

## VRA ASSURES IMPACTED COMMUNITIES OF ITS COMMITMENT TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOODS

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The Volta River Authority's (VRA) Environmental Management and Emergency Preparedness Plan (EMP/EPP) team has assured residents of the Lower Volta Basin of its commitment to improve their livelihood.

The Manager, Lower Volta Dredging Project, Mr. Ulysses Ocran-Hammond, gave the assurance during the year's EMP/EPP workshop organized to sensitize potentially affected persons of emergencies that could arise following the operation of the Authority's dams.

Mr. Ocran assured them of efforts VRA was making to improve the management of aquatic weeds and dredging of the Volta River in the Lower Volta Basin. He noted that the procurement process for the selection of private-sector companies to partner VRA is almost completed. "After the procurement process, physical activities are expected to commence in the third quarter after selected entities have obtained the relevant permits," he stated. According to him as part of the process, VRA engaged fourteen (14) project-impacted communities on the Lower Volta Dredging Project in December last year,

to sensitize, identify concerns and obtain their consent as part of the Project's implementation strategy".

He further assured that the Authority is putting in place measures to ensure communities impacted by VRA's operations are taken care of when the Lower Dredging Project kicks-starts.

Principal System Planning Engineer of the VRA and Coordinator of the EPP, Ing. Kwame Darkwah addressing a



*VRA officials and the stakeholders in a photograph at the North Tongu workshop*

concern of the residents noted that "Emergencies under the EPP arise from a spill situation at the Akosombo dam or a dam break of either the Akosombo or the Kpong dams, but not spilling at the KGS". He emphasized that KGS' spill is consistent with its operations, adding, "As a run-of- the river hydro



*Mr. Ulysses Ocran-Hammond*

plant, the KGS has to allow the tail water from Akosombo to pass without storage. As such in the event that there is ongoing maintenance activities, the KGS has to spill some of the water to prevent compromising the dam structure". He explained that spilling sometimes occurs as a way of preventing movement of weeds towards the ingress.

Senior Community Relations Officer, Mrs. Rhoda Arthur among others used the occasion to explain the criteria for selecting beneficiaries of the Authority's CDP scholarship.

The Authority's annual EMP/EPP workshop seeks to update impacted communities on the EMP implementation efforts as well as sensitize stakeholders on issues related to the EPP. It also provides a platform to obtain feedback from stakeholders on the EMP interventions and EPP awareness creation.