



FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTE



TECHNICAL REPORT



REPORT ON THE FINAL DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP OF THE AUSTRALIAN DIRECT AID MUSHROOM PROJECT

by

**Deborah Louisa NARH MENSAH, Charles TORTOE, Richard K. TAKLI, Mary
OBODAI, Matilda DZOMEKU**

May, 2018

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project, titled “Sawdust for mushroom cultivation in Ayum Forest area, Brong-Ahafo region” was funded by the Australian High Commission in Accra through the Direct Aid Program (DAP) with co-funding from CSIR – FRI. The running title of the project was Australian Direct Aid Mushroom Project (Aus-DAMP).

In Ghana, Ayum forest is one of the areas with a thriving timber industry resulting in the production of large quantities of sawdust. The sawdust is either burnt, left unused or minimally used for charcoal production, creating serious environmental pollution problems including the production of greenhouse gases, which would eventually contribute to climate change and its associated issues. However, sawdust is a very useful resource for mushroom cultivation for improved nutrition, health and income generation. Spent mushroom substrates (SMSs; the compost left after mushroom cultivation) are also beneficial for vegetable cultivation as biofertilizers of soil.

The project was aimed at building capacity of women and girls aged 18 – 45 years in two communities around the forest in mushroom cultivation using sawdust for poverty alleviation, improving nutritional status and livelihoods and minimizing environmental pollution caused by improper disposal of sawdust in the area.

The project team members were;

1. Prof. Mrs. Mary Obodai, Director; Team member
2. Dr. Charles Tortoe, Deputy-Director; Team member
3. Mrs. Deborah Louisa Narh Mensah, Research Scientist; Project Lead
4. Ms. Matilda Dzomeku, Research Scientist; Team member
5. Mr. Richard Takli, Technologists; Team member
6. Mrs. Regina Tsotsoo, Project Accountant
7. Mr. Eric Ofori, Project Administrator

CSIR – FRI partnered with the District offices of Ministry of Food and Agriculture as well as the Forestry Commission in Goaso to execute the project.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the projects were:

Overall Objective

The objective of the project was “to set up the mushroom cultivation industry in Ayum area through training in mushroom cultivation using sawdust and provision of 2 complete mushroom cultivation facilities with rain water harvesting to beneficiaries in 2 communities in the area”.

Specific Objectives

- ✓ To construct one complete set of mushroom cultivation facilities (one each of composting platform, bagging shed, incubation room, cropping house) rain water harvesting facilities in 2 communities around the Ayum forest area.
- ✓ To train 2 beneficiary groups (women and girls) in 2 selected communities on mushroom cultivation using sawdust and use of SMS for vegetable production
- ✓ Evaluate the impact of the project

PROJECT EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The project’s expected outputs included training of 2 beneficiary groups on mushroom cultivation using sawdust and use of SMSs for vegetable cultivation, provision of mushroom cultivation start-up materials, and construction of one complete set of mushroom cultivation facilities with rainwater harvesting facilities in each of the beneficiary communities (Ayumso and Bediako). These facilities included: One Composting Platform, One Bagging Shed, one 10,000 bag capacity Incubation Room with rainwater harvesting facilities, one 4,000 bag capacity Cropping House with rainwater harvesting facilities, two Sterilization Units and one fabricated Sun Drier.

THE FINAL DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP

The Final Dissemination Workshop was held on 27th March 2018 at Ayumso as a final activity of the Australian Direct Aid Mushroom Project. The theme for the Workshop was, **“Mushroom Cultivation: Empowering Women for Improved Livelihoods and Environmental Sustainability”**.

Workshop Objectives

The objectives of the Workshop were as follows;

1. To bring all stakeholders together to share learnings on the project.
2. To create a platform for the main project sponsors to have a view of the outputs on the project and to inspect all facilities constructed and/or delivered on the project
3. To formally inaugurate and hand over all facilities to the beneficiaries at the two communities
4. To hold an exhibition of mushroom dishes and some project outputs

Attendance and Program

Registration of attendees was done by Mrs. Diana Hayford with assistance given by Mr. Eric Ofori (Figure 1).

The program was attended by Dr. Charles Tortoe (Deputy Director, CSIR – FRI); Third Secretary Claire Maizonnier who represented H.E Andrew Barnes (the Australian High Commissioner to Ghana); Mrs. Vicentia Quartey (Program Manager, Australian High Commission in Accra); Mr. Eric Osei Aduamah (The Municipal Director of Agriculture, MoFA); Mrs. Grace Gyabaah (Asst. District Manager, Forestry Commission, Goaso); all project team members with the exception of the Director and the project accountant, Chiefs and Elders of Ayumso and Bediako Communities, the beneficiaries from the two beneficiary communities, the press and some members of the general public. Together with the CSIR – FRI project team members and chiefs from the two beneficiary communities who did not complete the registration form, the program had 46 participants (Figure 2 and Figure 3; Appendix 1).

The Master of Ceremonies (MC) was Mr. Richard K. Takli. Except for slight modifications, the Workshop was held according to the attached Program (Appendix 2).



Figure 1: An attendee being registered by Mrs. Hayford



Figure 2: Group picture taken at the end of the speeches



Figure 3: Chiefs and sub-chiefs of Ayumso present at the Workshop

Opening

The program commenced at 10:30 am as scheduled with an opening prayer said by Mrs. Mensah. The MC then introduced and invited the dignitaries and key team members to the high table. They were, Mr. Aduamah (the chairman), Dr. Tortoe, Ms Maizonnier, Mrs. Gyabaah, Mrs. Mensah (project lead), Ms Dzomeku (project team member) (Figure 4 - Figure 6). The chiefs and sub-chiefs of Ayumso who attended the program were then given the platform to do a self-introduction to the gathering (Figure 7).



Figure 4: MC introducing and inviting the guests



Figure 6: The high table.

From left: Ms Dzomeku, Dr. Tortoe, Mr. Aduamah, Ms. Maizonnier, Mrs Gyabaah and Mrs Mensah



Figure 5: The chairman going to take his seat



Figure 7: A chief of Ayumso doing a self-introduction

Speeches and Statements Delivered by Dignitaries

Speeches and statements were made by the various invited guests as captured in (Figure 8- Figure 12; Appendices 3 - 6).

In his Chairman’s acceptance speech, which doubled as the statement from his esteemed office, Mr. Aduamah commended the CSIR – FRI and the Australian High Commission for conceptualizing and funding this project as it had been his dream for a project to be carried out in the Goaso area to support the use of sawdust, which is in abundance in the Ayum forest area, to produce a useful product which will provide an alternative source of income and improve livelihoods. He urged the beneficiaries to hold on to the facilities constructed for them and make sure the outcomes of the project do not become a one-day-wonder. He said this way, he envisaged the impact of the project will be far reaching. He also stated that “I am promising to the Australian High Commission and CSIR – FRI that in my capacity as the Municipal Director of Agric I will ensure that the project will live up to expectation and the other communities in the Municipal will also take it up”.

A welcome address was given by a representative of the chief of Ayumso. The team were warmly welcomed and thanked for selecting Ayumso as a beneficiary community under the project for improved livelihood and environmental sustainability.



Figure 8: Mr. Aduamah giving his chairman's acceptance speech



Figure 9: Representative of chief of Ayumso giving a welcome address

In the speech read by the Deputy Director on behalf of the Director, Prof. (Mrs) Mary Obodai, Dr. Tortoe gave the background of the project and stated the project outputs. In relation to sustainability of the project beyond the project’s lifespan, he informed the attendants about the fact that the 2 mushroom cultivation beneficiaries have already sold their harvested mushrooms from compost bags produced during the training phase and reinvested their proceeds to restock their facilities. He also thanked the project partners, MoFA and Forestry Commission, for their

support during the implementation of the project. Ending the speech, he said “I hope that the mushroom industry which has been set-up here through this project expand towards product development and even export and eventually, would be replicated in other forest areas in Ghana.”

Delivering a speech on behalf of the Australian High Commissioner to Ghana, Ms Maizonnier congratulated Mrs. Mensah and the project team on the successful completion of the project despite initial challenges. She said “We at the Australian High Commission value our partnership with you and we thank you for the opportunity provided us under the mushroom cultivation project to extend the benefits of Australia’s development assistance efforts to Ayumso, Bediako and surrounding communities.” She highlighted the fact that Mrs. Mensah is a beneficiary of the Australia Awards Scholarship program and stated that Mrs. Mensah’s progress is a “great example of the potential the Award provides and the opportunity for the broader community if awardees put what they have learnt into practice”. She thanked all stakeholders for their support and immense contribution on the project.

Ms Maizonnier encouraged beneficiaries to take very good care of all the facilities they had received under the project and to work diligently with the knowledge and skills acquired to ensure that the project’s intervention yields maximum benefits to them, their families and their communities at large.

Her speech was followed by a speech read by Mrs. Gyabaah on behalf of the District Manager, Forestry Commission, Goaso, she stated that the project “is a step in the right direction because pressure on forest and the many people who depend on the forest for livelihood will be reduced. It also provides a broader spectrum for utilizing wood waste. The Forest Services Division therefore fully supports this initiative and wishes that all and sundry will be involved in the cultivation either as source of livelihood or as source of food.” She commended CSIR-FRI and the Australian Aid for this laudable initiative.



Figure 10: Dr. Charles Tortoe reading speech on behalf of Director, CSIR – FRI



Figure 11: Ms. Mazonnier delivering a speech on behalf of the Australian High Commissioner



Figure 12: Mrs. Gyabaah delivering a speech on behalf of the Forestry Commission

Statements Made by Beneficiaries

The speeches given by the invited guests were followed by some statements by some beneficiaries (Figure 13 - Figure 15). These included;

“I initially did not see how this project will be beneficial until we started harvesting and selling our fresh mushrooms and realising the kind of revenue we could generate within a week from sale of fresh mushrooms. I will remain fully involved in this activity to ensure the benefits from the project are sustained”

“I barely had any source of income to go by. I have realised that the mushroom cultivation can provide me an alternative source of income to improve my livelihood. This is a very good venture.”

A mushroom farmer at Goaso who purchases her compost bags from Techiman made a remark in which she encouraged the beneficiaries to hold on to this business venture because it is very rewarding, stating that the venture can be very challenging but they should be steadfast and resolve all matters which may arise amicably in order to ensure they reap the expected benefits. Although she was not a direct beneficiary of the project, this project’s outputs and outcomes would benefit her since she realises that she would not need to travel all the way to Techiman to purchase compost bags for her mushroom business.



Figure 13: A beneficiary from Bediako making a statement



Figure 14: A beneficiary at Ayumso giving a remark



Figure 15: A mushroom farmer from Goaso making a remark

Inauguration and Official Handing Over of Facilities to Beneficiaries

The mushroom cultivation facilities in the two beneficiary communities (Ayumso and Bediako) were inaugurated following prayers said at both communities (Figure 16 - Figure 24). The inauguration was done by Ms. Maizonnier supported by Dr. Charles Tortoe and the respective leaders of the beneficiaries as well as some community leaders, following which the facilities were inspected. The facilities were then officially handed over to the respective beneficiaries.



Figure 16: Stakeholders saying a prayer for the inauguration of the facilities at Ayumso



Figure 17: Ms Maizonnier and Dr. Tortoe inaugurating the facilities at Ayumso



Figure 18: The cropping house and compost bags at Ayumso being inspected



Figure 21: Inauguration of facilities at Bediako



Figure 19: Official handing over of facilities to beneficiaries in Ayumso



Figure 22: Inspection of incubation room at Bediako



Figure 20: A section of the mushroom cultivation facilities at Bediako



Figure 23: Official handing over of facilities to leader of beneficiary group in Bediako



Figure 24: Group picture taken after official handing over of facilities at Bediako

Closing

In his closing remarks, the chairman emphasised the importance of such projects in forest areas such as the Ayumso Forest Area. He further admonished the beneficiaries to take the mushroom cultivation business very seriously and to ensure that the project’s impact is far-reaching. He told the beneficiaries not to expect any further assistance on this project because at this stage, the success of the project depends on them and how well they carry out their activities (Figure 25).

The vote of thanks and closing prayer were said by Ms. Dzomeku (Figure 26).



Figure 25: Chairman delivering his closing remarks



Figure 26: Ms Dzomeku giving the Vote of Thanks

Exhibition

In order to demonstrate some dishes which could be prepared with oyster mushrooms, an exhibition stand was set-up at the Final Dissemination Workshop (Figure 27). Various dishes prepared with mushrooms were displayed on the stand. These dishes included mushroom *jollof*, *banku* with mushroom okro stew, mushroom *kantomire* and mushroom vegetable stew with plain rice. Copies of the training hand-book and hand-out as well as the pull-up of “Mushroom Cultivation Using Sawdust” developed and published on the project were also displayed at the exhibition stand.

While visiting the exhibition stand, Ms. Maizonnier said it was thoughtful of the project team to put up the exhibition stand which showcased dishes which can be prepared with the cultivated mushrooms as this would encourage the beneficiaries to continue the activity and the consumers to purchase and consume the cultivated mushrooms.



Figure 27: Guests being shown around the exhibition stand by the team from CSIR – FRI

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other activities carried out included meetings held with opinion leaders of both communities and endorsement and distribution of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to respective beneficiaries. These activities are detailed in this section.

Meetings with opinion leaders and beneficiaries

Meetings were held with opinion leaders and beneficiaries of the two communities. The meetings were attended by the project team members (including the MoFA representative) as well as the team from the Australian High Commission in Accra (Figure 28 and Figure 29).

While addressing the opinion leaders in Ayumso, Ms Maizonnier thanked the opinion leaders for allowing the project to be carried out in their community and for ensuring the smooth running of the project up to the official close of the project. On their part, the chief of Ayumso thanked the Australian people for funding the project, which he believed will make a positive impact on the livelihood of his people especially in the off season of cocoa. He also said that the mushroom cultivation facilities can also be educational for children, who can get to learn about the useful benefits of sawdust and mushroom cultivation and consumption.

Addressing the opinion leaders and beneficiaries at Bediako, Ms. Maizonnier extended the apologies of the High Commissioner for his inability to attend the Workshop himself. She stated that “Australia is very proud to assist your community to build such a facility. We are very happy to see that it’s working very well for the community and it is ready. We hope that

into the future, this facility will be productive and build financial gains for you in your community. And I see that it is right next to a school and I see that this is a very positive thing and I think that you can definitely teach the younger generation how to use this facility as well”. She thanked the opinion leaders and the beneficiaries for their warm reception and wished them good luck for the future.



Figure 28: Meeting with opinion leaders and beneficiaries at Bediako



Figure 29: Ms. Maizonnier addressing gathering at Bediako

Endorsement and Distribution of MoU

MoU developed by the project team for effective running of the two mushroom cultivation facilities beyond the project period were also endorsed and copies handed over to the leaders of the respective beneficiary groups by Dr. Tortoe (Figure 30 - Figure 32). Copies of the Endorsed MoUs were kept for CSIR – FRI.



Figure 30: An opinion leader endorsing the MoU at Bediako



Figure 31: A copy of the endorsed MoU being handed over to the chairman of the Ayumso beneficiary group



Figure 32: A copy of the endorsed MoU being given to the secretary of the Bediako beneficiary group

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Final Dissemination workshop was a success. All stakeholders were very appreciative of the overall work done on the project. All beneficiaries especially the main project sponsors were hoping that the two beneficiary communities become the hub of mushroom cultivation in the Brong-Ahafo Region as it was expected that the beneficiary groups would train individuals from neighbouring communities on mushroom cultivation upon request.

To crown the whole event, it was an immense joy to the project team when they chanced upon a beneficiary from Ayumso who was happily on her way to sell fresh mushrooms from the day's harvest (Figure 33).

With this, we are hopeful that the project's expected impact will be attained!

We thank the Australian Government for funding this project under the Direct Aid Program of the Australian High Commission in Accra.

We recommend that such projects should be funded and implemented at other forest areas in other parts of Ghana to realise the desired project impact in those other areas as well. We also recommend the incorporation of the benefits of mushroom cultivation and consumption in schools, especially those located around forest areas.



Figure 33: A happy beneficiary going to sell fresh mushrooms after the ceremony

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Attendance at Final Dissemination Workshop



REGISTRATION FORM

Aus – DAMP Final Dissemination Workshop

27th March 2018

NO	NAME	INSTITUTION	MOBILE NO	EMAIL
1.	ISAIAH KWASI BOFA	AYEMSO BENE	02435441984	
2.	Vincent Awanyo	Bediako ben.	0546504976	
3.	Yehesah Asiamah Andrew	AYEMSO	0247765558	yehesah.asiamah.5558@gmail.com
4.	Patricia Santodie	Goaso Farmer	0540527033	
5.	Afreh Thomas S.	BAC	0244247208	stafreh65@gmail.com
6.	E. O. ADUAMAH	AGRIC	0208511382	eoaduamah@yahoo.com
7.	B. Otwui Kusi	Dept. of COOPS	0243544002	
8.	ABROKWAH K. REGINALD	MOFA- A.E.A.	0243646062	
9.	Raphael Lawson	MOFA Driver	0209303103	
10.	Togbui Vincent K. Bugbari.	Ayemso Ben.	0249221580	



REGISTRATION FORM

Aus – DAMP Final Dissemination Workshop

27th March 2018

NO	NAME	INSTITUTION	MOBILE NO	EMAIL
1.	Abina Kufour	Bediako	0248137004	
2.	Ahna Boateng	Bediako		
3.	Linda Inyansi Akroh	Bediako	0553906042	
4.	Esther Mensch	Bediako	0553152638	
5.	Akus Omsuah	Bediako		
6.	Akus Semah	Bediako		
7.	Arthur Jacob	Ayemso	0246446822	
8.	Yemi Dyama	Ayemso	0242638524	
9.	Ada Joseph	Ayemso	0245487850	
10.	Vicentia Ewafay	AHC	0249766442	

REGISTRATION FORM
Aus – DAMP Final Dissemination Workshop
27th March 2018

NO	NAME	INSTITUTION	MOBILE NO	EMAIL
	Claire Maizonnier	Australia H. Com.	+233 54 434 1733	claire.maizonnier@dfat.gov.au
	Isarah Kwesi Bofah	Ayomso	024354984	
	Raymond Tetteh	Bediako	0547452287	raymondtetteh1990@gmail.com.
	Grace Gebaah	FSD, Ghana	0244990296	gracegebah82@outlook.com
	Joseph Asilla	FSD, Ghana	0243224771	asilla.joseph20@xhu.com
	Daniel Abrokwa	Kyenyehene	0244590529	
	Bertha Larbi	Ayomso Bene.	0546154209	
	Mercy Danso	Ayomso Bene.	0556481510 0545	
	Akwesi Appiahagyei	Ayomso Bene.	0276112459	
	Emelia Batchusey	Ayomso Bene.	0242740935	

REGISTRATION FORM
Aus – DAMP Final Dissemination Workshop
27th March 2018

NO	NAME	INSTITUTION	MOBILE NO	EMAIL
	Sabina Amankwah	Ayomso Bene.	0542737157	
	DANIEL WIAFE	WOTRO/FAO	243208170	
	Akosua Takpisaah	Ayomso Bene.	-	
	Vincent Hovor	Ayomso Bene.	0247498070	
	Kwadwo Agyapong	Ayomso Bene.	0550377462	
	Kofi Ammer	Bediako Bene.	-	

Appendix 2: Program, Final Dissemination Workshop



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PROGRAM



FINAL DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP FOR AUSTRALIAN DIRECT AID MUSHROOM PROJECT

Location: Ayumso (Brong-Ahafo Region)

Date: 27th March 2018

Time: 10:00am

Theme: **“Mushroom Cultivation: Empowering Women for Improved Livelihoods and Environmental Sustainability”**

No.	Time	Activity	Personnel
1	10:00	Registration	Mrs. Diana Hayford
2	10:30	Opening prayer	Mrs. Deborah L. Narh Mensah
3	10:35	Introduction of Dignitaries	Moderator
4	10:40	Welcome address by Forestry Commission / Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Municipal District Directors, Forestry Commission and MoFA
5	10:50	Statement by Chief, Ayumso	Chief, Ayumso
6	10:55	Statement by CSIR – FRI	Director, CSIR – Food Research Institute
7	11:05	Statement by Australian High Commissioner to Ghana	Third Secretary, Claire Maizonnier (representing H.E. Andrew Barnes)
8	11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official opening of Mushroom Cultivation Facility • Tour of facility • Demonstration of mushroom production process • Viewing of mushroom products exhibition stand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Secretary, Claire Maizonnier, Dr. Charles Tortoe • Invited guests, Project Team, Beneficiaries
9	12:15	General comments by beneficiaries	MC, Beneficiaries
10	12:35	Vote of Thanks / Closing prayer	Ms. Matilda Dzomeku
11	12:40	Media interactions	Mrs. Mensah, Invited Guests, Press
12	13:00	Lunch	Mrs. Hayford
13	13:30	Departure	

MC: Mr. Richard K. Takli

NB: Visit to and official opening of Bediako project site by Invited Guests will follow after Media Interactions.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN – MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF AGRIC

Nananom, distinguished guests, fellow head of departments, ladies and gentlemen, I am much elated to be part of this programme and also deliver this note to the august gathering.

In fact, it looks like a dream today as either by design/creation or magic/plan, this programme has come at the right time for our hardworking women in these communities – Ayomso and Bediako.

Now, the sawdust which is the main raw materials which our women have been using for manufacturing charcoal causing much environmental pollution and unhealthy condition of future life and contributing to global warming has come to an end. I am saying we would give thanks to the project sponsor Australian High Commission and CSIR – FRI the key actors or the implementors.

The technology of mushroom cultivation from sawdust which is the raw material collected from the saw mills are cheaper and available over here therefore the beneficiaries, our women especially, should make the best use of this golden opportunity as this project has come to relieve them from their hardship especially during the cocoa off season.

I am totally convinced that the life style of the beneficiaries will change completely as the poverty rate will be reduced and better standard of living be enhanced.

Before I retire on to my seat, I am promising to the Australian High Commission and CSIR – FRI that in my capacity as the Municipal Director of Agric I will ensure that the project will live up to expectation and the other communities in the Municipal will also take it up.

Thank you.

Appendix 4: Statement by District Manager, Forestry Commission read by Mrs. Grace Gyabaah

Cultivating mushrooms with sawdust project- Dissemination workshop at Ayomso- 27/03/18

A speech delivered on behalf of the District Manager- Mr. Godfred Quashiga

Mr. Chairman, Nananom, Representatives of the Australian High Commission, Members of the Food Research Institute and other Institutions present, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed.

The forests of Ghana provide many benefits to the international, national and local economies. Apart from the supply of timber to both the international and domestic markets, the forests provide Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) of which mushrooms are part.

Mushrooms are source of protein and potassium in our Ghanaian diets and serves as alternative or major sources of income for many, especially women. Unfortunately, the forests do not provide adequate and regular sources of mushrooms because of

1. Changes in climatic conditions
2. Deforestation and forest degradation
3. Increasing pressures on forest resources due to increasing population growth

This project: 'Cultivating mushrooms with sawdust' is a step in the right direction because pressure on forest and the many people who depend on the forest for livelihood will be reduced. It also provides a broader spectrum for utilizing wood waste.

The Forest Services Division therefore fully supports this initiative and wishes that all and sundry will be involved in the cultivation either as source of livelihood or as source of food.

We commend CSIR-FRI and the Australian Aid for this laudable initiative.

Thank you.

Presented by:

Grace Gyabaah
Asst. District Manager

Appendix 5: Statement by Director, CSIR – FRI read by Dr. Charles Tortoe

Statement by Director, CSIR – Food Research Institute

Final Dissemination Workshop; Australian Direct Aid Mushroom Project

27th March 2018

Third Secretary Clair Maizonnier (Rep of Australian High Commissioner to Ghana)

Mr. Eric Osei Aduaman (The Municipal Director of Agriculture, MoFA)

Mr. Godfred Quashigah (District Manager, Forestry Commission)

Chiefs and elders of Ayumso and Bediako Communities

The Media

Project Team

Ladies and Gentlemen

All Protocols Observed

The mandate of CSIR- Food Research Institute is to conduct applied market oriented research into problems of food processing and preservation, food safety, storage, marketing, distribution and utilization, and national food and nutritional security in support of the food industry and also to advise government on its food policy.

In Ghana, Ayum forest is one of the areas with a thriving timber industry resulting in the production of large quantities of sawdust. The sawdust is either burnt, left unused or minimally used for charcoal production, creating serious environmental pollution problems including the production of greenhouse gases, which would eventually contribute to climate change issues. However, sawdust is a very useful resource for mushroom cultivation for improved nutrition, health and income generation. Spent mushroom substrates (SMSs; the compost left after mushroom cultivation) is also beneficial for vegetable cultivation as biofertilizers of soil.

In addressing this, the CSIR-Food Research Institute in partnership with the project sponsor- the Australian Government through the Direct Aid Program (DAP), with assistance from the Ministry of food and Agriculture and the Forestry Commission has built the capacity of beneficiaries within two communities to utilize sawdust for mushroom cultivation in order to contribute to food security, improving nutritional status as well as minimizing environmental pollution caused by improper disposal of sawdust in the area with the goal of contributing to improving the livelihoods in and around the project areas. Interestingly, these are key goals which are part of the

Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations and falls within the mandate of our Institute.

Under the project 2 beneficiary groups have been trained on mushroom cultivation using sawdust, use of SMSs for vegetable cultivation, provision of mushroom cultivation start-up materials, and construction of one complete set of mushroom cultivation facilities in each of the beneficiary communities (Ayumso and Bediako).

These facilities included:

- One Composting Platform
- One Bagging Shed with store
- One 10,000 bag capacity Incubation Room with rainwater harvesting facilities
- One 4,000 bag capacity Cropping House with rainwater harvesting facilities
- Two Sterilization Units
- One fabricated Sun Drier

It may interest you to know that, the 2 mushroom cultivation beneficiaries have already sold their harvested mushrooms from compost bags produced during the training phase and reinvested their proceeds to restock their facilities.

At this juncture, I would like to thank our project sponsors- Australian Government-Direct Aid Program, acknowledge the assistance from MoFA, Forestry Commission, honourable chiefs, elders and landlords in the communities of the project. I hope that the mushroom industry which has been set-up here through this project would expand towards product development, and even export, and eventually would be replicated in other forest areas in Ghana.

Thank you

Speech by Australia's High Commissioner to Ghana H.E.
Andrew Barnes, presented on his behalf by Third Secretary, Claire
Maizonnier

Final Dissemination workshop for the Mushroom Cultivation Project

Tuesday, 27 March 2018

Salutation

- Representatives of Forestry Commission and
Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA)
- Directors of the Council for Scientific and
Industrial Research-Food Research Institute
(CSIR-FRI)
- Traditional authorities
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen
- And All other protocols observed

I am honoured to represent the Australian High Commissioner to Ghana, Mr. Andrew Barnes at today's event and to address you on his behalf. I convey the

sincere apologies of High Commissioner Barnes, who unfortunately couldn't be here today.

I would like to start by congratulating Mrs. Deborah Narh Mensah and the project team for the hard work you have done on this project – your commitment to see the project activities completed successfully despite initial challenges is heartening. Through your effort, the goal of establishing a mushroom cultivation industry in Ayum and completing valuable research that will enhance the future of the community.

We at the Australian High Commission value our partnership with you and we thank you for the opportunity provided us under the mushroom cultivation project to extend the benefits of Australia's development assistance efforts at Ayumso, Bediako and surrounding communities.

The mushroom cultivation project, just like the several others the High Commission has funded under our Direct Aid Program, is consistent with Australia's commitment to ensure that development benefits everyone – including women and girls and people living in rural communities. The environmental and social benefits of this project cannot be overstated.

The establishment of a sawdust-fed mushroom industry in Ayumso and Bediako is a creative and exciting intervention, which will contribute to the creation of

alternative livelihoods, improved nutrition, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

Women and girls play an important role in building and sustaining strong and healthy families. Women are also community leaders, able to support their families financially and find creative ways of gaining a livelihood. Targeting women in projects like this has a greater multiplier effect due to the role women play in the community. It is therefore heart-warming that this intervention focuses on women and girls and supports them with training and business start-up facilities.

By supporting local organizations to implement projects that propel people towards improved living standards and responds to the needs of local communities, the Australian High Commission contributes to empowering lives and building strong and resilient communities.

I am pleased to highlight that Mrs. Deborah Narh Mensah, who as project lead, designed and saw this project to a successful completion, is a beneficiary of the Australia Awards Scholarship program.

Deborah, the Australian High Commission is pleased to see you deploy your knowledge, acquired in Australia and elsewhere, to support agriculture and women's development in Ghana. We are proud of our association with you and are pleased to be part of your progress. You are a great example of the potential

the award provides and the opportunity for the broader community if awardees put what they have learnt into practice.

I thank the management of CSIR-FRI and Ministry of Food and Agriculture, for your support and immense contribution towards this project.

To the beneficiaries, I thank you for participating in this project. I encourage you to take very good care of all the facilities you have received under this project and to work diligently with the knowledge and skills you have acquired so that this intervention will yield maximum benefits to you, your families, and this community at large.

Thank you!