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**ON**

**ADMINISTRATIVE EXCHANGE PROGRAMME**

**BETWEEN**

**THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

**AND**

**THE STATE OF NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA**

**FROM 17<sup>TH</sup> TO 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

**IN**

**DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY**

**BY SHAFIQ MAMUDU**

## **1.0 Introductory background:**

The bilateral relations between Ghana and Germany goes back to the formative years of Ghana as a Republic in 1960. Since then, the cooperation between the two countries has been improving at both the multilateral and bilateral levels.

Germany supports Ghana at the multilateral level through its continuous support to the European Union, the African Development Bank Group and the World Bank Group from where Ghana receives a greater percentage of her development assistance. At the bilateral level, Germany has provided over €1.6 billion in financial assistance to Ghana since the implementation of the first project “Lower Volta Bridge” under the bilateral relation in 1963.

The focus of the bilateral relation between Ghana and Germany has, however, been concentrated at the governmental level. Germany is a Federal Republic and the individual Chancelleries in Germany also provide development assistance which go unreported at the national level. The need to develop and nurture the relations between Ghana and the State Chancelleries in Germany has, therefore, become imperative.

For instance, the State of North Rhine-Westphalia has been supporting some institutions in Ghana since 2007 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the State and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. The MoU was renewed in May 2016 in Accra, during the visit of the then Federal Minister for Europe and Media, who also doubled as the Head of the State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia.

North Rhine-Westphalia has supported the cleaning up of the Fosu Lagoon in the Central Region and constructed school buildings and established a palm oil mill in Offinso District in the Ashanti Region.

On the educational level, the University of Cape Coast and the University of Applied Sciences, Bonn-Rhein-Sieg are collaborating to enhance their technical capacities while the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) is also collaborating with the Universities of Dortmund and Gelsenkirchen. KNUST has received funding totalling €1.50million since 2012 as part of its agenda of becoming a centre of excellence for renewable energies and resource management. The Ministry of Science of North Rhine-Westphalia is also supporting some of the Universities of Applied Sciences in Ghana.

Owing to the above and to deepen the cooperation between Ghana and the State, an administrative exchange programme was established in 2017 to provide an opportunity for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to engage Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Ghana. Under the exchange programme, senior administrative personnel in North Rhine-Westphalia engage their Ghanaian counterparts over a two-week period, in each other’s country to exchange views and learn from each other with the view to enhancing their administrative capacities and invariably improving the cooperation between the State and Ghana. The maiden edition of the exchange programme was organised in 2017, which saw some German civil servants visiting Ghana in April 2017. A reciprocal visit was undertaken by their Ghanaian counterparts in June 2017.

The first phase of the 2018 edition of the exchange programme took place in Düsseldorf, Germany from 17<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Six participants from Ghana took part in the 2018 edition and included Mrs Josephine Bright Coleman (Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET)), Mrs Pamela Codjo (Ghana Immigration Service), Miss

Sara Iddrisu (Attorney General's Department and Ministry of Justice), Mr Tei Ogum (Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation), Miss Rosemond Appiah and Mr Shafiq Mamudu (Ministry of Finance).

The German tandems included Mrs Judith Schwethelm, Mrs Maren Hess, Miss Birte Ifang, Messrs Heinz Wesche, Peter Schmidt and Ulrich Hermanski.

The programme was facilitated by Dr Kambiz Ghawami and Dr Julia Boger of the World University Service, Germany and Mr Saeed Billa of Stodi Konsult, Ghana.

The Ghanaian participants left Ghana for Germany on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and returned on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Participants were accommodated at the IBIS Hotel, Ludwig-Erhard-Allee 2, 40227, Düsseldorf.

## **2.0 Exchange Activities:**

The highlights of the training are as follows:

### **2.1 Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018:**

Participants were met at the airport in Düsseldorf by Dr Ghawami and Dr Boger. Participants subsequently met their individual tandems during a welcome dinner at the Im Goldenen Kessel restaurant in Düsseldorf. The tandem of Mr Shafiq was Mrs Judith Schwethelm who works with the State Chancellery. Dr Stephan Holthoff Pförtner, Minister for Federal and European Affairs and International Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia welcomed participants to Germany and expressed the hope that the aim of the exchange programme would be achieved through the deepening of cooperation and partnership between the State and Ghana.

### **2.2 Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018:**

A one-day seminar was organised at the State Chancellery for both the Ghanaian participants and their German tandems. Dr Michael Borchmann made a presentation on "Federalism in Germany: the relationship between municipalities, federal states and the federal government". The presentation focused on the federal structure in Germany and the role of the judiciary. This was followed by a presentation by Miss Iddrisu on the "Structure of state and judiciary in Ghana: responsibilities and structure of the House of Chiefs". Participants and their tandems subsequently discussed their roles and responsibilities and the similarities and differences between North Rhine-Westphalia and Ghana. The day was climaxed with a group photo with Dr Holthoff Pförtner at the State Chancellery.

### **2.3 Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018:**

The day started with a brief meeting with Mrs Schwethelm at the State Chancellery. Mrs Schwethelm informed the meeting about the structure of the Chancellery and the fact that the Chancellery has an office in Berlin which serves as a liaison between the State and the Federal government. She further informed that the State has an office in Brussels, Belgium to represent the interest of the State at the European Union level.

This was followed by a meeting with Mrs Hedwig Petry, Mrs Belinda Knorr and Mr Michael Funcke-Bartz at the GIZ office in Düsseldorf. In attendance were Mrs Bright Coleman, Mrs Schwethelm, Mrs Hess, Miss Ifang, Mr Ogum and Mr Mamudu.

The meeting was to brief some of the participants on the projects being undertaken by GIZ in Ghana and their future plans for new projects. GIZ implements projects in Ghana on behalf of the Federal government and the State. It was indicated that information sharing on the activities of GIZ in Ghana was important and therefore, GIZ should endeavour to make information available to Ghanaian authorities including the Ministry of Finance.

A meeting was also held with Mr Andreas Henning of Engagement Global, a German non-profit organisation which seeks to support and strengthen the developmental commitments of civil society organisations. It provides financial support for organisations and initiatives based in Germany that seek to run partnerships in Sub-Sahara Africa. The support is usually projects and/or initiatives that aim to actively promote fair global coexistence. It also provides networking opportunities by linking organisations and groups with each other at the international level. It supports the One-World initiative of the German government. The meeting focused on the support North Rhine-Westphalia is providing, through Engagement Global, under the Ghana promoters programme which supports Ghana Forum and Fair Trade.

#### **2.4 Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018:**

Mrs Schwethelm, Miss Appiah and Mr Mamudu took a trip to the Bonn City Council to discuss the relations between the City of Bonn and Cape Coast in Ghana. Mr Stefan Wagner, Head of International Affairs at the City Council hosted the team and presented on some of the interventions Bonn has made in Cape Coast which include restoration of the Fosu Lagoon, establishment of a biodiversity centre in Cape Coast, supporting the University of Cape Coast and construction of a children's hospital at Efutu. Bonn and Cape Coast have had close collaboration since the adoption of a resolution at the Bonn City Council in 2008. The Bonn-Cape Coast partnership association was subsequently established in 2008 to promote exchanges between Bonn and Cape Coast.

A meeting was also held with Dr Friederike Fuhlrott, Desk Officer for Ghana at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (MBZ). The meeting was to discuss the Ghana portfolio and the preparations made by Germany towards the upcoming intergovernmental bilateral negotiations between the two countries scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018. In attendance were Mrs Bright Coleman, Mrs Schwethelm, Miss Ifang, Miss Appiah and Mr Mamudu.

#### **2.5 Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018:**

The Ghanaian participants and the German tandems including Dr Ghawami took a day's trip to Berlin. Meetings in Berlin started with a presentation made by Ms Sieglinde von Wasielewski, Head of International affairs at the Berlin office of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The presentation focused on Federalism in Germany and the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government in Germany and how their roles complement each other. This was followed by a lunch-discussion with Ghana's Ambassador to Germany, H.E. Gina Blay. The meeting centred on the role of the Embassy as a liaison between Ghana and Germany. The Ambassador expressed the hope that the exchange programme would help deepen the relations between the two countries.

Mrs Schwethelm and Mr Mamudu further held a meeting with Mr Bodo von Borries, Policy Expert at VENRO, an umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian aid non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which supports German NGOs providing support to NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana. The meeting was to discuss how German NGOs provide support to NGOs in Ghana and what accountability measures are put in place to ensure

funds are used for their intended purposes. The meeting also discussed how to improve reporting on funds flow to NGOs in Ghana.

Mrs Schwethelm and Mr Mamudu subsequently proceeded to a meeting with Mrs Katja Decker, Ghana Desk Officer at the German Foreign Office. The meeting was to understand the role of the German Foreign Office in the bilateral relation between Ghana and Germany. The meeting was important because Ghana deals more with the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development rather than the Foreign Office. However, during the discussion, it came to light that the Foreign Office and BMZ both play active roles, except that BMZ is the “face” of German development cooperation. The meeting also discussed the role of the Foreign Office in the upcoming intergovernmental bilateral negotiations between the two countries.

The team also went sightseeing in Berlin with a trip to the German Parliament.

### **2.6 Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018:**

The final leg of the first phase of the 2018 edition of the exchange programme started with a trip to the Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia where participants were taken on a guided tour of the Parliament House. This was followed by a presentation on the history of the State and the Parliament building.

Mr Wesche subsequently led Miss Appiah and Mr Mamudu to a meeting at the Ministry of Finance of the State. The team had discussions with Dr Ingo von Lishaut, Dr Frank Littwin and Miss Jan Rehm on tax revenue and the distribution of tax proceeds to the federal, state and local governments in Germany. The discussions were particularly interesting because, the Ministry of Finance in the State has more lawyers than economists. We were made to understand that the focus of the Ministry was more on taxes and therefore, it required the services of more lawyers rather than economists.

The issue of the double taxation agreement between Ghana and Germany was also discussed. There was tacit admission that the agreement needed to be reviewed to reflect current events. This is because the agreement has inured more to the benefit of Germany than Ghana. It is imperative that this issue is taken up with the German Foreign Office.

### **2.7 Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018:**

This was the last day of the exchange programme and it started off with a meeting with Mr Matthias Fischer, Head of Unit, Coordination and Promotion of External Trade – non European countries at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Innovation, Digitalisation and Energy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The meeting was to discuss some of the prospects of the Ghanaian economy and possible areas of cooperation between the State and Ghana.

The Ministry organised a fact finding mission to Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea to explore trade and investment opportunities in 2018. One perceived barrier to trade which was mentioned as affecting small and medium size German enterprises from establishing in Ghana was the high capital requirement on foreign owned businesses. Mr Fischer called for the establishment of special economic zones to attract German businesses.

A meeting was also held with Ms Heidi Cordier, Head of Unit for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Culture and Science. This was to gauge her assessment of the exchange programme. This is because Ms Cordier was part of the maiden edition of the exchange programme. She informed Mrs Schwethelm and Mr Mamudu that the maiden edition was

fraught with problems because participants did not really understand the programme. She mentioned that suggestions made to the organisers have yielded the required results since the 2018 edition seemed to have been properly organised with participants knowing what is expected of them. She called for more collaboration between the State and Ghana especially in the area of education.

An evaluation session was subsequently held for all tandems at the State Chancellery to assess the exchange programme from the individual, tandem and country levels. It focused on the similarities and differences between Ghana and Germany and what was enlightening to the participants. It also dwelt on the insights that would be needed for partners in the second phase of the programme expected to take place in January 2019, where the German tandems are expected to visit Ghana.

### **3.0 Impression of the exchange programme:**

- i. The programme was well organised and the rapport between the organisers, Ghanaian and German participants was good;
- ii. The meetings with the State officials, who were always prepared to explain the history and how the federal system works in Germany, was insightful;
- iii. The programme improves not just development cooperation between Ghana and Germany but most importantly intercultural relations;
- iv. It presents an opportunity for participants to learn from each other in terms of how they go about their working lives;
- v. It presents the opportunity to learn how non-state actors impact development cooperation.