

23rd February, 2022.

See Distribution List

Dear Sir/Madam,

PETITION TO STOP DIKOTO COCOA FARMLANDS FROM BEING CONVERTED TO OIL PALM PLANTATION BY AN INDIAN INVESTOR

We the undersigned communities are predominantly cocoa farmers who stay and farm on Dikoto stool land in the Wassa Akropong traditional area. We are made up of both indigenous Wassa people and migrants who have been staying and farming on the Dikoto stool land for several years. In fact, for some of us migrants, we see ourselves as Wassa people and call Wassa our hometown because this is where we were born and have built our livelihood around cocoa farming.

We are petitioning you for your support in our effort to stop Nana Dikotohene from evicting and selling our farmlands to an Indian Investor for oil palm plantation establishment. A few months ago, we were informed by Nana Dikotohene on whose land we reside and farm that he is taking back his land from us because he has found an Indian Investor who is going to clear all our cocoa farms and use the land for oil palm plantation. His main reason as he explained to us was that he wants to bring developmental project to the Wassa area. He also argues that some of the tenant farmers have defaulted in prompt payment of their land rent and have not renewed their tenancy agreement that expired several years ago. Hence, He, Nana Dikotohene has decided to evict both those who are in default and those who are not in default to give the land to an Indian Investor to plant oil palm instead.

We have made several attempts to reason with Nana Dikotohene to consider the over 5,000 people whose livelihoods depend on the cocoa farms that will be destroyed but he seems bent on continuing on his cause of action. We estimate that the land and cocoa farms that will be destroyed is almost 25,000 acres spanning from Appiakrom all the way to Wassa Kumasi and beyond. This situation we believe, if not resolved amicably and quickly has the potential of causing severe hardship and conflict in the locality. It also has severe environmental degradation potential since oil palm plantations are mostly monocultural and does not support co-habitation of biodiversity unlike cocoa that can be inter-planted with trees. Again, the socio-economic implications of Nana Dikotohene's action can be disastrous if not stopped immediately because aside Galamsey, cocoa

farming is the only occupation the youth in the area are involved in; by evicting them and selling the land to an Indian investor the affected youth could become armed robbers and Galamseyers who will continue to destroy the environment. We believe that the livelihood and welfare of the community members are paramount to profits that would be accrued to a single private individual or corporation from the proposed oil palm plantation. Our inability to prevent the Chief and his investors from implementing this initiative may lead to conflict, increase poverty, rural-urban migration, loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation and affect the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 1, 8,13 and 15.

As a key stakeholder in the Wassa Amenfi East Municipality, we are through this petition appealing to you to support our efforts to stop the Chief of Dikoto from selling these farmlands to the Indian investor for the cultivation of oil palm. We are optimistic that, with your support and influence, we can collectively persuade Nana Dikoto to rescind his decision and together develop a sustainable plan for him to earn royalties from the cocoa farmers working on his land.

Thank you for your kind consideration and support.

Signed.

Petitioners:

1. The Chief and people of Wassa Nsuaem
2. The Chief and people of Dikoto Junction
3. The Chief and people of Wassa Kumasi
4. The Chief and people of Abaase
5. The Chief and people of Sebeho
6. The Chief and people of Supanso
7. The Chief and people of Appiakrom
8. The Chief and people of Dikoto Krofrom
9. The Chief and people of Ojugu
10. The Chief and people of Larbikrom

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