



World Bank Ghana Country Director Meets Ghanaians in Brussels

27 September 2006 Brussels

World Bank's Country Director for Ghana, Mr. Mats Karlsson, met with representatives of the Ghanaian Community including officials of the Ghana Mission to the EU and representatives of the Association of Ghanaians in Belgium – Ghanaba. These meetings represented part of the World Bank's ongoing dialogue with the Diaspora group in Europe and aimed in exchanging ideas on the World Bank's program in Ghana and explore areas of corporation.

Speaking on the state of development in Ghana, Mr. Karlsson pointed out that the country was experiencing good economic growth, but poverty remained a problem for sections of the population. Governance indicators for Ghana were also good, with only Uganda and Tanzania scoring higher in Africa on the World Bank's Country Performance and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). However performance in a number of areas could be improved. On human development, school enrolments have increased, but questions remain on the quality of schooling and the state of tertiary education. Improvements are also required in the management of energy and natural resources. Problems associated with urban planning and employment also need to be addressed.

He said while remittances from Ghanaian nationals abroad are a major source of funds for the country, they often only fuel consumption and not necessarily investment.

In the ensuing discussion, issues of concern and interest raised by participants included protection of Ghanaian industry from unfair competition from Europe, lack of co-ordination between the World Bank and the EU's programs, little attention given to renewable energy (wind-, solar-power, bio fuels, LPG) and poor support given to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Before closing the meeting, Mr. Guggi Laryea – responsible for relations with civil society in the World Bank Brussels Office- informed the participants that the Office was in the process of seeking funds to organise a Development Marketplace for (Sub-Saharan) African Diasporas in Europe next year. The aim would be to select and reward entrepreneurial Diaspora activities and projects which improve the delivery of social services to the poor in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Representatives of the Brussels Ghanaian community, particularly officials of the Ghana mission, welcomed its first discussion with Mats Karlsson and expressed interest in engaging further dialogue with the World Bank on issues of mutual interest.