



## CONCERNED CITIZENS OF ATEWA LANDSCAPE

22nd March 2018

H.E Nana Addo Dankwah Akufu-Addo  
The President of the Republic of Ghana  
Ghana

Your Excellency

### PETITION:

#### **DO NOT MINE BAUXITE IN ATEWA. SECURE THE FOREST FOR WATER**

On this **World Water Day 2018**, under the specific theme of '**Nature for Water**' that explores nature-based solutions to the water challenges of the 21st century, we wish to draw your attention to the critical role of Atewa Forest in providing clean water for Ghanaians, and the threat of bauxite mining that would damage this valuable service and slow Ghana's progress towards meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, most specifically SDG6 to '**Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**'.

The issue is so important to us that, we embarked on a six days walk, signifying SDG Goal 6. We began our journey from Sagyimase on the 17th of March so we can meet you on this very important day, World Water Day. We spent time on the road engaging with people and creating awareness on the need to protect our water bodies and also share our concerns on why Atewa should be secured for water and not turned into a bauxite mine pit. A lot of people are worried about the current threat to our natural water sources. We have no doubt this issue is of utmost importance to you as well, father and President of this beloved country, Ghana.

An estimated 5 million Ghanaians rely on clean water from the rivers Densu, Ayensu and Birim that rise in the Atewa Forest. Clearing the land of trees and topsoil for bauxite mining will result in heavy metals, other pollutants and soil particles precipitating into underground and surface water sources.

This will pose serious health risks for rural communities and downstream consumers relying on the water for consumption, and cause further siltation of the Weija Dam, which is already silting at 2% a year. Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency recently warned that Ghana will be a water-stressed country by 2025 if nothing is done to reduce water pollution.

Ghana has made advances in securing water for her people, but around a fifth of the population still relies on surface water to meet their needs, leaving them vulnerable to water-related illnesses and disease.

A cost-benefit analysis of alternative uses of the Atewa Forest using the UN Economics of Ecosystem and Biodiversity Initiative compared four different land use scenarios for the Atewa Range Forest Reserve. All costs and benefits were accounted for including those that are often invisible and consequently excluded. Comparing the four scenarios overall, the scenario of conserving the forest intact and creating a National Park at Atewa with a supporting buffer zone will result in a cumulative value of US\$ 1,157 million over 30 years at a 5% discount rate compared to the US\$ 1017 million brought by mining and logging (of which 32% would be from illegal and unregulated activities, compared to 7% illegal/unregulated in the National Park scenario).

Only the National Park option with the supporting buffer zone will, in both economic and conservation terms, provide a long term value increase, benefiting both upstream and downstream stakeholders. In contrast, complete degradation by mining and logging will have an initial value increase followed by a constant downward trend. Bauxite mining will yield high profits to a few mining companies, while the costs of ecosystem service loss for other stakeholders are high. Water benefits to domestic and industrial users in the three river basins alone are estimated to be US\$25 million a year.

The potential value of ecotourism at Atewa Forest is estimated at US\$5.8 million a year based on comparisons with other tourist sites in Ghana. Additional conservation and green investments will yield further long term economic benefits for forest communities and downstream users, while bauxite mining will bring comparatively short term benefits to a few and then both the bauxite and the forest will be exhausted.

Mr. President Nana Akufo-Addo, in your position as co-chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Advocates and in support of your commitment to the SDGs shown by your inauguration of the High Level Inter-Ministerial Committee for SDG implementation in Ghana you charged with ensuring that Ghana becomes a shining example for the implementation of the SDGs, we are calling on you to withdraw the Atewa Forest from any bauxite mining agreement.

Removing this threat of bauxite development is the only option that will ensure Atewa Forest continues to fulfil its contribution to Ghana's capacity to meet Goal 6 of the SDGs and to maintain its service as a 'nature-based solution to the water challenges of the 21 century' for 5 million and more Ghanaians over the long term. We see this as the only future for Atewa Forest that is consistent with your determination to meet the SDGs by 2030.

Your Excellency, there are many sources of bauxite but there is nowhere else in Ghana that provide us this much water and also nowhere else on earth that has the combination of rare and unique species that live in Atewa Forest.

Atewa Forest and all the services and assets it provides will be lost forever to Ghana and the world if mined for bauxite.

Let it not be said in the future by generations unborn, that, it was during your watch that we lost this magnificent Jewel in the Crown of Ghana's Forests.

Thank you

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Cc:

Hon. Minister of Finance

Hon. Minister of Lands and Natural Resources

Hon. Minister of Sanitation and Water