

The European Union donates over 48 thousands euros worth of drones and digital equipment to the Environmental Protection Agency

Accra, 4 October 2019 – In an effort to continue its support to regulate the small scale mining sector in Ghana, the European Union has donated 48 thousand euros worth of drones and equipment to the Environmental Protection Agency. The drones and tablets were delivered to the EPA through the EU funded Accountability, Rule of law and Anti-corruption Programme (ARAP), implemented by the Spanish public foundation FIIAPP. The equipment was handed over in a ceremony held this morning at the Ministry headquarters.

Drones and tablets are currently being used to monitor compliance of small scale mines in different regions of Ghana. Drones are safer, faster and more cost-effective for mapping and monitoring large areas for environmental protection, environmental management and environmental investigation.

Drones are ideal for mapping - a 5kg drone can fly for several hours and send back pictures with a pixel resolution of up to one metre. Hovering at a height of only 200 metres, the potential issue of cloud cover obscuring the ground is virtually eliminated. A drone can provide crystal-clear images of any tropical rainforest or conserved wetland during any single day of the year.

In her speech, Ambassador Acconcia highlighted the fruitful collaboration between the European Union and the Environmental Protection Agency. The excellent results achieved so far in the use of digital tools to monitor compliance, have prompted the EPA to explore the extension to also other sectors beyond small scale mining. The Ambassador remarked that the preservation of Ghana's natural resources and environment are critical pillars within this endeavour. The strengthening of the rule of law and accountability within environmental governance are fundamental stepping stones for a healthy and thriving Ghana.

On behalf of the Ghanaian government, Professor Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng, the Minister of Environment expressed gratitude for the generous gesture of the European Union Delegation and to its Programme ARAP. He said "the drones and accessories the EPA is receiving today, will go a long way to enhance the monitoring of mining activities and other projects across the country and promised to make good use of the materials donated".

The donated drones equipment will alleviate the equipment shortage and help improve EPA's work in Ghana. Professor Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng, the Minister of Environment, Science Technology and Innovation, has applauded the great contributions made by the ARAP Programme, particularly in the area of environmental crimes.

"Environmental Governance is a key pillar in Ghana's National Environment Policy and this is key component of the Accountability, Rule of Law and Anti-corruption Programme". He also added that "week compliance monitoring of activities in the environment, particularly small-scale mining is a major challenge and Government is



committed to improving the capacity of Agencies responsible for the protection and management of the environment”.

After the Handover Ceremony, ARAP’s Team Leader, Ms. Ana Sánchez together with the Minister of Environment, the Ambassador of the European Union to Ghana and other guests, inspected the donated equipment.

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Notes to the Editor

The Accountability, Rule of law and Anti-corruption Programme (ARAP) is an EU funded programme, implemented by the Spanish public foundation FIIAPP that joins and supports the efforts of the Government of Ghana in its fight against corruption. The objective of the programme is to contribute to current reform processes to reduce corruption and improve accountability, and compliance with the rule of law, particularly when it comes to accountability, anti-corruption and environmental governance. It does so through support key institutions, while at the same time increasing the ability of the public, civil society organisations and the media to hold government to account.

