



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AND SPORTS

MEET – THE – PRESS

AT

THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

ACCRA, 13TH MARCH. 2018

BY

**Hon. Isaac Kwame Asiamah (MP)
Minister for Youth and Sport**

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND SPORTS, HON. ISAAC KWAME
ASIAMAH (MP) AT THE 2018 NATIONAL MEET-THE-PRESS PROGRAMME ON
TUESDAY, 13TH MARCH, 2018**

**Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister of Information,
Hon. Deputy Ministers,
Chief Directors Present,
Heads of Agencies and Directors of Ministries Present,
Members of Staff of the Ministry of Youth & Sports and Information
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I deem it a great honour and privilege to have this opportunity to Meet-The-Press and to share information on the activities of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

I am supported here by my Deputy Minister, Hon. Pius Enam Hadzide; the Chief Director of the Ministry, Mr. Frank Quist; the Director General of the National Sports Authority, Hon. Robert Sarfo-Mensah; the Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Authority, Hon. Emmanuel Sin-nyet Asigri and the Acting Director of the National Sports College, Mr. Eric Nkansah Dwamena. As you can see, I have a strong team of Strikers and Defenders. My Supporters Union is also present.

On behalf of my team, I will highlight the situation at the Ministry and its Agencies at the time I assumed office and talk about the new vision, plans, programmes, policies and projects aimed at giving a total facelift to the youth and sports landscape of Ghana.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I assumed office on 10th February, 2017. I spent the first one month studying, consulting, interacting and interviewing staff and stakeholders, including the media. I also did a lot of research and observation about the terrain I had entered.

Throughout the period of study and observation, I was trying to discover the so-called “Mafias” in the Ministry which I heard so much about. I did not find any Mafias at the Ministry; neither did I find one in the Agencies and Departments of the Ministry. What I found out was a team of dedicated and loyal workers and volunteers, who needed the right leadership and a clear direction to deliver on their mandate.

I discovered multiple stakeholders in Youth and Sports affairs, who needed to be listened to and involved as partners in the development of the Youth and Sports sectors of the economy.

I realized that, the staff at the Ministry and its Agencies were despondent because they lacked the requisite equipment, facilities, training, environment and motivation to produce results. Many of the offices had inadequate basic office equipment like computers, printers, photocopiers, telephones and air-conditioners. The office block of the Ministry was in a dilapidated state.

More disturbing was the fact that, the Ministry and its Agencies were engulfed in huge debt leading to even the disconnection of electricity to the Accra and Essipong Sports Stadia for two years; the seizure of a vehicle belonging to the National Sports Authority through court ruling; and the total neglect of maintenance of the National Stadia and other Sports Facilities like the Azumah Nelson Sports Complex and the National Sports College in Winneba.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies And Gentlemen,

It is not my intention and style to paint a gloomy picture of the state of the Youth and Sports Sector we took over from the old administration, but I find it very necessary to expose only the tip of the iceberg of what we inherited in order for Ghanaians to appreciate where we are coming from and where we are today.

Indeed Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies And Gentlemen,

Many people were skeptical about the capability of the new administration to come out of the quagmire which had existed in the past.

Nevertheless, I entreated my staff not to be despondent but hopeful. I impressed upon them to change their mindset from wondering why the Ministry was so deprived of resources to pondering over what collectively we can do to turn the fortunes of the Ministry around.

I assured the staff in particular and Ghanaians as a whole that, I was not appointed as a minister to come and lament over the State of Affairs, but rather to fix the challenges at the Youth and Sports Ministry.

Together as a team, we embarked on a journey of recovery. A journey many skeptics thought was a mission impossible.

Mr. Chairman,

I am happy to report that, within 13 months in office, and with the support of my hardworking staff, these actions have been taken or are in progress. They are:

- The rehabilitation of the Accra Sports Stadium has started in earnest.
- The reconstruction of the Azumah Nelson Sports Complex into a modern Youth and Sports Centre is in progress.

- Refurbishment of the dilapidated office block of the Ministry is ongoing.
- Sod cutting for the construction of nine (9) additional Youth Resource Centres, which include sports facilities for not less than ten sporting disciplines and Youth Development, will begin next week.
- Refurbishment of two (2) boys' dormitories, a lecture hall and construction of a girls' dormitory at Afienu Youth Institute is ongoing.
- Construction of Dormitories and multi-purpose assembly hall for six (6) other Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institutes are progressing in earnest.
- The National Sports Festival, which was last organised in 2011, i.e. seven years ago, was revived and successfully organized in Kumasi from 23rd August to 7th September, 2017.
- The Ministry has increased support to the Federations to participate in both international and national competitions.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I have so far painted a picture of the state of the Youth and Sports Ministry over the past 13 months. Permit me at this juncture to do a short performance review for each sub-sector of the Ministry.

1.0 THE YOUTH SUB-SECTOR

In line with the NPP Manifesto, government recognizes that, “the youth constitute our major source of human capital for the transformational agenda of the country”. However, we are all aware that, the major challenge facing the youth is lack of job opportunities. The unemployment situation is a threat to our security and democracy. The Ministry is therefore doing all it can to empower the youth and employ their skills and talents for sustained growth of the economy and involve them in decision making processes at all levels.

Accordingly, the following projects and programmes were rolled out last year. They were:

1. Step Towards Employment and Productivity (STEP)
2. Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship Training
3. Construction of Youth Resource Centres
4. Refurbishing of Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institutes
5. Promotion of the Spirit of Volunteerism among the Youth
6. African Union Youth Volunteer Corps Pre-Deployment Training Programme in Ghana

7. Establishment of a Secretariat in Ghana for the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs
8. Participation in International Programmes and Fulfillment of International Obligations and
9. Review of the National Youth Policy to make it more responsive to current local and International trends.

Now the details:

1.1 Step Towards Employment and Productivity (STEP)

In line with the NPP Manifesto of “change; an agenda for jobs” and the African Union vision of “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investment in the youth”, the NYA launched the Step Towards Employment and Productivity (STEP) Project in Kumasi. The project involves skill training for young people in the areas such as cosmetology, agri-business, welding and fabrication, ICT, and dressmaking.

1.2 Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship Training

Currently, three thousand youth are undergoing Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship Skills Training. Already, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed with ECOBANK Ghana Ltd to engage all the trainees after completion of the training.

1.3 Youth Resource Centres

Ghana has a huge deficit of centres with facilities for Youth and Sports Development. The Ministry through the NYA will cut the sod for the construction of nine (9) Youth Resource Centres beginning next week.

The centres will have the following facilities:

- FIFA standard football pitches
- Basketball, Handball, Tennis and Volleyball Courts
- Counselling rooms
- ICT Centres
- Entrepreneurship training centres
- Restaurants
- Gymnasiums and
- Multi-purpose Conference / Theatre Halls

1.4 Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institutes

The NYA has eleven (11) Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institutes across the country. Over the years, the Institutes have suffered to a large extent neglect and were almost on the verge of collapse.

The eleven Institutes were in arrears of seven (7) terms feeding grants which amounted to One million, Nine Hundred Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢1,900,000.00).

I am happy to inform you that, in 2017, the Ministry paid in full the seven (7) terms feeding grant arrears.

Currently, six (6) construction projects are ongoing in five of the Institutes. They include:

- A 300 seating capacity multi-purpose hall with kitchen attached to each of the Institutes at Sandema and Nalerigu in the Upper East and Northern regions respectively.
- A dormitory block each at the Institutes in Ajumako Afranse (Central Region), Abura (Western Region), Takrowase (Eastern Region), Afiencya (Greater Accra Region) and Sandema (Upper East Region).

1.5 Volunteerism

Over the years, volunteerism has contributed enormously to national development. Volunteerism in local communities has resulted in the construction of health facilities, community markets, water and other social amenities and facilities across the country.

In 2017, over 600 local volunteers and 120 international volunteers from over 50 African countries participated in community health and sanitation activities in Ghana.

1.6 African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AU-YVC)

Ghana hosted over 120 young people from 54 states across Africa for the 8th Batch of the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps' (AU-YVC) Pre-deployment Training Programme. The 14 days training programme was hosted at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). These volunteers which included Ghanaian youth will be deployed by the African Union to serve in different capacities in various parts of the African continent.

1.7 Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs

The Secretariat of the West African Chapter of the Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (CAYE-WA) was established to create an interactive platform to promote young entrepreneurs and enhance trade in the sub-region. A young Ghanaian Entrepreneur; **Bernard Oduro Takyi** was elected as the first Coordinator for the Chapter which was launched in Accra by officials from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Authority has since established the Ghana Chapter of Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs with five (5) Youth Entrepreneurship Networks.

1.8 International Obligations

The National Youth Authority sponsored 47 Ghanaian youth to take part in various activities and programmes worldwide.

These include:

- Youth Capacity Building Programme for ECOWAS Youth in Benin and Burkina Faso.
- 5th Ordinary Session of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU) in Sudan
- Commonwealth Youth Summit in Malaysia
- 19th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia
- Youth Leaders Forum at the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Uganda.
- Youth Exchange Programme for Strengthening Youth Organizations through South-South Cooperation in Colombia.
- 7th UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum in New York, United States of America.

1.9 Review of National Youth Policy

Ghana promulgated a youth policy in 2010. Viewed against current local and international trends and imperatives, the policy is not responsive enough.

The National Youth Authority in collaboration with the Ministry has initiated the review of the 2010 Youth Policy to adequately reflect current trends, issues and standards.

The National Youth Authority will undertake the following activities this year:

- Complete and furnish the National Youth Resource Centre Multi-Purpose Hall at its national headquarters at Kaneshie, Accra;
- Refurbish and equip the Youth Resource Centre at Sekondi;
- Organize the National Patriotism lectures in all the ten (10) Regions;
- Organize Voluntary Work Camps in 30 districts of the country;
- Continue the STEP Project under the Informal Youth Enterprise Development Programme.
- Facilitate the establishment of the Regional and District Youth Committees per NYA Act 939 and hold Advocacy Seminars or Conferences with relevant stakeholders to push for provisions for youth development especially vulnerable and socially excluded youth among others;
- Facilitate the establishment of Regional and National Youth Parliaments.

2.0 THE SPORTS SUB-SECTOR

The Ministry is pursuing a two pronged approach to sports development. First, there is an approach to use sports as an end in itself; and second, an approach to use sports as a means to an end.

The 'end' is judged by the trophies and medals won at the national and international games.

The 'means to an end' is the use of sports to achieve development goals such as economic development, health promotion, job creation, peaceful co-existence, teamwork, acceptance of rules and regulations and respect for one another, as well as the mitigation of social vices such as drug abuse, racism, hooliganism, violence, corruption, cheating and discrimination.

With the focus on sports as a means in itself and a means to an end, the Ministry has taken the following actions;

1. Established Rules of Engagement with National Sports Federations
2. Established conditions for recognition of National Sports Federations
3. Provided guidelines for Bidding to host International Games or Competitions
4. The Ministry's pledge to support Ghanaians to contest for positions on the Executive Boards of International Sports Federations
5. The existing cordial working relationship between the Ministry and its Agencies
6. Ministry's support for National Sports Federations
7. The training and deployment of 5,000 Youth under the Youth in Sports Module
8. The Ministry's concern over the delay in the start of the Ghana Premier League
9. Measures taken by the Ministry to ensure prudent Financial Management
10. The state of implementation of the Government's White Paper on the 2014 FIFA World Cup Commission Report and
11. The programmes and projects undertaken in 2017 and the ones envisaged this year.

Now the details:

2.1 RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

For the purpose of establishing cordial working relationship between the Ministry and the National Sports Federations, the Ministry and the National Sports Authority (NSA) met all the 44 National Sports Federations to discuss and establish rules of engagement.

Among others, it has been established as follows;

2.1.1 All Sports Federations should develop their respective sports disciplines locally before seeking to participate in international competitions. Ideally, we require seeing about 80% of Federations' activities being local programmes and developmental in nature and 20% international programmes. The Federations should have local visibility for citizens to understand and enjoy the sport. This rule requires Federations to pursue agenda to have offices and staff in all regions; have appropriate facilities and equipment across the country; have appropriate number and caliber of coaches and other technical personnel.

2.1.2 Recognition of National Sports Federations

In order for the Ministry to recognize a Sports Federation as a national one, it should have presence in at least six (6) Regions and fifty (50) Districts. Unless in exceptional cases – like Akwasi Frimpong participating in the just ended Winter Olympic Games, any Federation that is not national in character will not receive Government funding to participate in international games or tournaments. Such Federations will however, receive funding for local development.

2.1.3 Bidding to Host International Games or Competitions

It was established that all Sports Federations should seek authorization from the Ministry through the National Sports Authority before committing Ghana to host international games. The request to the Ministry should stipulate all the responsibilities required of Government with regard to finance, security, protocols, facilities, equipment, etc. This action is necessary because, in most cases, the Ministry should seek authorization from Cabinet.

2.1.4 Support Ghana's Bid for Election unto Executive Boards of International Sports Federations

The Ministry is committed to supporting sports officials who contest for positions on International Sports Federation Boards. I am happy to announce that a number of Ghanaians are gaining prominent positions on International Sports Federations due to the posture of the Ministry. They include;

- Justice Anin Yeboah, A Supreme Court Judge – He is the Chairman of FIFA's Disciplinary Committee
- Ben Nunoo-Mensah – Council Member, African Weightlifting Federation
- Nii Quaye Kuma – Vice President of Africa Hockey Federation
- Richard Akpokavie – Member of International Olympic Committee and International Council for Arbitration in Africa.
- Elizabeth King – Treasurer, Africa Hockey Federation

- Charles Osei Asibey – Dep. General Secretary for Africa Arm-Wrestling Federation.
- Kwesi Nyantakyi – 1st Vice President of CAF
- Anthony Baffoe – Deputy General Secretary of CAF
- Saanie Daara – CAF Media Expert
- Alex Asante – CAF General Coordinator
- Isaac Addo – CAF General Coordinator

The Ministry will pursue an agenda that will put more Ghanaians on the Executive Boards of International Sports Federations.

2.1.5 Cordial Working Relationship with Departments and Agencies

I would like to put on record the good cordial relationship that exists between the Ministry and its Agencies namely;

- The National Youth Authority (NYA)
- The National Sports Authority (NSA)
- The National Sports College, Winneba (NSC-W)
- The Ghana Olympic Committee (GOC); and
- The National Sports Federations

Like all human institutions, there had been occasional differences in opinions but all have been resolved through dialogue and mutual respect for each other.

2.1.6 Support for National Sports Federations

I am happy to inform you that in 2017, the Ministry financially supported Arm-Wrestling, Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Cycling, Handball, Hockey, Tennis, Volleyball and Weightlifting.

2.1.7 Youth in Sports Module

Under our innovative programme, The Ministry of Youth and Sports in collaboration with the Youth Employment Agency (YEA) under the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations has signed an MOU and will soon organize and deploy a number of Ghanaians in various sectors of the Sports Industry.

The Youth in Sports Module under the Community Improvement Programme will train 5,000 youth in the following fields:

- Pitch Management
- Janitorial Services
- Fitness and Wellness
- National Sports Federation Assistants

The aims of this programme among others are to create jobs for the youth through sports; improve stadia and sports facilities' maintenance throughout the country; promote health, fitness and well-being of citizens and reduce criminal activities among the youth due to unemployment opportunities.

2.1.8 The Ghana Premier League

Considering sports as a means to an end, the delay in the start of the Ghana Premier League defeats the purpose of using sports as a means to an end.

The Ministry regrets the unfortunate delay in the start of the Premier League and is actively intervening to find a lasting solution to the impasse between Accra Great Olympics and the Ghana Football Association.

2.2 PRUDENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The Ministry has taken measures to ensure that finances for the Sports Sub-Sector are judiciously managed and new revenue streams explored to sustain the development of Sports. Some of the initiatives are;

2.2.1 Accommodation for the Black Stars Coach

The Ministry has secured a permanent residential accommodation for the coach of the Senior National Football team, the Black Stars. Prior to securing this apartment, Government was spending between \$8,000.00 and \$12,000.00 a month on accommodation for the Black Stars coach over the years.

2.2.2 Winning Bonuses for National Football Teams

In consultation with the Ghana Football Association (GFA), the winning bonuses of all National Football Teams have been scaled down by 50%.

2.2.3 Establishment of National Sports Fund

Over the years, funding has been the bane of Sports development in Ghana, due to over reliance on government sources. It is an acknowledged fact that, sports thrives largely on sponsorship and therefore there is the need for a dedicated Fund towards a sustainable sports development and promotion in Ghana.

In this regard, a thirteen (13) member committee has been formed to oversee the establishment of a National Sports Fund. In December, 2017, a National Sports Consultative Forum was organized in Accra to elicit inputs from stakeholders on the establishment of the fund. The inputs will form the basis for the preparation of a Sports Fund Bill for the consideration of Cabinet and onward transmission to Parliament.

2.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S WHITE PAPER ON 2014 WORLD CUP COMMISSION REPORT

The President of the Republic of Ghana, acting in accordance with Article 278 of the 1992 Constitution commissioned a three-man Committee, chaired by Justice Senyo Dzamefe, to inquire into Ghana's poor performance in the 2014 FIFA World Cup competition.

The Commission submitted a 400 page Report to the President in March, 2015. After studying the report thoroughly and carefully, the Government issued a 24 page White Paper in accordance with Article 280 (3) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

The White Paper stipulated the recommendations accepted; the recommendations not accepted and the recommendations accepted with modifications.

The recommendations in the White Paper which were accepted and those accepted with modifications by Government and are not contested in court have been implemented by the Ministry.

They are:

- 1) The Ministry has caused the various supporters Unions to form one National Alliance of Supporters.
- 2) Prize moneys for national teams are accounted to the Ministry.
- 3) The Sports Bill has been passed into Law. The Ministry now operates with the Sports Act, 2016 (ACT 934).
- 4) The GFA makes full declaration of details of funding and expenditure for friendly matches. This is strictly enforced and the GFA has always complied with the directive.
- 5) The President of GFA is no more the Chairman of the Black Stars Management Committee.
- 6) Players are now paid bonuses in local currencies with cheques.

2.4 PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS 2017/2018

The major activities in sports within the period under review are as follows:

- 1) Ghana hosted and won the West African Football Union (WAFU) Cup, which was held in Cape Coast in September, 2017 which was won by the local Black Stars.
- 2) The National Female Football Team (the Black Queens) recently won the WAFU Women's Zone B Championships by beating the host country La Cote D'Ivoire. The Ministry has approved a package of Thirty-Two Thousand US Dollars (\$32,000.00) to the team.

- 3) The National U-20 Female team (the Black Princesses) have qualified for the FIFA Women U-20 World Cup to be held in France in August this year.
- 4) The National U-17 Female team (The Black Maiden), have also qualified for the FIFA Women U-17 World Cup Tournament to be held in November, 2018, in Uruguay.
- 5) Ghana is preparing to host the African Women's Cup of Nations Tournament in November-December this year. A Local Organizing Committee is in place and is working hard to ensure a successful tournament.
Government has approved an amount of **Eight Million US Dollars (\$8,000,000.00)** for the organization of the tournament. The amount will cover, among others, the rehabilitation of training pitches and works at EL Wak Stadium, Achimota School training pitch, University of Ghana Stadium, Robert Mensah in Cape Coast and Nduom Stadium.
- 6) It is also of interest to note that the Ministry financially supported twelve (12) other disciplines to participate in international competitions. These sporting disciplines which include Para Sports won a total of 90 medals.
- 7) Ghana's participation in the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia from 4th to 15th April, 2018. The team departed for Australia yesterday for pre-games preparations.
- 8) This year's National Sports Festival is billed to take place in Cape Coast in July/August.
- 9) Ghana will participate in the 2018 Africa Youth Games in Algeria from 18th to 28th July.
- 10) Plans are underway to revive the Security Services (SESSA) Games.

3.0 THE NATIONAL SPORTS COLLEGE

Hon Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the National Sports College was established to provide the academic and professional support for the Sports sector in Ghana and beyond. The Ministry is working on the legal framework for the establishment of the Sports College.

In the interim, the college continues to organize training programmes for Football, Volleyball and Tennis Coaches, Sports Journalists, Sports Facility Managers and Keep Fit Clubs Instructors.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Hon. Minister, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

We have reached a stage where youth and sports development have assumed much importance and therefore require a lot of attention. We intend to collaborate much more with the Media for the purpose of public education and seeking their opinion in youth and sports matters of national interest.

Considering the depth from where we are coming, there is no doubt that modest gains have been achieved within the 13 months of being in office. However, we are aware that a lot more need to be done.

I wish to assure the good people of Ghana of my Ministry's unflinching commitment to improving the lot of our youth to enable them live meaningful lives and contribute to national development.

We are also committed to providing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure for sustained development in sports and to ensuring that sports is used as a tool to promote the image of Ghana and also as a tool for human and national development.

We look forward to an enhanced partnership and cooperation with you in our collective effort to promote youth and sports development in Ghana.

Thank you all for your attention and May God bless our homeland Ghana.