



Ghana, UAE sign \$1bn deal to build Africa's largest innovation hub

BY KINGSLEY ASARE

A one-billion Innovation Hub is to be constructed in the country as part of efforts to position Ghana as the next Artificial Intelligence (AI) Hub in West Africa.

The hub, to be constructed in Ningo Prampram, is a partnership between Ghana and the United Arab Emirates led by Ports Customs Free Zone Corporation (PCFC) and G42.

PCFC is part of DP World and G42 is one of the leading AI firms in the World.

Consequently, the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding with PCFC to implant the project.

The Minister of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations, Samuel Nartey George, signed on behalf of the government while the Group Chairman of PCFC and Chief Executive Officer of DP World, Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, signed on behalf of his country.

In his remarks, Mr George said the Innovation Hub to be funded by PCFC formed part

of President John Mahama's vision of transforming Ghana into the next AI hub of West Africa.

He said in line with the vision to position Ghana as the AI hub in West Africa, President Mahama had launched the 1 million Coders programme to equip the youth with technology and AI skills.

"And for us, as you train a million coders, you need to have jobs for these coders. Now how do you attract the jobs? And this is where PCFC and G42 come in," he said.

The minister indicated that the partners were influenced by the 1 million Coders Programme

and decided to establish the Innovation Hub in Ghana.

He said G42 had led the transformation of Dubai's AI ecosystem and PCFC currently held over 11 Innovation Hubs in Dubai.

He stated that PCFC currently operated with all the big 10 top technology companies in the world such as Microsoft, Oracle, IBM, Meta.

"So having the innovation hub built here in Ghana by PCFC, they come along with over 11,000 companies that are under their umbrella in the United Arab Emirates to have a Ghanaian presence," the minister said.

Mr George said the first phase of the project which would be constructed on a 25-acre and would begin in 2026, and completed within two years.

"In terms of technological development, well this is arguably one of the biggest investments that's going to happen over the next 24 months in Ghana," Mr George stated.

Among the benefits of the Innovation Hub, he said the project would help create jobs for the youth as the technology and AI companies which would operate in the hub would not bring in expatriate but employ locals to work with.

Sultan Sulayem in his remarks said the world was currently ruled by ideas.

He said the Western World was developed on the back of technology and Ghana could pursue same.

Sultan Sulayem said the Innovation Hub would go a long way to help build the necessary AI and technology skills in Ghana and help create jobs for the youth.

He said DP World operate in 70 countries around the world and was a leading logistics and supply chain companies and was positioned to execute the project.



• Mr Sam George (right) and Sultan Sulayem displaying the signed documents