



**AFROEURO  
FOUNDATION**

**REPORT OF MEETING AT THE DUTCH PARLIAMENTARY  
HOUSE - January 24-28, 2020**



## **Introduction:**

This report gives a brief overview of the meeting which took place as part of the Netherlands Business fair which took place from January 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> in The Hague, Netherlands. The report specifically captures an internal meeting which occurred among the business delegations who participated in the fair at the Dutch parliament on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The meeting took place in the evening at about 19.00hrs.

As part of the Netherlands Ghana Business Fair 2020, there was a meeting with a cross section of Dutch parliamentarians from the economic department, business entrepreneurs, the Ghana Ambassador to the Netherlands and other important dignitaries with interest in international trade and entrepreneurship.

Present at the meeting were:

- Her Excellency Sophia Horner – Sam
- Honorable Mrs. Gifty Ohene Konadu
- Mr. Emmanuel Adjetey
- Ms. Augustina Austin
- Mr. Vincent Gambrah
- Mr. Emmanuel Lometey
- Mr. Vincent Gambrah
- Mr. Emmanuel Bonney
- Mr. Christian Kwesi Agyemang
- Mr. Phillip Sarfo
- Mr. Saaqa Merali
- Mr. Henry Brobbey Mensah
- Mr. Abrourai Abbukar
- Mr. Kelly Nkurunziza
- Mr. Alex Bisah Hukporti
- Ms. Dorcas Boateng
- Mr. Sumali Masuna
- Ms. Abena Bemah

## Discussions

The meeting was moderated by Ms. Augustina Austin, who began by welcoming all members present at the meeting. Ms. Austin asked all members to introduce themselves briefly to other participants at the meeting.

After the self-introduction, Mr. Chris van Dam (House of Representatives in the Netherlands) welcomed the entire delegation into the Dutch parliamentary house. He stated that this meeting is very important because the Dutch government has as part of its development policy to put Africa on its development agenda. He mentioned that the Dutch government has already begun discussing possibility of working together with other African countries and doing trade together. He then invited his colleague Mustafa Amhaouch (Economic Affairs, House of Representatives in the Netherlands) to throw more light on some of the key instruments that are put in place to facilitate future collaborations between Ghana and the Netherlands. In his speech, Mr. Amhaouch stated that Ghana already has a trade relationship with the Netherlands and it is important for such trade relations to be promoted to continue. He cited an instance that most of Dutch chocolates is derived from Ghana and it will be interesting to delegates to pay a visit to this warehouse which stores all of the cocoa derived from Ghana in Amsterdam. He further stated that the Dutch government is open for trade relations with Ghana government but they need more information about Ghana trade policies and investment relations. He further stated that there is a possibility that a business forum can be designed to give a platform for Ghanaian and Dutch business entrepreneurs and investment to meet and collaborate for possible trade relations. He mentioned also that soon all Ambassadors will be meeting and it will be interesting to also inform them about Ghana's internal trade policies and the possibilities of doing businesses together.

From there, Ms. Austin invited Mr. Vincent Gambrah (Director of the Netherlands Ghana Business Fair) to throw more light on why the business fair is being organized and importance of the gathering. In his speech, Mr. Gambrah thanked all participants for taking time to be present at the meeting. He explained that the Netherlands Ghana Business Fair is a diaspora initiative with main focus showcasing and promoting business opportunities in Ghana and the Netherlands. He mentioned that this year the business fair is focusing on

specific sectors as Agro Business, ICT, Real Estate Development/ Housing, Water/ wash and renewable energy . He stated the Business Fair is an excellent opportunity for networking for Ghanaian and Dutch Business partners.

Furthermore, Mr. Gambah stated the business fair seeks to promote the possibility enabling environment that will facilitate direct funding and partnership formation for Dutch and Ghanaian businesses, stimulate the exchange of ideas, cooperation and strengthen business relations , involvement and investments. The fair also aims at connecting business entrepreneurs from Ghana to the diaspora community in Netherlands. Through interaction, there is a possibility of business ideas emerging and possible discussion of how projects can be funded to bring together all policy holders and social actors together to create business opportunities and enhance markets for both Netherlands and Ghana. He mentioned that the theme for this year Business Fair is “One District one factor; Partnership formation”. The theme is derived as intervention by the Ghana government to promote local development at the local district thereby promoting development at the grassroots and local district. Also the theme seeks to expose local businesses to the internal market idea seeks to encourage entrepreneurship at the local district to support decentralization of job and natural resources.

After this, Mr. Sumaila Mesuna, Chief Executive Officer of Maagamni Oil Ghana was invited to share his experience as participant of the Netherlands Ghana Business Fair. In his speech, Mr. Mesuna began by thanking the organisers of the Netherlands Ghana Business Fair and he stated that this business fair is probably his third time being part of the fair. He stated that he is one of the success stories of Netherlands Ghana trade relations as he began life as an ordinary pump station attendant to now a successful Chief Executive of one of the most thriving oil companies in Ghana with a current employees of about 500 people who are also bread winners to other dependent members of their families. He stated that he was trained as an entrepreneur by Shell years back on how to manage an oil industry and it is from this that he had thrived to become a successful business man. Mr. Mesuna currently owns his business called Maagamni Oil which is named after his grandfather. He stated that that discipline he learnt when he was a pump station attendant has remained still date with focus on excellence. He encouraged that it is very important for Netherlands and Ghana to continue these kinds of trainings and business meetings to encourage particularly the young

entrepreneurs and starters to be able to learn and find the techniques they need into how to manage their own businesses.

Thereafter, Honorable Mrs. Gifty Ohene Konadu ( Ghana National coordinator, one district one factory) was asked to give a speech about doing business in Ghana and to emphasize more about the one district one factory which is currently ongoing project in Ghana. In her speech, Honorable Ohene Konadu stated that the 1 district 1 factory is an initiative instituted by His Excellency, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo- Addo (President of the republic of Ghana ) to address the challenge of slow economic growth at the district level in Ghana. She explained that the initiative aims towards that development of the private sector led by nationwide industrialization drive, which will equip and empower communities to utilize their local resources in manufacturing products that are in high demand both locally and internationally. This initiative seeks to enable Ghana reap the rewards of industrialization, increase agricultural and manufacturing output, reduce reliance on imports and increase food availability. The one district one factory program seeks to facilitate the creation of between 7,000 to 15,000 jobs per district and between 1.5 million and 3.2 million jobs nationwide b end of year 2020. She explained that the targeted industries are Agro Processing, Textiles and clothing, ICT, Pharmaceutical and cosmetics, waste management, tourism , arts and crafts. The One district one factory functions under the office of the republic of Ghana, managed by the Ministry of Trade and industry, led by the National coordinator, technical advisors and relevant stakeholders which include Ghana, Exim Bank, GCB Bank Limited, other participating financial institutions, GIPC, EPA, Municipal and District Assemblies, NBSSI, AGI, Chamber of Commerce, Ghana Standard Authority, CSIR, and other government institutions . She mentioned also that the major role of the government in the implementation of the one district one factory is to create the enabling environment for businesses to thrive, specifically to provide infrastructural facilities (such as water, electricity and access to roads ); to facilitate the acquisition pf operational permits and product certification; facilitate access to favorable credit ; provides technical assistance and business support services; explore market opportunities for businesses both locally and internationally and to provide other incentive packages for businesses to grow. She added that supplication to be an investor or partner to the one district one factory is open to all investors and to the Dutch government. She mentioned detailed application plan can be

submitted to the one district one factory secretary through the ministry of trade and industry.

After her speech, Her Excellency Sophia Horner Sam (Ghana Ambassador in The Netherlands) added that in the past, to find an international market for locally produced item from Ghana was very tedious. She said this based on her personal experience as a local farmer in the past. She said, due to the growing business relations between Ghana and The Netherlands this trend is changing. Now it gives her joy when she sees manufactured pineapples from Ghana on the shelves of Albert Heijn being marketed in the Netherlands.

After this, delegates were given the chance to ask questions and brainstorm about the way forward towards developing an international trade relationship between Ghana and the Netherlands.

Some of the concerns which emerged from the Dutch counterparts was with issue of corruption. They mentioned that the Dutch people have high respect for Honesty, Integrity and Transparency. Mr. Chris van Dam (House of Representatives in the Netherlands) wanted to know how transparent and Honest is it to do business in Ghana particularly regarding the issues of corruption. He added that the issue of corruption is very important to Dutch investors and they want to know what interventions the government of Ghana is taking to ensure that corrupt practices are not practiced.

To this the Ambassador, Her Excellency Honer-Sam explained that the government of Ghana has put zero tolerance for corruption. She said the government of Ghana has set up various intuitions in place to promote transparency and reduce corrupt practices. Honourable Ohene Konadu also added that Ghana is currently operating a free trade agreement and it has opened its doors to all businesses and investors. The discussions was ongoing but due to time factor, the Members of parliament mentioned that just one meeting is not enough to establish any agreement. There is need for more meetings to bring together all necessary stakeholders together, also to inform the entrepreneurs about all the activities and initiatives undertaken by the government of Ghana for trade investment purposes to create business opportunities.

## **Conclusion**

After intensive discussions, Ms. Abena Bemah added that this meeting is very important for all parties involved (both the Dutch and Ghanaian Business counterparts ) She emphasized that the vision of achieving a trade relation between Ghana and The Netherlands can achieved if the Embassy of Ghana in the Netherlands can work together with the AfroEuro Foundation and the organizing team under the Netherlands Ghana Business fair to discuss possibilities of creating another business forum that will link the Ghanaian businesses with the Dutch businesses and other investors. She further added that it is important for the Ghanaian business entrepreneurs not to lose sight of the diaspora community in the Netherlands as possible investors to local projects in Ghana.

After this, Ms. Concluded by thanking all participants present. The meeting came to an end at about 20:30hrs with informal networking amount the participants.

Below are some shared pictures:



