

REPORT ON CONSULTATION WITH GENERAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION (GAWU)

**CONSULTATIVE FORA ON ASSESSING TWO DECADES
OF DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN
GHANA**

ORGANISED BY: INSTITUTE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDIES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Assembly system of local governance was introduced in 1988 in Ghana. Over the years, various issues have arisen in the course of implementation. The present government has indicated its intention to review twenty years of decentralization to identify how best to accelerate the pace and facilitate effective and efficient local governance. To this end, a project for a stakeholder consultation process to review twenty years of decentralization and the assembly system was formulated.

The objective of the Consultative Process on Decentralization Project is to engage identifiable stakeholder groups in a review twenty years of decentralization and the assembly system, with a view to assessing the conceptual issues, distilling lessons and generating recommendations for the way forward.

It is intended that the project should:

- provide a wide range of opportunities for all sections of the population to participate, contribute to and feel that their issues have been taken into account;
- enhance a sense of ownership and recognition of the direction that is being taken in relation to decentralization; and
- acknowledge any peculiar experiences, good practices and priorities that different sections of the population may have with a view to making decentralization more effective.

The intended outcome of the Project is that the achievements, good practices and lessons from the twenty year experience of the assembly system would have been generated and recommendations for making decentralization and local governance more effective, provided.

To achieve its set objectives, the project has undertaken the following main activities:

- i. Ongoing identification, collation, analysis and documentation of expert review papers, results of consultations, reports, meetings and recommendations for reviewing the decentralization process;
- ii. Ten (10) regional consultations with an open forum format;

- iii. Consultations with Special interest groups including:
 - a) Regional Ministers
 - b) Traditional Authorities Report
 - c) Parliamentarians
 - d) Women's Coalitions
 - e) Community Women and Market Women
 - f) General Agricultural Workers Union
 - g) Presiding Members
 - h) Political Parties
 - i) Persons with Disability
 - j) Journalists for Business Advocacy

- iv. Position papers have also been received from various parties outside the interest group consultations and regional fora.

A main national stakeholder conference is scheduled for the 14th and 15th January, 2010. It is important that all of the information that has been generated is made available to the Ghanaian public to:

- Keep citizens informed as to what transpired;
- Add to the store of knowledge and documentation on decentralization and local governance in Ghana;
- Communicate events, thinking and trends to an international audience interested in decentralization and local governance in Ghana; and
- Generally make the information available for reference and research purposes.

This report focuses on the consultation with the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) of the Trade Union Congress.

2.0 RATIONALE FOR THE CONSULTATION

The one-day consultation with members of GAWU which took place on 7th December, 2009 brought together a total of twenty (24) participants made up of representatives of Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), GAWU Industrial Relations Unit and regional groupings. Out of the 24 participants, 75 percent were males and 25 percent were females.

2.1 Objectives of the Consultation

The consultation sought to:

- i. Brief GAWU on what has been done so far in terms of reviewing the decentralization process;
- ii. Provide the platform for GAWU members to contribute their ideas towards improving:
 - decentralization in the area of local economic development;
 - management of collaborations between District Assemblies and labour organizations; and
 - accelerating responsive and accountable decentralization.

3.0 OPENING SESSION

3.1 Remarks by GAWU Deputy General Secretary

Deputy General Secretary of GAWU, Mr. Edward Kariwah delivered the opening address on behalf of the General Secretary. He extended felicitations to the participants on behalf of the leadership of GAWU.

Mr Kariwah stated that he hoped the outcome of the review process would result in a new relationship between local Government Institutions and GAWU. He noted that the issue about decentralization is a strange one. He defined decentralization as the devolution of powers and authority vested in one and allows others to have a say or influence in what you do. He observed that although Ghana had been practicing decentralization for sometime but the concept was not working effectively as it ought to be.

The Deputy General Secretary acknowledged MOFA's partnership with GAWU and observed that the collaboration had helped build GAWU's capacity to advocate for effective government policy. He argued that after twenty years of decentralization, there was the need for GAWU to reflect on the following issues:

- Has decentralization provided better opportunities for capacity of civil servants than under a centralized system?
- Has it only providing the platform for workers to contribute to decision making, but less consideration for term of resource allocation?
- Has decentralization made workers better off?

He concluded by challenging participants to use the platform provided by this forum to express their views on the process and contribute to the discussions.

3.2 Remarks by GAWU Industrial Relations Unit

Mrs. Adwoa Sakyi of the Industrial Relations Unit gave a brief background of GAWU. She explained that GAWU is one of the organizations under the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and derives its membership from agricultural organizations. She noted that the association seeks to process the grievances of members and protect the mandate or rights of members.

Mrs. Sakyi stated that the union has a conference that meets every four years and is the highest decision making body of the association. The union she observed operates in four areas which include:

- i. rights in work programme;
- ii. training and educational programme;
- iii. policy; and
- iv. advocacy programme.

4.0 PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Progress Report on the Decentralization Review Process

The Deputy Director of the Institute of Local Government Studies, Dr. Callistus Mahamah shared with participants government's current effort toward reviewing the decentralization process. He thanked GAWU for the opportunity to tap their views on decentralization to be factored into the review process. Dr Mahama's presentation centred on the following issues:

i. *General Overview of What Has Been Done*

- Since 1988 the country has embarked on decentralization and the nation is made up of ten (10) regions and One Seventy (170) District Assemblies.
- Act 462 which established the District Assemblies gives the District Assemblies about eighty eight (88) responsibilities in their geographical territory.
- Section 10 of Act 462, transfers the functions of Central Government to District Assemblies.
- But for these functions to be performed there is the need for resources. It is for this reason that 7.5% of national financial resources has been allocated to the District, Municipal, and Metropolitan Assemblies.

ii. *How Have We Fared For 20 Years Under Decentralization?*

- Composite budgeting is being piloted at the district level. When it becomes operational, MOFA and other institutions will not get their budgetary allocation from central government but from the District Assemblies.
- The District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) cannot be relied on due to the operational process. Central Government determines the usage of the bulk of it.
- The guidelines on the DACF specifies what projects the Assemblies could apply the funds to.
- There are about 17 departments that will be integrated into the District Assemblies. If it becomes operational about 30,000 workers from the civil service will move to the local government service.
- The appointment of DCEs by the president is also an issue. This notwithstanding, the appointment of 30% of Assembly members is also an issue. Traditional Authorities have

also complained about the way and manner they have been integration into the local government system.

iii. Why Are We Now Reviewing The System?

- There have been a couple of reviews in terms of desk and expert consultation. But a broader stakeholder consultation is now taking place as a result of the current review process.
- So far, 10 regional consultations have been conducted. Consultations have been held with the National House of Chiefs, women groups as well as the disabled. The NGOs at the local level, presiding Members of DAs are yet to be consulted at a similar forum.
- A nine- member expert group reviewing all existing laws and submissions has been put in place.
- There is going to be a National stakeholder consultation where all the issues distilled from the various consultative fora would be brought on board for discussions. Some of the issues distilled include the call for constitutional review, amendment of the civil service law, and implementation of the composite budgeting.
- A master report will be developed and sent to cabinet. Cabinet will then come up with a National Decentralization Policy Frame work based on which Decentralization Action Plan will be developed.

4.2 Plenary Discussions

After the presentation, Dr Mahama led participants to discuss the issues raised in the presentation. Presented in table 1 below are the issues raised at the plenary.

Table 1: Plenary Discussion on Decentralization Consultative Meetings

ISSUES RAISED	REMARKS
Was the Civil Service Identified by stakeholders as a challenge?	Administrative decentralization has been one of the problems, of this review process. There was a consultative meeting with them where they came up with plans to decouple the local government administration from central administration.
Considering the specialized nature of the work of MOFA, how will agricultural workers function	What is envisaged is that with proper decentralization, MOFA will have skeletal staff for policy at the national

effectively under the local government system when MOFA is decentralized to be part of the District Assembly?	level; All others are supposed to be working under the District Coordinating Director (DCD). Now, the position of DCD will not be on ascension through the ladder. It will be advertized locally and heads of department will apply for it. All heads of departments will report to the DCD.
How will Directors of departments function under the District Coordinating Director? What are the criteria you need to satisfy to be a DCD?	The ILGS and LGS are coming up with a career progression plan for directors to cut down the duration for progression.
How were the consultations able to capture the thoughts of the various groupings within the agricultural sector?	There were strong farmer representation at the regional consultations especially in Northern regions and Ashanti. They were also allowed to submit position papers. Political parties were also brought together to tap their ideas.
Why has the Government given a date for the take off of the consultation in 2010, while it is already on-going?	Although some of the activities will start in 2010, some of the activities such as the decentralization of the 17 departments have started. Others which will be looked at in 2010 include the position of the RCCs in the governance system. The government has not taken any position on it.

4.3 Recommendations and Proposals for Improving Decentralization

Participants through a brainstorming session identified problems with the decentralization process and made recommendations and proposals on how to improve on decentralization in the areas of local economic development; management of collaborations between District Assemblies and labour organizations; and accelerating responsive and accountable decentralization.

i. *Local Economic Development*

Led by Mr. John Lambon, participants identified the problems bedeviling the local economy and made recommendations on how to address the challenges. Presented in the table 2 below are the identified problems and recommendations.

Table 2: Problems and Recommendations for Local Economic Development

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies which relate to specific investment potentials in a district do not come from the bottom but from the top;• There is lack of cooperation between individuals businesses of the same product. This affects gains. There is fragmented and subsistence nature of businesses;• Inadequate infrastructure (roads, electricity, irrigation, storage facilities);• lack of industries to patronize and minimize post harvest losses;• Inadequate capacity for DAs to facilitate the harnessing of local resources;• Land acquisition in the southern parts of Ghana is a problem;• Lack of capacity to provide technical support to local businesses; and• Limited access to funds for private sector businesses.
RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District Assemblies must actively advocate for changes that adversely affect their constituents. They can do this by organizing public hearing and feeding the outcomes into their bye laws and National policy outfit.• The 30percent quota of Assembly members to be appointed by government must be technical experts and minority tribes.• Assembly members must be paid through the consolidated Fund.• The DAs can facilitate the formation of Farmer-Based Organisations (FBOs) and link them to financial institutions for support.• The creation of land banks and enforcement of laws associated with multiple sale of land.• Create platform for local Government and Traditional Authorities to work in harmony.

ii. ***Management of Collaboration with Labour Organizations***

Led by Mrs. Adwoa Sakyi, the recommendations made by participants are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3: Recommendations for Management of Collaborations with Labour Organizations

RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build capacity of organized labour on District assembly concept.• Use structures of organized labour at the District level to advocate for good economic policies at the local level.• Use structures for the mobilization of community based organizations.• Organized labour can also be used as resource hub in disseminating information on policies.• Members can be appointed as technical members of DAs.• Organized labour can be involved in infrastructural development.• Research on issues affecting labour. An example is child labour.• Consultation on regular basis on policies, formations of committees and appointment of 30% DA members

iii. Accelerating Responsive and Accountable Decentralization

Led by Mrs. Suzy Lamptey, participants came up with recommendations aimed at accelerating responsive and accountable decentralization. Presented in table 4 are the recommendations.

Table 4: Recommendations for Accelerating Responsive and Accountable Decentralization

RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DAs must identify key issues affecting their constituents.• Participatory decision making at all levels of the District Assembly structure.• There is the need for District Assemblies to keep proper records.• Staffing and capacity issues at the DAs must be addressed.• Elected assembly member must consult their constituents before and after every meeting (DAs)• CSO should create awareness that their constituents have the right to demand accountability form DAs.• They must the platform of public hearing to educate the general public (demand accountability)• DAs must publicize their activities and revenue generation• Clear definition of decentralization and continuity of programmes and policies.

iv. *Suggestions towards an Improved Decentralization Process*

To provide a platform for all participants to share their views on how to generally improve on the decentralization process, participants were made to submit written suggestions. The suggestions have been summarized in table 5 below.

Table 5: Information Provided on Suggestion Sheet by GAWU Members

NO	DISTRICT	OPINION/SUGGESTION/PROPOSAL
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the local system should be piloted in a few districts in all the regions
2	I D A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Officers should be competent for a particular position before being assigned the post
3	GAWU, Regional office HO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extension officers who were withdrawn from the cocoa services to MOFA created a challenge in the cocoa production because the officers have to contend with other areas which are not helpful. The extension officers should be sent to specific areas of their work
4	MOFA, Regional Office, HO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a problem with the extension officers from the cocoa service, thus all extension officers should have training /education on all the areas of their job
5	MOFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers should be given soft loans so they can pay on time
7	AMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assembly is suppose to lassie with financial institutions to help the stakeholders to market their produce
8	MOFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The various departments under MOFA should be clearly identified as to how agricultural projects will operate
9	MOFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the new decentralization should be piloted in some districts in all the regions. The results would be viewed at the pilot period ,problems and challenges identified would be corrected before full implementation throughout the country
10	GAWU, Headquarters, ACCRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women should be considered in the 30% quota reserved for vulnerable groups. The 7.5% allocated to District Assemblies should be doubled to 15%, and deductions stopped.

NO	DISTRICT	OPINION/SUGGESTION/PROPOSAL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Officials should be paid for their services.
11	GAWU-Regional officer-Koforidua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The District Assemblies should be empowered in terms of logistics in order to be more efficient and effective to be on top of their jobs
12	GAWU-Regional-Eastern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government must hasten up to finish all the process regarding the idea of decentralization because it is enormous even involving constitutional Amendments , so that is laudable idea of bringing out administration to the locals would not be abandoned should there be a change in government
13	GAWU of GTUC, Accra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce deductions made from allocations to District Assemblies to make them more efficient and operational
14	GAWU of TUC, Accra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should increase the District Assembly Common Fund from 7.5% to at least 15%
15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assembly members must be paid
16	MOFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be challenges in the posting of staff to the various agencies. For example it will difficult for health workers to go and work at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture
17	GAWU, National secretariats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of money that District Assemblies are allowed to raise through loans should be increased .The law should be reviewed
18	Dangbe West-MOFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caution would have to be of essence in the process in order not to displace potentials in the distribution of leadership roles of the sub-sections under the Assembly
19	Dangbe West-MOFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unified agriculture is creating problem of power struggle between veterinary service and main extension leadership at the District levels. That problem must be solved before MOFA operate under local government
20	GAWU of GTUC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should increase the 7.5% of the national revenue to the 170 Districts to 10% to enable the districts to carry out their developmental projects properly since some cannot generate revenue internally

NO	DISTRICT	OPINION/SUGGESTION/PROPOSAL
21	GAWU of GTUC, Accra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position of chief Executive must not be an elected one . • Make public hearing in Districts functions to involve more people. • In the 30% government appointee,50% should be women and this backed by a legislative instrument

5.0 CLOSING SESSION

On behalf of General Agricultural Workers Union, Mrs Julian Asare Budu thanked the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Institute of Local Government Studies for the opportunity to be part of the decentralization review process. She noted that although there is a lot of room for improvement in the area local governance, Districts like East Akim, Birim Central and Kwaebibirem are some of the districts that are doing very well.

In conclusion, she extended commendation to the organizers and to all participants for the frank and open discussions. She expressed the hope that the outcome of this workshop would be put to good use and labour will play a key role in the development of Ghana.

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Programme Outline

CONSULTATION WITH GENERAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION (GAWU) ASSESSING TWO DECADES OF DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN GHANA

7th December, 2009

Programme

1. Arrival and Registration
2. Opening Address (General Secretary-GAWU)
3. Introduction
4. A Word from GAWU's Industrial Relation
5. Presentation-Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
6. Snack Break
7. Facilitation- Ministry of local Government
8. Workshop Evaluation
9. Closing Remarks
10. Lunch

Annex 2: List of Participants

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Annex 3: Evaluation

Evaluation Comments

- The workshop has been successful, congratulation;
- It has been interesting but the duration is short;
- The presentation on local government is very good, it has educated us as about the local government system,
- Good work done with your consultation process, please do not discard contributions.
- We propose a follow up workshop with ILGS.
- The environment was very enabling
- Snack was good
- I have learnt a lot from this workshop. Thank you ILGS.