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PRESS RELEASE

WASSA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY MINING CHANGES NAME TO “WACAM”

The Wassa Association of Communities Affected by Mining is an environmental and human rights advocacy non-governmental organisation (NGO) engaged in building the capacities of communities affected by surface mining operations to enable them to have effective engagement with multinational mining companies in their struggle to protect their human rights and ensure environmental integrity.

WACAM, which started as a small community based mining advocacy NGO in the then Wassa West District has expanded its operations to cover mining communities in the Western, Ashanti, Eastern and Brong Ahafo Regions of Ghana in addition to sharing its mining advocacy experiences with NGOs and communities in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso.

In view of the new reality, it became imperative to change the name to reflect the vision, mission, challenges and growth of WACAM.

After extensive consultations involving the mining communities, volunteers, Staff of WACAM and others, who share in the vision of building a strong social movement with a national character to advance the objective of protecting the sovereign rights of citizens and for environmental justice, the Executive Council settled on the name “WACAM”.

“WACAM” was preferred because when translated into the Akan language it meant “I have been bitten” or “I have been disturbed”. Thus the new name reflects the objective reality in communities affected by surface mining operations the world over.

The new identity means WACAM is going to open and gear up mining advocacy to higher levels to involve all patriotic Ghanaians, Students, Workers, Trade Unionists, Media Experts, Intelligentsia, NGOs, Religious People and Community People in a struggle that would protect the environment, sovereign rights of citizens and ensure maximum benefits to our beloved Ghana.

Many things have gone wrong with the exploitation of Ghana’s minerals to the extent that multinational mining companies with the connivance of a few Ghanaians have taken the greater portion of the benefits of mining and left the majority of mining communities with all kinds of problems.

Since the natural wealth of Ghana belongs to all Ghanaians, it is the onerous responsibility of all citizens to work to protect the country’s natural resources. The struggle should not be left only on the shoulders of the poor people affected by multinational mining operations.

This is a call to all patriotic citizens of Ghana to join the struggle to halt the unbridled exploitation of the country's natural resources, which destroys the environment, pollutes water bodies, violates the rights of citizens, depletes mineral resources and yields only minimal returns to Ghana.

The new Logo of WACAM is a graphic drawing of a green hut sandwiched by two golden huts. The huts represent habitats. The green colour symbolise the environment comprising social, cultural, spiritual and economic lives of human beings and the physical environment of rivers, mountains, forests and animals while the golden colour represents the natural wealth endowment of Ghana. The three huts represent WACAM's strong belief that development can be sustainable only when it is in harmony with the economic, social and cultural lives of the people; environmental integrity and considers the needs of future generations.



The green colour of WACAM represents the resolve of WACAM to protect and safeguard the environment as enshrined in Article 41k of the 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, which states: "It is the duty of every citizen to protect and safeguard the environment". WACAM's new website is www.wacamghana.com

WACAM wishes to express its deepest gratitude to individuals, organisations and institutions that have supported WACAM in diverse ways to bring it this far.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Daniel Owusu-Koranteng".

Daniel Owusu-Koranteng

Executive Director

Dated: 18th August 2009