



## **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE 2017: PROMOTING FARMER - PASTORALISTS RELATIONSHIPS TOWARDS THE PROMOTION OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN GHANA**

The International Day of Peace (IDP) was established in 1981 by the UN resolution 36/67. This year marks the 36th time the world is commemorating the day globally and nationally, and the fifth edition of the Geneva Peace Talks held at the United Nations General Assembly. The theme for the 2017 IDP is Respect, Safety and Dignity for All while the Geneva Peace Talks is “Building Bridges.” These themes have once again brought to public discourse the growing need for ensuring safety for all and sundry and enhances the debate for inclusion and respect for diversity.

As we celebrate this day in Ghana, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) Ghana National Office draws attention to the lingering agro-pastoralists and farmers conflict in the country. Over time, it has become apparent that in our quest for agricultural modernisation, commercialisation, and expansion; population increase and settlement expansion; infrastructure development and industrialisation; successive governments have neglected the well-being of the farmers and herders and their contributions to our daily sustenance. This deliberate action or inaction of programmatically excluding them, especially in agricultural development and community space, has resulted in increased tension between the farmers and communities on one hand and cattle herders on the other hand. It has resulted into sporadic violent and ‘sniper’ attacks leading to loss of lives, injuries, destruction of properties, internal displacement, disunity, and has the tendency to create a perpetual state of insecurity in the country.

Equally worrisome is the discriminatory tendencies of tagging an identity with the problem, the prejudice and stereotype used against cattle herders and farmers in the country and indeed across Africa, which has over time created entrenched exclusivity and contributes to increase vulnerability of these pastoralists and farmers towards radicalisation and violent extremism in the continent and Globally.

WANEP-Ghana acknowledges the numerous attempts to address this perennial problem of farmer-pastoralists conflict in the form of security operations and establishment of task forces by the government of Ghana to mitigate violence and restore law and order. The communities themselves, have tried to solve the lingering crises by taking the laws into their own hands with devastating consequences. Similar efforts have been made by neighbouring countries such as Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso, etc. but all these well-meaning efforts have not yielded the needed results. We applaud the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) protocols and components of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) stipulations that enjoin people in the region to move freely and establish, promote trade, exercise their rights and freedoms, etc. Notwithstanding, we need to be mindful of the fact that the free movement of people into Ghana and establishment without notice or tracking could pose a security risk as potential terrorists or militants could disguise as herders or migrant farmers passing through unapproved routes to undertake nefarious activities without being noticed in the communities.

As we celebrate the Peace Day, the unity of the Farmer-Pastoralists, in Ghana, in Africa and the world has become imperative, especially in these trying times where conflict and violence has

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become more complex in view of unmet human security needs. In this regards, we urge government, individuals, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to adopt a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral integrated coordinated approaches to addressing the farmer-pastoralists conflict in Ghana. All hands must be on deck to effectively manage criminality and insecurity posed by this perennial conflict as well as other security threats such as arms proliferation, cybercrimes, political violence, communal conflicts among others. As concerned citizens and residents, it behoves on us to adopt inclusive approaches and strategies that will enable the farmers and cattle herders to interact peacefully and live amicably within our communities.

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