

August 28, 2023**Dear Sir/Madam,****Presentation on Expert meeting on enhancing capacity-building for local governments to incorporate human rights into all their work;**

Land Rights Defenders Inc is an approved 501©(3) humanity centered public charity organization registered in the United States with its main mission to protect the rights of landowners and ensure a safe and equitable environment for indigenous and native groups by advocating for fair and just land policies and practice.

In 2021 the organization connected with the indigenous people of the Ashanti tribe in Ghana, who's members including women and children have been subject to constant persecution, torture, character defamation and criminalization of exercising their inalienable rights of control and usage of their ancestral lands violating the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People. Consequently, we are triggered to enforce compliance with the Ghana's Land Act 1036 both through legal action when necessary and through public education campaigns design to raise awareness about the law's protection against illegal land grab.

Human rights are essential for a flourishing society, and it's high time we start respecting and protecting them. Unfortunately, in Ghana, local and regional governments are often under-equipped to uphold human rights, making it hard to reach the sustainable development goals. It's time to build up their capacity and get creative with the strategies that can be used to make it happen. We can also look to government and non-governmental organizations to team up and tackle the challenges. By doing so, we'll be able to make sure everyone in Ghana can access and enjoy their human rights.

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Background and context:

When it comes to the history of human rights in Ghana, it's important to understand that prior to independence in 1957, most of the country's laws were based on colonial legislation. While Ghana made strides towards developing its own legal framework after independence, incorporating several international conventions on human rights, sadly, these laws aren't always enforced or respected by local and regional governments due to a lack of resources and inadequate legal frameworks. It's crucial that local and regional governments take responsibility for enforcing human rights, as they are responsible for providing basic services like healthcare, education, food security, and access to water – all of which are essential for safeguarding people's basic human rights. Plus, local and regional governments have the duty to ensure civil liberties, such as freedom of speech and assembly, are upheld within their jurisdictions. Local and regional governments have a huge responsibility when it comes to defending human rights, but that doesn't mean they don't face their fair share of obstacles. From financial woes to outdated processes, inadequate personnel to weak legal frameworks, capacity-building initiatives are desperately needed if these governments are going to be able to live up to their human rights enforcement duties. Solutions include training government staff, increasing resources, creating educational programs, forming partnerships between governments and NGOs, and increasing public awareness. On top of all that, external forces, like political climates, digitalization, and global economic trends, must be taken into account when creating these strategies. Let's work together to make sure human rights are always upheld!

Key challenges facing local and regional governments:

Local and regional governments in Ghana are hindered in their ability to safeguard the rights of citizens due to limited budgets and inadequate legal frameworks. Global factors such as migration flows, climate change, economic shocks, and conflicts beyond their borders exacerbate this challenge. To help local and regional governments overcome these obstacles and uphold human rights, capacity-building initiatives should be tailored to each region or city, focusing on training and education programs for officials, public-private partnerships for financial resources, non-governmental organizations for enforcement, effective legal frameworks, improved internal processes and systems, and intergovernmental transfer coordination. If implemented at scale, these strategies could enable more equitable access to essential services and better protection for vulnerable

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populations.

Strategies:

In order to ensure that all citizens of Ghana can enjoy their human rights, capacity-building initiatives must be established at the local level. These initiatives should include: providing educational programs on human rights to government staff; launching public awareness campaigns to raise citizens' understanding of their rights; forming partnerships between government, private businesses, NGOs, and other stakeholders; establishing laws defining violations of human rights and providing accountability measures for those found guilty; developing internal processes and systems to monitor compliance with laws related to human rights; and collaborating between government and civil society organizations. Through this integrated approach, greater coordination between levels of government can be achieved, enabling effective protection of vulnerable populations from abuse and equitable access to essential services.

Opportunities for collaboration and partnerships:

Additionally, training programs for local and regional government officials should be developed to strengthen their capacity in areas such as human rights law, policy development, conflict resolution, civic engagement, and related matters. Furthermore, incentives at the national level, such as tax breaks and grants, should be implemented to promote sustainable development initiatives that support capacity-building in areas like health care, education services, and housing.

In order to effectively enforce human rights, collaboration and partnerships between local/regional governments in Ghana, universities, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and other relevant entities are essential. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can provide access to capital, technology, infrastructure, and other resources not available through traditional government programs, as well as foster cooperation between different levels of government. Additionally, incentives at the national level, such as tax breaks and grants, should be implemented to support capacity-building initiatives in areas like health care, education services, and housing. Training programs for local/regional government officials on topics such as human rights law, policy development, conflict resolution, and civic engagement should also be developed to promote capacity-building efforts. By engaging a range of stakeholders and international partners, more effective strategies for protecting vulnerable populations and providing equitable access to

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essential services can be developed.

Conclusion and recommendations:

In summary, local and regional governments in Ghana are essential to the realization of human rights. Despite facing challenges like limited resources, inadequate legal frameworks, and the influence of global forces, capacity-building initiatives can help them to surmount these barriers. To do so, strategies such as training and education, public-private partnerships, collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the optimization of internal processes and systems, and coordination between levels of government are all necessary components of an effective, integrated approach.

In order to maximize the success of initiatives for increasing capacity building of local and regional governments in Ghana to enforce human rights, the following recommendations should be taken into account. Firstly, partnerships between government offices at various levels, universities/colleges, private sector actors and civil society organizations should be established to ensure a unified approach to capacity-building for human rights. Additionally, public-private partnerships (PPPs) can be established to effectively share resources. To this end, training programs should be implemented on topics like human rights law, policy development, conflict resolution and civic engagement. Lastly, comprehensive legal frameworks should be put in place to ensure international standards regarding the protection of human rights are properly observed by local agencies. By making efforts to create an environment which upholds human rights at a local level, then populations in vulnerable situations can be better safeguarded and access to essential services can be provided in a fair manner. Subsequently, it is essential that greater emphasis is placed on creating strategies to increase capacity building for local and regional governments in Ghana to implement international standards for the protection of human rights. Thank you.

Signed

Nana Kwesi Osei Bonsu
(Global Ambassador)

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