

Visit by Parliamentary Committee to GSB

A twelve-member Parliamentary Select Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism paid a visit to Ghana Standards Board on Tuesday, 1st June, 2010. The delegation was led by the Chairman of the Committee, Hon. Amadu Sorogho.

Other members of the delegation were: Hon Stephen Kunsu, Hon Jonathan Tackie-Komme, Hon Yakubu Kakpagu Imoro, Hon Ibrahim Dey Abubakri, Hon Daoud Anum Yemoh, Hon Nii Laryea Afotey-Agbo, Hon E. T. Mensah, Hon Seth Adjei-Baah, Hon Kwaku Agyemang-Manu, Hon Kofi Frimpong and Hon Nana Yaw Ofori-Kuragu.

They were accompanied by four members of Parliamentary staff.

The visit afforded the Committee the opportunity to interact with Management, familiarize itself with operations of GSB, ascertain the Board's capacity and readiness to meet import demand and also acquaint itself with the challenges of GSB's future projections.

The Acting Executive Director, Dr. George Ben Crentsil, welcomed the visitors to GSB and expressed his appreciation for the visit. He then asked the GSB Directors present to brief the Parliamentary group on the operations of their Technical Divisions, namely, *Metrology*, *Standards*, *Testing*, *Inspection* and *Certification*.



Members of the Parliamentary group (left) at a meeting with some GSB Management Staff (right)

During question time the Parliamentarians expressed concern about the following issues:

- Perceived conflict between Food and Drugs Board (FDB) and Ghana Standards Board (GSB)
- Taking of large quantities of samples by GSB officials supposedly for testing
- How frequent checks are conducted on goods in the market to determine their quality
- Whether or not standards exist to determine the purity of gold
- Promotion of the use of weighing scales for trading activities
- Presence of unwholesome products, including sub-standard electrical gadgets, on the market
- Presence of GSB in the regions

The Acting Executive Director, Dr. George Ben Crentsil, explained that the relation between him and the FDB Chief Executive was very cordial but acknowledged that more needed to be done beyond the two of them to resolve any perceived conflict between FDB and GSB as the present establishments do not reflect any conflicts.

On the issue of GSB presence in the regions, Dr. Crentsil explained that apart from the Head Office in Accra, GSB has offices in Sekondi-Takoradi for Western and Central regions; Kumasi for Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions; Koforidua for Eastern region and Tamale for Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions.



The Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism, Hon Amadu Sorogho (left) and the Executive Director of GSB, Dr. George Ben Crentsil (right) during the meeting.

He also said he had instructed his officers to suspend taking large quantities of samples of products supposedly for testing, whilst the Board works out other sampling methods and control for the products. Dr Crentsil stressed that calibration of measuring instruments including medical devices was important.

He added that as a medical doctor he was aware of the dangers associated with inaccurate readings of medical devices, pointing out that GSB was not going to relax on its mandate to enforce the law on calibration of medical devices.

With regard to whether standards exist for gold, the Acting Deputy Executive Director (Commercial), Dr E. Jerry Ablorh, explained that the GSB had a complete facility for testing and Hallmarking of gold and gold jewellery. He said that efforts were underway to get legal backing for this. To this, the Parliamentarians asked the Board to put down their request in writing and submit it to Parliament.

In the case of unwholesome products in the market, it was explained that GSB was aware of the porous nature of the country's borders and was mapping out strategies to deal with the problem.



Some members of the Parliamentary group at the Electrical laboratory of the Metrology Division

After this, the visitors went round to see GSB's Metrology laboratories. They were highly impressed by what they saw and expressed gratitude to GSB's Management and Staff for the warm reception given them during the visit.