

The launch of the National Sanitation Campaign: a shared and collective responsibility

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The National Sanitation Campaign to rid the country of filth was officially launched on November 13, 2017 by the President H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo at a colourful ceremony at the Banquet Hall of the State House amid pomp and pageantry. The sanitation campaign under the auspices of the ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources is the flagship program of the Ministry in the area of Sanitation. It is under the theme Lets Keep Ghana Clean; play your part. The launch of the sanitation campaign marked the beginning of series of activities to be implemented by the government through the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources to address the sanitation challenges in the country. The launch of the campaign comes against the background of the declaration by the President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo to make Accra the neatest and cleanest city in Africa by the year 2020 to enable the country gain its rightful status globally as one of the neatest cities in Africa and the world at large. Over the years, various governments have made efforts to clean our towns and cities by clearing our refuse dumps: One of the measures adopted was the introduction of the National Sanitation Day which was observed every first Saturday of each month. Though the measures achieved some modest gains, they were not far reaching enough.

The nation always relapsed back to the same state leaving our town and cities filthy and our gutters choked. The least rainfall especially in Accra and other major towns always resulted into flooding and the loss of lives and property.

There was therefore the need to adopt a new paradigm shift in the management of the country's sanitation challenges. One of the key measures introduced was the establishment of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources by the President His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo in March this year (2017) soon after assuming office. The Ministry has the mandate to holistically formulate policies and develop programs to tackle the sanitation menace in the country. The launch of the National Sanitation Campaign was therefore designed by the Ministry to achieve these objectives and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Sanitation. It is estimated that poor Sanitation practices cost the country a whopping sum of \$290 million per annum which could have been channeled to other Development Projects such as the building of infrastructure. According to the research the cost incurred is as a result of poor Sanitation practices and exposure to preventable diseases among other factors. One cannot also ignore the fact that the cost of procuring medicine for the treatment of sanitation related diseases is another area of huge government expenditure.

Generally, the attitude of the Ghanaian towards sanitation is rather poor. We throw away rubbish indiscriminately and litter the streets regardless of the consequences on our health. Open defecation is practice anywhere. These are all bane to tourism promotion in the country which affect economic Development. The county's quest in achieving the targets of the sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030 is therefore becoming illusive. The establishment of the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources by the President and accorded it a cabinet status has been hailed by many Ghanaians as a step in the right direction in fighting the sanitation challenge. The Ministry's strategic medium to long term program includes the establishment of a National Sanitation Authority, Sanitation Brigade and a National Sanitation Fund. Others include the construction of more Transfer situations throughout the country. The Ministry is

also working with Private stakeholders for the establishment of recycling plants across the country as the most effective and efficient way to manage the waste menace in the country.

The mandate of the Ministry also includes the re- structuring of the entire value chain of waste management and streamlining of the finances in the Sector to facilitate easy collection and the treatment of waste before final disposal.

Accra the Neatest City in Africa

The vision of the President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo is to make Accra the neatest and cleanest city in Africa by the year 2020.

A capital comparable to any other capital in Africa and beyond. The vision of the President is a clarion call on all Ghanaians to join hands to make the vision a reality. This is reflected in the choice of the theme of the sanitation launch; let's keep Ghana clean, play your part.

Let's all be responsible citizens and support the various intervention measures to keep our country clean for sustainable national development keeping in mind the adage that cleanliness is next to Godliness.