



POLICY BRIEF

ON

NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT FORUM



**Achieving Equitable and Balanced Development through
Effective Project Delivery in Northern Ghana**



BACKGROUND

The Constitution of Ghana, under the Direct Principles of State Policy, aspires for an equitable and balanced development for the country. Nonetheless, it has been noted that uneven development persists. Through the Coordinated Development of Economic and Social Development Policies as well as the national development policy frameworks over time and targeted response to these, development disparities persist between different parts of the country.

Locational and other geographical characteristics such as deforestation,

erratic rainfall patterns, excruciating temperatures, drought, the effects of climate change, and environmental degradation have created inherent

Developmental setbacks for the northern parts of Ghana, requiring deliberate action to create resilience for inhabitants. Historically, the Northern parts of Ghana have faced perceived systemic inequalities in resource allocation, infrastructure development, and access to social services. These imbalances have contributed to a developmental lag between the north and southern Ghana.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

The National Development Planning Commission and the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development, the Northern Regional Coordinating Council, development partners, multilateral and bi-lateral partners, CSOs and other stakeholders organised a forum to have a comprehensive dialogue about the development of the Northern regions' and agree on clear strategies to bridge the development gap. The forum, themed "A Policy Thrust: Achieving Equitable and Balanced Development through Effective Project Delivery in Northern Ghana," took place on the 15th of August 2023 in Tamale, the Northern Regional capital. Panel discussions underscored this goal, with particular emphasis on strengthening partnerships and building foundations

for successful project implementation.

These discussions fostered collaboration and coordination among stakeholders for impactful outcomes. The Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion (SoCo) Project has been identified as a game change for the north, if it is not "implemented as business as usual". The Project, a USD 150 million multi-country five-year (2022 – 2026) intervention is intended to improve regional collaboration, socio-economic and climate resilience of border-zone communities in the target northern regions of the Gulf of Guinea countries exposed to conflict and climate risks." The Project will contribute to increases in productivity and job creation; improve access to

basic services; reduce youth exposure to extremism; boost local economic development; enhance climate resilience; increase female participation in agriculture and decision-making and enhance cross-border trade.

Participants at the forum were a cross-section of traditional leaders,

agriculture, Regional Coordination Councils, the Metropolitan and Municipal District Assemblies (MMDAs) from the project Area, the academic community, media, development planning practitioners, government officials and administrators from across the country.

Highlights of the SOCO Project

The Project scope covers **Northern, North East, Upper East, Upper West, Savannah and Oti Regions**, 48 beneficiary Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, 217 clusters, 434 community facilitators, over 1,500 communities, and 582 sub-projects.

The SoCo Project aims to increase productivity and create jobs, generate socio-economic impact, intensify youth-focused interventions, promote local economic development, create positive environmental impact, focus on gender transformation and create regional impact.

Project Components

1. Investing in community Resiliency and Inclusion.
2. Building Foundation and Capacity for Inclusive and Resilient Communities.
3. Regional Coordination Platform and Dialogue
4. Project Management
5. Contingent Emergency Response Component.

Project Pillars

1. Data Collection
2. Knowledge Generation
3. Dialogue

Thematic Areas

1. Local governance
2. Climate resilience
3. Social Cohesion & conflict prevention
4. Local economic development for women and youth
5. Digital technologies and innovations

For further information on the SoCo please visit: <https://soco.gov.gh/>



The main messages and recommendations emerging from the forum focused on 9 key policy areas:

1. Planning and prioritisation
2. Policy and Focus
3. Institutional Partnership
4. Articulation and Information Sharing
5. Capacity Building
6. Resource Mobilisation
7. Harmonised Implementation
8. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
9. Legitimacy and Inclusion

Policy Recommendations

1. Planning and Prioritisation

Effective planning is crucial to navigate the challenges of limited resources. A well-defined plan aligned with a long-term vision ensures responsive decision-making and resource allocation. Such a plan clearly delineates the development priorities to guide implementation.

Proper sequencing of interconnected activities that build upon each other would contribute to a holistic approach to development.

2. Policy and Focus

Policy and planning must guide the focus of development efforts. Districts have made notable improvements, aligning their initiatives with larger developmental policies and plans.

3. Institutional Partnerships

Well-defined roles for stakeholders, including NGOs, district assemblies, and Development Partners, contribute to streamlined collaboration and synergy.

4. Articulation and Information Sharing

Effective communication and information sharing among various actors, including NGOs and district assemblies, are crucial for successful partnerships and collaboration.

5. Capacity Building

A well-informed private sector is empowered to make strategic

investments, thus fuelling sustainable development. Concurrently, NGOs need the capacity to actively engage with district assemblies to ensure that their interventions resonate and contribute positively.

6. Resource Mobilisation

Diversification of resource mobilisation efforts must be pursued. Drawing from local sources and the private sector can offer a stable foundation for funding developmental initiatives.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

A cornerstone of accountable development, robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning mechanisms is a prerequisite to balanced development efforts. These mechanisms enable stakeholders to assess progress, derive valuable insights, and fine-tune strategies for optimal impact.

8. Harmonised Implementation

The timing and harmonisation of activities by NGOs, district assemblies, and DPs are vital for successful implementation. Missing timing can disrupt the overall process.

9. Legitimacy and Inclusion

Development relies on legitimacy and inclusion. Ensuring all stakeholders are brought on board fosters ownership and commitment to development goals.

Further information on the regional forum can be accessed using the following link: <https://web.facebook.com/100009391450956/videos/318857444139963/>

Resource Persons/Experts

1. Mr. Daniel Botwe (MP), Minister for LGDRD.
2. Hon. David Quaye Annang, Vice Chairman, NDPC.
3. Dr. Kodjo Esseim Mensah-Abrampa, Director-General, NDPC.
4. Hon. Shani Alhassan Shaibu, Northern Regional Minister.
5. Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur, Head of Service, OHLGS.
6. Mr. Pierre Laporte, World Bank Country Director, Ghana.
7. Dr. Michael Ayamga, Senior Lecturer, Department of Applied Economics, UDS.
8. Prof. David Millar, Professor of Agriculture, Natural Resource Management and Indigenous Knowledge.
9. Mr. Hardi Tijani, Executive Director, Regional Advisory Information and Network Systems (RAINS), Tamale.
10. Ms. Janet Adama Mohammed, West Africa Programme Director, Conciliation Resources.
11. Pln. Samuel Seth Passah, Director, Local Governance and Decentralisation, MLGDRD.
12. Sagnar Naa Ambassador Yakubu Abudulai, Paramount Chief, Sagnarigu Traditional Area, Northern Region.
13. Mr. Charles Abani, UN-Resident Coordinator, United Nations, Ghana.
14. Mr. Ibrahim-Tanko Amidu, Executive Director, STAR-Ghana.
15. Ms. Wedad Sayibu, Development Practitioner and Director, School for Life.
16. Mr. Alhassan Issahaku, Chief Director, Northern Regional Coordinating Council.

