



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION APRIL - JUNE 2023

NEWSLETTER



① NLA SETTLES GH¢9M UNPAID WINS - SAMUEL AWUKU

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② GEPA REPORTS 6% GROWTH IN NON-TRADITIONAL EXPORT EARNINGS

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KOJO OPPONG NKRUMAH

Minister for information and MP for Ofoase Ayirebi



FATIMATU ABUBAKAR

Deputy Minister for information

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF DIRECTOR



Cherished readers,

I am pleased to welcome you to our newsletter's second quarter 2023 issue. We are delighted to share news about some of the Ministry's operations with you, and we are proud to have you as one of our stakeholders. We appreciate your attention and support at all times.

We launched our digital campaign on disinformation and misinformation this quarter in response to the rise of fake news. The campaign aimed to arm the public with the strategies needed for informed and rational decision-making, to reduce the spread of fake news, and to provide extensive information to the general public on what constitutes disinformation and misinformation, as well as to arm them with ample knowledge on how to identify, disengage, and stop wrongful information from spreading further.

As part of efforts to effectively disseminate information on government policies and programmes to the citizenry, the

Ministry facilitated eight Press Briefings/State of the Agency Report within the quarter. These briefings sought to update the nation on new developments within the National Lottery Authority, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ghana Export Promotion Authority, Ministry of Information (Right to Information), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ghana Boundaries Commission, and Ministry for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development.

The newsletter also includes other intriguing articles that are worth reading.

We anticipate that the remaining months of 2023 will present additional chances for networking, innovation, and collaboration.

As a Ministry, we are committed to carrying out our mission by educating the public on government development policies and programs and gathering the necessary input. We hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and appreciate the confidence you have placed in our sector.

Mrs. Charlotte Morgan-Asiedu

Chief Director

Ministry of Information.

NLA SETTLES GH¢9M UNPAID WINS



The Director General of the National Lottery Authority, Mr. Samuel Awuku delivering his remarks during the press briefing

The new management of the National Lottery Authority (NLA) paid about GH¢ 9million out of GH¢ 15million of unpaid wins which was inherited from the previous administration. This according to the authority represents 60 percent of such unpaid wins over the period.

The Director General of the NLA, Mr. Sammy Awuku, disclosed this at the State of the Agency briefing, organised by the Ministry of Information, in Accra.

“I met a debt of about GH¢15,000,000.00 in unpaid wins on the assumption of office. As of now, we have cleared a greater part of the debt and we continue to make efforts together with management to clear the outstanding debt,” the Director of NLA said.

He noted that to avert a pile-up of win payments, the authority had developed the Instant Pay *389*1000# for players to instantly redeem wins of up to GH¢ 1,2000 after the draw.

“In partnership with our Corporate Lotto Marketing Companies (LMCs), we have also instituted Prize Payment Centres in our regional offices nationwide for wins up to GH¢ 12,000.00,” he said.

Mr. Awuku mentioned that the authority had renegotiated its deal with KGL - KGL Group from GH¢25,000,000.00 in 2021 to GH¢55,000,000.00.

He stated that out of the amount, GH¢ 2,000,000.00 was used in supporting the authority's Good Causes Foundation and GH¢3,000,000.00 for the Stabilisation

Fund for our LMCs.

“In addition, we have renegotiated the deal to GH¢ 65,000,000.00 for 2023 as part of the partnership deal,” Mr. Awuku explained.

The Director-General said the NLA was exporting its games to other countries for royalties, stressing that “My initial trips to Ivory Coast and Nigeria will now pay off as both countries will soon pay us royalties of GH¢18,000,000.00 and GH¢13,000,000.00 respectively, for drawing our games online through KGL Group.”

He mentioned that as a result of the deal, the NLA was expected to receive GH¢ 92, 0000,000.00 from the KGL Group this year.

Mr. Awuku added that the NLA had also begun engagements with Burkina Faso and Niger to trade its games and collaborate with those countries.

Touching on its operations, he said that as part of measures to sanitise the lottery space and generate revenue for national development, the NLA management continued processes began by his predecessor.

These he said included licensing Private Lotto Operators annually, adding that “Operators who want to operate under the framework of the National Lotto Act, 2006 (Act 722) pay a sum of GH¢1,500,000.00, while those who operate under the Veterans Administration Ghana Act, 2012 (Act 844) pay a sum of GH¢500,000.00 since we have their franchise to operate their games.”

In addition, Mr. Awuku said Private Lotto Operators (PLOs) were also required to pay a fixed figure to support their Good Causes Foundation.

He said the authority had signed on new third-party collaborators as part of measures to rake in more revenue and innovative and exciting games.

“We are also in talks with Supreme Ventures, the biggest lottery operator in the Caribbean, together with their local partner, who will introduce exciting new games that are not 5/90 in nature or form,” Mr. Awuku indicated.

GEPA REPORTS 6% GROWTH IN NON-TRADITIONAL EXPORT EARNINGS

The Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA) has announced a 6% increase in the country's Non-Traditional Export (NTE) earnings for the year 2022.

Launching a Report on the Analysis of the 2022 Non-Traditional Export Statistics, the Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry, Dokua Asiamah-Adjei expressed satisfaction with the growth and acknowledged the resilience of Ghana's NTEs amid global economic challenges.

She commended the efforts of individuals within the export value chain and the export fraternity for their relentless work, which contributed to the positive outcome of the 2022 NTE statistics.



“It is, therefore, refreshing to see that our NTEs have continued to show resilience in the face of global economic challenges. I am very pleased with the outcome of the 2022 Non-Traditional Exports statistics, as it is a testament to the relentless work put in by every individual along the export value chain/export fraternity”, she said.

Overall, the NTEs increased by 6%, or USD3,531,048,234 over the previous year and accounted for over 20.22% of total export earnings over the same period.

The Chief Executive Officer of GEPA, Dr Afua Asabea Asare stated that the NTEs, which encompass a range of diversified products, recorded earnings amounting to US\$3,531,048,234 in 2022, compared to US\$3,330,317,588 in the previous year.

This growth has been attributed to a combination of

structural changes within Ghana's NTE ecosystem and the effective implementation of the National Export Development Strategy (NEDS).

“We are delighted to report a 6% increase in Ghana's Non-Traditional Export earnings for 2022. This positive trend can be attributed to the successful implementation of the National Export Development Strategy and the strategic changes made within our NTE ecosystem,” she stated.

According to the CEO, the implementation of the NEDS played a crucial role in facilitating the growth of the NTE sector. The strategy focused on enhancing market access, improving product quality and standards, promoting value addition, and exploring emerging markets. These initiatives have led to an overall strengthening of Ghana's NTE sector and a diversification of its export offerings.

Highlighting the top ten NTE products for 2022, Dr Asare mentioned cocoa paste, cashew nuts, cocoa butter, iron and steel circles, rods, sheets, billets, articles of plastics, aluminium plates, sheets and coils, canned tuna, natural rubber sheets, cocoa powder, and shea oil. Notably, cocoa paste emerged as the highest earner, contributing US\$520.3 million, followed by cashew nuts with US\$294.2 million. Shea oil ranked as the lowest earner with US\$92.6 million.

The cumulative value of the top ten products accounted for US\$2,150,085,426, representing 60.9% of the total NTE earnings in 2022. The top ten earners' average earnings were US\$215.0 million.

Dr Asare further emphasized the market destinations for Ghana's NTEs, highlighting the five distinct groups including the ECOWAS, the European Union (EU) & United Kingdom, Other Developed Countries, the rest of African Countries, and Emerging Countries.

The CEO noted that the ECOWAS market remained the leading destination, accounting for 34.59% of the total market, followed closely by the EU & UK markets, contributing 31.90%.

Burkina Faso emerged as the leading market destination for Ghana's NTEs, with a consumption value of US\$425.01 million, representing a 16% increase from the previous year. Togo followed with a significant 21% increase, consuming US\$198.05 million in 2022 compared to US\$156.88 million in 2021.

This, the GEPA CEO expressed her optimism for the future of Ghana's NTE sector, citing the continuous efforts to diversify products, explore new markets, and enhance competitiveness.

RTI COMMISSION GRANTED PROSECUTORIAL POWER BY AG TO PROSECUTE OFFENDERS – INFO. MINISTER



The Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah addressing the media

Information Minister, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah has announced that the Right to Information Commission (RTIC) has been granted prosecutorial power by the Office of the Attorney General to go after individuals and institutions who flout the RTI Act.

He disclosed this at a Minister's Press Briefing in Accra on Wednesday, 10th May 2023.

“The RTIC is fully backed by law to sanction individuals and institutions that do not comply. Additionally, it has prosecutorial powers from the AG to prosecute offenders under the Act,” he said.

Hon. Opong Nkrumah emphasized that the Commission's ability to prosecute offenders was crucial to the effective implementation of the RTI Act, which was passed in 2019.

He also noted that the Commission had been working diligently to ensure that Ghanaians were aware of their rights under the law and had access to the information they needed.

He said since the introduction of the Act, some 478 public institutions in the country have been established information units and assigned designated RTI officers to facilitate the implementation of the law.

Additionally, he said 320 designated RTI officers have been assigned to various public institutions to ensure compliance with the Act.

The Minister explained this formed part of a broader strategy to put measures in place that will ensure the effective implementation of the RTI Act.

RTI APPLICATION TO BE MOVED ONLINE – INFO MINISTER

The Ministry of Information is working to move the Right to Information (RTI) application process online.

This was announced by the Minister of Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah, at a press briefing on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, in Accra.

According to the Minister, the Ministry in collaboration with the RTI Commission and the Access to Information (ATI) Division of the Ministry has been working to operationalize an Online Records Management System (ORMS) to facilitate the application and processing of RTI requests.

The platform, he said is being developed in accordance with Section 18 of the RTI Act, 2019, and is aimed at digitizing the entire RTI process and enhancing efficiency.

“The Ministry, through the ATI Division, and in consultation with the RTI Commission, is working to operationalise an Online Records Management System (ORMS) to enable applicants to apply for information online, aid information officers in keeping accurate records, and increase efficiency”, the Minister said.

He added that the unique platform, which had been developed by Section 18 of the RTI Act, 2019, would not only digitize the process of RTI application and processing but would also transform records management across public institutions in the country and serve as a central resource centre for RTI.

Hon. Opong Nkrumah stated that the online platform would aid information officers to keep accurate records, transform records management across public institutions, and serve as a central resource centre for RTI.

He further noted that the platform is aimed at making the application and processing of RTI requests easier and more accessible.

He explained that the move to an online platform for RTI application and processing was in line with the Government's commitment to enhance transparency and accountability in public institutions.

The Minister called on public institutions to ensure that they have designated RTI officers and information units to facilitate the implementation of the law



The Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah addressing the media

478 PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS HAVE INFORMATION UNITS AND DESIGNATED RTI OFFICERS – INFO. MINISTER



The Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah addressing the media

The Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah, has indicated that since the introduction of the Right to Information (RTI) law in 2020, 478 public institutions in the country have established information units and have been assigned designated RTI officers to facilitate the implementation of the law.

He made the remarks at a press briefing at the Ministry of Information yesterday.

The Minister said the law had made remarkable inroads since its introduction as the legal framework that provides the constitutional rights of persons to access official information held by public institutions and relevant private institutions.

“Since the passage of the RTI Law, 478 public institutions in Ghana have established information units and designated RTI officers to facilitate the implementation of the law,” he said.

According to the Minister, since the inception of the law, his Ministry has put in place the right structures to ensure its smooth operation.

He stated that the establishment of the information units and the designation of RTI officers are part of these structures and showed the Government's commitment to ensuring transparency and accountability in public institutions.

“The RTI law is a critical tool in our efforts to deepen transparency and accountability in public institutions. We are committed to ensuring that public institutions comply with the law's provisions, and we will continue to monitor their implementation to ensure that they are doing so,” he added.

Hon. Opong Nkrumah urged members of the public to take advantage of the RTI law to access information from public institutions, saying that it is their right to do so.

“The RTI law empowers citizens to demand information from public institutions, and we encourage all Ghanaians to exercise this right. We believe that the law will go a long way in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance in the country,” he said.

The RTI law was passed by Parliament in 2019 and became operational in 2020. The law aims to promote transparency and accountability in public institutions by providing citizens with the right to access information held by public institutions.

SCHOOL FEEDING CATERERS TO BE PAID NEXT WEEK – GENDER MINISTER

The Minister for Gender, Children, and Social Protection, Hon. Lariba Zuweira Abudu, has announced that the caterers working under the School Feeding Programme will receive arrears for the third term of the 2022 academic year next week.

She made the remarks at the Ministers' Press Briefing in Accra on 4th June.

She noted that the arrears for the first and second terms have been settled adding that the payment process for the third term was delayed as a result of thorough validation and auditing processes.

“I want to ensure that the auditing and due diligence is done. It takes time because the numbers are voluminous so you need time for the auditors to go through and make sure that every caterer who has cooked has been captured and will be paid. They have to bear with us when their monies are not coming in good time. Certainly, we will pay them and next week we are paying,” she said.

Hon. Abudu revealed that the files of about 11,052 caterers have been cleared for payment while 76 are still pending as a result of challenges with their E-Zwich card. She added that caterers who did not cook in the third term as a result of various reasons will not be paid.

According to the Minister, beneficiaries of the programme have increased to 3,801,491 as at 2023. She further indicated that the government has proposed GHC 1.20 pesewas from the current GHC 1.00 as the cost per meal per day for each beneficiary.

The Gender Minister explained that the Ministry was running an electronic monitoring system which would provide real-time data to enhance the delivery of the programme.

“A software has been developed to manage the School Feeding Programme data, and the ministry will continue to implement planned activities and monitor compliance to standards so that no one is left behind,” she said.

Touching on the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme (LEAP), the Minister indicated that the programme currently has over 1.5 million beneficiaries. She added that it had cleared the 2022 arrears and payment for the 1st cycle of 2023 is expected to commence next week.

Hon. Zuweira Abudu said that persons accused of witchcraft in the five camps of the Northern and North East Regions of Ghana have been included to benefit from LEAP cash grants.

Also, persons affected by leprosy in the Weija Leprosarium and other five camps: Upper East Region, Upper West Region, Eastern Region, Volta Region, and the Central Region respectively have been captured in the LEAP Programme.



The Minister for Gender, Children, and Social Protection, Hon. Lariba Zuweira Abudu

GHANA'S TERRITORIAL BOUNDARY STRENGTHENED – GHBC



Major General Emmanuel W. Kotia, the National Coordinator for the Ghana Boundary Commission

The Ghana Boundary Commission (GhBC) has been diligently working over the years to reaffirm, demarcate, and delimit Ghana's international land and maritime boundaries. These efforts are aimed at ensuring the country's territorial sovereignty is always respected.

During a press briefing in Accra, Major General Emmanuel W. Kotia, the National Coordinator for the Ghana Boundary Commission, highlighted the Commission's mandate and its strategic objectives as outlined by the law. He emphasized that the Commission's work has broader implications for safeguarding the country's territory in collaboration with various stakeholders within and outside Ghana.

Major General Kotia discussed the major land boundary activities undertaken by the Commission, such as the Multi-Agency Mapping and Operational exercises in the Northern Corridor (Ghana-Burkina Faso) and the Joint Land Boundary Commission consultative meeting with Burkina Faso. In the Western Corridor (Ghana-Cote d'Ivoire), mapping exercises, multi-agency assessments, and meetings with the National Boundary Commission of Cote d'Ivoire were also conducted along with Joint Technical Committee Meetings in Abidjan and Accra.

Regarding the Eastern Corridor (Ghana-Togo), land boundary activities included reaffirmation exercises at Aflao and Akanu, and reaffirmation of land boundary pillars in Phase 1 and Phase 2, covering distances along the International Boundary Line. These activities aimed to reinforce and clarify the boundaries between Ghana and Togo.

On the maritime boundary front, Major General Kotia mentioned that the National Boundary Commission of

Nigeria invited GhBC to an introductory meeting in Abuja to discuss the proper delimitation of the common maritime boundary between the two countries. He also shared that negotiations with Togo to resolve a longstanding maritime dispute are ongoing, with positive outcomes expected.

The Boundary Commissions of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire held three bilateral meetings to discuss the implementation of the 2017 ITLOS ruling and other cross-border cooperation activities of which a Joint Technical Committee on Maritime and Land boundary issues was established to foster collaboration.

To enhance maritime surveillance, GhBC acquired state-of-the-art Delta Quad Maritime surveillance drones with support from GNPC. These drones will be used in joint inspections with the Ghana Navy along Ghana's eastern and western maritime borders.

Other notable activities mentioned by Major General Kotia included Ghana's admission to the African Union Border Programme, advocacy for the ratification of the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention), search and retrieval of legacy documents defining Ghana's borders with neighboring states, and the joint commemoration of the 12th African Border Day with the National Boundary Commission of Côte d'Ivoire.

Looking ahead, the Commission plans to continue consultative meetings with neighboring Boundary Commissions, pursue maritime negotiations with Togo, and conduct land boundary and reaffirmation exercises with Togo, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire. Major General Kotia appealed to international partners and agencies to support the Commission in its efforts to assist deprived border communities. The Commission aims to secure funding for projects such as rehabilitating health clinics, improving roads, and providing water supplies to these communities.



Major General Emmanuel W. Kotia, the National Coordinator for the Ghana Boundary Commission and deputy minister of information with other dignitaries during the press briefing.

2023 FISHING CLOSED SEASON COMMENCES ON JULY 1–FISHERIES MINISTER

The 2023 Fishing Closed Season is scheduled to commence and will run from July 1 to August 31, 2023.

Mrs. Mavis Hawa Koomson, the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, disclosed the details of the closed season at the Minister's Press Briefing which was organized by the Ministry of Information. She emphasized that thorough consultations with industry stakeholders were conducted before finalizing the dates.

To ensure sustainable fishing practices, the artisanal and inshore fleets will adhere to the closed season from July 1 to July 31, 2023. The industrial trawl vessels, on the other hand, will extend their closure until August 31, 2023, the Minister indicated.

Mrs. Koomson highlighted that the implementation of the Closed Fishing Season is based on scientific recommendations aimed at stock recovery. Its objectives include curbing overfishing, reducing fishing pressure, restoring overexploited fish stocks, and replenishing dwindling fish populations.

The Ministry has a track record of implementing closed fishing seasons, with exceptions made in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mrs. Koomson shared that during the previous closed season in 2022, the Ministry distributed essential supplies to support affected fishers and processors. This included 20,000 bags of rice weighing 25kg each and 8,333 cartons of cooking oil.



Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, Mrs. Mavis Hawa Koomson



Deputy Minister, MOI, Minister for Fisheries, Chief Director of MOI, and other Directors from the Ministry of Fisheries

“The Ministry extended assistance to fishers through the provision of 6,000 bundles of wire mesh, 20,000 basins, 1,710 chest freezers, and 1,150 subsidized outboard motors,” she noted.

As part of efforts to promote sustainable livelihoods for fishers, the Ministry and its partners, including the Ghana Fisheries Recovery Activity, have launched alternative livelihood training programs. These programs initially focus on training 550 fishers in various skills such as masonry, carpentry, dressmaking, hairdressing, electronics, and auto engineering. The training will eventually be expanded to cover 8,000 fishers, with ongoing support to help trainees establish their own businesses and generate income from their trades.

Addressing the issue of illegal fishing, Mrs. Koomson revealed plans to deploy an Electronic Monitoring System equipped with video recording and Global Positioning capabilities. This system will be installed on three pilot trawl vessels to monitor fishing activities at sea 24/7.

Furthermore, the Ministry will implement Ministerial Directives regarding trawl gear specifications to minimize the catch of juvenile fish and bycatch. It will also enforce Directives that limit trawl vessels to a maximum of 30 days at sea for each fishing expedition.

In a regional context, Mrs. Koomson highlighted that Cote d'Ivoire will be implementing its 2023 Closed Fishing Season during the same period as Ghana. Moreover, Togo, Benin, and Liberia are expected to join in next year, demonstrating a collective commitment to sustainable fishing practices in the West African region.

MOI, ISD COMMEMORATE CIVIL SERVICE WEEK CELEBRATION WITH CLEANUP EXERCISE



Chief Director with some Directors and staff during the clean-up exercise



Staff of the Ministry of Information partaking in a cleanup exercise as part of the civil service week celebration

The Ministry of Information and the Information Services Department (ISD) organized a clean-up exercise around the office premises as part of activities lined up for the Civil Service Week Celebration.

According to the Chief Director of the Ministry, Mrs. Charlotte Morgan–Asiedu, “This is part of the activities planned for Civil Service Week and part of our responsibility to clean up ourselves and our environment as part of the “Clean Ghana” initiative.”

She pointed out that staff have been cooperative and have shown up in large numbers to help with cleaning, which has led her to believe that whenever they are called upon, they would assist with cleaning tasks.

Mrs. Morgan–Asiedu stated that a healthy community was wealthy, so management would educate and encourage employees to keep their surroundings clean.

“We will come together from time to time to clean our surroundings to ensure that this has a long-term impact,” she added.

She urged employees to take full responsibility for cleaning the environment for their benefit.

On his part, the Acting Chief Information Officer of ISD, Mr. David Owusu-Amoah, noted that the cleanup exercise was an integral part of the Civil Service Week Celebration.

He stated, “It does not reflect well on you if you come to work and work in an untidy environment. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. We must remind ourselves as a department to keep our surroundings clean.”

To achieve any transformational goals, he said, cleanliness was essential, so while we all participate ceremonially, we needed to be aware of the need to maintain cleanliness during the celebration of civil service week.

“An untidy environment discourages effective business operations because, as we all know, first impressions last forever,” he added.

To ensure sustainability, he stated that management would remind employees regularly to keep their surroundings clean.

“We need to practice the 'clean as we go' principle, which means that even though there are cleaners, we still need to help keep the area tidy. This will dispel the misconception that only cleaners are accountable,” he stressed.

MOI, ISD COMMEMORATE GREEN GHANA DAY



Chief Director of the Ministry of Information, Mrs Charlotte Morgan-Asiedu watering a tree to mark the tree planting day

The Ministry of Information (MoI) and the Information Services Department (ISD) have marked Green Ghana Day with a tree-planting exercise and tree nurturing at the Ministry on Friday.

The Day forms part of the Government's aggressive reforestation/afforestation strategy to restore the country's lost forest cover and contribute towards global efforts to fight climate change and other adverse impacts on lives and livelihoods.

The Chief Director of MoI, Mrs. Charlotte Morgan – Asiedu, who led the team encouraged everyone to participate in the tree planting exercise and nurture them to ensure they survive to build a sustainable future.

She stated, “Today 9th June marks Green Ghana Day, it is an initiative of tree planting exercise. We are joining the President to plant 10 million trees. Everyone is supposed to plant a tree in their homes, by the roadside, in churches, in mosques to restore our forests which are depleting.”

According to Mrs Morgan – Asiedu, the current state of the environment in Ghana leaves much to be desired and there was much that can be done to improve the situation.

“This exercise is for our children and generation, so everyone should do their best to support this initiative,” she noted.

Mrs. Morgan-Asiedu emphasized that more trees should be planted, that they should be cared for by being weeded and watered, and that environmental cleanliness should



Some staff of MoI and ISD in a group picture on the Green Ghana Day

be preserved in order to make the environment greener.

She noted that the Ministry would intensify the tree planting and keep an eye on the progress of the trees planted.

“This project will be sustained because the trees planted would be nurtured to grow,” she added.

The Green Ghana Day was instituted in 2021 by Government, under the auspices of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, as part of an aggressive afforestation and reforestation programme to restore the lost forest cover of the country.

The theme of this year's Green Ghana Day is “Our Forests, Our Health,” with a goal of planting at least 10 million tree seedlings across the country.

CAN OUR TRADITIONAL LEADERS LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST GALAMSEY?



A galamsey (illegal mining) site in Ghana and how its activities have destroyed water bodies Citizens on a galamsey site

Galamsey, which means “gather them and sell,” (a local Ghanaian term that means illegal small-scale gold mining in Ghana) has been an age-old method of creating a living for individuals in Ghana's small towns since the 1970s. However, the technique has evolved into a large-scale time bomb that is ready to detonate.

Illegal small-scale mining, sometimes known as 'galamsey,' typically entails physically digging small working pits, tunnels, and drains for gold. Galamsey practitioners, unlike commercial miners, can only dig to a limited, shallow, and lesser depth. Their operations are often unregulated, resulting in significant environmental ramifications and effects. Many people in rural villages still make a living through illegal mining.

According to miningreview.com, the practice employs an estimated 60 percent of the country's overall mining labour force and provides a living for millions of people. Regardless, the practice continues to affect Ghanaians, communities, and state resources.

Our water bodies have been mostly depleted, and farmlands and forest reserves have been depleted, resulting in devastating consequences for the immediate environment, food production, water, education, and health, to name a few.

As a result, the practice was made illegal under the modified Minerals and Mining Act of 2015 (Act 900) and the Minerals Commission Act of 1993 (Act 450). It is a crime under the law to mine any mineral without a concession and an authorized license.

Anyone found guilty of this offense in Ghana risks a minimum of 15 years in prison and a maximum of 25 years. In addition to the increased minimum sentences, convictions may result in minimum fines of 150,000 penalty units.

Despite the cited rule, illegal small-scale mining is nevertheless prevalent in most parts of the country. Ironically, popular outrage and opinions about its bad effects on Ghana's natural resources diminished over time, until the revival and stunningly revealing operations of galamsey kingpin 'Aisha Huang' rekindled interest and discourse in the country.

This position, combined with recent developments, has reignited outrage and unhappiness among Ghanaians on the subject, increasing pressure on the government and state actors to act.

The government reacted appropriately by launching Operation Halt and, more recently, Operation Halt II, both of which were coordinated by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.

Operation Halt continues to be one of the most aggressive special joint military and forestry task teams designed to put

an end to all unlawful mining operations in the country's forest reserves.

Furthermore, some particularly vulnerable river bodies and forest reserves were designated as red zone locations, which meant that no mining activity may take place in or near such areas. Except in exceptional circumstances, the government also restricted activities in forest reserves such as reconnaissance, prospecting, and exploration.

In October 2022, Operation Halt II was relaunched to enhance the fight against illegal mining and prevent its reappearance in the country.

The Minerals Commission will now consult with our most esteemed traditional rulers when granting mining licenses under the new mining regime. This single decree from the government has been widely praised, especially given that traditional leaders have repeatedly stated that they have no active or direct role in the processes leading to the eradication of galamsey in Ghana.

It has become evident that traditional leaders and chiefs must play an important role in the government's anti-galamsey drive, particularly in awarding mining concessions and licenses.

After all, each galamsey site is under the jurisdiction of a traditional authority, and their direct monitoring will aid in the eradication of unlawful small-scale mining in their individual domains.

Significantly, the disparity in the fight against unlawful small-scale mining between chiefs, political leaders, and security officers will no longer be an incentive for galamseyers. While this directive is regarded as the greatest opportunity, it also poses a significant challenge for the National House of Chiefs, the recognized body under the constitution, to connect with the directive and establish the necessary protocols to enable traditional leaders to live up to the expectations of the government and the entire Ghanaian people.

Ghana, like most African countries, is endowed with hospitable lands, minerals, cocoa, coffee, shea nuts, forestry, timber, water bodies, human resources, and so on.

Many people have identified 'God as a Ghanaian' as a result of this nice deed. Unfortunately, this advantage has not been enough to turn the country's fortunes around. Rather, it has harmed our people. Clearly, having all of the natural resources is not enough; what is more important is how they are handled.

According to existing research, the driving elements of galamsey in most sections of the country include poverty, a lack of employment possibilities, and the desire of the youth to get rich quickly and at any cost.

It is now up to our most recognized leaders to upend the status quo. But the basic question is whether our traditional leaders are capable of meeting these expectations.



Citizens on a galamsey site

FIGHTING MIS/DISINFORMATION TOGETHER!

Misinformation has always been a plight for individuals, companies, entities, institutions, and countries. Various measures have been put in place by individuals and institutions to combat misinformation. However, the heightened threats and the rate at which misinformation spreads have become a cause for alarm. This has necessitated the need to constantly combat mis/disinformation and also educate the general public, especially netizens on how to identify, verify, impact, and effect of mis/disinformation.

Ultimately, combating disinformation is a shared responsibility that requires the cooperation of individuals working together as a task force to promote truth and accuracy. In its quest to protect the integrity of information shared in digital media and safeguard the well-being of communities.

Recently, the Ministry of Information launched a campaign to combat misinformation. The campaign was rolled out to fight mis/disinformation on social media platforms where the spread of misinformation is massive and easy. The campaign was also geared towards educating netizens on the effects and impact of mis/disinformation.



*Campaign against mis/disinformation
#VerifyFirst*

SIM CARD RE-REGISTRATION: THE JOURNEY SO FAR

After months of speculation and anxiety, the SIM Card registration in Ghana which started on 1st October 2021 officially came to an end on May 31st, 2023, amidst several unresolved issues.

According to the National Communications Authority (NCA), about 11 million active but unregistered SIMs would be deactivated after May 31, 2023. As of 25th April 2023, 36,571,257 SIMs have been registered out of which 25,448,962 SIMs have completed both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the SIM registration exercise using the Ghana Card, and have been fully registered and stored in the central SIM database.

It is worth noting that, the SIM Card registration policy have already been implemented in some African countries. Senegal and Mauritius have had this policy as far back as 2006. Botswana, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan followed suit in 2008 and implemented similar policies. Subsequently, more than 20 countries followed, Ghana included. The first SIM registration exercise in Ghana took place in 2010-2011. There was however a major challenge in verifying the identification documents used. There were instances of fake ID numbers as well as fictitious names for existing SIM registration databases. These issues the NCA thought had compromised the data thus the need for subscribers to re-register their SIM Cards. This time the Ghana card was made the only legally acceptable document for verification.

The aim of the SIM Card registration policy is to fight crime, prevent fraud and support Anti-Money Laundering and the opposition of the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT).

Though the policy itself is laudable, the challenges it has presented to subscribers has cast a dark shadow on the SIM re-registration process. The Ghana Card, being the main document with which subscribers are permitted to register their SIM cards have become highly sought after with millions of Ghanaians still not having access. Many Ghanaians currently do not have their Ghana cards after several months or even years of registering. Others do not even know where to go to have their Ghana cards done. The NCA estimated that about six million active, but unregistered SIMs may have been deactivated at the end of the exercise.

This development has created a lot of frustration and anxiety among a section of subscribers whose SIM cards have been blocked. In our world today mobile phones have become one of the main efficient and cost-effective means of transaction among Ghanaians. Most traders, businesses, and companies use their cell lines as the main means to reach their customers to transact business with them. Let us consider also the economic impact the deactivation process may bring on small-scale businesses that are already struggling to recover from the current harsh economic environment in the country.

Millions of Ghana cedis may be lost in the course of the deactivation process and this may have serious repercussions on the economy.

Register your Sim Card using your Ghana Card

Stage 1

1. Dial the sim registration short code *404#
2. Enter your Ghana card PIN. Do not add the hyphen
3. Confirm your Ghana card PIN
4. Enter your surname
5. Type your first name
6. Type your date of birth - day, month and year
7. Choose your sex - male or female
8. Confirm details
9. Submit details received to complete USSD SIM registration

Stage 2

Visit your Telco shop to complete registration

Stages in the sim-card registration exercise

DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

1. The Right to Information Commission is fully backed by law to sanction individuals and institutions that do not comply.
2. Since the implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) law in 2020, 478 public institutions in the country have established information units and have been assigned designated RTI officers to facilitate the implementation of the law.
3. The Ministry of Information is working to move the Right to Information (RTI) application process online to facilitate the application and processing of RTI requests.
4. Over 1000 Right to Information (RTI) requests have been made since the passage of the RTI Act in 2019.
5. Despite the increase in the number of requests over the years, rejected requests have remained low, due to the technical support provided by the Access to Information Division (ATID) to public institutions.
6. The final deadline for SIM card re-registration with the Ghana Card ended on May 31, 2023.
7. In compliance with a directive from the national communication Authority, telecommunication firms in Ghana deactivated approximately 9 million SIM cards on June 1, 2023.
8. The de-activation exercise aimed at enhancing security and combating fraudulent activities of some Ghanaians.

PROFILE OF MRS. CHARLOTTE MORGAN-ASIEDU

Mrs Charlotte Morgan-Asiedu is currently the Chief Director at the Ministry of Information, a position she has held since April 2023. A seasoned Career Civil Servant with proven Leadership and Managerial skills, Mrs Morgan-Asiedu has honed her administrative skills over the thirty-plus years that she has spent in the Civil Service, which has seen her occupy various Senior Management positions.

Prior to her appointment as Chief Director, Charlotte had been the Director, of Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation and Research, Statistics and Information Management at the Office of the President, a position she held for about five years. Charlotte had also earlier held the position of Director of Human Resources at both the Ministries of Tourism and Communication.

She started her career at the Ministry of Finance where she spent eighteen years rising through the ranks from her entry position as Assistant Director IIB to the position of Director in General Administration. Through this versatile journey, Charlotte has perfected her skills in the areas of leadership, coordination, planning, and organization.

A result-oriented person, Charlotte's work over the years has cut across both private and public sector organizations, making her acquire a lot of competencies and experience as an Administrator having worked closely with political office holders, other Civil Servants, and technocrats as well as public and private sector players.

Mrs Charlotte Morgan-Asiedu is married, she is a mother, is compassionate and takes great pride in the number of people she has been able to impact positively over the period in her career and the successes she has chalked wherever she worked as a Civil Servant.

Charlotte holds a BA in English and French from the University of Ghana, Legon, and an MA in Public Sector Management from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). She has also attended several courses and conferences both local and International over the years.



PICTURE GALLERY



Deputy Minister with the CEO of NLA and other directors of NLA



Staff of MOI & ISD after a clean-up exercise



Major General Emmanuel W. Kotia, the National Coordinator for the Ghana Boundary Commission and deputy minister of information with other dignitaries during the press briefing



Chief Director and staff of MOI after a cooking competition during a cooking contest at OHCS



Training on customer service by the RSIM department Officer from the RSIM unit at the training on customer service

