GHANA GETS NEW DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR IT'S NATIONAL IT AGENCY

By Vera Doku, ISOC Ghana

Friday October 22, Accra Ghana. Some members of the Internet technical community recently congratulated Mr. William Tevie on his appointment as Director General (DG) of the National Information Technology Agency (NITA) at a social gathering in Accra, Ghana.   A citation was read on behalf of ISOC Ghana Chapter, GARNET and the entire Internet Technical community, extolling Mr. Tevie for his contribution toward the advancement of the Internet in Ghana. "We hope that you will help Ghana regain its premiere role as leader of the Internet in Africa," the citation read. In IT circles, the appointment of Mr. Tevie to this position has been seen as the government of Ghana's commitment to the advancement of the Internet in that country.

Mr. Tevie was the first IP engineer in Ghana and former Chief Technical Officer (CTO) of Network Computer Systems the Internet pioneers in West Africa. He has held several positions in the industry and was instructor in Internet Society's INET developing countries IP workshops in the mid-1990s. Mr, Tevie was also a former executive member of ISOC Ghana and is currently board member of the Ghana Chapter.

Speaking on the topic *Towards an efficient country Code Top Level Domains (ccTLD) Registry (ccTLD) for .gh* at the Internet Society Ghana Social evening event, Mr. Tevie traced the history of the ccTLD in Ghana and mentioned that because of some peculiar challenges, there was a lull in the development in the sector. He assured the gathering that as DG, his outfit would take steps to put policies in place to advance IT in the country.

The main presentation for the event was *Role of a ccTLD in every Country* by Eric Akumiah, General Manager Africa Top Level Domains Organization in Mauritius. Mr. Akumiah presented the concept of ccTLD to a diverse gathering made up of Internet savvy people, the media and among other people. He explained that it was important that Ghana like other countries, market its country code top level domain (.gh)widely through automation, so that more people would use it as their Internet addresses. He also said that government should play a central role as a facilitator to make sure that the country codes top level domain is properly managed.   In responding to the question of who should manage the .gh domain, Mr. Akumiah said that the status of a cctlds, whether commercial or not-for-profit should be governed by national policy. "This is the essence of having a NITA, which would be responsible for coming out with policies to guide the IT industry," he said.

Responding to a question on how Ghana could regain its leadership role in the Internet on the continent. Dr. Nii Quaynor, Executive Chairman of NITA, who chaired the gathering, said that NITA would play an instrumental role on ICT policies in the country and would build a government Network of all government institutions with domain names and IP addresses. Most importantly NITA would be responsible for sustaining the growth in IT sector in the country.

Some members of the society who could not be present at the event joined the meeting via skype and twitter.

In a related development, ISOC, GARNET and Ghana Network Operators' Group (ghNOG), members of the Internet community paid a courtesy call on Mr. Tevi at the offices of NITA on Wednesday October 27. Among the members present was Prof. M. Dakubu of acting CEO of GARNET, who said his outfit would be part of the national network and hoped that NITA would help GARNET to create its own physical infrastructure for academic research which would finally be linked to the West Africa region and eventually the continent. Prof. Dakubu said NITA could also benefit from GARNET, which specializes in research and the training and development of ICT personnel for the industry.

On his part, Mr. Ernest Brown, Convener of ghNOG, who was also present said, "I am very excited about the appointment of Mr. Tevie. I know that his appointment will change the face of IT in the country." He said that with the appointment of the new Director General, he hoped to see more stakeholder consultation; a bridge in the gap between practitioners, and policy makers; the formation of a consortium by NITA to support eGovernement infrastructure and good management of IT infrastructure.

"We believe with the appointment of Mr. Tevie, the development of the ccTLD and the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) will be a priority," said Mr. Eric Akumiah, General Secretary of ISOC Ghana who was also part of the team that paid the courtesy call to the Director General of NITA.