

NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON DAMS AND DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA

Institutional Networking Meeting with Local Level I Institutions.

MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 19th August, 2010 Time: 10:00 – 12:00

Venue: Lower Manya Krobo Dist. Assembly Hall.

CHAIRPERSON:

Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally

INVITED GUESTS PRESENT

Name	Organization	Position
Nene Tetteh Amoako IV	Natriku	Chief
Fio Daniel	Asuogyaman Constituency	Research Assistant
Emmanuel Akornortey	Dangme West District Assembly	Presiding Member
Emmanuel A. Lartey	Dangme West District Assembly	Chief Executive
Agnes Charway	Fanteakwa	Representative
Dorvor Frederick	Fanteakwa	Representative
Nurudeen Tagoe	Yilo Krobo District Assembly	DBO
Patience Asem	VRA Resettlement Trust Res	Executive Director
James A. Tandoh	Upper Manya Krobo District Assembly	Ag. Coordinating Director
Joseph Tetteh Angovor	Upper Manya Krobo District Assembly	Chief Executive
Joe Nyankamawu	Lower Manya Krobo District Assembly	Coordinating Director
Felix K. Tetteh	Asuogyaman District Assembly	Representative
Michel Nuertey	Yilo MP	Representative
Isaac Agbo-Tetteh	Lower Manya Krobo	Chief Executive
Liqa Raschid-Sally	IWMI	Project Leader
Richard Koranteng	VBDF	Executive Director
Rhoda Arthur	VRA	Asst. Information Officer
Stephen A. Tetteh	Lower Manya District Assembly	Higher Executive Officer
Nakotey Emmanuel	Rite FM	Presenter
Edmund Akoto-Danso	IWMI	Researcher

AGENDA

1. Opening and Self Introduction
2. Presentations
 - 2.2.1 Brief Background to the GDD
 - 2.2.2 Rationale for the Institutional Networking meeting and Capacity Building for Dam Affected Communities (DAC)
 - 2.2.3 Activities of the Volta River Authority Trust Fund for DAC's
3. Discussion
4. Wrap Up

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Issue</i>
1. Opening & self-introductions	<p>The meeting started with a prayer by Michel Nuerthey and followed by self introduction of all participants (see list of participants). Hon. Agbo-Tetteh who welcomed members of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) of the Ghana Dams Dialogue and other invited persons to the meeting showed his appreciation to the Ghana Dams Dialogue for facilitating the networking meeting. He added that, even though the Members of Parliament who were invited are not present due to other national assignments, he is happy that, some were able to send their representatives. As a member of the NCC of the Ghana Dams Dialogue, he ended his welcome address by explaining to the other members of the relevance of the meeting to the administrative heads of the districts that borders the Akosombo and the Kpong dams. The Project Leader, Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally in her introductory remarks talked about the objectives of the meeting. She said, the meeting is part of a process of institutional networking where focused meetings are held with key stakeholders groups to discuss some emerging issues around dam development in the country and forge a way forward.</p>
2. Presentations	<p>Dr. Raschid-Sally gave a presentation on the background, outputs and impacts of the Ghana Dams Dialogue. She ended her presentation by outlining some emerging issues that the process has unearthed since its inception. She said, “the way forward for the VRA Resettlement Trust Fund for Dam Affected Communities (DACs) must be clarified, and the relationship between DACs and district assemblies must be strengthened. In addition, the governance of water and energy resources development must be fortified such that there is space for public participation, capacity-building and empowerment as well as mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation”. At the end of the presentation, participants sought for clarification on some of the issues she raised.</p> <p>Hon. Joseph Tetteh Angovor of the Upper Manya Krobo District Assembly wanted to know about the safety of the Akosombo and the Kpong dams. Dr. Raschid-Sally informed members about the existence of a Dam Safety Unit at the Water Resources Commission (WRC) in charge of safety matters but added that the inadequate information to the district assemblies about its existence clearly shows the lack of information exchange and insufficient participation in decision making for sustainable dam development in the country. Ms. Rhoda Arthur from Volta River Authority (VRA) in response to the issue assured the meeting that the VRA has regular safety checks on the dams by internal staff and other experts. Hon. Agbo-Tetteh added that the Assembly structure have a Unit in charge of safety and security matters within which the NADMO is also placed, and called on the VRA and WRC to update them on the safety of the two dams regularly.</p>

Richard Twum Koranteng gave the second presentation, which focused on capacity-building of DACs. He began by situating the DACs within the national, regional and district-level contexts of Ghana. He said, VRA, which had initially assumed responsibility for the welfare of the DACs, eventually 'transferred' these communities to the district assemblies through the Ministry of Social Welfare. However, this 'handing over' process lacked clarity and transparency, and raised a number of issues that remain unresolved. He added that, the DACs are said to lack representation in the district assemblies, even when their numbers merit such representation and as a result, the DACs have no say in the running of the districts. He also said, many DACs are faced with unsatisfactory land acquisition processes and claims that the Government has not paid compensation either to DACs or host communities, leading at times to conflicts between the two.

He recommended that, there should be capacity building for both the DACs and the district assemblies in order to empower them to exercise their rights and responsibilities. The DACs would also benefit from the provision of counterpart funding for the purposes of social infrastructure. Finally, the Dialogue should help shape policy reforms such that land acquisition for resettlement purposes is streamlined.

At the end of the presentation, participants asked questions and commented on the presentation. Hon. Joseph Tetteh Angovor commented on the issue raised by Richard Twum Koranteng about lack of representation of DAC's in the district assemblies. He explained that some of the settlements are found within existing electoral areas and so, they are fully represented and not isolated from decision making process. Hon. Isaac Agbo-Tetteh informed the meeting that, there is a process ongoing to facilitate the creation of smaller assembly areas and he believes that all these would be resolved when the process is completed.

Hon. Joseph Tetteh Angovor also wanted to know if there is a specific coverage of land around the lake which is solely for VRA to which Ms. Rhoda Arthur promised to check for him the actual span of land designated around the lake for VRA.

Hon. Agbo-Tetteh lamented about a situation where his assembly are not able to effectively collect property tax from some communities because they believe their properties are sub-standard or not in the assembly's land. He requested that, the much spoken of document that indicates that the VRA has fully handed over DAC's to the district assemblies should be made available to all so that all communities could be equally taxed and also benefit on equal terms. Nene

	<p>Tetteh Amoako IV added that a joint committee of DACs and LLAs should be set up to write to the VRA for the document. Hon. Emmanuel A. Lartey mentioned the difficulties involved in compensation process especially for the Akosombo dam but was optimistic that if the authorities refer to their documents, issues relating to compensation could be resolved.</p> <p>Mr Felix K. Tetteh speaking of problems between settler and host communities informed the meeting about some settler communities in Senchi, Adjena, Labolabo and New Dodi who have started selling lands belonging to host communities. The resettled communities were encroaching on lands as well.</p> <p>Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally reacting to views expressed by the participants suggested a proper documentation of issues in all circumstances and the information should be centralized and made available to anyone interested. It is difficult to resolve questions in the absence of all the facts pertaining to the matter. She added that, for these issues to be resolved, someone (who has influence over all the stakeholders) has to make a bold decision regarding what has to be done.</p>
	<p>The final presentation of the day was given by Ms. Patience Asem from the Volta River Authority Trust Fund. Her presentation provided an outline of the rationale for and activities of the Trust Fund, and some of the challenges that it is facing in realising its objectives. The Trust Fund seeks to ameliorate some of the negative impacts experienced by the DACs. It also serves to relieve the VRA of its role as a welfare provider for the DACs, allowing it instead to concentrate on its core business. The VRA is mandated to provide the cedi equivalent of US\$ 500,000 to the Trust Fund annually and the money is to be utilised in the 52 resettlement townships that were established during the construction of the Akosombo dam. The main activities of the Trust Fund is to support activities in the water, sanitation, education, health and social welfare sectors. She listed some of the projects undertaken by the Trust Fund and applauded some organisations such as DANIDA, Water Aid, the Community Water and Sanitation Agency, NGOs as well as the district assemblies for their support.</p> <p>Ms. Asem emphasised that the investments that the Trust Fund makes for the benefit of the DACs are channelled through district assemblies. She listed some of the challenges of the Trust Fund which includes among others, the delays in the receipt of funds from the VRA. Moreover, the Trust Fund's activities are complicated by land disputes, and claims of lack of compensation to host communities for the land that is now occupied by the resettled communities. Title deeds and land registration concerns – both of DACs and host communities are still unresolved. The basic infrastructure in the resettlement townships is often dilapidated, and its improvement requires major investments. In places, district</p>

	assemblies have neglected the DACs, thereby shifting expectations to the shoulders of the Trust Fund.
3. Discussions	<p>After the last presentation, Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally opened the floor to questions and comments on all three presentations.</p> <p>Nene Tetteh Amoako IV recommended an amendment in the Trust Fund Act since it only caters for the 52 communities resettled under the Akosombo dam project whilst the 6 communities under the Kpong project is neglected. In response, Ms. Asem said the Trust Fund currently works according to the deeds to which it was set up. She suggested that, as an area or district, they can request through the appropriate office for the amendments.</p> <p>Hon. Agbo-Tetteh made a recommendation that, even though Members of Parliament are well represented on the Trust Board, there should be a representation of District Chief Executives (DCE's) as well since they are closer to the affected persons. Ms. Asem recommended that, these concerns about the Trust Fund should be captured as a package and forwarded to the Ministry of Energy and other appropriate quarters for amicable resolution.</p> <p>Mr. Fio Daniel wanted to know the criteria for which livelihood activities would be developed in the affected communities. Ms. Asem in response indicated that, the livelihood option activities was a suggestion made during the last Board Meeting to which a committee was set to work on the percentage and other procedures for the activities. This has to be approved at the next Board Meeting after which the details will be circulated to everybody.</p> <p>Hon. Agbo-Tetteh commended the GDD for the networking exercise and further recommended that, the districts where DAC's are located should prepare a communiqué to the Ministry of Local Government on the issues at stake. He also recommended a meeting involving the district assemblies and the communities and other relevant stakeholders where issues will be plainly discussed. He further indicated that the DCE's have various fora at which they meet which provides them with various opportunities to discuss issues if these are brought up. Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally requested Hon. Agbo-Tetteh to lead in organizing with his other colleague DCE's in preparing the communiqué to the responsible authorities.</p> <p>A participant wanted to know the source of the VRA Resettlement Trust Fund to which Ms. Asem indicated that the money is paid by VRA on an annual basis. The meeting agreed that there should be a review of the amount paid. The call for the review was made considering the fact that, there is increase in population and also the cost of things in the affected communities and the entire nation as a whole.</p>
4. Wrap-up	Dr. Liqa Raschid-Sally in wrapping up for the closure of the meeting summarized the key points discussed as follows:

She said, the meeting recognizes that a lot of problems faced by the affected communities and also the district assemblies (DA's) could be resolved by better process of communication. She suggested to the district assemblies to identify these communications gaps and try to work towards addressing them.

The meeting also recognizes there are other fundamental issues preventing the district assemblies from properly incorporating most of the DAC's and recommended a common platform for all stakeholders to discuss these issues.

The meeting again recognizes that part of the problem will be solved when facts of the issues are made clear to all stakeholders involved.

The meeting also recommended a joint committee of DA's and DAC's with the VRA to resolve some of the identified issues

The meeting ended with a prayer by Mr. James A. Tandoh at 13.00.