

REPORT ON 4TH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM MEETING



4th Multistakeholder Platform Meeting Report

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Report Written by: Kingsley Twumasi

Background

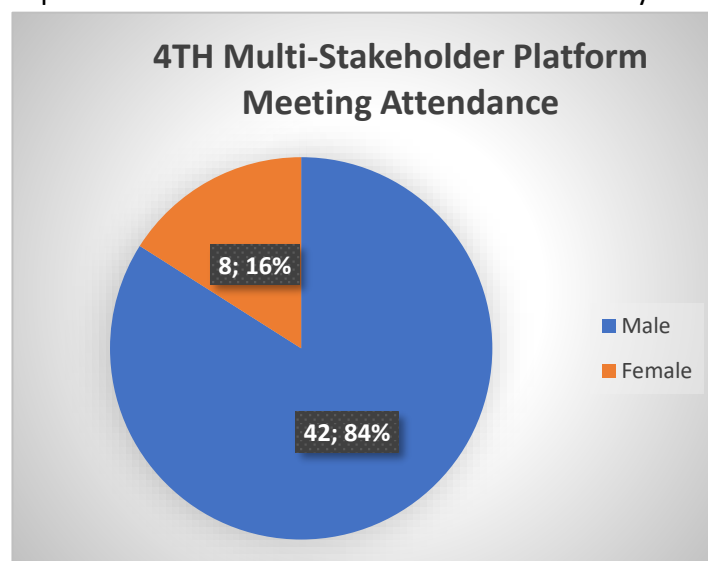
The Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) was created under the project titled “Atebubu and Wiase: Forest Landscape Restoration” to monitor the progress of the project implementation which is receiving funding from AstraZeneca and implemented by NGPTA, NDF and APSD. The 5-year project aims at restoring degraded land areas and improving the livelihoods of farmers engaged in the project. This platform gives the opportunity for the voices of the project beneficiaries (farmers) to be heard and address challenges encountered during the implementation phase of the project. Again, foreseeable hazards that may retard the success of the project are discussed to find practicable solutions. Previously, the NDF had organised three (3) MSP meetings to address urgent issues on the project. This MSP meeting is organised to address fire issues to protect the project farms from fire outbreaks in the dry season (1st November to 31st March).

Introduction

This report covers a one-day multi-stakeholder platform meeting on how to protect farmlands from bush fire during the dry season.

Attendance

The meeting was well attended by fifty (50) participants of whom forty-two (42) representing 84% were males and eight (8) representing 16% were females. The participants were made up of the Farmers, District Assemblies, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Wildlife Division, Ghana Fire Service – Wiase Stationed and the Forest Service Division. Attached as annexe_1 is a copy of the participant sheet. See the chart below for a summary of the attendance.



Welcome Address



Figure 1 Hon Anthony Owusu giving the welcome address at the MSP meeting

Hon. Anthony Owusu who is the Assemblyman of the Bantama community and the chairman of the MSP welcomed participants present at the meeting by attesting that this is another opportunity to come together for the fourth time to discuss and assess the progress of the ongoing project. He said that this meeting is very important because the management of fire has been a problem for the Atebubu-Wiase landscape during the dry season. This meeting is to emphasize to all farmers who are part of the project on how to control and protect

farmlands from fire outbreak. He encouraged all participants to pay maximum attention to every detail discussed and contribute fully to make the meeting fruitful.

Setting the context by Mr. Mustapha Seidu

Mr. Mustapha Seidu, the director of the Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) introduced the concept of the project to the participants by saying the objective of the Atebubu-Wiase Forest Landscape Restoration project is to mitigate climate change and improve the livelihoods of the farmers engaged in the project areas. He continued by saying that climate change has disrupted food availability, quality, and quantity. It has also caused changes in precipitation patterns, changes in extreme weather events and reduction in water availability which result in reduced agricultural productivity. On the subject matter of the day, Mr. Seidu said that the issue of fire outbreaks is a common sight during the dry season in the Atebubu-Wiase Landscape. Many farmers have lost farm properties due to fire outbreaks largely caused by careless bush burning by hunters, herdsman burning for fresh grass, cooking in farms and slashing and burning. There is a need for farmers to devise ways to control and reduce fire outbreaks in the dry season. Ending his statement, he said that this MSP



Figure 2 Mr. Mustapha Seidu setting the context of the meeting

meeting is purposely organised to educate and equip participants present with knowledge of fire management. The fire service officers are invited to this meeting to present how to control and protect farmlands from fire outbreaks during the dry season.

Presentation on Fire Management

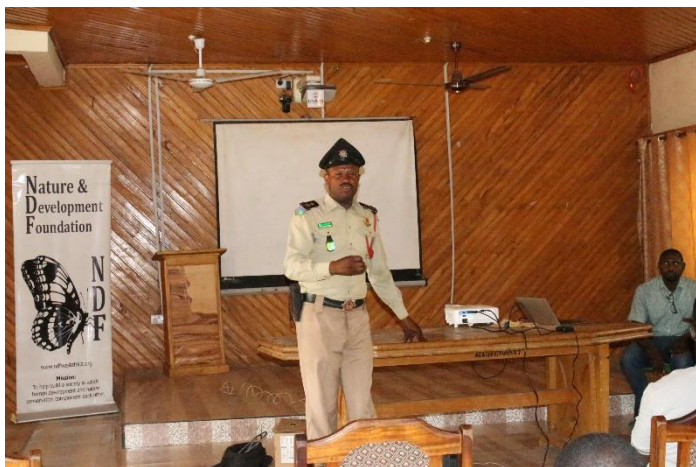


Figure 3 Mr. Kabore educating participants on fire management

Mr. Zakaria Kabore, the rural fire coordinator from the Ghana National Fire Service – Atebubu Municipal Assembly, made a brief presentation on fire management. He started with the types of fire which are domestic, industrial, and bushfire. In his presentation, he stressed on bushfire as it was the topic of the day. He made it known that the control and prevention of bushfires Act 1990, PNDCL 229, bans bush burning activities in the dry season. He elaborated that cooking in the farm,

hunting of animals, possessing any fire ignition tool in and around the farm during the dry season (November to March) is prohibited and culprits will be dealt with under the law severely. Offenders of the bush fire law will be fined, jailed or sentenced to communal labour. He again educated the participants on the causes of bush fire in the Atebubu-Wiase enclave and how to control or prevent bushfires. Ending his presentation, he urged all participants to comply with the bush fire law in the dry season (November to March) to protect and keep the farmlands from fire outbreaks which can cause massive destruction to properties. Farmers were asked to be each other's keeper at the time of the dry season to keep and protect farms free from fire outbreaks.

Causes of Bush Fire in Atebubu-Wiase enclave

Three causes of bush fire in the Atebubu-Wiase enclave were identified during the meeting which are:

1. Slashing and burning
2. Animal hunting and
3. Herdsmen (Fulani) burn bushes for the growth of fresh grass to feed their cattle.

Measures adopted to control fire outbreak

1. Setting up a fire volunteer team to monitor farm activities during the dry season
2. Banning all burning activities within the dry season period (November to March)
3. Creating fire belts around farms to prevent fire from reaching the farmland
4. The Ghana fire service in collaboration with the Ghana police service in Atebubu-Wiase will strictly enforce the ban on bush burning and sanction anyone who offends the law accordingly in the dry season.

Report from Project field monitoring

NGPTA project officers shared lessons observed from field monitoring. Below are bulleted points of the results from the field monitoring exercise:

1. Tree seedlings intercropped with yams look good
2. Cashew and Mango trees are well managed
3. Some farmers establishing farms on lands not mapped or known to the project
4. Some lead farmers share tree seedlings with relatives not engaged in the project
5. High Interest in Cashew and Mango trees
6. Tractor ploughing on the farmland causes destruction to the planted tree seedlings
7. Timber Seedlings planted are not well managed

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, the workshop was well-organised and successful. Participants understood that fire outbreaks can cause massive loss of properties if care is not taken and it is very important to practice fire management during the dry season. Some of the participants attested to losing their farms due to fire outbreaks which could have been prevented. Participants also understood that all uncontrolled bush-burning activities have been banned from the month of November to the month of March under PNDC law 229, 1990 and offenders will be sanctioned. Participants were enthused with the measures identified and adopted to control bush fire in the dry season and pledged to put in their maximum efforts to protect the farmlands from bush fire.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made during the meeting:

- Creating fire volunteers in each farming community to monitor and control the burning of farms during the dry season.
- Creating fire belts around the farmlands.
- Farmers should be each other's keeper to protect farms from burning.
- The use of fire ignition tools in the farm should be avoided as much as possible.

Issues Log and Action Points

Issue	Status	Actions until the next MSP meeting
Communication	Pending	How can members help communicate better on project objectives The project resolved to use Community Information Centers to educate and spread information about the project
Better gender representation	Done. But there is more room for improvement	Women empowerment plan Bring in more female speakers to address their issues
Farmer representatives	Done	NGPTA field staff to help farmers to select their representatives to the MSP
Land Tenure	Pending	NDF, Assembly members and NGPTA team to mediate the impasse between the chiefs and the migrant farmers
Low participation of migrant Farmers	Pending	Same as above
Bushfire management and control	Implementation is ongoing. It is a recurrent activity	Development of Bushfire management plan including MSP recommendations to be agreed and start implementation in the next MSP meeting

Annexe

Annexe_1



4TH MSP
PARTICIPANT SHEET.r