



10 SMEs receive \$331,606 to address plastic waste

By Juliet Akyaa Safo

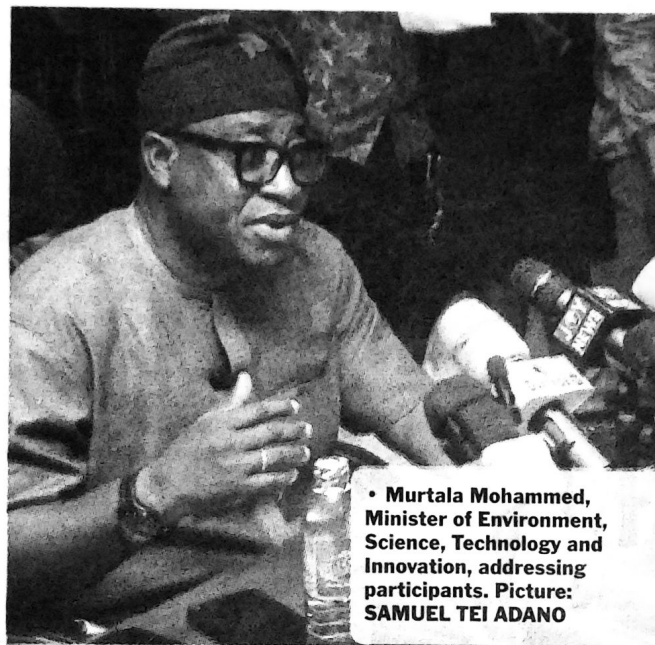
THE Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) has disbursed an amount of \$331,606, which is the first tranche of funding of \$4,350,000 to support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in sustainable plastics management.

Ten selected SMEs received the funding during a brief ceremony in Accra yesterday.

The total disbursed amount is for the pilot phase of a five-year Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded project, known as "Establishing a Circular Economy Framework for the Plastic Sector in Ghana".

Components of the project include establishing an enabling framework for a circular economy in plastics management, building capacity and pilot project, coordination, communication, knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.

The aim of the project is to implement Ghana's National



• Murtala Mohammed, Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, addressing participants. Picture: SAMUEL TEI ADANO

Plastic Management Policy, transitioning the country to a circular economy.

It is also aimed at minimising plastic leakage into oceans and waterways, and fostering a framework for sustainable plastic production.

The project is expected to create over 7,600 direct and indirect jobs through various plastic recycling activities, such

as plastic waste collection, lumber and pavement blocks production.

The implementing agency for the project is UNIDO, with MESTI and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the executing agencies.

Utilise funds

The Minister of Environment, Science,

Technology and Innovation, Murtala Mohammed, expressed his commitment to take particular interest in monitoring how the funds would be utilised.

"My responsibility as a minister is to look at alternative ways to get enough funding after the piloting.

"So please, I don't need anything from you. If you are not using the money for which it was intended, do not go and ask any big man to call me, because I would insist that they take you out," he warned.

He commended the beneficiaries for their work to properly manage plastic waste in the country.

"We know that this is just to pilot it. UNIDO has the capacity and the ability, if you are able to do it very well. I think that we may get more funding this time around, not piloting," he said.

The Project Director, Lydia Essuah, said the project aligned with efforts to implement the National Plastic Management

Policy, adding that the ministry was using funds from the government, donors and collaborating with the private sector operators in that regard.

She also urged

beneficiaries to make good use of the funds and stick to the timelines given to ensure that plastic pollution was addressed in the country.

Commitment

In a speech read on her behalf, the UNIDO Project Manager, Muge Dolun, said the project was in line with UNIDO's mandate to lead the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III), in collaboration with partners.

He commended the sector minister's commitment to the project and the team in charge of it for work done so far.

He also congratulated the SMEs and urged them to utilise the funds in advancing circular plastic solutions for the country.

He reaffirmed UNIDO's commitment to support the country in achieving its development and environmental objectives, and that he looked forward to continuing partnership on the project and future projects.

Highlight

- The total amount for the five-year project is \$7 million
- The amount set aside for capacity building and pilot projects is \$4,350,000