Protecting Livelihoods in the fishing industry

Also in this Edition:

- Favourable tax policies for the private sector - page 4
- Enhancing private sector involvement in international trade - page 13
- Strengthening ASSI to promote MSME development - page 6
- Growing Ghana’s tourism industry - page 15
- Enhancing the competitiveness of Ghana’s pharmaceutical industry - page 8
- Managing natural resources in our communities - page 17
- Regulating Ghana’s film industry - page 9
- Contributing towards gender empowerment - page 18
- Improving health care sector service delivery - page 12
- AGI construction sector inaugurates PPD platform - page 21

Supported by:

Embassy of Denmark
DANIDA
International Development Cooperation

USAID
From the American People

European Union
PROTECTING LIVELIHOODS IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Members of CEWEFIA successfully advocated the protection of the mangrove plantations along water bodies in their district

Cover page picture: A stream in the Ampenyi Community with depleted mangrove plantation

A better understanding and appreciation of the importance of mangroves to the preservation of fish stocks along the coastal areas in the Western region remains one of the major achievements of the Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA).

The leadership of CEWEFIA have testified that as a result of their advocacy action, the destructive attitude of Ampenyi natives towards the wild mangrove plantations has changed significantly.

The Monitoring and Evaluation officer of CEWEFIA, Mr. Michael Takyi explained that following CEWEFIA’s advocacy action, the heavy destruction and harvesting of mangrove plantations along water bodies has been drastically reduced, as many communities along the coastal districts have been educated on the benefits of mangroves and the need to protect them.

“We believe that if this attitudinal change is sustained, our mangrove vegetation will be conserved to help protect fish stocks and livelihoods within the local fishing industry”, Mr. Takyi remarked.

The president of the association, Mrs. Victoria Churchill Koomson explained that CEWEFIA’s dialogue with duty bearers on the issue has been very fruitful, to the extent that traditional rulers in the community have expressed the desire to support the association to start a mangrove plantation to help conserve the mangrove vegetation in the district.

“In September 2017, traditional authorities in the Ampenyi community gave CEWEFIA a three-acre parcel of land to enable the association begin mangrove plantation as part of efforts to replenish the depleted mangrove plantations in the Central and Western regions. Moreover, in response to CEWEFIA’s advocacy action, the KEEA Municipal Assembly has agreed to formulate and...
enforce by-laws to conserve mangrove plantations along water bodies in our district”, Mrs. Koomson revealed.

The Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association (CEWEFIA) is a union of over 700 women fishmongers who ply their trade along the coastal districts of the Central and Western regions of Ghana. CEWEFIA was formed and registered in 1994 with the objective of promoting the adoption of improved fish processing serve as the breeding sites for our fishes, and crabs and provide habitats for both aquatic and terrestrial species.

One challenge that that has threatened the growth of CEWEFIA members’ businesses is the dwindling fish stocks which has been primarily due to the rampant destruction of mangroves which serve as the breeding sites for fishes and crabs, while also providing habitats for other aquatic and terrestrial species. This problem adversely climate change, low catches, and therefore low earnings, thus resulting in abject poverty among the fishmongers.

In an attempt to find solutions to these challenges, the leadership of CEWEFIA applied for a BUSAC Fund advocacy grant to enable them advocate the enforcement of policies to protect the mangroves and the riparian sites from destruction.

With the support of Danida, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided CEWEFIA with an advocacy grant in April 2016, which enabled the association to start dialoguing with relevant duty bearers from the KEEA Municipal Assembly, Community leaders and traditional authorities on the need to protect the mangrove along water bodies in the Central and Western regions, so that these mangroves can continue to serve as breeding sites for fishes, crabs and other aquatic species that are a source of livelihood for fishmongers and other fisher folk.

Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund.

A forest officer inspecting the suitability of the allocated land for mangrove plantation
The leadership of the Association of Ghana industries (AGI) has lauded the support of the BUSAC Fund which enabled AGI to successfully advocate the review of multiple taxes that impacted negatively on the cost of doing business for the Ghanaian private sector.

Following AGI’s fruitful dialogue with duty bearers, the government of Ghana, in March 2017, announced a number of tax reviews in the nation’s 2017 budget. Government abolished the following taxes that were previously levied on private sector businesses:

- 1 percent Special Import Levy;
- 17.5 percent VAT/NHIL on financial services;
- 17.5 percent VAT/NHIL on domestic airline tickets;
- 5 percent VAT/NHIL on Real Estate sales;
- Excise duty on petroleum;
- Special petroleum tax rate from 17.5 percent to 15 percent;
- 17.5 VAT/NHIL rate replaced with a flat rate of 3 percent for traders;
- Initiate steps to remove import duties on raw materials and machinery for production within the context of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) Protocol
- Implement tax credits and other incentives for businesses that hire young graduates.

The President of AGI, James Asare Agyei, said the scrapping of these taxes is expected to stimulate private sector growth in the country. He, however, noted that although the news was pleasing, the association would continue to dialogue with government over some other taxes that need to be reviewed in favour of the private sector.

“AGI welcomes the budget which really comes with making sure that the private sector would be stimulated. A lot of initiatives have been identified in the budget [but] it is early days yet for us to be able to digest and know how some of these things are going to be implemented,” he stated.

The Association of Ghana Industries and the entire business community are hopeful that these tax reviews by Government will reduce the burden of tax.
regulations that impact negatively on doing business while also improving compliance and transparency in the tax formulation process, thus making Ghanaian businesses become more competitive in a business friendly environment.

Formed and registered in 1957, the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) is a voluntary business association of over 1,200 members made up of small, medium and large scale manufacturing and services industries. In April 2016, the leadership of AGI sought the support of the BUSAC Fund to advocate the review of taxes adversely affecting private sector businesses in Ghana.

With the support of its development partners, Danida, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided AGI with an advocacy grant to enable the association dialogue with relevant duty bearers over these tax issues. In June 2016, the leadership of AGI started having dialogue with duty bearers from the Ministry of Finance, Ghana Revenue Authority, MOTI and Parliamentary Select Committee on Trade and Tourism on the need to reduce the burden of tax regulations/policies that impact negatively on doing business in Ghana.

Ahead of Ghana’s 2016 general elections, the leadership of AGI also had strategic deliberations with all the political parties contesting the elections to push for AGI’s tax concerns to be captured in the parties’ manifestoes. When the new government assumed office in January 2017, AGI further dialogued with the new Minister of Finance to ensure that AGI’s proposed tax reviews were captured in the 2017 budget.
Members of ASSI launching their 5-year strategic plan
ASSI remotely via their mobile phones.”

Members of ASSI are also excited about the fact that their new strategic direction and the restructuring exercise is also enabling the association to efficiently gather and process data on their member SMEs.

“Thanks to our restructuring processes, now at the click of a mouse, I am able to view in real-time all new members who just registered with ASSI. The system also enables me to easily disaggregate data across trade areas, gender and others. This is enhancing our planning and needs assessment of the kind of business development services our members require for growth and profitability”, Mr. Abbey testified.

The leadership of ASSI have also expressed delight about the fact that the association’s recent restructuring drive has contributed significantly to deepening the internal democracy of the association.

The President of the association, Mr. Saeed Moomen stated that “with the support of the BUSAC Fund, we have reviewed and adopted a new working constitution to guarantee good corporate governance and to further enhance ASSI’s internal democratic processes. Thanks to this process, members of ASSI have elected new national and regional officers across the country to steer the affairs of the Association in line with the constitution and strategic plan.”

ASSI’s restructuring exercise has also enabled the leadership of ASSI to reposition and rebrand ASSI as an able representative of the small-scale industries sub-sector as well as a reliable partner of government for national growth and local economic development.

In line with this vision, ASSI has been able to set up a functional website and online media presence to enhance ASSI’s organizational image and visibility.

The Association of Small Scale Industries (ASSI Ghana) is the apex body of trade sector associations in Ghana. Established in 1986, it has complemented the efforts of state and non-state institutions in driving the small-scale sector, which is the fulcrum for employment creation, business growth and revenue mobilization for the state at all decentralized levels. However, despite the relevance of ASSI in promoting the competitiveness and profitability of the private sector, the association has, over the past decade, become ineffective in pushing the agenda of MSME’s at the district, regional and national levels. The ineffectiveness of ASSI has left the micro, small and medium enterprises vulnerable to the shocks of the economy.

To address these weaknesses, members of ASSI sought support from the BUSAC Fund in May 2016 to enable them strengthen the capacity of ASSI to effectively dialogue with policy makers on behalf of MSSE’s. With the support of its development partners, DANIDA, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided ASSI with an advocacy grant that enabled the association to relaunch ASSI as the lead advocate for trade sector associations in Ghana.

Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund.
Members of the Chamber of Pharmacy Ghana (CPG) are delighted about the results of their fruitful dialogue with government, which has led to tax reforms aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of the local pharmaceutical industry.

As a result of CPG’s advocacy action, Ghana’s Parliament, on Friday, November 3, 2017 passed a motion for the removal of the 17.5% VAT on 483 imported medicines. It is estimated that the removal of these taxes will lead to about 30% reduction in the prices of pharmaceutical products in Ghana, thus leading to a reduction in the cost of healthcare for Ghanaians. Again, as a result of this breakthrough, CPG is currently working out new prices of affected medicines with the Ministry of Health, pharmaceutical dealers and the National Health Insurance Scheme.

Furthermore, in order to preserve the competitiveness of local pharmaceutical manufacturers, the leadership of CPG also secured an agreement with the Ministry of Health to restrict the production of 49 pharmaceutical products to local manufacturers of pharmaceutical products.

Mr. Harrison Kofi Abutiate, the Chairman of the Chamber of Pharmacy Ghana, pointed out that the removal of the taxes would not only improve the timely supply of most required medicines but also lessen the bill burden of patients, especially those with terminal illnesses.

Members of CPG are also confident that the downward review of taxes on medicines will further lower the cost of managing the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and ensure the paying of medicine suppliers on time.

For many years, the Chamber of Pharmacy Ghana had to contend with high taxes on medicines, which contributed to increases in prices of the commodity and threatened the quality of health care delivery in Ghana. Realising the threat these high taxes on medicines posed to the growth and profitability of the domestic
Actors in Ghana successfully advocated the passage of the Film Development and Classification Act to regulate Ghana’s film industry.

Members of the Ghana Actors’ Guild (GAG) are pleased with the fact that their advocacy action contributed immensely to government’s decision to regulate and develop the film industry in Ghana.

As a result of GAG’s advocacy action supported by the BUSAC Fund, a draft bill on Film Development and Classification was considered by Cabinet and approved for submission to Parliament in the third quarter of 2014.

With the advocacy skills acquired during their advocacy action, the leadership of GAG intensively followed up on the issue with duty bearers. These series of dialogue and follow-ups persuaded...
The leadership of GAG signing an advocacy grant contract to enable them further advocate the implementation of the Film Development and Classification Act.

Parliament to eventually pass the Film Development and Classification Act (2006) in October 2016, and this was duly signed by the then President John Mahama into law in December 2016.

The new law will provide the legal framework for the production, regulation, nurturing and development of the local film industry. The law is also expected to regulate the exhibition, distribution and marketing of films in Ghana.

Per the law, new structures such as the National Film Authority and its Governing Board, the Film Development Fund as well as the Film Classification Committee are all expected to be created and their activities streamlined to perform certain specific functions.

Like many other stakeholders within the film industry, the President of Ghana Actors Guild, Mr. Samuel Fiscian is optimistic that the new law will help to deal with some of the numerous challenges confronting the Ghanaian film industry such as piracy and proliferation of foreign film content in the country.

“We believe that if properly implemented, the law can help curtail the unbridled importation of foreign films into our dear country,” Mr. Fiscian noted.

Despite their remarkable advocacy success, members of GAG are not resting on their oars. In order to operationalize this law for the benefit of Ghana’s film industry, the leadership of GAG are, with the support of the BUSAC Fund, are currently advocating the passage of a legislative instrument (LI) to facilitate the implementation of this law.

The Ghana Actors Guild (GAG) was formed in 1997 with the objective of protecting the common interests of actors, as well as promoting professionalism within Ghana’s film industry. The association has a membership of over 900 professional actors who ply their trade within Ghana’s film industry.

As a key stakeholder within the film industry, GAG had noted with concern that Ghana had become a dumping site for movies of all standards as a result of the inadequacies and consequent ineffectiveness of the existing Cinematograph Act, 1961 (Act 76) in responding to current technological, operational and economic conditions. GAG members realized that
The leadership of GAG are currently advocating the passage of a legislative instrument (LI) to facilitate the implementation of the Film Development and Classification Act.

This situation was increasingly stifling the business viability as well as the international competitiveness of the local Ghanaian film industry.

To address this challenge, members of GAG sought the support of the BUSAC Fund in February 2012 to advocate the passage of the Film Development and Classification Bill into an Act to regulate operations within the film industry. With the support of its development partners, Danida, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund supported GAG to dialogue with relevant duty bearers to pass the Film Development and Classification Bill into an act.

It was expected that at the end of the GAG’s advocacy action, Parliament will pass the Film Development and Classification Act that among other things will establish the National Film Authority to streamline and regulate the film industry in Ghana.

*Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund*
**IMPROVING HEALTH CARE SECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY**

Health care facilities providing services under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) are getting payments for services rendered much faster than before, thanks to the advocacy action embarked upon by the Health Insurance Service Health Insurance Service Providers Association Of Ghana (HISPAG).

The Executive Director of HISPAG, Mr. Frank Torblu, stated that following the advocacy action embarked upon the members of HISPAG, authorities at the NHIS have made efforts to ensure that the duration for processing payments for services rendered by health insurance service providers does not exceed three months.

“In the past, when our members submitted claims to demand payment for services rendered, it took between nine and twelve months for the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) to process the payments, and this was adversely affecting the finances of our members. But after our advocacy action, NHIA is now expediting the processing of payments, such that our members now receive payments for their claims within a maximum of three months”, Mr. Torblu remarked.

Another noteworthy achievement of HISPAG's advocacy action is the government's abolition of the capitation system of payment, which resulted in health insurance service providers being underpaid for their services.

Mr. Frank Torblu once again pointed out that in response to HISPAG's advocacy action, the Government of Ghana announced on 25 July 2017 that with effect from 1st August 2017, NHIA will cease the implementation of the capitation system of payment which gave health care providers an unrealistic consultation fee of GHC 2.74 per patient per month.

Members of HISPAG are also impressed by the fact that through this advocacy action, duty bearers now involve HISPAG in major decision making such as the determination of prices of medicines and fees for services rendered by providers.

The Health Insurance Service Providers Association of Ghana (HISPAG) is a union of 104 health care facilities providing services under the National Health Insurance Service Scheme (NHIS). Made up of hospitals, clinics, medical laboratories and pharmacies operating in all the ten regions of Ghana, the association was formed in 2007 with the objective of establishing a united front to address the challenges impacting negatively on the operations of health insurance service providers in Ghana.

For many years the operations of HISPAG members have been...
The difficulties encountered by business entities while using Ghana’s ports for international trade is set to become a thing of the past, following Ghana’s successful ratification of the WTO’s Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

As result of the advocacy action implemented by the International Chamber of Commerce Ghana (ICC Ghana), Ghana ratified the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) on 4 January 2017, making it the 104th WTO member to do so. On February 22, 2017, the TFA officially entered into force as two-thirds of WTO member states made up of 110 member countries ratified the TFA.

The Secretary General of ICC Ghana, Mr. Emmanuel Doni-Kwame engaging duty bearers in a televised panel discussion.
Doni-Kwame explained that reaching this threshold means the TFA now becomes an official part of the multilateral trading system, which covers more than 96% of global GDP. ICC Ghana is optimistic that a full implementation of the TFA will create a more conducive business environment for international trade, especially for the private sector.

“It is expected that Ghana’s ratification of the TFA will help minimize transaction costs for private businesses by easing the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit, while also promoting effective cooperation between customs and other relevant authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues”, Mr. Doni-Kwame remarked.

Estimates show that the full implementation of the TFA could reduce trade costs by an average of 14.3% and boost global trade by up to $1 trillion per year, with the biggest gains in the poorest countries. For the first time in WTO history, the requirement to implement the Agreement is directly linked to the capacity of the country to do so. A Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF) has been created to help ensure developing and least-developed countries obtain the assistance needed to reap the full benefits of the TFA.

Re-launched in March 2014, ICC Ghana is part of an extensive global network that currently comprises 6.5 million enterprises in over 130 countries, and its objective is to help create a global business consensus and to work in partnership with governments and civil society to favour multilateral policy solutions to issues that transcend national borders.

The leadership of ICC Ghana observed with concern that as the beginning of 2015, Ghana, a member of WTO, had still not ratified The Trade Facilitation Agreement which contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods. The chamber was of the view that the TFA was very important to business because it brings down trade transaction costs which are highest in developing countries, who are least able to carry this burden. Realising that the TFA has the potential to be of particular benefit to traders in Ghana, ICC Ghana sought the support of the BUSAC Fund to advocate Ghana’s ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

With the support of its development partners Danida, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided ICC Ghana with an advocacy grant to enable the chamber to persuade duty bearers to ratify the TFA. In March 2016, ICC Ghana started engaging relevant duty bearers from the public sector in dialogue sessions on the need for Ghana to urgently ratify the TFA to ease the movement of goods and services across Ghana’s borders. During these dialogue sessions, ICC Ghana also impressed on duty bearers. It was also expected that a road map for the implementation of the TFA in Ghana will also be established. Some of the key duty bearers engaged by ICC Ghana include the Parliamentary Select Committee on Trade, Ministry of Trade and Industry and UNCTAD.

Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund
Members of the Tour Operators Union of Ghana (TOUGHA) are testifying that their advocacy action contributed significantly to the curtailment of the rapid encroachment of various wetlands by estate developers in the Greater Accra Region.

Following TOUGHA’s fruitful dialogue with duty bearers, the Water Resources Commission has taken steps to halt the rapid destruction of various wetlands that attract tourists into the country because they are natural habitats for wildlife.

The National President of TOUGHA, Ms. Nancy Sam pointed out that the protection of these wetlands from encroachers will boost growth in the tourism industry, as it ensures that tour operators will be able to take their clients to these sights for bird watching.

“Wetlands and riparian sites constitute important natural resources for the tourism industry because they serve as habitats for various species of wild birds that generate a lot interest among tourists from all over the world. The rampant destruction of these wetlands resulted in a loss of revenue for tour operators who used to take tourists to these sites. But with the support of the BUSAC Fund, we have had fruitful dialogue with the Water Resources Commission who have taken the necessary steps to halt the destruction of these water bodies”, Ms. Nancy Sam remarked.

Ms. Sam also stated that as a result of TOUGHA’s advocacy action, the association is scheduled to sign an MOU with the Water Resource Commission under the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing for the protection of wetlands and water bodies.

Members of TOUGHA are also impressed by the fact that as a result of their advocacy action, duty bearers are now involving TOUGHA in the formulation and implementation of policies regarding water bodies and tourism in general. TOUGH members have testified that in recent times, the Water Resources Commission now recognizes the association and
has started to partner with TOUGHA to protect Ghana’s wetlands and their rich wildlife that have the potential of attracting tourists.

Registered in the year 2000, the Tour Operators Union of Ghana is made up of 81 tour operators who operate across all the ten regions of Ghana. The association was formed with the objective of creating awareness about the operations of the domestic tourism industry, and to significantly influence state legislation on tourism in Ghana.

In January 2016, the leadership of TOUGHA sought the support of the BUSAC Fund to advocate the enforcement of laws on wetlands and the protection of water bodies.

With the support its development partners, Danida, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided TOUGHA with an advocacy grant in March 2016, which enabled the association to begin engaging duty bearers in dialogue over the need to mainstream TOUGHA in enforcing Laws on wetlands and the protection of water bodies.

In the process, TOUGHA had fruitful dialogue with public sector agencies such as the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts and Ministry of Lands and Forestry.

*Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund*
Communities within the Amenfi West and Central Districts are now in a better position to conserve their natural resources for their benefit, thanks to the advocacy action embarked upon by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Following IUCN’s fruitful dialogue and follow-ups with duty bearers, the final Bye-laws for Amenfi West and Central District CREMAs were officially gazetted in May 2016.

The Country Coordinator of IUCN, Mrs. Saadia Bobtoya Owusu-Amofah that in response to IUCN’s advocacy action supported by the BUSAC Fund, the bye-laws for Amenfi West and Central District CREMAs were published in the 20th May, 2016 edition of the Government Bulletin and delivered to the IUCN’s consultant on June 13, 2016.

Mrs. Owusu-Amofah further explained that the consultant submitted 70 copies of the bulletin to IUCN, while 150 bound photocopies of the byelaws were also distributed later to all the Community Resource Management Areas (CREMA) communities, as well as key stakeholders at the district, regional and national levels.

“It is expected that these byelaws will help to conserve natural resources (vegetation and wildlife) within the two districts with sanctions spelt out for offenders pursuant to the provisions contained in the document”, Mrs. Owusu-Amofah remarked.

Formed and Created in 1948, IUCN has evolved into the world’s largest and most diverse environmental network. IUCN is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its 1,300 Member...
organisations and the input of some 10,000 experts worldwide. In March 2016, IUCN Ghana sought the support of the BUSAC Fund to advocate the gazettement of district assembly bye-laws for two Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) from the Amenfi West and Central districts.

With the support of its development partners, Danida, USAID and the EU, the BUSAC Fund provided IUCN with a grant, which enabled the organization to begin assisting the leaders of the Amenfi West and Central CREMAs and an independent consultant to draft bye-laws for the two CREMAs in April 2016. Upon extensive sensitization about the contents of the draft bye-laws, the two CREMAs adopted the bye-laws.

IUCN also ensured that duty bearers such as District Chief Executives of the two districts, Presiding members and Regional Coordinating Councils were all briefed about the contents and purpose of the bye-laws in order to obtain their cooperation. On the 25th April 2016, the final byelaws were submitted to the Government publisher for publication in the Government Gazette.

It is expected that the newly gazetted bye-laws will enable the CREMAs from the two districts to better protect their natural resources.

Story: Ebenezer Kpentey, the BUSAC Fund

CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS GENDER EMPOWERMENT

SOME COMMUNITIES IN GHANA ARE CHARACTERIZED by a patriarchal system where motherhood is a crucial factor that excludes women from leadership roles. The patriarchy system gives dominance to men in authority and decision-making in and outside the home. It is perceived more or less as an abnormality for women to participate in public affairs. In such situations, women dominated associations choose to appoint male leaders to represent them and advocate solutions to their needs.

There is the need to empower women to enable them to contribute more effectively towards the growth of the Ghanaian private sector.
as they feel they would be better listened to in society.

Through regular interaction with grantees, some BUSAC Fund trainers noticed that male representatives leading female dominated organizations seem not to take the views of their female members into consideration and make decisions without consulting them. These women members tend to accept the decisions made by their male representatives and shy away from openly expressing their views in the presence of male council members.

During the “Why and How to Advocate” training sessions, the BUSAC Accredited trainers observed this pattern and realized the need to interview these women individually in order to understand why they behave the way they do in the presence of their male council members and leaders.

From interactions with the women participants, the trainers came to understand that these women subconsciously are not able to express their views due to cultural factors. Culturally, women have been taught to relinquish leadership roles to men because of their superior positions in traditional Ghanaian communities. There is therefore the tendency for women to bow out from taking managerial roles, limiting their innovativeness and involvement in decision making.

The lack of capacity of women to freely express their opinions at meetings allows the male leaders to dominate discussions and decision-making within their organizations, often leading to the marginalization of the views and ideas of women within the group.

A number of BUSAC Fund’s accredited Trainers and Grant Monitors have also observed that many female members of business associations lack confidence in their own leadership and organizational abilities; hence they have the tendency to hand over all aspects of leadership to the men within their ranks and merely act as followers. Such women most often do not contest for leadership positions within the

Women need to play a more active role in the leadership and managerial affairs of their organizations
association, and as a result, these associations with very high female member base end up with sole male-based leaderships running their affairs. This over-dependence on men to play leadership roles has wrongly influenced many male members of business associations to dominate the administrative affairs of the associations, while underestimating the capabilities and contribution of women within their ranks.

The BUSAC Fund believes that women play an important role in the development of the Ghanaian private sector. Therefore there is the need to empower women to be more participatory in managerial decision making, having confidence in their own leadership abilities and viewing their male counterparts as equal partners. In return men holding leadership positions in women associations should also be more gender sensitive and incorporate the opinions of their female peers.

Based on these observations the BUSAC Fund plans to integrate the above aspects of gender empowerment in its current training programme, “Why and How to Advocate”, which is applied to all first-time grantees.

To achieve this goal, the BUSAC Fund has taken the necessary steps to sensitize the Fund’s accredited trainers and monitors in their awareness of the need to be gender-sensitive in training women associations led by male representatives.

As part of one of its priority areas, the BUSAC Fund uses its advocacy training programme to enhance and empower women in society and build on their leadership and organizational capacities. The Fund has integrated Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in its grant making process, providing women groups the necessary advocacy skills needed to engage with high-profile duty bearers in constructive dialogue on relevant business environment issues affecting their businesses.

These newly acquired skills enable women groups to efficiently carry out their advocacy actions. For instance, as a result of advocacy training some women groups have successfully advocated access to arable agricultural lands for their female members in the Upper West region of Ghana allowing them to improve the livelihood of their community and developing new business opportunities.
The Construction Sector of the Association of Ghana Industries has recently inaugurated a Public-Private Sector Dialogue (PPD) platform aimed at providing a participatory, inclusive and a structured approach to policy making directed at reforming governance and the business climate within Ghana’s construction industry.

The PPD platform is expected to be a permanent quarterly forum for top-level stakeholders of the public and private sectors of the construction industry to dialogue on pertinent issues confronting the industry.

Supported by the BUSAC Fund and its development partners - DANIDA, the EU and USAID, the newly launched AGI PPD platform will be spearheaded by key relevant Ministries, Agencies and Departments and the Built Environment Professional Institutions and Associations.

In his opening address to participants at the inauguration ceremony held in Accra on 6th September 2017, the President of AGI, James Asare-Adjei highlighted the huge importance of the construction industry to the growth and development of the country. Mr. Asare-Adjei also asserted that the government industrialization agenda could not be achieved without a vibrant construction industry, saying the sector serves as oil that fuels the manufacturing sector.

The BUSAC Fund Manager, Mr. Nicolas J. Gebara pointed out that there is the need to ensure coordination and interaction among construction-related institutions such as the professional bodies of architects, surveyors, builders and engineers in order to help shape a national construction industry policy and programme.

Mr. Gebara further stated that the BUSAC Fund will support AGI to establish a Construction Sector Public Private Dialogue (PPD) platform as part of efforts to help the AGI Construction Sector to
aspire to become an active and vibrant construction industry mouth piece in championing construction industry development initiatives.

After inaugurating the new AGI Construction Sector PPD, the Minister of Roads and Highways, Hon. Kwasi Amoako-Atta pointed out that public-private sector dialogue platforms were useful initiatives for improving the business environment and competitiveness of the Ghanaian Construction Industry.

He further emphasized that PPDs provide inclusive fora for discussing ideas that would contribute greatly to the sustainable development of the country, noting that such platforms increase trust and foster good governance through coordination, transparency and accountability.

“This PPD platform is viewed as an additional but important building block that will broaden the consultative process in the construction and, more particularly, the road sector industry and contribute to effective decision making”, Mr. Amoako Attah remarked.

Hon. Amoako-Attah was optimistic that the newly launched AGI Construction sector PPD platform would help address the challenges facing the construction industry in general and the road sector in particular. The Minister also used to the opportunity to urge contractors to maintain high standards in the execution of their contracts.

A Senior Private Sector Specialist of the World Bank Group, Ms. Kaliza Karuretwa urged the AGI Construction Sector to approach the proposed PPD platform as a sustainable process rather than an event in order to achieve clarity on what the sector’s main issues are, adding that the entire PPD process should be grounded on solid analytics and well established monitoring mechanisms for a positive outcome.

She added that PPD can be a valuable tool to bring relevant stakeholders together to discuss, identify, and prioritize the challenges limiting the potential of the private sector. She noted that once these challenges have been identified and prioritized, stakeholders can work together to propose solutions to the numerous challenges confronting the private sector.

The Chairman of the AGI Construction Sector, Mr. Rockson Dogbegah explained that the objectives for the establishment of the platform include the speeding up of construction sector reforms to enhance the business environment, as well as presenting a singular forum for discussion, collaboration and networking among construction sector stakeholders.

Following the inauguration of the new AGI PPD platform, an MOU was signed by the Minister of Road and Highways, the Minister of Business Development, Representatives of the National Development Planning Commission and the private sector representative participating at the forum.
THANKS FOR READING!

FOR COMMENTS AND ENQUIRIES, CONTACT US VIA:
contact@busac.org / ebenezer@busac.org

ISSUED BY THE BUSAC FUND
Writer: Ebenezer H. Kpentey
Editors: BUSAC Fund Editorial Team
Designed by: Ebenezer H. Kpentey
Email: contact@busac.org
26/03/2018