

## Cop faces trial for alleged murder

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COUNTDOWN

47 days



GHANA 2008

## Kotoko, Liberty in flying start

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# Daily Graphic

GHANA'S BIGGEST  
SELLING NEWSPAPER  
SINCE 1950

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2007. NO. 150220. PRICE: 50GP OR ₵5,000

## Two ministries to draw alcohol policy

Story: Eleanor Gurney

**IN an effort to stem the rising trend of alcohol abuse in the country, two ministries have decided to join forces to help draw up an alcohol policy for the country.**

The two ministries — Trade, Industry, Private Sector Development and President's Special Initiatives (PSI) and Health — made the pledge at a workshop held in Accra on Thursday by the IMANI-Centre for Humane Education, a social think-tank dedicated to researching economic trends.

The purpose of the workshop was to identify the key issues relating to alcohol use, including the negative effects of its abuse on society, and to discuss effective policy measures that could be taken to address these issues.

Also present at the workshop to guide the focus of the discussions was Dr Keith Evans, the Principal Advisor on Drugs Policy to the Government of South Australia, who also advised on the development of a national alcohol strategy for England and Scotland.

He advised that any alcohol policy adopted should be in line with cultural factors and be balanced, taking into account all stakeholders, including the alcohol beverage industry, alcohol abusers and non-drinkers.

He stressed that the only way that any policy would be successful was through partnership among key stakeholders, the government and the wider community.

"Alcohol can be a good friend but also a terrible enemy," Dr Evans said. "What is needed is a policy that not only addresses current alcohol issues but also manages the potential for future problems."

A representative of the Ministry of Health, Rev Jonathan Yaw Martey, who is also the acting Deputy Director of the Food and Drugs Board (FDB), spoke on the dangers associated with alcohol abuse, including birth defects, reduced liver function and impotence, saying, "The need to move away from such behaviours that impinge negatively on our health cannot be overemphasised."

He noted that the socio-economic effects of alcohol abuse were also significant and pledged the support of the Ministry of Health to curtail the abuse of alcohol and drugs, adding that, "the Ministry of Health will spearhead a multi-sectoral strategy to develop a comprehensive policy aimed at reducing the use of alcohol and other substances of abuse that have a negative impact on our socio-economic development."

A speech was also delivered on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms Gifty Ohene Konadu, who said while alcohol abuse was extremely harmful to both the individual and society, alcohol could also be used as a tool of economic empowerment.

"Alcohol is a potential lucrative source of tax revenue for the government. It provides employment and incomes and even foreign exchange for the country from its export," she said, adding, "The balance among revenue, health and employment should, therefore, be carefully considered and the best practice duly chosen."

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# Ghana's alcohol consumption goes up

By Francis Xah

**A** VAILABLE data indicates that, last year, 25,633 tonnes of ethyl alcohol worth 16.6 million dollars was imported into the country.

The increase is fueled by the high domestic demand for alcoholic beverages.

Ethyl alcohol is the raw material used for the production of alcohol.

Gifty Ohene Konadu, Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry, PSI and PSD, who announced this at a national alcoholic workshop organised by IMANI, a Ghanaian think tank dedicated to research into economic

trends for businesses in Accra last week said the increase in the importation of the product has compelled the government to review the tax regime on the product in order to rake in more revenue.

"Ninety million litres of beer was produced in 2005, while 2.7 million litres of hard liquor was produced during the same period last year, indicating that the consumption of alcoholic products is on the increase," she said.

She said most developing countries raised much of their revenue through the alcohol industry citing the case of South Africa that generates more revenue from the industry.

"Alcohol tax

## —Trade Minister

policy is long overdue for Ghana, we must have a comprehensive policy on alcohol just like South Africa and Kenya," she stressed.

Mrs. Konadu said the workshop could not have come at an opportune time than now, when the nation is trying to carve out ingenious ways of taxing different products, including mobile phones.

Mrs Konadu however conceded that alcohol has two faces, "it is a villain giving rise to social problems, and a hero riding to the rescue with copious fiscal returns".

The Minister of Health, Courage

Quashigah, also in a speech read on his behalf, said the Health Ministry is concerned about the escalating use of alcoholic beverages by Ghanaians, especially the youth.

"Long before medical science recognised the health risks inherent in uncontrolled consumption of alcohol, God, through the Bible, had already sounded the alarm bells in Proverbs 23: 29-33, to draw man's attention to the adverse effects of unbridled consumption of alcohol," he said.

The minister mentioned birth deformities, impotence, cancer, mental, liver, and low



*Gifty Ohene-Konadu, Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry, PSD & PSI*

body temperature, as some of the harmful effects associated with chronic high intake of alcohol.

Major Quashigah said in recent times his Ministry has called for a shift from curative medicine to preventive medicine in our health care delivery.

He said the regenerative health concept emphasises on nutrition, promotion of health,

healthy lifestyles, and healthy environment.

"A healthy lifestyle is not built upon high consumption of alcohol, tobacco smoking, abuse of drugs, and bad-eating habits," the minister stressed.

He cautioned that, there is the need to move away from behaviours that impinge negatively on our health, and called for the

curtailment of high alcohol consumption in the country.

Franklin Cudjoe, Executive Director of IMANI, said the Food and Drugs Board (FDB) was recently taken to court for banning alcoholic adverts, because it had called for responsible production, promotion, and marketing of alcoholic beverages.

He said the FDB had done the right thing as the regulator in the industry.