

100,000 Targeted for National Apprenticeship Programme this year

By Joselyn Kafui Nyadzi

THE Minister of Youth Development and Empowerment, George Opare Addo, has announced that the government will enrol 100,000 onto the National Apprenticeship Programme (NAP) this year.

The programme is meant to equip the youth with employable skills and support their transition into entrepreneurship.

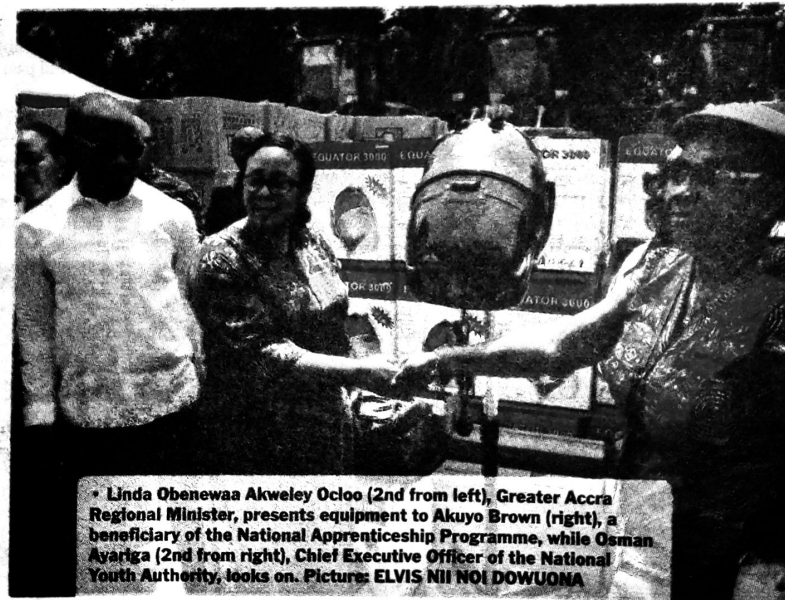
The Minister said the move formed part of efforts to reduce youth unemployment and underemployment by providing practical training and start-up tools for beneficiaries.

"We enrolled 10,000 apprentices last year. This year, we intend to enrol 100,000," Mr Opare Addo said in Accra last Friday at a ceremony to distribute apprenticeship equipment to master craftsmen beneficiaries.

The equipment include sewing machines, hair dryers, tool boxes for mechanical works, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

The Youth Development and Empowerment Minister explained that the programme was designed not only to train young people but also to support them to establish their own businesses after training.

He added that the vision was to move beneficiaries "from apprenticeship to



Linda Obenewaa Akweley Ocloo (2nd from left), Greater Accra Regional Minister, presents equipment to Akuyo Brown (right), a beneficiary of the National Apprenticeship Programme, while Osman Ayariga (2nd from right), Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Authority, looks on. Picture: ELVIS NII NOI DOWUONA

entrepreneurship," adding that complementary programmes had been introduced to provide certification, further skills and job placement opportunities.

Mr Opare Addo urged the master crafts persons to provide quality training to

apprentices within the stipulated time and advised beneficiaries to take good care of the tools provided to them, stressing that they were meant to support their livelihoods.

The Greater Accra Regional Minister, Linda Akweley Ocloo, said the initiative was a

demonstration of the government's commitment to equip the youth with employable skills, tools and opportunities.

She said the distribution of equipment represented a deliberate investment in the future of young people and a step towards helping them to secure sustainable livelihoods.

Mrs Ocloo called on metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives to ensure transparent and timely onward distribution of the equipment and to work closely with Members of Parliament to guarantee accountability.

NAP

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Youth Authority, Osman Abdulai Ayariga, explained that the programme was scaling up towards an annual target of 100,000 apprentices by 2026 and disclosed that it was backed by a \$300 million allocation in 2025 to cover training costs and stipends to remove financial barriers.

Addressing concerns of delayed payments to master craft persons and apprentices, he explained that the authority was undertaking physical verification and validation exercises to eliminate ghost names.

"It is better we delay and do the right thing than to rush and do the wrong thing," Mr Ayariga said, adding that teams would visit training centres and shops for unannounced

checks and that only validated beneficiaries would be paid.

He cautioned apprentices to be present at their training centres, as absenteeism during validation could lead to their removal from the programme.

Mr Ayariga further said opportunities under the programme would be extended to marginalised groups, including persons with disability, to ensure inclusiveness.

Programme scope

The National Coordinator of NAP, Nicodemus Dery, said the programme covered nine broad areas, including agriculture and agro-processing, artisanal trades, information and communication technology (ICT) and digital services, creative arts, hospitality and tourism, personal care, and mechanical and electrical trades.

He said since the launch of the programme, over 235,000 young people had applied, with 20,000 shortlisted.

Out of that number, 14,335 had been onboarded and were undergoing training, while thousands of master craft persons had also been engaged.

Mr Dery assured applicants who were not selected earlier that they remained in the system and would be contacted as the enrolment expanded.