

## **SOD CUTTING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY MINI – GRIDS IN THE ADA EAST DISTRICT OF THE GREATER ACCRA REGION**

**6<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

Hon. Minister of Energy, John Peter AMEWU  
Hon. Deputy Ministers  
Chief Director of Ministry of Energy  
Director, Renewable Energy,  
Project Coordinator of GEDAP  
The District Chief Executive of Ada East  
Dear Chief and people of Alorkpem, Aflive and Azizakpe  
Other dignitaries and organizations present  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to participate in this important sod-cutting ceremony organized by the Ministry of Energy for the construction of three (3) renewable energy mini – grids on three island communities here in the Ada East District of the Greater Accra Region.

We are excited to be here especially given the delay in implementation partly due to a long procurement process, the COVID 19 pandemic and the associated travel and movement restrictions that came with it. It is my hope that work would commence as soon as possible and that the Swiss-funded project will be completed on time so that you, the inhabitants of the communities on these islands, can have access to affordable, reliable and sustainable electricity.

Electricity access, although very important has struggled to generate financial resources in many countries, especially when it comes to rural electrification. Currently, Global electrification rate is at 89% with about 573 million people in Sub Saharan Africa having no access to electricity. According to the World Bank, if efforts to increase electricity access are not sustained, this number could rise to about 650 million people by 2030.

Ghana has been remarkably successful in extending its national grid in the main lands. Electricity access stands at 85% with the remaining unconnected communities being in the remote areas and on the islands such as the one, we are currently on.

Switzerland is committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Switzerland, through the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, SECO, has been working with the Government of Ghana to achieve goal number 7 of the SDGs, which seeks to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. SECO has been supporting the Ghana Energy Development and Access Project (GEDAP) under the Ministry of Energy since its inception, with the objective to improve efficiency in the power distribution system and increase access to clean

and sustainable electricity. In line with the Government's policy to accelerate rural electrification, SECO found it key to assist in the electrification of island communities through renewable energy mini-grid systems. Through the program, 3 mini grids will be built to provide electricity access to about 2'000 inhabitants living on the 3 islands communities (namely: Alorkpem, Aflive and Azizakpe). In total, Switzerland has contributed a total of 33 million dollars to the GEDAP program.

Innovative and modern energy technologies have become essential in increasing electricity access and supply of energy to citizens across the country. Electricity access improves the quality of life of people, promotes economic growth and social equity as inhabitants can now engage in commercial activities that require the use of electricity. We believe that access to electricity will also improve food production and food preservation for the inhabitants of the community as the problem of storage will be solved. It will also allow for school going kids to learn in the evening and access IT technologies powered by electricity to enhance their IT skills.

The COVID – 19 pandemic has increased the need for electricity as more businesses and activities have gone digital and it is important that the people in these communities are not left behind. Sending money digitally, proper healthcare and provision of quality education should be better possible once the mini grids are completed.

This project funded by Switzerland does not only improve the lives of the people in these communities but also protects the environment by producing green energy which contributes to climate change mitigation. On this note, I would like to encourage Ghana to continue to initiate policies that promote the adoption of green and clean energy technologies in the power sector. Unfortunately, climate change is a reality and becomes more and more a threat to the livelihoods of many around the world.

Let me conclude with a reference to the excellent state of bilateral relations between Ghana and Switzerland. This year, we do not only celebrate the existence of 60 years of diplomatic relations between our countries who established their first people-to-people contacts with the arrival of the Basel mission some 200 years ago. We could also witness the historical State visit of H. E. President Nana Addo Dankwah Akuffo – Addo to Switzerland at the end of February of this year, right before the global outbreak of the pandemic.

On the marge of the visit, Ghana and Switzerland signed an MoU to take action and collaborate on achieving climate commitments under article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Switzerland is also ready to working closely with the Ministry of Energy and the Energy Commission on a future project to introduce net – metering systems to allow for renewable energy penetration into the national grid system under the Scaling up of Renewable Energy Program (SREP).

I am hopeful that Ghana and Switzerland will continue to collaborate and work hard towards the promotion of sustainable clean energy for all.

Thank you all for your attention and I wish you all a nice afternoon.