
**ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE VOLTA RIVER AUTHORITY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXTENSION OF THE NATIONAL
GRID TO WA, BOLE AND SAWLA ON OCTOBER 4, 1996.**

His Excellency the President,
Honourable Members of State
Namini (for the Wa chiefs; Ewurana for the Bole/Sawla area chiefs)
Ladies and gentlemen,



We in the Volta River Authority feel very honoured and proud to be part of this momentous occasion which incidentally symbolizes the realization of one of our most cherished dreams, namely, to extend power from the national grid to all the regions.

Exactly 30 years ago this month, the foundation for Ghana's rapid industrial development was laid with the formal inauguration of the Akosombo hydro-electric power plant. The impact of cheap and reliable supply of electric power could since then be gauged from the comparatively rapid development of parts of the country, particularly in southern Ghana, to which electricity supply from the national grid has been extended.

The Authority has remained committed to the objective of extending reliable power to all parts of the country to assure equitable development.

In pursuance of this objective, the Authority in 1987 began the Northern Electrification and System Reinforcement Project (NESRP) under which communities in the Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions would be connected to the national grid. Since the project had to be implemented in phases, the Authority in the interim installed diesel generators in Was to supply its needs. In 1994 the Authority started the Upper West grid extension project under which 320 km of 161 kV transmission line was to be constructed from Techiman to Wa, as well as the supply and erection of a sub-station in Wa and distribution networks in Bole and Sawla, the last two towns in the Northern Region.

The project which cost 90.827m FF and 1.262 billion Cedis was jointly funded by the French government and the Volta River Authority.

His Excellency the President, Honourable members of State, Honourable members of Parliament, Namini (for the Wa chiefs; Ewurana for the Bole/Sawla area chiefs), Ladies and gentlemen, with the successful completion of this project, the VRA is happy to announce that all regional capitals have now been connected to the national grid. Furthermore, with the recent addition of Bole, a total of 41 district capitals have since the beginning of the National Electrification Scheme in 1989, been connected to the national grid.

We wish to assure you that with Sawla already connected to the grid, supply to Larabanga and Damango should be completed very soon. Similarly, supply is to be extended to such major towns as Lawra, Jirapa and Nadowli located further north of Was and Damango. We will then have realized our long term goal of completing the loop from Techiman through Wa, Han and Tumu to Bolgatanga.

Even now, we can say with confidence, based on the rapid rate of development taking place in the

other regions, that having made available cheap and reliable supply of power from the national grid, the rapid development of the northern sector of the country is now assured.

The increasing demand for electricity in the newly connected communities can now be met while the regular unavoidable shedding of load which characterized supply from our diesel system, is expected to be a thing of the past.

Communities can hasten the extension of power supply to them by taking advantage of the government's Self-Help Electrification Project (SHPE) by acquiring their own distribution poles and providing labour for their erection if they live within 20 km of the transmission network.

His Excellency, permit me to acknowledge the contribution of all those who made the realization of the Upper West grid extension project possible. First of all, the Government of Ghana has to be commended for its political will to extend Akosombo power to Was and providing the administrative encouragement. Previously, it was not thought possible that Akosombo power could be extended to all the regions. Today's ceremony has proved the skeptics wrong and the credit, I must once again say, goes to your government.

I wish to also commend the contractors, Cegelec of France and their sub-contractors, ABB Sae Sadelmi of Italy for doing a good work and completing the works on scheduled.

I wish to assure the Ghanaian business community and all investors that the Authority would continue to do whatever is within its capability to ensure that cheap, reliable and continuous power supply is made available to the ever increasing market. It may interest you to know that in fulfillment of this objective, the Authority supplemented its supply last year by importing power from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire between April and August when the lake level was going down. We imported at about 75 cedis per unit (kWh) and sold at 23 cedis per unit to domestic consumers, that is about 300 per cent lower than the purchased price to Ghanaian customers.

As a result of the increasing demand, which has been growing at a rate of about 15 per cent per annum over the last three years, we expect to continue the importation this year too. It was to address this growing energy demand that we initiated the Takoradi Thermal Power Project.

I am happy to announce that the project has so far been on course. The necessary funding has been secured while contract documents have been signed for work to begin on the major components of the Project. Already, construction work has begun on the housing and infrastructural works at the site, while work on marine investigations was completed a year ago. Activities for the other components of the project are at various stages of planning, preparation and implementation. The main contract involving the construction and commissioning of a 200 MW simple cycle combustion turbine was expected to start a month ago. We are confident that the first 200 MW of power from the Takoradi Thermal generating station would be available by mid-1997.

Before I take my seat, I wish to appeal to all of you to help the Authority protect its equipment. If people remain apathetic when the Authority's transmission towers are vandalized or fail to prevent the setting of bush fires which often destroy our distribution poles, it is the whole community that suffers when power supply is disrupted.

We are also appealing to you to use electricity wisely. You don't have to leave on lights or electrical appliances when they are not being used. You must also endeavour to use energy efficient equipment such as the new compact fluorescent bulbs the VRA has introduced in your homes and work places; the initial cost of purchase may appear high but in the long run you stand to make great

savings on your electricity bill. Your judicious use of electricity will also help us to make power available to more customers who can create more job avenues for the community.

Thank you.