



NEWSLETTER



1

MINISTERS PRESS BRIEFINGS AND STATE OF THE AGENCIES REPORT

A total of Nine media engagements were held under the Ministry's flagship programme: the Minister's Press Briefing and the State of Agencies Report under the third Quarter of 2023



2

MINISTER FOR INFORMATION LAUNCHES GIMPA LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

This lunch symbolized a significant milestone in the history of the faculty after its establishment 13 years ago. The event had a public lecture on the theme: 'A Legal Framework for Communicating Governance.'

3

350 RTI OFFICERS UNDERTAKE UNESCO CERTIFIED ACCESS TO INFORMATION COURSE

Three Hundred and Fifty Right to Information (RTI) officers have successfully undertaken the UNESCO Massive Open Course on Access to Information laws and policies and their implementation.

4

AGENDA 111 TO CREATE JOBS, EMPLOY 20,000 HEALTH WORKERS

Government's much touted priority health infrastructure project, Agenda 111 is poised to generate thousands of indirect jobs and employ a substantial healthcare workforce of 20,000 professionals.

5

HUAWEI'S 'SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE' PROGRAM GRADUATES 40 FEMALE STUDENTS IN GHANA

Deputy Minister for Information, Hon Fatimatu Abubakar affirmed government's commitment to enhancing ICT learning space to address real-time challenges in education, healthcare, and communication.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF DIRECTOR



Dear readers,
I am pleased to extend warm greetings and welcome you to the Ministry of Information's third quarter 2023 newsletter. The Ministry of Information is unwaveringly committed to keeping our stakeholders informed on our significant developments and progress. It is therefore with immense pride and enthusiasm we present to you news on some of our programmes and activities.

We have embarked on a crucial campaign to combat disinformation and misinformation in our media, and this is aimed at educating and equipping the citizenry on misinformation and disinformation. We are pleased to inform you that our commitment to this campaign remained steadfast in this quarter, our consistent educational efforts have seen a noticeable increase in public awareness regarding disinformation and misinformation, its consequences, and how to identify and curb it from spreading further.

As you may also be aware, the Ministry has embarked on a nationwide tour dubbed the Agenda 111 impact forum, which aims at updating the public on governmental projects and addressing gaps in infrastructure across the country. The Ministry will continue facilitating these tour engagements to give visibility and ensure that the Ghanaian public is well-informed on governmental projects.

In our commitment to keeping the citizenry abreast of government policies and programmes the Ministry has facilitated 8 Press Briefings/State of the Agency Report within the quarter. These briefings focused on updating and improving public enterprises' portfolio by the Ministry of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Environment Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ghana Health Service, National Food Buffer Stock Company, Ministry of Communication, Ministry of Health, and the Zongo Development Fund and the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources.

As a Ministry, we recognize the importance of sharing accurate information and the role it plays in our nation's progress, we are committed to fostering an informed citizenry and educating the public on government development policies and programs.

We invite you to explore the contents of this newsletter, engage with the articles, and continue to be active participants in the journey of building an informed community. We hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and appreciate the confidence you have placed in our delivery.

Thank you for your continuous support.

Mrs. Charlotte Morgan-Asiedu

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GOVERNMENT TO DISPOSE OF DEFUNCT ENTITIES – PUBLIC ENTERPRISES MINISTER



Minister for Public Enterprises Hon. Joseph Cudjoe addressing the media

The Minister for Public Enterprises Hon. Joseph Cudjoe has announced the Government's intention to dispose of some 17 defunct State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs).

According to the Minister, the Government is paying a fortune to watch over them while they rot away, including security guards and other staff.

He made the disclosure yesterday during the Minister's Press Briefing, a bi-weekly press briefing platform put together by the Ministry of Information to provide updates on the various Ministries.

"The situation of defunct entities whose current state of disrepair was a sad sight to behold it has become imperative to completely dispose of the entities to save resources and salvage for sale what can be saved", Hon. Cudjoe said.

The Minister indicated that the other portfolio management strategies included liquidation, listing on the Ghana Stock Exchange and strategic investment.

Restructuring Public Enterprises Portfolio

Hon. Joseph Cudjoe further indicated that Cabinet is considering a Memorandum to restructure all Public Enterprises in which the Government has an interest. According to him, the Memorandum seeks to liquidate, list on the Ghana Stock Exchange, look for strategic investment and or dispose of them. The Minister outlined the efforts the Secretariat is undertaking together with other Government agencies to streamline the portfolio of public enterprises in Ghana.

Portfolio Management, the world over requires consistent overview and analysis of the interest of the Shareholder to ensure efficiency, economy, and profitability at all times.

"This approach is no different from what the Government of Ghana is currently doing through the Minister for Public Enterprises and the Minister for Finance", the Minister explained.

Hon. Cudjoe pointed out that efforts are being taken on active entities in which the Government has a significant stake to make them more functional, efficient, and effective and where they cannot be turned around, to dispose of them.

On specific efforts being undertaken to improve the current stock of entities of the state, the Minister outlined measures undertaken which included, building the capacity of Boards and Board Secretaries in corporate governance, and institutionalization of a code of corporate governance for implementation across all the specified entities.

The rest included; the Implementation of the annual stakeholder series, the Implementation of the annual performance contracts and the Implementation of the Public Enterprises League Table.

The Minister mentioned that the activities are expected to lead to the improvement of systems and processes for the development of the entities and ensure competition and achievement of targets set for them.

To further consolidate the gains made, the Minister stated that there was a need for further improvement in compliance with the submission of reports, signing of performance contracts, submission of audited accounts and implementation of restructuring and turnaround plans for entities that require them.

Hon. Cudjoe added that there would be an intensification of the engagement with the Parliament of Ghana and digitalisation and revenue leakage risk mitigation.

The Minister reiterated that Specified Entities are a key feature of all countries the world over and are used for the growth and development of sectors of the economy and to drive the development envisaged for such sectors.

CABINET APPROVES NATIONAL SPACE POLICY - MESTI BOSS HAS ANNOUNCED



Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Hon. Dr Kwaku Afriyie

The Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Hon. Dr. Kwaku Afriyie has announced that the National Space Policy has been approved by Cabinet.

The policy is expected to serve as a framework for utilizing space science and technology to drive national development.

The Minister made this statement at the Ministers' Press Briefing organised by the Ministry of Information in Accra today.

He stated that the Ministry would collaborate with relevant ministries and the private sector to establish the Ghana Space Agency.

"This agency will coordinate the development of human capital, infrastructure, and the overall growth of the space science sector", Hon Kwaku Afriyie said.

Hon. Kwaku Afriyie revealed that his outfit under the Ghana-Korea K-Innovation Partnership Programme, had developed and unveiled a comprehensive 10-year masterplan which would enhance the commercialization of research and innovation in the country.

He reiterated MESTI's commitment to global disarmament efforts and mentioned that his Ministry in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), was actively reviewing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Bill to implement the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons.

Environmental Protection. The Minister said that some 12 SMEs have been selected to receive technical and financial support under the Circular Economy Framework for the plastics sector in Ghana Project to address the pressing need of environmental challenges. These initiatives include discouraging single-use plastic production, demonstrating the production of biodegradable plastics, and promoting the recycling of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), (High-Density Polyethylene Plastic Type) HDPE, Low-Density Polyethylene Plastic Type (LDPE), and more.

He revealed that the Plastic-Free Schools project has been implemented in two schools, focusing on plastic segregation and integration of plastic management programs into the curriculum.

"We have also collaborated with the University of Ghana and Notpla to introduce the Ooho edible water packaging and compostable take-away boxes in selected restaurants on the UG campus", Hon. Kwaku Afriyie stated.

To manage electronic waste, the Ministry is implementing the sustainable management of electrical and electronic waste with support from the German Development Cooperation.

The Minister further stated that over 315.71 tons of e-waste cables, 36.65 tons of mixed batteries, 19.94 tons of thermoplastics, and 106 sets of CRTs have been retrieved, mitigating their harmful impact on the environment.



Minister for MESTI, Hon. Dr Kwaku Afriyie in the middle, Deputy Minister for Information to his left, Directors and staff of the Ministry

GOVERNMENT APPROVES NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY INTO POWER GENERATION MIX



Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Hon. Dr Kwaku Afriyie addressing the media at the press briefing

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has approved the inclusion of nuclear technology into Ghana's power generation mix, and the Ghana Nuclear Power Programme Organization (GNPPO), the Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Hon. Dr Kwaku Afriyie has said.

He stated that the programme would be moved to the Office of the President to enhance coordination.

The Minister made the remarks at the Minister's Press Briefing in Accra.

Hon. Kwaku Afriyie mentioned that his outfit had also received approval for the commercial release of Bt pod borer resistance Cowpea which would boost farmers' yields and add value to Ghana's agricultural sector.

The Crop and Food Research Institute at the Council for Scientific Research- Crop Research Institute has developed various innovative products, including hybrid maize varieties, tomato varieties, and bio-composite materials, which are expected to contribute to food security, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

Carbon Market and Climate Change

In the efforts to combat climate change, Hon. Kwaku Afriyie said his Ministry had developed a Carbon Market Framework document to incentivize organisations to minimize their carbon footprint and adopt low-carbon technologies.

He revealed that the Ministry had engaged several Governments, including Switzerland, Singapore, Sweden, and South Korea, to explore investment opportunities in the carbon market.

He mentioned that the projects which are being developed are; clean cooking solutions, waste-to-compost projects, and electric bikes, among others,

These products when developed would contribute to Ghana's sustainable development and climate change mitigation goals.

GHANA SET TO HOST 13TH AFRICAN GAMES - SPORT MINISTER



Minister for Youth and Sports Hon. Ussif Mustapha addressing the media

The Minister for Youth and Sports, Mr Ussif Mustapha has disclosed that Government had spent \$154 million on the reconstruction of the Legon Sports Stadium and other sports facilities including a world-class rugby park, swimming pool and athletics oval.

The facilities are meant for the 13th Africa Games to be held in Ghana next year.

"Facilities for the 13th African Games are almost complete for the Games in March next year. The quality of these facilities will open Ghana up to host other continental and world champions", Hon. Mustapha said.

The Minister made this disclosure yesterday when he took his turn at the Minister's Press Briefing organised by the Ministry of Information in Accra.

The Games would feature a total of 22 disciplines, badminton, cycling, swimming, table tennis, tennis, triathlon, and wrestling, which would serve as Olympic qualifiers for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

The rest which are non-Olympic qualifiers, are arm wrestling, athletics, beach volleyball, boxing, cricket, football, handball, hockey, judo, karate, rugby, volleyball, weightlifting, basketball (3×3) and taekwondo.

Additionally, five disciplines-e-sports, mixed martial arts, speedball, sambo, teqball, scrabble and pickleball-would be showcased as demonstration sports during the event.

According to him, the 2023 African Games would be used to lead the charge in making Ghana a destination for global sporting activities.

Hon. Ussif Mustapha expressed appreciation to the African Union (AU) and other stakeholders for collaborating with the Government to ensure Ghana in March 2024.

Resolution of Challenges

The Minister for Youth and Sports commended President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for his pivotal role in resolving the long-standing impasse among the African Union (AU), the Association of National Olympic Committee (ANOCA), and the Association of African Sports Confederation.

He said the signing of the Negotiated Agreement on the Management and Organisation of the African Games on February 19, 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, marked a significant milestone in the planning process.

MATERNAL MORTALITY HAS REDUCED SIGNIFICANTLY - DR. KUMA- ABOAGYE



Director-General, Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr Patrick Kuma-Aboagye addressing the media

The Director-General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr. Patrick Kuma-Aboagye has disclosed that maternal mortality, neonatal mortality and under-five mortality had reduced significantly over the years.

He mentioned that Ghana's institutional maternal mortality had dropped from 875 deaths in 2018 to 809 in 2022.

He explained that although the figure looks small, it was very significant especially when deliveries had increased by 13 per cent from 9,000.

"Our stillbirths have also reduced significantly while the national supply chain system has also improved", he added.

Dr Kuma-Aboagye disclosed this when he took his turn to address the media during the Minister's Press Briefing organised by the Ministry of Information in Accra yesterday.

He stated that there has been an improvement in the public health emergency response system regarding emerging and re-emerging outbreaks such as Marburg, Lassa fever and Yellow Fever.

"Currently, we have been able to establish E-surveillance which enables us to collect and share information to about 70 per cent of our points across the country to enable them to respond quickly to emergencies and outbreaks at all levels", he added.

Recruitment

The Director-General also said that in the last years, the service had recruited more than 33,000 new staff to boost capacity at the half year 2023.

He added that although the service has suffered some brain drain their numbers have not been affected.

Yes, we have lost experienced hands and skilled staff but we have also instituted measures to ensure that in the next two years, we replace them through training programmes and recruitment", Dr. Kuma-Aboagye stated.



Dr Alberta Biritwum Nyarko- Director (PPME Division)

NEW INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE DELIVERY

The Director in charge of Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division, at the Ghana Health Service, Dr Alberta Biritwum Nyarko has announced that her outfit is set to roll out a new initiative to improve quality healthcare and service delivery.

Under the programme, "Network of Practice", the Ghana Health Service is poised to improve health service delivery through the Primary Health Care system, especially at the sub-district and community level.

He mentioned that last year, the service lost about 525 nurses to brain drain and reiterated that the service has commenced recruitment of nurses across the country.

NEW INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE HEALTHCARE DELIVERY- cont.

This approach would see facilities such as infirmaries, maternity homes, laboratories, sickbay pharmacies and Community-based Health Planning Systems (CHPS) compounds interconnected through a district healthcare centre where each facility is expected to provide holistic and quality primary healthcare services.

Dr Biritwum Nyarko disclosed this at the Minister's Press Briefing in Accra yesterday.

Explaining further, Dr Nyarko said under the Network of Practice Programme, a group of public and private health service delivery facilities would be deliberately interconnected through an administrative and clinical management model for better client service, reduce deaths and ensure rapid response to clinical & public health emergencies.

"We at the Ghana Health Service have measures in place to combat the issue of unnecessary crowds, overworked doctors and nurses, long-distance client cover, cost incurred and time wasted at the district health centre", she said.

Dr Nyarko stated that the measures put in place would provide hospitals in sub-districts, communities and schools with the needed equipment and qualified personnel.



Dr Alberta Biritwum Nyarko – Director (PPME Division)



Programme Manager of the National Malaria Elimination Programme, Dr Keziah Malm addressing the media

The Director-General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr. Patrick Kuma-Aboagye has said his outfit has begun a more aggressive phase in its effort to eradicate malaria.

This comes after notable advancements in the epidemic's management and lessons learnt over time. At the Minister's Press Briefing yesterday, the Programme Manager of the National Malaria Elimination Programme, Dr. Keziah Malm stated that the reinforcement of existing interventions that have been successful in reducing malaria over time and the introduction of a few new ones would be necessary to eradicate malaria.

Dr. Malm mentioned that the new ones include mass drug administration, post-discharge malaria chemoprevention and scaling up malaria vaccination, as well intermittent preventive treatment of malaria in school children.

She added that under the defunct Malaria Control Programme, the country had been able to reduce prevalence and mortalities significantly, justifying the country's potential to eliminate malaria.

"The current elimination target is focused on reducing mortality by 100 per cent by 2028 and cases by 50 per cent using the 2022 figures as the baseline", the Programme Manager said.

She further stated that Malaria deaths have reduced significantly over the last years from 1.42 out of every 100,000 cases to 0.45 per 100,000.

On strategy, Dr Malm said that the new malaria elimination strategic plan had been developed to strengthen passive and active surveillance and monitoring evaluation systems; ensure that 100 per cent of all confirmed cases were appropriately, effectively and completely treated within 72 hours and ensure 100 per cent by 2028.

Malaria, a major cause of death's prevalence had reduced from 27.5 per cent in 2011 to 8.6 per cent in 2022, while mortality had reduced by 95 per cent between 2012 and 2022, representing a decline from 2,799 deaths in 2012 to 151 in 2022.

GOVERNMENT SPENDS 2.7 BILLION ON FREE SHS FOOD SUPPLIES



The CEO of NAFCO, Hanan Abdul-Wahab addressing the media at the briefing

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Food Buffer Stock Company Limited (NAFCO), Hanan Abdul-Wahab has said that Government has spent about GHC2.7 billion to pay food suppliers under the Free Senior High School Policy between 2017 and 2022.

The amount covers the supply of 18 food items to over 700 senior high schools (SHS), technical, vocational and community development schools. He made the remarks at the bi-weekly Minister's Press Briefing organised by the Ministry of Information in Accra yesterday.

Mr Abdul-Wahab explained that an amount of GH¢81.1 million was paid to food suppliers in 2017; GH¢296.2 million in 2018; and GH¢441.5 million in 2019.

For 2020 and 2021, NAFCO paid GH¢467.9 million and GH¢692.2 million respectively, while GH¢726.6 million was paid in 2022.

Arrears

Addressing the issue of payment of arrears to food suppliers, the CEO said NAFCO has cleared about 85 per cent of its arrears for 2022.

“In terms of percentage, I can say that 85 per cent of what we owe as arrears for 2022 has been settled. What is remaining is 15 per cent, which we are working to ensure that it is settled before the end of the month,” he said.

He explained that GH¢100 million was released on July 17 by the Government with an additional GH¢80 million being released this month (August) for payment.

Food Supplies

Mr Hanan Abdul-Wahab mentioned that his outfit has supplied over 6.8 million bags of selected food items to cater for more than 1.2 million SHS students. The supplies included 1,502,730 (100kg) bags of maize, 510,000 bags of beans and 289,380 Bags of Peanuts.

The rest are 223,950 Bags of Millet, 131850 bags of Soya and 4,158,360m (50kg) Bags of Rice.



NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH LAUNCHED



Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, Minister for Communications and Digitalisation.



Deputy Minister for Communications and Digitalisation (middle) flanked by Deputy Minister for Information, CEO of CSA Dr. Antwi-Boasiako and other stakeholders

The National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) has been launched with the objective of elevating digital security consciousness and empowering both individuals and organisations to safeguard their personal data in the face of an ever-evolving global digital landscape.

Set on the theme “Promoting a Culture of Digital Safety”, the media launch took place at the Ministry of Information in Accra on Sunday, September 3, 2023.

The campaign is scheduled to run throughout October.

The Deputy Minister for Communications and Digitalisation, Hon. Ama Pomaa Boateng who launched the campaign on behalf of the Minister for Communications and Digitalisation, Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, emphasised the transformative impact of digital technologies on the lives, work, and interactions of people.

She underlined the concurrent rise in risks for individuals, organizations, and societies due to the rapid advancement of the digital age.

“The prevalence of cyber threats such as cyberbullying, privacy breaches, misinformation, and disinformation have become prevalent and of urgent concern”, Hon. Pomaa Boateng said.

Statistics

Recent statistics painted a vivid picture of Ghana's digital landscape. According to the Groupe Special Mobile Association's Connectivity Index 2023 Report, Ghana ranked third in Africa with a score of 51.4% in internet penetration over the last five years. Additionally, the report noted Ghana's impressive score of 86.69% in Online Security, aligning with its standing on the ITU's Global Cybersecurity Index. The report also revealed that Ghana's internet access rate in 2023 stood at 23.05 million, representing 68.2% of the population, with 6.6 million (19.5%) actively engaged in social media activities.

However, these advancements came with a price. Ghana's exposure to high-risk cyber threats, including Romance Scams, Phishing, Advance Fee Fraud, Online Bullying, Sextortion, and Online Impersonation, had escalated.

The NCSAM launch served as a call to action. It brought together Government officials, private sector players, business executives, cybersecurity professionals, educationists, civil society organisations, and media representatives to promote cybersecurity awareness and address these concerns.

The Director General of the Cyber Security Authority Dr Albert Antwi-Boasiako, explained that the importance of increasing awareness and fostering secure online practices was for a safer digital Ghana.

He added that the NCSAM would encompass a range of activities dedicated to educate and conscientise both organisations and the Ghanaian public about the opportunities and threats in cyberspace.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Chamber of Telecommunications Dr. Kenneth Ashigbey mentioned that Cybersecurity was a collective responsibility that involved everyone.

The President of the Ghana Association of Banks, John Awuah, stated that a lot of investments had been made by the banks to ensure secure transactions on digital channels.

The President of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Mr. Albert Kwabena Dwumfour, pledged the association's support for NCSAM to enhance cybersecurity practices in the country.

On behalf of the Board of the Cyber Security Authority, Carl Sackey added that this year's theme underscored the necessity of collective action by Ghanaians to safeguard digital assets, intellectual property, and private information.

In a statement delivered on behalf of the President of ISACA (Accra Chapter), Daniel Gyampo said that in today's interconnected world, the significance of cybersecurity cannot be overstated.

Representing the Joint Cyber Security Committee, Col. Dr. Tim Ba-Taa-Banah, appealed to Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and civil society to actively participate in the NCSAM.

Background

The NCSAM, which originated in the United States in 2004 under the auspices of the US Department of Homeland Security, has evolved into a collaborative international event, with Ghana being the latest nation to join the effort to promote cybersecurity awareness and ensure a safer digital future for all.

AGENDA 111 TO CREATE THOUSANDS OF INDIRECT JOBS, EMPLOY 20,000 HEALTH WORKERS – GOV'T



Presidential Advisor on Health, Dr. Anthony Nsiah-Asare



Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah

Government's much touted priority health infrastructure project, Agenda 111 is poised to generate thousands of indirect jobs and employ a substantial healthcare workforce of 20,000 professionals.

The Presidential Advisor on Health, Dr. Anthony Nsiah-Asare made the remarks during a visit to the Agenda 111 project site in Kpassa in the Oti Region yesterday.

Addressing the Agenda 111 Impact Forum, a platform created by the Ministry of Information to regularly update Ghanaians on the progress of construction works, Dr. Nsiah-Asare highlighted the significant socioeconomic and employment opportunities that the initiative would bring.

"Agenda 111 is not just about constructing hospitals; it's about creating opportunities and jobs for the people of Ghana. Through this project, we expect to employ approximately 20,000 health workers across various roles, from doctors and nurses to support staff.

"Additionally, the construction and operation of these hospitals will create thousands of indirect jobs, driving economic growth in the areas where these facilities are situated," explained Dr. Nsiah-Asare.

He emphasized that the project's impact would extend beyond healthcare, benefiting communities through job creation and economic development.

The Agenda 111 project is an expansive initiative that includes the construction of 101 district hospitals in underserved regions, two psychiatric hospitals, seven regional hospitals, and the rehabilitation of the Accra Psychiatric Hospital.

Dr. Nsiah-Asare reiterated that this undertaking aligned with the Government's vision to enhance healthcare infrastructure while boosting the nation's economy.

Present during the visit were the Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah, Regional Minister, Joshua Gmayenaam Makubu, Presidential Advisor on Health, Dr. Nsiah-Asare, Project Consultant, Paul Osei, Traditional and Religious Heads, Officials of the Monitoring and Evaluation Secretariat at the Presidency as well as other well-known dignitaries.

On his part, Hon. Opong Nkrumah emphasized the meticulous planning and management of the project, which had been divided into eight zones, each comprising an average of 14 sites, each with dedicated teams of consultants, including architects, civil engineers, structural engineers, mechanical engineers, and biomedical engineers.

He mentioned that the importance of community engagement and collaboration would ensure the seamless integration and optimal functionality of the health facilities upon completion.



ROADS AND ELECTRICITY BEING PRIORITIZED AROUND AGENDA 111 PROJECTS

The Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah has indicated that Government has prioritized the development of roads and electricity infrastructure around Agenda 111 project sites as part of a broader plan to bring development closer to areas where these hospitals are sited.

He made the statement during a visit to the Kpassa project site on Monday, September 11, 2023.

"Agenda 111 is not just about constructing hospitals; it's about ensuring that these facilities are fully functional and accessible to all Ghanaians.

"As we construct these hospitals, we are also working on improving road networks leading to these facilities. Additionally, ensuring a stable supply of electricity is a top priority to guarantee uninterrupted healthcare services," Hon. Opong Nkrumah explained.

He emphasized the importance of ensuring that these critical healthcare facilities are easily accessible and well-equipped with essential services highlighting the Government's commitment to provide the necessary infrastructure support to complement the healthcare initiative.

Present during the visit were the Oti Regional Minister, Joshua Gmayenaam Makubu, Presidential Advisor on Health, Dr. Anthony Nsiah-Asare, Project Consultant, Paul Osei, Traditional and Religious Heads, Officials of the Agenda 111 Monitoring and Evaluation Secretariat at the Presidency as well as other well-known dignitaries.

Project Consultant Mr. Paul Osei shared positive updates on the progress of works in the Region. He noted that the Kpassa project was already at an advanced level of completion, with most of the work already accomplished.

He gave assurance that the project would be completed and handed over to the Government in January 2024.

With regards to construction works nationwide, Mr. Osei said on average, most contractors have completed about 52 percent of the work on all project sites.

He was confident that the majority would be finished and commissioned by the end of the year.

On his part, the Oti Regional Minister, Mr. Makubu, applauded the Agenda 111 project in Kpassa. He described it as a testament to the President's commitment to upgrade healthcare infrastructure in the country.

He expressed gratitude for the various developmental projects initiated in the region since its creation in 2018.

The Agenda 111 project encompasses the construction of 101 district hospitals in regions without such facilities, 2 psychiatric hospitals, 7 regional hospitals, and the rehabilitation of the Accra Psychiatric Hospital. This ambitious initiative aims to bridge healthcare gaps and improve access to quality healthcare services for all Ghanaians.

OTI REGIONAL CHIEFS PRAISE GOV'T FOR PROGRESS OF AGENDA 111 PROJECTS



Oti Regional Chiefs and team of Engineers

The Oti Regional Traditional Council has expressed appreciation for President Akufo-Addo's commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure in their region through the Agenda 111 projects. During a visit to the Kpassa project site on Monday, September 11, 2023, local chiefs lauded the President for his vision and dedication to enhancing healthcare services.

“We are immensely grateful to President Akufo-Addo for the Agenda 111 projects, particularly the one here in Kpassa. These projects will bring a significant transformation to our region, and we commend the President for his laudable efforts”, spokesperson for the Paramount Chief, Ubor Konja Tassun VI said.

President Akufo-Addo's administration initiated the Agenda 111 project, also known as the Ghana Health Infrastructure Project, to address gaps in healthcare infrastructure across the country. It included the construction of 101 district hospitals in areas lacking such facilities, two psychiatric hospitals, seven regional hospitals, and the rehabilitation of the Accra Psychiatric Hospital. Four hospitals from the Agenda 111 project have been allocated to the region: one each in Kpassa, Kadjebi, Chenderi, and Jasikan. The Kpassa project 1 of 4 in the region is progressing steadily, with most physical structures already in place.

Local leaders expressed their optimism about the positive impact the completed hospital would have on the health and well-being of the community. “This hospital will not only provide better healthcare but also create jobs for our people. We believe it will improve the quality of life for our residents,” said one of the traditional leaders during the visit.

The traditional leaders also pledged their support for the project and called upon the local community to collaborate with the Government and stakeholders to ensure the seamless integration and optimal functionality of the health facility upon completion.

Present during the visit were the Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah, Oti Regional Minister, Joshua Gmayenaam Makubu, Presidential Advisor on Health, Dr. Nsiah-Asare, Project Consultant, Paul Osei, Traditional and Religious Heads, Officials of the Monitoring and Evaluation Secretariat at the Presidency as well as other well-known dignitaries.

On his part, Dr. Nsiah-Asare highlighted the socioeconomic and health impacts of the projects for the locals in the Region. With regards to its socioeconomic impacts, Dr. Nsiah-Asare said it would lead to the creation of numerous jobs for indigenes along the health value chain.

On healthcare delivery, Dr. Nsiah-Asare said the projects would help the country achieve Universal Health Coverage which is the third goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

DEVELOPMENT OF ZONGO COMMUNITIES REMAIN GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITY - CEO HAS SAID



The CEO for Zongo Development Fund, Dr Arafat Sulemana Abdulai

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Zongo Development Fund, Dr. Arafat Sulemana Abdulai has reiterated Government's commitment to ensure that Zongo Communities benefit from the Akufo-Addo led administration's development agenda. Addressing the media at the Minister's Press Briefing organised by the Ministry of Information in Accra today, Dr. Arafat Abdulai revealed that the fund had provided training on Entrepreneurial and Economic empowerment to about 1,200 youth from the various Zongo communities. Additionally, five hundred youth had also acquired training in specialized skills, financial aptitude, and competence. The fund which is mandated to provide financial resources to develop and transform the Social and Economic conditions of Zongo Communities has delivered on its mandate by improving some social infrastructure, economic empowerment and community engagement/peace and security in zongo communities in the country.

Education

Dr. Abdulai disclosed that the Zongo Development Fund had constructed about 69 classroom blocks, 37 ICT Labs, Libraries and renovated dilapidated school blocks and classrooms in the various zongo communities across the country.

He mentioned that Zongo communities in Wassa Amenfi, Bogoso, Offinso Kokote, Nsuaem, Bamvum, Tamale Buoho, Otaakrom, Asokore Quranic School, Hamdaniyya Islamic sch, Effiduase, Agogo Asante Akim, Adeiso Tabiase, Bosore, Barekese, Kwamibikrom, Boadua, Mishio, Tolo, Goyiri among others had benefitted from the construction of a six-unit classroom blocks. "We have provided ICT Labs in Tapa Islamic school, Sherif Islamic school, Elmina, New Dormaa Basic school, Aswaj Cluster of Schools, Falahiyya Islamic school, Cape Coast, Umariya Islamic school, Bolgatanga, Alhuda Islamic School, Assin Fosu, Effiakuma M/A Basic school, Dr. Arafat Abdulai revealed."

Water and Sanitation

The CEO mentioned that the provision of portable drinking water and healthy sanitary conditions in Zongo communities remain top priorities of the Fund and in this regard about 163 Zongo communities had benefitted from the provision of Mechanized boreholes, whilst 47 Public and Institutional places of convenience had been constructed.

"Through the Zongo Development Fund, we have constructed Mechanised water system in Opeikuma Zongo, Agona Zongo, New Bortianor, Akwatia Zongo, Hweehwee Zongo, Zaruba, Tempene, Damank, Jasikan Zongo, Kojo Ashong, Kumbungu, Asesewa Zongo and Sagabo, Bawku", Dr. Abdulai revealed.

He added that some Health facilities had also been upgraded and renovated by the Fund in several Zongo communities, in addition to the provision of drainage systems, storm drains and bridges.

Sports and Recreational Facilities

In the area of Sports, Dr. Arafat Abdulai stated that the Fund had invested in the construction of 18 Community Sports and Recreation Centres (Astro Turfs) thereby emerging as the foremost provider of community sports infrastructure in Ghana.

He further stated that it was an undeniable fact that the Zongo communities are awash with sporting talents and the construction of the facilities unearth, harness, and nurture these talents for sustainable socio-economic growth and development.

"ZoDF recognizes the inexhaustible sporting assets in Zongo communities and is committed to providing enabling infrastructure to unearth, harness and nurture these talents for sustainable socio-economic growth and development, he said."

The Zongo Development Fund since its establishment in 2018 has impacted positively on the lives of communities, individuals, and organizations in Zongo communities in the 16 regions across the length and breadth of Ghana.

GHANA COMMITTED TO ATTAIN SDG GOAL 6 BY 2023 - WATER AND SANITATION MINISTER SAID



Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources, Hon. Dr. Freda Prempeh

The Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources, Hon. Freda Prempeh has called on all Ghanaians to actively play their prescribed roles effectively in relation to sanitation and hygiene issues in order to attain the Government's vision of a clean Ghana.

She made the remarks when she launched World Cleanup Day which is celebrated on September 30, under the local Theme "Cleaning for Safe, Healthy and Sustainable Ghana" today at the Minister's Press Briefing in Accra.

The activities for the celebration would include a massive clean-up activity across the length and breadth of Ghana, traditional and social media sensitisation campaigns, intensive premises inspection by staff of the District Assemblies, among others.

The Minister emphasized that the importance of the World Cleanup Day in Ghana hinges on collaboration and partnerships and urged everyone to partake in the celebration.

"The Government and Non-State Actors, the Media as well as individuals are urged to come together to plan and execute cleanup activities across the country. We need to educate the youth who are the future leaders of this country with the view of instilling in them a sense of responsibility towards the environment, she said."

Hon. Freda Prempeh reaffirmed the Ministry's mandate which was to develop policies that would enhance the delivery of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services in the country.

"The Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies are mandated to undertake the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and services and enforce the byelaws on sanitation within their jurisdiction."

"Households, on the other part, are expected to make the waste available for collection and disposal and keep hygienic surroundings as well as pay the requisite fees for the services being provided by the MMDAs, she said"

The World Clean Day Celebration commemorated on September 30 is a global movement that began in Estonia in 2008 and had grown exponentially, bringing together millions of people from every corner of the world.

It is a day when people come together to clean up their environment, raise awareness about the importance of responsible waste management and sustainable living.

Achievements

The Minister revealed that Ghana was the first country to sign the Sanitation and Water for All Compact and this made it possible to prioritize WASH services delivery through deliberate and focused committed programmes, with clearly defined plans for funding.

As a result of this, Ghana was able to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on Water, five years before the deadline.

To further consolidate the gains made, H.E the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo who is also a Co-Chair for the SDG Advocates Emeritus, set up a specific Ministry for Sanitation and Water Resources when he assumed office in 2017.

The main aim of this innovative idea was to prioritise the sector and make the necessary commitments to ensure the delivery of sustainable water and sanitation services towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 6 by 2030. Page 3 of 6 Government and Development Partners have, from 2017, invested heavily to expand water and sanitation services to benefit a lot of people. The huge investment has increased the population with access to basic drinking water services from 79% in 2017/2018 to 87.7% in 2021, while population with access to exclusive household toilet facilities increased from 21% in 2017/2018 to 25.3% in 2021. In addition, the proportion of water bodies with good Ambient Water Quality increased from 51.5 in 2017 to 58.2 in 2021. Proportion of solid waste properly disposed of in five major towns/cities, increased from 70% in 2017 to 85% in 2021.

Vision For Wash

On water resources management, the Minister disclosed that her outfit would continue to ensure the effective management and utilisation of water resources.

She mentioned that additional monitoring stations would be established to monitor and track the quantity and quality of surface water resources, while groundwater mapping would be undertaken to fully determine the ground water resources potential of the country.

"In addition, buffer zone and other integrated water resources management strategies will be enhanced to ensure that the country's water resources, will no longer be under threat of pollution, she stressed."

On Sanitation, Hon. Freda Prempeh disclosed that on access to liquid waste management, the vision was to end open defecation through the construction of about 1.5 million household toilets.

This, she said would ensure that about 60% of the populace/households in urban/peri-urban and 50% of the populace/households in rural areas have access to exclusive households' toilets and using at least basic sanitation and progressively moving towards safely managed services by 2030, while the remaining 40% of the populace/households in urban/peri-urban and 50% of the populace/households in rural areas will rely on improved shared toilet facilities.

She also stated that the vision for solid waste management was to minimize waste and maximize the value of resources by promoting the continuous use, recycling and regeneration of products and materials by ensuring that 95% of solid waste are collected and disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner and about 65% of all such waste is safely treated and reused within major towns/cities by 2030.

On Hygiene, the Minister reminded all that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic re-echoed the need to expand the use of hand hygiene facilities beyond the home to other settings such as workplaces, markets, transport terminals, community centres and other public places.

She revealed that the vision of the Ministry was to have about 70% of the populace/households in urban/peri-urban and 50% of the populace/households in rural areas practicing safe handwashing with

Illegal Mining

The Minister expressed her worry on how the activities of Illegal mining had negatively affect not only the operations of water utility companies such as the Ghana Water Limited (GWL) but Ghana's freshwater resources.

She disclosed that Aquatic life and fauna were being destroyed through these nefarious activities.

"The health of human beings, aquatic species and other animals that rely and survive on these water bodies is under threat as a result of the assimilation of heavy metals such as mercury and arsenic which have been deposited in these water bodies, she said."

She revealed that her outfit was collaborating with the relevant stakeholders to mitigate these activities which are destroying Ghana's water.

EMPIRICALLY EVALUATE PERFORMANCE- OPPONG NKRUMAH CHARGES PROS



Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah

The Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah, has charged Government Public Relations Officers (PROs) to continuously assess their performance and ensure that Public Relations (PR) strategies align with PR templates.

The Minister made the remarks at the 2023 Information Services Department (ISD) PROs' mid-year review in Accra on Monday.

He indicated that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are empirical methods of evaluating performance.

“What gets measured, gets done”, Hon. Opong Nkrumah said.

The mid-year review was to examine PR plans, conduct conformity checks with the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies, and encourage underperforming PR Units to improve compliance.

To help reposition the ISD to deliver efficiently, Hon. Opong Nkrumah advised the PROs to fully support the Department's transformation agenda being championed by management in partnership with the Ministry.

He highlighted some achievements under the transformation programme, which include a new organogram, the renovation of the newsroom into an ultra-modern one, and a change in strategy for the Public Relations Coordination Division and the Research Division of the Department.



Acting Chief Information Officer of ISD - Mr. David Owusu

On his part, the Acting Chief Information Officer of ISD, Mr David Owusu-Amoah, noted that the mid-year assessment programme determined whether goals have been achieved and whether new goals can be set.

“It is important because it allows PROs to assess their progress and stay motivated; it allows supervisors to stay connected to you and provide useful feedback and it allows us to gain insight into how staff understand their roles and challenges,” he added.

350 RTI OFFICERS UNDERTAKE UNESCO CERTIFIED ACCESS TO INFORMATION COURSE



Head, ATI Division, Dr Winnifred Nafisa Mahama

Three Hundred and Fifty Right to Information (RTI) officers have successfully undertaken the UNESCO Massive Open Course on Access to Information laws and policies and their implementation.

The training, a collaboration between UNESCO and the Access to Information (ATI) Division of the Information Services Department (ISD) formed part of capacity-building initiatives for all RTI officers assigned to public institutions across the country.

The head of the ATI Division, Dr Winnifred Nafisa Mahama, emphasised that the importance of this initiative was to empower the officers to understand the working systems of access to information legislation, its implications, and the processes involved in making decisions in line with international standards.

“The initiative taken by the Division is to strengthen the RTI officers with the requisite knowledge and skills essential for the effective handling of information requests,” Dr Mahama said.

The officers completed all eight modules of this course in one month and were issued certificates of participation.

She mentioned that the certification does not only enhance their credentials but also their commitment to upholding the mandate of the RTI Act, 2019 and the Civil Service.

Some participants from the training said that they gained insights into various international frameworks, conventions, and treaties that underline the importance of transparent and accountable information-sharing mechanisms, which provide a pivotal link between access to information and sustainable development.

UNESCO is a key stakeholder and partner, offering support to the ATI Division in the delivery of its activities. This initiative is one of the measures to strengthen the supply side of the RTI architecture to function effectively and efficiently.

About the UNESCO Massive Online Course

The UNESCO Massive Open Online Course is a self-paced Online Course on Access to Information Laws and Policies and their Implementation. This course, developed by the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) and UNESCO, is an introduction to the right to access information held by public authorities.

It has been developed in response to the ever-changing access to information landscape and provides insight into the core workings of access to information rules and better practices in different areas while providing practical tips for information officers, those working at oversight bodies and applicants.

About the ATI Division

The ATI Division was established and commissioned within the Information Services Department (ISD) on 17 July 2020 to support the processes for RTI implementation in the country.

The Division recruits, trains, and deploys RTI officers to public institutions to service access requests. It also provides back-end support to RTI officers in their daily activities. The Division also executes any other obligations of the Minister under the RTI Act, 2019 (Act 989).

GHANA IS A TRENDSETTER ON GLOBAL ISSUES - UNICEF BOSS SAID



UNICEF Representative, Osama Makkawi and the Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah in a handshake.



The UNICEF Representative in Ghana, Osama Makkawi Khogali has described Ghana as a trendsetter on global issues.

He made the remarks when he paid a courtesy call on the Minister for Information, Honourable. Kojo Opong Nkrumah yesterday at the Ministry of Information.

Mr. Osama Makkawi Khogali applauded Ghana for being the first to sign the Convention of the right of the Child and pledged UNICEF'S support to continue to work with Ghanaian institutions to shore up support for the Ghanaian child.

Hon. Opong Nkrumah pledged government support to work with UNICEF in the area of child protection and wellbeing. The minister cited the School Feeding Programme, Capitation grant, and the Free Senior High School Programme as some of the many social interventions which demonstrate the importance the Government places on the Ghanaian child.

“The Government of Ghana will continue to place emphasis on the Ghanaian Child”, the Minister for Information said.

Ghana signed the Convention of the Rights of the Child on 29th January 1990 and one week later, on 5th February 1990, Ghana became the first country in the world to ratify the treaty – committing to adopt it into national law.

MINISTER FOR INFORMATION LAUNCHES GIMPA LAW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Hon. Kojo Opong-Nkrumah, Minister for Information delivering a public lecture at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration

The Faculty of Law at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) launched its alumni association and unveiled its logo on Wednesday, September 20, 2023. This lunch symbolized a significant milestone in the history of the faculty after its establishment 13 years ago. The event which took place at the Greenhill Campus of GIMPA in Accra had as a part of the event, a public lecture on the theme: 'A Legal Framework for Communicating Governance.' The launch was carried out by the Minister of Information, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah, who is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, supported by the Rector of GIMPA, Prof. Samuel Kwaku Bonsu and the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Dr. Kwaku Agyeman-Budu.

Hon. Opong Nkrumah who could not hide his excitement said 'I am honoured to be back here at GIMPA today, a place that holds a very special place in my heart.'

He further thanked GIMPA and the Faculty of Law for the investment made in him and his colleagues several years ago and assured them they would do their best to serve the nation well by employing the skills acquired. Touching on the 13-year journey of the Faculty of Law, Hon. Opong Nkrumah had this to say 'The GIMPA Law story is one that we can all be proud of. Starting with the Faculty and then the effort to attract the Ghana School of Law Campus to GIMPA. The Prof. John Evans Atta Mills Centre for Law was also a good addition.' The Rector of GIMPA, Prof. Samuel Kwaku Bonsu, who was visibly excited, said earlier this year, GIMPA sought to intensify its engagement with alumni and friends of GIMPA. 'I cannot express adequately, the joy that I am experiencing right now as I stand here and see this dream transform into reality with the launch of the association,' he stressed.

He informed the alumni present that they would henceforth serve as the bridge for alumni across generations, thus representing the GIMPA spirit.

Prof. Kwaku Agyeman-Budu, the Dean of the Faculty of Law stated that the role of alumni in shaping the all-round advancement of any institution could not be overemphasized. 'You, our esteemed alumni represent the GIMPA law and serve as the living embodiment of the values, knowledge, competencies, and excellence that the GIMPA Law has to impact,' he added. He stressed the faculty's intention to leverage the knowledge, experience, and diverse networks of its alumni to enhance the reputation of "GIMPA Law."

He further assured the alumni of the faculty's readiness to engage and partner with them in forging a mutually beneficial future. The faculty now looks to its new alumni for assistance in various projects, including providing pro bono legal assistance to prisoners and other institutionally significant endeavours. Beginning next year, 2024, the faculty will introduce the following four Master of Laws (LL.M.) programmes: General Master of Laws degree program, Master of Laws degree in International Trade and Business Law, Master of Laws degree in Dispute Resolution Law and Practice and Master of Laws in International Criminal Law and Justice.

HON. OPPONG-NKRUMAH, PAYS A COURTESY CALL ON CHAIRMAN OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST



Chairman of The Church of Pentecost, Apostle Eric Nyamekye in the middle, Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah to his left, and Deputy Minister for Information Hon. Fatimatu Abubakar to his right

The Minister for Information Hon. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, Deputy Minister for Information, and some members of the Management at the Ministry of Information, paid a courtesy call on the Chairman of The Church of Pentecost, Apostle Eric Nyamekye, today at the Church's General Headquarters in Accra.

The visit was, to congratulate Apostle Eric Nyamekye on his elevation to the presidency of the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) and wish him well in his new mandate.

The delegation from the Ministry was well-received and other matters were discussed. A key point among his points of admonition was the need to build a system of national values to guide our journey as a Republic.



The Chairman of The Church of Pentecost, Apostle Eric Nyamekye, and delegates from the Ministry

BRAND GHANA NEEDS FORWARD LOOKING STRUCTURES – OPPONG NKRUMAH



Hon. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah addressing stakeholders

The Minister for Information, Hon. Kojo Oppong Nkrumah has called for a strategic overhaul of Ghana's structures to ensure the nation is equipped for a forward-looking future.

Addressing the audience at the International Advertising Association's (IAA) 6th Africa Rising Conference today, Hon. Oppong Nkrumah emphasized the critical need for Ghana to adopt innovative and adaptable structures, drawing parallels between the nation's evolution and the strategies employed by corporate brands navigating a changing landscape.

Speaking on the theme "Building Future-Ready Brands," the Minister stressed that just as corporate brands must define their purpose, we as a nation, must also articulate our overarching purpose.

He said this process required confronting difficult questions and making bold decisions, one that must ensure the benefit of the country.

"Just as we are asking corporate brands to introspect and answer these critical questions to shape their purpose and be future-ready, we as a nation must do the same. Whether a corporate or a national brand, to be future-ready, these are some of the difficult considerations we must make.

"And when we are done, we must be bold to shed off some things we have done for a while. We must take the tough decisions to take new paths without regard to whose ox is gored so that we stand a better chance of being ready for the future rather than champions of the past," he said. He underscored the need for the nation to prioritize forward-thinking over being champions of the past, emphasizing that the path to a future-ready "Brand Ghana" demands courage and a willingness to challenge the status quo urging that this transformation must occur without regard to whose interests may be affected.

"We work for Brand Ghana, not political parties, religious groups, or ethnic divisions," Hon. Oppong Nkrumah declared.

He stressed the importance of defining a unified purpose for Brand Ghana that resonates with all citizens, not just a select few.

"We must do better at setting out and upholding a set of norms that all of us, not some, will live by," the Minister said.

He emphasized values such as community, integrity, responsibility, and entrepreneurship, and urged collective commitment to these principles.

The conference featured a lineup of distinguished speakers, including Chairman and World President of the IAA, Sasan Saeidi, President of the Advertising Association of Ghana, Andrew Ackah, CEO of X3M IDEAS, Steve Babaeko, Co-founder and MD of Zeepay, Andrew Takyi-Appiah, and other notable dignitaries.

Since its inception in 2015, the Africa Rising conference has been a pivotal event on the MarCom calendar across the continent, drawing influential marketing communications professionals from Africa and around the world. With 5 successful editions since its launch and consistently attracting over 400 participants annually, Africa Rising has been a leading force in nurturing a dynamic MarCom industry across Africa while advancing the IAA's agenda in the region.



Hon. Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, and participating Stakeholders

HUAWEI'S 'SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE' PROGRAM GRADUATES 40 FEMALE STUDENTS IN GHANA



Deputy Minister for Information, Hon Fatimatu Abubakar addressing the audience.

Huawei Ghana has marked another achievement with the successful conclusion of its 'Seeds for the Future' program, a testament to its commitment to nurturing digital talents in the country. The 2023 edition saw 70 female tertiary students selected for this transformative program, with 40 of them celebrating their graduation at a ceremony held at the Accra City Hotel.

Throughout the program, these bright young women underwent rigorous training in various ICT courses, career development programs, and invaluable mentoring sessions.

The curriculum covered a spectrum of cutting-edge subjects including 5G, AI, Digital Power, and Cloud Computing, enhancing both their technical acumen and leadership skills.

Notably, students were privileged to engage in mentorship and career guidance sessions, offering them profound insights from experienced industry professionals. Huawei Ghana recognized and rewarded excellence, with the best-performing students receiving cash prizes and state-of-the-art ICT equipment.

Deputy Communications Minister Ama Pomaa Boateng, speaking on behalf of sector Minister Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, underscored the critical importance of ICT in problem-solving and bridging the skills gap, especially among the youth. She emphasized that the study and implementation of ICT-based programs and skills are pivotal for Ghana to play a significant role in both the domestic and global economies..

Ama Pomaa Boateng highlighted the potential of ICT in sectors like telemedicine, agriculture, and health, particularly in rural areas. She called upon the private sector to increase investments to drive ICT growth and development and urged the Education Ministry to prioritize ICT programs in schools to unearth more local talents.

Deputy Minister for Information, Hon Fatimatu Abubakar affirmed the government's commitment to enhancing the ICT learning space and its immense potential to address real-time challenges in education, healthcare, and communication.

Kweku Essuman Quansah, Deputy Managing Director of Huawei Ghana, emphasized the program's objective of closing the industry's skills gap in the ICT sector. He noted that over the past few years, Huawei's 'Seeds for the Future' program has prioritized the training of ICT talents globally. Quansah emphasized the program's role in fostering innovation, diversity, and collaboration, highlighting Huawei's commitment to empowering the next generation of tech leaders.

The success of Huawei's 'Seeds for the Future' program in Ghana reaffirms the company's dedication to promoting digital education and fostering a vibrant ICT ecosystem in the country.

DEK VACCINES PARTNERS IVI KOREA, EUBIOLOGICS TO MANUFACTURE VACCINES IN GHANA



Dr Kofi Nsiah-Poku (3rd from left), Managing Director of DEK Vaccines, and Kyeong Ho Min (2nd from right), Vice President, Production Planning Division, Eubiologics Company Limited signing the agreement. Looking on are Dr Anthony Nsiah-Asare (2nd from left), Presidential Advisor on Health; Dr. Delese A. A. Darko (left), Chief Executive Officer, Food and Drugs Authority, and other dignitaries. Picture: EDNA SALVO-KOTEY

DEK Vaccines Limited, has partnered with two of the world's largest vaccine manufacturers, Korean International Vaccine Institute (IVI) and EuBiologics to produce and distribute Oral Cholera Vaccines (OCV) in Ghana. The ground breaking agreement signed September 4 in a brief ceremony at the National Vaccines Institute in Accra marks the beginning of a major local vaccines manufacturing project that will boost vaccine equity and access for children in Ghana and Africa.

As part of the agreement, IVI Korea is expected to transfer Vaccines manufacturing technology to DEK Vaccines whiles EuBiologics will be engaged to train its officials to enable them to manufacture vaccines of the same quality produced by IVI in Korea. The agreement also details additional cooperative actions like funding OCV clinical trials in Ghana and other African nations, scaling up vaccine production capacity to the proper level and obtaining regulatory approvals. Aside from the OCV, Eubiologics would consider developing a combination of vaccines for typhoid and meningitis.

The CEO of DEK, Dr. Kofi Nsiah Poku in his remark indicated that the ceremony symbolized the seamless exchange of knowledge, innovation and progress from one realm to the other and also the beginning of a promising journey towards technological advancement and collaboration for vaccine manufacturing in Ghana and Africa.

Dr. Nsiah revealed that production of the vaccines would begin at the end of 2024.

“We are going to start with cholera vaccine and later do typhoid vaccines as well, Dr. Nsiah-Poku noted.

He further indicated that his outfit was building the necessary infrastructure to train its personal on the technology” Mr. Nkansah emphasised.

A representative from the IVI, Andrea Kim was concerned about the ability of the continent to deal with cholera and other water borne diseases and noted the company's readiness to make Ghana a hub of making waterborne diseases vaccines in Africa.

On her part, the international marketing team leader of EuBiologics Ms. Rachel Park said the company had two manufacturing sites with the capacity to produce 500 million doses of vaccines.

IVI Korea holds the vaccine's Intellectual Property (IP) and has licensed manufacturers all over the world, particularly those in developing nations. EuBiologics is a bulk manufacturer whiles DEK Vaccines Limited is a 'fill and finish' partner in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors.



CEO of DEK, Dr. Kofi Nsiah Poku and other stakeholders

OBSERVING WORLD RADIO DAY: REDUCING THE ILLS OF BROADCASTING IN GHANA

The abundance of radio stations in the nation is not only proof that succeeding governments have created an enabling climate, but more importantly, it is proof of Ghana's vibrant democracy. However, the ongoing lack of regulations to govern the entire sector remains a hidden danger that certainly warrants worry and reflection.

In Ghana, radio broadcasting was first introduced in 1935 during the rule of Sir Arnold Hodson, a British governor at the time of the Gold Coast. Radio broadcasting has had a significant impact on people's lives in Ghana and worldwide ever since Radio ZOY, the first state broadcast station, and later the Gold Coast Broadcasting Service (GCBS), were founded in 1954. This incredibly old-fashioned style of communication has evolved into a powerful tool for distributing knowledge, entertainment, and propaganda with the short-term goal of doing so. In addition to being reasonably priced, radio is also simple to use and gets to a lot of people quickly, including remote areas.

Arguably, the foundation of Ghana's democracy has been consolidated and solidified by the power of radio broadcasting. Many notable and historic moments in the country have been transmitted through radio.

Therefore, it was appropriate that 91% of world leaders and stakeholders supported the idea of designating a special day to honour the importance of radio globally. Ghana has celebrated World Radio Day annually on February 13 since the designation was made in 2012. In reality, Ghana observed the day this year with the subject "Radio and Peace," emphasising the contribution of radio to promoting peace and preventing conflict in the nation. While the day gave participants a chance to commemorate the contribution that radio has made to Ghana's enduring democracy and peace, it also raises questions about the state of broadcasting today.

Article 21 of the 1992 Constitution is explicit about the fundamental human rights of the Ghanaian citizenry as it guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression, including the freedom of the press and other media. However, this fundamental right does not include propaganda for war, incitement to violence, hate speech, ethnic incitements, vilification of others etc. Paradoxically, these constitutional breaches have ultimately become the ills of broadcasting, exposing the citizenry, especially children, to sometimes very harmful information. The country was thrown into absolute excitement over the repeal of the criminal libel law, which was seen as unfriendly to press freedom. The repeal has no doubt made its mark in the annals of global history, as the president of the republic, His Excellency Nana Akufo Addo, remarked.

"The repeal of the criminal libel law has impacted very positively on the development of the Ghanaian mass media, freeing them from unnecessary self-censorship and promoting a robust and critical media. Consequently, it has contributed to the growth of a vibrant and critical media that has earned Ghana the reputation of having one of the most media-friendly and liberal climates in Africa", Nana Akufo-Addo, 2011)

However, it has yet to make the needed impact in terms of content churned out by journalists and largely owners within the broadcasting space.

"The gap still exists where you see content on our broadcast network, and the NMC is unable to do more than discuss, engage, and recommend. The sad thing is that in spite of our initial meetings and conversations, the infractions still continue on our broadcast platforms, but the NCA is unable to act because the collaboration has not taken place yet," the Minister for Information bemoaned.

A more significant difficulty is the absence of clear, transparent, and uniform legal criteria for the grant of broadcasting authorizations in Ghana. The National Media Commission was established under the Constitution with the mandate to regulate the press. The provisions under the commission are limited in terms of broadcasting authorizations. The National Communications Authority, though it has the mandate to authorise the establishment and use of spectrum for broadcasting services, is also short on content regulation. These concerns clearly indicate that we have a fundamental weakness, especially when it comes to content regulation, and therefore call for immediate attention. The stakes have become even higher with the rapid spread of broadcasting establishments in the country.

According to an article authored by Jacob Arthur, a lecturer in communication studies at the University of Cape Coast, and published by the Conversation on February 13, 2020, titled Radio in Ghana: from mouthpiece of coup plotters to giving voice to the people, there has been a steady rise in radio production in Ghana over the past 20 years.

It is the most consumed medium in the country, with a penetration rate of about 90%.

Again, according to the National Communications Authority, as of the 3rd quarter of 2022, 707 FM broadcasting stations had been given frequency authorizations, with 513 currently in operation.

These include 31 public radio stations, 5 foreign radio stations, 119 community radio stations, 24 campus radio stations, and 528 commercial radio stations. Ghana's airwaves are projected to be more vibrant with the introduction of digital terrestrial transmission.

Admitting this potential danger, the government has rightly responded by instituting some measures to maintain some global standards within the broadcasting space. The government, through the Ministry of Information, has facilitated the drafting and signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the National Communications Authority (NCA), the National Media Commission (NMC), and other stakeholders to serve as a framework to ensure that all stakeholders in the broadcasting industry collaborate to deal with specific emerging issues that may arise.

As a long-term measure, the Ministry is currently facilitating a comprehensive broadcasting bill in consultation with stakeholders in the broadcasting industry. The objective of the broadcasting bill is to provide comprehensive legislation on broadcasting services, including certain internet services regulated by the national media commission and the national communications authority, consistent with the constitution of the Republic of Ghana. This is a very important step towards sanitising Ghana's airwaves and therefore must be commended. However, parliament has yet to pass the bill into law.

Stakeholders in the industry, non-governmental organisations, and sections of the public have continuously called for parliament to urgently pass the bill, which has been in and out of parliament for some time. The very recent group to drum home a similar message is the Ghana Journalists Association, which, in a press release signed by the General Secretary, urged the government and the legislature to quicken efforts to get the bill passed. "We urge the Executive and Legislature to give maximum attention to the Bill and get it passed immediately. "In fact, the Executive and Parliament cannot absolve themselves of blame as far as the current state of radio broadcasting in Ghana is concerned, and until they work in concert to pass the Broadcasting Bill immediately, they cannot raise any clean hands against the ills of radio broadcasting in Ghana," portions of the release noted.

Radio continues to be one of the most trusted and used media. That notwithstanding, it has the power to build or possibly disintegrate the current peace and unity that took this country decades to attain. On the occasion of this year's World Radio Day celebration, Hon. Kojo Opong Nkrumah called on stakeholders within the radio industry to use their platforms to help in the exercise of bringing peace and unity, particularly in areas prone to conflicts.

"On a day like this, we would like to remind our colleagues who operate in places where sometimes tensions may rise that we have a responsibility to help in the exercise to bring peace and unity and not necessarily fuel it," he noted.

So, the protocol of observing World Radio Day every year has been established in the country. What is yet to be established is a comprehensive legislation on broadcasting services. So, in the spirit of commemorating World Radio Day, I commend the duty bearers in this case, the government, the Ministry of Information, and stakeholders for showing commitment to this course, and hope that the process of enacting the broadcasting bill will be hastened to speedily eliminate the many ills of broadcasting in the country.



UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION: EMPOWERING SOCIETY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

International Day for Universal Access to Information is a day dedicated by the United Nations to be commemorated on the 28th of September every year. This year will focus on the importance of the online space for Access to Information.

The significance of empowering societies to bridge the divide in access to information cannot be overemphasised especially in this era where the world is closing in on digital space. In an increasingly interconnected world driven by information and technology, the concept of Universal Access to Information (UAI) has become more critical than ever before.

According to the United Nations UAI means that everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart information. This right not only underpins democratic values but also plays a pivotal role in socio-economic development, education, healthcare, and global solidarity.

The Digital Divide

The absence of internet and digital technologies in some parts of the country serve as a major challenge to bridging the gap in access to Information. While the internet and digital technologies have revolutionized access to information, a significant portion of the global population still lack reliable access to Information. Bridging this divide is essential to ensure that everyone can enjoy the benefits of UAI. According to the National Communication Authority, Ghana has seen an increase in internet connectivity in 2023 with the internet subscription rising to over 22.8 million. This marks significant growth from the previous years with the penetration rate at 71.49%

In terms of education, UAI can significantly enhance education. With access to online learning resources, students can access a world of knowledge, regardless of their geographic location or socio-economic background. This can level the playing field and reduce educational disparities.

Universal access to medical information and telemedicine services is critical, especially in remote areas. Patients can receive medical advice, diagnosis, and even treatment without having to travel long distances. Also, easy access to Information encourages economic Development. Information is a valuable resource for economic growth where entrepreneurs and businesses can access market data, connect with customers, and develop innovative solutions more easily. Universal Access to Information empowers citizens to stay informed about government actions and policies and participate more effectively in the democratic process, holding leaders more accountable.

The Role of Government

Government plays a crucial role in ensuring Universal Access to Information by enacting and enforcing laws that protect freedom of information and expression. Governments also need to invest in digital infrastructure, such as broadband internet access, equipment and the needed technology to reduce the digital divide. This would go a long way to make information accessible to everyone irrespective of their geographical difference.

Public education on Digital Literacy must be intensified to equip citizens with the necessary skills needed to navigate the digital world safely and effectively. Also, the government must add digital education to the academic curriculum through the Ministry of Education. The stem education is a good example that need extra push and support by all stakeholders to help the country bridge the gap in digital literacy in the country.

The Role of Technology Companies

The various Tech companies in the country also have a major role to play in advancing Universal Access to Information. Citizen's inability to purchase or use tech services and solutions is a major contributing factor to the digital divide. The various Tech Companies who are key stakeholders must therefore develop and promote affordable technology solutions to ensure that even those with limited financial means can afford access to information. Another key issue Tech Companies must address is content moderation. They must balance the need for content with moderation and regulation to protect the citizenry against harmful content while preserving the concept of freedom of expression.

In a world where Cybersecurity has become a major threat to national security, technology companies must build resilient data protection programs to safeguard the data of individual users of the various digital platforms. More importantly, the design of tech products, services and solutions must consider accessibility, usability and persons with disability

Universal Access to information is not just a fundamental human right, it's a catalyst for progress. By ensuring that everyone can access, seek, and share information freely, societies can promote education, healthcare, economic, development, and democracy. Governments, tech companies, and individuals all have roles to play in advancing UAI and building a more inclusive and equitable world. It's a collective effort that can help us harness the full potential of the digital age while upholding our shared values.

