

12th September 2024

PRESS STATEMENT

The Impact of Presidential Debates and Encounters on Ghana's Democratic Development

Introduction: The Presidential Debates organised by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) have significantly influenced the trajectory of Ghana's democratic development. These debates have emerged as a fundamental element of Ghana's electoral framework, nurturing transparency, accountability, and informed electoral decisions. Commencing in the year 2000, the IEA has consistently organised Presidential Debates and Evening Encounters in every election year, except for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Influence on Democratic Development: These debates and encounters have remarkably advanced democratic discourse by providing a platform where candidates can directly convey their policies and visions to the electorate. This transparent exchange of ideas empowers voters to make well-informed decisions rooted in the candidates' positions on critical matters. The conduct of these debates since 2000 underscores Ghana's allegiance to democratic values, setting a standard for other African countries and underscoring the country's democratic development.

Promotion of Accountability and Transparency: Moreover, Presidential Debates and Evening Encounters instil a sense of accountability in candidates, compelling them to elucidate their positions and rationalise their policies, consequently promoting transparency and ensuring that leaders are answerable to the populace. By focusing on issues rather than personal attacks, the structured setting of these debates mitigates political tensions, thereby fostering a healthier political environment.

Educational Instrument for the Electorate: Furthermore, these deliberations function as an educational instrument for the electorate, providing insights into the candidates' competencies, comprehension of national issues, and capacity to articulate remedies. In doing so, the debates stimulate increased engagement in the electoral process, invigorating the electorate and bolstering voter participation.

Conclusion: The debates and encounters constitute a vital constituent of Ghana's democratic framework, enriching democratic dialogue, fostering accountability, mitigating political tensions, educating the electorate, and kindling voter engagement.

As Ghana prepares for the 2024 elections, the continuity of these activities will be pivotal in fortifying the country's democracy and guaranteeing that the voices of the people resonate.

Consequently, the IEA has scheduled two Presidential Debates, one Vice Presidential Debate and five Evening Encounters as follows:

Evening Encounters

Activity	Date	Venue
First Encounter	Wednesday, 18 th September 2024	Accra
Second Encounter	Tuesday, 24 th September 2024	Accra

Third Encounter	Tuesday, 1 st October 2024	Accra
Fourth Encounter	Tuesday, 8 th October 2024	Accra
Fifth Encounter	Tuesday, 15 th October 2024	Accra

Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates

Activity	Date	Venue
First Presidential Debate	Tuesday, 22 nd October, 2024	Accra
Vice-Presidential Debate	Tuesday, 5 th November, 2024	Accra
Second Presidential Debate	Tuesday, 19 th November, 2024	Kumasi

END