

**PRESS STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES, HON. KWAKU ASOMAH-CHEREMEH ON  
MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF  
STATE ACQUIRED LANDS ON FRIDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2020 HELD  
AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE MINISTRY OF LANDS AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES.**

Ladies and gentlemen of the Press.

Let me first of all wish each and every one of you and all media houses in Ghana a prosperous new year. May the Good Lord continue to direct our paths throughout the year 2020.

You have been invited here this afternoon as a medium for bringing to the attention of the general public, very urgent and pressing issues regarding the rampant abuse of our precious land resources by recalcitrant individuals and groups of persons.

Ladies and gentlemen, government has over the years, through laid down legal processes, embarked upon the acquisition of land for various public uses. These include residential, educational, civic, cultural, health, recreational, agricultural, commercial and industrial uses.

Lands have also been acquired for utility infrastructural purposes such as roads, railways, airports, telecommunications and electricity.

Over the years and especially the last two decades, there has been an unprecedented increase in the use and development of our land resources as a country, especially in the urban areas. This has been mainly due to the rapid population growth which is currently estimated at Thirty Million, technological advancement, rural/urban migration and the multiple uses of our land which is a finite asset and therefore does not increase in size.

The land market has therefore witnessed many serious challenges including multiple sales, boundary disputes between various land holding groups, disregard for existing statutory planning schemes, construction without approved development permits, buildings within water ways and road reservations and the use of land guards, a phenomenon which is illegal among many other challenges.

Various attempts have been made by government through statutory bodies such as the Judiciary, the Security agencies, the Lands Commission District, Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies and the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority to ensure that land as a resource is protected

and utilized in a manner that will guarantee its preservation for future generations.

Currently a Land Bill which seeks to harmonize all legislations on land is undergoing Parliamentary approval processes prior to its passage into law as an Act of Parliament.

Ladies and gentlemen of the press:

I am sorry to report that in spite of all the measures being implemented, encroachment on state lands has been on the ascendency especially in Accra and its environs. There are regular reports of encroachment on lands set aside for use by the military, educational Institutions such as Achimota school and the University of Ghana, hospitals such as Korle-bu, industrial sites such as the Afienuya site for urban renewal and industrial enclave, road reservations including the Accra-Tema Motorway and commercial agricultural sites such as the Dairy Farms for the Ministry of Agriculture at Danfa, Oyarifa, Kweiman and Amrahia.

These unauthorised and illegal activities have resulted in a major threat to life and property as well as the government's own flagship projects such as One District One Factory and the provision of shelter for the citizenry as well as achieving opportunities for local and foreign investors.

Even though various notices have been served within some strategic locations as well as engagements with community leaders and groups, this nuisance is still ongoing.

With specific reference to the Amrahia Dairy Farms, in response to numerous petitions received, the Ministry has been engaging the various communities through a series of discussions including the possibility of ceding off portions of the land for community use.

Unfortunately, whilst these discussions are ongoing, some members of the communities have illegally arrogated unto themselves the right to take over and develop these lands without any authorization. This unfortunate situation has caused the Ministry to demolish unauthorized structures within the area in the recent past.

The Ministry is once again warning all such persons to desist from this practice. Failure to do so will result not only in demolition of structures but also prosecution of offenders. The general public is hereby strongly advised that before they enter into any land transaction, they seek expert advice and conduct the requisite official search from the Lands Commission so as not to incur any avoidable loss.

To ensure that this situation is brought under control the security agencies together with a private development company, ANYOK HOLDINGS Limited have been engaged to undertake various approved demolishing exercises within state acquired lands.

The Ministry has put in place a system to redress grievances of persons or groups whose lands have been acquired by the state and are yet to receive compensation. This will go a long way to eliminate the imminent hardships that the acquisition may have brought.

Finally, Government recognises the role of our revered Traditional authorities and will continue the series of engagements to ensure that all grievances regarding compensation for state acquired lands and related matters are addressed promptly and adequately.

The doors of the Ministry and its agencies such as the Lands Commission are open and any member of the public who has any grievance regarding the management of public lands and the measures being implemented can contact the Client Service and Access Unit of the Lands Commission or the Technical Directorate for Lands at the Ministry for redress.

Government will continue to work to protect the interest of the citizenry at all times but will not countenance any act that will compromise the security of the state. We therefore call on all to collaborate with the Ministry and the security agencies to achieve an enabling environment for all.

I thank you for your attention.