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Transporting Ghana into the future



Ghana's transport minister, Dzifa Aku Attivor



SPECIAL REPORT

As part of its transition from a lower middle-income country to full middle-income status, Ghana is aggressively positioning itself to become the transport hub of West Africa. In this 20-page Special Report, the minister for transport, Dzifa Aku Attivor, and the heads of the relevant transport sector agencies, take us through the massive developments going on in the sector. This is in fulfillment of President John Dramani Mahama's promise of making Ghana the gateway not only to West Africa, but to the whole continent.

Ghana: Implementing the government's transport vision

Ghana is far ahead in terms of infrastructure than other lower middle-income African countries, but as the West African nation advances to middle-income status, the government is upgrading and expanding infrastructure, particularly in the transport sector, to meet current and future demands as well as to establish the country as a safe gateway to the African market.

“A reliable, efficient, cost-effective and modern transportation system is required to fast track [Ghana's] transition from a lower middle-income to a fully-fledged middle-income status. To this end we have, over the last few years, been putting in place the building blocks for reaching this goal,” said President John Mahama in his State of Nation address delivered early this year.

“We have always been fond of referring to Ghana as the gateway to West Africa,” the president added, “but more and more it is looking like Ghana is becoming a gateway to the rest of Africa as well.”

This, in essence, is the sum of the government's transport vision, and the philosophy behind the transport-sector reforms and construction currently going on in the country to make it an ideal place for investors.

The vision, according to Dzifa Aku Attivor, minister for transport, is “to create an integrated, modally complementary, cost-effective, safe, secure, sustainable and seamless transportation system responsive to the needs of society, supporting growth and poverty reduction, and capable of establishing Ghana

as a transport hub of West Africa.”

Thus, on the following pages, you shall see how the government, via the Ministry of Transport and the relevant sector agencies, is implementing the government's transport vision, or trying to achieve the goals set by the vision.

Overall, the vision contains seven policy objectives. These are: 1) establish Ghana as a transportation hub for the West African subregion; 2) create and sustain an efficient transport system that meets

user needs; 3) integrate land use, transport planning, development planning, and service provision and 4) create a vibrant investment and performance-based management environment that maximizes benefits for public and private sector investors.

The other objectives are to develop and implement comprehensive and integrated policy, governance, and institutional frameworks; ensure sustainable development in the transport sector; and develop adequate human resources and apply new

technology.

The transport minister says the government is providing an integrated network in the country that makes passenger travel as well as freight transport efficient, cost effective, affordable and, perhaps most important, safe and secure. Such a system, she says, will bolster Ghana's reputation in becoming an important gateway to Africa.

The government is expanding and developing the air-transport infrastructure to establish a more efficient and

And just as air transport, the government is improving and modernizing its ports sector to keep up with the growing demands of the fast-expanding economy. Major expansion projects are underway at the two harbors, Tema and Takoradi, to increase their capacities and also to ensure that both are being fully equipped to service local and international shippers. Soon congestion at the ports would be eased considerably, and the long lines of vessels at the ports would be



productive aviation industry that will effectively compete in the marketplace while providing first-class service. The country has one international airport, Kotoka, in Accra, besides other local airports. Several major international airlines fly there regularly. Most of the country's air-transport market is international. With the improved safety and security of air transport in the country, international and domestic passenger numbers have increased dramatically over the past few years.

a thing of the past. Already, clearance procedures of goods at the ports have been simplified to prevent delays.

Recognizing the importance of maritime security to the economy, the government has allocated the requisite resources to protect its maritime domain, in view of the rise of illegal activities, particularly piracy. The completion of a Vessel Traffic Management Information System (VTMIS) has put the Ghana Maritime Authority in effective electronic surveillance control of the country's maritime juris-

diction.

The government has also drawn up plans to develop the railway network – track would be upgraded to standard-gauge, and new railway lines would be constructed. The Western Rail Line would be rehabilitated as well as the Suburban Rail Lines, including rolling stock, for Accra-Nsawam, Takoradi-Kojokrom-Sekondi, and Kumasi-Ejisu. Also completed are the feasibility studies for the rehabilitation of the Eastern and Central Lines, and the expansion and construction of rail lines to northern Ghana.

“Before the end of my first term [i.e., December 2016], Ghana will witness a revival of its railway transport service, carting export products to

buses from the government to augment its already impressive fleet of 1,017. An additional 30 new buses will be purchased by the company itself to enhance the fleet.

On the luxury-travel side, the Intercity STC Coaches Limited (ISTC) has by far the most ambitious plans to recreate the glorious days of its past as a way of conquering the future than any other transport-related company or agency in Ghana. In January 2015, Minister Attivor says the ISTC will take delivery of 45 brand new Scania luxury coaches bought by the government of Ghana, which, in one fell swoop, will increase the ISTC’s current fleet size by more than 125 percent and give it the wherewithal to im-

the ports and safely carrying commuters over various distances,” the president promised in his 2014 State of the Nation address.

Minister Attivor says the government is committed to the provision of reliable, safe and efficient mass transport services by road in Ghana and the West African subregion. In the next few months, she says, passengers who use Metro Mass Transit (MMT) buses for their travels in the country will see expanded service when the company takes delivery of 200 new

plement some of the lofty ideas it has under its belt.

Overall, the prospects of the transport sector are very good. The massive development going on in the sector has raised Ghana’s investor attractiveness. And with its political stability, better economic policies, and strong economic growth, the country is poised to become the regional leader. ■

One of the major expansion works at Kotoka International Airport, the Southern Apron construction, is due to be completed this year.







Ghana to get new national airline

“There is a lot going on in the transport sector”, says Transport Minister Dzifa Aku Attivor. This includes plans to establish a new national airline on a public-private partnership basis. According to the minister, the country has learned a lot of lessons from why the previous two

national airlines, Ghana Airways and Ghana International Airlines, failed. “And I can assure you that our government will not commit the same mistakes.” Besides the new airline, there are plenty of expansion works going

on in the aviation, railway and ports sub-sectors of the country’s transport sector. In this interview, Minister Attivor talks about some of the works.

Q: What would you say is the philosophy behind your government’s transport vision?

A: Ghana is a lower-middle-income country, and we are on the threshold of reaching a full middle-income status. So under the leadership of President John Mahama, the government has embarked on a massive transformation program based on economic diversification, macroeconomic stability, social inclusion and job creation. President Mahama also recognizes that better infrastructure, and more investment in the economic sectors, particularly transport where I am privileged to head, will be crucial for our ambition of achieving full middle-income status. That is why you see massive infrastructure projects going on all over the country.

Q: What support is your ministry getting overall from the central government for the new projects?

A: Our transformation agenda is designed to position Ghana as the gateway to the continent. As such the president is supporting my ministry to undertake rapid upgrade and expansion of the country’s airports, particularly the Kotoka International Airport (KIA), and both Tema and Takoradi harbors. We will also rehabilitate and improve the railway system, and provide a more efficient road transport service.

We have about 35 airlines operating from, and flying into, KIA on international and local routes, so we need to expand facilities there. The current terminal building was built to take care of 500,000 passengers per year, and right now the airport is doing about 2 million passengers per year. So sometimes the airport is a bit congested. That is why we are refurbishing the facilities there and expanding the airport as a whole. Currently we are constructing among others a southern apron for eight

wide body aircraft and it is almost completed.

Q: And the Tamale Airport is being turned into an international airport?

A: Yes. Work has already started on a \$125 million proj-

ground lighting to facilitate night-flight operations. We also recently installed an instrument-landing system to guide pilots when they are coming to land, because the weather in Kumasi is very unpredictable.

“Air transport is one of the cardinal points of our economic growth, so we take aviation safety seriously, and indeed it is one of the high priorities at the Ministry of Transport.”

ect to upgrade the Tamale Airport into an international airport and the first phase of extending the runway to accommodate bigger aircraft, and the installation of lighting systems to facilitate take-off and landing at night time, will be completed by September next year.

We are also working on the Kumasi airport. We are improving and extending the runway. We are also installing aeronautical lighting and

Q: Is it true as reported that another international airport is planned for the Greater Accra Region?

A: That is true. The government has plans to build a new international airport at Ningo-Prampram in the Dangbe West District of the Greater Accra Region. Preliminary designs for the new international airport have been done. The proposed annual passenger throughput is 4.5 million, and annual passenger

Dzifa Attivor: “Our transformation agenda is designed to position Ghana as the gateway to the continent.”

aircraft movements is 33,835. It will also have 12-peak-hour passenger aircraft movement, and provision has been made for 13 apron stands. The new airport is needed to ease the pressure on the Kotoka International Airport, which is experiencing very high domestic and international traffic.

Q: Is the government thinking about establishing a new national airline, after the failure of Ghana Airways and Ghana International Airlines?

A: Yes, we have plans to establish a new national airline on a public-private partnership basis. We have learned a lot of lessons about why the country's two airlines, Ghana Airways and Ghana International Airlines, failed, and I can assure you that our government will not commit the same mistakes. We are in the process of looking for a serious private partner for the creation of the new national airline, and my ministry has received several proposals from private airline companies.

We have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and the World Bank to provide us with technical advisory services and also to help us choose a reliable partner to take a majority stake in a new national airline by the end of next year. This would be our third attempt at running a national airline, so we are very cautious. This time around the private investor would play a leading role. We are very optimistic about the success of the new airline.

Q: How seriously does your ministry take aviation safety?

A: As you know, air transport is one of the cardinal points of our economic growth, so we take aviation safety seriously, and indeed it is one of the high priorities at the Ministry of Transport.

We have tremendously enhanced safety in our skies through the installation of modern air-navigation systems, and capacity building at the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), the company



Minister for Transport Dzifa Attivor (R) explains a point to President John Mahama during an inspection tour of Kumasi Airport.

that provide air navigation services within the Accra Flight Information Region, that is the airspace over Ghana, Togo and Benin and some areas over the Atlantic

tion of all.

Q: And what can you say about the ports and harbors of Ghana? What is going on there?

A: The ports in the country

capacity container vessels.

At the Takoradi port, the expansion works underway are geared toward developing the port to handle bulk commodities, including bauxite and manganese, and also to service the oil exploration and production companies in the Western Region. Works underway at the port include breakwater construction, channel dredging to allow deeper ships to enter, and the provision of sites for bulk terminal and other facilities. The expansion work will facilitate more tonnage, especially as the activities of oil and mining companies in the area increase.

Q: Piracy has been increasing in West African waters in the last decade. What is the situation in Ghana's territorial waters, and what is the government doing to combat such crimes?

A: As you know, cases of piracy have increased in the Gulf of Guinea, but we don't have any threats of piracy in Ghana's waters. Our waters are very safe. Recently President Mahama inaugurated Africa's biggest Vessel Traffic Management Information System (VTMIS) at the Ghana

adding new lines. But none was able to do it. What is your government's railway policy?

A: We are exploring various avenues to totally revamp the railway network in the country. The Ghana Railway Development Authority (GRDA) is the agency in charge of promoting, developing and maintaining the rail infrastructure and rail services in the country.

GRDA and other stakeholders are working on a railway improvement plan that will see to the rehabilitation of railway lines in the country. The private sector is most welcome to partner with the government to revitalize the rail sector.

The three main railway lines are the Western, Eastern and Central, and they are in poor condition. So far some tracks have been upgraded to standard-gauge specifications, and some lines extended. Some of the stations between Accra and Tema have been rehabilitated with modern facilities.

We have bought two new diesel passenger trains, each with three passenger carriages and a 600-person capacity, to run two daily services on the Accra-Tema line, which began operations in February 2013.

Q: But that is about intra-city services?

A: Yes. As part of the Presidential Priority Projects scheme, we are also constructing a suburban line from Takoradi to Sekondi via Kojokrom in the Western Region.

In terms of cost and efficiency, it is far better to ship commodities like cocoa and bauxite through rail lines, to avoid increasing congestion and wear and tear on our road links.

So we are going to bring the once-vibrant railway sector back on track.

As you can see, there is a lot going on in the transport sector in terms of infrastructure development to help boost economic growth and fast track the country's transition to full middle-income status, as the president promised in his State of the Nation address early this year. ■

“President Mahama recognizes that better infrastructure, and more investment in the economic sectors, particularly transport, will be crucial for our ambition of achieving full middle-income status. That is why you see massive infrastructure projects going on all over the country.”

Ocean.

At all times, we ensure that the implementation of safety oversight in the country meets international standards.

I guess you have heard reports that Togo and Benin have requested autonomy from Ghana in the management of their airspace. There is no tension between us over this issue, as some reports suggest. There are talks going on at the highest level of government of the three countries, and the issue will be resolved soon to the satisfac-

are also undergoing massive expansion, as never seen before, to boost their capacity to keep up with increasing volumes of cargo as our economy grows. We are carrying out expansion works at Tema in five phases, to ease congestion and reduce wait times.

Phase 1 involves constructing breakwater, dredging to specified depths and creating quay wall foundation trenches.

There is also reclamation to build new terminal areas, as well as building five new berths to accommodate high-

Maritime Authority.

It has a long-range identification and tracking system of about 1,000 nautical miles. It is one of the best out there, and that is what we use in clearing our water of piracy, drug trafficking and related crimes. Ghana's waters are the safest on the continent because we have never let our guard down.

Q: Several past governments have talked about revamping the country's rail network and even



Abdulai Alhasan, acting director-general of GCAA

Civil Aviation: Keeping Ghana's skies safer

The Ghana Civil Aviation Authority's technical and operational record over the past years speaks for itself. But to make Ghana's skies even safer, new and better air navigation equipment and technology are being installed in Accra and elsewhere.



Aerodrome Controllers at the Air Traffic Control Tower at Kotoka International Airport, in Accra.

As Ghana's airports are rehabilitated and expanded, and air travel increases, so do the responsibilities of the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). There cannot be any escalation in air transport without a corresponding rise in air navigation services. Which makes the job of the GCAA even more onerous, and vital.

As a result, air navigation

services are being totally revamped in the country via massive improvements in the GCAA's equipment and capability.

"We are working hard to keep our skies safe," says Abdulai Alhasan, acting director-general of GCAA, the agency tasked with ensuring traffic in the nation's airports and providing air navigation services within the Accra Flight Information Region (FIR), which comprises the airspace over Ghana, Togo and Benin and a large area over the Atlantic Ocean in the Gulf of Guinea. "GCAA's technical and operational record over the past years speaks for itself," he adds.

The installation of two new Instrument Landing Systems

(ILS) for Accra and Kumasi has been completed, at a cost of \$969,000 and \$1 million respectively. Both are awaiting



calibration, before coming on stream.

A Wide Area Multilateration (WAMLAT) and an Air Traffic Control Management System are also being installed, at a cost of \$5 million. And that is only Phase 1. The project is expected to be completed in 2015.

In addition, a modern Air Traffic Navigation Service Center is to be built at the cost of \$35 million (including equipment). The feasibility studies and design are already completed. The project is waiting for site location from the Ghana Airports

Company Limited. The project period is 2015-16.

The current developments are music to the ears of the GCAA, whose mission is "to provide safe, secure, efficient and effective aviation regulation and air navigation services in a professional and environmentally responsible manner."

The GCAA's vision is to be

"a world class aviation regulator and air navigation services provider."

As such, the acting director-general says GCAA's training school, the Aviation Academy, is being extended at a cost of \$12 million to provide more space and better conditions for academic work that would bring even more improvements to the GCAA. The Academy's extension project started in October 2012 and will finish in December 2014.

The director-general says the high number of airlines doing business in Ghana and a number of others that are undergoing certification to begin operations in the country are a testimony of how safe and secured Ghana's airspace is. ■

Ghana's airports undergoing massive facelift

Air travel in Ghana will be a very enjoyable pursuit when the Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL) finishes all the ongoing and proposed projects meant to give the country's airports a massive facelift.



Charles Asare, acting managing director of GACL



Forever patient, air travelers in Ghana have grown accustomed to crammed spaces and second-rate facilities at the country's airports, but all that is going to change in the next year or two. Travelers using Kotoka International Airport (KIA) in Accra will be the most pampered when the Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL) completes two passenger terminals at the country's premier airport.

Making Ghana's airports not only safe and efficient, but downright pleasant to experience, is the goal that the GACL is working toward, says its acting managing director, Charles Asare. He wants to make sure that the airports can handle not only the largest and most state-of-the-art aircraft, but also provide the people who use them with the best possible service.

Asare, who came on board only in September, sees his agency's mission as upgrading Ghana's airports into world-class facilities. Expansion and

refurbishment of the arrival hall at Terminal 2 (due to finish in 2015) and Terminal 3, expected to be completed in 2016, at a cost of \$250 million, will bring vast improvements that will dramatically change the face of KIA.

In one fell swoop, the two new terminals will wipe away the current overcrowded spaces of the airport and give passengers using the nation's leading airport something to smile about.

Equally, passengers using regional airports in Kumasi, Tamale, Wa, Sunyani and Takoradi will see vast improvements as the GACL is rehabilitating and expanding all of them, including terminal buildings and runways.

Big changes in Accra

Starting in Accra, under the KIA Development Phase III, the arrival hall of Terminal 2 has been given a facelift. Phase 1 of that work, expansion of the immigration and baggage claim halls, completed before its Nov. 30, 2014

deadline. Phase 2, the arrival facilities of Terminal 2 being fully expanded and refurbished, was also completed a year before its deadline, which was November 2015.

The addition of another new terminal at KIA, the proposed Terminal 3, will eat up a good portion of the current passenger traffic at the airport and clear cramped conditions at the airport.

The technical and financial proposals for Terminal 3 were submitted on Oct. 7, 2014. The estimated cost is \$250 million. Funding will come from external sources, and the project is expected to be completed by December 2016.

Ongoing projects at KIA

Besides Terminals 2 and 3, the projects currently underway at the KIA include: 1) the construction of a southern apron for eight wide-body aircraft, due to be completed this year; 2) installation of baggage handling and screening systems; 3) re-roofing of terminal buildings; and 4) installation

of x-ray screening equipment.

The others are installing apron Aviation Guiding Lights (AGL), reconstructing taxiway and apron pavements, rehabilitating the runaway touchdown zone, and constructing 17 apron parking stands for mix-fleet aircraft, at a cost of \$45 million for the latter.

Regional airports

The Kumasi airport is also getting a facelift. The runway will be extended from 6,500 feet to 8,200 feet, at a cost of \$40 million. The project will begin in September 2015.

New apron AGL are also being installed, and the current small terminal building in Kumasi will be expanded and refurbished. The airport, like all the regional airports in the country, is also getting new x-ray screening equipment installed.

Like Kumasi Airport, the regional airport at Tamale is also being upgraded and extended. Both the runway and terminal building will be expanded and rehabilitated.

Similarly, the Sunyani Airport will get a facelift. Its runway and apron will be rehabilitated at a cost of \$40 million. The work will start in March 2015.

So also will the Wa Airport runway and security fence be rehabilitated.

Future development

Funding requirements for what the GACL calls "future development" come to a cool \$564.9 million, made up of: 1) multistorey parking garage at KIA, \$35.3 million; additional apron for Code A, B, C, \$45 million; construction of Terminal 3 at KIA, \$250 million; expansion of Terminal I at KIA, \$30 million; expansion of Kumasi terminal building, \$8 million; Kumasi apron and runway upgrade, \$62 million, and Sunyani apron and runway upgrade, \$75 million.

The other projects include runway overlay at KIA, \$20 million; procurement of three crash rescue fire tenders, \$6.3 million; construction of KIA's apron, \$20 million; KIA outer



▲
The expansion of Terminal 2 arrival hall at Kotoka International airport is going on as scheduled.

▶
The construction of a southern apron for eight wide-body aircraft at Kotoka International Airport is almost completed.

perimeter fencing, \$3.3 million, expansion of sewage treatment plant at KIA, \$1.5 million; ducting and reinstallation of AGL cable at KIA, \$4 million; fire detection system at KIA, \$3 million; rehabilitation of Wa runway and security fence, \$1.5 million. Grand total: \$564.9 million.

The GACL also proposes to develop new aerodromes at Ho, Cape Coast, Bolgatanga, Koforidua and New Takoradi airports, even as it looks for public private partnership (PPP) investors to build a multi-story parking garage at KIA estimated to cost \$35 million. An airline office complex, and a freight-forwarders office complex will also be constructed under PPP.

Overall, there are happy days ahead for Ghana's various airports, thanks to the

foresight of the GACL.

For all airports in the country, Asare says, modern equipment, including security x-ray machines, is a high priority, because passengers and personnel need to feel that air travel is safe.

"We also label our excellent services at the airports as SAFE: S, for safe and secure; E is efficiency; R is reliability; and V is for visibility," the managing director says. ■

President John Mahama, on board an excavator, breaks the ground for the start of work on the upgrading and expansion of the Tamale Airport into an international airport.



Ghana Ports: Embracing the future

Ghana's ports and harbors are undergoing a major transformation that will put the country on the world maritime stage. As a result, the Ghana Ports & Harbors Authority (GPHA) is embracing the future by providing the most efficient maritime services within the West African subregion.



With an eye to the future, especially to meet the demands of the growing economy, the Ghana Ports & Harbors Authority (GPHA) is giving the country's harbors a new lease on life. Both the Tema and Takoradi harbors are being extended and expanded to take in the increased traffic expected in the future.

Already, the country's import traffic through the Tema and Takoradi ports has been increasing year after year. In the decade from 2003 to 2013, it grew from a total 7 million tons in 2003 to 12 million tons in 2013.

Breaking it down to the individual ports, Tema saw nearly 5.5 million tons of imports coming through in 2003 but more than 10 million tons in 2013.

Takoradi is principally an export-oriented port, but even Takoradi has seen import traf-

fic going up, from 1.2 million tons in 2003 to nearly 2 million tons in 2013.

Similarly, export traffic through Tema and Takoradi has been growing, from 3.3 million tons in 2003 to 5 million in 2013.

Exports out of Takoradi increased from 2.5 million tons in 2003 to 3.5 million tons in 2013. Tema saw export traffic increasing from 809,589 tons in 2003 to 1.5 million tons in 2013.

If this trend continues, the two ports will need expanded spaces to cover the increased traffic volume. And that is exactly what Richard A.Y. Anamoo, director-general of GPHA, says the government is doing.

"Under the leadership of President Mahama, we are undertaking a number of major projects, expansion of the ports and the modernization of some of the old structures, including security improvements," the director-general says.



Richard Anamoo,
director-general of GPHA

The Tema port

Built in 1962, the Tema port is now seeing various expansion and extension projects going on, which, when completed in the next two years, will enhance service delivery at Ghana's premier port.

As part of the improve-

ments, the GPHA has completed an E-Gate Project involving the installation of CCTV and OCR systems, costing \$4.9 million.

Two tug boats, the T.T Addy and the V.A Owusu-Ansah, have also been acquired, at a cost of almost \$9 million, in addition to security patrol boats at a cost of \$2.8 million.

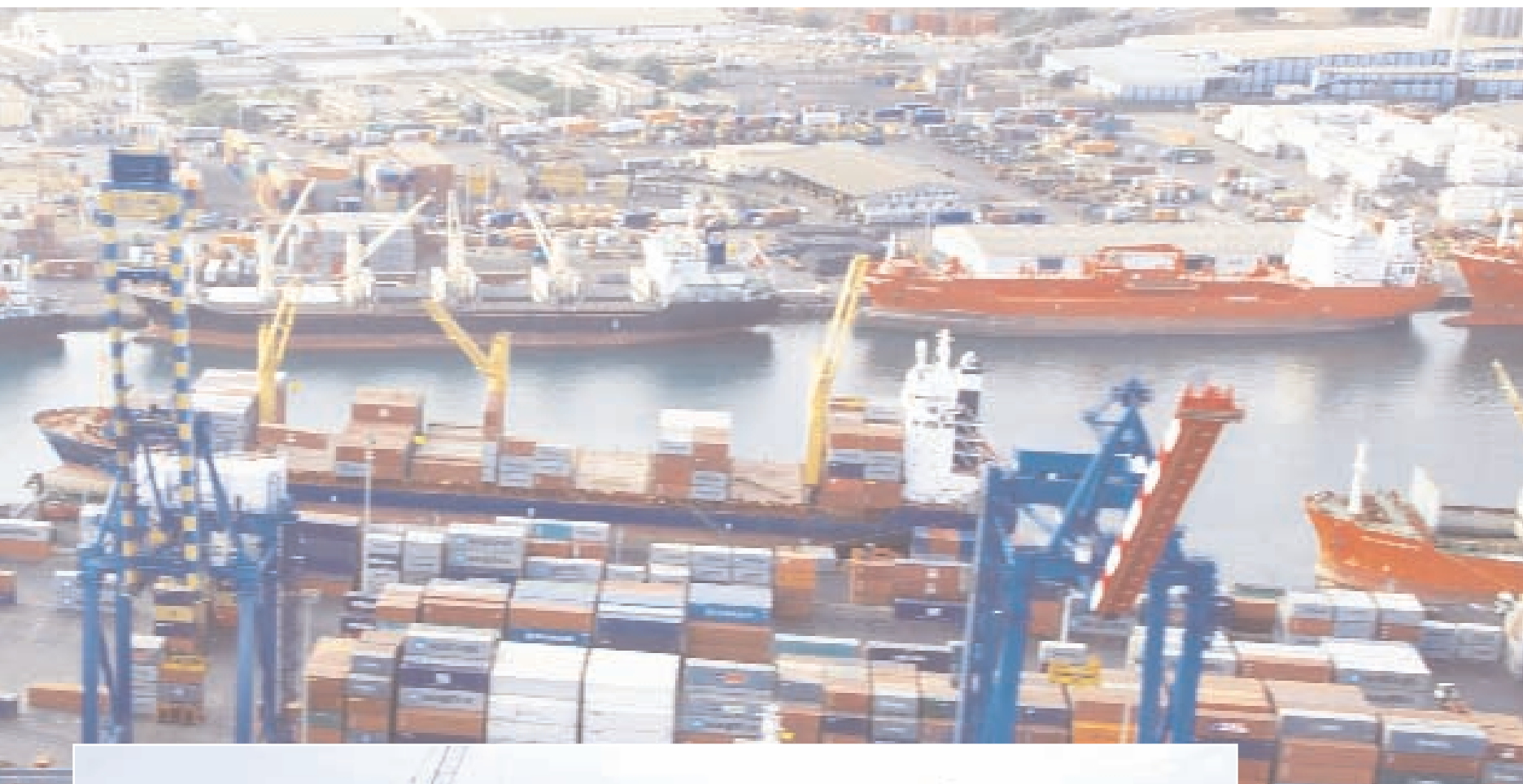
To improve services further, cargo handling equipment, worth \$23 million, has been procured by the GPHA, while a further \$8 million has been spent on reachstackers, forklifts, Mafi tractors and trailers.

To look after the health of the maritime men and women who are the backbone of the Tema port, a 130-bed, \$5.5 million Maritime Hospital, built by the China State Hualong Construction Co. Ltd., under contract from the GPHA. The hospital, three-quarters completed, was slated to be finished this year, but that deadline may be ex-

tended. The hospital will have five surgical theaters, a medical gas plant, a morgue, an ICU, an accident/trauma/emergency unit, CT-scan, MRI, etc. It has been in the works since November 2012.

To decongest and enhance conditions at the Tema port, the GPHA is developing a Transit Truck Village (TTV) at Ashiaman, with a capacity of parking 800 trucks plus other vehicles. When completed, the Ashiaman TTV will take much of the traffic away from the already existing TTV at the Tema port proper, which has a capacity of 280 trucks plus other vehicles.

The GPHA is also developing a Reefer terminal at the Tema port. Pavement structure works, costing \$500,000, are 90 percent completed. The electrical installations, lighting, substations and generator sets for the project, worth \$2.2 million, are also 90 percent completed. Installation of



Top: An aerial view of Tema port. Left: The construction of a bulk-cargo-handling jetty going on as part of the expansion of the Tema port.



Minister for Transport Dzifa Attivor and the director-general of the GPHA, Richard Anamoo, brief President John Mahama on the progress of breakwater dredging construction at the Takoradi port.

Reefer racks, costing almost \$2 million, is 30 percent completed. When finished, it will have a capacity of 800 tons.

A geotech, bathymetric and sub-bottom survey has been done to guide future development of the Tema port. Already, the construction of a bulk cargo-handling jetty is underway, at a cost of \$122.1 million. It will be 1,300 feet long and 165 feet wide. Construction started in November 2012 and is expected to be completed by November 2015.

As part of Phases 1-2 of the port's expansion, the construction of a 52-foot draft and a 4,600-foot quay will start in the first quarter of 2015.

In total, the Tema port expansion project is estimated to cost \$1.5 billion. This includes access roads and up to 250 acres of terminal, STS cranes, etc.

Feasibility studies and design of access roads have been done, and a draft report has been presented for the major access roads to the port, including a new 7.5-mile dedicated highway to be built at a

cost \$180 million.

An upgrade of five miles of the Tema-Accra Motorway to Harbour Road in Tema will also be done, at an estimated cost of \$120 million. At least two interchanges will be constructed on the Motorway-Tema Port stretch. The Meridian Road and sections of

dredged at a cost of \$1.95 million.

In the near future, the GPHA intends to establish a GPHA/STC Training Institute to train tomorrow's marine men and women. The aim is to train and certify technicians and engineers for tomorrow's needs.

burgeoning oil industry to cater to, Takoradi is undergoing a major facelift to prepare it for the expected increased traffic that the oil industry is likely to bring.

Already breakwater dredging works are underway. More than 3,600 feet of the main breakwater has been com-

pleted. Also underway is the construction of 2,600 feet of lee breakwater. The job is being done by a Belgian contractor, Jan de Nul NV, at a cost of \$251 million. It is expected to be completed in September 2016.

Dredging at the port is scheduled to start in November. Geotechnical investigations have indicated two types of materials to be dredged: sandstone and mudstone. Both floating and submerged pipelines will be laid from the dredging vessel to discharge

Fishing harbor

The Sekondi Fishing Harbor will also be expanded, at a cost of \$19 million. The project is being sponsored by the Japan government's international development agency, JICA.

The work includes a lay-by wharf, an access road to the boats beach with canoe-berthing facilities, a fish market shed, fuel dumps, an administration block and a 30-ton-a-day ice-making plant. A water-supply facility will also be provided.

Although the expansion of the ports is expensive, the director-general of GPHA says it's necessary to position Ghana as a strategic hub in the maritime industry.

"Our ports and harbors are undergoing a major transformation that would put Ghana on the world maritime stage," says Anamoo. "We are also ensuring that we provide efficient services at the ports." ■

"Our ports and harbors are undergoing a major transformation that will put Ghana on the world maritime stage."

Hospital Road – all in Tema – will also see major upgrades.

The expansion project at Tema also involves the reconstruction of the existing Net Mending Wharf to cover a length of 426 feet and a width of 41 feet, at a cost of \$1 million. It is expected to be completed in December 2014.

The project involves the repair of the wharf and breakwater, the provision of solar lighting and a re-surfaced driveway to the fish-market area. The nearby Canoe Basin has already been cleaned and

The institute will use simulators to produce crane operators, forklift operators, reach-stacker operators, mobile crane operators, offshore platform operators, tractor and vehicle drivers and tugboat and pilot launch operators.

Takoradi port expansion works

The Takoradi port is not being left out by the GPHA. Being the nation's export gateway, which now has Ghana's

Protecting Ghana's maritime domain

With the installation of new electronic surveillance equipment and enhanced personnel efficiency, the Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA) is now in effective surveillance control of the country's maritime jurisdiction.

The Ghana Maritime Authority (GMA) is the regulatory body mandated to ensure maritime safety and security, maritime environment protection and efficient shipping services in the country. Its main objective is to ensure that there is effective legislation in place to regulate the maritime industry.

As such, the GMA is determined to collaborate with the Ministry of Transport to ensure the passage a Maritime Pollution Bill, regulations to license ship-manning agencies in the country, inland waterways regulations and new regulations to incorporate the global Manila Amendments to the Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers (STCW) Convention into Ghana's domestic legislation.

With the completion and commissioning by President John Mahama of a Vessel Traffic Management Information System (VTMIS) for the GMA in April, the Authority is now in effective electronic surveillance control of Ghana's maritime jurisdiction.

The VTMIS project (funded by a Finnish concessional loan of \$21.7 million and \$6 million counterpart domestic facility) is a state-of-the-art system designed to provide a comprehensive and continuous

surveillance of Ghana's maritime domain.

It will also protect the country's maritime resources (including offshore installations, oil terminals and gas pipelines), and check unlawful maritime activities such as piracy and armed robbery, and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and other maritime crimes.

The VTMIS is an important maritime security tool that will also help the GMA repress any other unlawful maritime activity and environmental degradation within Ghana's maritime jurisdiction.

The GMA was responsible for implementing the local component aspect of the VTMIS project as directed by the Contract Agreement.

This included the procurement of a work boat to service and maintain the hydro-buoys, the purchase of hydrological buoys for weather observation, the payment of satellite fees for both the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) and Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system of the VTMIS, and payment for the allocation of transmission frequencies and bandwidths.

The LRIT system is a key component of the VTMIS, which allows the GMA to receive position reports from



A GMA official monitors the VTMIS from the control room to keep surveillance over Ghana's waters.

vessels flying Ghana's flag from anywhere in the world, as well as reports of ships passing through the country's maritime domain.

The LRIT further allows the GMA and other stakeholders to obtain enhanced awareness of developments in Ghana's maritime domain and to be able to track both domestic and foreign vessels 1,000 nautical miles away from Ghana.

Procurement of boats

As electronic surveillance is incomplete without boots on the ground (or, in this case, boots on the sea and inland waterways), there is the need to complement the electronic surveillance system with physical patrols for enhanced security measures, especially for port control and inspection of ships that call at the country's oil sites at the Jubilee Fields and at anchorages, for maritime search and rescue operations, and for safety enforcement on the Volta Lake.

As a result, the GMA has been looking into acquiring

identify boats to be constructed for the GMA.

Office building

Another pressing need for the GMA is office accommodation, as there has been an expansion in the Authority's mandate due to the discovery of oil and gas in Ghana's maritime jurisdiction.

This development has led to an increase in vessel traffic and a corresponding increase in the demand for PSC officers and ship inspectors in general by the GMA. There is therefore a compelling need for office accommodation for GMA staff. To solve the problem, the GMA has already acquired a land title, and engineering drawings and bill of quantities have been prepared for a new head office building. Funding arrangements are currently being sought from banking syndicates to obtain a loan facility. The GMA will also use part of its internally generated funds to support the project, which is expected to commence in 2015. ■

Ghana Railways will rise again



A newly constructed Railway Station Building at Community 1, Tema.

The Ghana Railway Development Authority (GRDA) is geared up for greater things in the next two years. The existing but decayed rail network will be rebuilt while completely new lines will be added to connect the whole country, from north to south, east to west.



A renovated Tema Harbor Railway Station.

Five railway projects are to be completed in 2016 under the Presidential Priority Projects scheme. The Ghana Railway Development Authority (GRDA) is in charge of the projects and is keen to complete them on schedule, all things being equal, says the chief executive of GRDA, Alidu A. Sadique.

The projects include the construction of the Takoradi-Sekondi via Kojokrom suburban railway line. It will cost \$165,577,267. Construction work is ongoing and is about 35 percent complete.

The letter of credit for the New Diesel Multiple Units (NDMUs) to be procured as part of the project is yet to be established, however. This is



President John Mahama inspects a new rail line. He has pledged to restore Ghana's rail transport to its former glory.

likely to cause a delay in the manufacturing of the NDMUs.

Two existing locomotives and six coaches will, however, be rehabilitated, while modern signaling and a telecom system will be provided.

Two new station buildings on the line will be constructed, while another two will be renovated and four halts erected. The project's completion date was extended by 12 months to April 2015.

The second of the five projects is the Western Railway Line. The China Development Bank (CDB) funding for the Kojokrom-Awaso section of the line has been canceled. Funds are therefore being sourced from the Brazilian government for the development of the Kojokrom-Awaso section.

The GRDA is further exploring the possibility of public private partnership (PPP) options for the Dunkwa-Kumasi section. From where

things stand now, work on the Western Railway Line is likely to overshoot the 2016 deadline.

The third of the five projects is the redevelopment of the Eastern Railway Line and the Boankra Inland Port.

The GRDA has already engaged a transaction advisor, and a strategic investor is being sought to partner with the government in the construction of the Eastern Railway Line to link the Boankra Inland Port. It is expected to reach financial closure by the end of 2015. Here again, from where things stand now, work on this line is likely to go beyond the 2016 deadline.

The fourth rail project under the Presidential Priority Projects is the development of tram services in the Accra-Tema Metropolis. A feasibility study will soon be carried out for the possible introduction of the tram services. Again, the

2016 deadline of this project may not be met.

The fifth project is the Tema-Akosombo Railway Line, part of the Eastern Corridor Multi-Modal Transport System. Funds are being sourced from the Exim Bank of India for the construction of the Line. Though part of the Presidential Priority Projects to be completed by 2016, work on this line also is likely to overshoot the deadline.

GRDA, the regulator

The above projects and others make the GRDA a very busy place indeed. The Authority was established under the Railway Act 2008, Act 779, which was passed by Parliament on Nov. 14, 2008, and received presidential assent on Jan. 6, 2009.

The objects of the Authority are to promote the development of railways and railway

services; hold, administer and improve the railway assets of the country; and promote the development and management of suburban railways.

To achieve these objects, GRDA was tasked with granting licenses, concessions, and leases necessary for the operation of railways and railway services, and performing other related functions, including keeping a register of railway operations, licensees and sub-licensees.

In addition, its functions are to: 1) exercise ownership rights over assets that are transferred to the Authority from the Ghana Railway Company Limited 2) set and enforce safety and security standards for the construction and operation of railways in accordance with the Act 3) regulate and monitor the activities of licensees, concessionaires and operators of railway 4) initiate, conduct, promote

and encourage studies necessary for the growth and development of railways, including the development of master plans and set standards 5) oversee the administration of a Railway Development Fund and ensure that the fund is used for the purposes set out in the Act 6) ensure collaboration with other public, private or international agencies necessary for the performance of its functions 7) advise the government on railway matters generally 8) subject to Section 98, carry out any transitional function that is necessary for the growth and sustainability of railways, and other activities incidental to its functions, and 9) subject to ministerial directives, perform the functions of a railway regulator.

Railway Master Plan

Since coming into existence, the GRDA has concentrated



A newly completed section of the Sekondi-Kojokrom rail line.

on getting the railway regulatory structure and a Railway Master Plan for the country in place.

Its collaboration with the Ministry of Transport and the World Bank led to the preparation of Railway Regulations that enabled the GRDA to fulfill its mandate.

Marketing the Railway Master Plan as a means of sourcing funds and mapping up strategies toward securing PPP options is now a major concern of the GRDA.

The Master Plan provides for the expansion and rehabilitation of the country's existing railway network, which is now part of the Presidential Priority Projects, to be completed by 2016.

The existing railway network consists of three main lines. The Western Line from Takoradi to Kumasi (with branch lines to Prestea and Awaso in the Western Region) is the oldest in the country. It was started in 1898 and was completed in 1903.

The Eastern line from Accra to Kumasi is the second oldest, having been started in 1908 and completed in 1923. The Central line from Huni Valley in the Western Region to Kotoku in the Eastern Region, with a branch line to Kade, is the youngest in the country. It

was started in 1926 and completed in 1956, a year before Ghana's independence.

The GRDA's new Railway Master Plan proposes to expand the existing network from Prestea to Cote d'Ivoire, and from Awaso through the western parts of the country all the way through the Brong Ahafo Region to Hamile in the Upper West Region.

A new line is proposed to start from the twin-cities of Sekondi/Takoradi along the coast to Cape Coast through Winneba to Accra, then to Aflao and Togo.

Also from Accra, a new line will go through Akosombo and thence through the Volta Region up to Yendi in the Northern Region, and then veer right to Togo.

Aanother new line will start from Kumasi through Tamale to the Upper East Region and onward to Burkina Faso.

And From Kumasi, another new line would go through Sunyani to meet a line that bisects the country from East to West, passing through Fufusu in the Northern Region and meeting the new Awaso-Hamile line at Sawla in the same Northern Region before continuing to northern Cote d'Ivoire.

The eastern end of that line will go through Tamale before

joining the Akosombo-Yendi line at Yendi.

The suburban rail network in the Tema-Accra-Nsawam metropolis will also be expanded.

An existing line from Accra to Nsawam will be rehabilitated, and a new line will be built from Tema through Accra to Kasoa, and another from Accra to Dodowa.

Yet another new line will start from Tema to Nsawam via the northern environs of Accra, meeting the Accra-Dodowa line on the way and going on to join the existing Accra-Nsawam line.

Other projects

The GRDA, according to Chief Executive Alidu Sadique, has also been renovating the railway facilities at the Tema harbor. Four stations on the line – Asopronchona, Batchona, Achimota and Odaw – are now 95 percent complete, with parking lots, CCTV cameras, turnstiles, fencing and public address systems installed.

Last year, the GRDA completed the following projects: 1) construction and extension work on the Tema harbor to Japan Motors Railway Line in Tema Community 1, a distance of two miles; 2) provision

of four semi-automatic barrier arm mechanisms at the entry to the Tema port, Ghacem factory, Ghafco and Sahara Oil tank farm; 3) construction of a new station building at Community 1 with a parking lot, turnstiles, fencing and CCTV cameras.

Besides that, other projects under the GRDA to be completed by 2016 include the construction of semi-automatic barrier arm level crossing mechanisms along the Accra-Tema rail line – 10 mechanisms are to be installed at major level crossings along the route to reduce accidents. The project, to be completed in December 2015, will cost \$1,388,418.

According to Chief Executive Alidu Sadique, the Public Procurement Authority has given approval for the sole sourcing of the project to Amandi Holdings since 2013. However, budgetary constraints have delayed the award of the contract.

The GRDA has also been engaged in the preparation of safety and training manuals for safe operation and management of trains in the country, with the help of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which provided technical assistance for the preparation of the Railway Safety

and Maintenance Standards (RSMS). A draft final report of the RSMS has been submitted, and comments have been forwarded to JICA. The GRDA is awaiting the final report.

The way forward

"The GRDA is keen to complete the preparation of all regulations and organization structure to enable it to fulfill its mandate," says Sadique. "The Authority will continue with the preparation of the Railway Safety and Maintenance Standards, while recruiting more staff and pursuing the acquisition of permanent head office accommodation."

The rehabilitation of the Accra-Nsawam Railway Line will remain a major focus for the GRDA in the coming year, even as feasibility studies on the Central Railway Line and other lines per the Railway Master Plan continue.

Other priority projects in the coming year will be providing fencing along the Accra-Tema Railway Line, establishing a GRDA Legal Department, upgrading the Railway Location Workshop in Sekondi, and retooling and upgrading the GRDA's Railway Training School into an institute. ■

The resolve to revive ISTC is paramount

Intercity STC Coaches Ltd (ISTC) will soon increase its current fleet size by more than 125 percent which will help it to dominate the luxury end of road/passenger transport in the country, and implement an ambitious survival plan.

In January 2015, the Intercity STC Coaches Limited (ISTC) will take delivery of 45 brand new Scania luxury coaches bought by the government of Ghana, which will increase its current fleet size by more than 125 percent and give it the wherewithal to implement some of the lofty ideas it has under its belt. The company's current fleet size is 36 coaches; in January, it will be 81. From all indications, the company is dying to re-create the magic of the days of yore, when it commanded all it surveyed in the luxury passenger transport business in Ghana.

Between now and January, however, the ISTC will continue to partner with private-vehicle owners who have been providing it with coaches on a 30:70 revenue-sharing basis.

The company's main aim now is to recapture the position of the lead luxury transporter in the country that it occupied for so long, but that it lost in the last decade.

To achieve its aims, it has put together ambitious plans that will see it doing things that it has never done in its history, just to get ahead.

Part of the deal will see the ISTC introducing a mini-bus "Swift Service" and new routes for clients who want to travel

in groups, faster and to destinations that ISTC coaches currently do not serve. About 100 minivans will be deployed on local routes to perform the swift services.

The company will also increase operations on all its domestic and international routes, and its Accra-Kumasi-

Accra and Kumasi-Accra-Kumasi routes will resume full 24-hour services.

Its international routes that serve Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire, Lome in Togo, Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso and Cotonou in Benin will also see revamped operations.

Out of the current nominal

fleet of 36 coaches, the ISTC has a monthly average fleet availability of 22. Interestingly, revenue from the 22 operational coaches is supposed to pay the company's 450 workers, purchase fuel and lubricants, pay for spare parts and utilities, and finance part of the company's indebtedness that has accumulated over some years.

Whereas the industry ratio of staff to bus is 4:1, the ISTC has a staggering ratio of 21:1. This is an albatross that the management intends to resolve by using various means to reduce the staff strength.

Overall, the company plans to diversify its operations to include:

- Commercialization of its engineering workshops countrywide.

- Inspection of vehicles for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) in ISTC

workshops.

- Engaging in the retail sale of products that the company largely consumes, such as tyres.

- Operating a bulk tank service.

- Improving load factor and market share through the use of aggressive marketing/adverts and reliable coaches.

- Improving cash flow and reduce loss.

- Enhancing its ability to attract financiers and banks to finance future projects within the next two years.

- Listing on the Ghana Stock Exchange within 5 years.

As the company explains, "Our quest to diversify our operations is to enable the bus operation to reach its peak, where we could implement our replacement policy to enable any bus purchased to pay for itself before it becomes scrap." The diversification "has become necessary in view of a new paradigm of sophisticated clientele," the company adds.

According to a company, "Under the current managing director and board of directors, the resolve to revive the ISTC is paramount. Therefore, several actions have been taken in the last four months to ensure the achievement of this goal. We shall soon unveil our new vision and mission that will be displayed at vantage points across all our terminals."

The ISTC's key corporate objective is to "proactively work to reclaim the top position in the transport industry, whilst sustaining such leadership position for the next decade through hard work, dedication and turning round the company into a profitable and self-sustaining enterprise." ■



Intercity STC Coaches Limited will soon introduce more luxury coaches, minivan "Swift Service," and new routes.

Metro Mass, the shape of things to come

Metro Mass Transit is committed to the provision of a reliable, safe and efficient mass transport service by road in Ghana, and is keen to expand its services to become a world-class mass transport company in the West African sub-region.

In the next few months, passengers who use Metro Mass Transit (MMT) buses for their travels in Ghana will see expanded service when the company takes delivery of 200 new buses from the government to augment its already impressive fleet of 1,017. An additional 30 new buses will be purchased by the company itself to enhance the fleet.

In the recent past, the company has not been able to use the full capacity of its fleet because of the frequent breakdown of buses, which has meant that an average of only 723 buses are in operation daily.

But determined to improve its services and efficiency, the company has rehabilitated 105 of the breakdown buses to augment the operable fleet, and is doing its best to bring the rest into service.

Noble John Appiah, managing director of MMT, says that when the 30 new buses are in operation, in addition to the rehabilitated 105, passengers will enjoy a new experience much better than what they have known in the past.



Noble John Appiah
managing director of MMT

For example, a total of 200 air-conditioned buses will be in use in Accra and Kumasi to expand intra-city and peri-urban services. The routes to be operated have already been identified, and the bus redistribution program is already in place.

With a staff strength of 4,271 (76 percent male and 24 percent female), which puts the company within the industry-required ratio of four employees to one bus, the MMT is committed to the provision of a reliable, safe and efficient mass transport service by road not only in Ghana but also in the whole West African sub-region.

Its target is to achieve an operational service classification in Ghana of 28 percent

inter-city, 40 percent intra-city, and 32 percent rural-urban. At the moment, it operates 333 routes but has plans to expand them.

Figures released for the company's operations between January and June this year show profits climbing to \$2 million from a total of 13,700,777 passengers carried over the period under review.

Company's vision

According to Appiah, part of MMT's vision is to offer free bus service to school children in accordance with the government's social service charter. Between January and June this year, the company was able to provide free service to 23,592 school children. It hopes to better the record in the coming months.

On May 14 this year, the company launched a five-year strategic plan whose highlights included improving the safety of passengers and staff, improving customer service, expanding access to services, establishing a great workplace, increasing profitability and attaining financial sustainability, adopting environ-



Metro Mass Transit will soon take delivery of more buses from the government, and it promises its passengers a more enjoyable experience.

mentally friendly practices, and attaining International Standard Organization (ISO) certification.

The company's overall vision, the managing director says, is to become a world-class mass transport company in the West African subregion.

As such, its core values include safety as a number one priority, respect for passengers who use its buses, rooting out bad practices that undermine the future of the company, and recognizing and rewarding good performers while being intolerant of poor



100 percent complete; while at Cape Coast tents and chairs are being used at the depot premises.

Helping customers

Customer help desks have also been established at the various depots, and customers are encouraged to use the company's toll-free hot line (080-010-400) whenever possible.

Recently, the company organized customer-service training for 1601 frontline crew members, comprising 147 point officers, 157 inspectors and 1,453 passenger service assistants.

To provide entertainment on its buses and also generate revenue through advertisement, the company has installed 17 LCD screens in some buses.

As a means to increase its profitability and attain financial sustainability, the company has also installed an ICT-based fuel management system on 767 buses, and tracking devices on 528 buses.

Additionally, it has installed six biometric time and attendance machines at its head office in Accra, and at its depots in Cape Coast and Kumasi. It has also outsourced cash collection in Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Takoradi.

To improve services further, it has developed fleet renewal and a bus specification policy.

Overall, the company's key performance indicators are impressive: It has reduced the number of road traffic crashes by 30.85 percent, reduced road traffic crash deaths by 57 percent, reduced road traffic crash-related injuries by 52 percent, and increased fleet availability to 71.06 percent.

In the next two years, the company aims to prioritize 1) expansion of access to services 2) review, expand and optimize intra city schedules on a

financially sustainable basis 3) sustain provision of free buses for school children 4) provide discounted fares for the aged 5) acquire 400 new buses 6) expand services to cover international routes, primarily to West African countries 7) start services in the luxury category 8) provide a parcel service, and 9) run bus services to every district in Ghana.

By 2016, the company hopes to increase profitability and attain financial sustainability, while retooling its workshops to provide facilities and equipment.

To further improve efficiency, it will deploy a Microsoft dynamics GP supply-chain management system for procurement and stores (including spare-parts management), and implement electronic ticketing.

During the same time, it will acquire mobile service vans that will work on breakdown buses in situ.

As part of the way forward, the company will also assess the technical and financial feasibility of providing or extending value-added products such as a parcel service, driver training school and cargo bussing on high-cargo routes. Computerization of luggage charges and the use of luggage scales will be implemented at the same time.

Infrastructure development

Regarding infrastructure development, the company has the following projects at various stages of development, but they all have to be finished by 2017:

- Redevelopment of the Yendi hub at the cost of \$108,000, to be completed in 2015.

- Major rehabilitation of Kumasi, Takoradi and Sun-

yani depots and the fencing of the company's land in Wa at a cost of \$2.1 million. This is expected to be completed in 2014-15.

- The development of the company's head office building at a cost of \$280,000, to be completed in 2014-15.

- Development of the Hohoe hub and bus terminal at \$108,000, to be completed in 2014-15.

- Development of the Techiman hub and bus terminal at \$108,000 to be completed in 2014-16.

- Development of residential accommodation at Cantonments (Accra) and Tamale, costing \$1.5 million. This is to be completed in 2015-17.

- Acquisition and development of land at Kasoa for operations, at a cost of \$218,000. This will be completed in 2014-16.

- Redevelopment of the Kumasi bus terminal at \$125,000, to be completed in 2014-15.

All said and done, the company hopes to reduce the number of road-traffic crashes by 90 percent; reduce road traffic crash death incidents by 90 percent; reduce road traffic crash-related injuries by 90 percent, increase fleet availability to 90 percent, and reduce inter-city bus breakdown en-route by 90 percent.

The above targets are achievable despite the following some challenges facing the company. The absence of dedicated bus lanes results in poor schedule of services, and high import charges, and the ever-changing exchange rate of the cedi, affects the cost of imports. However, notwithstanding the challenges, Managing Director Noble Appiah says the company is determined to achieve a reliable, safe and efficient mass transport service by road in the West African subregion. ■

ones.

A recent review of its 2014 operations highlighted the improvement of passenger and staff safety as a paramount priority. To this end, 1,705 drivers have been re-trained in collaboration with the National Drivers Academy.

A further 2,677 employees have been trained on fire and safety, while 10 management team members and 16 depot

managers have been given workplace health and safety training. To improve quality of buses serviced, 21 workshop supervisors have also been trained.

The company has also embarked on bus terminal development countrywide as a way of improving customer service, says Noble Appiah. The terminal at Aflao is now 80 percent complete; the one at Tarkwa is

Safety is DVLA's main concern

Driving in Ghana will have a completely new face from now on as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) implements all the new provisions in the Road Traffic Regulations that fall under the mandate of the Authority.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) is implementing major reforms to ensure safety on Ghana's roads. As many as 34 new provisions have been added to the existing 160, and they are being implemented over a three-year period, from 2013 to 2016.

The provisions in the Road Traffic Regulations (L.I. 2180) now being implemented on a priority basis included the introduction of electronic road-worthy stickers throughout the DVLA offices countrywide by January 2015, and equipment-based testing for commercial vehicles. Under this, all commercial vehicles within the Greater Accra Region are to benefit from equipment-based testing at Private Vehicle Testing Stations (PVTs).

According to the DVLA's chief executive, Rudolph Beckley: "It is an established fact that the successful development and prosperity of every economy in the world is dependent on an efficient transport system. This can only be achieved if the necessary infrastructure and required services for all modes of transport are provided and maintained on sustainable basis."

Safety is the goal

Therefore, Beckley says, the DVLA is committed to ensuring that driving in Ghana becomes very safe, and vehicles on the roads are worthy to be there, as part of the government's goal of achieving better transport infrastructure development for the accelerated growth of the economy.

As a result, under Regulation 119 and 120 of the Road Traffic Regulations, concerning seat belts, the DVLA has started registration of commercial vehicles with seat belts. By June 2015, all registered commercial vehicles

should be fitted with functioning seat belts in all required seating positions. Phase One of the project started in September 2014 and Phase Two will start in June 2015.

A third license plate, to be pasted on the windshields of all vehicles (Regulation 12), and the registration of trailers (Regulation 4) are also being implemented. The timelines for both are 2014-15.

The development of driver in-yard test grounds is also underway. It started last year and will be completed in 2016. The digitization of manual vehicle records has also been ongoing. It is being implemented over a three-year period, between 2013 and 2016.

More reforms

There are also reforms in driver license administration. A manual for basic driver training has been completed, and a computer-based theory test in all DVLA offices has been introduced.

The computer-based theory test has been criticized by the public, however, as Ghanaians are not as computer literate as, those in say, the U.S.

"We are not looking at computer literacy to be able to mount this stage," the DVLA chief explains. "Even if you only use mobile phones, you are more than OK to take the test. That environment is so user friendly we don't even have a keyboard. All we have is a mouse and a screen. All you do is to point to the right answer and then click, and that is all."

The DVLA has also introduced 48-hour mandatory training for new driver license



Rudolph Beckley,
chief executive of DVLA

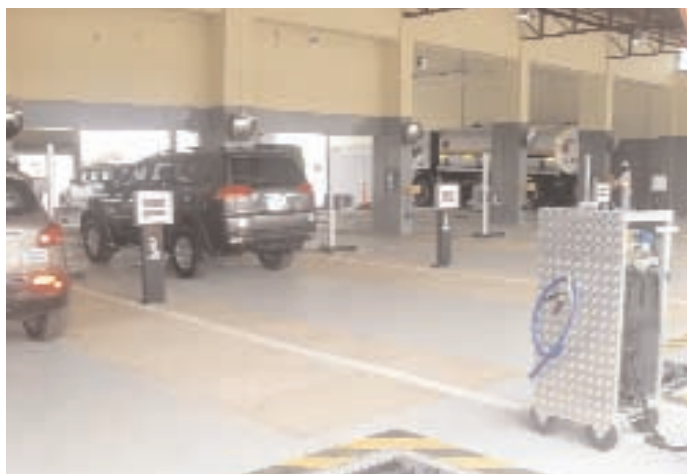
applicants.

The Authority is also establishing mobile satellite offices countrywide to bring its services closer to the people. Currently being done on a pilot basis, the Authority has extended its operations through its mobile satellite offices at Hohoe, Nkawkaw, Tarkwa,

Mampong-Ashanti and Obuasi. The pilot phase started between February and August 2014, with full roll out beginning in October 2014.

Other ongoing projects include the expansion of the operations of Private Vehicle Testing Stations (PVTs) in all the regions to prove the road-worthiness of vehicles. The DVLA authorized 13 investors to construct PVTs within the country, and one was completed in 2013. The rest are at different stages of completion, with a 2014-15 deadline.

As part of the new measures, the DVLA opened a new office at BIVAC at Kuntunse (Accra) in April 2014 for the registration of vehicles. The expansion of the DVLA offices in Accra proper is also underway, as the number of vehicles being registered keeps increasing. Figures released for 2014 show the following registrations: April, 286 cars; May, 573; June, 585; July, 568; and August, 552.



DVLA plans to expand the operations of Private Vehicle Testing Stations (PVTs) in the country.

Autonomy

Beckley says the DVLA is seeking operational autonomy from government subvention by the end of 2014. As such, it engaged the services of a consultant who interviewed key stakeholders of the Authority and presented his findings to the DVLA board, and senior and middle management.

The Authority has met with the responsible government committee to discuss the measures for weaning off government funding, as it is determined to complete that process by December.

The DVLA is also implementing fraud-control measures that started last year and will be completed in 2016. Fraud, or "Goro activities," by staff has been one of the perennial challenges facing the DVLA. This often results in the faking of DVLA's documents and revenue leakage. The Authority now wants to stamp out this practice throughout its offices countrywide.

Other challenges facing the Authority include the difficulty in obtaining financial clearance to recruit competent staff, and access to large parcels of land for acquisition for the Authority's operations, especially in urban centers. As if that is not enough, the Authority's own lands are also being encroached upon.

Another major challenge is customer dissatisfaction with poor service delivery by the DVLA. But Beckley says the Authority is now determined to improve its services and will train all categories of staff, especially client-services staff.

As part of the new deal, the DVLA will move into a modern, purpose-built head office soon as it continues the construction of new office accommodations and other facilities in all the regions and districts of the country. ■