



• Dr Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed (middle) with other dignitaries and beneficiaries **Photo: Stephanie Birikorang**

## Circular economy project gets boost:

# SMEs allocated \$4.35m ...for sustainable plastic waste management

BY AGNES OPOKU SARPONG

**T**HE first tranche of the \$4.35 million allocated to the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) under the country's Circular Economy Project has been disbursed.

Totalling \$331,606 the money was disbursed to 10 SMEs under the Framework for the Plastics Sector in Ghana (CEF-PS) Project.

The project is geared towards helping the country move towards reducing plastic pollution, especially in oceans and waterways as well as developing the circular economy.

It is also to support the implementation of the National Plastic Management Policy (NPMP) and the National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP), both of which are focused on managing plastic waste in a sustainable way and reducing harmful chemical emissions from plastic waste.

Speaking at the event, the Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed, expressed his commitment to transparency and accountability.

He said he would personally monitor how the money is used and made it clear that he expects the funds to be used strictly for the intended purpose.

"I do not need even one cedi from any of you," the Minister said firmly. "Use the money well

because we will be watching to ensure it is used properly. If not, there will be consequences."

He revealed that he visited some of the SMEs before approving the funds and was impressed by their work.

He shared stories of companies making plastic school chairs and even building structures using recycled plastic.

One company's work, he noted, had encouraged him to push for more funding.

He also called for future project expansions to include other regions like Kumasi and the Volta Region, stressing the need for fair distribution and wider coverage across all 16 regions.

According to the Minister, Ghana currently processes less than 10 per cent of its plastic waste, and the aim should be to reach at least 30 per cent through improved recycling efforts and innovation.

The Minister emphasized that international donor funds come with strict rules, and the money must be used responsibly.

He warned the SMEs against trying to use political connections to cover up mismanagement.

"I don't want any big man calling me. If the money is not used well, you will be taken off the programme," he warned. "This is just the beginning. If you perform well, more support may come."

UNIDO's Strategic Partnership and Engagement Lead, Joseph Yeboah, also praised the selected

SMEs for their innovation and urged them to work hard to meet expectations.

"There is more work ahead, but with continued commitment, I'm confident you will deliver results with the quality and impact we all expect," he said.

He added that the success of these SMEs would be used as a model for future circular economy projects and emphasised the importance of their role in showing what was possible in the plastics sector.

Mr Yeboah thanked the Global Environment Facility for its support and said UNIDO remained committed to helping Ghana achieve its development and environmental goals.

The project coordinator, Ms Lydia Essuah, urged beneficiaries to honour the timelines agreed upon and deliver results that would drive national progress.

"We are launching the implementation stage of a programme we have carefully designed to transform Ghana's circular economy environment," she said, adding that "We have gone through extensive stakeholder engagement, site visits, and project design reviews to ensure this programme delivers real impact."

She added that the initiative draws from Ghana's National Plastic Management Policy, approved by Cabinet in 2020, to guide the shift towards a circular economy and responsible plastic waste management.