

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE MAYOR OF SEKONDI-TAKORADI,
HON. ANTHONY K.K. SAM AT THE CELEBRATION OF 2019 OPEN
GOVERNMENT WEEK HELD ON 13TH MARCH, 2019 AT THE STMA' S
CONFERENCE ROOM.**

The Honorable Presiding Member,

The Metro Co-ordinating Director,

Co-chair of the Multi-stakeholder Forum

Distinguished invited guests,

Civil society organizations,

Nananom,

Corporate bodies,

The Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you once again to this morning's press briefing on the Assembly's journey on the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative. We thank you for heeding to our call to join us this morning to observe the global Open Government Week under the theme, "OGP in STMA: The Journey So Far Towards Attaining a Sustainable and Resilient City That Commands the Trust and Confidence of all Citizens".

OGP is an international initiative formally launched in 2011 to ensure effective collaboration by bringing together government reformers and civil society leaders to create and implement action plans with the aim of ensuring inclusive, responsive and accountable governance. Currently, there are 79 participating countries and 20 subnational governments that have signed unto the platform.

Ladies and Gentlemen, STMA signed onto the OGP platform in 2015 to join nineteen other subnational governments in the World. The platform requires member states to bring out action plans that will in the short to long term enable them to become a more transparent, open and accountable government to its citizens. STMA came out with its first action plan in 2016 at the 4th OGP Global Summit in Paris.

The Assembly sought to adopt smart governance tools in the second OGP action plan that would ensure open, transparent, participatory, innovative and transformational governance with the vision of building sustainability in the structures of the Metropolis. With this idea in mind, we went on to prepare and co-create our second action plan which began in 2018 and will end in the year 2020. The action plan was prepared through a rigorous process that engaged the Assembly's stakeholders which included civil society organisations, traditional authorities, representatives from local government and public agencies, religious leaders and PWDs. In all, almost 1,200 citizens were directly engaged during the 4-month co-creation process including marginalized groups.

All the concerns that citizens raised during the co-creation process were analyzed and developed into five (5) commitments for the action plan. They are transparency and accountability in public infrastructure, civic participation and fiscal transparency, public service delivery, access to information and access to public services with particular emphasis on sanitation.

Ladies and gentlemen, in advancing our OGP agenda, the Assembly is partnering with various international organizations to fulfill our commitments.

Partnership with The Engine Room (TER) and GOVCHAT under OGP

Hon Presiding Member, Ladies and Gentlemen, STMA is partnering with The Engine Room (TER), an international non-profit organization based in the USA to provide technical support in implementing our commitment number two (2) by simplifying data sharing templates and creating mechanisms for internal and external data sharing. This would aid in empowering citizens to enhance responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels and build citizens trust and confidence in resource allocation and utilization.

The Assembly is also in talks with Eldrid Jordaan, the developer of GovChat to develop and launch a customized application for STMA. The GovChat is aimed at enabling citizens to access information, report complaints and receive feedback on services through mobile phone. It is our expectation that the good people of Sekondi-Takoradi will make use of the platform to ensure easy access to Metropolitan services.

STMA360

The Assembly will officially launch the STMA 360 web application which will bring about ease in acquiring permits for effective development control and management. STMA 360 is web and smart phone based Mobile Monitoring geospatial technology platform developed in the year 2018 purposely to track and manage progress of projects undertaken by citizens in the metropolis and reports on the status of the project to facilitate permitting and local governance services.

The app gives vivid location of where projects are being undertaken and some basic information such as the type of development, the owner, date for inspection, date for review, date for consideration, permit fee payable and the status of application whether approved or deferred. The app gives room for direct interactions with authorities and conveys feedbacks and comments from users. Complementing the web app would be the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles.

STMA Joins CoST

Hon Presiding Member, distinguished Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to announce to the good people of Sekondi-Takoradi that the Assembly has joined CoST - the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative. CoST is a leading global initiative to improve transparency and accountability in public infrastructure by working closely with government, industry and civil society to promote disclosure, validation and interpretation of data from infrastructure projects. This helps to inform and empower citizens and enables them to hold decision makers to account.

I am happy to inform you that STMA is the first sub-national member across the globe to be admitted by CoST and this truly reflects our motto “Nullis Secundi Sumus”.

Let me take this opportunity to introduce to you Professor George Ofori, the vice chairman of CoST board, who has travelled all the way from UK to witness this event.

Open Government Week

The Open Government Partnership Platform has set 11th -17th March, 2019 to mark Open Gov Week. Today Sekondi-Takoradi joins the OGP global family to mark this week.

Open Gov Week is designed for anyone who believes citizens should play a role in government decision making. Open government doers, leaders, and thinkers from around the world come together to share ideas, discuss solutions, and commit to new levels of citizen participation in government. This year the global focus is on Inclusion. Our OGP Action Plan seeks to promote inclusiveness in the governance of Sekondi-Takoradi through capacity building of the citizens to proactively engage and actively participate in the decentralization process to achieve our goal of attaining a sustainable and resilient city.

On this note, I officially outdoor STMA's OGP Local Action Plan II and would like to end by calling on all stakeholders to help us in our bid to be more transparent.

I wish you all a happy OGP week celebration.

Good morning and thank you once again.