



## VRA Signs MoU with IFC

**T**he Volta River Authority (VRA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) on the development and financing of power projects in the country.

The MoU is designed to encourage private sector investment in the power sector, and to support the government in its policy of increasing generation capacity to 5000MW by the year 2016.

Speaking at the signing ceremony in Accra, Mr. Richard Arkutu, IFC's Head of Africa Special Initiative for Infrastructure, told Journalists the IFC and VRA had



**Mr. Richard Arkutu, Head of Africa Special Initiative for Infrastructure, IFC and Ing. Kirk Koffi, Chief Executive, VRA, signing the Memorandum of Understanding**

identified a number of generation potentials that could contribute to domestic power supply, in line with the National Energy Policy.

He said the IFC-VRA MoU would ensure the financing of

VRA's generation plants in the years ahead; that those projects would be developed in partnership with internationally reputable and experienced power generation developers.

*Contd. on pg.2→*

### OUR VISION

**SETTING THE STANDARD  
FOR PUBLIC SECTOR  
EXCELLENCE IN AFRICA**

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## VRA Signs Mou with IFC ← Contd. from pg.1

Mr. Arkutu said the IFC was prepared to help VRA shortlist the projects they want to embark on, as well as with feasibility studies.

“The power plants that are being jointly developed are expected to operate on a lower cost basis, to ensure the delivery of affordable electricity to Ghanaians. They are also expected to support alternative fuel projects, such as Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import solution, and renewable energy projects.

Mr. Arkutu noted: “In partnering with the VRA, we are able to identify the correct entry points for the private sector to have an impact on the country’s development goals in the electricity sector.”

He expressed hope that the targets of the MoU would be met;

that the IFC would assist the VRA partner with companies that have the technical expertise to contribute to the development of those projects.

The Chief Executive of the VRA, Ing. Kirk Koffi, expressed delight at the signing of the MoU, after many months of discussions. He expressed appreciation to the IFC for the partnership and noted that besides boosting power generation it would also improve the Authority’s financial position.

Ing. Kirk Koffi noted that Ghana’s energy demand had been increasing by 200 Megawatts per year, therefore there was the need to add to the existing capacity in order to ensure that the country’s energy requirements were met.

Responding to questions from the media after the signing ceremony,

Mr. Koffi said the current load-shedding situation had been aggravated by a number of factors, including the low water level at the Akosombo Dam, low supply of gas from Nigeria, and repair and maintenance work being undertaken on some of the generating units.

Mr. Koffi noted that gas supply from Nigeria had been cut down by about 50%, seriously affecting VRA’s thermal generation capacity. “We have 150MW in Tema that we cannot operate because of this cut-back by NGas, our suppliers in Nigeria and it was to forestall this situation that the Authority had signed agreements with four private companies in Nigeria to supply it with gas. The VRA, he said, was patiently waiting for the At-uabo gas project to finally take off,

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Cold Store



Community School

### Corporate Social Responsibility

#### — Social Enhancement Projects

Social Enhancement Projects for the Communities include:

- Classroom blocks
- Cold Store
- Potable Water
- Health Facility
- Public Place of Convenience (KVIP)
- Asphalted Road from Inchaban to Aboadze
- A first Class Road from Inchaban to Dwomoh

#### — Community Development Programme

To continually provide support for communities, the Authority has a Community Development Programme (CDP) under which communities also benefit from:

- Youth Training Programme
- Education
- Income Generating Activities
- Social Infrastructure
- Support for cultural activities



#### Working at VRA

A career at VRA is one to be proud of. Opportunities abound in personal development, rewards and aspirations. What is more, you will be challenged to thinking outside the box, while contributing to the growth of an industry leader. Whatever it is you do at VRA, you will know you are contributing to a cause which not only impacts Ghana, but also the West Africa sub-region. All these, and an organization deeply committed to accountability, teamwork, integrity and trustworthiness. Welcome aboard!



*The power plants that are being jointly developed are expected to operate on a lower cost basis, to ensure the delivery of affordable electricity to Ghanaians. They are also expected to support alternative fuel projects, such as Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import solution, and renewable energy projects.*

so that the Authority would begin taking advantage of the country's own gas.

Ing. Koffi said owing to the retrofit work at Kpong, one unit had had to be shut down and would be down for nine months, resulting in a 40MW of outage for the next 36 months. One unit at Akosombo had also been shut down for a 27-day planned maintenance, he said.

He added that owing to the low level of the dam, that unit at Akosombo would remain shut, even after the completion of the work. This, he said, would enable the Authority to manage the water in the dam judiciously.

He expressed hope the VRA's thermal unit in Takoradi, which has been down alongside TICO, would be back on line by the end

of September 2014. This, he remarked, would stabilise and improve the current situation. "What is needed is an adequate reserve margin that would ensure supply sustainability in the future he added."

He told the media that efforts were being made to ensure that the Authority's 220MW Thermal Power Project at Kpone (KTPP)

← Contd. on pg.7

## "We Owe More Than We're Owed" — C.E. Tells VRA Managers

BY JOHN CHOBBAH & JEFF OBENG DANKWA

The Chief Executive, Ing. Kirk Koffi, has stated that, "currently, the Volta River Authority owes more than it is owed."

At a mini-management meeting at the Kpong Generating Station at Akuse, Mr. Koffi asked the Directors, Managers, and Principal Officers to help strengthen and stabilise the financial position of the Authority, so that it can sustain its business of power generation.

Explaining the current trends in the demand for electricity in Ghana, Mr. Koffi said an analysis of Ghana's 2013 demand showed that it rose by more than 10%, as against the sub-regional aver-



Contd. on pg.4→



## “We Owe More Than We’re Owed” ← *Contd. from pg.3*

age of 3% and the world average of 13%.

Mr. Koffi said VRA provided between 75% and 80% of the country’s electricity, and noted that VRA was now facing stiff competition from Independent Power Producers (IPPs). Ing. Koffi, therefore, called on his managers to keep growing and building the Authority to attain the highest standards in service delivery.

The Chief Executive also threw more light on the upcoming restructuring exercise, at the end of which the Real Estate and Security Department, Health Services Department and VRA Schools would be commercialised. Some health and safety concerns, such as cholera and ebola, were discussed. The management called on VRA staff to take precautions and heed the various preventive warnings, such

as the proper washing of hands with soap, the use of hand sanitisers, and avoiding contact with other persons’ body fluids.

Ing. Koffi was accompanied by the Deputy Chief Executive, Finance (DCE&F), Ms Alexandra Totoe, and the Director of Human Resources, Mr. Isaac Aidoo.

# VRA SUPPORTS KNUST MEDICAL STUDENTS

The Volta River Authority (VRA) has presented a cheque for GHc 6,064.98 to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) Medical Students Association, at a short ceremony at the Head Office, Accra.

The donation, which was to support Emmanuella Salia, 24-year-old fifth-year medical student of KNUST, forms part of the Authority’s corporate social responsibility.

Mrs. Mary Salia, mother of the beneficiary, who is a Programme Officer of Volunteer Sending Organisation, an NGO, received the cheque on behalf of her daughter. She noted that Emmanuelle’s petition to the VRA for support was part of a fund-raising programme by her colleagues from the KNUST Medical Students Association. The association needed US\$4,000 to support its members to undertake six weeks of practical training in France, Germany and the USA.

Mrs. Salia expressed hope that the training would provide the students with an excellent environment for



community-based professional and academic medical training, research and support.

She thanked the VRA for the donation and expressed hope that it would go a long way to assist the association.

Mr. William Appau, Community Relations Officer at the Corporate Communications Unit, presented the cheque to Mrs. Mary Salia.

# King Mukuni Wants to Invest Here



Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III and King Mukuni in a group picture with staff of VRA

## King Mukuni of Livingstone Province in Zambia, says he wants to invest along the Volta Lake.

King Mukuni, the Lion King of Livingstone Province in Zambia who has 20% share in Sun International Hotels at Livingstone, near the Victoria Falls, has disclosed after a tour of the Dodi Island, of his desire to invest in amphibians.

He promised to bring in lions

to be trained by his own people so that they hand over to trained Ghanaians after two years.

Receiving King Mukuni, the Paramount Chief of Akwamu, Nana Kwafo Akoto III expressed hope that the King's visit would serve as a collaborative platform to tap from the King's experience and to develop Akwamu.

Nana Kwafo Akoto noted that his area was one of the largest tourism sites in the country and expressed the view that if it was well exploited it would benefit

not only Akwamu but also Ghana as a whole.

Welcoming King Mukuni and his delegation, VRA's Director of Investment, Mr. Samuel Gyawu, expressed delight at the King's decision to invest in Ghana's tourism sector, particularly along the Volta Lake.

He said, "The Lake abounds with investment opportunities, and investing in them would create many jobs for the people within the communities along the Volta Lake."

The Managing Director of the Ghana Tourism Development Company (GTDC), Mr. Samuel Mills, noted that King Mukuni was indeed, a champion of tourism, whose expertise could be tapped; hence his being invited by the Ghana government.

The Volta Lake, the world's largest reservoir and the fourth largest by water volume, is located completely within the country of Ghana with a surface area of about 8,502 km<sup>2</sup> (3,275 square miles).

# The Risk Management Process

## RISK TREATMENT

We have so far been looking at the steps in the Risk Management Process. We have already discussed communication and consultation, established the context for risk management, risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation. This article focuses on Risk Treatment.

### What is Risk Treatment?

Risk Treatment involves identifying a range of options to reduce the consequences and/or likelihood of a risk. The aim is to increase potential benefits, whilst reducing potential costs.

### Why do we have to treat risks?

A key outcome of the risk evaluation process is a list of those risks requiring further treatment, as determined by the overall level of the risk against the organisation's risk tolerance levels. However, not all risks will require treatment, as some may be accepted by the organisation and only require occasional monitoring.

The risks that fall outside the organisation's risk tolerance levels are those which pose a significant potential impact on the ability of the organisation to achieve its set objectives. The purpose of treating such risks is, therefore, to minimise or eliminate the potential impact that they could pose to the achievement of the set objectives.

### How do we treat Risks

Treating risks involves the following key steps, each of which are briefly explained below:



#### a. Identify risk treatment options

Risk treatment design should be based on a comprehensive understanding of how risks arise. This includes understanding not only the immediate causes of an event, but also the underlying factors that influence whether the proposed treatment will be effective. The selection of a risk treatment option will depend on the type and nature of the risk.

The following diagram illustrates treatment options for both positive and negative risks. Negative risks need to be avoided, transferred and mitigated, whilst positive risks can be exploited, shared and enhanced. We however, accept negative or positive risks if they are within the organisation's risk appetite.

#### b. Select Options for Treatment

Risk treatment options selection involves considering all possible treatment options and actions available to treat the risk and the best one (cost-

*Contd. on pg.8→*

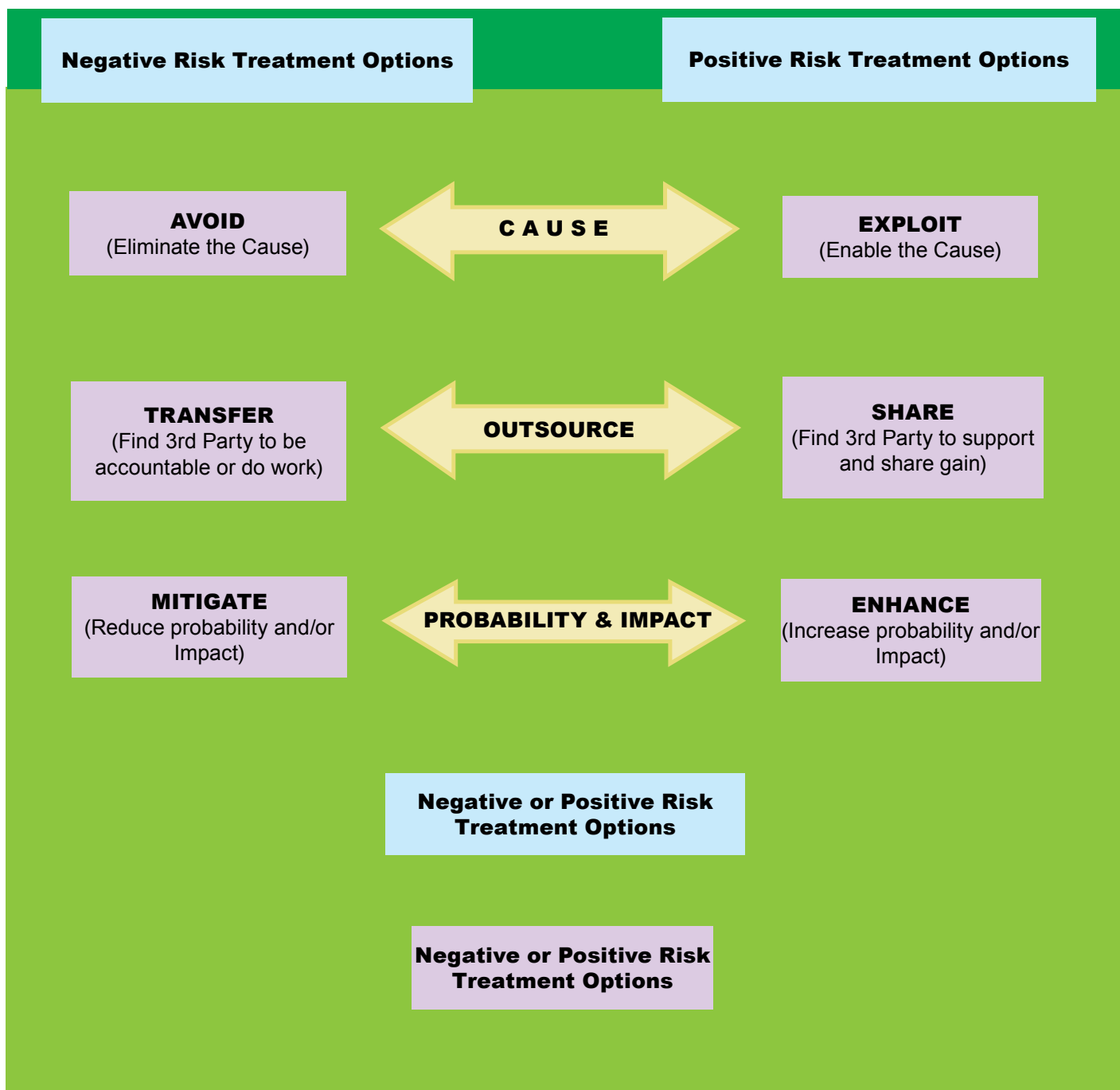


Figure 1: Risk Treatment Options

**VRA Signs MoU with IFC**

← Contd. from pg.3

would come on stream during the first quarter of 2015, as scheduled.

Mr. Koffi assured the media that the VRA was working round the clock to ensure it met its mandate of ensuring that Ghana had a stable, regular and adequate power supply at all times.

BY MICHAEL DANSO — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT



Ing. Kirk Koffi, Chief Executive, VRA, addressing the media after the signing ceremony



## The Risk Management Process ← Contd. from pg.6

effective) selected. The Risk Management Standard (ISO 31000) recommends that consideration must be given to the cost of the treatment, as compared to the likely risk reduction that will result. Various treatment actions may be identified but not all of them may have reasonable costs. Cost-benefit analysis of the treatment options and actions should be considered, i.e. balancing the cost against the benefits to be derived, and the most reasonable option chosen.



### c. Assign Risk Ownership

Every risk must have an owner. Risk owners should assume responsibility for developing effective risk treatment plans. The risk owner should be a person with sufficient knowledge and experience about the risk and/or risk area for which treatment is required.

### d. Communicate the treatment plans

Effective communication among key stakeholders of the risk treatment plans will facilitate awareness, understanding and commitment to the risk treatment process.

All treatment options should be consolidated into risk action plans and/or strategies. As one risk may inter-relate with other risks, treatment actions may take into account such inter-relationships and a holistic approach adopted to reduce duplication of effort.

The purpose of the treatment action plans is to document how the chosen options will be implemented. These plans should include the following:

- ◆ Proposed actions – What is the selected treatment?
- ◆ Resource requirements – What is required to implement the treatment?
- ◆ Responsibility – Who is the Treatment Owner?

- ◆ Timing – What are the time-frames for treatment implementation?

- ◆ Performance measures – What are the key indicators that will demonstrate the progress of implementation, and ultimately, the effectiveness of the treatment option?

- ◆ Reporting and monitoring requirements – Who needs to be informed during and at the completion of the implementation of the treatment? How will the implementation be monitored?

Following the implementation of the treatment options, the level of risk needs to be re-evaluated to determine if the treatment brings the risk to an acceptable level for the organisation. If not, further treatment options may need to be considered and implemented.

### Conclusion

The successful implementation of the risk treatment plan requires an effective management system that specifies the methods chosen, assigns responsibilities and individual accountabilities for actions, and monitors them against specified criteria. Communication is a very important part of the treatment plan implementation.

Risk treatment helps to minimise, or eliminate, the potential impact that identified risks may pose to the achievement of set objectives and exploit opportunities that will enhance their achievement.



# VRA for More Renewable Energy

## — Board Chairman

The Board Chairman of the Volta River Authority (VRA), Mr. Lee Ocran, says he wants to see the Authority increase its renewable energy capacity to at least 20% by the year 2017.

Mr. Ocran told VRA News that the Authority was prepared to commit resources to the construction of a 110MW wind farm. “At the moment we are still at the mandatory one-year feasibility study stage, before the actual work begins sometime next year. Already the VRA is operating a 2.5MW solar power generator in the Northern Region and is working on increasing that capacity.”

Mr. Ocran noted: “Management is working hard to get a reserve margin of at least 600 MW, in order to address the power deficit.” This should allow VRA some space, in case of a system shutdown.

Said the Board Chairman: “During my term of office, which is about three years what I want to do for the VRA is to make sure that machines which are down are returned to service by the end of

October. We should then have been able to put all our machines in good shape.”

He said VRA would invest in power generation without depending entirely on the government. “We will enter into Join-Venture Partnership (JVP) agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs),” he said.

Mr. Ocran said it was time VRA developed some of the generation plants on its own, or went into joint ventureships. “In so do-

*The Authority to produce power at a cheaper cost and to make the price of electricity much more affordable to consumers*

ing, we would consider critically the fuel sources and the types of fuel we would want to use.”

He reiterated the VRA’s desire to generate power from coal. “We will ensure that VRA ventures into coal power generation. It is a reliable source of power, and the VRA will explore all the possibilities and make a prudent decision when the time comes,” he said.

The USA, he pointed out, produces about 40% of its power from coal; South Africa, 60% and Ghana could have at least 10% of coal in her power generation mix.

He said that the cost of generating from coal is much lower than other types of fuel. “That, coupled with other cheaper sources of fuel for thermal power generation, would enable the Authority to produce power at a cheaper cost and to make the price of electricity much more affordable to consumers.”

On VRA’s financial problems, Mr. Ocran, said management had taken a number of measures designed to address the current situation. One such plans he said was to reduce “the waste in the system” by restructuring of the Authority’s assets, and to increase efficiency.

“Being efficient,” he remarked does not mean laying off people ... One must be prudent and use resources cautiously”. He urged VRA staff to support the management to achieve its development objective.

# Balanced Scorecard-Based Performance Management System

## Policy and Guidelines

### Part 3

#### 3.0 360 DEGREE COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

The PMS shall provide a framework for assessing employee's soft competence. The 360 Degree Competence framework shall be applied for evaluating employee's conduct, attitude and behaviour. There shall be **participants/appraisers** drawn from employee's work environment. The participants/appraisers must have sufficient working relationship and knowledge in respect of employee's soft skills/competence (i.e. work attitude, conduct and behaviour). The employee shall assess himself/herself as **'Self'**. The other participants shall be the employee's **Supervisor** (Main Appraiser), **Peers** and **Subordinates**.

An employee shall be required to nominate a **Peer** and a **Subordinate** of his/her choice. On same employee, HR or its assign or Supervisor shall nominate an additional **Peer** and **Subordinate**.

However, an employee who does not have a subordinate shall not have subordinate assessment.

A peer shall be drawn from/across a section or department as appraiser if he/she has sufficient working relationship and knowledge in respect of employee's work attitude, conduct and behaviour.

HR shall determine the weight to be assigned to the 360 Degree Competence for employees.

Rating of the 360 Degree Competence Framework shall be based on the 1-5 Likert Scale.

#### 3.1 Special Arrangement for Employees on New Appointment/ Promotion/ Transfer/Re-assignment

Where an employee takes up a new appointment, promotion, transfer or re-assignment (e.g.re-assignment to Project) and therefore spends varied period of time with different Supervisors and colleagues at different work environments, the employee shall be assessed by the Supervisor and colleagues (participants) at the department/unit/section where he/she spent the greater part of the year.

#### 3.2 Interim 360 Degree Assessment

There shall be an interim Supervisor 360 degree assessment for an employee whose **supervisor is exiting the service of the Authority on retirement** and having spent at least 7 months with subordinate. This assessment shall suffice for Supervisor assessment for the performance year.

#### 4.00 PERFORMANCE OUTCOME/RATING

HR shall be responsible for developing modalities for computing employee's performance outcome and rating.

Performance Incentive/Bonus payment and annual increment shall be based on employee's performance outcome/rating.

#### 4.1 Computation of Performance Outcome/Rating

Computation of employee performance outcome shall be based on the following:

- **Corporate Level** - 30%

30% of employee overall performance score shall be determined by corporate performance achievement in

## Balanced Scorecard-Based Performance Management System

recognition of corporate teamwork/effort. The actual corporate performance raw score (%) shall be used for the computation of performance outcome/rating.

- **Departmental Level** - 30%

30% of employee's overall performance score shall be determined by departmental/unit performance achievement in recognition of departmental/unit teamwork/effort. The actual departmental/unit performance raw score (%) shall be used for the computation of performance outcome/rating.

- **Individual Level** - 40%

40% of employee overall performance score shall be determined by individual performance achievement.

### 4.2 Determination of Performance Score for Corporate Office

#### 4.2.1 Office of Branch Heads

Average score of all the departments and units within the branch shall be applied as departmental level score (30%) to determine the performance outcomes of employees in the Office of the Branch Heads.

#### 4.2.2 Office of the Chief Executive

The corporate performance score shall be applied as departmental level score (30%) to determine the performance outcomes of employees in the Office of the CEO.

## GLOSSARY

**Supervisor:** An employee who exercises direct oversight over an employee in the discharge of his/her schedule/duties.

**Higher Supervisor:** An employee who has oversight responsibility over a supervisor i.e. a supervisor's immediate supervisor

**Participant:** An employee who takes part in assessment process.

**Appraiser:** An employee who assesses another employee's conduct, attitude and behaviour.

**Appraisee:** An employee whose conduct, attitude and behaviour is being assessed.

**Peer:** An employee who is on the same level, slightly above or below an Appraisee in terms of job position and rank.

**Subordinate:** An employee of lower rank/position who

takes directives and reports directly to another employee of higher rank/position i.e. a Supervisor.

**Permanent Employee:** An employee engaged for service to the Authority on long-term basis i.e. with no specific contract period.

**Contract Employee:** An employee engaged for service to the Authority on specific contract period usually on short-term basis.

**Transfer:** Movement or re-location from one job location to another within the Authority without an automatic change in status.

**Secondment:** It refers to temporary absence of an employee either from an outside agency to the Authority or vice versa for a specified period.

**Salary Scale:** The salary attached to a position.

PMS Forms refer to Employee Performance Target Setting (EPTS); Employee Performance Monitoring & Review (EPMR); and Performance Improvement Plans (PIP).

## ABBREVIATIONS

**BSC:** Balanced Scorecard  
**EPMS:** Employee Performance Management System  
**PMS:** Performance Management System  
**EPTS:** Employee Performance Target Setting Forms

**EPMR:** Employee Performance Monitoring & Review Forms  
**PIP:** Performance Improvement Plans

For more information about the Balance Scorecard Performance Management System, please call PLC 728153 or email [bsc.pms@vra.com](mailto:bsc.pms@vra.com)

# Mastering the Art: Giving Your Business Communication the Winning Edge

**I**nformation management strategies and capabilities are crucial to business success. Communications professionals and management who can define what information they need to run their businesses successfully, when that information is needed, and what its quality should be, will continue to outperform their less savvy peers. Therefore, it is important to recognise information quality as a manageable, strategic business asset.

Information must be managed in the same way as other assets, such as finance, human resource or property. Quality information has both potential and realised values, and must be maximised for both bottom-line results.

## **Business Development Process**

Information management is a business development process. Among the first of this are the strategic marketing, communication and positioning that a company undertakes to condition the market with the aim of building a favourable response to itself and its products or services, through information management.

The nature of information itself is shifting from being an end in itself to a commodity meant to be repackaged and distributed. To be valuable and meaningful, information must be reformatted.



## **Strategic Business Asset**

All people need, and use, information in their personal and professional lives. But most processors of information do not appreciate that they must manage information as a strategic business asset that can transform information into knowledge and action to create value for their stakeholders.

## **Competing With Communication**

In today's competitive business environment, winning business means competing with communication. Communication has become a transformational commodity that puts priority on behavioral change. As Jean Francois Lyotard, a French philosopher, sociologist, and literary theorist puts it, "knowledge, in the form of in-

formational commodity, is indispensable to productive power...and will continue to be, a major – perhaps the major – stake in the worldwide competition for the control of information, just as politicians battled in the past for control over territories, and afterwards for control over access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labour."

Technology-driven change continues to solve problems that were previously the source of power struggles between nations. For example, as Lyotard explains, the need for cheap labour is diminished by the mechanisation of industry; and the need for raw materials is reduced by advances in alternative energy solutions. So the control of information is most likely to become the 21st century's definition of power.



## Reputation Management

Another important aspect of this business development process is the management of perception reengineered through business-oriented communication, such as business letters, business proposals, newsletters, corporate annual reports, business plans, etc. These are great marketing and sales documents. Business communication is a creator of impressions. Business communication influences judgements about competence and

presentation. When business communication is executed with skill and finesse, it has the power to get one the results one needs.

Effective business writing differs from other types of writing. Powerful business writing, design and genre deliver information in a style that facilitates reader comprehension.

## The Writing Matrix

This perspective on business communication has led to a redefinition of

‘voice’ and engages and inspires critical thinking, collaborative dialogue, self-reflection and evaluation.

## Writing is an Art

Designing and developing superior business communication is an art, and to be successful at it one needs to master the art of business communication. However, writing is a skill that few people seek to improve. Writing can be very demanding. Business writing is a hard, complex task that requires careful planning. Crafting business communication in brilliant prose, inspired by poetry in its beauty and power, sublimity, flow and style, diction and rhythm, language and imagery, is a gruelling, difficult, demanding, slow process, requiring vision, time, analysis, revision, energy, thought, focus, strategy and purpose. The truth is, one’s writing skills can make a big difference to one’s efficiency, productivity and career success. One must write in a manner that would cause one’s readers to stop and think. Words that motivate one’s readers are words that get attention, capture interest, create desire, and call to action.

Clearly, writing business communication is not without pain. But it can certainly be less painful and more satisfying if one follows the writing strategies below. When one practices good writing habits they become second nature. The following “Top Tips” for Exceptional Business Writing is at the top of the list of “top tools” to help one gather, recognise and use good writing techniques.

## *To Be Continued*

**BY MICHAEL O. SACKEY**  
— EDITOR



professionalism. It shapes readers’ perceptions and works as much on the intuitive and subliminal level, as it does on the rational, descriptive level. Effective business writing has the power to influence how companies are perceived by their stakeholders. For example, a compelling corporate annual report, a business proposal, a speech or a memo, persuades on many levels and builds the impression it creates from the complex interplay of language, design, emphasis, visualisation, and pre-

its purpose. Consequently, rethinking the mission of business communication has led to a development of writing strategies that deliver solution to writing problems. This involves the combination of the design approach to writing, precision writing and other major writing guides, into a new and powerful synthesis of writing metrics and protocols for managing effective business writing. This framework can be used to achieve great success in writing. Writing is effective when it has a

# VRA HONoured by P. R. Institute

The Volta River Authority (VRA) has been honoured by the Institute of Public Relations (IPR), for its continuous contribution to the growth and development of the Institute.

VRA's award, a certificate of honour, was received on behalf of the Authority by the Manager, Corporate Communications, Mr. Samuel Kwesi Fletcher, at the Institute's 7th Presidential Luncheon in Accra. Speaking at the function, which was on the theme; "Enhancing National Discourse: The Face of the Professional Public Relations Practitioner," the Chief Executive of the VRA, Ing. Kirk Koffi, called on members of the IPR to aim to make careful whilst word choices and references as otherwise their communication could only be considered imprecise, inappropriate, unacceptable and inaccurate, and may even be seen to be biased and prejudicial, even if they were not intended to be so.

He called on PR practitioners to be demonstrate sensitivities and circumspect to be more inclusive in their use of language, and to avoid words that tend to affect people's sensibilities.

"Whether engaged in proactive corporate communications, media relations, community relations or crisis communications, PR outfits must be properly resourced so as to achieve



**Major Albert Don-Chebe, President of IPR, presenting a certificate of acknowledgement to Mr. Samuel Fletcher, Manager, Corporate Communications, Volta River Authority**

their objective of effectively managing corporate reputation". He added: "Leadership in organisations should appreciate and come to the conclusion that image is everything."

Mr. Koffi appealed to the audience to make energy conservation an attitude, rather than a choice, considering the challenges facing the energy sector. He said, "If we do not work on waste from both the supply and the demand side, then even when the Authority adds to capacity, it would still be found wanting, year after year."

Ing. Kirk Koffi said he trusts that communicators could help disseminate this critical information to the public. He described electricity as an expensive commodity that must be used judiciously, for that would inure to the benefit of consumers, as they would also save on their bills.

The Minister of Communications, Dr. Edward Omane Boamah, urged Public Relations practitioners

to use Information and Communication Technology to disseminate information in a timely manner.

He said the current democratic space guaranteed freedom of expression and required practitioners to use modern communications technologies to enhance national discourse.

The Chairman of the Board of the Royal Bank, Dr. Kofi Koduah Sarpong, who chaired the event, urged IPR to package its agenda in a more marketable way to attract more institutions.

The President of IPR, Major Albert Don-Chebe (Rtd.), advised practitioners to upgrade their knowledge, in order to be able to satisfy their customers.

Other organisations that received recognition included; the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation; Zoomlion Company, etc.

**BY MICHAEL DANSO**  
— CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

# THE FIRE HOAX

Staff responsiveness in emergencies, situations particularly in the case of a fire outbreak at the Electro-Volta House, was put to an interesting test recently.

The emergency situation was brought about when a staff of the Corporate Communications Unit raised the alarm on a perceived fire in the building.

News about the fire did not only cause a stir on the 7th floor; it also resulted in the helter-skelter movement of people, and sent shivers down the spines of ECG staff when the news swept across all floors. This is best explained by the swiftness with which some Directors and many others ran out of their offices.

The drama of the perceived fire outbreak began as workers were going about their normal schedules that day. According to Mr. Samuel Fletcher, Manager, Corporate Communications, he smelt smoke as he descended from the 10th to the 7th floor. He, therefore, raised the alarm.

In no time most of the workforce had rushed out, leaving only the “doubting Thomases” at their desks to continue in their skepticism. While a few assembled at the designated assembling point, many others stood in front of the conference hall, watching the unfolding event.

Later, pyrophobias, Mr Fletcher included, returned to their offices full of laughter and amusement. The whole drama had been triggered by a false alarm! It was found later that, the smoke had

come from the 8th floor, where plumbers had been burning loads of paper to bend pvc pipes.

Ms. Bellona Vittor-Quao, who confirmed Mr. Fletcher’s claim, said she also smelt the smoke and although it all turned out to be a false alarm, it was a sure test for staff responsiveness.

Mr. Samuel Lamptey, Manager, Safety Management, said the right thing was done, in the event. Said Mr lamptey: “if the fire can be easily handled, an individual should tackle it with the nearest portable fire extinguisher. If it was not possible, those

who discovered the fire should vacate the premises immediately, closing all doors behind them.”

He advised further: “On hearing the fire alarm, all staff must stop work; switch off electrical equipment at the mains; close doors and evacuate immediately.” Movement, he said, should be guided by the evacuation exit signs on

the floors. “Do not panic, remain calm and walk quickly to the nearest exit and proceed to the assembly point,” he advised.

He advised staff and guests never to re-enter the burning building unless so instructed, and accompanied by the Safety Officer. “If you get trapped, keep the doors closed, and seal cracks and vents to keep the smoke out. If there is no smoke outside, open the windows and hang an object in the window, to attract the attention of the fire department,” he advised.



BY MICHAEL DANSO — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

# Records Management: Everyone's Business

## Introduction

*Records Management is becoming increasingly important to the Authority. However, it appears the interest is being driven by increasing government regulation and what to do with the huge volumes of documents generated daily by the average worker.*

Increasingly, legislation and statutory requirements, such as The Volta Development Act of 1961, popularly known as Act 46, and the Public Records and Archives Administration Act, 1997, (**Act 535**), enjoin the VRA to preserve operational records.

In the wake of increased demand for accountability and the expected Access to Information Bill, one wonders what the situation would be like if people continued to treat records management as the domain of only a particular set of staff.

VRA continues to lose valuable intellectual assets because of this attitude. It's worth noting that records management starts with the creation of a document. That is why this should be everyone's business in the Authority.

While records management is a vital tool for companies in addressing governance, compliance and retention requirements, the benefits go beyond these.



## One may ask, what is Records Management?

ISO Standard 15489 2001 defines Records Management (RM) as the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records, including the processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of, and information about, business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Wikipedia defines Records Management (RM) as "The practice of maintaining the records of an organisation from the time it is created, until their eventual disposal. This may include classifying, storing, securing and destruction (or in some cases archival preservation) of records".

According to the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM), Records Management is the process of managing the records in a medium in accordance with approved policies, procedures and schedules. Records Management as a discipline defines and applies business rules related to the creation, protection, retrieval and disposal.

The use of Records Management best practices is often a good indicator, for management, of the control and use of records through their life cycle. Because of that, getting a good Records Management process in place and setting up best-practice policies should be a top priority for the management of VRA.

It has been a full year since Ghana's historic election petition ended. One question that comes to mind is,



what would have happened if the Electoral Commission had failed to produce those pink sheets? Your guess is as good as mine.

As an employee of the Authority, I have seen successive governments of Ghana demanding some records of the Authority's previous transactions. The most recent has been on judgment debts, as a result of the implementation of the Authority's compensation policy under the VRP Act.

We workers of VRA's Archives felt very proud, because we lived up to expectation and produced all the records that were demanded.

I will at this point want to examine important drivers behind the need for Records Management within an organisation such as the VRA.

From the above definitions we can conclude that, Records Management is a field of management; it is a process that involves a series of functions that need to be provided to fully enable the management of an organisation's records. These functions include:

#### **Creation**

This involves the generation of records through correspondence, memos, reports, agreements, etc., in our day to day routine work. Records are, therefore, the by-products of business transactions.

#### **Classification**

This involves the hierarchical, or systematic, arrangement in groups or categories, according to established criteria.

#### **Maintenance and Use**

Records are maintained as evidence of a company's business transactions. They are filed or bound, and referred to in making business decisions and, at times, tendered as evidence when the need arises. They also help us determine income and expenditure, as well as projections for the future.

#### **Access and Control**

These should determine the visibility of a record and

## **RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNCTION**

**CREATION**

**CLASSIFICATION**

**MAINTENANCE AND USE**

**ACCESS AND CONTROL**

**IDENTIFYING RECORDS**

**STORING RECORDS**

**CIRCULATING RECORDS**

**DISPOSAL OF RECORDS**

*Contd. on pg.18→*

## Records Management: Everyone's Business ← Contd. from pg.17

the operations a user can perform on the record.

Access may also be determined by the stage of a record in a life cycle. For example, a document at the review stage cannot be viewed by everyone.

Thus records management may involve, among others:

- ❖ Creating, approving and enforcing policies and practices on records, including their organisation and disposal.

- ❖ Developing a records storage plan, which include the short and long-term housing of physical records.

- ❖ Identifying, classifying, and storage of records

- ❖ Coordinating access to records and balancing the requirements of business confidentiality, data privacy, and public access.

- ❖ Executing a retention policy on the disposal of records

Managing physical records involves different disciplines and may draw on a variety of approaches and expertise.

Records must be identified and authenticated. This is usually about filing and retrieval; in some circumstances more careful handling is required.

### Identifying Records

If an item is presented as a legal record, it needs to be authenticated. Forensic experts may need to exam-

ine a document to determine that it is not a forgery and that any damage, alteration, or missing content is documented. In extreme cases, items may be subjected to microscopic X-rays, radio-carbon dating, or chemical analysis, to determine authenticity. This level of authentication is rare, but requires that special care be taken in the creation and retention of the records of an organisation. There is the need, therefore, for organisations like the VRA to take a second look at their Records Management practices. These practices involve the following:

### Storing Records

Records must be stored in such a way that they are accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage. A typical paper document may be stored in a filing cabinet in an office; for others, file rooms with specialised environmental controls, including temperature and humidity. Vital records may need to be stored in a disaster-resistant safe or vault. In addition to on-site storage of records, many organisations operate their own off-site storage facilities, or outsource these processes to commercial records centres.

### Circulating Records

Tracking the record while it is away from the normal storage area is referred to as circulation. Often, this is handled by simple written re-

coding procedures. However, many modern records environments use computerised systems. These can also be used for periodic auditing to identify the unauthorised movement of the record.

### Disposal of Records

Disposal of records does not always mean destruction; it may include transfer to an archive. Destruction of records ought to be authorised by law, statute, regulation, or the operating procedures of an organisation, and the records should be disposed of with care, in order to avoid inadvertent disclosure of information. The process needs to be well documented, starting with a records retention schedule, and policies and procedures that have been approved at the highest level of the organisation. An inventory of the records disposed of should be maintained, including certification that they have been destroyed. Records should never simply be discarded as refuse.

These processes are summed up in what is known as The Record's Life Cycle.

To be continued.

***Records must be stored in such a way that they are accessible and safeguarded against environmental damage.***

# Maintaining Your Integrity

BY CYNTHIA ANN AGLAH — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

**F**orty-two-year old construction foreman, Modestus Za, worked diligently and faithfully with building contractor, Nathaniel Goodman, for 15 years. Goodman was impressed with Modestus' attitude to work and his integrity.

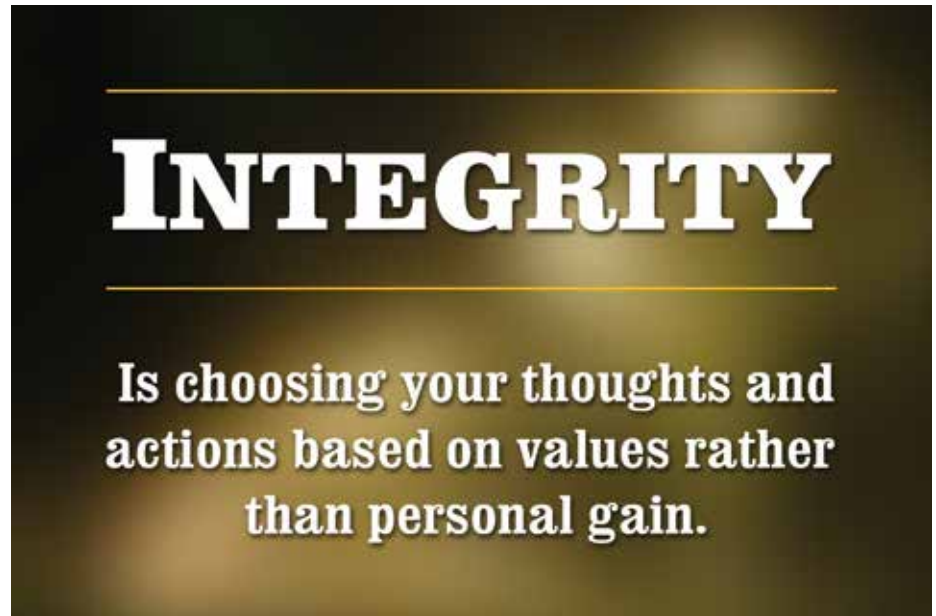
He therefore, decided he would honour Modestus in a special way.

Mr. Goodman needed to leave the country for two years to undertake a big project. Just before leaving, he gave Modestus some money to supervise the building of a three-bedroom house for a friend.

For the first time in his working life Modestus decided to keep part of the money; he therefore used only inferior materials to build that house, because he thought his “wicked” boss had not appreciated him for the number of years he had worked for him. Therefore he had decided to use his ‘wisdom’ to build that house.

At the end of the two years, Mr. Goodman returned and was happy to see the beautifully painted building and congratulated Mr. Za on the good job done. So he decided then to organise a get together to honour Za. Mr. Goodman asked Modestus to invite his family and his friends to attend and they came in their numbers.

In the presence of his family, friends and relatives, Mr. Goodman handed over the keys to the house to Modestus, thanking him



for his selfless attitude, humility and ‘integrity’.

Suddenly Mr. Za’s countenance changed, knowing what he had done.

He had compromised his integrity and would live with this guilt forever.

So, what do we mean when we talk about integrity?

Integrity is a concept of consistency in actions, values, methods, principles and expectations. It is also a firm adherence to a code of moral or artistic values. Integrity is a personal choice.

Some of us have held on to our good morals, integrity, commitment, dedication and trust in all spheres of our lives - economically, socially and spiritually. Maybe we are now at a point in our lives where we think our work has not been recognised so our enthusiasm has waned.

Such attitudes lead to “cutting of corners” and behaviour that go a long way to affect our whole lives and the integrity we have upheld for many years.

You might think your contribution was not being recognised but I tell you a lot of people are inspired by your integrity. Hundreds of people are looking at your values to mould their lives. Do not be discouraged. Hold on to your values, allow time to elapse, because whatever height you are destined to attain would definitely come to pass.

Can we just be silent for a moment and look at our attitudes once again? Do we have reason to change or improve on anything we have been doing?

We just cannot be like Modestus and have to live with that guilt for the rest of our lives.

Are we going to maintain our integrity? The ball is in our court.

# VRA Staff Briefed on Ebola, Cholera

BY MICHAEL DANSO & ROSE BRAIMAH, INTERN — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT



The Deputy Director of Clinical Care and Information Monitoring at the Ghana Health Service, Mrs. Getrude Avortri Agbo, has advised staff of the Volta River Authority (VRA) to always practise high standards of personal and environmental hygiene.

Speaking at a one-day forum on Ebola and Cholera, Mrs. Agbo said personal hygiene was the major tool that could be used to stem the rising tide of infections of Cholera and Ebola, if the deadly virus were for one, reported in Ghana. Cholera has recently been affecting a number of areas in Ghana. But the couple of suspected Ebola cases have proved negative.

The event which was held at the Electro-Volta House Conference Hall, in Accra was organised by the Health Services Department, in collaboration with the Human Resource Department and was designed to increase awareness of Ebola and Cholera.

Discussions on Ebola took centre stage at the forum as audience were enlightened about the nature of the disease, its history, mode of transmission, people most at the risk of contracting the virus, symptoms, treatment and how it can be prevented.

Mrs. Agbo said the inherently fragile virus originated in the Central African rain forest in 1976 and was named Ebola after a river in Zaire very near where it was first discovered.

It is said to have no cure and kills about 90% of its victims in a few days. The fruit bat she pointed out had been found to be the natural habitat for the virus.

Wild animals that ate those bats were exposed to the virus, and when human beings ate those animals, they also were infected. From there, she noted, the virus would spread from person to person. She advised against eating “bush meat” as one would not know which animal had been exposed to the virus.

On the mode of transmission Mrs. Agbo advised people against, coming into close contact with the blood, saliva, stool, vomit, urine, sweat and other bodily fluids of an infected person and soiled linens used by patients.





She however, told staff not to panic, since the transmission starts only after the patient had started showing signs and symptoms of the disease, and not during the incubation period.

She outlined the symptoms as, a sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat; diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pains, lack of appetite, a skin rash, red eyes, hiccups, cough, chest pain and difficulty in breathing and warned one could be confirmed as having the Ebola virus only through a laboratory test done in Ghana, only at the Noguchi Memorial Institute of Medical Research (NMIMR), at Legon in Accra.

Mrs. Agbo, who also oversees the National Infection, Prevention and Control programme at the GHS, asked the gathering to report suspected cases to the hospital early for better chances of recovery, since delay may result in death.

She demonstrated hand washing with soap, especially before handling food, eating, after visiting the washroom and at any time the hands come into contact with blood or other body fluids, as some measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

At the time of filing this report, the World Health Organisation (WHO) had said the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, the most virulent since the disease was first identified in 1976, could infect as many as 20,000 people before it is brought to a halt.

More than 3,000 people are said to have been infected, and more than 1,500 deaths recorded so far in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.



**Ebola spreads through direct contact with contaminated animals, objects (such as needles) or an infected person's blood or secretions.**



# Benin National Assembly President Hails VRA

The President of the Benin National Assembly, Prof. Mathurin Coffi Nago has praised the Volta River Authority (VRA) for preserving what he says is the biggest legacy in the sub-region – the Akosombo Generating Station (AGS).

Prof. Nago, who was in the country recently to confer with his Ghanaian counterpart, Right Hon. Doe Adjaho on the impending conference of Speakers of West African parliaments, made the remark while leading a 12-man delegation on a one-day working visit to the AGS.

He said, “The whole of the West Africa sub-region is proud of Ghana’s immense contribution towards the socio-economic development of the region. And I am glad to see for myself the source of the electric power which has been the backbone of this development.”

Prof. Nago praised the Volta River Authority (VRA) for prudently managing the Akosombo Generating Station over the years without any expatriates and expressed gratitude to VRA for ensuring that Benin continued to get power from Ghana.

Prof. Nago said Benin had a lot to learn from Ghana on industry and energy, and expressed hope that his visit would set the pace for the exchange of ideas between the two countries.

Welcoming the delegation to the VRA, the Chief Technician Operating Officer, Mr. Forster Temeng, expressed the Authority’s pleasure at having had a very good relationship with Benin. He expressed hope that the visit of the President of the Benin National As-



The delegation from Benin in a group picture with VRA staff.



President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Benin signing the guest book.

sembly would go a long way to strengthen this relationship.

He said, “VRA is pleased to be playing a very pivotal role within the sub region and is delighted that the Republic of Benin is a beneficiary of our work.”

The Information/Publicity Officer of the Corporate Communications Unit at Akosombo, Mrs. Rhoda Arthur, who conducted the delegation round the Authority’s facility, reiterated the VRA’s willingness to share her rich experience with its neighbours in the sub-region.



# Oracle Hyperion Planning Application To 'Go Live' OCTOBER 2014

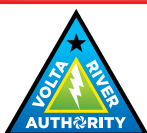
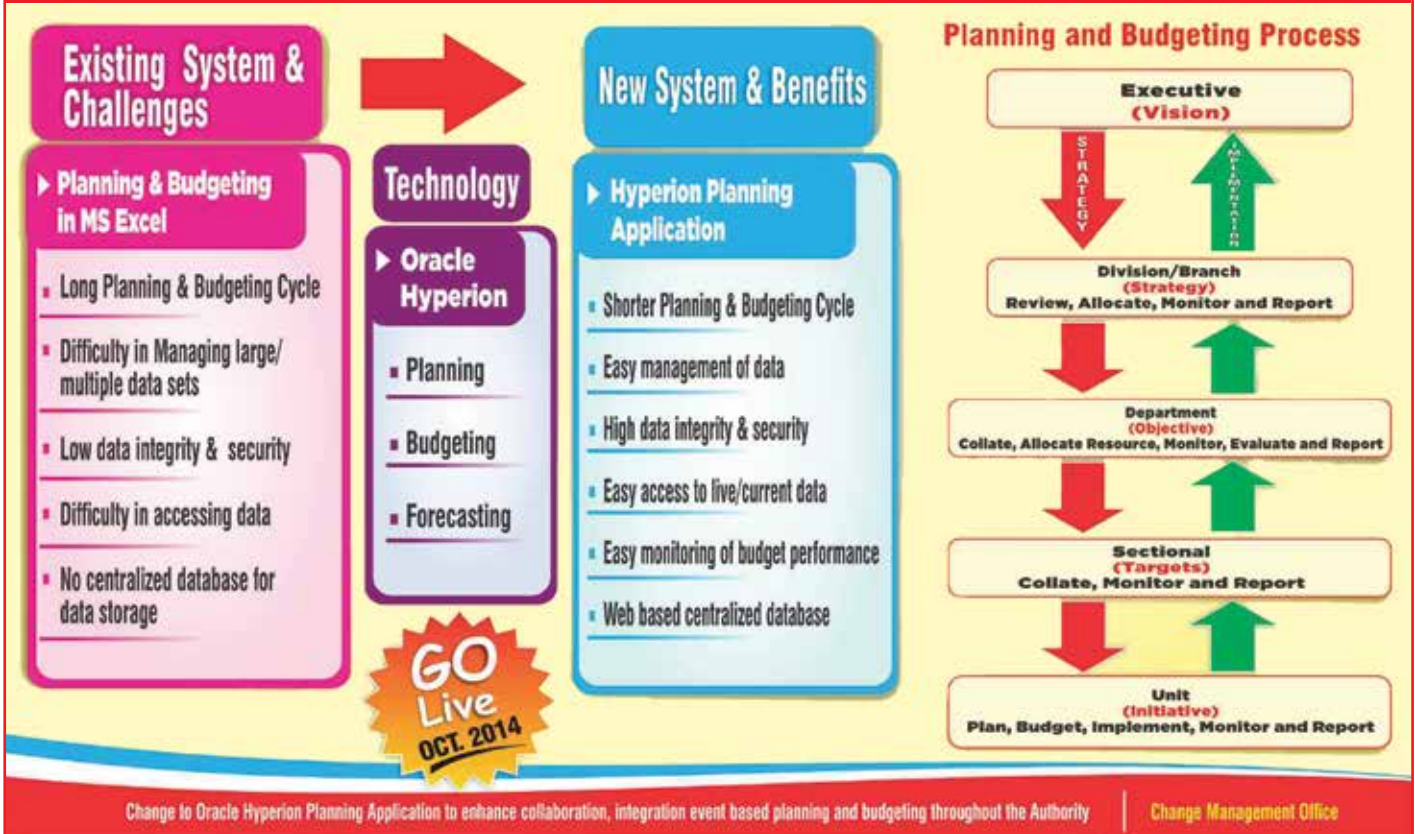
As earlier announced, the Authority is implementing the Oracle Hyperion Planning application for the 2015 planning and budgeting cycle. This is a major step towards the achievement of an enterprise wide resource planning (ERP) solution in the Authority.

In view of this, a comprehensive training programme for selected staff from all departments has already been rolled out to train 'super users'/trainers to support their departments in the preparation of their plans and budgets.

Staff who experience challenges should contact Service Desk on **728-500**; [servicedesk@vra.com](mailto:servicedesk@vra.com)  
Or E-Business Project Office 728-301-3  
Change Management Office 728-143,183.

**HYPERION - Your Power to Effective Planning...**

## ORACLE HYPERION PLANNING APPLICATION



**VOLTA  
RIVER  
AUTHORITY**

# VRA DONATES SEEDLINGS TO MPAKADAN

The Volta River Authority (VRA) is encouraging its riparian communities to prioritise the on-going Volta Gorge Reforestation Project, which is expected to help safeguard the environment along the Volta Lake.

The programme strategically targeted at traditional authorities, community leaders, community groups, farmer groups, fisherfolks and school children, is intended to sensitise them on environmental issues and ensure they take up their responsibilities on environmental protection.

Donating 30 grafted mango and 200 cassia seedlings to Mpakadan, a large community at Asuogyaman, the Director, Environment and Sustainable Development Department (E&SDD), Ing. Theophilus Nii Okai, urged the various groups within the community to accept ownership of the seedlings by ensuring that they were not allowed to go waste.

He said the E&SDD at the beginning of the year introduced an educational programme on *“Benefits of Agroforestry”* for five riparian communities in the Volta Gorge, to create awareness on the importance of agro-



Director, Environment and Sustainable Development Dept., (E&SDD), Ing. Theophilus Nii Okai and Mr. Ben Sackey, Manager of Environment and Sustainable Development Dept., planting the seedlings in the community

forestry to promote tree planting and to diversify products, markets, and farm incomes, improve soil and water quality, reduce erosion and non-point source pollution and damage from flooding. "It was expected that from these the communities could establish woodlots, in order to reduce the destruction of VRA's established tree plantations and vegetation cover along the Volta Lake Basin."

The Chief of Mpakadan, Nana Akoto, expressed thanks to the Authority for honouring its promise to provide the community with the seedlings, noting that the gesture fit-

ted perfectly into the VRA's afforestation project.

He appealed to the Authority to provide the Mpakadan community with potable drinking water to save the people from water-borne diseases, as the Volta Lake was their only source of drinking water.

Present at the event were staff of the E&SDD, including the Manager, Environment, Mr. Ben Sackey, Manager, Public Health, Mr. Kwasi Prempeh, and Information/Publicity Officer of the Akosombo Corporate Communications Unit, Mrs. Rhoda Arthur.



# 3rd UMaT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa, last July held its 3rd biennial international conference on mining and minerals, at Tarkwa. The conference was designated: "Innovations in Mining and Mineral Processing; Expanding the Frontiers of Mining Technology."

The four-day conference sought to create a platform on which academics and professionals in the mining, petroleum and allied industries could share their views and experiences on how to address a large number of challenges.

Delivering the welcome address, the Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Jerry S.Y. Kuma, commended the sponsors, local and foreign partners and all stakeholders for getting the event off to a good start. "The vision of the university is to become a Centre of Excellence in Ghana and Africa, for conducting cutting-edge research and for producing world class professionals for the mining, petroleum and allied industries," he said.

In his keynote address, Prof. F.T. Sourineni, Chair of Mine Geotechnical Engineering University of



Mr. William Appau, (left) presenting VRA branded souvenirs to Mr. Amankwah.

New South Wales in Sydney Australia, said the time had come for Ghana to equip itself to combat its current challenges. He suggested that people working on "galamsey" "should be empowered to become registered small-scale industries, who would help boost the economy."

A resource person, Mr. Ntiamoah Donkor, spoke on Corporate Social Responsibility. He emphasised the need for institutions to give back to society; that the mining industry was doing quite well in health, education and employment, among many others.

Dr. C.K Amuzuvi of the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, said although Renewable Energy Technologies had been used in Ghana for many

years, they had not added significantly to the country's energy mix. He suggested that the government and other institutions could support investment in solar, a reliable alternative source of energy.

Institutions invited to the conference were include the Volta River Authority, Metso Ghana Limited, and Goldfields Ghana Limited.

■  
The vision of the university is to become a Centre of Excellence in Ghana and Africa, for conducting cutting-edge research and for producing world class professionals for the mining, petroleum and allied industries.  
■

# AKUSE: AIS HOLDS 1st GRADUATION

BY JOHN CHOBBAH & JEFF OBENG DANKWA

The first graduation ceremony of Akuse International School (AIS) has taken place at Akuse. It was held together with the 9th speech and prize-giving day, under the theme, “Sustaining Academic Excellence.”

The Guest Speaker, Dr. Mawuko Dza, Director, Quality Assurance, Koforidua Polytechnic and Adjunct lecturer at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and Ghana Telecom University, noted that, it was most important to develop and improve a well-coordinated learning strategy and environment.

“The provision of such facilities”, he said, “are essential to supporting first-rate teaching and, outstanding student performance.” He also called for investment in recruitment and retention of good staff, to help maintain high standards.

Dr. Dza described graduation and speech and prize-giving ceremonies, as wonderful opportunities to celebrate achievement and success, and help take stock and make projections. He congratulated the prize winners, whom he



The graduants in picture

described as a true representation of everything the AIS stood for.

Dr. Dza called on stakeholders to recognise the usefulness of the roles they played as partners in progress and in nation building, and urged the students to be serious with their studies, as their parents were investing heavily in their education, so that the future would be secure for them and for the society at large.

Presenting the School report, the Supervisor and Headmaster, Mr. Reuben Kugblenu, said the school now had three hundred and sixty-three students and twenty

nine staff and was adjudged first among the 58 schools in the Lower Manya Krobo District in the 2013 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The School also took part in a number of academic competitions, such as the Science, Technology, Mathematics, Innovation Education (STMIE) Clinic and the Ngmayem Festival Educational Quiz Competition, as well as sports competitions involving the three VRA senior high schools.

Mr. Kugblenu said a new 3-storey building was being put up at the J.H.S that would provide three laboratories for the sciences, lan-





**Dr. Mawuko Dza, delivering his speech**



**Mr. Arnorld K. Seshie , first right, Mr. Kwesi Darko Asare, middle, and Dr. Mawuko Dza, left, honouring the ceremony**



**The graduands in a group photograph with the headmaster and staff**



**The Cadet Corps of Akuse International School**



**Culture display by Akuse International School**



**Grade School pupils in a culture display**

guges and I.C.T. He however, expressed regret that the school lacked furniture for the classrooms, visitors, library and the administration, as well as library books, modern electronic gadgets, a new school bus, musical instruments, a driver, and a Music teacher.

The School Head Prefect, Isaac Paid Bedu, said the school's ICT laboratory was too small, and students found it difficult to learn or pay attention there. He expressed regret that the roof of the science laboratory was leaking and there were not sufficient number of

ouvre blades, in the windows. Bedu also asked for the purchase of a second school bus, since the school was growing.

The Chairman for the occasion, Mr. Kwasi Darko Asare, urged students to take their studies very seriously and congratulated the staff on a job well done.

The ceremony was preceded by an Exhibition of art and crafts, pre-technical skills, science and photography, as well as choreography, traditional dance and a parade by the cadet corps.

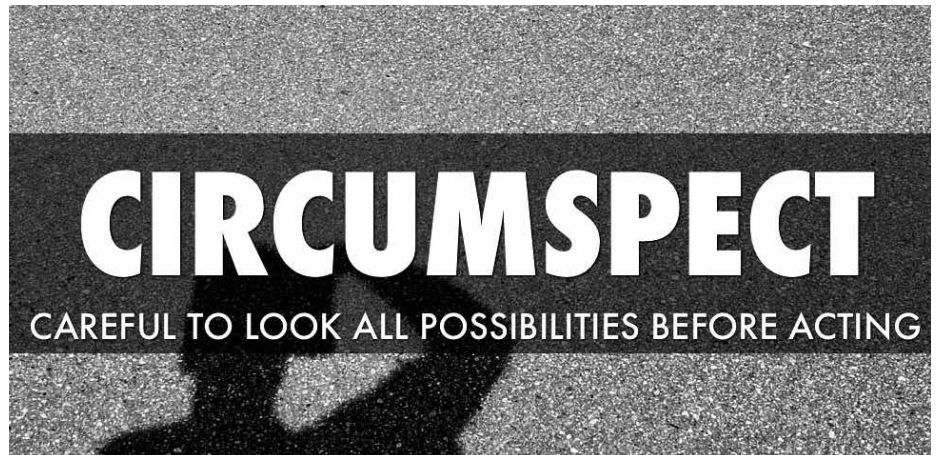
# Be Circumspect With How You Treat Others

BY ROSE BRAIMAH, INTERN — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT, ACCRA

I often wonder what the world would be like if all men were equal. I mean, if we were all Bank Managers, Doctors, Nurses, Chief Executives, and so on. The world would have been an interesting place to live in. Who would have serviced our cars for us? Who would have produced food for us to eat? Who would have taught our children in school? Who would have cleaned our offices and homes for us? Who would have driven us to our various destinations? Who would have helped us carry our loads when we go shopping? The questions are inexhaustible.

This goes a long way to tell us that everybody is important. We all in one way or the other depend on each other for survival. Without the cleaner, our offices and homes would be dirty, without the mechanic, our cars would have to be abandoned when they are faulty, without the carpenter, we would not have furniture and our buildings would not have roofs, windows or doors, without the security man or woman, our safety would be compromised.

We should therefore treat each other with respect. The fact that you have been able to climb to the top does not make the other person down there a lesser mortal; neither does it make you a better person



than he or she. It only goes a long way to show the diversity in life.

Yes, it is true that some people end up at the lower part of the ladder because they abused the opportunities that came their way. Others also ended up there because they were not fortunate enough to get someone to help them climb up the ladder. Again, it is true that those at the top of the ladder got there because they made good use of the opportunities that came their way or they were fortunate enough to get parents or relatives to support them. Others might have got there through hard work or a lot of struggle. However, in one way or the other, everybody is contributing to the survival of the human race.

Why then do we have to look down on one another? Why then do we have to behave as if we are doing the other person a favour? We must remember our Twi adages which say that, “nsatea nyinaa nnyepe”

(all the fingers are not equal) and “ahenfo kyinie, ebididi binum akyi” (the royal umbrellas come in ranks). These two adages teach us that, no matter where we find ourselves in life, there is always someone higher or better than us. The same applies to us being higher or better than others.

Let us treat everybody with respect and love so that we can live in a happy society. Life has a very funny way of turning the tables upside down. You might not know when you would need the help of that driver, that cleaner, that head potter, that farmer, or that market woman you are disrespecting today. We should always guide our steps and actions with this famous maxim: “Those you meet on your way up are the same people you meet on your way down.”



# THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER

BY JAMES OPARE — PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT, AKOSOMBO

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

*13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is man's all.*

*14. For God will bring every work into judgement, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (NKJV)*



Colleagues, this sentence is one of my favorites in the Holy Bible. It was written by Solomon, the wisest, richest, most influential King of Israel.

The name Solomon means: Loved by Yahweh. Solomon looks at life “under the Sun” and from the human perspective and declares it all to be empty. Power, Popularity, Prestige, Pleasure – nothing can fill the void in man’s life but God himself! But once seen from God’s perspective, life takes on meaning and purpose, causing Solomon to exclaim, “Eat, drink, rejoice, do good, live joyfully, fear God and keep His Commandments!”

Skepticism and despair melt away when life is viewed as a daily gift from God (Acts 17:24-28). Just stewards, one day we must give an account. It is a pity that some people are spending their lives; others are wasting their lives, but only a few are investing their lives.

If our lives are to count, we must fulfil three obligations; Fear God; Keep His Commandments; and Prepare for the Final Judgement Day.

## Fear God

This is the attitude of reverence and awe that God’s people show to Him because they love Him and respect His power and greatness. The person who fears God will pay attention to His Word and obey it, not tempt Him by deliberately disobeying Him or playing with His Son.

If you fear God, you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God, you fear everything else. (Isaiah 8:13 and Psalm. 112)

## Keep His Commandments

God created life, and He alone knows how it should

be managed. He wrote the manual of instructions, and wise is the person who reads and obeys it. When all else fail, read the instructions. The fear of the Lord must result in obedient living, otherwise it’s only a sham, or a waste of time.

The dedicated believer will want to spend time daily in scripture, getting to know the Father better and to

discover His will. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instructions (Prov.1:7).

“For this is man’s all” (his purpose in life). When Solomon looked at life “under the Sun” everything was fragmented and he could see no pattern. But when he looked at life from God’s point of view, everything came together in one whole. If man wants to have wholeness, he must begin with God.

## Prepare For the Final Judgement Day

... God shall judge the righteous and the wicked. But know that for all these God will bring you into Judgement. Man may seem to get away with sin but his sin, will eventually be exposed and be judged righteously. Those who do not trust the Lord Jesus Christ will be doomed forever.

Six times in his discourse, Solomon told us to enjoy life while we could; but at no time did he advise us to enjoy sin.

If you know Jesus Christ as your saviour, then your sins have already been judged on the cross; there is, therefore, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, (Rom 8:1) and (John 5:24). But if you die having never trusted Christ, you will face Judgement at His throne and be lost forever (Rev. 20:11-15).

Is life worth living? Yes, if you truly live through faith in Jesus Christ. Then you can be satisfied, no matter what God may permit to come into your life.

He who has the son has life; he who does not have the son of God does not have life (1 John 5:12)

You can receive life in Christ and – be satisfied!

# Akosombo International School's 41st Speech, Prize-Giving and Graduation Day

The Headmaster, Basic Division of Akosombo International School (AIS), Mr. Willis Ampiauw, has called on the Management of the VRA to equip the school with the necessary infrastructure, to enable it to stand on its own as a Strategic Business Unit.

Speaking on the theme: 'Sustaining Academic Excellence', at the School's 41st Speech, Prize-Giving and Graduation Day at Akosombo, Mr. Ampiauw said VRA Schools must be made an educational enterprise of excellence and choice. This, he said should follow the philosophy of holistic education, as set out in the music of Ephraim Amu: "Give equal attention to the head, heart and hands."

"We cannot do without cognitive skills, but vocational and effective skills make formal education more meaningful and help us fulfil life's endeavours better. We should therefore, be purposeful in transforming humans from just biological species into functional social species that understand our place in the world and know what counts in life," he said.

The Guest Speaker, Dr. Etse Sikanku, lecturer at the School of Communication Studies, Universi-



A section of the graduands seated at the ceremony

ty of Ghana, urged parents to allow their wards pursue their own dreams and professional careers, while recognising that academic excellence was a pre-requisite for success in life.

Dr. Sikanku, an old student of the school, said it was important for students to take their studies seriously at every stage, since that would help them identify their passion in life and direct their energies to them. He praised parents and teachers who had been supporting their wards to achieve their aims.

He promised to set up an annu-



Mr. Arnold Seshie (General Manager, VRA Schools), delivering his address.

al award scheme that would reward the best graduating BECE student.

Mr. Eric Ofosu, Human Resource Manager of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana, who chaired the event, called on parents to take a keen interest in

*Contd. on pg.37→*



Speech, Prize-Giving and Graduation Day in Pictures



Staff of AIS in a group photograph with the 2014 Graduating Class.



Prof. Joshua Alabi, Vice Chancellor, University of Professional Studies (UPS) delivering his address.



Mrs. Cynthia Amarteyfio, a past student of the 1985 year group addressing the graduands



Outgoing Head Prefect of AIS delivering a speech at the graduation ceremony



Mr. Arnold Seshie congratulating a graduand at the ceremony.



A section of parents who were there to support their wards



Mr. Julius Kog-der, Headmaster, Secondary Division congratulating a graduand.



# VRA to Support Kyease Experimental Primary Computer Lab Project



**Dignitaries, staff and old students of the school**

The VRA has donated Gh¢5,000 to the VRA Kyease Experimental Primary School for the establishment of a computer laboratory.

When completed, the laboratory would be expected to promote the teaching and learning of Information Communications Technology (ICT).

Speaking on behalf of the Management and Staff of the VRA, at a grand durbar to climax the school's 50th anniversary celebration at Akosombo, Mr. Edwin Aryeetey, Akosombo Town Manager, said the Authority was prepared to support the school to set up an ultra-modern ICT laboratory.

He said: "The VRA cannot down-play the importance of ICT education at the basic level, as it is the point at which children are prepared to appreciate technology." He added, it is important because ICT defines all aspects of man's existence in the world today

Mr. Aryeetey promised that the VRA Authority was ready to provide the school with a structure to accommodate the centre, and some computers for its establishment.

Delivering the keynote address on the theme: "Improving Academic Performance in the 21st Century Child through ICT; the Role of Stakeholders", Mrs. Florence Vanderpuye, of the VRA, noted that teachers were the first stakeholders that most children come into contact with and therefore ought to be equipped with the necessary ICT skills.

"The academic performance of students would be greatly enhanced when ICT is deployed in the delivery of education," she said, adding that this would result in the creation of new possibilities for teachers to engage in new ways of information acquisition and analysis.

The Headmaster of the School, Jerry Ohene-Ansah, noted the high academic performance of the school over the last five decades and ex-

pressed hope that the future could only be better.

"To all our present and past staff I say, well done for your continuous support over the years; and it is my fervent hope that the school would continue to enjoy your support," he concluded.



**A student receives an award for excellence.**



**A section of staff and dignitaries on their way to exhibitions grounds.**



**The headmaster, dignitaries, staff and old students cutting the anniversary cake.**



## Personality Profile

# D. C. COBBLAH

## THE MAN WHO HAS SEEN IT ALL

BY KWESI EYESON — HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, AKUSE

**H**e worked with VRA for 42 years and still continues to be associated with the Authority, even after his retirement. This is the man who is said to have seen it all – the good, the bad and the ugly - because he has been around long enough.

This is the true story of 72-year old Mr. David Corpoe Cobblah, a former Principal Administrative Assistant of the Thermal Power Station at Aboadze, and currently the National Chairman of VRA Retirees Association.

Recounting his days at VRA, from his office at the Resettlement building DC, as he is affectionately called, joined the Volta River Project (VRP), in 1960. He had then graduated from the New Era Secondary School, a private school at Korle Wokon in Accra.

He submitted a copy of his School Certificate to the Establishment Secretariat (now Head of the Civil Service) which was responsible for all government employment at the time, and was asked to report at the Volta River Project Secretariat, for appointment.

Talking to DC is like reading the history of VRA. To properly position this period in history, just look at your staff number and compare it with DC's staff number 0214 and that will tell you the number of years you need to catch up with him historically.

DC said he joined the Authority during the 'golden era', when VRA had the resources to support its projects and programmes. He served under six Chief Executives spanning a period of 41 years.

Some of the people he worked with were the late F.V.L. Laryea, former Director of Personnel, the late A.B. Futa, former Director of Services, and E. A. K. Kalitsi, a former Chief Executive.

He worked initially with the Services Department and, later with the Personnel Department in Accra. In 1986, on returning from overseas training, under a joint-sponsorship with the British Council, he was transferred to the Personnel Department at Akuse and later to Akosombo, and from there to the Akosombo Retrofit Project.

He worked with the Maritime Services Unit of the Transport Department at Akosombo, before being transferred to the Thermal Power Station at Aboadze in 1996. He retired in 2002.

The experiences he gained from working in the various departments and locations made him an all-round effective and efficient worker. No wonder, after his retirement he was given a one-year contract appointment with the Thermal Generation Department.

And when he thought he was going to savour retirement to the full, he was elected National Chairman of VRA Retirees Association - an honour he could not refuse.

As Chairman of the VRA Retirees



David Corpoe Cobblah, DC

Association, he has represented the association on many platforms and often involved with the Authority. For example at the recent Long Service Award ceremony held at the Accra International Conference Centre (AICC), DC was captured in his splendid ceremonial of the Retirees Association dress giving total support to the programme.

He recalls that in 2003, for the first time in the history of VRA, staff threatened to go on a demonstration and started wearing red bands.

Asked about the current restructuring exercise, Mr. Cobblah had this to say: "Restructuring in any organisation is in itself not a bad thing, but it must be done with a human face, to reduce the burden on the affected staff; because it can be rather terrifying."

This is the man who has been associated with the Authority for more than four decades; this is the great fellow who wishes to ensure that even in retirement, staff have something positive to offer. This is the man who has seen it all!!!

Restructuring in any organisation is in itself not a bad thing, but it must be done with a human face, to reduce the burden on the affected staff; because it can be rather terrifying.

# VRA Schools Receive Eco-Schools Award

The Volta River Authority (VRA) Schools have been awarded an “Eco-Schools Green Flag,” the first in West Africa.

The award, an international programme of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), aimed at empowering students to be the change that the world needs by engaging in fun - and action-oriented learning.

Eco-Schools is now running in 59 countries and is the largest network of students and teachers in the world, with 14 million students, 1.2 million teachers, 44,000 schools and 15,000 Green Flags awarded.

Each school follows a seven-step change process and empowers

its young persons to lead processes and actions wherever they can.

Over time, and with commitment to Eco-Schools, the seven-step process is expected to lead to improvement in learning outcomes, attitudes and the behaviour of students. This would cascade into the local community and ultimately into the local environment. Evidence of success in these areas would eventually lead to a school being awarded the ‘Green Flag’.

Presenting the prestigious “Green Flag” to the Management of VRA Schools, a representative of Eco-Schools from Australia, Mrs. Hilda Opoku, said, “the programme was not just an environmental education programme, but also a method structured for em-

powering students, through skills they needed to become tomorrow’s leaders of Ghana.

She urged them to take advantage of the programme since it would help their academic skills through practice.

“The outreach requires social responsibility, both to your local community as well as to your global village by becoming worthy ambassadors for the programme,” she said.

VRA Schools’ Coordinator for Eco-Schools, Mrs. Margaret Ayernor, noted that the Eco-School programme started in Ghana in 2004 after a visit by Dr. and Mrs. Opoku to the Akosombo International School.

She noted that since the commencement of the programme, VRA Schools has paid visits to schools within the Akosombo community, to share ideas on the activities of AIS Eco-School.

Mrs. Ayernor was grateful for the recognition of the efforts of VRA Schools’ Eco-School and promised that her team would intensify its education on waste management or Akosombo International School, Akosombo Township, and even beyond.



Dr. and Mrs. Opoku displaying the Eco-School flag awarded to the VRA Schools, while Mr. Arnold Seshie, General manager, VRA Schools observes the ceremony with a smile.

# Writing the Report

## — An Open Report to Human Resource Department

BY SAMUEL M. CANN — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT, ABOADZE

With a pot of calabash brimming with the supposed collection of Wisdom of the entire land hanging on his belly, ‘Ananse’ the spider, began climbing a palm tree with great difficulty. His intention was to hide its contents from the rest of the world. But as fate would have it, ‘Ntikuma,’ his son, saw him struggling and suggested to him to hang the calabash at his back to facilitate his movement. Realising his mission had not been wholly accomplished, he dropped the pot of calabash, letting go of all the Wisdom he had painstakingly collected.

The lesson from Ananse’s experience is that knowledge does not reside in any one person. So what was the end of gathering at a course on Report Writing, a posse of professionals, whose daily work at the Corporate Communications Unit, involves the writing of one form of report or another Course?

The opening prayer for the programme was rendered in Fanti by Mr. Samuel MacIntosh Cann, Community Relations Officer for Aboadze. The full impact of his prayer could not have been lost on participants, as he pronounced distinctly those Fanti words.

In his usual calm, but warm, way, Mr. Michael O. Sackey, Principal

Information Officer took position as facilitator for the subject of “Effective Writing”. Using both the experiential, as well as the didactic approach, he succeeded in sustaining the interest in the course for the two days.

Information, especially in our time, must be seen as an essential commodity. And like all commodities, it has to be packaged well in order to attract interest. Many good proposals have failed to make an impact, not because they are bad, but because of poor presentation.

As people at the forefront of the

writing or speech could bring about a turnaround, even winning over one’s opponent. There could not have been a better way of ensuring that this fact made a lasting impression on participants.

The session on Conflict Resolution facilitated by Mr. William Appau, Community Relations Officer, was most thought-provoking. Participants contributed freely to the discussion on how workplace conflict could be handled, so that it does not degenerate to the extent of affecting corporate goals.

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*The lesson from Ananse’s experience is that knowledge does not reside with any one person.*

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Authority’s communication activities, it behoves us to delve deeper into the techniques of good writing and speaking, so as to cash in on our competitors’ shortcomings, whether in changing public perception, or justifying the annual budget allocation.

Using a film on US President Obama’s first State of the Union Address; Mr. Sackey drove home the fact that a conscientious, precise

Perhaps, apart from appearing as one of the facilitators on “**Team Building and Communication Skills**,” Mr. Samuel Fletcher, Manager, Corporate Communications Unit, sat in through the entire course. Like a lawn tennis umpire, Mr. Fletcher would occasionally halt proceedings to make a point or two, or ask for participants’ views on certain issues that were being discussed.

← Contd. on pg.39



## Personality Profile

# UPCLOSE WITH MR. ERNEST FIFI THARKOR

BY MICHAEL DANSO & ROSE BRAIMAH, INTERN — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

**T**alent can be described as a marked innate ability. Naturally therefore, everyone in one way or the other is good at doing something.

Whereas some can write and sing; others can manage, while others also have good communication and marketing skills. In short, when we understand what we are interested in, and what we are good at, then we can make fulfilling career choices and discover our major definite purpose.

Developing talents require patience, self-discipline and diligence. These are what Mr. Ernest Fifi Tharkor, known in private life as Uncle Fii, prides himself with.

Mr. Tharkor, a staff of the Corporate Communications Unit sees his talent as his biggest asset, and never ceases to develop it in diverse ways.

Drawing inspiration from broadcast legends Gordon Avenogbor and the late Komla Dumor, Mr. Tharkor believes he is still learning and hopes to receive a lifetime achievement some day.

For answers to what influences his ability to excel on stage, the VRA NEWS got up-close and personal with the corporate MC of our time, Mr. Ernest Fifi Tharkor.



Mr. Ernest Fifi Tharkor

**VRA NEWS (VN):** Who is Mr. Ernest Fifi Tharkor?

**FIFI THARKOR (FT):** Ernest Fifi Tharkor hails from Ajumako-Besease in the Central Region. I am a trained teacher with 12 years experience. However, somewhere along the line, I veered off and studied communications at the Ghana Institute of Journalism. I am currently a Public Relations (PR) practitioner of good standing with the Institute of Public Relations. I have worked as a PR person over the last 22 years. I am bilingual as I speak English and French languages fluently.

Indeed, I taught English and French during my days as a teacher. I have worked at various positions in different organisations before joining the Authority.

**VN:** How long have you been working with VRA?

**FT:** I got employment into the VRA in March, 2005. Interestingly, come March 15, 2015, I would hit my tenth milestone.

I was employed as Information/Publicity Assistant, stationed at the Akuse office. The department then was called the Public Affairs Department. A year or so later, the name was changed to Corporate Services Department and later, General Services Department.

Four years later, I got transferred to Accra to join the newly created Public Relations Unit. The Unit was placed under the Corporate Office. This was during the early days of Mr. Kwaku Andoh Awotwi's appointment as Chief Executive. It was a four-man

unit with Mrs. Gertrude Koomson as the Head. My other colleagues were; Samuel deGraft-Johnson and Bellona Gerard-Vittor -Quao. Our office was located on the first floor.

Today, as we speak the Unit has been renamed Corporate Communications. Also, we have had some colleagues of ours who used to be with the General Services Department joining us. The department now has almost twenty staff.

It would interest you to know that I entered VRA as Information/Publicity Assistant. My quest to increase and upgrade my knowledge propelled me to undertake a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and Master of Arts (MA) degree in Public Affairs from the Political Science department of the University of Ghana respectively.

**VN: How did you take up the Emceeship role in the Authority?**

**FT:** My MC role began at church. I remember a young man in the church had been scheduled to be the MC during the launch of the church's annual harvest. At the eleventh hour, the young man failed to show up. In order not to disrupt the church's programme, the Director of Religious

Affairs nominated me to take up the role.

To my utmost surprise, the function went well; the Pastor commended me for my performance at such short notice. Again, I got the opportunity to MC at a church member's wedding ceremony. The feedback was that I excelled. From there, I developed the interest based on the requests I was receiving from individuals, organisations, etc.

**VN: How was your first experience as a Corporate MC?**

**FT:** I remember I was contacted by the staff at Akuse to MC their end of year party. Initially, it appeared most of them had doubts about my ability as an MC. This is because some of them had viewed my calm disposition as a weakness. Later on, they told me they had had doubts about my ability. This was because they were looking for somebody who could capture the attention of the audience. Perhaps, they were looking for a noisy person who in their estimation could fit into their bill.

This according to them was because their previous end of year parties had not gone well. Perhaps, it was because they had no one to sustain the fun after they had taken their meals. Hear them, "Our end of year

*I taught English and French during my days as a teacher.*

party is always boring. Staff troop out the moment they finish eating and exchanging pleasantries. We want somebody who can create and sustain the fun during the party."

I accepted the challenge and prepared for the occasion. The rest is history! Those who doubted my ability came by and commended me for the wonderful performance. Would you believe the party went all the way till 2am the following day. This was a sharp deviation from the usual 11pm when their parties always end.

On another occasion, the current Chief Executive, Ing. Kirk Koffi invited me to MC the inauguration of the Akosombo Keep Fit Club. The programme went very well as people commended me for the delivery. I remember fondly, the late Courage Quashigah coming closer and patting me on the shoulder for the excellent show. Eventually we became very good friends.

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## Akosombo International School's 41st Speech, Prize-Giving Graduation Day ← *Contd. from pg.30*

their children's studies and encourage them to attain their ambitions.

Mr. Ofose, a member of the 1988 year group made a pledge, on behalf of his colleagues, to provide the assembly hall with six hundred chairs and books for the grade school library.

Students who excelled in their disciplines were rewarded while candidates at the just ended Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) were presented with certificates of attendance.

## National Service Personnel Share their Experience

### *Isaac Osei Debrah, Procurement, Accra*

**N**ational Service person, Isaac Osei Debrah believes that his attachment to the stores section of the Procurement Department has sharpened his skills and knowledge in his preferred area of study- Procurement.

Isaac says working with the Authority has made him smarter, more innovative, more focused and much more brilliant.

But Mr. Debrah in spite of the very many good things he has learnt as a service person, found the working environment not conducive to effective learning, because his office was too small and crowded.

The greatest challenge at the stores he says was replenishing of stock and cross-checking of items. Because, he says, that work was more time-consuming.

Additionally, he says, “Though the department has several sections, one gets stuck to a particular section over a long period and, thus has little or no opportunity to learn from the other sections.” He is of the view that service persons can be made more versatile by periodic rotation.

Some of the things he has learnt from his attachment to the stores section include the grading system; preparing weekly and inspection reports, binding items in the appropriate places and registering the pick lists.

Isaac Osei Debrah reiterates the generally-held view that VRA is a good institution to work with, because the system encourages people to learn. He advises his colleagues to learn and be submissive wherever they find themselves.



### *Ebenezer Djan, Tema Thermal Generation*

**E**benezer Djan explains that his experience with the Authority was greatly enjoyable. He said he was given the opportunity to learn a lot about controls, particularly during hot gas inspections at the Tema Thermal Plant.

That experience, he says has led to interest in Control Engineering and to fall in love with the idea of mastering in Control Engineering.

Mr. Djan says the working environment was conducive for learning because his supervisors were very willing to impart their skills and knowledge. Moreover, service personnel were offered hands-on practical training, and the human relations were brilliant.

He is grateful for the opportunity to learn about pressure switches and transmitter calibration, RTD calibration, and also the overview of Mark VI turbine control.

His overall perception of learning in the organisation is that it is practical and interesting.

But, Mr. Djan points out some issues that, he thinks, constitute challenges. For instance, his greatest concern was that service personnel were not allowed to take initiatives, the argument being that they lacked the skills and knowledge.

He suggests that the Authority develops strategies such as monthly interface with supervisors, in order to monitor the progress of service persons.

Nevertheless, says he, VRA is a conducive place to work and learn. He praised the staff for that good human relations and urged his colleagues to take seriously what they have been taught.





## National Service Personnel Share their Experience

**Selasi Nyavor**  
*Procurement Akosombo*

**S**elasi Nyavor, a Higher National Diploma (HND) holder from the Kumasi Polytechnic worked with the Procurement Department at Akosombo.

At 26, she believes she has acquired sufficient capacity to take up any procurement responsibility anywhere. She feels her association with the Procurement Department has broadened her knowledge, of the VRA as well as the social level.

Socially, she said, her interaction with the Authority's internal and external publics has greatly boosted her confidence. "On the corporate level too, I have been exposed to a great lot of areas in procurement."

VRA, she says, "has a superb working environment conducive to learning, and has dedicated staff willing and prepared to share their knowledge with trainees."

Working with the Volta River Authority, she says was one of the best things that ever happened to her in her professional training. "Learning in school, as we all know, is more theoretical than practical. But learning at VRA, for me, has been very practical," she says.

Selasi says that she had thought, initially, that procurement was as simple as it was introduced to her back at school. But that was before her association with VRA. She says she has now been exposed to the



key processes involved in procurement. During her attachment, she said, she was sometimes given administrative duties to perform. This has been an eye opener. Additionally, her computer literacy has greatly improved, because she had to do a lot of work on her own.

Talking about challenges, Selasi singled out the stress she had to go through to get accommodation when she reported for duty at her location. She confessed this nearly derailed her enthusiasm for the job.

Selasi advises her colleagues to make the best out of the experiences they have acquired during their attachment with the Authority.

### Writing the Report ← Contd. from pg.26

Such interjections were like icing on the course cake; for they tended to stimulate members full participation.

In fact, participants contributed fully to all discussions. In a round-up exercise to find out how each participants had benefited from the programme, Mr. Emmanuel Agbassorme, a Driver at the Corporate Communications Unit,

Akosombo, received a great round of applause as he talked about the knowledge gained, using his field of calling.

The entire Corporate Communications Unit is most grateful to Management for releasing funds for the programme, and promise to deliver on target to make the right impact.

# Reverend SLO now 'SENIOR CITIZEN'

BY KWESI EYESON — HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT, AKUSE

According to the population statistics of Ghana, persons between the ages of 0 and 17 are children; those between 18 and 59 are adults, and those 60 years and above are old people, popularly called 'Senior Citizens'.

So it happened that, while we were busy working for our daily bread, retirement quietly crept past us and made the Very Reverend Samuel Lomo Okine, Senior Manager, Training and Staff Development, a 'Senior Citizen'. He had spent 26 years of his life in unbroken service to the Authority.

Rev. SLO, as he is affectionately called, joined the Authority in 1988 and was assigned to the Northern Electricity Department (NED) as the first District Supervisor in the Upper East Region capital, Bolgatanga.

He was subsequently transferred to the Upper West capital, Wa, the following year.

In 1992, he was again transferred, this time to Tamale, Head Office of NED, as the Maintenance and Operations Engineer. In 1994, Mr. Okine was transferred to the Engineering Services Department and assigned to the team working on the National Electrification Project (NEP). The project involved the extension of electricity to all the district capitals in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions, and some parts of Ashanti Region. In 1997 while Rev SLO was working on the NEP, the Authority advertised for the position of Technical Training Manager in the newly constituted Training Department.

After a very long delay, he was appointed the Technical Manager.



Reverend Samuel Lomo Okine

In 2005, he was assigned additional responsibility as Senior Manager, Training and Staff Development Division, the position he held until his retirement.

Very Reverend Okine attended Wesley Grammar School in Accra for his Ordinary Level and then GSTS in Takoradi for the Advanced Level. He sat the Advanced Level examina-

## VRA Supports Schools BY NATHANIEL MENSAH

The Volta River Authority has donated the first batch of 60 story books out of a total of 300 to six (6) basic schools and 200 bags of cement to the Akwamuman Senior High School.

The donation which is valued at GH¢13,000.00 is in fulfilment of the Authority's commitment towards a sustained mutually beneficial relationship with its communities through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, took place at separate events in the Asuogyaman District.

Making the donation on behalf of the Authority, the Director, General Services Department (GSD) Madam Abla Fiadjoe, indicated that the Authority's current CSR strategy towards education development is to promote reading and numeracy skills at the basic level given the recent poor academic performance at the basic schools nationwide.

She said the Authority is committed to helping its communities improve their educational fortunes through reading and learning at the basic level.

Madam Fiadjoe recounted the numerous support the Authority continues to provide its communities such as the Community Development Programme Scholarship scheme which has over 120 students benefiting; the Trust Fund projects, donation of exercise books and computers among others.

A representative from the Asuogyaman District Education office, Mr. Fred Kotoka, who received the books on behalf of the schools was thankful to the Authority for the gesture and expressed hope that

tion a second time, at Accra Academy, and was admitted to the KNUST in Kumasi for a programme in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical/Electronic Engineering in 1981.

While still a young student at GSTS, Mr Okine had a vision to serve God and immediately took steps to actualise his dream. He joined the school's Scripture Union (SU) and played a key role in its programmes and projects.

So in 2001, he took the ultimate decision to become a Minister of God by enrolling at the Trinity Theological Seminary at Legon, Accra. He graduated in 2002 and was commissioned in Accra the same year. Thereafter, he began a two-year probationary study that ended with his ordination, in Sekondi, in 2004, as a Reverend Minister of the Methodist Church.

He subsequently held his ordination thanksgiving service at the Volivo Society near Asutsuare in 2005. In

2012, he was given full recognition as a Minister with the status of Superintendent and accordingly confirmed with the title "Very Reverend."

We remember Rev. SLO as someone who loves people; he is generous and very understanding. One had expected that being a native of Accra's Bukom, from where many of the nation's greatest boxers have come, he would be very aggressive and pugilistic. But Rev SLO is rather the opposite.

If there is anything like Personal Social Responsibility (PSR), then he, indeed, excels not only as a 'Man of God', but also as a 'Man of the People'. For there was not a single week in which he was not invited to officiate at a social programme organised by colleague staff, church members, welfare associations and public institutions.

He mediated in many family, church and workplace disputes. In fact, when his natural chocolate colour combined with his well-built body, in his black or white cassock

with the clerical collar, he took on the looks of what we see as the Angel Gabriel.

As an Electrical Engineer with VRA (which made him a 'Dumso' Engineer), he helped to bring electricity, and hence development, to very many people in the northern parts of the country.

As a Human Resource Practitioner and Head of the VRA Training School at Akuse, he helped to design, develop and deliver technical and non-technical training programmes, leading to the school's reputation, nationally and internationally, as a first choice training institution for hydro- and thermal-power generation.

As a Reverend Minister of the Methodist Church, he helped people to appreciate the hand of God in their daily affairs and to seek His intervention whenever they faced any adversity in life.

He no doubt has earned his life-achieving promotion to the enviable rank of 'Senior Citizen'. We say, "Ay-eeekool!"

other stakeholders within the district and beyond will emulate the Authority's example.

The Headmaster of Akwamuman Senior High School, Mr. Emmanuel Tawiah who received the bags of cement on behalf of the school revealed how timely the donation was and expressed his gratitude to the management of the Authority for coming to the aid of the school.

**Top photo: Director, General Services Department (GSD) Madam Abia Fiadjoe donating the bags of cement at the background to the headmaster of Akwamuman SHS Mr Emmanuel Tawiah**

**Below: Director, General Services Department (GSD) Madam Abia Fiadjoe making a donation to Mr. Fred Kotoka of the HR Unit at the Asuogyaman District Education Office**





## UPCLOSE WITH MR. ERNEST FIFI THARKOR

← Contd. from pg.37

**VN:** *How would you describe your style of Emceeing?*

**FT:** Seriously speaking, in my opinion, Emceeing has no style. What is important is to know what the occasion is all about; have a good background to the occasion; know the invitees in order to address them appropriately; have a good command of the English language; be decorous and once in a while lace your presentation with a joke to keep the place alive. What is important is that, your choice of joke should be informed by the level and calibre of people present at the function. In short you have to be an “attention getter”, so that your audience will follow you as you direct the programme.

Personally, I have a pack of humorous jokes under my belt. So I unleash them during my programmes. Indeed, a lot of people have requested I record my jokes on CD for sale.

**VN:** *Share with us an unforgettable experience you have had in the course of emceeing a show?*

**FT:** The most vivid is when HR Department called me at an eleventh hour to MC a programme. I went to the programme unprepared. However, I successfully managed the function to my own amazement.

The other unforgettable experience was when the current Chief Executive called me one Christmas Eve to MC the 70th birthday of his in-law. The

invitation came so late I had wanted to refuse. On a second thought, I decided once he was my superior, I dare not disappoint him.

I went all right, but I could see even my dressing was not suitable for the occasion. I felt embarrassed. Nevertheless, by God’s grace, I steered the programme successfully.

**VN:** *Do you have a role model or mentor?*

**FT:** Role model? I would say I had mentors but now I have overtaken them. The late Komla Dumor and GBC’s veteran presenter, Godwin Avenogbor, were the favourite two. Unfortunately, Komla Dumor has joined the other world but I would suggest to Godwin and the others still in the business to see me for some more schooling.

**VN:** *How would you describe your profession; a gift, talent or a calling?*

**FT:** I won’t call it a profession because if I did, it would appear as though I was employed by VRA to MC programmes. I am a qualified Public Relations practitioner. I just have the liking for it and I do it as a hobby. Maybe we can say it’s a talent because I do it effortlessly.

**VN:** *What has been one remarkable achievement you’ve gained from this role?*

**FT:** I remember during the 50th anniversary celebration, my name was

tabled on the programme as coordinator for the Thanksgiving Service. However, to my surprise, I received a call from my boss then, informing me to go to Takoradi to MC the inauguration. I should say I wasn’t prepared for it.

All the same, I took my ramshackle vehicle and drove to Takoradi. As the programme rolled on, I looked up on the dais and noticed all the executives and dignitaries seated were up on their feet giving me a standing ovation. I guessed I had swept them off their feet with my skills. Instantly, I reckoned such a feat would come with a promotion. But hey, I am still where I am.

**VN:** *How would you want to be remembered when you go on retirement one day?*

**FT:** I want to be remembered as that simple, pot-bellied, affable, interesting, humble and hardworking man who could make you laugh till your ribs cracked. On the professional level, I am working hard to ensure I am remembered for my hard work, discipline and dedication to duty. It is always good to leave a good mark.

**VN:** *Any message to your fans?*

**FT:** Well my admirers should continue praying to God to grant me good health. Presently, I can say the “fuse” to my waist has been “blown”. They should pray for me to recover quickly.

# TEMA Senior Staff Association undertakes *HEALTH WALK*

The Senior Staff Association (SSA), at Tema last August, went on a Health Walk, with the Theme: “**A HEALTHY MIND IN A HEALTHY BODY.**”

The 7.5km walk started from the Ningo-Prampram round-about and ended at the City Escape Hotel, on the Dawhenya-Prampram road.

In a presentation on “Diet and Health,” a Nutritionist, Mr. Wise Chukwudi Letsa of the Trust Hospital in Accra, advised staff to take more vegetables and less alcohol and sugar.

The Director for Procurement, Mr. Evans Appiah, commended the SSA Executives for organising the event and urged them to arrange more of such programmes. He said this would not only get the staff to socialise, but would also give them the physical conditioning they need.

The Chairman of the Association, Mr. George John Amegashie, and the Secretary, Mr. Hudson Mawutor Adipah, promised members similar programmes and asked them to participate fully.

The well-patronised walk was led by Mr. Appiah and the Manager, Procurement, Madam Shirley Habiba Seidu.





# VRA Rewards Long-Serving Staff

BY MICHAEL DANSO — CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT



The Chief Executive, Ing. Kirk Koffi, has clarified that VRA Schools, VRA Hospital, and the Real Estate & Security Department are to be restructured into limited liability companies to operate as efficient subsidiaries of the Authority.

Ing Koffi confirmed this position at the 2014 mid-year Long-Service award ceremony held at the Accra International Conference Centre last June. The event was held to reward 239 men and women who had worked for the Authority between 10 and 40 years.

Ing. Koffi said restructuring the business units had become necessary to be able to compel with the Independent Power Producers (IPP). The energy market, he noted, would soon become very competitive, and VRA needed to ensure that it survived the competition.

Regarding the initial speculations on the outcome of the intended restructuring, the Chief Executive expressed management's willingness to engage the various staff groups to resolve any issues that would arise from the restructuring.

He commended the award winners and urged them to remain dedicated and committed to their duties. As management, he said, "we will continue to acknowledge the commitment of employees to ensure they are well motivated to give of their best and ensure the Authority maintains her track record as one of the best organisation in the country."

The Long-Service Awards is a valuable component of the Authority's employee recognition package. It is organised twice a year to give Management an opportunity to recognise employees for their loyalty and dedicated service.

Each recipient took home a certificate of merit and an undisclosed sum of money.

Madam Dorothy Derban, a Senior Enrolled Nurse at the Health Services Department was adjudged the longest serving staff. She had served the Authority for four decades.



Madam Dorothy Derban, proud recipient of the 40 years award in a pose with the Chief Executive.



## Long-Serving Staff Awards in Pictures

### 35 YEARS ▼



### 30 YEARS ▼





## Long-Serving Staff Awards in Pictures

### 30 YEARS ▼



### 25 YEARS ▼



### 25 YEARS ▼





## Long-Serving Staff Awards in Pictures

### 25 YEARS ▼



### 20 YEARS ▼



### 20 YEARS ▼





## Long-Serving Staff Awards in Pictures

### 20 YEARS ▼



### 15 YEARS ▼



### 15 YEARS ▼





## Long-Serving Staff Awards in Pictures

### 15 YEARS ▼





## Long-Serving Staff Awards in Pictures

### 10 YEARS ▼





## | 2014 STAFF RETIREMENTS |

FULL NAME	DEPARTMENT	POSITION	LOCATION	RETIREMENT DATE
Mr. Ebow Acquah	Planning & Business Development	Manager, Sales Contract	Accra	1 Jul, 2014
Mr. Mama Mohammed	Real Estate & Security	Watchman	Aboadze	1 Jul, 2014
Mr. Jonas Odei	Health Services	Head Hospital Orderly	Akosombo	2 Jul, 2014
Mr. Joseph Tetteh Menzo	Hydro Generation	Principal Driver	Akuse	11 Jul, 2014
Mr. Emmanuel Komla Alifo	MIS	Principal Driver	Accra	20 Jul, 2014
Mr. Vincent Yeboah Awisi	NEDCo	Senior Watchman	Techiman	7 Aug, 2014
Ms. Beatrice Soetor Atitsogbui	Real Estate & Security	Watchman	Accra	17 Aug, 2014
Mr. Richard Degbe Akortor	Environment & Sust. Development	Principal Clerk	Akosombo	20 Aug, 2014
Mr. Kofi Asamoah	Health Services	Principal Driver	Akosombo	20 Aug, 2014
Mr. Moses Kofi Ayaim	Real Estate & Security	Principal Estates Assistant	Accra	21 Aug, 2014
Mrs. Evelyn Setutsi Amu	VRA Schools	Principal Superintendent Teacher	Akuse	30 Aug, 2014
Mr. Edward Kumi Abrokwah	Thermal Generation	Assistant Chief Technician Engineer	Tema	31 Aug, 2014
Mr. Simon Kwaku Ametefe	Hydro Generation	Supervising Maintenance Mechanic	Akuse	2 Sept, 2014
Mr. Stephen Naadu Ayei	NEDCo	Principal Commercial Officer	Sunyani	9 Sept, 2014
Mr. Philemon Amesimeku Tse	Real Estate & Security	Foreman	Akosombo	10 Sept, 2014
Mr. George Konor Ofosu	Real Estate & Security	Watchman	Akuse	10 Sept, 2014
Mr. Godfried Yao Ayisah Adamani	Real Estate & Security	Watchman	Akuse	20 Sept, 2014
Reverend Samuel Lomo Okine	Human Resources	Senior Manager, Training & Staff Dev't	Akuse	28 Sept, 2014



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### Just For Laughs

## INSTALLING HUSBAND!!!

Dear Tech Support,

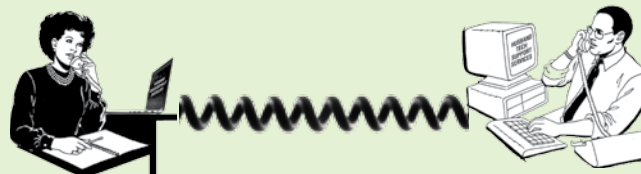
Last year I upgraded from **Boyfriend 5.0** to **Husband 1.0** and I noticed a distinct slowdown in the overall system performance, particularly in the flower and jewelry applications, which operated flawlessly under **Boyfriend 5.0**.

In addition, **Husband 1.0** uninstalled many other valuable programmes, such as **Romance 9.5** and **Personal Attention 6.5**, and then installed undesirable programmes such as **NEWS 5.0**, **NO MONEY 3.0** and **FOOTBALL 4.1**.

**Conversation 8.0** no longer runs, and **House-cleaning 2.6** simply crashes the system.

Please note that I have tried running **Nagging 5.3** to fix these problems, but to no avail.

What can I do?



### HUSBAND APPS

- Husband 1.0 uninstalls
  - ◆ Romance 9.5
  - ◆ Personal Attention 6.5
- Husband 1.0 installs
  - News 5.0
  - No Money 3.0
  - Football 4.1

Will experience System Crash due to:  
 Conversation 8.0    Housecleaning 2.6  
 Anti-virus Nagging 5.3 will not fix problems

Do you want to continue?  
 Yes    No

BY SAMUEL YIRENKYI — MGT. INFO. SYS. (MIS)

### IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

- ◆ VRA's Board Vision
- ◆ Writing Workshop 4
- ◆ Balanced Scorecard-Based Performance Management System

Please send your concerns, questions, congratulatory messages, issues, worries, suggestions, etc., to [corpcomm@vra.com](mailto:corpcomm@vra.com)

For further information/enquiries, contact Corporate Communications Unit, Corporate Office. Tel: +233 302 664941-9 Ext. 252, 413, 309 & 453 PLC 724252/413/309/453. Also visit [www.vra.com](http://www.vra.com)