

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED BY PARTICIPANTS OF THE 1ST ANNUAL MEETING OF DAM AFFECTED-COMMUNITIES, ON JULY 17, 2009.

INTRODUCTION

The Ghana Dams Dialogue is a platform that brings together a variety of actors, who have a stake in hydropower dams. Its membership includes representatives from government ministries, decentralized government departments, research institutions, opinion leaders of dam-affected communities, traditional leaders, the private sector, and dam operators. The objective of the dialogue is to contribute towards, equitable, transparent, participatory and sustainable development of dams in Ghana.

We, the 185 participants who took part in the two-day meeting of dam-affected communities in Ghana on the theme “Successes and challenges of the Akosombo and Kpong resettlement schemes - lessons for the Bui Scheme”, have acknowledged that:

1. There remain unresolved and critical social, economic, and environmental challenges, which constitute grave human injustices to affected communities.
2. The VRA Resettlement Trust Fund, set up to provide development support to affected communities, has not lived up to expectations.
4. Representatives of the affected communities are excluded from decision-making on issues that emanate from the Akosombo and Kpong hydropower projects and that directly affect them.
5. The affected communities are subject to persistent harassment by host communities due to ill-managed resettlement
6. Lessons from the Akosombo and Kpong Hydropower Projects have not sufficiently informed the Bui Resettlement Package.

In view of the above, we resolve as follows:

1. That steps must be taken to strengthen community associations, especially at Kpong and Bui.
2. That the Ghana Dams Dialogue and affected communities jointly convene a workshop between VRA, BPA, communities and other stakeholders.
3. That the Ghana Dams Dialogue should act as a channel for the implementation of outcomes of the meeting.
4. That the Ghana Dams Dialogue should urgently organize a workshop on the implementation of the proposed Bui Resettlement Programme.
5. That Government should re-define the role of the inactive VRA Resettlement Trust Fund
6. That the Ghana Dams Dialogue should build capacity for dam affected communities to enable them participate meaningfully in the Dialogue.
7. That a capacity building workshop should also be organized for decentralized government authorities in efforts to ensure good governance.
8. That an Act of Parliament should be passed to establish a commission or its equivalent to govern dam-related activities in the country with the participation of affected communities.
9. That an interim body should be established to coordinate the activities of all dam-affected communities and to develop strategies to address their concerns.
10. That the relevant government and other entities enter into binding and enforceable contracts for compensation and resettlement These contracts must be properly negotiated and documented with affected communities.