

Govt injects GH¢2bn into District Assemblies Common Fund —Veep

BY AGNES OPOKU SARPONG

THE government has reiterated its commitment to decentralisation by empowering communities and assemblies to participate in determining development priorities.

To this end, government has so far disbursed GH¢ 2 billion through the District Assemblies Common Fund, (DACF) to support development initiatives and improve essential services at the community level.

The Vice President, Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, announced this at the opening of the National Dialogue on Decentralisation and Responsive Governance in Accra yesterday, stressing that the allocation reflects government's resolve to ensure that decentralisation translates into tangible benefits for citizens.

She noted that while resources were important, it must be matched with empowerment and accountability to deliver real impact.

"Meaningful development happens when communities are given a voice in setting priorities and when assemblies

are empowered to respond to those voices," she said.

The Vice President explained that Ghana embraced decentralisation more than three decades ago as a bold strategy to bring governance closer to the people, insisting that government must not be restricted to the capital but must reach districts, communities and households.

According to her, "governance becomes truly responsive when policies and programmes are shaped by the needs of citizens."

Professor Opoku-Agyemang called for decentralisation to move from abstract aspirations to a reality that shapes service delivery and creates opportunities.

She said government's reset agenda for local governance included increasing the District Assemblies Common Fund, moving towards the election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs), and supporting assemblies to boost internally generated funds.

She added that assemblies would also be encouraged to leverage revenues for private capital and development.

The Vice President further revealed that work on the National Decentralisation Policy and Strategy 2026–2030 was progressing steadily under the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation and its Secretariat.

"Once completed, the policy will provide a forward-looking framework for transferring power, authority and resources from the centre to the local level.

She expressed confidence that the outcomes of the dialogue would enrich the content of the policy and shape its implementa-

tion in concrete ways.

The Secretary to the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation, Dr Gameli Kewuribe, said the dialogue comes as Ghana marks 37 years of decentralisation reforms.

He said it was a moment to reflect on the progress made, the challenges faced and the opportunities ahead.

On behalf of development partners, the Swiss Ambassador to Ghana, Simone Giger, commended the government for steps taken to advance decentralisation, including wide consultations on the draft policy and greater transparency in assessing the performance of assemblies.

She urged the government not to rest on its accomplishments but to move beyond fine ideas on paper to actual implementation that benefits communities.

She stressed that fiscal and political decentralisation remained key to achieving responsive governance and pledged the continued support of partners.

Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, Ahmed Ibrahim, announced a new social accountability initiative to strengthen oversight at the local level.

Under the plan, traditional leaders, religious groups and citizens will be invited to directly question assemblies about their use of resources, projects undertaken and overall performance.

Prof. Dora Edu-Buandoh, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast and High Commissioner-Designate to Canada, who chaired the occasion, encouraged participants to engage frankly in the technical sessions, share knowledge and build consensus to produce clear and actionable pathways for strengthening local governance.



• Vice President Professor Opoku-Agyemang (inset) addressing participants at the meeting Photo: Seth Osabukle