



# IMANIFESTO

Assessment of The First Year of The NPP Government

#IMANIFESTO18



**IMANI**

Center for Policy & Education

JANUARY, 2018

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABFA	Annual Budget Funding Amount
AOCDP	Accelerated Oil Capacity Development Programme
AU	African Union
BOST	Bulk Oil Storage and Transportation
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CPESD	Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development
COCOBOD	Ghana Cocoa Board
COTTOM	China's Outbound Travel and Tourism Market
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CWM	Cash Waterfall Mechanism
ECG	Electricity Company of Ghana
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ETLS	ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme
EOCO	Economic and Organised Crime Office
ESLA	Energy Sector Levy Act
GAS	Ghana Audit Service
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GETFUND	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GHS	Ghanaian Cedi
GIFMIS	Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System
GoG	Government of Ghana
GRA	Ghana Revenue Authority
GUSIP	Ghana Upstream Services Internship Programme
GYEEDA	Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency
Homofest	Homogeneous Festival
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IGF	Internally Generated Funds
IOC	International Oil Companies
IPEP	Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme
ITB	Internationale Tourismus Bourse
LGBB	Local Government Borrowing Bill
LI	Legislative Instrument
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assemblies
MIDA	Millennium Development Authority
MSDI	Ministry of Special Development Initiatives
MT	Metric Tonne
Nabcorp	National Builders Corp
NADMO	National Disaster Management Organisation

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NACAP	National Anti-Corruption Action Plan
NAS	National Ambulance Service
NDAS	National Digital Addressing System
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NEIP	National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Plan
NHIA	National Health Insurance Authority
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NIR	National Identity Register
NIS	National Identification Scheme
NPA	National Petroleum Authority
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NTR	Non-Tax Revenue
OGM	Office of Government Machinery
PANAFEST	Pan African Historical Theatre Project
PBB	Programmed Based Budget
PFJ	Planting for Food and Jobs
PFMA	Public Financial Management Act
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RFP	Request for Proposal
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHS	Senior High School
SME	Small and Medium Scale Enterprises
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SONA	State of the Nation's Address
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
TIN	Tax Identification Number
TLMs	Teaching and Learning Materials
TSA	Treasure Single Account
UN	United Nations
USD	United States' Dollar
VAT	Value-Added Tax
VEF	Voluntary Education Fund
WAGP	West African Gas Pipeline
WBDBI	World Bank Doing Business Index

## ABOUT IMANI

IMANI Center for Policy and Education was founded in 2004. IMANI is a local Think Tank of considerable local and international repute and significance. We have carved a niche in Ghana's and to a large extent Africa's policy environment for putting out objective, independent analysis and critique on many issues, using tried and tested techniques that apply across different disciplines. Through effective communication skills and the ability to work with public-spirited media and civil society, we are shaping national, regional and global agenda in order to close the "citizen participation gap" in the governance process.

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### **VISION**

To be the most influential think-tank in Africa, promoting peace and prosperity through rigorous research analysis and advocacy, and commitment to educating society on the benefits of a free economy and policy issues concerning business, government and civil society

### **MISSION**

Subjecting public policy to critical analysis and engaging in advocacy with the vision to promote a freer and more prosperous society.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to assess the first year of the NPP government based on promises made in their 2016 Manifesto. Unlike previous IMANIFESTO reports that graded the performance of government by assigning a percentage score, this year's analysis is purely a qualitative one with highlights and comments on what has been achieved so far. It also identifies gaps, challenges and offers some suggestions on the effective implementation of the promises. The analysis has been undertaken along eight broad themes: Economy, Job creation, Agriculture Governance, Education, Health, Energy and Infrastructure. Data sources for the assessment included, the 2016 Manifesto, 2017 and 2018 Budget Statements, the Coordinated Programmes for Economic and Social Development, and project and news reports.

The macroeconomy stayed on a recovery path in the first year of the NPP administration. Estimates for debt to GDP ratio (68.3%) indicates a return to sustainable levels - sustainable threshold for debt to GDP is 70%. Meanwhile, exchange rate was relatively stable with the Ghana Cedi depreciating at an average rate of 4% (as at October, 2017) compared to 4.4% in the same period in 2016. Though inflation was generally on a downward trend, average lending rates remained high even with significant reduction in the Monetary Policy Rate.

Concerning promises relating to job creation, performance in the first year was not encouraging. Despite the numerous promises targeted at creating massive employment, there is little evidence to suggest the actual number of jobs created in the first year. On the other hand, performance in the agriculture sector has been fairly good given the successful implementation of a number of programmes such as the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) and the significant reduction in the prices of selected agricultural inputs. There was however a slow pace in implementing projects relating to irrigation and fisheries.

On Governance, the Office of the Special Prosecutor was established to help combat corruption. Public sensitization was also carried out in 2017. However, little progress was made on other anti-corruption measures or governance issues in the first year. Under the education sector, the NPP government initiated steps to implement most of the 25 promises. These included the implementation of the Free SHS policy. The policy had implementation challenges in the form of infrastructure deficit, congestion, inadequate furniture, high preference for boarding status and raised questions concerning the sustainability of funding and quality assurance.

The Government also made efforts in achieving some of the promises in the health sector, however many gaps exist in the first-year performance of the government. Efforts made to achieve the promises included the re-introduction of the nursing trainee allowance and the partial settlement of the NHIS debt.

For the energy sector, significant strides were made in implementation of promises made in the Manifesto. Specifically, the institution of the energy bond which contributed to the reduction of the energy sector debt as well as the commencement of the Accelerated Oil Capacity Development Programme and the Ghana Upstream Internship Programme to develop local capacity. It is noted however that debt reduction gains may be eroded if net debt accumulation remains positive for the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the sector. Further, the manner in which oil revenues have been allocated towards the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme is likely to negatively affect the tracking of spending regarding oil revenue.

2016 manifesto promises that were initiated in the infrastructure sector in the first year included full automation of clearance processes at the Tema and Takoradi ports as well as the commencement of the National Digital Addressing System and the National Identification System. While the paperless system is said to have reduced clearing time from two days to eight hours and increased revenue by 35.4% within the first year, the government failed to register citizens via the National Identification System as promised.

Given the progress made so far, not should be taken of the following: government must hasten implementation of the National Identification Scheme to enhance revenue mobilisation and provide a reliable data base for decision making; there is also the need to build a national database on key indicators employment and productivity for proper economic planning; transparency in "Planting for Food and Jobs" must be improved as well as improving accountability in managing the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Project; government must be more proactive in combating corruption: and government must explore innovative strategies to fund education and health.

IMANI is grateful to the Open Society Initiative for West Africa for being the main sponsor of this important exercise.



## INTRODUCTION

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# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In many countries the world over, political parties commit to undertake certain policies or to achieve certain outcomes usually in the form of a set of promises or pledges publicised in political manifestos. Thomson et al, (2014), in studying the impact of government institutions on the fulfilment of government pledges, note that these promises made by political parties are necessary for both informing voting behaviour and for enhancing accountability.

The World Bank, writing on accountability in governance states that "Accountability ensures actions and decisions taken by public officials are subject to oversight so as to guarantee that government initiatives meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community they are meant to be benefiting, thereby contributing to better governance and poverty reduction". Further, the continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of public servants ensures that they are performing to their full potential, achieving value for money in the provision of public services and being responsive to the people they are serving.

Although the mere existence of manifestos does not guarantee the performance of proposed policies, they provide the basis for the oversight role of citizens given that they effectively document policies or plans of aspiring political candidates and parties. Once such a document exists, continuous evaluation of performance of stated promises can be undertaken. Examples exist of measures adopted in tracking the implementation of political promises.

In the United Kingdom, a user-friendly website named "GovTracker", has been developed by a group of non-partisan creators, which collects and reports evidence on the implementation of government promises throughout its tenure in office. It reports that as at January 2017, after 221 days in office, Theresa May's current government has completed 19% of its political promises.

In 2013, the Jinnah Institute - a think tank in Pakistan, adopting a qualitative approach, performed an assessment of the historical implementation of political party manifesto promises of six political parties since 2008 and reported the implementation status of promises made as at 2013. It finds that much headway was made by the political parties in vital areas such as education, constitutional reform, legislation concerning women and minorities and on counter terrorism and the youth.

An article published by the Premium Times of Nigeria in 2016 qualitatively analyses the implementation of the ruling All Progressives Congress's (APC) manifesto promises within one year of governance. The article revealed that, while some headway was made in the implementation of promises concerning national security and public finance, the government failed to make significant progress on others such as those concerning the rule of law and electoral processes, education and health, youth and sports among others.

The Tanzanian government in 2017 launched an online portal to track the implementation of manifesto promises with the view of improving public service delivery. The portal shows the implementation level of each promise made indicating whether it is closed, in progress, on alert or needs to be expedited. However, the issue noted here is that the system is government engineered and controlled. This undermines true accountability. It is interesting to note that while it is generally accepted that manifestos facilitate tracking of implementation of promises made by political parties, there is little comprehensive research into the direct impact of this tracking on accountability and overall governance. However, a preliminary assessment of the growth in use of political manifestos as well as the demonstrated rigour with which countries particularly in Africa, have begun to track implementation of commitments made is telling of the fact that there is acceptance that tracking is necessary to keep government responsible and accountable.



# METHODOLOGY

This year's IMANIFESTO methodology shifts from a semi-quantitative approach to a qualitative analysis of the performance of the NPP government in its first year. The analysis focuses on the promises made by the government in its manifesto and attempts to track the implementation so far, of key promises that have been initiated. The promises are assessed under the following sectors: Economy; Agriculture; Governance; Education; Health; Energy and Infrastructure.

All promises for each sector are identified and key ones are traced through the 2017 and 2018 Budget and Economic Statements; the Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development (2017-2024), reports from Ministries, Departments and Agencies, other sector specific guidelines and programmes as well as news articles.

The study notes the preliminary results of the implementation of the key promises, discusses the potential and analyses the implications thereof on other indicated promises or policy initiatives. It aims to answer the question; "Do the proposed policies or programmes for which commitment has been made in the budgets, appropriation bills, actual drawdowns by the responsible sector ministries, reflect the scenario where potential or actual results could be attained or otherwise?". The study also notes the differences between the catalogue of promises, commitments in the Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development (2017-2024) and the budgets.



## ECONOMY

The NPP government has promised to build the most business-friendly and people-friendly economy in Africa in order to create jobs and prosperity for all Ghanaians. The government sought to achieve its objective by restoring macroeconomic stability; shifting the focus of economic management from taxation to production; managing the economy competently; and making the machinery of government work to deliver the benefits of progress to all Ghanaians. To accomplish this goal, about one hundred and forty-six (146) promises were made concerning the macroeconomy, trade and industry, agriculture, and tourism in the 2016 NPP manifesto. These promises are broadly in line with the medium term Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development (2017-2024) demonstrating consistency and commitment to their goals.

In the first year of the NPP administration, reflecting a stabilizing macroeconomy, Ghana enjoyed positive credit ratings. Three major rating agencies - Fitch (B/stable), Standard & Poor (B-/positive) and Moody's (B3/stable) - rated Ghana's economy as stable in 2017 considering such factors as exchange rate, public debt and inflation. Such positive rating if sustained and enhanced, will improve Ghana's global outlook, making her attract further investments. The Ghana cedi was relatively stable in 2017, compared to the previous year; and to other currencies in the West African sub-region. Between January 2017 and October 2017, the cumulative depreciation of the Ghana Cedi was 4.0% compared to 4.3% during the same period in 2016. Though inflation was on a downward path, meeting the 2017 inflation target of 11.6 percent proved elusive as the year closed with an inflation rate of 11.8 percent.

## Enhancing Fiscal Discipline

The ruling government in its 2016 Manifesto promised to enhance fiscal discipline by promoting transparency, accountability and credibility in fiscal policy implementation. To achieve this, the government promised to amend the existing Public Financial Management Act (PFMA), 2016 (Act 921) to allow for the establishment of a fiscal council. In addition, the government is committed to strengthening expenditure management, enhancing revenue mobilization and ensuring effective debt management to promote improved and sustainable fiscal performance .

### Fiscal Council

Even though the government mentioned in the 2017 budget its intentions to initiate processes for the establishment of a fiscal council, the 2018 budget did not give an account of activities undertaken so far towards the implementation of this initiative or the government's plans for it in 2018. Given that fiscal council is touted as the main institution to spearhead fiscal discipline in the country, it comes as a surprise that the government has made little progress towards establishing it in its first year. It is even more worrying that the government made no plans for it in the 2018 budget statement. Is the fiscal council no longer seen as an anchor for setting up and monitoring medium term fiscal policy?

### Strengthening of expenditure management

Concerning expenditure management, the government made a number of commitments in 2017. Below is a list of some of the commitments made and the status of their implementation as highlighted in the 2018 budget.

- Government committed to deploy the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) to new areas and to strengthen the capacities of Assemblies in the management of the new Programmed Based Budgeting (PBB). In 2017, GIFMIS was expanded to 54 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), 60 Metropolitan, Municipal, Districts Assemblies (MMDAs) and training on PBB was given to all the 216 Coordinating Directors; Budget, Planning, and Finance Officers including procurement and key staff of MMDAs . This effort is commendable as it demonstrates government's commitment to minimize inefficiencies and budget overruns.
- With regards to enforcing the PFMA, government committed to a major sensitisation drive and to strictly enforce provisions in the PFMA under a robust sanctions regime, especially provisions limiting expenditure overruns and commitment controls. Provisional results in the 2018 budget indicated that extensive sensitisation drive was undertaken to educate key PFMA stakeholders. However, there is no report on the enforcement of the two provisions, which are; limiting expenditure overruns and ensuring commitment controls. There is also no reported activity on sanctions applied as promised. Does the lack of reporting indicate a lack of enforcement or a gap in reporting? Crucial elements of a well-functioning Public Financial Management System include strict monitoring, reporting and enforceable sanctions which are not evident from performance reported for 2017. Plans for enforcing PFMA in 2018 appear repetitive since they also focus primarily on sensitisation and education.
- In 2017, government promised to revise the draft Local Government Borrowing Bill (LGBB); a comprehensive legislation to guide local assemblies to access private capital for development. The bill has seen very little progress since its initiation in 2008 . Though the NPP government in its 2016 manifesto promised to hasten the enactment of the bill, there is neither a report on progress made in its first year nor any provisions for it in 2018. This development is worrying given that the LGBB can reduce the burden on the public purse and help the government consolidate its efforts to achieve and sustain fiscal discipline in the medium to long term. Passing the LGBB can also greatly enhance the decentralisation efforts of the government.

# RESULTS AND ANALYSIS *cont'd*

## Revenue Mobilisation

In line with promoting a private sector led economy, the NPP government reduced and eliminated a number of taxes in order to encourage production and enhance private sector development. To compensate for the revenue shortfall and enhance revenue mobilisation, several measures were stated in the 2017 budget. Some of these measures included the deployment of electronic point of sale devices to improve VAT declaration, review of existing legislation on Non-Tax Revenue or Internally Generated Funds (NTR/IGF) to develop an IGF policy, and pilot in five small taxpayer offices a self-assessment system to enable tax payers prepare their own estimates. Other measures included a full implementation of the Excise Tax Stamp Act, (Act 873), introduction of a paperless system at the port, implementation of the National Identification System (NIS) and a review of import duties and tax exemptions.

Provisional results from the 2018 budget suggest that most of these measures were implemented albeit with some challenges. For instance, delays in the implementation of the excise tax stamp expected in 2017, led to the postponement of the initiative to January 2018. Despite the commendable efforts of the government to implement most of the measures put in place in the 2017 budget to boost revenue generation, the government failed to meet its revenue target of GHS 44.9 billion . This led to an accompanying reduction in expenditure in order to stay within the 2017 fiscal deficit target of 4.8% of GDP. By September 2017, revenue was 9.3% below projections and the budget deficit on a cash basis was 4.6% .

From the 2018 budget, revenue shortfall can be attributed to challenges such as, delays in passing bills for the deployment of fiscal electronic devices as well as the implementation of the National Identification System (NIS). The main ideas to drive revenue generation, as highlighted by the 2016 NPP manifesto and in the 2017 budget, included increased tax compliance, efficient and effective revenue administration and widening the tax base to include the informal sector. Deployment of fiscal electronic devices was critical to the government's plan to increase tax compliance. However, the recorded delays in legislations to support the deployment made this difficult .

A full implementation of the NIS was also needed to compliment efforts of the Ghana Revenue Authority to rope in people and businesses in the informal sector. Implementation of NIS is also needed to compliment the national digital addressing system to enhance property tax collection. Though the government promised that all registered persons will have a national identification card by end of 2017, it merely relaunched the NIS in 2017 and is yet to begin registration . Reasons cited for missing the October, 2017 deadline for the first phase of registration include delays in passing the National Identity (Amendment) Bill . If the NIS is not speedily administered, the story of deficits in revenue mobilization may not be different in 2018 and beyond.

## Public Debt Management

According to the 2017 budget, the objective of debt management is to ensure public debt sustainability within the framework of the PFMA. The government's debt management strategy for 2017 was to introduce new instruments that will lengthen the maturity profile of public debt and to reduce the cost associated with the public debt portfolio . This strategy proved largely successful in 2017; the government issued a 15-year domestic bond and a 7-year bond to re-profile maturing 91-day and 182-day treasuries. The administration also normalised the yield curve as rates on short-term treasuries fell in 2017. Preliminary fiscal data up to end of September indicate a reduction in debt to GDP ratio from 73% in 2016 to an estimate of 68.3% in 2017. Going forward, in 2018, government intends to re-profile Ghana's external debt by issuing Eurobonds.

## Interest Rate

To spur private sector investment, the 2016 NPP manifesto committed to pursue policies that will reduce interest rates. Between 2016 and 2017, the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR), the 91-day Treasury bill rates and interbank rates saw significant reductions. While the MPR fell 550 basis points to 20%, the 91-day treasury bill rate fell from 16.8% to 13.3%. Average lending rate, however, remained high even though it fell marginally from 31.38% to 28.96%, averaging 31.23% at close of 2017 . Meanwhile, with key challenges to credit such as limited information persisting, credit to the private sector grew by just 3.2% as at September 2017 as against 17.4% as at September 2016.

Banks mitigate credit risk through proper credit analysis. To do a decent credit analysis and at a relatively lower price, credit information should be made available and be easy to access. In Ghana, credit bureau coverage is only 16.5% of the adult population along a zero percent credit registry coverage. Credit scoring tools also do not exist. Even though MPR and other money market rates may have reduced, the market will always price-in the inherent risk arising from limited information which results in higher lending rates. This situation is even more pronounced for the informal sector which is very large in Ghana. In November 2017, Bank of Ghana reported that both short-term and long-term loans to large as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) decreased. They cited increases in Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) and risk related to large borrowers as reasons for the decline.

## Trade and Industry



### One District, One Factory

“One District, One Factory” is one of the flagship industrial development initiatives of the NPP government. The objective of this initiative is to set-up at least one medium to large factory in every district in Ghana to ensure and even spatial spread of industries. In 2017, no factories were actually built. Instead, the government completed technical, commercial and financial viability analysis on 462 proposals out of which 191 projects were selected to be implemented in 102 districts. According to the 2018 budget, 250,000 jobs are expected to be created, the evidence of which will not be seen until actual implementation starts.

It is however worth noting that, a dedicated website with relevant information on the initiative has been created. The website provides detailed information on the services rendered by the “One District, One Factory” secretariat, information on the application process and an application portal among others. This is a commendable step as it increases access to the initiative, build ownership for the project and increase accountability. To further consolidate these gains, the national secretariat of the “one district, one factory” initiative must regularly update the website with all relevant information.

### Trade Facilitation

The 2016 NPP manifesto promised to reduce fees and charges at the port and restructure the customs division of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) to optimise its operational efficiency. It also promised to introduce reforms in the port clearing system to improve their operational efficiency. Following through on its promise, a paperless port system was launched in 2017 to boost revenue generations and to improve transaction times at the port. According to the 2018 budget, the paperless port is reported to have reduced transaction time at the port from 2 days to 8 hours for compliant transactions and increased revenue by 35.4%. Some users of the port system, including freight forwarders and importers however insist that the challenges in the paperless system still persist. According to the users, aside compliance issues, which has been moved from the long room at Tema to the headquarters in Accra, the port processes remain the same. Some even refer to the 8-hour timeline for clearing goods as a “façade”. Are the complains an indication of inadequate understanding of the new process?

Another recent initiative which is perceived to pose potential challenges to a short cargo dwell time is the excise tax stamp policy which was launched in August 2017. Just as the paperless system, the tax stamp policy has the objective of improving revenue generation at the port with the additional benefit of addressing counterfeiting problems in the country. The challenge however lies in its implementation which involves unpacking goods for stamping and repacking them before they are cleared at the port. The caveat here is that gains made in the paperless system could be easily eroded if it takes too long to unpack and repack products for tax stamps to be fixed. Though improving government revenue mobilisation efforts is important, it must not be done at the peril of the private sector. Proper and consistent monitoring and evaluation of all old and new port policies will be imperative to strike the right balance.



## Tourism

NPP's 2016 manifesto acknowledged the huge tourism potential that has been left unexplored for many years by successive governments and promised their government will be different. To achieve this, the NPP government promised to aggressively develop tourist sites and bring them to world-class standards. They also promised to deliberately market and promote Ghana's unique tourist sites; promote domestic tourism; and generally, take tourist staff and the hospitality industry seriously among others. However, this is not the first time the tourism industry in Ghana has been promised a "make over" by a political party. Past administrations also made promises to make Ghana a preferred and competitive tourist destination and to develop new, high-value options in the leisure market. Nonetheless, Ghana is still not a preferred and competitive tourist destination even for the local tourist. This makes one wonder whether the rhetoric will continue, even with this new administration.

The main performance or achievement of the tourism sector in 2016 as highlighted by the 2017 budget was to boost domestic tourism through the organisation of selected activities. The activities included the Chocolate Day, Hang Paragliding Festival, PANAF-EST and Homofest. In the same budget, the 2017 outlook was to undertake investment feasibility studies to strengthen private sector participation through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs); to ensure sustainable tourism development; kick start the Marine Drive Tourism Investment Project and to develop the Efuwa Sutherland Park into an ultra-modern world class park through PPP

arrangements. However, the 2017 performance of the sector as stated in the 2018 budget include the organization of the Chocolate day, paragliding festival, Emancipation and PANAFEST Day. The ministry also participated in eight international fairs including the 51st Internationale Tourismus Bourse (ITB), Tourism Fair Berlin-Germany; China's Outbound travel and tourism market (COTTOM) in Beijing, China and the Akwaaba Fair in Nigeria.

While organising cultural programs and travelling to international fairs are all reasonable tourism promotions activities, it does not even begin to address the core challenges faced by the tourism industry in Ghana. Core challenges faced by the industry include; the deplorable conditions of roads leading to the major tourist sites in Ghana, which critically affects both domestic tourism and discourages private sector involvement; non-existence of basic necessities such as proper sanitation, signage, restaurants, etc. at most tourist sites among others. While the budget has stated the need to leverage private partnerships to develop the tourism sector, specifically tourism infrastructure, the public purse will still have to make significant contributions. In the 2017 budget, allocations to capital expenditure (CAPEX) for tourism decreased significantly (74.42%) from GHS 4.3 million in 2016, to GHS 1.10 million in 2017. However, in the 2018 budget, allocation to CAPEX has increased from GHS 1.10 million in 2017 to GHS 16.7 million in 2018. This is generally a very good change, assuming that actual disbursement equals projections. It reflects the government's realisation that increased spending in tourism has great potential to drive economic growth and create jobs.



### Job Creation

Job creation constituted a central theme of the NPP's 2016 Manifesto therefore most of the party's promises were tied to promoting job creation and increasing wealth. Several promises were made with the aim of lessening the unemployment burden confronting the country. Specific initiatives include the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) which is expected to create over 750,000 direct and indirect jobs, One district One factory, Zongo Development Fund among others. After a year in office, mixed results have been achieved.

The 2018 budget statement provided information on some recruitment processes that have occurred since the NPP took over the running of affairs of the country. COCOBOD, as part of their artificial pollination project, have trained and deployed

10,000 youth. Concurrently, the Planting for Food and Jobs has employed about 2,160 university graduates and 1,070 non-graduates have been recruited so far. Also, a total of 201,000 farmers have benefited from the programme, however, there is lack of clarity as to whether these were new or already established farmers. There is also an issue concerning how the recruited individuals were engaged under the programme in terms of their role along the value chain.

Secondly, under the same programme, there is information suggesting 1,200 agricultural extension officers have been recruited by the government. The aforementioned employment offer, coupled with the over 18,000 nurses and the 22,000 teachers remain examples of direct employment government was able to create in 2017.

A lack of data and updated reports on purported recruitment makes it almost impossible for rigorous assessment to be carried out on job creation. The most recent data on unemployment/jobseekers and labour statistics were collected in 2015 . Regardless of non-availability of reliable data on unemployment, the recent aggressiveness displayed by over 84,000 youth striving for 500 vacancies at Ghana Immigration Service gives a worrying picture of the unemployment situation in Ghana , hence the need to act fast as a country.

In the 2018 budget, Government hinted some commendable employment driven initiatives, such as the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Plan (NEIP). The NEIP seeks to support Ghanaians with profitable ideas by providing “cheap funds”. In so doing, the government hopes to create sustainable jobs and increase entrepreneurial activities. Concurrently, the government has mentioned plans to provide direct jobs to about 100,000 graduates in Sanitation, Health, revenue mobilization, agriculture and education under the National Builders Corps (Nabcorp). Sadly, the Nabcorp falls under similar employment modules implemented by past governments for instance the National Youth Employment Programme, which did not guarantee job sustainability. Almost all of such employment modules expire after the implementing government loses power.

The most sustainable approach to job creation which the government has already identified in their manifesto and reiterated in the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development (CPESD) for 2017-2024 is the “private sector-led approach”. However, if the government wants to complement private sector efforts in the short to medium term, it must seek to do so efficiently. Also, existing entrepreneurial and mentorship programmes that aim at creating employment need to be audited, reviewed and further expanded. Carrying out an audit will help to eradicate duplication of efforts and also drive investments to critical areas.



## Agriculture

In order to achieve the government’s vision of increasing agricultural productivity, modernizing agriculture and increasing income levels of local farmers as well as achieving food security, a total of about 61 promises were made in their 2016 manifesto. These promises were categorized under 13 sub-themes including irrigation, cocoa, fisheries among others.

To further reiterate its commitments to the sector, these promises have also been captured in the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development (CPESD) for 2017-2024. For example, agricultural transformation has been deliberately selected as one of the four key pillars to drive growth and development for a stipulated period. Specific flagship programmes and projects outlined in the CPESD to be implemented are: to launch Planting for Food and Jobs Campaign, effectuate both the One Village, One Dam Initiative and the One District, One Factory and implement subsidy programmes on seeds, fertilisers and other agrochemicals. Within one year in office, some commitment has been made towards achieving some of the 61 promises while others are yet to be “touched”. Attempts to improve mechanization, increase access to credit, the implementation of the commodity exchange programme and improving extension services is commendable. Notable promises achieved so far include the slashing of fertilizer prices and the implementation of the Planting for food and Jobs programme.

## Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ)

PFJ remains one of the popular initiatives undertaken by the NPP government. As the major outstanding project of the Ministry of Agriculture for 2017, the campaign was purported to encourage all Ghanaians (both rural and urban) to engage in farming activities on a full or part-time basis. The PFJ is anchored on five pillars namely: provision of improved seeds; supply of fertilizers; provision of dedicated extension services; marketing and e-Agriculture and monitoring. For the first year, the programme sought to target 200,000 farmers and is expected to increase the production of maize, rice, soybean and sorghum. Although no Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) report on the programme exists, the 2018 budget hinted that after 7 months of launching the campaign, about 201,000 farmers have been registered so far across the country, thereby exceeding the target of 200,000. Three thousand, two hundred and thirty (3,230) jobs have been created and 121,000 metric tonnes (MT) out of a target of 233,356MT of subsidised fertilizers have been distributed. Also 4,454.98 MT out of a target of 5,767.50MT of subsidised seeds of maize, rice, sorghum, soybean and vegetables were distributed to beneficiary farmers.

Generally, the 2017 growth rates for the agricultural sector was higher than that of 2016; growth rates for the first three quarters of 2016 were 5%, 3.9% and 2.8% respectively, compared to 7.7%, 3.4%, and 10% in the first three quarters of 2017. Given that PFJ was launched in the second quarter of 2017, it is unclear how much of this growth can be attributed to the PFJ initiative. A major concern with PFJ is the lack of a comprehensive document spelling out guidelines for implementing the campaign. Similarly, the paucity of information on such an important project is worrying. This negatively affects the ability to track implementation of the policy. For instance, how can the rate of payment of subsidised inputs be assessed? Periodic reporting on the programme, for example after every farming season, will ensure transparency and provide adequate information for prospective farmers and investors' use.

Secondly, it will be interesting to know if the initial agenda of incentivising all Ghanaians to venture into the farming business has been abandoned. Currently, little to no information on such an arrangement exists and the 2018 budget also made reference to only 500,000 beneficiary farmers for this year.

## Irrigation

As at 2013, it was estimated that about 99% of cultivated land in Ghana had zero access to irrigation facilities thereby hampering year-round production. It was therefore refreshing to note that the NPP government has made promises to address this challenge through the implementation of the "One Village, One Dam" project and rehabilitate existing public irrigation schemes. According to the CPESD, the government pledges to "facilitate the provision of community-owned and managed small-scale irrigation facilities across the country, especially in the Afram Plains and the northern savannah, through the One Village, One Dam initiative". However, indications of intentions to be carried out within the first year based on publicly available data has not been encouraging. Compared to the 2015 figure of 66 dams and dugouts, in 2016 112 dams and dugouts were completed which represents a 69% increase in the number of dams and dugouts. The ministry in its report on activities for 2017 highlighted that 192 small dams and dugouts in 64 districts have been identified for development under the 'One-Village-One Dam' initiative. This will represent a 71% increase from the 2016 figure. For 2018, the ministry is projecting additional 50 small dams and dugouts which will represent a 26% increase for 2018. The declining rate of growth from 2018 is curious to note, especially for a government that continues to re-echo its decision to use agriculture as an economic transformation tool. It has been reported that Government is yet to receive bids from prospective applicants to kick-start the One Village One Dam project. Nevertheless, some other irrigation projects have been initiated and are at various stages of completion including the Mprumen dam, Tamene irrigation scheme and the Uasi irrigation scheme.

## Cocoa

The government's decision to ensure that farmers receive increased producer prices enough to encourage them to produce more cocoa for export is commendable. In 2017, though global prices plummeted forcing Ivory Coast to cut down its producer prices, the government remained committed to the promise by maintaining the 2016 prices. Also, the assurance to rehabilitate existing farms and the replanting of cocoa trees have taken off. These interventions, coupled with the artificial pollination programme among others are expected to increase yield from the reported 2015 level of 778,044MT.



## Fisheries

The government listed an array of promises (10) aimed at revamping the fisheries sector. These promises largely seek to ensure the availability and transparent distribution of premix fuel and to increase fish stock as well as to ensure profitability within the sector. In the 2017 budget statement government promised to “facilitate the supply of premix fuel and outboard motors to fishers in an “effective and transparent” manner”. However, within the same year, there were at least 200 cases of premix fuel diversion , which denied fishermen of the much-needed input. It is imperative for the government to outline clear guidelines and reforms to regulate the pre-mix fuel trade. A robust public-private arrangement that will ensure accessibility to premix fuel as well as reduce inefficiencies is needed. The regulatory agencies have proven that they are not capable of enforcing strict compliance while perpetrators keep robbing the state of huge sums of money.



## GOVERNANCE

Out of about 73 promises made in their 2016 manifesto related to Governance, a limited number appear to have seen implementation in the first year of the NPP government. These include the introduction of an independent Office of the Special Prosecutor and recruitment of 499 new personnel in the Ghana Prisons Service. In 2017, the government also undertook many exercises to sensitize the public, media and other stakeholders on various governance areas, such as fire safety, corruption, weaponry, and encouraging women to participate in conflict prevention. The government also established a Cyber Crime Unit at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the police service, in line with the manifesto promise to enhance the capacity of the police to tackle cyber-crime.

Many of the promises related to the Governance Sector require amendments or enactments of legislation before being implemented, which often take longer than a year. The 2018 Budget Statement mentions that during 2017, the legislative drafting division of the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General’s Department has drafted a number of bills, including the Legal Profession (Amendment) Bill, the Legal Aid Commission Bill, and the Companies Bill, all of which are awaiting approval from Cabinet . A governance related promised that the government has made actual progress on is tackling corruption.

## Corruption

One of the key anti-corruption promises the NPP made in their manifesto was to institute the Office of the Special Prosecutor. This promise was made in light of the many corruption scandals during the previous administration, such as the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) saga, the Smarttys bus branding scandal, and Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) misappropriation of public funds to name a few.

The decision to establish the office of the Special Prosecutor was made despite the presence of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO), which both have the authority to investigate cases of possible malfeasance in the public sector and prosecute them through the Attorney-General.

It is admirable that the Special Prosecutor has autonomy from the Executive. This was said to be necessary for the elimination of institutional bottlenecks such as the monopoly of prosecutorial authority by the Attorney General. However, it is also important to ensure that the office of the Special Prosecutor does not increase bureaucracy by usurping and/or overlapping the role of other anti-corruption agencies. For example, EOCO has as its mandate the recovery of assets and is reported to have recovered the amount of GHS 26.7 million from two companies on behalf of the Bulk Oil Storage and Transportation (BOST) company and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) in 2017. The Office of the Special Prosecutor also has a similar mandate for asset recovery.

A prudent and important part of fighting corruption would be to first put in place anti-corruption practices specifically in the public procurement process, which has historically presented avenues for corruption. Additionally, a study by the Transparency International in 2013 on Corruption in Ghana found that the institutions perceived as the most prone to bribery were: Police, Customs administration, Judiciary, Licenses, Permits and Public Services, Tax Administration, and the Extractive Industry. The 2018 Budget Statement indicates that the government sensitized the public on corruption as part of the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP), by distributing 5,000 copies of the plan. Though a good initiative, distribution of the copies of the NACAP in and of itself is not a sufficient measure to deal with the menace of corruption if not buttressed with other stipulated measures such as the whistle blowers' website. Overall, it remains to be seen whether enough is being done now to curtail corrupt practices in the public sphere in the long run.



## EDUCATION

The NPP 2016 manifesto declared Education to be a major priority and committed itself to a 'Bold, Creative, Visionary and All-embracing Program for the Transformation of Education in Ghana'. As a priority sector, the NPP had four core objectives, which translated to 25 promises specifically under Education. The core elements are free education for all Ghanaian children up to Senior High School (SHS); raising the quality of education at primary and senior high school level, with emphasis on science and mathematics; working with universities to raise their standards to the ranks of the best among their peers in Africa; placing research and innovation at the heart of education in Ghana.

The Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017- 2024), which outlines the vision of Ghana, prioritises education as a key driver in providing opportunity for all. The expansion of access to and improvement of quality of education at all levels for all socio-economic groups is the main goal in strengthening social development and inclusion.

After a year in office, the key education promises/strategies implemented by the ruling government include; implementation of the Free SHS policy, restoration of the teacher trainee allowance covering 49,000 trainees in 41 colleges of education, redefinition of basic education to include senior secondary education, a 100 percent increase in the capitation grant from GHS 4.50 to GHS 9, commencement of the review of basic level curriculum with focus on the four R's (Reading, wRiting, aRithmetic and cReativity).

### Free SHS Policy

The core element of the NPP's education programme is "free education for all Ghanaian children up to Senior High School, to ease the burden on parents and guardians while encouraging them to assume their responsibility for the social upbringing and parental control of their children". This translates to the promise to "redefine basic education to include Senior High School (SHS), covering vocational, agricultural and technical schools", and making it available for free on a universal basis to all Ghanaians. The President in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) affirmed the commencement of the Free SHS policy in September 2017.

The policy has been met with implementation challenges in the form of infrastructure deficit, congestion, inadequate furniture, high preference for boarding status and well-documented operational issues such as the placement of students in day schools as boarding students. A look at these challenges raises questions concerning;

- The sustainability of the source of funding;
- Improvements in the Quality of Secondary Education; and
- Equity and Equality

### **Sustainability of Funding Sources**

The success of the free SHS policy is contingent on the availability of sustainable funding. Based on the 2017 budget the policy is largely being funded by oil revenue (52.8%). Though encouraging, in light of how unpredictable oil revenues can be, the sustainability debate continues. Additionally, the proposed establishment of the Voluntary Education Fund (VEF) to support education in the 2018 budget is a good initiative. However, it raises further questions about the sustainable funding of the Free SHS policy and what the setup of VEF will be if established. The creation of the VEF is in itself a testament of funding challenges ahead as enrolment increases and the demand for infrastructure also increases. The setup of the VEF is very critical in terms of its effectiveness and efficiency. The current implementation challenges of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) and Scholarship Secretariat which are both under the office of the government machinery should serve as a caution for the set up and placement of the VEF. It would be prudent for the VEF to be under the mandate of the Ministry of Education to avoid the challenges faced by the GETFund such as the delay in the disbursement of funds for projects.

### **Improvements in the Quality of Secondary Education**

Infrastructure is one of the most basic elements necessary to ensure access to quality education. Interestingly, the GHS 400 million allocated to the Free SHS policy in 2017 was skewed towards the provision of Goods and Services, which primarily covers the cost of the one-time fees and the recurrent expenditure. This raises questions about funding of CAPEX for the policy. It is therefore not surprising that infrastructure challenges were encountered at the initial stages of the implementation of the policy. However, during the 2017 'Meet the Press Series' by the Ministry of Education, the Minister highlighted the start of a procurement process to supply of 2,559 dining tables, 3,038 teacher table and chairs, 5,135 pieces of computer lab furniture, 69,572 mono desks, 13,145 bunk beds and 4,335 mattresses as the interventions to address the infrastructure deficit.

Additionally, a US\$ 40 million loan has been accessed from the World Bank to address the infrastructure deficit. The proposed implementation of the Accelerated Programme for the Rationalisation and Expansion of Educational Infrastructure should be prioritized in addressing the infrastructure deficit for education sector instead of depending on external loans.

### **Equity and Equality debate**

The Free SHS policy has as one of its objectives equity. But the current form of implementation tends to address equality more favourably than equity. Consider these; should funding per student at every school be exactly the same, or should students who come from a less privileged background get access to more resources in order to ensure that they can catch up with those more privileged? The process of making sure all students have equal access to resources for education is important but, the reality is that some students need more resource than what the Free SHS policy is offering. Therefore, there is a need for targeting in order to achieve the equity goal as well as the equality goal.



## HEALTH

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 3 aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Achieving this goal requires the attainment of a number of targets such as achieving universal health coverage and addressing the disparities in the health sector. Ghana has committed itself to achieving the SDGs including Goal 3. The 2016 NPP manifesto made 45 promises to deliver affordable, equitable and easily accessible healthcare when voted into power.

### **National Health Insurance Scheme**

In the 2016 NPP manifesto, it was claimed that the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) had collapsed. The NPP explained that the scheme's collapse was due to huge indebtedness to service providers. In April 2017, the total debt of the NHIS owed service providers was estimated to be GHS 1.2 billion. This indebtedness has called into question the sustainability of the NHIS over the 14 years of implementation. Due to this, the NPP made a major promise to restructure the NHIS. Since coming into power, it has prioritised the clearing of the NHIS debt. According to the 2018 budget, GHS 560 million out of the GHS 1.2 billion debt has been paid. The government deserves to be commended for such an effort.

Although, the government has made efforts in settling part of the debt, it is still difficult to identify initiatives that have been adopted to restructure the NHIS as promised. Sustainability of the scheme will depend on the government's ability to find alternative funding sources.

### **Nurses' Training Allowance**

The 2016 NPP manifesto promised to restore the nursing trainee allowance which was scrapped by the previous administration. To fulfil this, the government allocated GHS 149 million in the 2017 budget to 54,840 beneficiary trainee nurses. The 2018 budget further increased the allocation to GHS 312 million, though the number of beneficiary trainee nurses was not stated. The restoration of the nurses' trainee allowance by the government can potentially lead to a cap in the number of trained nurses. This is because the number of students admitted into the nursing schools at any point in time is dependent on the amount of funds allocated for the allowance. Already there is a huge deficit in the nurse to population ratio; in 2016 the nurse to population ratio was 1:725.

Re-introduction of nurses' trainee allowance raised questions about the potential introduction of a quota system in the admission process. The government assured citizens that quotas will not be introduced in the admission of nurses. Contrary to this assurance, a directive was issued by the government to reduce the intake of students by 1,600 in 2017. This implies that the introduction of the nurses' trainee allowance has adversely affected admission of students into public nursing training institutions, which contradicts government's initial intention for restoring the nursing trainee allowance. The government restored the nursing training allowance to incentivise Ghanaians into the trainee nurses training institutions.

## Emergency Services

The 2016 NPP manifesto stated the intention of the NPP to make global health concerns, such as emergency preparedness to deal with acute injuries and disasters, a priority in the health sector. Two main promises relating to the country's emergency relief response were made. These include "strengthening emergency capacity and capability nationwide" and, "strengthening the National Ambulance Service and ensuring collaboration with NADMO". In 2016, the CEO of the National Ambulance Service (NAS) stated that it had only 165 ambulances to service the whole country, despite international guidelines suggesting that, given Ghana's population, about 1,000 ambulances were needed . By 2017, the number of ambulances operated by the NAS was estimated to be only 55 .

The Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development further reiterated government's commitment by stating the goal of revamping emergency services . Regarding this issue, in January 2018, the Minister of Health claimed the government intends to obtain 275 ambulances by the end of the year through the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme (IPEP), which is under the Ministry of Special Development Initiatives . However, given that epidemics and other health emergencies can occur without warning, this promise should have been a priority in the first year.

## Sanitation

The NPP 2016 manifesto made two promises concerning sanitation: to establish a National Sanitation Programme and Action Plan and promote recycling of refuse through incentive packages. After a year in office, neither promise has been achieved.

Rather, the government hinted plans in the 2017 budget to establish a National Sanitation Authority which will work in collaboration with the MMDAs to manage issues of sanitation in the country . A draft policy to support the establishment of the Authority is currently awaiting cabinet's approval .

Given that the NPP government is committed to make Accra the cleanest city in Africa , not much progress has been made towards achieving this goal in its first year. Government must prioritise sanitation issues especially since it affects multiple facets of the economy including health, tourism and productivity.

## ENERGY



To achieve its vision for the energy sector, the NPP in its 2016 manifesto made about 37 promises covering the power, petroleum and renewable energy sectors. The main focus of these promises was to eliminate the problems that bring about Ghana's perennial power crisis while providing for the economy reliable and affordable energy supply.

Out of these 37 promises, efforts of the now ruling government within its first year have focused chiefly on; restructuring of the energy sector debt, reducing electricity tariff, expanding electricity supply. Others include, allocating of oil revenues primarily towards expenditure on infrastructure, health, education and agriculture, investing in the skills of Ghanaians to manage the oil and gas sector and empowering local firms and individuals to play active roles in the oil and gas value chain.

### Power

#### Restructuring the Energy Sector Debt

The ruling government has considerably added on to the efforts of the previous government in dealing with the issue of the energy sector debt. Riding on the back of the already instituted Energy Sector Levy Act (ESLA), the energy bonds were issued to refinance the energy sector debt.

Though this is laudable, it is critical to pay attention to the following:

- It is all fair and good if it is assumed that while the energy debt stock is reducing, the power utilities are not incurring any further debt. However, a major concern would emerge if this is not the case, especially if the net debt accumulation of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the sector positive overtime.
- The key factors that led to the accumulation of the energy sector debt have not been judiciously dealt with in such a manner as to ensure that net debt accumulation overtime is not positive. Particularly, progress has stalled on the ECG Financial and Operational Turnaround project intended to improve the efficiency of the utility so as to ensure it does not incur further debt. As the Millennium Development Authority (MIDA) notes after a second Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in December, “the road towards the procurement of a competent private sector partner for the ECG has been long and challenging” . Also, not much has been heard concerning governments stated commitment to secure fuel supply for power generation. Particularly, the 2017 and 2018 budgets were silent on payments for Nigerian Gas via the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP), the proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) contracts among others.
- In lieu of the foregoing, implications for other policies proffered by the government are as follows;

#### **The Cash Waterfall Mechanism (CWM):**

The main purpose of the CWM is “allocating and paying collected revenues to all utility service providers and fuel providers”. This mechanism effectively settles debts owed and is useful in allocating revenues collected from power distribution. However, it stands to be undermined if other fundamental issues that inhibit revenue collection by the ECG are not dealt with.

#### **Reduction in Electricity tariffs**

Although the 2017 budget was mute on the details of the electricity tariff reduction promised in the NPP’s manifesto, the 2018 budget listed a whole gamut of expected reductions in electricity tariffs across consumer categories including average reduction of 13% for residential and non-residential consumers. In so far as the energy sector levy is built into the electricity tariffs, if tariff reductions will affect the Energy Debt Recovery Levy, the Public Lighting Levy and the National Electrification Scheme Levy, then the electricity tariff reduction strategy may potentially upset debt restructuring efforts in the sector.

## OIL & GAS



#### **Allocation of revenues**

It came with much satisfaction when the NPP government reorganized the priority areas of the Annual Budget Funding Amount (ABFA) in its 2017 budget to focus more on agriculture, education, health and road, rail and other critical infrastructure development given that it had promised to do so in its manifesto. Much caution was served concerning the “Road, Rail and Other Critical Infrastructure” priority area. This proceeded from the fact that, the previous government had coined a similar priority area facilitating the thin spread of oil revenues on several projects making tracking difficult hence undermining accountability .

Even though the 2016 manifesto did not particularly mention the creation of the Ministry of Special Development Initiatives (MSDI), the 2017 budget highlighted the creation of the MSDI together with the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme (IPEP) to facilitate decentralized development. Under the IPEP, each of the 275 constituencies in Ghana is to receive US\$1 million or GHS 4.39 million

annually to fund projects selected under standardized guidelines. This translates to approximately GHS 1.1 billion to be spent annually.

The 2018 budget revealed that, of the total expenditure allocations to the MSDI, 65.8% would be sponsored by the government of Ghana while 34.2% of the amount would be obtained from the ABFA. In and of itself, allocation to the MSDI or IPEP from the ABFA is not alarming. The non-definition of the projects to be funded by the designated amount is quite alarming. There is no concrete document that spells out the standardized guidelines and catalogues the defined projects on which monies will be expended. Categories outlined from which projects should emerge include the one district one factory initiative, the one village one dam initiative, small business development, agricultural inputs, water for all projects and sanitation projects. These initiatives themselves have not been clearly defined. The threat to accountability is glaring given this situation which is likely to make it difficult to track expenditure of oil revenues on projects.

### **Local Capacity Development**

The government's effort in aggressively developing local capacity in the oil and gas sector to deal with the lack of requisite technical skills and expertise have been commendable. The 2016 manifesto committed to an Accelerated Oil Capacity Development Programme (AOCDP). The Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development (CPESD) (2017-2024) highlighted the implementation of this programme which will be carried out by the Petroleum Commission through the development of policy actions such as the Ghana Upstream Sector Internship Programme (GUSIP).

Within one year, AOCDP as well as GUSIP were launched. The AOCDP is a multi-faceted training programme targeting individuals, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) as well as employees of public institutions. The programme will facilitate the training of 1000 Ghanaians annually including 200 SMEs and 300 employees within the public sector. The AOCDP is complemented by the GUSIP which aims, in collaboration with International Oil Companies (IOC's), to equip young professionals such as geologists and petroleum engineers with the requisite practical experience required in the oil and gas industry. It was reported in the 2018 budget that 43 interns have so far been placed in upstream oil and gas companies.

Although the AOCP together with the GUSIP hold great potential for job creation in the sector, there are critical questions to be asked and points to be noted;

- Is the sector able to absorb the number of trained persons churned out year on year?

The oil sector has an enclave nature with few employment opportunities. A critical needs assessment of the sector taking into consideration the lifetime of the industry as well as year on year employment into the sector must inform the numbers expected to be churned out. But the paucity of data concerning the year on year employment in the sector is telling of the fact that such a needs assessment may not have been carried or even if carried out may be flawed.

- Proceeding from the above, there is the need to ensure that skills obtained are transferable so that other auxiliary industries may absorb trained persons who may not find available jobs in the oil and gas sector.
- How does the AOCDP and GUSIP take into consideration or feed into already laid down local content policy? Does it add an additional layer of burden onto IOCs thus undermining the attraction of investors into the sector?

The NPP in its 2016 manifesto committed to infrastructure development through a programme dubbed the Integrated Infrastructural Development Programme which covers road, railway, ports, harbours, aviation, housing, Information Communication Technology (ICT) as well as water systems. Approximately 73 promises concerning infrastructure development were made by the NPP and within its first year, the government has focused mainly on mainstreaming ICT into governance and public service delivery including automation of clearance processes at the ports, National Identification Scheme (NIS), the National Digital Addressing System (NDAS), continuous maintenance of existing roads and construction of some railway lines (Sekondi to Takoradi via Kojokrom),

## **Ghana Ports go Paperless**

In line with the commitment to ensure efficiency and to eliminate corruption at the Ghana Ports made in its 2016 manifesto and corroborated in the CPESD 2017-2024, the government within the year pursued and brought to a head the full automation of clearance processes at ports in Ghana. Key to the automation process were the creation of a Risk Engine that helps identify compliant importers and a paperless import clearance process flow which enables compliant importers to get customs clearance online. The process took effect from the 1st of September 2017 and was rolled out at both the Tema and Takoradi ports.

After initial hiccups within the first and second week of implementation mainly due to network issues, the paperless system normalized and ran smoothly. The 2018 budget reports, the introduction of the paperless system at the ports significantly reduced transaction time from 2 days to 8 hours and increased revenue from the ports by 35.4%. The increase in revenue is prima facie the expected result of the paperless process given enhancement to trade facilitation; the faster goods are cleared, the greater the quantity of goods cleared hence the greater the revenue flows.

Overall, the initiative is commendable. The key concern however is with the risk clearance system/risk engine. The engine works with a risk profile of the importer which is generated from historical compliance of the importer as well as a description of the items being imported. If the system declares the importer as compliant, the importer is able to clear his goods without the need for inspection. Here's the catch; any glitch in the algorithm of the risk engine would mean that importers can be declared compliant when indeed they aren't. This may allow room for the passage of illegal, prohibited or restricted items without the necessary permit in the case of misclassification or misdescription and may lead also to loss of government revenue.

## **National Identification System and National Digital Address System**

The NPP stated categorically in its 2016 manifesto; "we will register every resident in Ghana within the first year of taking office". Apart from the fact that registration of all Ghanaians by the National Identification System (NIS) has not been achieved during one year, little progress has been made in terms of setting the process in motion.

The NIS was launched in September of 2017 and information can be found on the government's e-Services portal concerning the usefulness of the NIS card (named the Ghanacard), guidelines on filling the form, as well as answers to some frequently asked questions. However, a check on the 15th of January 2017 revealed that the website of the National Identification Authority itself was down for maintenance.

The 2017 budget reveals that, the main intention for the NIS as well as the National Digital Address System (NDAS) is to broaden the tax base by roping in undocumented but economically active players in the informal sector thereby formalizing the economy so as to maximize revenue collection. The 2018 budget reported the roll out of the NDASS on October 18th 2017 and the revival of the NIS whose implementation was halted after its September 2017 launch due to required amendments of the National Identification Authority Act, 2006 (Act 707) and subsequent passage of the relevant Legislative Instrument (LI). The required amendments to the Act include :

- Doing away with the use of the voters' identity cards, driver's license and baptismal certificates as proof of citizenship and retaining birth certificates and passports
- Elimination of the current minimum age for registration to enable all children under six years to be registered



Three days after the 2018 budget reading, on November 18th 2017, the National Identity Register (NIR) (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was passed into an Act under a certificate of urgency to pave way for the introduction of the LI.

It is important to note that the initial cost of the NIS was stated to be GHS 100 million in the 2017 budget. However, it was allocated GHS 200 million in the 2018 budget though little progress had been made. This increase in allocation could possibly be the effect of the delay of the project leading to cost overruns. However, a 100% increase is quite curious.

## CONCLUSION

This Manifesto analysis was carried out to assess and track the implementation of promises made by the NPP government prior to being elected into power. During the first year of their term, the NPP government achieved reasonable progress towards implementing some of the promises they made to voters in their 2016 manifesto. These included the commencement of Free SHS policy, increasing yields of cocoa by rehabilitating cocoa farms and replanting trees, relative macroeconomic stability and reducing the energy sector debt by GHS 5 billion. However, some key elements must be carefully monitored to ensure future success of the implementation of the manifesto pledges.

First, amendment and enactment of some legislation is needed prior to the fulfilment of some manifesto promises. These include legislation such as the Local Government Borrowing Bill which will aid in the implementation of the promises related to decentralization; legislation regulating the trade of pre-mix fuel in the fisheries sector, among others. The expectations on the progress made in the manifesto promises should not be high, taking into account the time needed for necessary legislations to be passed.

Innovative strategies for the funding of education and health initiatives are needed to ensure sustainability of these government policies and programmes. The Free SHS policy is a key policy and must be well implemented in light of the initial challenges, such as the needed infrastructure, Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) and teachers which will be required as a result of the increased enrolment. In addressing disparities in the health sector, the funding sources of the NHIS must be evaluated and reformed.

There is also the need for improvements in transparency and accountability in some processes. For example, there should be transparency in the method of recruitment of participants of the Planting for Food and Jobs Programme. Accountability, such as the details of how exactly the USD 1 million allocated to each constituency under the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme will be spent, is also key. Increasing transparency and accountability would ensure that monitoring and evaluation can be conducted by the public, which would lead to less corruption.

Proper monitoring and evaluation by the government is also of importance in order to rectify emerging challenges in policies. Audits of sectors, such as the existing job creation programmes and the oil and gas sector will present useful Monitoring & Evaluation tools which could help the avoidance of duplication. These will build into national databases.

Overall, while the progress made by the NPP government to achieve the promises in their manifesto is auspicious, given the length of time, we must also be wary of just ticking off promises from a checklist without solving actual problems. An example of this trend is with the rate of accumulation of the energy sector debt. Further, the interconnectivity of policies and programmes which will facilitate implementation of the promises should not be underestimated. Thoughtful coordination among Ministries, Departments and Agencies should be a priority.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the analysis made so far, the following recommendations are proffered;

## **Economy**

- Strengthening expenditure management will require that government consolidates its efforts in enforcing the Public Financial Management Act, (Act 921). The sanction provisions in the PFMA must be strictly enforced to achieve this.
- To address credit information challenges which affect lending rates, government must consult and collaborate with the private sector to find reliable and sustainable means of generating and distributing credit information (both positive and negative). This will ensure increased and sustainable credit flows to the private sector.
- Regarding trade facilitation, government must increase education on the paperless system to improve understanding among users. Continuous engagement with stakeholders of the port will also be required to address the challenges faced by importers, exporters and freight forwarders. To ensure the sustainability of new reforms, port processes must be audited periodically.
- Aside marketing Ghana as a favoured tourism destination, government must focus effort and resources to address the critical infrastructure challenges facing the tourism industry. Some of the infrastructure challenges include deplorable conditions of roads leading to the major tourist sites in Ghana, lack of basic necessities such as proper sanitation, signage and restaurants.

## **Job Creation**

- As a matter of urgency, government must initiate steps to create a database on labour and employment issues. Such an initiative will be useful for policy planning and project implementation. Relevant institutions such as the Labour department at the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations and the Ghana Statistical Service could be resourced to undertake this project.
- There is also the need to audit the numerous government interventions targeted at creating employment to identify challenges and find practical solutions to them. Government must consolidate the existing employment modules under one or two umbrellas to ensure accountability, easy monitoring and savings.
- For data consistency and proper planning, it will be useful for government to create an informative platform to communicate the number of direct and indirect jobs that have been or that are yet to be created.

## **Agriculture**

- Government must ensure timely reporting on activities under the Planting for Food and Jobs campaign. This will promote transparency and ready availability of data to attract the much need private investment in the agriculture sector.
- There is the need to expedite the processes regarding the implementation of the One Village One Dam Project. The execution should also be guided by a comprehensive plan that will spell out specific deliverables, maintenance process and ownership to ensure sustainability.
- As a matter of urgency, the government should develop and implement a clear policy/law to regulate the activities surrounding pre-mix fuel. Reforms in the form of decentralizing the selling of pre-mix fuel at the existing fuel stations are highly recommended.

## **Governance**

- In order to fight corruption, the government can adopt a number of measures, such as Integrity Pacts for stakeholders in public procurement processes. These were developed in the 1990s by Transparency International and have been used by 18 governments worldwide, including Rwanda, Zambia and India, to fight corruption by permitting government agencies and private contractors to sign up to a set of behaviour guidelines, agreeing not to engage in corrupt practices and the payment of bribes. In the countries where integrity pacts are a regular appendage to procurement contracts, the benefits are that there is increased competition and transparency, building of trust and a reduction in the number of oversights in contracts. Many Integrity pacts are also accompanied by an independent monitor, which is usually a Civil Society Organisation (CSO), which helps all parties to ensure transparency and follow the pacts.

- Transparency can also be increased through enactment of legislation such as the Right to Information Bill and the full implementation of the Public Office Holders (Declaration of assets and Disqualification) Act 1998 (Act 550).

### **Education**

- It is imperative for the government to address infrastructure deficit in the education sector. The Proposed Voluntary Education Fund should augment the GETFUND in addressing the infrastructure deficit only. The VEF should seek to mobilise additional resources for education through a range of mechanisms (bond issues, private giving, leveraged investments, voluntary levies etc.) in order to invest in initiatives that address the infrastructure deficit.
- Tax revenue should be the main source of funding for the Free SHS policy. The government must generate enough revenue to cover the policy. Oil revenues should be seen as a secondary source of funding rather than the primary source.

### **Health**

- It will be essential for the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) to introduce innovative strategies that can save the scheme from collapsing by preventing delays in the payment of claims. Health Insurance can operate through Telecommunication companies. This will enable the informal sector who are not on monthly salaries to make payments for the premium on daily basis.
- The Student Loan Act 2011 (Act 820) must be amended to allow nursing trainees to get access to the student loan. The student loan scheme policy will allow nurses to fund themselves with student loans just like other tertiary students access loans in the country.

### **Energy**

- It is critical to achieve a pragmatic balance between the rate at which the energy sector debt is being reduced and the rate of net debt accumulation by the power utilities. It will be prudent to throw similar or even heavier effort behind mitigating debt accumulating factors as has been given to debt reduction through restructuring. It will also be useful if the government pushes through with its promised Credit Risk Assessment Framework which is to guide in State Owned Enterprise borrowing in order to abate further accumulation of debt.
- There is the need to document the standardized guidelines for project selection and to catalogue a number of projects per annum that would be pursued under the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme. The scope of categories of projects should also be limited seeing that some of the project categories mentioned can be subsumed under other already existing MDA's. For example, the new Ministry of Business Development could cater for projects under the "Small Business Development" category and projects under the "Agricultural Inputs" category can be covered under the "Agriculture" priority area of the ABFA. This would allow for easy tracking and enhance accountability
- While the Accelerated Oil Capacity Development (AOCDP) and Ghana Upstream Sector Internship Programme (GUSIP) are highly commendable, there is the need to build a store of employment data in the sector that would inform employment needs assessment of the sector periodically, and feed into the strategy of the AOCP and GUSIP training programme year on year. Skills acquired should as much as possible be transferrable given enclave nature of oil industry and perceived life span of production activities.

### **Infrastructure**

- It is needful for the risk engine that supports the paperless system at the ports to be proved to be secure and for it to be appropriately suited to the customs processes to avoid the clearance of prohibited or restricted goods.
- It is in the interest of the government to fast track the process of the introduction of the Legislative Instrument that will give support to the National Identification Authority (Amendment) Bill given the knock-on effect that delay is likely to have on other policy initiatives such as the integration of databases from key public institutions and the overall goal of formalization of the economy to broaden the tax base.

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