

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY MEMBERS OF FOOD SECURITY  
POLICY ADVOCACY NETWORK (FoodSPAN), AT YENDI, on 13<sup>th</sup>  
March 2008**

We the members of the Food Security Policy Advocacy Network (FoodSPAN), representing various Civil Society Organisations as well as individuals (including NGOs, CBOs; farmers/fisherfolks, women groups, networks; trade unions; membership-based organizations; faith based groups/organizations; researchers, Academia; and other stakeholders), across the country:

Acknowledging that the Government of Ghana is making commendable efforts to reduce poverty, targeting in particular marginalised people of Ghana especially those residing in rural areas;

Being mindful of the state's commitments in International treaties and covenants in ensuring Right to Food of her citizens, and the role played by CSOs and other stakeholders in influencing political spaces both in Ghana and elsewhere;

Bearing in mind that agriculture is the backbone of the economy, providing livelihoods to many people in the formal and informal sector, feeding many local industries, and ensuring food security thus maintaining peace and national security;

Recognising the contribution of fish workers (fishermen, fishmongers etc) and the importance of fish in the diet and wellbeing of Ghanaians and recognising the constraints in the fishery industry;

Noting that the farmers/fish workers who feed the nation are still the poorest people in the country, and that over 80% of the poor are hungry in Ghana;

Recognizing with grave concern that the local food situation continues to deteriorate and the right to food remains a challenge as long as powerful corporate and external bodies continue to exert undue influence over trade policies and practices which ultimately undermine the food security situation in the country;

Taking cognizance of the fact that the control of productive resources are in the hands of few influential persons and corporate groups in the agricultural sector and being mindful of the influence of external bodies on our national policies;

Noting with grave concern, that the increasing demands of arable lands for the purposes of mineral extraction and biofuel production by corporate bodies pose a danger to food and livelihood security;

Recognising that in spite of women's contribution to agricultural development and food production in particular, they still continue to be very poor and suffer discrimination in terms of access to natural and other productive resources.

We the members of FoodSPAN including farmers in the Northern Region do resolve that:

Government lives up to its obligations to ensure the right to food of the good people in the country by formulating and implementing pro-poor policies and appropriate practices by:

1. Increasing the percentage of budget allocated for farmers/ fisherfolks to support agriculture and food production, storage, processing and this must also reflect in the budget allocation of the various districts;
2. Committing to Research and Extension for improvement of local food production, storage, processing and distribution;

3. Guaranteeing market access for local produce by making it mandatory for all state institutions to use only domestically produced food items. In this light, farmers should be empowered to supply food to the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) in their various areas as outlined in NEPAD CAADP Pillar 3, and the operational manual of GSFP;
4. Ensuring that trade negotiations and other agreements promote food and livelihood security, rural development agenda, and protect local food production including small scale local producers and industries. We are therefore asking the Government to re-think about the Economic Partnership Agreements and reject it in favour of the many poor farmers in the country;
5. Regulating trade especially imports and increase tariff or imposing levies on imported food items that are produced locally, and the funds acquired used to support local producers;
6. Coordinating sector Ministries such as Agriculture, Trade, Finance and Local Government and harmonising their policies to promote sustainable agricultural growth and rural development to target small scale producers ;
7. Establishing a monitoring team composed of government officials, Civil society including farmers, NGOs, Trade Unions, human right activists and other stakeholders to monitor progress made in reducing hunger and have a bill of rights to include Right to Food;
8. Establishing a special support package for women and other vulnerable groups to improve their access to natural and other productive resources such as land, water, credit, and other agro-inputs;

9. Ensuring implementation of policies in the fisheries sector, checking and monitoring the use of industrial trawlers and the right use of fishing gears in the territories of our coast, especially the industrial fleets operating in Ghanaian waters. Promoting the growth of inland fisheries and farming, especially in the Northern Regions;
  
10. Developing a clear position to curb the rush for land for the production of biofuels in response to a global agenda, and ensuring that the production of biofuels in Ghana should not undermine food and livelihood security of our local farmers:
11. Regulating the operations of Transnational Companies regarding their activities including the biofuel production, and abusive exploitation of natural resources, and;
  
12. Stopping the activities of alien Fulani herdsmen in the country.

We the members of FoodSPAN therefore urge the government to act on the above concerns to ensure the right to food for all.

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 Chairman of FoodSPAN

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 Vice Chair of FoodSPAN

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