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EMPLOYERS' BREAKFAST MEETING HELD IN ACCRA, TEMA, KUMASI AND TAKORADI

In a bid to develop its new strategic advocacy plan, GEA organized four (4) Employers' Breakfast Meetings, in Accra, Tema, Kumasi and Takoradi, to solicit the views of members on the key issues that must engage the attention of the Association for the ensuing years.

The outcome of the meetings shall be developed into a Business Agenda 2019-2021 that will be the Blueprint for GEA advocacy actions. The workshops were organized from 14-28th August, 2018. Participants were drawn across all sectors of the economy: Banking, Insurance, manufacturing, agro processing, education, Oil and Gas, energy amongst others.

After intensive discussions and deliberations, the following economic, social and HR issues were agreed upon by members of the country to be incorporated and addressed in the 2019-2021 BA:

Economic

- Financial and Macroeconomic Instability
- High Cost of Doing Business
- Unfavorable Trade Policies
- Unclear tax policies/ Inadequate tax incentives
- The poor linkage between to productivity and income

Social and Labour

- Persistent of high graduate unemployment rate
- Skills gaps and shortages
- Need for a position paper to guide the planning of the Free Senior High School Programme
- Lack of engagement between MMDAs and businesses
- Government bureaucratic and regulatory challenges

Human Resource Management

- Support for Collective Bargaining Agreement at the industry level
- Need for assistance on redundancy, sick and maternity leave policies



Some participants at the Breakfast meeting



MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY ORGANIZES PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE MEETING

1.0 Background

In 2017, the Ministry of Trade and Industry under the current government initiated a Sector Working Group (SWG), which provides a platform for dialogue by bringing together MDA's and Development Partner (DP) representatives involved in a specific policy sector. Afterwards, a maiden meeting was organized by the Ministry to help align the activities of the various DPs to government development objective of enhancing the performance of the private sector to trigger higher economic growth and development.

Further to this action, the Ministry organized a Private Sector Dialogue meeting on 1st June, 2018 at Alisa Hotel, which was chaired by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Hon. Alan Kyeremanteng. The primary objectives underlining the meeting were to discuss the contribution of Government, Development Partners and the Private Sector towards a private sector-led growth and development, as well as to deliberate on the challenges being faced by the private sector and how best the identified challenges can be mitigated.

2.0 Participation

The meeting attracted participants from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, European Union (EU), Department of International Development (DFID), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Switzerland Embassy, African Development Bank (AfDB), DANIDA, The World Bank, Germany GIZ/KFW, The Netherlands Embassy, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), Private Enterprises Federation (PEF), and Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI).

3.0 Discussions on the road map to boosting Private Sector Development

3.1 Government

The Chairman, Hon. Alan Kyeremanteng indicated that whereas several interpretations may be accrued to the Ghana Beyond Aid agenda, it entails measures aimed at ensuring effective utilization of aid to serve as a catalyst in achieving a self-reliant and a sustainable economy. Hence, the Ghana Beyond Aid agenda is built on three (3) main pillars namely;

(i) Building a Stable Macroeconomic Environment

The minister expounded that government has been implementing prudent measures that seek to regulate the macroeconomic atmosphere to boost private sector development.

Some of the positive outcomes of these policy measures include the increasing GDP growth, achievement of single digit inflation, declining interest rate, reduction in treasury bill and BOG policy rate.

(i) Agricultural Transformation Agenda

In order to be successful in the Planting for Food and Jobs initiative, it was reported that government has been paying special attention to fertilizer subsidy and distribution, provision of improved seed varieties, and enhancing extension services to the agriculture sector of the economy.

(ii) Industrial Transformation Agenda

Reporting on some of the key initiatives undertaken by the Ministry to support private sector development in the field of industrialization, the following were highlighted;

- Review of approximately 320 technically feasible projects out of about 700 proposals into the one district, one factory initiative.
- Establishment of industrial Banks purposely to provide credit facilities to assist private sector developments.
- Supporting strategic anchor industries such as iron and steel industries, Auto-mobile and Vehicle assembling industries, as well as Garment industries.
- Introduction of Business Regulatory Reform Program to help improve Ghana's performance on the global business indicators in terms of competitiveness.
- Creation of a Business or web base consultative platform to provide feedbacks on existing business regulatory frameworks, as well as assessing the impact of these regulatory frameworks.
- Plans to initiate an institutionalized platform called the Public-Private Dialogue, as well as the Presidential Business summit to bring businesses together and discuss issues of interest.

4.0 GEA's submissions

GEA's submitted that there was the need to curb illicit trading activities, bridge the current skills gap problem, tackle the country's infrastructure deficit, and influence monetary policy to reduce cost of capital, which has bedeviled private sector activities in the country.