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PROJECTING A NEW IMAGE FOR THE CHIEFTAINCY INSTITUTION

In 2013 when His Excellency the President John Dramani Mahama was making appointments by way of Ministers and their Deputies for the various Ministries, one Ministry that attracted a lot of interest and attention was the Ministry for Chieftaincy and Culture, as it was then referred. The interest of the public was .because of its unique position as the bridge between traditional authority and political leadership.

Stakeholders were quite anxious to know who succeeds the then Minister Mr. Alexander Asum Ahensah. But most importantly, the interest was also about the next person for the job who will re-organise and re structure the Ministry and take it to the next level. To many it was a big surprise when the name of Dr. Henry Seidu Daannaa was mentioned. For those outside the realm of chieftaincy Affairs, Dr. Daannaa was not a household name. But for the many who have been involved in one way or the other in Chieftaincy Affairs, it was no surprise at all. It was indeed a welcome news. They saw in him the visionary leader who will bring his rich experience, skill and expertise in chieftaincy matters to bear on the fortunes of the ministry and the Institution. It was not expected however that the Ministry will be re-designated Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs. But that is the prerogative of His Excellency the President. per Executive Instrument 2013.

For the past one year that Dr. Henry Seidu Daannaa has been at the helm of Affairs as the Sector Minister for Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs, he has not relent in his efforts to inject a new breath of life into the Chieftaincy Institution and Administration in the country in order to carve a new image for the Institution. For the past one year, he has charted a new course for the Institution

to re-assert itself as an indispensable sector in the scheme of national development.

To this end, ably supported by his deputy John Alexander Ackon, Dr. Daannaa has always been on the move from one region to another, traditional Council to another and from one Institution to another regardless of geographical location. Indeed, one can say without any shade of doubt that his promise to the members of the Parliamentary Vetting Committee which did vet him early last year when his nomination came up is coming to pass.

One would recall that Dr. Daannaa during his vetting defended the relevance of the chieftaincy Institution in contemporary times against the backdrop of calls to abolish the Institution; and further declared his determination to work tirelessly to uplift the image of the Institution and project it to the highest level.

OPINION: For many stakeholders in the chieftaincy Institution, Dr. Daannaa's appointment as the sector Minister was a blessing. Having been the main pivot and architect at the Research Directorate for well over 20 years since the establishment of the erstwhile Chieftaincy Secretariat to the days of the Ministry in 2006, and having been a resource person on chieftaincy matters in Ghana and beyond, Dr. Daannaa no doubt has a deep understanding of the sector, its challenges and the way forward. He has what it takes to bring the desired changes and impetus to the sector.

ON THE MOVE: Since his assumption of office a year ago, Dr. Daannaa has so far successfully toured six regions to acquaint himself with the challenges in the regions on chieftaincy matters.

In each of the regions visited, he has held series of discussions with almost all the traditional Councils, visiting each one in turn. This pro-active measure has led to the amicable resolution of many chieftaincy issues which otherwise could have degenerated into violence and destruction.

With ten Regional Houses of Chiefs, 275 Traditional Councils dotted along the length and breadth of the country, and of course the National House of Chiefs, each one with its unique characteristics and challenge, one can imagine the enormity of challenges the Ministry and the Institution of chieftaincy face. The

most obvious being chieftaincy disputes, resources for effective work, need for efficient staff, logistics and developing policies to promote effective interface between traditional governance and civil society on one hand and traditional governance and other spheres of national life.

MEDIA TOURS: Acknowledging the important role of the media as an indispensable stakeholder to every Institutional growth and for purposes of media/public relations, the Media was not left out in the outreach programmes of the Minister. The role of the media comes forcefully into play when it comes to public education, information dissemination, sensitization, and publicity among others. Dr. Daannaa's interaction therefore with the Management of a Section of the Media including New Times Corporation, Metro TV, TV Africa and TV 3 was an opportune platform created to involve the media in the policies and programmes of the ministry. Dr. Daannaa appealed to the media to inform and educate chiefs on the need to register in the National Register of Chiefs as a legislative requirement per the Chieftaincy Act 759 of 2008. By all standards, the media outreach programme was a positive one towards forging closer ties and working relationship with the Media. This view was strongly emphasized by the Weekly Spectator in its "Comment" Column of Saturday May 17, 2014.

Certainly, one can say without any reservation that notwithstanding the challenges of the Chieftaincy Institution, the past one year has ushered the institution into a new period of transformation and image building. A peaceful chieftaincy environment is an asset to national development and progress.

It enhances the socio-economic life of the people. And this is the prime vision of the sector minister for Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs Dr. Henry Seidu Daannaa and his deputy Hon Alexander John Ackon as they pursue policies and programmes to uplift the image of the Institution to greater heights for the promotion of peace and good governance.

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