



REPORT ON THE 2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOR FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS NETWORK IN GHANA



ENCOM HOTEL ANNEX, TECHIMAN – 12TH FEBRUARY, 2024

PREPARED BY: NATIONAL SECRETARIAT-FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS NETWORK IN GHANA (FONG)

New Life Junction Pokuase – Mayera Road, Accra Digital Address: GW-0054-1535.

C/O P. O. Box DK 216, Darkuman, Accra.

Tel: +233 24 546 1304 E-mail: farmersorganisation@yahoo.com

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Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
BaDECC	Business and Development Consultancy Centre
DAA	Development Action Association
ECASARD	Ecumenical Association For Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
FONG	Farmer Organizations Network in Ghana
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
ROPPA	Peasant Organizations and Agricultural Producers of West Africa

Introduction

Farmers Organisations' Network in Ghana (FONG) is with a currently FBO membership of over 400 and spread across Ghana. The Network has just ended it's 2023 Annual General Meeting. The network



obligation to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) was realised as delegates from all the 3 administrative zones of FONG across Ghana attended and participated fully in the AGM with each zone sending adequate delegates as possible.

The Section 4.1 of Article 4.0 of FONG constitution request that an Annual General Meeting be held because it is the supreme decision making organ of FONG and consisting of ALL paid up members. FONG therefore held the 2023 year AGM on Monday, 12th February, 2024 at ENCOM Annex Hotel, Tachiman, Ghana.

In collaboration with stakeholders and partners such as the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Peasant Organizations and Agricultural Producers of West Africa (ROPPA), FAO, IFAD, USAID-Policy Link, GIZ-Agribiz and many other state agencies, NGOs and sister organisations, the Network over the year has been mobilising and championing the interest and production activities of smallholder farmers across the country. The Network is in the business of making members and stakeholders accept the concept of treating agricultural activities/productions as business and hence living up to the FONG motto, “FARMING AS A BUSINESS IS OUR BUSINESS”.

This report is an account of FONG Annual General Meeting which created the platform for members to share information, select new national level leader and energies themselves for the years ahead.

Aim and Objectives of the AGM

This year’s AGM was conducted in the face of the following objects;

1. Elect national level leaders of FONG
2. Review the annual activity report of FONG National Secretariat
3. Approve Five-year Strategic Plan of FONG

Methodology

The AGM was an important democratic and legal event for the Network and therefore required significant preparation;

First, checks were made on the rules in the constitution of FONG about the timelines and processes for holding the AGM. Considerations such as:

- ✓ who should be invited
- ✓ the process and timeline for notifying members and others of the AGM
- ✓ what information must be included in the AGM agenda and how and when that information should be received and published
- ✓ what reports need to provide at the AGM
- ✓ the required quorum (the number of people needed for a meeting to be valid)
- ✓ who is eligible to vote
- ✓ voting process and announcements.

Secnodly, the meeting was held and guided by an agenda;

- ✓ Delegates registration
- Introduction of Delegates
- Introduction of Invited Guest
- Speech made by the Out-going President and Solidarity Messages from Partners
- Presentations, discussion and adoption of Reports and approval plans
- Election of Officers
- Swearing-in of elected Officers



Meeting was generally participatory, interactive and cooperative in the spirit of conscientious building.

Participants

The AGM was attended by 31 participants (17 males & 14 females) drawn from all the three operational zones of the Network (Northern Ghana Zone, Middle Ghana Zone and Southern Ghana Zone). Others came from Partners and Stakeholders (See Appendix 1 for details of participants).

Opening

Welcome Address by the President of FONG

The president of FONG, Dr. King David Amoah, thanked all zones for attending the AGM despite the absence of resources. He acknowledged the sacrifices made by members as they sponsored themselves to the meeting. This, he said, is an indication of members' commitment to the network and a sign of sustainability.

The president said that FONG has travelled far since 2003 when it was established and owe a lot of gratitude to some key organizations such as FAO, IFAD, AGRICORD and ROPPA that has supported it in diverse ways over the years. He noted that ROPPA, in particular, has been very committed to the course of FONG and continues to support the network for all this long period. The president informed members of the decision of ROPPA to release funds owed FONG for the previous year's activities. He said the organization therefore needs special commendation and recognition in special occasions like. For those who know little about this key partner, the president took participants through the structure of ROPPA and how it relates to the Pan African Farmers Organization as well as other regional bodies East Africa, Central Africa, and North Africa. He also recapped the structure of FONG from the zones (Northern, Middle and Southern Zones) to the national leadership to remind participants of how decision making processes have culminated to this event as the highest decision making level of the network.

Dr. Amoah also took the opportunity to do a special introduction of the Coordinator of FONG, Mr. Sulemana Nathaniel, who was recently appointed alongside the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Julius K.A. Nornoo. He expressed his appreciation to the coordinator for his commitment and sacrifices and the Finance Officer, Mr. Samuel Essah, for being the longest serving staff and showing maximum dedication for all these years.

The president emphasized that the fact that FONG still exists is an achievement considering the huge challenges the organization has gone through over the years. One of the greatest weaknesses of FONG, according to him, is non-payment of dues. He therefore called on members to take a decision on how to deal with this critical issue. He also called on members to take a decision on the kind of commodity groups the organization needs to deal with in order to meet the current trend and interest of partners and government. The president also noted structural weaknesses such as ineffective operation of zonal



offices and National Executive Committee due to resource constraints. These challenges coupled with inability of the network to hold regular elections to change leadership have affected the growth of FONG. He underscored the need for the network to take critical steps to expand its membership to cover all the regions in all the zones.

Dr. Amoah reminded members that one of the critical assignments of the AGM is the election of new executives including the President, the vice presidents (1st and 2nd vice), women's college leader and youth college leader. He called on all to ensure that the people elected are capable of transforming FONG and ensuring its accelerate growth and sustainability.

[Address by the special guest](#)

The regional director of Agric for the Bono East Region, Mr. James Adu, was the special guest of honour for the FONG AGM. In his address, he expressed joy being invited to grace the occasion. Mr. James said he was impressed with the Moto of FONG "Farming as a business is our business" even though he was not sure whether members of the network lived by the moto. The director also indicated his excitement about the involvement of women and youth in FONG and encouraged the network to continue that path. According to him, most farmers in the Bono East region were old with an average age of farmers being 45 years. One of the reasons for this development, he noted, was because most people don't want their children to be farmers and the youth are not attracted to farming.

Another area of concern in the Agriculture sector, according to Mr. James, is the excessive use of agrochemicals which he said is mainly responsible for the gradual extension of cocoyam and snails that emerged in most farms and were relied upon as source of food and extra income for farmers during the production season. The depletion of these products from the wild is said to affect many farmers who depends on these products during the production season. He therefore encouraged FONG to include advocacy interventions against rampant and unsafe use of agrochemicals. He also asked the network to advocate for improved access of smallholder farmers to simple equipment that can do weeding, transplanting and harvesting so as to reduce the overreliance on weedicide and manual labour. This, he revealed, is what MoFA is now pushing for as alternatives to agrochemicals and manual labour use.

The regional director lamented that importation of foreign rice is one of the biggest challenges facing the Agriculture sector in Ghana. He noted that, even when farmers in Ghana make bumper harvest like this year, they are unable to sell the rice because of high competition from imported rice. He therefore encouraged FONG to include innovative measures for marketing of local rice as part of their new strategic plan.

The special guest concluded his remarks by calling on FONG to continue to learn from innovative strategies used by similar organizations in other countries to address challenges confronting smallholder farmers in Ghana. He cited a case in Malawi where farmers were able to establish a



savings and loans scheme and graduated it to a big Farmers Bank that is so powerful that government can no longer do things without consulting the association. Such strategy, if adopted, can help address the challenge of access to finance by smallholder farmers in Ghana, Mr. James Adu concluded.

Presentation of Technical Report

The National Coordinator of FONG, Mr. Sulemana Nathaniel, presented the technical report on behalf of the president. The report highlighted several aspects and activities of the network including, current membership issues, activities planned and implemented, partners of FONG, workshops and meetings attended, NEC meetings, FONG visibility, Logistics and staff remuneration issues. Details of the report are presented below.

Membership issues (*Include dues status, technical support to members and membership satisfaction survey*):

Members of FONG are currently drawn from affiliated members and partners. The secretariat has updated about 460 of these members who are either farmers base groups or farmers based associations. Individual farmers and processors forming these updated data is also about 7000 persons. However, many years of poor data storage and management has led to some loss of membership information otherwise, previous report documents code a more higher membership.

Status of Activity implementation, 2023 fiscal year (Table1):

Activity	Planned Outputs/immediate outcomes	Results achieved
Action 2.3: Strengthening the influence of POs for the adoption and implementation of LOASPH/TASK 17: Participate in government meetings and programmes affecting farmers	FONG members participated in the review process of the National Climate Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan lead by The Ministry of Food and Agriculture in collaboration with the Feed the Future Ghana Policy LINK Activity	Contributed to Two (2) government agriculture policy and programme review process
Action 3.3: Organize body sessions/TASK3: Organise NEC Meeting	One (1) in-person and several online NEC meetings held	Contributed to the management of FONG and member welfare



Action 3.5 Institutional strengthening/TASK2: Pay Salaries	Four (4) months staff salaries fully paid Web site updated	Supported 3 staff salary Supported FONG WEB site updates
Action 1.8 Supporting the participation of women and young people in commercial events in the region/TASK 9: Support funds mobilisation to mark 2023 World Rural Women's Day	FONG Supported member organizations to mobilise funds and sponsorship for 2023 world rural women's day celebration	Contributed to the celebration of 2023 IRWD by some members
Action 1.1 Setting up and strengthening CNIEPs/TASK 1: Institutional Support-Office maintenance, Audit, Stationery, others	Salaries and allowances partly paid to staff	Supported salaries and allowances part payments
Action 1.6. Development and strengthening of training facilities and youth incubation centers in 7 national platforms	FONG Supported 10 farmers from five regions to participate in an information sharing workshop on climate information services in Ghana	Collaborated with Policy Link and build the capacity of 10 farmers on climate information services in Ghana
TASK 6: Organise meeting with stakeholders to share Strategic Plan	Shared 7 copies of strategic plan with some partners and members	Renewed collaboration with partners
TASK 8: Collect data to document success stories and case studies	One annual market membership satisfaction survey conducted	Members cooperated with FONG in trying to understand issues and serve better
TASK 11: Policy Advocacy-Press Release	Provide expert advice and interviews sought for by media houses to address national agricultural issues	Granted one (1) interview with GTV on a live news cast



<p>CLOSA Project : Connect and Learn for Sustainable Associations</p> <p>FONG staff participated in a workshop targeted at improving financial sustainability, commercial viability, and self-reliance of Associations in Ghana.</p>	<p>16 farmers participated in capacity information sharing meeting</p> <p>2 FONG staff trained</p>	<p>Contribute to peer support mission of same industry actors</p>
<p>AGROECOLOGY: Workshop to strengthen national agroecology stakeholder consultation</p>	<p>Reviewed annual action plan for the National Consultation Framework on Agroecology in Ghana</p>	<p>More functional NCFA-Ghana in place to ensure effective stakeholder participation and coordination of agroecology activities</p>
<p>GIZ-AgriBiz: The Sustainable Employment Through Agribusiness Programme</p> <p>Logistics support</p>	<p>One annual market and membership satisfaction survey conducted</p> <p>Laptop, printer, smartphone, modem</p>	<p>FONG better inform of members needs and issues for better planning</p>
<p>MOPSS:</p> <p>Organization high-level mission to advocate for the consideration of pastoralism and nutrition in DAs</p> <p>Advocacy Workshop to Consider Pastoralism in DAs</p> <p>Meet pastoral associations to broaden their social base and strengthen their accountability towards their members</p>	<p>Advocated for the consideration of pastoralism in District Assembly Development Plans</p>	<p>Drafted roadmap to consider pastoralism in DAs</p> <p>Sensitized actors on peaceful co-existence between livestock farmers and crop farmers</p>
<p>DERPIn project launch and country-level inception workshop</p>	<p>Farmers mobilised in DERPIn project activities in Ghana</p>	<p>Collaborated with UDS in launching and holding DERPIn project in Ghana</p>



Stock of Achievements (Sum-Up) Table 2:

Projects (AWPB or not)	Total number of planned activities	Total number of fully implemented activities	Variance
ROPPA (OpenACP)	6	3	3 on-going
GIZ-Agribiz	7	7	0
ROPPA (DERPIn)	2	2	0
ROPPA (MOPSS)	3	3	0
ROPPA (Agroecology)	1	1	0
CLOSA Project	1	1	0

Partnerships:

In the 2022/23 fiscal year, FONG has received technical and funding support to undertake some activities in partnership and collaboration from different distinguished partners and stakeholders including ROPPA, PAFO, FAO, IFAD, GIZ-Agribiz, University for Development Studies (UDS), CLOSA, USAID/POLICY LINK, MoFA etc. However, majority of the support has come from ROPPA and GIZ-Agribiz.

FONG National Secretariat in Accra with three technical staff was able to give substantial technical and coordinating support to the implementation of activities including some member planned activities in some zones among the three operational clusters (zones) of FONG. Currently, FONG still keep to four core interventions areas:

- Facilitating/supporting capacity building and the provision of institutional support to members
- Policy engagement/influencing
- Provision of agricultural economic support/advisory services
- Communication and knowledge management

ROPPA

➤ **AGROECOLOGY:** Workshop to strengthen national agroecology stakeholder consultation
 Reviewed annual action plan for the National Consultation Framework on Agroecology in Ghana
 More functional NCFA-Ghana in place to ensure effective stakeholder participation and coordination of agroecology activities

➤ **MOPSS Project:**

These actions were taken;

Organization high-level mission to advocate for the consideration of pastoralism and nutrition in DAs

Advocacy Workshop to Consider Pastoralism in DAs

Meet pastoral associations to broaden their social base and strengthen their accountability towards their members

Results;



Drafted roadmap to consider pastoralism in DAs

Sensetised actors on peaceful co-existence between livestock farmers and crop farmers

➤ DERPIn project launch and country-level inception workshop

AKADEMIYA2063 and PAFO in partnership is implementing the “Digitally Enabled Resilience and Nutrition Policy Innovations (DERPIn) project” over a three-year period in five African countries – Benin, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda, and Senegal. FONG is representing PAFO in Ghana to implement the project. Our duty in the project is to mobilised farmers and farms for data cillection.

The project seeks to focus attention on African countries capacity to anticipate and respond to shocks resulting in large-scale disruptions and irreversible damage to food systems, livelihoods and putting at jeopardy our infant farming systems and developing agribusiness gains in Africa.

So the solution preferred in this project is a digitally-enabled, customizable tools, data, and analytical products to cater for the needs of a broad range of stakeholders including government, the private sector, and most crucially food systems actors including smallholder farmers

In collaborated with UDS, the project was launch in Accra with the participation of farmers, MoFA and many other stakeholders in the agriculture sector in Ghana, Rwanda and Senegal.

Currently 90% of FONG administrative overheads come from the financial support of ROPPA. FONG has been the National Level Platform for ROPPA for many years. Over the last two (2) years administrative funds from ROPPA is drying up leading to de-motivation and attrition of Technical Personnel in FONG. Under the year of review, the only 3 staff FONG has at the National Secretariat did not receive salaries for six months. The hope is that, ROPPA will eventually send funds for some salaries and office operational cost.

USAID/Policy LINK Activity:

- Participate in government & stakeholder meetings and programmes affecting farmers
- FONG mobilised members to participate in;
- Workshop on Review of Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security Action Plan at City Escape Hotel, Accra

- Workshop on Improving Climate Information Service Provision in Ghana at Koforidua in the Eastern Region

FONG currently has no memorandum of understanding with Policy LINK but prospecting to have one in the future.

GIZ/Agribiz:

Membership Satisfaction and Market Survey;

Collected data from FONG members for a market and membership satisfaction survey. This was done with the support of GIZ-Agribiz project. Analysis of the survey data has unearthed the following paramount concerns/issues under the report heading “What are FONG Members most worried about?” Ratings of challenges by FONG respondents presented the following top challenges;

- Poor access to inputs
- Poor access to markets and marketing services

FONG has ended a 2-year partnership with Agribiz but in the process of a year partnership renewal

FONG Support:



Policy Advocacy-Press Release;

Provide expect advise, interviews and consultations sought for by stateholders, media houses to address national agricultural issues;

FONG technical staff and many other FONG members participated in government and state agency meetings and in each case FONG advocated for smallholder farmers in Ghana

Granted one (1) interview with GTV on a live news cast on how best farmers could be supported in this era of increasing cost of production for farmers

CLOSA:

Farmer Networks and Associations Peer Support Mission

With the support of CLOSA (Connect and Learn for Sustainable Associations),

Two FONG technical staff and 16 members participated in a workshop targeted at improving financial sustainability, commercial viability, and self-reliance of Associations in Ghana.

Currently, FONG has 2-year memorandum of understanding with CLOSA.

Presentation of Financial Report (Table 3):

The financial report was presented by the Finance Officer, Mr. Samuel Kofi Essah, on behalf of the president. His presentation focused on income and expenditure within the period as shown below.

Income Received as at 31st December 2023

Source	Amount
Gifts	29,000.00
MOPSS Project	104,000.00
Agroecology Project	62,000.00
Salaries	58,000.00
Total Received	253,000.00

Expenditure as at 31st December 2023

Item	Amount
MOPSS Project	103,000.00
Agroecology Project	54,000.00
Salaries	24,000.00
Administrative expenses	12,000.00
Audit	8,000.00



Total Expenditure	201,000.00
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Laying and adoption of Strategic Plan

The president, Dr. King David Amoah, laid the new strategic plan for adoption by the house. He reminded members that a consultant was contracted to develop the strategic plan in consultation with the National Executive Committee. According to him, the consultant completed the work in 2022 and shared the draft strategic plan to all zones and members made inputs before the final copy was presented to FONG. The president therefore proposed that members adopt it as the final FONG strategic plan 2022 to 2027. Consequently, the strategic plan was unanimously adopted by the AGM.

Election of Executives (Table 4a):

The president informed members that notice for election of new executives was served prior to the AGM in line with the constitution of FONG. By the power vested in him by the constitution, he declared that all positions of FONG stood dissolved to pave way for election of new leaders. Since the network was unable to bring electoral commission to the AGM as stipulated by the constitution of FONG, members agreed that the National coordinator and the Finance officer of FONG be made to act as election officers for the AGM.

The election officers called for submission of nomination forms for all individuals who were ready to contest the following vacant positions of FONG.

1. President
2. 1st Vice President
3. 2nd Vice President
4. Women's College Leader
5. Youth College Leader

Contestants were given 30 minutes to go through their nomination forms before submission to the election officers. By the end of the stipulated time, 2 candidates each contested for the president, women's college and youth college leadership positions while 1 person contested for the 2nd vice president position. The position of the 1st vice was not contested by anybody so members agreed that, by convention, the person who emerges second in the presidential contest will be made the 1st vice president. The approved contestants for the positions include the following

No.	Name	Gender	Position	Zone
1	Emelia Anor	Female	President	Southern Zone
2	Chief Issahaku Jesiwuni	Male	President	Northern Zone
3	Philip Amoah	Male	2 nd Vice President	Middle Zone
4	Gladys Serwaa	Female	Women's College Leader	Middle Zone



5	Janet Adade	Female	Women's College Leader	Southern Zone
6	John Kimpon	Male	Youth College Leader	Southern Zone
7	Lydia J. Akenteng	Female	Youth College Leader	Middle Zone

The election was done one position after the other starting with the position of the President. Each contestant was assigned a unique number (1 or 2) and each delegate was given a piece of identifiable paper cutting to vote by writing the unique number of their preferred candidate on the paper. Before the elections started, the election officers counted all the delegates president and declared the total number of expected votes.

For election of each position, the election officers will collect all votes into an empty box displayed to all delegates and then pour out the content onto an empty table, sort according to the unique numbers and then count for each candidate. The position of the 2nd vice president which had one (1) candidate was unanimously endorsed. By the end of elections, the results were declared as follows.

Table 4b:

No.	Name	Gender	Position	Total Votes	Declaration
1	Emelia Anor	Female	President	11	
2	Chief Issahaku Jesiwuni	Male	President	18	Elected
3	Philip Amoah	Male	2 nd Vice President	29	Elected
4	Gladys Serwaa	Female	Women's College Leader	17	Elected
5	Janet Adade	Female	Women's College Leader	11	
6	John Kimpon	Male	Youth College Leader	10	
7	Lydia J. Akenteng	Female	Youth College Leader	19	Elected

Note: Total eligible voters = 29, only one absentee for election of women college leader

Swearing inn ceremony

The outgoing president, Dr. King David Amoah, swore inn the newly elected executives by administering the oath of office to them as they lined up in front of the delegates. The newly sworn inn leaders of FONG were applauded by the delegates who also took turns to congratulate them with handshakes.

Closing Remarks

The outgone president congratulated the newly elected executives for their victory and encouraged them to rally all the members behind them to ensure success of FONG. He particularly called on those who did not win the contest to give their maximum support to the elected officers as the exercise was a friendly and family contest devoid of any rancor.

The president tasked all zones to elect their new executives soon after they return so as to facilitate the reconstitution of the national executive council in line with the constitution of FONG.



Dr. King David Amoah informed members that ROPPA planned to hold its board meeting in Ghana so the new executives will be introduced to them during this event. He said FONG has been tasked to find the venue and support in the organization of the meeting.

The former president also informed members that he submitted a proposal to the Private Enterprises Foundation to provide some support to members of FONG. Fortunately, he said the proposal has been accepted and he has been asked to attend a meeting in Accra to discuss it. He therefore asked members to pray for a fruitful outcome of that meeting so that some support will be obtained within the year.

On his part, the newly elected president of FONG, Chief Issahaku Jesiwuni, thanked all delegates on behalf of his colleagues for the confidence reposed in them to lead the network. He assured members of their commitment to do their best to ensure that the association becomes more vibrant and successful in the near future. He therefore called on all delegates, particularly those who haven't been elected to consider the event a collective win as he will reach out to everybody to ensure that they continue to work as a family for the success of FONG. He concluded by thanking every member and wishing them safe travel back home.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The General Assembly acknowledged that the Network did not have funds to coordinate member activities and run office operations as expected. Meaning, FONG currently does not have funds or secured funds to implement the approved five-year strategic plan and annual work plans.

In this way, the Network members and the technical staff need to;

- Strengthen economic services activities to generate revenue
- Double efforts to gain and deepen partnerships and media visibility
- Step up on member dues collection



Appendix 1: List of Participants