PRESS RELEASE

**Madrid brings together the Ghanaian Office of the Attorney General and the Environmental Protection Agency**

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**Madrid, 24 June 2019 –** A six-member delegation of the Office of the Attorney General  and the Environmental Protection Agency paid an official visit to Spain from 17 to 21 June 2019. The delegation was composed of the Director of Legal Prosecutions, Ms. Yvonne Abena Asiedua, Senior State Attorney, Mr.Richard Ansah, Assistant State Attorney, Mr.  Emmanuel Kwasi, Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Ebenezer Appah-Sampong, Director of Legal Department, Ms. Christine Okae and Programme Officer, Mr. Samuel Nortey. The visit was coordinated by Mrs. Ana Sánchez the team leader on Rule of Law and Anti-corruption Programme (ARAP) who played a significant role in guiding the delegation through their visit in Madrid.

As part of the agenda, the Ghanaian delegation visited the National Toxicology Institute and Forensic Science in Madrid, where they were briefed on the work of the Institute on tools and best practices in relation to environmental crimes. The Environmental Protection Agency expressed its interest in exploring institutional agreements for provisions on training and educational insight for its staff.

The agenda of the delegation also included a visit to SEPRONA (the Nature Protection Service), a unit of the military police responsible for nature conservation and environmental crimes. The Ghanaian delegation met with  Captain Godoy, who  presented to them the regulatory framework and the coordinating work among all the institutions from the environmental sector in Spain and Europe. They reviewed how to share information, plan activities to strengthen criminal justice systems and provide coordinated support.

“The only way to work together is by exchanging information” said Captain Godoy and proposed possibilities of collaboration with Ghana in relation to money laundering, illegal trade of mercury, illegal gold mining and illegal trafficking of protected species. In addition, they analyzed possible ways of collaborating in research and prosecution under the European Union regulation Law 2017/821 on minerals in conflict zones, a field of work of special interest in Ghana.

The Ghanaian delegation was inspired by the Public Environmental Agency of Madrid, where they were briefed on the compilation of “The 17 Points Of Future Environmental Protection Plans” and its interventions. After the meeting, they stopped at the Centre for Environmental Education “El Campillo”, where the environmental protection and techniques of Madrid’s Environmental Agency were found.

The delegation also paid a visit to the Special Public Prosecutor’s Environmental Office where they discussed environmental best practices and reviewed practical cases with regards to illegal mining, waste, land planning, wildlife trafficking and air pollution.  It also paved the way towards a possible collaboration under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Spanish prosecutors and the Ghanaians delegation through their respective International Relations Units.

The Ghanaian Office of the Attorney General and the Environmental Protection Agency delegation concluded its agenda by visiting the Spanish Ministry of Justice. They were welcomed by Mr. Israel Pastor, Head of Support Unit, Director-General for International Legal Cooperation, Religious Affairs and Human Rights. The meeting was held in the context of the ongoing engagement on international legal cooperation procedures and legal assistance networks. The Spanish Ministry of Justice proposed an international collaboration and made itself available to the Ghanaians institutions.

The Director of Legal Prosecutions, Yvonne Abena said: “This visit has been a very productive experience to contextualize the learnings. In a global world in which crimes are also transnational, the common points in this matter with Spain and Europe are essential. Madrid has brought together the Ghanaian Office of the Attorney General and the Environmental Protection Agency”. Ms. Abena added that “a lot of ideas have come forward and inspired us to work together to promote inter-institutional coordination at the national level”.

“We are grateful for this experience and boundless collaboration  will continue from here” stressed Mr. Ebenezer Appah-Sampong, Environmental Protection Agency’s Deputy Executive Director.

This international visit is one of several interactions organised by ARAP that aims to support Ghanaian public institutions by establishing  international networks and exposure to international best practices. It promotes inter- institutional coordination in common areas at a national level through the Ghanaian institutions.

The EU-funded Accountability, Rule of law and Anti-corruption Programme (ARAP) is implemented by the Spanish Public Foundation FIIAPP.

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**Note to the Editor**

**About ARAP**

The ARAP - Accountability, Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme project joins the Ghanaian government's efforts to reduce corruption. This Programme is funded by the European Union Delegation to Ghana and is currently implemented by the Fundacion Internacional y para Iberoamerica de Administracion y Politicas Publicas (FIIAPP). This programme aims to promote good governance and support national reform, in order to enhance accountability and strengthen anti-corruption efforts across the country.

**Captions:**

arap\_madrid\_06: Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) at the National Toxicology Institute and Forensic Science in Madrid, Spain.

arap\_madrid\_07: Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) at the unit of the Spanish Civil Guard (SEPRONA) in Madrid, Spain

arap\_madrid\_08: Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) at the Special Public Prosecutor’s Environmental Office in Madrid, Spain.

arap\_madrid\_08: Representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) at the Ministry of Justice in Madrid, Spain.