

Appendix 5: Text of Kumasi Peace Accord

KUMASI ACCORD ON PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA

INTRODUCTION

Since November 1994 the inter-NGO Consortium and the Nairobi Peace Initiative (NPI) have been organising and facilitating a series of peace and reconciliation consultations and workshops among the warring ethnic groups in Northern Ghana.

Follow-up and Planning committees were formed from the different ethnic groups in the region to work the NPI and the Consortium. Between May 1995 and April 1996 five meetings and consultations were organised in Kumasi as well as numerous others in Bimbilla, Gushegu/Karaga, Saboba, Salaga, Yendi, and Zabzugu/Tatale aimed at creating consensus on the need for peace and reconciliation, building confidence among the warring ethnic communities, as well as searching for solutions to the outstanding issues of conflict underlying the wars.

At the fourth Kumasi meeting, 48 delegates from seven ethnic groups constituting chiefs, PPNT delegates, opinion and youth leaders were invited to work towards the search for durable resolution to the conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana. The NPI facilitated a series of bilateral and multilateral negotiations aimed at identifying the issues clearly and finding solutions that are acceptable to all the parties involved. On February 29, 1996, the delegates severally and jointly agreed to a draft document which outlined the agreements reached on the contentious issues presented in the negotiations.

The draft agreement was then taken by the delegates to their respective communities for

extensive consultation, discussion and feedback with all segments of their community. After four weeks, the delegates returned to Kumasi to report on the outcome of their consultation processes, to incorporate into the draft agreement the feed-back and amendments generated by the consultations, as well as, when necessary, to renegotiate the draft agreement. After these processes, on March 30th 1996, the delegates signed the following document which was called the Kumasi Accord on Peace and Reconciliation Between The Various Ethnic Groups In The Northern Region of Ghana.

PREAMBLE

WE, the Bassare, Dagomba, Gonja, Konkomba, Nanumba, Nawuri and Nchumuru delegations;

MEETING together at the Peace and Reconciliation Consultations held in Kumasi in February and March 1996;

HAVING heard, considered, discussed and debated the demands each group had against each other as adversaries during the Northern Region conflict;

BELIEVING that all ethnic communities have a crucial role to play in the building of peace;

DETERMINED to resolve all outstanding issues between us and to lay the foundation for a durable and stable peace for sustainable development;

CONVINCED that it is in the best interest of our respective people that we create an enabling atmosphere of peace that will foster social re-integration, mobility, economic cooperation and development as individuals and as groups;

ACCEPTING that our individual and group aspirations of development can only be achieved in an atmosphere of forgiveness, moderation, compromise, cooperation and the peaceful resolution of our differences;

NOW AGREE as follows:

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE DAGOMBAS, KONKOMBAS AND BASSARES

- 1 The present scheme of land tenure in Dagbon reflected in the customary laws, usages and practices is non-discriminatory and satisfies the aspirations of all citizens of Dagbon regardless of ethnic background. It is recognised that the Ya-Na holds the allodial title to all Dagbon lands and he holds same as a trustee in trust for all the citizens of Dagbon. The divisional chiefs whether they are Dagombas, Konkombas, Bassares etc are the caretakers of the land and all citizens through their respective divisions have a birth-right of equal and unimpeded access to the land in accordance with customary law. In this context the term "citizens" refers to all persons claiming and reputed to be indigenous persons and recognised as such. Currently Dagombas, Konkombas, Bassares, Anufos etc. are generally known as citizens.
- 2 We are appreciative of the Ya-Na's gesture to confer paramountcy on Dagomba, Konkomba, Bassare etc. chiefs and note with satisfaction that the conditions attached to the elevation to paramountcy are as applicable to Dagomba chiefs as they are to Konkomba and Bassare chiefs in the same situation.
- 3 We note with satisfaction that even before the conflict Konkomba, Bassare and Anufo chiefs had representation in the Dagbon Traditional Council. We also note that the participation of these chiefs in the Dagbon Traditional Council was interrupted when the conflict broke out. We agree that the said chiefs ought to resume their active participation in the work of the Traditional Council.
- 4 We declare and affirm our acceptance and observance of the rules, customs, practices and usages regarding the institution of chieftaincy in Dagbon and that without discrimination all chiefs in Dagbon, be they Dagombas, Konkombas, Bassares, Anufos, etc. are entitled to exercise all powers, jurisdiction and authority reserved for chiefs under customary law.

In particular we affirm that all chiefs in Dagbon, save and except as custom or the law may limit, are entitled to exercise all rights and powers in the following matters, namely:-

- a. the creation and approval of new settlements in the area of jurisdiction
- b. enskinments of lesser chiefs or headmen in the area of jurisdiction

- c. the prerogative to adjudicate upon certain disputes in the area of jurisdiction
 - d. entitlement to jurisdictional allegiance from subjects in the area of jurisdiction.
- 5 We will respect and be sensitive to the respective religious subscribed to by our people and we shall do nothing that will directly or indirectly offend, impugn or ridicule each other's religion.
 - 6 We decry the spiral of arms and ammunition build-up in the Northern Region and affirm our readiness and determination to stem their flow into the region.
 - 7 We declare that we shall cooperate fully in bringing about and facilitating a complete reconciliation of our people in accordance with the tenets of our customs. We note in particular the restrictions on the movement of Konkombas and Bassares in Tamale and other areas in the Region and agree that we shall implement such appropriate measures as may be found efficacious to ease the problem.
 - 8 As an assurance to our continued peaceful co-existence and collaborative relations we undertake to cease all provocative acts, utterance and particularly publications in the media that may inflame passions and lead to breaches of security in our areas.
 - 9 We recognise and accept the value of confidence-building in our efforts to structure and entrench peace and we therefore agree that in all our dealings with each other we shall demonstrate absolute good faith, sincerity and commitment to peace.

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE KONKOMBAS AND NANUMBAS

- 1 Nanumbas, who are indigenous and sole owners of the land in Nanun, do recognise the Konkombas as an important non-Nanumba community and brothers in development who seek the well-being of the district and whose status, rights, duties and obligations are traditionally recognised and defined under Nanun customary law and usage.
- 2 Konkombas shall be allowed to freely choose their headmen to be blessed by the Bimilla-Naa or his delegated divisional authority, provided this will not conflict with the interest of the Bimilla-Naa and/or the Princes of Nanun.

- 3 Representation at administrative and political decision-making processes shall be by merit and following due process.
- 4 We declare that we shall cooperate fully in bringing about and facilitating a complete reconciliation of our people in accordance with the tenets and practices of our traditions. We note in particular the restriction on the movement of our peoples in Nanun and all the other areas in the Region and agree that we shall implement appropriate measures as may be found efficacious to ease the problem.
- 5 Land ownership is not in dispute with the Bimbilla-Naa as the paramount chief and alodial owner of all land in Nanun as accepted by the Konkombas.
- 6 Paramountcy is the preserve of eligible Nanumbas.
- 7 We shall accept regulations from the Nanumba Traditional Council with Konkomba representation, which, with the help of ecological experts, regulates land use, land tenure and settlement patterns for purposes of preservation of the ecology for future generations.
- 8 Customary pacification in respect of river gods, land gods and groves should only be performed by the recognised land and fetish priests or Tindanas of Nanun.
- 9 We agree to refrain from the practice of ethnicising individual criminal behaviour; that is, from blaming an entire ethnic group for the criminal conduct of an individual who is a member of that ethnic group.
- 10 For purposes of assuring security and the avoidance of recurrent inter-communal violence, the parties agree to create committees composed of Nanumbas and Konkombas whose tasks will consist of the following:
 - a. identifying people in Nanun communities that foment or incite ethnic animosity and violence and ensure that appropriate legal actions are taken against such people in order to stop or deter their behaviour.
 - b. Identifying particularly conflict-sensitive areas and travelling to those areas jointly (Konkombas and Nanumbas together) to educate people about peaceful co-existence and to resolve problems in the areas peacefully so that inter-communal violence does not erupt.
- 11 On the issue of the 365 self-styled chiefs and separatists, we the Konkomba delegation will

undertake, with the assistance of the Nanumba delegation, to verify and ascertain the position of such chiefs and in consultation with our Nanumba counterparts seek a solution that will be satisfactory to both sides.

- 12 We decry the spiral of arms and ammunition build-up in the Northern Region and affirm our readiness and determination to stem their flow into the region.

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE GONJAS AND NCHUMURUS

- 1 The Nchumurus have appealed to the Gonjas not to frustrate Nanjuro-Wura's application for paramountcy. Gonjas have agreed to cooperate.
- 2 Gonjas have accepted in principle that the Nanjuro-Wura's status had been established as equivalent to a divisional chief. It was circumstances that made him opt out of the Gonja chieftaincy system.
- 3 Gonjas will allow the Nanjuro-Wura's application through Government, for paramountcy to go through at the National House of Chiefs.
- 4 The Gonjas also agree to support a subsequent creation of separate Nchumuru Traditional Council.
- 5 The Nchumurus will have representation on Northern Region House of Chiefs.
- 6 In order to facilitate these agreements, the following steps have been agreed upon by the two sides:
 - a. The Gonja delegation will immediately brief the Yagbon-Wura and the Kpembe-Wura on Nchumura proposals and demands.
 - b. The Tuluwe-Wura will liaise with the Mion-Lana (AA Ziblim) who has agreed to act as an intermediary between Nchumuru and Gonja.
 - c. In consequence of item (b) above, the Mion-Lana and Tuluwe-Wura have scheduled to visit the Yagbon-Wura on the 15th of March to concretise the Gonja-Nchumuru peace process.
 - d. The Mion-Lana will give a feedback, subsequent to which Nchumuru will propose a tentative date to meet with the Yagbon-Wura. The date should allow sufficient notice to enable the Yagbon-Wura to assemble his divisional chiefs.

- 7 A preliminary meeting between Gonja and Nchumuru at the highest Traditional Level should open the avenues for the formulation of Peace-Awareness groups/meetings/workshops at the community levels.
- 8 Both ethnic groups will commence organising their peoples for reintegration, resettlement and reconstruction.
- 9 The follow-up Committee will be invited to facilitate the plans/expectations above.

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE KONKOMBAS AND GONJAS

- 1 We commit ourselves to express respect to each other and refrain from activities that debase or insult each other's people, elders, customs and traditions.
- 2 Konkombas have no claim to Gonja land or to paramountcy in the same area. However, where there is a large Konkomba community, the Gonja paramount or divisional chief may confer a leadership title that he deems fit on any Konkomba who will serve under him.
- 3 We agree that when conflicts erupt or rumours about conflicts circulate, the chiefs and leaders from the Gonja and Konkomba communities will take initiatives to approach each other to investigate the matter and arrest the escalation through respectful discussions.
- 4 The Konkombas agree to undertake an independent investigation of the causes for the 1994 war between them and the Gonjas and share their findings so that both parties could learn from the mistakes that might have been committed by any side and put mechanisms in place to ensure that the same mistakes are not committed again.
- 5 In order to encourage free movement in the conflict areas as an element of reconciliation between Gonjas and Konkombas, we agree:
 - a. That we shall ask our respective chiefs, headmen, elders, youth association leaders to ensure safe movement of members of the other ethnic group within their communities.
 - b. That if anyone from another ethnic group is attacked we agree to hold the chief or leader accountable to apprehend the culprit or be held accountable themselves.
 - c. That working groups made up of representatives of all ethnic groups in the area follow up at the community levels

and educate citizens on the need for peaceful coexistence and free movement.

d. A peace conference will be organised in Salaga before the commencement of the farming season involving all ethnic groups in the Salaga area.

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE BASSARES AND GONJAS

- 1 Both sides recognise that the investigation of the Buipe Bridge incident is an essential ingredient in the reconciliation process between Bassares and Gonjas.
- 2 The Gonjas agree to undertake an independent investigation into the matter and share the findings so that both parties could learn from the mistakes that might have been committed by any side and to put mechanisms in place to ensure that the same mistake is not committed again.
- 3 Bassares have no claim to Gonja land or to paramountcy in the same area. However, where there is a large Bassare community, the Gonja paramount or divisional chief may confer a leadership title that he deems fit on any Bassare who will serve under him.

AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE Nawuris AND GONJAS

- 1 The Nawuris and the Gonjas recognise that there are several outstanding issues of dispute between them that require peaceful resolution. The Kumasi meetings have helped both delegations to articulate and identify these issues.
- 2 The two delegations agree to continue the dialogue that has begun in Kumasi in order to create a conducive environment and understanding that would lead to the resolution of the outstanding issues.
- 3 To that effect, the Nawuris agree to intensify their confidence-building and peace-education activities to encourage peaceful ethnic co-existence in their respective communities with the assistance of the Peace Awareness Committee.
- 4 The Nawuris agree to assist, in whatever way possible, in resettling the Gonjas displaced from Kpandai due to the war between the two ethnic groups in 1991, back in the places from which they were displaced.

AGREEMENT ON REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

To underline our commitment to this Accord, and to enshrine the sense of unity that the Accord generates among us signatories and our peoples in the Northern Region of Ghana, as well as to give an institutional embodiment to the spirit of this Accord which can enhance the implementation of the Accord's provisions, we have hereby agreed to create a region-wide association that will be composed of representatives from all the ethnic communities which currently live in the Northern Region. The specific nature and

functions of such an association shall be determined at a meeting of representatives of youth associations from all ethnic communities in Northern Ghana and this meeting shall be organised to take place immediately subsequent to the signing of this Accord.

IN FULL AGREEMENT with the above paragraphs, we the delegates from the seven ethnic communities in the Northern Region of Ghana have signed this Accord on this 30th day of March, 1996 in Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

(34 signatures follow)