

## **BONABOTO SEVENTH NATIONAL CONGRESS**

**THEME:** ENSURING EFFICIENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAVANA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (SADA): ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

**VENUE:** CATHOLIC SOCIAL CENTRE, BOLGATANGA

**DATE:** 29<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2010 – 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY, 2011

### **COMMUNIQUÉ**

We, the members of BONABOTO, an association of citizens of Bolgatanga, Nangode, Bongo, Tongo and their environs;

Aware that the majority of people from our area are impoverished, marginalized, deprived and faced with a hostile environment resulting in the highest levels of illiteracy, high drop-out rates from school and fewer students in tertiary institutions;

Further aware that opportunities and potentialities exist and that the people continue to be innovative with coping mechanisms even in their current situation;

Happy that government has recognised the depth of the problems and potential of the three Northern regions and has initiated action to address these perennial problems with a comprehensive initiative called the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA);

Gathered at our seventh national congress at Bolgatanga in the Upper East region of Ghana from 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010 – 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2011;

Having deliberated on these critical problems as well as opportunities in the area's development and recognised 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 the 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 have continued to keep the people of the three Northern Regions very poor;
2. That the unfavourable socio-economic indicators of development in the BONABOTO area such as low school enrolment and high drop-out rates at the basic education level, aggravated by child trafficking, high maternal mortality and child mortality rates, etc. require drastic steps to address them;
3. That the SADA does not appear to have a sustainable source of funding as has already been demonstrated by both the NPP and NDC governments since 2007;

### **NOW THEREFORE**

Call on the Government, its development partners, and NGOs to play their respective roles responsibly in the implementation of the SADA so as to actually address the

developmental challenges and harness the potential of the people of the SADA area. BONABOTO believes that these problems can be solved to a great extent if the following are done:

1. That the implementation of the SADA should be conducted as a comprehensive national initiative and in a non-partisan, transparent and participatory way so as to greatly improve the lives of the citizens of the three Northern regions; The sustainability of the funding is critical as well as the political commitment by the current and future governments to continue the programme;
2. That the Government of Ghana fulfils its commitment to revamp the shea nut industry in the three northern regions of Ghana as part of the SADA strategy. This can be enhanced by encouraging the private sector to invest in this industry.
3. That the SADA supports the revamping of existing irrigation dams and construct additional 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. That the political leadership of the three Northern regions, including Members of Parliament and Ministers, should work in the interest of the development of the areas, particularly in the implementation of SADA, in a non-partisan, non-ethnic and non-sectional approach.
5. That a completely new space be acquired for the Upper East Regional Hospital rather than the proposed demolition of the current hospital. It would not only be a waste of resources but would also deprive the patients in the region of health care during the period from the demolition of the current hospital to the completion of the new hospital. The current regional hospital should be converted to Bolgatanga Municipal hospital to serve its fast growing population.
6. That BONABOTO is happy that efforts are being made to rehabilitate the roads in the Bolgatanga municipality and other roads as well as the construction of new ones to link district capitals and farming areas. However, there are already concerns about the quality of the rehabilitation works that need to be addressed;
7. That the Gurune language be approved for inclusion in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to avoid undue hardship and disadvantage to the children of the BONABOTO area who are currently being compelled to write examination in other languages viewed as “foreign” languages, and/or compelled to face limited choices of subjects.
8. That the Ministry of Health and the Upper East Regional Coordinating Council take steps to continue the construction of the Regional Airport located at Sumbrungu as a lot of resources have already been invested into the project and the reasons for locating the airport in Sumbrungu remain valid in spite of our cordial relations with the current Burkina Faso government.
9. That the chiefs, landlords and all stakeholders of the region’s development should do everything possible to facilitate the release of lands for public use while government on its part, provides adequate compensation for such lands;
10. That, considering the high poverty rates in the whole of Northern Ghana and the low levels of education, the School Feeding programme be extended to all basic

schools in the three Northern regions not only as a means to increase school enrolment but also to enhance the nutrition of the children;

11. That both BONABOTO citizens and non-BONABOTO citizens avoid using the positive image of BONABOTO and its membership for selfish purposes which may bring the association's name into disrepute.

Adopted on this 31st day of December 2010 at Bolgatanga.