

## **SDF General Meeting**

Venue: Zoom and conference calls via WhatsApp

Date: July 27, 2024

Start time: 5.30pm GMT

End time: xxpm GMT

### **Agenda**

1. Opening prayers
2. Attendees
3. Apologies
4. What measures could we put in place to mitigate the recurrent damages that our community members suffer from storms run-off water.
5. Why SDF-sponsored subsidised healthcare is not regularly available to members of the community and, what SDF is doing to change the situation for the better.
6. Acknowledge the annual subscription payment of people in Sika, remind and encourage community members to pay their annual subscription, because as a community, we can only accomplish our development goals if we have adequate resources.
7. Update on Sika Community Clinic project.
8. Update on Sika Women's Garden Project
  - a) Submitted grant application.
  - b) Land transfer to the Community.
9. Succession planning
10. AOB
11. Closing prayers

SDF General Meeting: July 28, 2024. A full audio file of the meeting can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

<https://sgul.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=9a6eacde-0ed5-4eb6-a88e-b1bc00c386d>

### ***1. Opening prayers***

Offered.

### ***2. Attendees***

**Kemo Sonko (Chair)** Almameh Sonko, Lamin Famoro Sonko, Omar NR Sonko, Lamin Anfaal Manjang, Pa Amadou Drammeh, Fabourama Ceesay, Sutay Janneh, Kabiro KS Janneh, Galaxy A51, Satang Sanneh, Lamin Sonko-Nani, Bakary J Sonko, Alieu SK Cham. Demba Jammeh, Omar Janneh, Siaka Sonko, Fatou Darboe, Sima Camara, Yaya Tomaring Njie, Mariama (Bonto) Jaiteh, Lamin Camara-Nyorta, Saikou Lamin Sonko, Ba-Malang Janneh, Fatou Sonko-Lemuna, Juma Sarr, Babadinding Sonko, 002203599710, Sarjo Gitteh, Pa-Saikou Keita, Khadijatou Sonko, Mustapha (Pa Bojang) Sawo, Lamin Janneh-Kadesa, Prince of S.U, Saffiatou Sonko, Janko Njie, Bin (+14044027609, Yankuba Saho, Pa Sanyang, Bakary Manneh-Lang Manneh Ida, Saikouba Ceesay

### ***3. Apologies***

Malamin Janneh (Maala)

**4. *What measures could we put in place to mitigate the recurrent damages that our community members suffer from storms run-off water.***

With the Chair (Kemo Sonko) having introduced the first item on the agenda, Bakary J Sonko inquired if the road contractors/government provided any support since the incident happened. It was stated that prior to the rains, the councillor, Pa Saikou Sonko facilitated the repairs of some of the areas affected by the erosion by placing nets filled with boulders of rocks on the trenches/paths of the water ways. This intervention helped, but it was reported that the residents removed the boulders around their houses.

Prior to the incident, Sulayman Bajo sought to ensure that the draining pipes that were removed by the Road contractors (from near Bajo Kunda and Gitteh Kunda) are re-instated, but without success. The contractors apparently said that re-introducing the drainage pipes/culverts would create an incline/slope in the road. Since the rains which caused damages to properties and affected many households, Sulayman Bajo and Kemo Sonko raised the issue- using video footages and photos as exhibits- with the Road contractors and some of their contacts. The contractors visited and created some passage for the water by the roadside- a sort of temporary measure. Although the some of the rains have not been as heavy as the first, it appears that the runoff rainwater from the village is causing some damage to the road.

To mitigate the problem, the meeting decided to set up a taskforce to investigate finding a temporary and lasting solution to the problem. The members of the taskforce as follows:

- Mustapha (Pa Bojang) Sawo – VDC Chairman
- Kemo Sonko -SDF President
- Sulayman Bajo
- Almameh Sonko
- Malamin Janneh
- Lamin Famoro Sonko

**Action point 1:** The taskforce to call an emergency meeting to discuss amongst other things:

- i. The need to convince the road authorities to re-introduce the drainage pipes or construct culverts as were previously obtained.
- ii. Seek to meet up with Mustapha (Tel: 00220 2526024) first before seeking to escalate the matter higher up.

The meeting discussed and agreed that the villagers should not intervene to create the waterway without obtaining clearance from the road contractors.

Some suggestions that were offered at the meeting to help address the issue include:

- a) The creation of a waterway (gutter) from Cham Kunda through the garden of Manneh Kunda, Gitteh Kunda and then through what is the market and then to the drainage pipes by the roadside.
- b) The creation of a waterway on the Pakau side of the village that would drain the water from that side away from the village towards the side that used to have the 4-drainage pipes.
- c) The idea of creating the waterway from Cham Kunda was onto the road was generally considered potentially problematic as it could create a crater in the middle of the village and through roads that connect households which could prove dangerous for pedestrians.

- d) Discourage the felling of trees and encourage the villagers to engage in tree planting as a permanent solution to the problem- the VDC and SDF were urged to work in collaboration on this effort.
  - e) Divert the water coming from the Basic School/Sameh side to that it courses towards the rice fields/site of the current Women's Garden.
- 5. *Why SDF-sponsored subsided healthcare is not regularly available to members of the community and, what SDF is doing to change the situation for the better.***

The Chair recognised the very good work being done in Sika by the CHN, Malamin Janneh and Alhagie Njie. However, the irregularity of the visit by the CHN was raised as a concern; that the CHN being a government employee could only come to Sika when her availability allowed it. This affects not only the regularity of the healthcare services, but also affects the shelf life of the drugs. The meeting recognised the need for to look at ways that would ensure that the healthcare professional visits Sika at least 2 times a month.

To that end, the meeting recognised and thanked Ba-Malang Janneh who saw some 40 patients at the Clinic on June 29, 2024. The meeting urged other Sikankolu with Nursing background to try and lend some support, when they visit Sika, towards the running of the Clinic. Ba-Malang Janneh informed the meeting that since he would spend some of his annual leave in Sika, he would endeavour to see patients at the clinic. He (Ba-Malang Janneh) called on other healthcare professionals with Nursing background to try and volunteer to do the same.

Almameh Sonko informed the meeting that one of his contacts could be engaged in some discussion with a view to finding out if s/he would be suitable and keen to work at the Clinic.

**Action point 2:** Almameh Sonko to share the contact details of the healthcare professional with Omar Janneh and Ba-Malang Janneh so that initial discussion can begin- in consultation with SDF Executive- with a view to getting a more reliable healthcare individual in Sika.

- 6. *Acknowledge the annual subscription payment of people in Sika, remind and encourage community members to pay their annual subscription, because as a community, we can only accomplish our development goals if we have adequate resources.***

The Chair led the words of appreciation and thanks to the people of Sika for the record annual subscription payment (**Total: D17,800**) received so far. In that regard, Lamin Camara-Nyorta, Lamin Janneh (Prof Janneh) and Pa Saikou Sonko were thanked for their hard work in collecting the subscription payments and recording them very diligently.

The meeting encouraged all those who are yet to pay their annual subscription to try and do so as soon as they can so that the objectives of SDF can be realised. In this regard, the meeting reminded the attendees and all to try and reach out to our contacts and family members to pay their annual subscription.

- 7. *Update on Sika Community Clinic project.***

The Chair provided an update on the Community Clinic project. In Summary, the meeting was informed about the following:

- The visit by Kemo Sonko and Omar NR Sonko to meet the Regional Director of Health, NBR at Essau about SDF's desire to build a clinic in Sika.
- At the meeting, the Regional Director of Health shared with them a template of the clinic and residence building plans that the Ministry would want such facilities to conform to.

- SDF worked with their Architect (Mr Samateh) who is known to Bakary J Sonko; the Architect did the works for SDF without pay. However, SDF felt it necessary to show its appreciation for the excellent work done by the Architect and chose to give him and the team a token sum of money and letter of appreciation from SDF.

With the clinic plan now done, Kemo Sonko, Omar NR Sonko and Ba-Malang Janneh- who knows the Regional Director at a personal level- would go to see the Regional Director and submit the Clinic plan to him and seek his blessings to approval the plan and as well ask him to submit the plan to Director of Medical Services for review and possible approval.

Bakary J Sonko informed the meeting about the commitment of Project C.U.R.E. (USA) to supply 40ft container load of medical equipment supplies -worth \$350,000-\$400,000- to the Clinic.

The Chair informed the meeting about the SDF-sponsored scholarship programme for CHN. The meeting encouraged qualified candidates to apply for the scholarship. The meeting made it clear that it would be desirable to have someone from Sika benefit from the scholarship, but that if no suitable candidate can be found in Sika, applicants from elsewhere would be considered.

*Observation: Ba-Malang Janneh suggested that the requirement that a successful candidate upon completion of their training should live and work in Sika for 6 years should be re-considered with a view to lowering it so that it can appeal to applicants.*

## **8. Update on Sika Women's Garden Project**

### **a) Submitted grant application.**

The meeting was informed about the New market-oriented vegetable gardens matching grant SDF applied for in May 2024. Everyone who worked on the application was thanked; the meeting was informed that if the grant is successful, it would significantly uplift the horticultural sector of the community. The ongoing work by the Executive Committee to follow up on the grant application also recognised. At present, it looks like the application has moved from the Regional Coordinator's office in Kerewan to Banjul/Kombo.

The VDC Chair (Mustapha Sawo) welcomed the efforts of SDF to seek funding for the Women's Garden. He highlighted the difficulty faced by the women stating that many of the women cease their vegetable gardening prematurely as the current site is used for rice cultivation and that the landowners reclaim the land and prepare it for rice cultivation reasonably early. He said if the funding being sought is successful, the new site could be used for vegetable garden by both men and women which would transform the socioeconomic well-being of the people of Sika.

### **b) Land transfer to the Community.**

An important element of the grant application is that the ownership of the land should not be in doubt. The meeting thanked late Nyimanding Drammeh and her family and Lamin Drammeh-Manyima Camara for the gifting of some of their land for the Community Clinic. In addition, the meeting showed its appreciation to Jaiteh Kunda for allocating a sizeable portion of their land to the Women of Sika.

Then the meeting was informed about the progress made to date on the transfer of the lands. An official from Physical Planning visited the sites and the following costs were incurred:

- Women's Garden: D5,000
- Community Clinic: D3,000

The costs incurred for the official transfer of the lands are as follows:

- Women's Garden: D10,000
- Community Clinic: D5,000

The papers are due to be signed by the responsible person at the Kerewan Area Council who we understand has travelled.

The meeting recognised the need to have scanned copies of the land transfer documents so far obtained so that if the visitors come to do their feasibility studies, there is some evidence that goes to clarify the ownership of the land for the Women's Garden.

## **9. Succession planning**

It was recognised that to keep SDF going/sustainable, some input by the young in the life and work of SDF and how to provide responsible leadership of an organisation is necessary. To that end, everyone is encouraged to be a part of SDF and that everyone should try and volunteer their time to participate in the work of SDF.

The meeting was reminded that SDF is for everyone- all Sikankolu and everyone who associates themselves with the core values and vision of SDF; everyone is a member unless they declare themselves out; that SDF is a development-oriented organisation that works in partnership with the VDC. The VDC Chairperson (Mustapha Sawo/Pa Bojang) spoke eloquently about the work of SDF and that the VDC stands ready to work with SDF.

The meeting recognised the need to have some SDF Executive Committee members within the VDC with a view to facilitate closer collaborative work between the 2. Responding to this, the meeting was reminded that Lamin Famoro Sonko sits in the Executive Committee of both the VDC and SDF. In addition, it was also mentioned at the meeting that Malamin Janneh (Maala) who was the former VDC Chairman was also a member of SDF Executive Committee.

The Chair informed the meeting that towards the realisation of this objective, the Executive would seek to prepare members of the current leadership team to take up other roles that they may not be nominated into so that new skills may be gained and or support provided where necessary.

Other issues that were discussed and agreed produced the following action points:

**Action point 3:** Lamin Famoro Sonko to discuss with the VDC if they would wish to suggest the need for SDF to co-opt any of the VDC's members and report this to SDF Executive Committee for action.

**Action point 4:** For the VDC to discuss and suggest how they think SDF could work with them and for Lamin Famoro Sonko to bring the outcome of such discussion to SDF Executive Committee for consideration and action.

## **10. AOB**

### ***a) Consider the need to hold the General Meeting more regularly***

Recognising that the meeting was attended well, and the quality of exchanges were fruitful and very constructive, the meeting decided that the General Meeting be held at least 2 times a year – in June and December.

### ***b) Annual subscription payments***

Sutay Janneh informed the meeting about the need for us as well as heads of households to reach out to our contacts and family members to become not only members of SDF but also remind them to pay their annual subscription so that the work of SDF can continue.

***c) Initiate a tree planting project***

The need for the VDC and SDF to work together and encourage the people of Sika to engage in the planting of trees as a long-term solution to the problems of windstorms and runoff water. This was discussed and recognised as a worthy cause to pursue so that the threat to the households that is posed by the erosion can be addressed.

***d) Water draining creation in the village***

The meeting was informed by Omar NR Sonko that the apparent proposal to create water drainage systems in part9s) of Sika may potentially affect the provision of healthcare at its current location (his house) and that measures should be taken to ensure that, when necessary, a plan B (site) is available for the delivery of healthcare to the people of Sika.

***e) Encourage the young study Science so that they can benefit from the SDF scholarship programme***

Bakary Manneh-Lang Manneh-Ida informed the meeting that many of his age mates may not qualify for the scholarship because they did not study science. He urged that we seek to mentor the young to take up Science subjects so that they can go embark on further study in the healthcare system.

***f) Encourage other women folks to participate in the life and work of SDF***

Fatou Darboe, who made a lot of excellent contributions during the meeting, was urged to encourage other women folks to find the time to attend and participate in the work of SDF.

***11. Closing prayers***

Offered.