



SEND GHANA

CITIZENS'

Watch

3rd Quarter
Newsletter





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Mrs. Harriet N. Agyemang, the first female Country Director of SEND GHANA.

SEND GHANA APPOINTS HARRIET AGYEMANG AS FIRST FEMALE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

By Editorial

SEND GHANA has appointed Ms. Harriet Nuamah Agyemang as its new Country Director, effective August 1, 2024. This historic appointment makes Ms. Agyemang the first woman to lead the organization since its inception.

Ms. Agyemang brings over two decades of experience to the role, having joined SEND GHANA in 2003 right after completing her national service. Throughout her 21-year tenure, she has gained extensive expertise in program planning, implementation, policy research, monitoring, and advocacy.

Over the years, she has held various positions within the organization, including Project Officer, Communications Officer, and Programmes Officer.

Prior to her appointment, Ms. Agyemang served as Senior Programmes Officer, where she oversaw SEND GHANA's advocacy efforts on national and subnational budgets, as well as health-related issues.

In her new role as Country Director, Ms. Agyemang will provide strategic leadership for the organization's operations.

She aims to strengthen collaboration across SEND's regional offices in Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, enhancing knowledge sharing and partnerships with government and civil society. Her vision also includes upholding SEND's mission as a social enterprise, promoting economic development for its stakeholders, and adapting the organization's programming to meet evolving challenges in advocacy and livelihoods.

Ms. Agyemang holds a Masters in Development Studies from the University of Ghana, a Bachelor of Arts in Integrated Development Studies from the University for Development Studies, and a Diploma in Journalism from the Ghana Institute of Journalism.

01



PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY: MAKING COCOA INDUSTRY DOCUMENTS ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

Francis Nkaw

The inclusion of People Living with Disabilities (PWDs) in public discourse is an important step toward achieving equity and empowerment. While the cocoa industry has long been a central point of national discussion, PWDs in the sector are often left out of the conversation and lack access to important cocoa information or documents, often due to their impairment.

Therefore, to foster inclusivity and diversity among farmers, it is essential to provide cocoa-related information

in formats that are accessible to all farmers, including those with disabilities and those without. SEND GHANA is one of the organizations leading the effort to provide farmers with information in accessible, disability-friendly formats. Under the Fair4All project, we recently published a report assessing cocoa receipts and spending, which revealed a lack of inclusivity for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the dissemination of critical information by stakeholders. The findings of this report were presented at a national dialogue on September 5,



Front row, from left to right: Dr. Jewel Andoh (Researcher), Dr. Peter K. Obeng Asamsa (Executive Director of the Ghana Blind Union), and Mr. Emmanuel Laryea (President of the Physically Challenged Association of Ghana), pictured with participants at the national dialogue on the assessment of cocoa receipts and spending.

2024, by Dr. Jewel Andoh, a researcher. The dialogue aimed to encourage key players in the cocoa value chain, particularly Cocobod and Local Buying Companies (LBCs), to adopt disability-friendly practices.

This includes disseminating relevant information in accessible formats such as braille, large print, and audio to ensure cocoa farmers and other individuals with disabilities can access all cocoa-related information. The dialogue also highlighted the Disability Act 2006 (Act 715), which aims to address the accessibility challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Ghana.

During the event, Dr. Andoh emphasized the importance of making fiscal information accessible to cocoa farmers who are PWDs. He urged stakeholders to adopt disability-friendly formats to ensure everyone, regardless of ability, has access to vital cocoa sector information. To demonstrate this commitment, the findings of Dr Andoh's report were developed into disability-friendly versions, including braille, large print, and audio formats. These materials were presented to the Ghana Blind Union, the Federation of People Living with

Disabilities, and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection during the dialogue. This effort aims to encourage other stakeholders to adopt inclusive methods of information dissemination and promote equitable access.

Dr. Peter K. Obeng Asamoah, Executive Director of the Ghana Blind Union, expressed gratitude to SEND GHANA for their comprehensive approach. "Different disability groups face unique challenges," he noted, emphasizing that the audio materials, particularly those in Twi, would reach cocoa farmers with various disabilities, including difficulties with reading and writing. He assured participants that the audio will be disseminated to reach every farmer in cocoa-growing communities across Ghana.

Dr. Obeng also urged stakeholders in the cocoa value chain, especially License Buying Companies (LBCs), to adopt SEND GHANA's example, advocating for the fair treatment of visually impaired members during the cocoa weighing process. He commended SEND GHANA for addressing this significant issue and pledged to advocate for the protection of his members at all levels.

Mr. Emmanuel Laryea, President of the Physically Challenged Association of Ghana, also commended SEND GHANA's initiative, noting that it has inspired his organization to work harder to ensure fair treatment for their members, many of whom are involved in the cocoa value chain.



Mr. Joseph Otchere Osei presenting a copy of a policy brief in a disability-friendly format to a representative from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection.



Mr. Andrew Acheampong making a contribution during the dialogue.

02



PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS AND TB PATIENTS

By Comfort Attuah

On September 5th, the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) held a roundtable discussion in Koforidua focused on the human rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) and tuberculosis (TB) patients. The meeting sought to review existing laws, policies, and regulations to better address the human rights of these individuals and reduce stigmatization and discrimination.

The discussion brought together key stakeholders, including security officers, lawyers, judges, representatives from NAP+, and various civil society organizations. During the meeting, participants learned about the Ghana AIDS Commission (GAC) Act, 2016 (Act 938), and the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, which emphasize the importance of privacy, anti-discrimination, and the right to education and work for people living with HIV/AIDS and TB.

Under The UASID-funded Community Led Monitoring project, SEND GHANA and the Commission for Human Rights Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) reviewed the human rights laws and policies to identify laws that contribute to stigma and discrimination for amendment. The assessment of current human rights policies revealed significant implementation challenges within the

laws established in the 1992 Constitution and the GAC Act. While only a few gaps were noted, it was found that sections of these laws often do not protect the rights of PLHIV, particularly concerning their right to privacy during legal proceedings and age limits for HIV testing without parental consent. Stakeholders agreed that increasing public awareness and enforcing existing laws were essential to achieving real change.

Addressing the widely recognised issue of discrimination faced by People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in healthcare settings, a representative from NAP+ shared concerns about the persistent stigmatisation by health workers. The recounted personal experiences of being labelled with derogatory terms like “HIV person,” emphasise the harmful impact of such behavior. These experiences underscore the urgent need for increased awareness and training to combat stigma and discrimination within healthcare settings, ensuring that PLHIV receives respectful and equitable care.

Several key recommendations emerged from this discussion worth reiterating. These include the need for continuous sensitization of health workers, the integration of ART services into the general healthcare system and ensuring that legal proceedings involving PLHIV are held privately to protect confidentiality.

Stakeholders were encouraged to take proactive roles within their organizations to address identified gaps in policy and practice, ensuring that stigma and discrimination are challenged and eliminated. By so doing we will be promoting and protecting the human rights of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and TB. This is vital for developing an effective national response to HIV/AIDS.



A stakeholder advocating for the reduction of stigma and discrimination in the health and education sector.



Madam Harriet, Country Director of SEND GHANA, with stakeholders from the security services, legal profession, judiciary, and CSOs in a group photo.

03



EMPOWERING COCOA FARMERS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE: A TRAINING WORKSHOP

Francis Nkaw

Recent global developments in the cocoa sector have prompted significant changes in how cocoa is purchased and traded. New regulations from the European Union, particularly concerning Human Rights and Deforestation, along with the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, are shaping the industry. In response, Ghana has introduced several interventions, including the Cocoa Management System and African Regional Standards, in collaboration with Côte d'Ivoire, to streamline compliance. However, cocoa farmers, who are central

to the industry, have often been left out of these discussions, resulting in limited knowledge and awareness of these important initiatives.

To address this gap, the Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform organized a training workshop for its members at on September 9th and 10th, 2024. The workshop brought together representatives from farmer-based organizations, NGOs, media, academia, and the private sector, all working within the cocoa sector.



a group photo of participants at the training

The training was designed to equip farmers with the skills and knowledge needed to conduct further training in their districts. Key topics covered included the Cocoa Management System, African Regional Standards, and the Productivity Enhancement Program. By mastering these areas, the farmers would be able to share their newly acquired knowledge with other farmers, helping to strengthen practices and productivity across the cocoa sector.

The session on the Cocoa Management System (CMS)

covered four key components: the Cocoa Farmer Database, the Ghana Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme, Child Labour, Remediation Systems, and the Deforestation Risk Model. The CMS streamlines the registration and monitoring of cocoa farmers, enhancing transparency and efficiency in production and sales.

The African Regional Standards (ARS) complement the Cocoa Management System (CMS) by harmonizing cocoa quality standards across Africa to enhance consistency and competitiveness in the global market.



THE ARS FOCUSES ON ALIGNING COCOA PRODUCTION WITH SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS:

ARS 1000-1:

Requirements for Cocoa Farmer as Entity/Farmer Group/ Cooperative Management System and Performance.

ARS 1000-2:

Sustainable Cocoa – Requirements for Cocoa Quality and Traceability.

ARS 1000-3:

Sustainable Cocoa – Requirements for Cocoa Certification Scheme (2021).

The Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) on the other hand is designed to promote four key farming practices known as the “4 Ps namely Pruning, Pollination, Poultry Manure Application, and Protection.

The facilitators employed a participatory adult learning approach, actively engaging participants in the learning process. This approach enabled all attendees to be actively involved and deepen their understanding of vital policies. This method, which incorporates discussion, reflection, and experiential activities, promotes greater involvement, enhances knowledge retention, and

fosters practical skill development. Research shows that such an approach is highly effective in adult education, ensuring that learners absorb and apply knowledge effectively.

By enhancing the knowledge and skills of stakeholders, we can work towards a more inclusive and informed approach to addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by cocoa farmers in Ghana. The success of this workshop sets the stage for the Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform to extend its advocacy efforts into remote cocoa-growing communities.

04

A LEARNING VISIT FROM OXFAM AND A REFLECTION ON OUR PARTNERSHIP THUS FAR.

Mary Ann Kamara

Learning is a continuous process that is necessary for human development. As such, CSOs must regularly reflect on their past activities, engagements and previous partners to plan for their future. OXFAM and SEND GHANA are not exempt from this. As such, on the 23RD of August, the Deputy Regional Director of OXFAM West Africa visited SEND GHANA to enquire about the partnership thus far, any challenges and how to alleviate them.

In his opening remarks, the CEO of SEND West Africa, Mr. Siapha Kamara, highlighted the long-standing relationship between SEND and OXFAM, which spans over two decades. He recounted how, in SEND GHANA's early years, OXFAM provided a \$1,000 grant to support a social accountability project using gender transformative tool to promote equitable distribution of family responsibilities and prioritize the education of the girl child. This initial funding led to the creation of SEND GHANA's Gender Model Family.

Mr. Kamara noted that OXFAM and SEND operate within similar political and economic fragilities but have successfully implemented numerous life-changing projects that benefit communities across Ghana. He emphasized the mutually beneficial relationship between the two organizations, stating that their

strategic partnership continues to yield significant dividends for Ghana. Through collaborative project implementation, they are driving the development agenda in communities nationwide. In addition, he mentioned that with support from OXFAM, SEND GHANA's "HIPC Watch" was able to monitor the operationalization of HIPC-mandated development projects and policies. These two projects set the stage for SEND GHANA's future projects, engagements and activities.

Mr. Siapha Kamara also addressed the interconnected nature of OXFAM's project implementation model, where partners are deeply interlinked. He noted that delays or inefficiencies from one partner inevitably impact others within the consortium, jeopardizing the overall success of projects. Highlighting the challenges posed by such dependencies, he called on OXFAM to re-examine this co-dependent structure. Mr. Kamara emphasized that delayed responses or slow implementation by any partner can undermine the group's ability to meet targets and deliver projects effectively. To ensure smoother operations in the future, he recommended that partners be thoroughly vetted and adhere to a unified code of conduct, fostering accountability and efficiency in project execution.

Responding to Mr. Siapha Kamara's comments, the Deputy Director of OXFAM acknowledged the challenges raised and assured that OXFAM is developing a partnership strategy aimed at strengthening relationships with partners while considering the cultural contexts of the diverse countries in which they operate. She expressed optimism about deepening the collaboration between OXFAM and SEND GHANA to drive positive change for vulnerable groups and communities.

Following the CEO's address, programme Officers Tajudeen Mohammed and Nana Kwesi Barning Ackah gave a brief overview of the current OXFAM-funded projects. These projects are Power to Choose, Fair4All and "Sustainable Cocoa". In summary, they said each project aims to improve the

capacity of different marginalized or underrepresented groups. Power to Choose seeks to strengthen youth capacity to lead impactful advocacy on health-related issues while F4A and Sustainable Cocoa are geared towards promoting a farmer-centred approach in advocating for a fair and sustainable cocoa sector.

The visit concluded with the Deputy Director thanking the SEND team for their time, openness, and honesty. She pledged to address the concerns raised with the OXFAM Ghana team, reinforcing OXFAM's commitment to fostering stronger, more effective partnerships.



05



EMPOWERING CITIZEN'S VOICES: A CRITICAL ELEMENT FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Mohammed Tajudeen Abdulai

As Ghana's democracy deepens, the role of citizens in shaping development policies is pivotal to advancing the country's democratic credentials and good governance. As the nation heads toward a crucial presidential and parliamentary election in December 2024, political parties are already rallying support and sharing their manifesto proposals with the electorate.

Ahead of the development and launch of the major political party manifestos, SEND GHANA, in collaboration with the CSO Partnership for Social Accountability, prepared and shared a Citizens' Manifesto with these parties. The Citizens' Manifesto had two main objectives: to encourage political parties to incorporate citizens' proposals into their platforms for addressing social sector challenges and to serve as a tool for citizens to hold elected officials accountable for their promises and performance.

To build on this effort, SEND GHANA partnered with one of the country's leading media organizations, the Multimedia Group Limited, to host a live national dialogue. This event featured key

representatives from both the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), offering citizens a platform to ask how these parties planned to incorporate their concerns into their manifestos.

With just over three months until the general elections, both the NPP and NDC have officially launched their manifestos. The NDC launched its Youth Manifesto on August 12, followed by its national manifesto on August 24, with SEND GHANA receiving recognition for its contributions to social accountability, which align with the ideals of the NDC.

Both parties have made significant promises on social sector development, including areas such as education, healthcare, water, sanitation, hygiene, gender empowerment, disability inclusion, and child protection. SEND GHANA has reviewed the manifestos, highlighting how much they reflect the citizens' manifesto inputs.

MANIFESTO HIGHLIGHTS: EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION.

In education, both the NPP and NDC have committed to major infrastructure expansion at the pre-tertiary level. The NDC aims to address issues like schools under trees through its Big-Push agenda, while the NPP plans to upgrade junior high schools, revamp schools in underserved communities, and improve kindergarten and primary school facilities for a more inclusive learning environment.

In healthcare, both parties emphasize strengthening the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The NPP promises prompt NHIS payments to health providers and automatic adjustments to the cost of medicines, while the NDC has pledged to remove the cap on the NHIS Levy to ensure timely payments and provide additional healthcare funding. Both parties also aim to boost local vaccine production and establish pharmaceutical hubs.



Students conducting an experiment in the laboratory.



GENDER EMPOWERMENT AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

When it comes to women's empowerment, both the NPP and NDC have vowed to push affirmative action legislation. The NDC plans to enforce a 30 percent quota for women in political appointments, while the NPP seeks to enhance maternity benefits across sectors. The NDC has also committed to reviewing the Labour Act to mandate four months of paid maternity leave for mothers.

On disability inclusion, both parties made firm commitments. The NPP will enforce the Persons with Disability Act by ensuring disability-friendly access to public buildings and setting recruitment quotas for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The NDC has pledged to reserve a mandatory minimum of 5 percent of public sector jobs for PWDs and to focus on inclusive economic strategies.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SOCIAL WELFARE.

For child protection, the NPP plans to introduce a Digital Child Protection and Tracking System, while the NDC is committed to developing a Protective Framework for Children to address issues like trafficking, child labor, and harmful cultural practices.

On social protection, the NPP has vowed to pass the long-awaited Social Protection Bill to guarantee sustainable funding, ensuring the rights of beneficiaries are protected.

A COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY

Regardless of the outcome of the 2024 elections, SEND GHANA remains committed to its role in ensuring political accountability. By empowering citizens and enhancing their agency, SEND GHANA and its partners aim to hold the next government accountable for delivering on its promises and addressing the fundamental needs of the people.

06



GCCP CALLS FOR OVER 60% RAISE IN FARMGATE PRICE OF COCOA

The Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform (GCCCP) has called for a substantial increase in cocoa prices for the 2024/2025 season. On September 3, 2024, farmers from the platform held a press conference in Accra to project a new farm gate price for the upcoming cocoa season. This projection follows recent increases in cocoa prices on the international market.

While the global price for cocoa was pegged at \$12,261 per tonne in April 2024, Ghanaian farmers have not significantly benefited from these hikes. This is due to the longstanding cocoa marketing strategy adopted by the Ghana Cocoa Board, which focuses heavily on forward sales rather than spot sales.

This approach has limited farmers from reaping the full benefits of recent global price surges.

In light of these challenges, the GCCCP is calling on the government to implement a 65-70% increase in cocoa prices to ensure fair compensation for farmers and sustain the cocoa industry. Before the press conference, the price was 3,000 Ghana cedis per bag and 48,000 Ghana cedis per tonne. A statement read on behalf of the platform by Francis Tainor, President of the Mankrong Cocoa Farmers Association, emphasized the potential collapse of local cocoa buying companies due to financial challenges and market conditions. He called for the establishment of a minimum farm gate



price to protect farmers' livelihoods and ensure the sustainability of the cocoa sector.

Tainor elaborated, saying, "The 2023/2024 cocoa season was marked by significant challenges that continue to affect both farmers and the broader cocoa industry in Ghana. These challenges included low yields, high inflation, rapid currency depreciation, rising input costs, and increased labor expenses, which have wiped out any positive gains from high global prices, further entrenching poverty among cocoa farmers. Extreme weather conditions, such as prolonged rainfall in some regions and drought in others, have led to widespread black pod disease, devastating cocoa farms, especially in the Western-North region, which produces the majority of Ghana's cocoa."

He also pointed out the delays in the disbursement of cocoa syndicated loans, which have meant that many Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs)—particularly local ones—could not raise the capital to purchase cocoa. This has led to frustration among farmers who have been unable to receive payment for their delivered beans.

Tainor's statement highlighted the urgent need for measures to help farmers adapt to climate change and ensure sustainable cocoa production. He urged the government to implement existing

policies more aggressively, such as the Climate-Smart Cocoa Strategy and the AFR100 initiative, and work towards compliance with the EU Deforestation Regulation, which aims to eliminate deforestation from supply chains by the end of 2024.

Obed Owusu-Addai, Co-Coordinator of the GCCP, supported the call for a price revision, stating, "To ensure that Ghanaian cocoa farmers remain motivated and competitive in the sub-region, we propose that the government institutionalize the upward mid-term revision of the farm gate price, considering the volatile nature of our currency. This will also help to minimize cross-border smuggling of cocoa beans mid-season."

The GCCP, hosted by SEND GHANA, represents a coalition of media, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, farmer-based organizations, and academia. The platform advocates for the interests of local cocoa farmers and buying companies. The GCCP proposed a minimum farm gate price of GHS 3,583 per bag (64kg) and GHS 57,320 per tonne of cocoa beans, a significant increase from the current GHS 2,070 per bag. The call for fair pricing is seen as crucial to the survival and prosperity of cocoa farmers and the long-term sustainability of the cocoa sector.





From left: Nana Kwasi Barning Ackah (National Coordinator, GCCP) and Francis Tainor (President of the Mankrong Cocoa Farmers Association), seated alongside members of the platform at the press conference.



Nana Yaw Reuben addressing Journalists during the press conference.



Francis Tainor, President of the Mankrong Cocoa Farmers Association, reading a press statement on behalf of the farmers.



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