

# GH¢9.9bn Spent On Free SHS

BY Ernest Kofi Adu, Parliament House

**THE MINISTER** of Finance, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, has disclosed that a total of over GH¢9.9 billion has been spent on the Free Senior High School (SHS) programme.

According to him, the impact of the programme is

evident, with the initiative having benefitted a cumulative total of 5.7 million young people, many of whom may not have had this opportunity.

Presenting the 2024 mid-year fiscal policy review of the government in Parliament yesterday, the Finance Minister said President Nana Akufo-Addo had

stayed on course for almost the past eight years since announcing the policy of Free Senior High School in 2008.

"On March 2, 2017, the Government allocated GH¢400 million to implement Free SHS. We also indicated that our oil resources will fund the programme, as the President believes that every Ghanaian child must benefit from the oil resources," he said.

"Mr. Speaker, to complement this effort, we have provided facilities under TVET to empower our young people with employable skills; with 168,000 students enrolled in the 2023-2024 year," he said.

Additionally, Dr. Amin Adam stated that the government was constructing 10 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) schools and 10 STEM centres across the country, and pointed out, "And we have distributed 900,000 tablets for secondary school

students."

The minister noted that quality education had been given considerable focus, pointing out that the performance of the students at WASSCE in 2023 is also the best since 2015.

He said the government had over the last eight years prioritised education, and this is to ensure that over time, skills will be improved to impact productivity, grow the economy and improve living standards.

## Capitation Grant

The Finance Minister noted that to ease the financial burden on parents and guardians of public basic school pupils, the government disbursed about GH¢38 million as Capitation Grant for the first half of 2024 to ensure schools have adequate resources to provide quality education.

"Additionally, funds have been released for the payment of feeding grants

to all public Special Schools (Institutions for the Handicapped) for the 2024 academic year, thereby supporting vulnerable students," he asserted.

He noted strongly that the capitation grant has increased from GH¢5.00 in 2016 to GH¢15.00 in 2024.

## School Feeding Programme

He said the Ghana School Feeding Programme commenced in 2006/2007 with 1,950 beneficiaries, but over the years, there has been considerable growth of the programme from 1.6 million beneficiaries in 2016 to over 3.8 million beneficiaries in 2023, and is currently in the region of 4 million beneficiaries as of June 2024.

"In one year, we have added over 200,000 children. Mr. Speaker, an amount of over GH¢662 million was paid to caterers as at June 2024.

"The Programme continues to provide employment

for over 34,000 caterers and cooks, especially women to generate income to enable them to take care of their families. The Programme has also created a ready market for local farmers thereby boosting the local economy."

## LEAP

Dr. Adam said to protect the real value of the benefits for the most vulnerable households, the government has in the last two years increased the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) grant by 200% from GH¢64.00 in 2022 to GH¢256.00 in 2024.

He explained that this means that the government has doubled the grant every year for the last two years.

"This measure ensures that the programme's outcomes are effectively achieved. Under the enhanced LEAP, the number of beneficiary households has increased from 212,917 in 2016 to 324,073 in 2024," he stated.

## ...As Economy Rebounds

**THE MINISTER** of Finance, Dr. Mohammed Amin Adam, says the government has made remarkable progress in fiscal consolidation which has resulted in the rebounding of the economy, evidenced by the stability being experienced in the country.

"Our progress enables us to be confident about the future," he noted and added, "This is the result of effective implementation of the policies and programmes outlined in the 2024 Budget."

"Together, we have successfully navigated challenges in the last seven months. We continue to stay the course and achieve successes with the IMF-ECF programme," the Minister told MPs in Parliament, while presenting the 2024 mid-year fiscal policy review.

Dr. Adam said the government had concluded the external debt restructuring with the OCC, Eurobond Holders and key energy sector IPPs.

"We have kept our promise to DDEP bondholders with coupon payments. We have invested in our infrastructure, our people, and our future; and we have seized this opportunity to commence reforms in public financial management, financial sector and State-Owned Enterprises," he said.

According to him, the government is rebuilding trust, regaining policy credibility, restoring confidence in the economy and raising hope for businesses and families in the country.

"We are proving that quick recovery is possible. We are proving that growth with fiscal consolidation is possible," he asserted.

The Finance Minister said these have been made possible by the "mindset of possibility."

"That is what transforms individuals, families, communities, businesses, and nations. It has been the same mindset that has guided our actions, as a Government, since 2017," Dr. Adam intimated.

For him, it took a possibility mindset to expand and improve existing strategic social interventions to cater for the vulnerable in the society.

## Facts Sheet

According to the Finance Minister, the government has increased spending on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) from GH¢1.1 billion in 2016 to GH¢6.5 billion in 2024; and through digitisation, increased active membership from 10.8 million in 2018 to over 17 million people.

He continued that the government has also increased the

capitation grant per child from GH¢5.00 in 2016 to GH¢15.00 in 2024, and increased the share of the DACF to persons with disabilities by 50 percent, doubled the number of student loan recipients, from 30,000 on average per year before 2022) to 58,000 per year currently, by removing the guarantor policy under the Student Loan Trust Fund.

"Mr. Speaker, this critical mindset of possibilities, was our guide when we introduced the Free SHS programme which has increased total enrolment year-on-year from about 800,000 in the 2016/2017 academic year to 1.4 million in the 2023/2024 academic year; introduced the National Rental Assistance Scheme to assist people with rent advance, which has benefited over 2,000 so far," he said.

The Finance Minister said the government had introduced a medical drone delivery service and on-boarded over 2,700 health facilities; introduced Mobile Money Interoperability (MMI), which has led to Ghana achieving 95 percent access to financial inclusion.

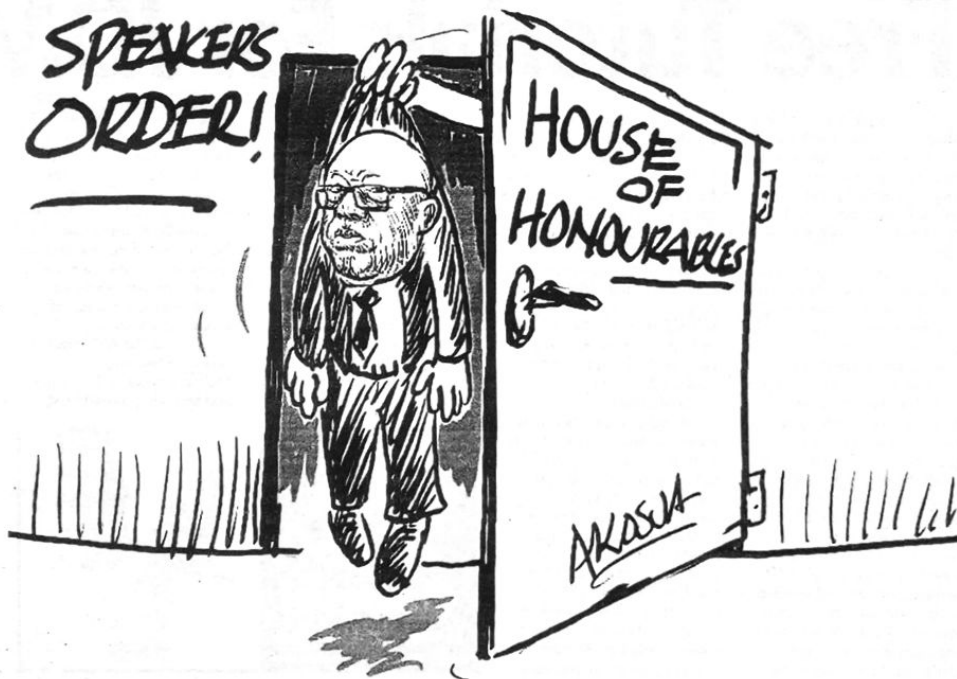
"We introduced the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Project (IPEP) which delivered 1,609 completed projects in all 275 Constituencies; introduced the Zongo Development Fund and constructed over 200 infrastructure projects in Zongo communities," he continued.

He said the government also introduced the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) to support over 10,000 beneficiaries; introduced the paperless system at the ports and digitalised the operations of the DVLA; and introduced the 1D1F initiative to diversify our economy.

"To-date, 321 1D1F projects are at various stages of completion, with 169 fully functional and providing over 170,000 direct and indirect jobs; introduced the Planting for Food and Jobs to provide critical inputs and improve food security; instituted the 'Year of Return' and 'Beyond the Return', and the 'December in GH' initiative to promote tourism," he said.

The Finance Minister disclosed that the government had created six (6) new regions to deepen decentralisation and participatory development.

According to him, the mindset of possibilities has also enabled the government to keep the lights on in the past seven years, clear all accumulated BTAs up to 2022, constructed 120 courts, with 80 completed, and 150 bungalows for the Judiciary.



## Nana Commissions 320 Police Housing Units

BY Charles Takyi-Boadu, Presidential Correspondent

**PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDO** has commissioned 320 new housing units for the Ghana Police Service at the Accra Police Depot in Tesano.

This milestone, which is a testament to the government's dedication to improving living conditions for security personnel, marks a pivotal step in bolstering national security and safety.

Speaking at the ceremony, the President said, "These 320 housing units symbolise our resolve to ensure that those who risk their lives daily to protect us have a safe and comfortable

place to call home."

He was of the belief that access to decent accommodation significantly boosts the morale and effectiveness of police officers.

That, he said, was because a well-housed police force is inherently more motivated and productive.

In acknowledging the challenges faced by police officers and their families, the President reiterated the government's determination to provide solutions that alleviate these difficulties.

This initiative reflects a broader agenda to ensure that every Ghanaian, irrespective of profession or rank, has access to decent and affordable housing.

The President gave a brief history of the Security Services Housing Programme, initiated in 2018 with the goal of increasing the housing stock for security services.

To date, the Ministry of Works and Housing has successfully delivered 536 housing units under Phases I and II of the programme.

Phase I, completed in 2014, provided 168 units for the then Bureau of National Investigations in Tema. Phase II, completed in 2018, delivered 368 units for the Ghana Navy at Tema Newtown.

>>>Cont'd on page 6