

## **KDDA: THE WAY FORWARD**

Let me first of all thank this interim body for the marvellous job they are doing and also lend my whole hearted support in pursuance of the goals and aspirations of KDDA.

The Kono district and its people are at a cross roads, our very existence as a people is now at stake and our future is being determined by the spinning coin. This is a dangerous scenario and needs immediate intervention particularly from those of us in the Diaspora.

It is as a result of this, that those of us UK should put our resources together both time and otherwise to make KDDA succeed and become the beacon of light for our people.

KONSU from which all the other Kono groups both in Sierra Leone and the Diaspora Evolved is the oldest regional non political organisation in Sierra Leone, formed to bring awareness to the people of Kono and to help develop their living standards. The founding fathers of Konsu took their responsibility very seriously and lived up to the ideals of the organisation. The result of this can be seen all over the world in the past students of the Koidu Model Academy. These guys were brave enough to put their monies and influence together to start an institution of learning. By doing this they set the bench mark for what is expected of Konos everywhere “We do it for ourselves” this is the spirit that those of us here today have to keep burning. Over the years we have reneged from our responsibilities and let petty squabbles over take what we should be doing to follow the footsteps of our forefathers. It is with this aim that I solemnly submit to all of us that KDDA becomes the key mouth piece, think tank and strategy developer of our sacred land. This seems like a mammoth task but it will please you to know that we have the capacity and ability to achieve this, what we lack is the tenacity and this is what we have to inculcate to achieve our ideals. My submission that KDDA be the main mouth piece and strategy developer of the Kono people is because of the disdain, lack of respect and marginalisation presented on the Kono people. All the political parties and their representatives have treated the Kono people in the same manner taking everything from Kono and giving nothing back to the land or its people.

The perpetual occurrence of this philosophy marginalising Kono has brought us to the point where we are now an endangered species and if we do not act now future generations will have to blame us for doing nothing when we should have done a whole lot. Visit the Kono district you will see the total neglect of a people by both past and present administrations. In the face of the tremendous contribution that Kono has made in terms of mineral, agricultural and human resources to Sierra Leone.

We are treated as non-entities in our community, begging for our own very existence.

Off shore oil has been discovered in the south of the country, can you imagine what will happen to us when drilling starts? now that we are the bedrock of the economy of Sierra Leone we do not have an inch of tarred road, adequate medical facilities, 6<sup>th</sup> form to mention but a few what do you think will happen to Kono? Kono will be closed for business and the road to Kono will be dead, even our language will disappear. Let's think about this.

This must stop and the answer lies with us as in our own very hands we have the power to turn things around.

As a people we need to have a plan, a plan that will lead us to the future encompassing our culture, economy, education and social activities. I see no reason why Kono people cannot dominate the economy of Kono. We own the land and we should be the key beneficiaries of that land. We have to start investing in our land in agriculture, tourism and other businesses. Our people have been growing coffee from time immemorial what evidence of upward mobility have we seen in their lives? This is because the top end of the industry is been dominated by foreigners and as far as they are concerned the status quo can remain as it is, our people own the land, and they do the hard work on the land and get less for their labour and products.

We are blessed to be located on one of God's most beautiful and productive geographical areas yet we are poorest of the poor. Why? The answer lies in ourselves until we the Konos appreciate the gift that we have been endowed with it only get worst for us.

There is an urgent need for us to come together and think the way forward for our district and our people.

A symposium sometime this year should be a priority.

This is my take.

Happy New Year All.

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