

# **BONABOTO FIFTH NATIONAL CONGRESS**

**THEME: BONABOTO CONGRESSES, RELEVANCE, IMPACT ON THE BONABOTO AREA, AND THE WAY FORWARD**

**VENUE: CATHOLIC SOCIAL CENTRE, BOLGATANGA**

**DATE: 27<sup>TH</sup> - 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2006**

## **COMMUNIQUE**

We the people of Bolgatanga, Nangodi, Bongo, Tongo and their environs;

Cognisant of the fact that we have become increasingly impoverished, marginalized, deprived, faced with a hostile environment resulting in the highest levels of illiteracy, stunted growth of our children, wasted growth, longest distances to health and educational facilities, recording the highest drop-out rates from school, having comparatively fewer students at our tertiary institutions;

Deeply bruised by the pernicious policies of our British colonial masters of denying us access to education resulting in an over 300-year gap between the North and South; noting with concern the absence of any policy to address the situation particularly after the first republic;

Conscious of our deteriorating circumstances and the need for the sons and daughters of the area to take our destiny into our own hands;

Having gathered at our fifth national congress at Bolgatanga in the Upper East region of Ghana from 27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006;

Having deliberated on critical problems militating against the area's development, and recognising the role of other development partners in wealth creation and poverty reduction within the area and desirous of improving our circumstances do hereby issue this communiqué.

1. That despite previous efforts at reducing poverty in the BONABOTO area, poverty is still very high due to a number of reasons such as, erratic rainfall patterns, unfavourable environmental conditions, low levels of both public and private investment leading to high levels of unemployment and migration of the youth to the cities. This unfortunate situation is further aggravated by poor access to quality education, unwillingness of professionals to work in the area due to inadequate amenities such as poor road networks, quality health and educational facilities, as well as lack of government's special interventions such as President's Special Initiative (PSI) and Millennium Challenge Account (MCA).
2. That the growth and progress of the BONABOTO Association is retarded as a result of acute financial constraints, poor enrolment and commitment, and lack of an established secretariat.

**NOW THEREFORE**

Call on the various stakeholders including our own membership, Ghana Government, development partners, and NGOs to come to the aid of the people of the BONABOTO area in helping to address the seemingly intractable problems confronting the area. BONABOTO believes that these problems can be solved to a great measure if the following are done:

1. That the British Government owes the North reparation for the indelible damage caused by their policy and we urge the Ghana Government to immediately and urgently take up the issue
2. That the Ghana Government fulfils its commitment to revamp the shea nut industry in the three northern regions of Ghana. This can be enhanced by encouraging the private sector to invest in the industry.
3. That the Ghana Government with support from development partners should revamp the existing irrigation dams and construct more smaller dams and dug outs to promote irrigable farming to ensure food security and better livelihoods for the people. This also can be enhanced by educating the people on rainwater harvesting techniques.
4. To ensure the attainment of food security in the country and the north in particular, the Ghana Government should systematically scale down the importation of food crops that are grown in the country and support the local production of those crops instead.
5. That our concern over the years about fair representation in government especially cabinet and boards of State Organisations and Enterprises (SOEs) has not been fully addressed and government should address it. Much as the Upper East Region now has as cabinet minister, it is to the detriment of our sister region, the Upper West. Out of the maximum 19 cabinet ministers, the two upper regions have always shared one cabinet minister, which is grossly unfair.
6. That the Ghana Government ensures that the BONABOTO area gets its fair allocation of projects such as the President's Special Initiatives (PSI) and that several uncompleted projects should be completed.
7. That the poor road network is gravely retarding the development of the BONABOTO area, and the Ghana Government should hasten the tarring and rehabilitation of old roads and construct new ones linking district capitals and farming areas as well as our sister Upper West Region.
8. Five (5) years down the line, the Ghana Government has not fulfilled its promise to revive the tomato factory at Pwalugu and the meat factory at Zuarungu. Congress still calls on the government to fulfil this promise.
9. That, members of BONABOTO meet all their financial obligations to the association on a timely basis and each member is committed to contribute 5% of his /her monthly income to the BONABOTO EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FUND (BEAF).
10. That BONABOTO will educate the public that it is not an elitist group and all people from the area should enrol and remain active members. Furthermore, BONABOTO shall endeavour to establish branches or units at local levels in Bongo, Nangodi and Tongo.
11. That for a more holistic development of the area, Congress calls on capable citizens to be proactive by establishing schools, clinics, hospitals, hotels and small-scale agro-processing industries in the area.

That Congress notes that most of the problems enumerated are not peculiar to the BONABOTO area alone and, therefore, calls on our brothers and sisters in the three northern regions to maintain the peace and unite for this common objective. Congress consequently expresses its support for the demonstration by the Northern Youth to draw the Ghana Government's attention to the marginalisation of the North.

Adopted on this 30<sup>th</sup> day of December 2006 at Bolgatanga.