

Integration

The new Executive Secretary of the Revenue Agencies Governing Board (RAGB), Mr Samuel Sallas-Mensah has begun a tour of all the Collections and facilities of the Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) nation-wide.

The Executive Secretary who was accompanied by Mr Anthony Doku, Director of Research and Monitoring and Mr Kofi Andoh, Director of Finance at the RAGB, the Commissioner of CEPS, Mr Emmanuel Doku and other top management personnel visited all the Ho and Aflao Collections.

The main objective of the tour is to acquaint him-self with the operations of the Service as well as sensitize the officers about the proposed integration program being introduced by the government.

At a meeting with the staff of the Service at the Aflao Collection, Mr. Sallas-Mensah announced the proposed integration of the three revenue agencies in the country.

According to the proposed integration policy, the CEPS, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Value Added Tax (VAT) Service are to be integrated into one department to be called the Ghana Revenue Authority.

Under the Ghana Revenue Authority, the collapsed IRS and the VAT would be responsible for collecting domestic taxes and would therefore be headed by a Commissioner.

CEPS will also be responsible for collecting import duties as well as the frontier taxes and will also be headed by a Commissioner.

The supporting services of all the three revenue agencies which comprise the Human Resource and Administration, Accounts, Public Relations, etc would be integrated into one department to be headed by a Commissioner.

The three Commissioners will report to a Commissioner-General who will be accountable to the Ghana Revenue Authority Board.

Already the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have expressed support for the integration process.

Mr Sallas-Mensah said the integration is geared towards modernizing revenue administration by introducing efficiency into the revenue collection system as well as reducing the cost of collecting revenue so that there would be enough money to undertake government projects.

Additionally, the integration process will also enhance the image and status of officers and make the Authority one of the most enviable institutions in the country.

Mr Sallas-Mensah noted that revenue collection is one of the most difficult jobs, adding that “under the integration process, the Conditions of Service would be reviewed in order to make life comfortable for tax collectors”.

He explained that integration of the three revenue agencies have already taken off well in most of the West African countries within the Sub-region with the exception of Ghana and Nigeria and expressed the hope that the process in Ghana will take off soon.

Mr Sallas-Mensah gave the assurance that the integration process would not result in any form of retrenchment or redundancy as being speculated and therefore urged officers to assured and support the process.

He reminded the officers of the additional 24 per cent target which has been added to the initial target and urged them to strive to achieve their target, adding that the RAGB has put in place a number to incentives bonuses for the achievement of this target.

During the Open Forum, officers asked questions about the fate of the various Destination Inspection Companies, the freezing of recruitments, promotions and transfers etc.

On the fate of the Destination Inspection Companies, Mr Sallas-Mensah explained that the DICs signed a contract with the previous administration and that the contract is being

reviewed by the present government and therefore urged the officers to exercise restraint and wait for the outcome of government's decision.

On recruitments, he said the exercise has been curtailed in view of the impending integration. With regards to transfers and promotions, he explained that the Board of the RAGB is yet to be constituted and that once the Board is in place, these activities will resume.

From the Aflao Station, the executive Secretary and his team paid a courtesy call on the Paramount Chief of Aflao, Torgbui Fiti V before continuing to Akanu and Kpoglo stations.

At the Kpoglo Station, the Commissioner of CEPS, Mr Emmanuel Doku, urged the officers to value and classify the goods accurately and ensure that taxes are levied on all dutiable goods so that the Service can achieve its target for the year.

At all the stations visited, officers complained about accommodation and water problems, inadequate staff which is affecting revenue collection among others.

The Executive Secretary and his team visited the CEPS stations at Afiadenyigba, Akanu, Batume Junction, CEPS Academy Kpetoe, Ho, Nyive, Shia, Tinjaase, Honuta, Menuso, Wli Afegame, Leklebi-Dafor and Asikuma Junction.

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