**APPEAL FROM THE PEASANT FARMERS ASSOCIATION OF GHANA TO THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PWALUGU MULTI-PURPOSE DAM**

1. **PREAMBLE**

On behalf of the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana, Peasant Farmers in North East and Upper East region; TAMA Foundation, Millar Institute, Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development and Oxfam in Ghana, I wish to express my gratitude for the opportunity to engage you today. I further want to share our appreciation for your passion to change the economic situation of the country, especially those in the northern Ghana.

Your Excellency; the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG) is an association of smallholder farmers formed in 2005 with the mandate to advocate for pro-poor agriculture and trade policies that impact the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Ghana and beyond. The association’s vision is “life of dignity for the peasant farmer”. Membership of the association currently stands at over 2000 registered Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) made up of over one million individual members in thirteen operational regions of Ghana. Majority of the association’s members earn their livelihoods from farming, rearing, agribusiness, fishing and all manner of petty trading.

Your Excellency, the economic activities of our members in 2021/2022 has been very difficult due to several factors. Ranging from high input cost, high cost of mechanization services and general increased cost of production. Moreover, the effects of climate change associated with unreliable raining patterns has also led to poor crops yields, increasing agricultural risks, low food supply and general cost of food stuffs. Investing in irrigation development is therefore of outmost interest to us, the reason we embarked on the campaign in support of your efforts to get the Pwalugu Multi-Purpose dam constructed.

Your excellency, on 27th October 2022, we held a public processing in Nalerigu to present our petition for prioritization of construction of the Pwalugu Multi-purpose Dam which was premised on the following;

That

* The government under the able leadership of His Excellency Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo place a very high premium on agricultural development in Ghana.
* The central role of agriculture to food security, poverty reduction and job creation and the fact that, profitable farming cannot take place in recent times without irrigation
* The multifaceted role the Pwalugu Multi-Purpose Dam is projected to play in the area of dry season farming, aquaculture and livestock production
* Construction of the Pwalugu Multi-Purpose Dam therefore stands to benefit not only people of Upper East and North East Region, but will also contribute significantly to the national food basket.

1. **BACKGROUND**

As an economist yourself, you have severally alluded to the importance of the agricultural sector to the national economy, rural livelihood and household food security. Despite the small size of North East and Upper East Regions; these regions contribute significantly to the national food basket.

It has been documented that due to climate change and related issues such as unreliable rainfall patterns, drought and in some occasions flooding, farming has become very risky in recent times. Whiles the intensity and duration of rains cannot be predicted any longer, there are many occasions where farmers lost all their farms due to flooding.

Your excellency, the sod-cutting on 29th November 2019 led by his excellency; the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo for the construction of the Pwalugu Multi-Purpose Dam which has been on the drawing board for over 60 years has given us hope, that with time, the issue of irrigation for dry season farming will be addressed. However, the delay in the dam construction and compensation for the affected households is now making our people apprehensive with the turn of events

1. **OUR APPEAL**
2. Your Excellency, smallholder farmers bear the brunt of climate change hazards especially changing rainfall patterns, drought and flooding in Ghana. In our case, those living and farming along the White Volta Basin have to be assisted by NADMO and other NGOs as a result of flooding due to heavy rains and spilling of Bagri Dam annually. Prioritization of investment in the Pwalugu Multi-Purpose Dam could set the tone for investing in massive irrigation infrastructure in other parts of Ghana. Given the importance of the dam to the livelihoods of the people in the area and the nation as a whole, we are calling for dedicated sources of funds for construction work. The previous budget allocation from GOG could not be relied on to effectively complete the dam. While thanking you for listening to our appeal and allocating about GHS253,000,000 from the ABFA for the dam construction in the 2023 budget, it is our hope that when the IMF negotiation is completed, there could be a dedicated funding to guarantee its completion.
3. Your Excellency, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) have been applied by many developed and developing countries in irrigation development. The PPP has the potential to bring much-needed financial, technical, and managerial resources for successful construction and completion of the Pwalugu Multi-purpose dam. Given the current economic difficulty the country is facing, we humbly suggest that, in the worst-case scenario of government’s inability to mobilize enough resources for the dam’s construction, government can explore numerous financing options such as the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) or Build Own Operate Transfer (BOOT), depending on which option offers the best value for money for consideration. Private investment and financing costs could be recovered through government subsidies and fees from users.

In conclusion, Your Excellency; we are all aware of the current economic situation in the country and the efforts being undertaken by the government to address them. Whiles we appreciate these efforts, we wish to emphasize that government prioritizes the agricultural sector, since it is the sector that can lead us out of this economic difficulty and the best and most efficient way to get our economy back on track. We are also optimistic that construction of the Pwalugu Multi-purpose dam will provide a clear message to you and your government and win the support of many actors in the agricultural sector due to importance of irrigation development to agricultural development in the country.

Thank you