

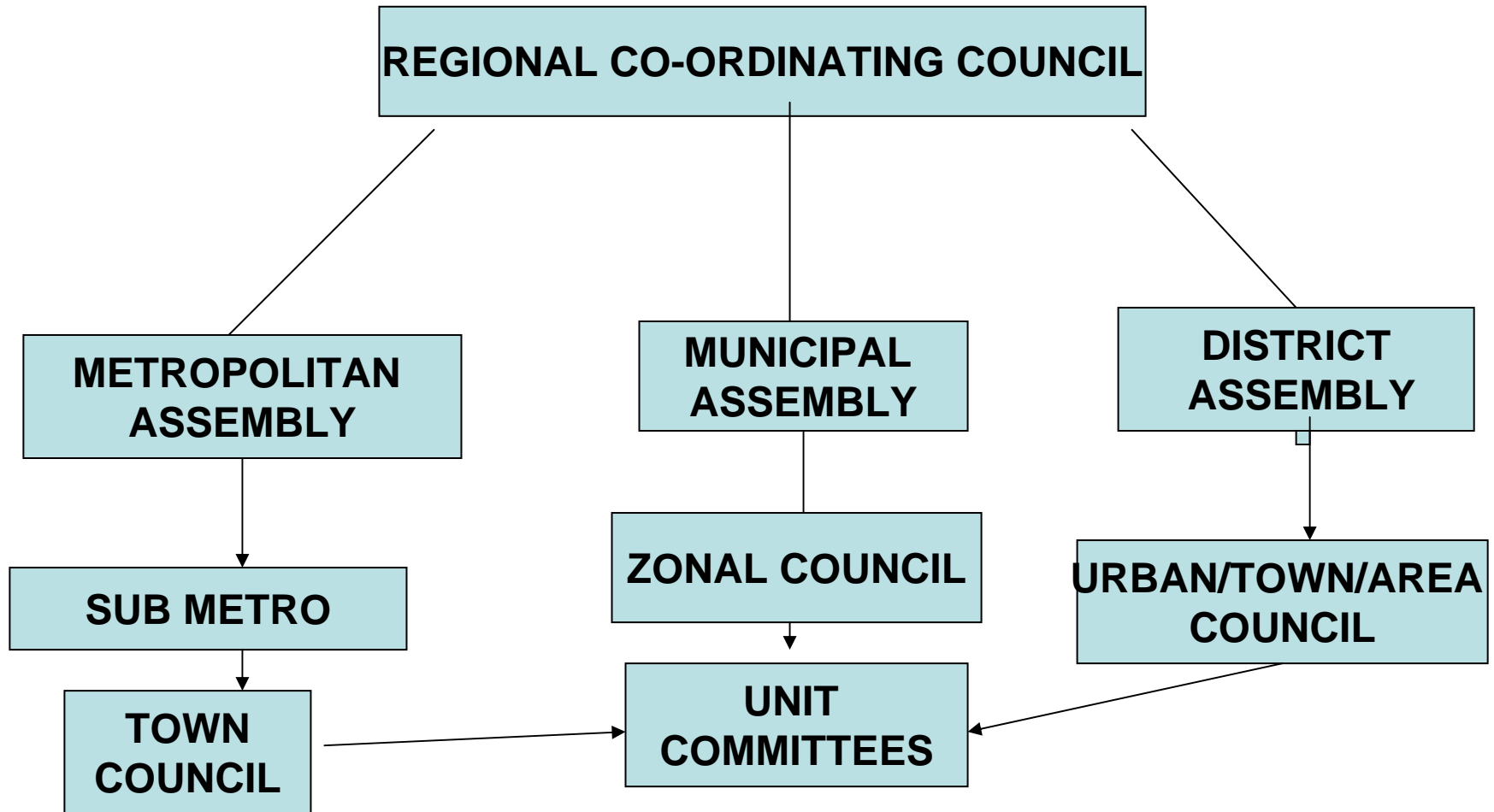
**CHALLENGES AND
PROSPECTS IN
DECENTRALISED
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING –
THE NORPREP EXPERIENCE**

INTRODUCTION: The structure of Local Government System in Ghana

- **OBJECTIVE**
- **share with participants the experiences of the Northern Region Poverty Reduction Programme (NORPREP) in supporting decentralised developing planning process in the context of the local government system in Ghana.**

- The Planning law of Ghana places the mandate on
- the districts Assemblies
- with overall co-ordination placed at Regional Co-ordinating Council.
- The region represents the highest level of governance after the national level.
- There are 10 of such regions in Ghana. Below the region is the District Assembly and below the district is the Area council

GHANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE



District Assemblies

- the District Assembly (DA) became the key institution in 110(now 138) designated districts within Ghana's ten regions. Districts are relatively small units, with a minimum population of 75,000.
- The District Assemblies have deliberative, legislative and executive functions.

Sub District Structures

- To further take governance to the grassroots there is a two tier of sub-district structures.
- This is intended to give communities more say in local governance. Firstly, there are over 1300 Urban, Zonal and Town/Area Councils throughout Ghana.
- Secondly, there are supposed to be about 16,000 Unit Committees (UCs) throughout Ghana, covering settlements of between 500-1000 people in rural areas and approximately 1500 in urban areas.
- In theory, the sub-district structures, especially the Unit Committees, provide structured mechanisms of representation, participation and accountability from village-level upwards.

NORPREP STRATEGY

- the incidence of poverty is about 40% as the national average. Northern Ghana is worst affected, Upper East-88%, Upper West- 84% and Northern Region – 69%.

NORPREP GOAL & OBJECTIVES

- **improve the livelihoods and living conditions of poor rural communities with emphasis on women and other vulnerable groups through deepening and broadening rural services and community and individual self-help capacity**
- **It aims to build the capacity of decentralised local government, civil society and community organisations to better respond to the needs of the poorest strata of the population**

- **It is also intended to improve access to resources and services by the large rural population, especially women and introduce operational changes and reforms needed to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of the institutions and community service providers in the Northern Region**
- **NORPREP will focus extra resources on poorer area councils and communities and most vulnerable people within communities.**

TARGETING STRATEGY

- **Area targeting**
- **Focus extra resources on poorer area councils**
- **Ranking of area councils and communities according to degree of poverty and disadvantage based on agreed criteria**
- **Targeting of vulnerable groups**
- **Intra-community targeting process to identify and target vulnerable categories within communities**

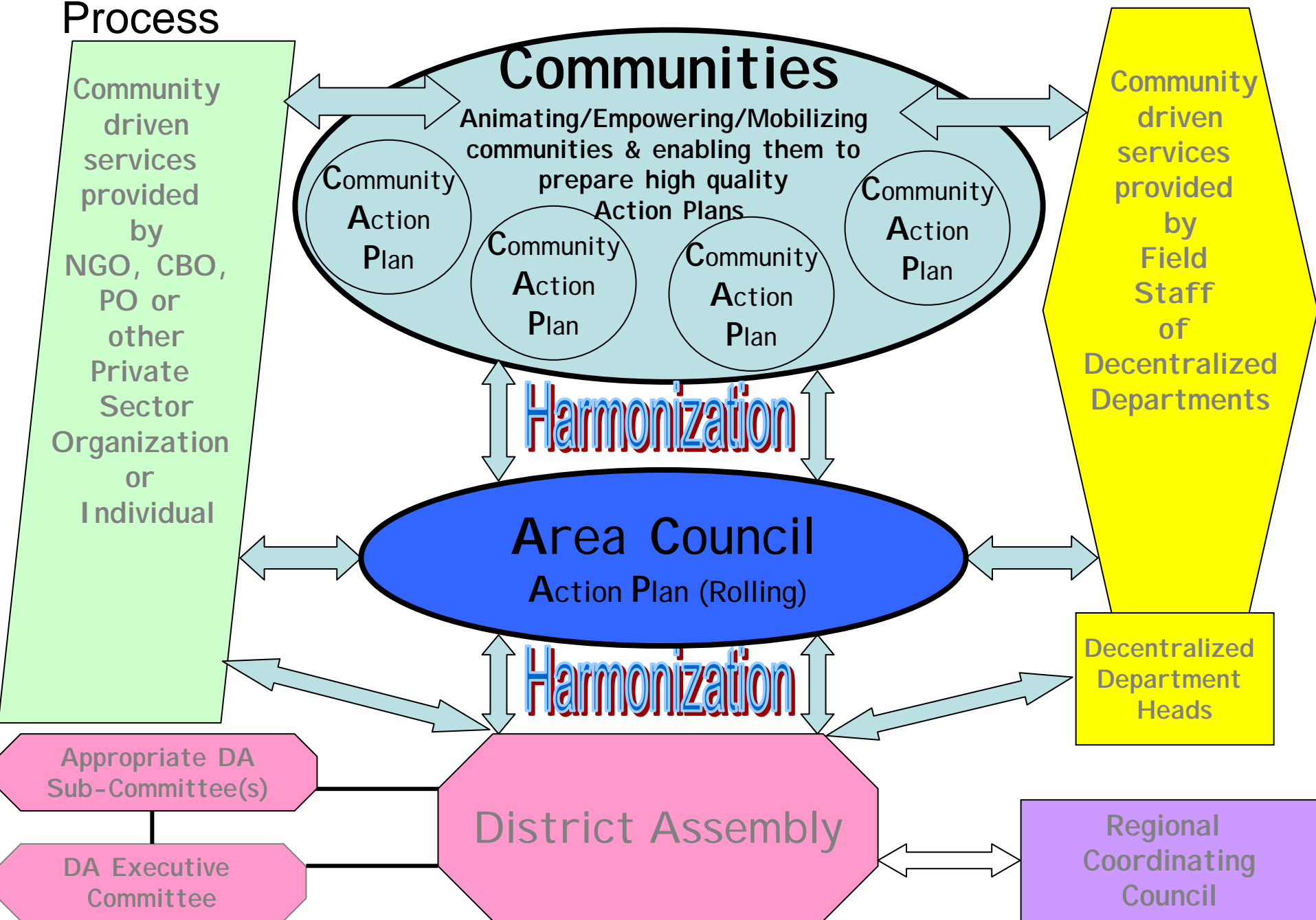
COMPONENTS

- **Capacity Building**
 - *Capacity building will at National, Regional, district and community level*
- **Community Development component.**
 - **Provision of financial support to proposals emanating from communities and groups synthesised at the Unit committees and Area councils into action plans and endorsed by DAs**

DECENTRALISED PLANNING PROCESS

- **The AWPB process follows the planning guidelines provided by National Development Planning Commission.**
- **The process emphasises a participatory demand-driven approach with forward and backward consultations during the various stages of synthesis and consolidation.**

• NORPREP Community Driven Participatory Dev. Planning Process



CHALLENGES

- **non functioning of the Area councils**
- **The technical staff of the decentralised departments at the districts who are to constitute the capacity building teams and give technical support for implementation are not adequate.**
- **The whole decentralisation concept appears to have been compromised by the establishment of autonomous services like the Ghana Health Service and the Ghana Education Service.**

- **the results of the planning process and the prioritisation and harmonisation at the Area council and later at the district assembly for implementation tend to reduce the priorities of the vulnerable groups to the background**

ATTEMPTS AT ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

- **Partner collaboration fora have been institutionalised at the regional level.**
- **collaboration in decentralised planning. In four UNICEF-supported districts, where Community Action Plans were drawn NORPREP validated and supported their implementation**
- **preparation of the Medium term Development plans,**
- **Harmonising Capacity Building activities of development partners**
- **Issues of geographical coverage in terms of districts Area council and communities are also considered to ensure complimentarity.**

- **the use of one or two extension staff of decentralised departments and retired civil servants at the Area Council level.**

CRITICAL ISSUES

- **Can community infrastructure and capacity building alone address issues of poverty reduction without credit?**
 - Programme seeks to promote linking venerable groups to financial institutions-
 - Inadequate number of rural financial institutions
 - Financial institutions interest does not coincide with those of the groups

- **To what extent can decentralised planning work in the face of inadequate staffing of the targeted poorest districts, Area councils, and communities?**
- **How do we get the districts to accept targeting as the focus of resource distribution towards poverty alleviation?**