

COMMUNIQUE

**BY THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF GHANA AND THE GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE,
ISSUED AT EBENEZER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OSU, ACCRA ON MAY 10, 2017.**



Dearly beloved citizens of our dear nation Ghana, we bring you warm greetings from the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

DELIBERATIONS OF THE 2017 JOINT MEETING

We have just concluded our annual Joint Meeting which was held at Osu Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, Accra on Wednesday May 10, 2017. During the time we prayed and discussed issues of both Church and National interests. At the end of our meeting, we deem it appropriate as Christian Leaders of our land to bring the following issues of concern to the attention of the Church, the government and the entire citizenry so that we can all actively participate in the process of addressing them together as one united people.

2016 PEACEFUL ELECTIONS AND THE POST ELECTION CHALLENGES

We congratulate all Ghanaians for the peaceful manner we conducted ourselves before, during and after the 2016 General Elections. We congratulate the Security Agencies, the Electoral Commission, Religious Organisations, Traditional Leaders, the Media, Civil Society Organisations, Political Parties and all Stakeholders for the various roles they played to ensure the peaceful elections and transition of power from one political party to another.

We also want to thank the foreign missions and the many people who prayed for the nation during the electioneering period.

We however observed with worry pockets of violence especially from some supporters of the ruling political party during and after the period of the transition that calls for concern. The destruction of state property, the unlawful seizure of government properties and most alarmingly, the attack on the rule of law and democracy are issues that call for serious attention.

We are therefore calling on all political parties especially the party in power to uphold the rule of law at all times to grow our democracy.

THE FIGHT AGAINST GALAMSEY AND DESTRUCTION OF OUR WATER BODIES

We have observed with satisfaction the efforts of His Excellency the President of the Republic and his government to protect our water bodies, farm lands, forest reserves etc. and their commitment to end illegal mining in the country. This menace is destroying the lives of ordinary Ghanaians, livestock and food stuff. Many of our youth have also abandoned the classroom leading to increase in illiteracy in the affected areas. We commend the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, the Media Coalition, Religious Bodies, Traditional Leaders, Security Agencies and all who have committed themselves to the fight against illegal mining in the nation.

To this end, we the leaders of CCG and GCBC are calling for the following:

- Government's effort in the fight against galamsey should be sustained and remain non-partisan.
- Government should make great efforts to ensure that major river bodies like Birim, Prah, Ankobra, Densu etc will be drinkable again.
- Pastors in the country should identify themselves with the campaign and allow their pulpits to be used for education.
- Christians in the nation should pray and commit ourselves to the preservation of our environment and other natural resources at all times.

PAYMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE ARREARS

The National Health Insurance Scheme owes the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG) hospitals in excess of ₵200,000,000.00 (two hundred million cedis). Over the years several efforts have been made by CHAG to reclaim our money but to no avail.

Our hospitals take loans from banks to run and pay interests. Moreover, CHAG has made a commitment that staff members in our hospitals and clinics do not use strike action as a means of negotiation and we want government to appreciate these efforts we are making and act accordingly. We therefore call on government and the ministry of health to consider the following:

- Appreciate and acknowledge the contributions the churches make towards health care delivery in the nation.
- Roll out as a matter of urgency a programme to pay all arrears owed the CHAG hospitals to ensure that churches are able to run our hospitals and clinics.

FREE SHS AND A CALL FOR CHURCH-STATE PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION

We have observed with joy government's efforts to roll out the policy on Free SHS education. We welcome this idea as a pro-poor programme that would go a long way to ensure that most of our young people have access to at least senior high education level.

We therefore call on government to work on the sustainability and quality of the free SHS policy.

As we congratulate government in this matter, we wish to reiterate our call for a deeper Church-State partnership in education for the following reasons:

- For the churches to better own their schools and have increased supervision and oversight responsibilities
- For the churches to have better involvement in the management of the schools
- For the churches to uphold the moral standards of education which have become a worry to many a Ghanaian.

ATTITUDINAL CHANGE

We have observed with discomfort the levels of public indiscipline in our nation. The avoidable killings on our roads, open defecation resulting in diseases like cholera and typhoid, disregard for the rule of law, disregard for environmental cleanliness, lateness to work, lack of maintenance of public property, corruption etc. are examples of such worrying attitudes.

We therefore wish to draw the attention of Christians and the nation to the following:

- Christians should bring to bear our faith values into public service by living lives worthy of our calling.
- Citizens of this nation should cherish values like hard work, honesty, integrity, and respect for the rule of law.
- We call on government to roll out a programme to facilitate attitudinal change which the CCG and the GCBC would be ready to support. A typical example is the need to establish accessible counselling units in our various institutions.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

We have observed that the Church in Ghana is growing in terms of numbers, media coverage and visibility, especially in urban and metropolitan areas.

However, we have observed that whereas individual denominations may be growing in the cities, most denominations in the rural areas are dying. Moreover, the frontline of the Church as a national family is becoming weaker because we have not paid adequate attention to the unity of the National Church.

We are therefore calling on all churches to prayerfully consider the following:

- All churches should embrace the spirit of ecumenism and foster closer relationships with neighbouring churches.
- Denominations should respond and work towards Jesus' prayer in John 17:21 'That all may be one.'
- Denominations should not allow our differences to divide us since we are bigger than our differences but see ourselves as one people with one God, one faith and one Bible.

CONCLUSION

The Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference wish to assure all Ghanaians that we would continue our public education, Christian advocacy ministry, and prayers for peace, harmony, and justice in Ghana.

In so doing we will continue to be non-partisan and be guided by the principles of the Holy Bible. We wish all Ghanaians well in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SGND

Rev. Dr. Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong
General Secretary
CCG

SGND

Rev. Fr. Lazarus Anondee
Secretary General
GCBC

SGND

Rev. Dr. Ernest Adu-Gyamfi
Chairman
CCG

SGND

Most Rev. Philip Naameh
President
GCBC