

# YEA creates 700,000 jobs in 7 years — CEO

## • Graduates 5,000 fresh artisans

By Timothy Ngenbe

THE Youth Employment Agency (YEA) has created 700,390 jobs since 2017, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the agency, Kofi Baah Agyepong, has disclosed.

He mentioned some of the jobs as 6,028 community health workers, 15,000 community protection assistants, 1,500 prison office assistants, 250 youth in modern building technology, 500 garment master trainers and 2,000 garment module trainees.

Mr Agyepong added that within the period, the YEA also created jobs for 40 industrial garment manufacturers, 596 YEA district managers and monitoring assistants, 282 persons with disabilities, 10,896 job centre engagements, 5,000 business and employment assistants, 20,000 youth in skills training, 5,000 youth in ICT, 45,000 youth in sanitation, 5,000 Kayayei skills training beneficiaries and 20,000 youth in agriculture," he said.

He added that the YEA had recruited and trained 137,092 beneficiaries under its traditional and special initiatives over the past two years.

"I am confident that this number will increase significantly by the end of December, this year," he said at the distribution of start-up kits to 5,000 artisans trained by the agency in Accra today (September 19).

### Job fair

Mr Agyepong stated this in a speech delivered on his behalf by the Deputy CEO of YEA, Alhaji Ibrahim Bashir, at the launch of The Ghana Report Jobs and Entrepreneurship Fair in Accra yesterday.

At the event, 5,000 persons who have been trained in various artisanal skill areas graduated, and were provided with startup kits, including sewing machines, welding machines, make-up kits and wheelbarrows.

The trainees acquired skills in 10 craft areas, including carpentry, plumbing, beauty care, auto mechanics, general electrical, tiling, painting, and decoration.

Mr Agyepong said the 16-day Jobs and Entrepreneurship Fair by the YEA and The Ghana Report on the theme "Building a stronger Entrepreneurship base for sustainable job creation for Ghanaian youth" was a testament to the government's commitment to empower young people for national development.

### GhArtisan App

The YEA CEO added that as part of a comprehensive strategy to consolidate the

gains made so far in the artisanal sector, YEA would launch the "GhArtisan App", a free mobile application that had been developed for all artisans.

"This will not only create more job opportunities for artisans, but also make it easy for the public to access their services as they do in the case of Uber, Yango, Bolt and others," he added.

Mr Agyepong stated that the evolving artisanal sector and the emergence of technology in every

aspect of human life had varying effects on the future of small and medium-scale set-ups, and required artisans to update their skills to remain relevant.

He said it was for that reason that the YEA had dedicated more resources to revamping the artisanal industry to stand firm in the midst of the worrying threats of 21st Century technology.

Artisanal sector under threat.

Mr Agyepong said it was worrying that the country's artisanal landscape had been taken over by skilled persons from neighbouring countries, particularly Togo.

"Our artisanal landscape has been competitively encroached upon and gradually been subjected to various threats by our neighbouring countries, especially Togo. YEA believes that if concrete measures are not taken immediately to regain our artisanal sovereignty and to equip young men and women with modern skills relevant to the industry and global standard, many young people would remain vulnerable to the unending threats occasioned by youth unemployment," he said.

### Stronger partnership

The CEO of The Ghana Report, Rashida Saani, said the novel idea of the artisans' job fair was a great move towards addressing the unemployment gap in the country.

"The launch of this initiative also shows that when the private sector works together with the public sector, the country's development needs can be tackled," she said.

Ms Saani urged young people to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the YEA and Ghana Report to build their capacity and also acquire skills needed for sustainable livelihood.

A security analyst, Adib Sani, described the initiative as not only a means of economic empowerment but also an avenue for improved security.

"This initiative that seeks to provide opportunity for young people to be trained, will contribute to reducing the insecurity in the country because the beneficiaries will be busy working to earn a living at all times," he said.

## Fact Sheet

The Youth Employment Agency (YEA) has created 700,390 jobs since 2017, with the number expected to increase by the end of December, this year.