

Inauguration of Sector Skills Bodies for Agriculture, Construction and Tourism & Hospitality, Accra, 12th September, 2019

Opening remarks by H.E. Swiss Ambassador Philipp Stalder

Hon. Minister of Education, Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh,
Distinguished guests,
Dear ladies and gentlemen,



Ambassador Philipp Stalder © Embassy of Switzerland

It is a pleasure to be here today and represent the Embassy of Switzerland at this inauguration event of the Sector Skills Bodies to which my country has largely contributed in terms of finance and expertise.

In Switzerland, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) - or as we call it in German the “*Berufslehre*” - is very deeply rooted since decades. Asked about the reasons why Switzerland has such a strong and highly diversified economy, often our dual education system is mentioned at the first place. It is very common for young people in Switzerland to start their professional career with an apprenticeship. Almost as much as 80 % of our youth gets involved in vocational training in order to become skilled workers and managers whereas only one fifth – the ones with the necessary intellectual capacity - chose to attend an academic university. Interestingly, many Swiss with a vocational training background have a bigger salary and better career perspective than their peers who went to university. In Switzerland a TVET background,

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is not at all interpreted by society or parents as a kind of second-best education. However, we have to admit, that it is challenge in many countries, and also task for all of us in Ghana, to fight and to change old and outdated perceptions about vocational training.

It is my hope that the Swiss vocational training system may serve as an inspiring example although it can't be by no means a copy-paste exercise. Nevertheless, we wish that Ghana will soon also be able to harvest its own TVET fruits. TVET would on the one hand serve the industrialization goal – also in view of the ‘Ghana beyond aid’ strategy - , and on the other hand provide promising career opportunities for young people.

On this background, we are very pleased to be part of the Ghana Skills Development Initiative (GSDI). Through our development cooperation, the Swiss Government supports the current phase of the program with an amount of Euro 1.5 million. In addition, we have linked the initiative with our Ghana Private Sector Competitiveness Program, which is a Euro 12.5 million heavy program, where we address bottlenecks in the cashew and palm oil value chains in a comprehensive way.

I hope that I do not tell you a secret by stating that the private sector plays a crucial role in the technical and vocational training area. This is the key element and TVET needs to be anchored in and promoted by the private sector because only the strong involvement of industries ensures that the system is effectively addressing labor market demands. Let me also say that the Ghana Skills Development Initiative is already supporting strong linkages to the private sector through the collaboration with trade and other umbrella associations.

By launching the Sector Skills Bodies, we would like to see an even more structured involvement of the private sector in the future. The main task of the sectorial Skills Councils is to advise the implementation of national and regional TVET strategies and to come up with recommendations.

Switzerland is famous for its culture to sit together, to strive for compromises and to create win-win situations. Therefore, let me express my satisfaction that the Councils are structured in a way that all main stakeholders are involved. Employers and industry associations are brought together with associated ministries and key TVET institutions. I am sure that this collaborative exchange of different opinions and ideas is the right way to go and finally strengthen the Ghanaian TVET system.

Let me congratulate the Government of Ghana to have decided to strengthen the important domain of TVET. By concluding, let me also thank our partners, GIZ for the professional implementation of the GSDI and the Government of Germany and the EU, which have agreed to co-finance the program together with Switzerland.
