways, means, and extent to which its management strategies contribute to the meaningful participation, and subsequent empowerment of all the members and constituents of the organization.

We believe that the forthcoming election for the office of President of FIDE should serve as an opportunity for chess federations, clubs and players in each member country to conduct their own objective assessment of the record of achievements of the current FIDE leadership against the promises made to us during past election campaigns, as well as against what we want our common organization to be, both today, and in the future.



As Presidents of our respective African chess federations, representing our chess clubs and players, we believe that the forthcoming election for the office of President of FIDE is our opportunity to evaluate and to question the contribution of the current FIDE leadership to the development of chess on our continent as compared with that in other parts of the world. We also believe that it is our chance to evaluate the record of empowerment of African chess federations, clubs, and players, with a view to ensuring an equitable (and therefore durable) development of chess throughout the world.

In our own evaluation, both individually and collectively, FIDE's record on these last two fronts is poor. We have assessed the current FIDE leadership's policy for Africa over the course of the expiring term of office and we believe that this can be summarized by three words: Contempt, Neglect and Inaction.

In light of the above, we call on chess federations in all African countries to reject, with circumspection, the current campaign tactics of the current FIDE leadership and to join our agenda for CHANGE and TRANSPARENCY in the management of FIDE. We call for the empowerment of African chess federations, clubs and players, and for the promotion of equitable development of chess throughout the world, as endorsed by Grandmaster Garry Kasparov, our candidate for the Presidency of FIDE in 2014.

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President - Nigeria Chess Federation

Dr. Essoh Jean Mathieu Claude ESSIS
President - Federation Ivoirienne des Echecs

Mr. George Kweku ARKO-DADZIE
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