

**PETITION TO HIS EXCELLENCY, NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO ADDO,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

MAKE THE CREATIVE ARTS A FULL MINISTRY FOR MORE JOBS

Your Excellency, Artwatch Ghana, an art-based think-tank, and Board of Fashion Ghana, humbly, petition that Ministry of Creative Arts (MoCA) be established, separating it from Tourism as it stands now.

The Creative Arts cover wide expanse of vocations in both Visual arts and Performing arts. Vocations in the Visual art include sculpture, painting, furniture art, basketry art, jewelry, graphic design, textiles, fashion design and ceramics. Areas in the performing arts include music, film, theatre arts. There are several career paths under each of these vocations. For instance, fashion, textiles and garment manufacturing is a major industry that employs millions of people. In some of the fashion capitals of the world, after finance, the industry is the next biggest earner.

The music and the film industries, for example, are more than our gold reserve when guided by comprehensive policy and financial support from government. Each broad vocation must have a regulatory body be it national council or authority to manage the affairs for efficient productivity. For example the fashion industry must have a Board of Fashion and the film industry much have Ghana Film Commission/Authority as it exists in more advanced nations. These regulatory bodies must be under the proposed Ministry of Creative Arts (MoCA).

Establishing only one council (Creative Arts Council) to manage the affairs of the entire ministry as proposed in Creative Arts Bill will not yield the expected results since it would lack expertise in all the varied vocations for effective policy formulation, implementation and supervision for rapid results. The proposed Ministry of Creative Arts (MoCA) must formulate comprehensive National Creative Arts Policy and legislation and ensure its keen implementation.

Incubation centres must be established in the technical/vocational-based tertiary institutions to give student-finalists, in groups or individuals, the entrepreneurial opportunity to premiere their newly developed products for approval by an established career jury for onward introduction into the global market. It is not enough to train students and leave them to develop or establish businesses and career paths on their own. Example is the new nationally accredited Fashion and Design Education that has little or no structured industry for graduates to turn to. They are amateur and need coaching at these proposed incubation centers that must be established and supervised by their respective tertiary training institutions.

The Ministry of Creative Arts (MoCA) must institute Skills Development Funds for TVET (Technical, Vocational Education and Training) students for they lack start-up capitals and simple equipment to establish their individual or joint businesses. The Ministry of Creative Arts (MoCA) must, as a matter of urgency, provide departments and units in the College of Art and Built Environment (CABE) of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, the School of Creative Arts in University of Education, Winneba, School of Applied Arts of the Takoradi Technical University and other technical and vocational-based training centers in the tertiary institutions with state-of-the-art tools and equipment for teaching and learning.

Your Excellency, for decades, the Creative Arts have not been given rigorous developmental attention it deserves to reap its profitable benefits for national development in Ghana. When the Ministry of Tourism was realigned through Executive Instrument (E.I. 2013) to include the Creative Arts, it brought some hope that the Arts would receive some facelift but the result has not been encouraging. We observed that the realignment of the

tourism industry to the Creative Arts could not solve the predicaments of the Creative Arts industry since the latter receives little attention for its progressive growth than the former. It receives the least budgetary allocation and attention. But when the Creative Arts is not developed, our tourism will not grow, for it is a vehicle for tourism growth. Many tourist visit countries for the arts, fashion and music, it is a tangible asset of any advanced society. When the Creative Arts grow, tourism becomes a bonus in that growth.

There are instances where funds are given to some sectors of the Creative Arts fraternity leaving other crucial aspects. This does not encourage holistic growth of the Arts. In the nation's current state of massive graduates unemployment, there is an urgent need to prioritize the development of the Creative Arts.

Your Excellency, Mother Ghana is bedeviled with massive unemployment plights. The youth including graduates from our tertiary institutions are equally affected. However, numerous researches relating job creation and employment have proven that the world's buoyant economies (such as China, Germany, Russia, Japan, Canada, Italy, France, Great Britain and USA) have created more jobs for their people through the Creative Arts. The Department of Culture, Media and Sports (2015) in UK testifies that the number of jobs in the creative industries increased by 5.5 per cent between 2013 and 2014 to 1.8 million jobs. The National Governors Association of US reports that the creative industries create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies.

China, India, Malaysia and Ghana had similar economic development status in the 1980s. But when China, Malaysia and India capitalized on their arts and developed it to its fullest potentials, they experienced tremendous economic development. Through the arts, they have created numerous jobs for their people and enriched their nations. When Singapore launched its Renaissance City Plan in 2000 and rolled it out till 2012, they succeeded in transforming the country into a cosmopolitan global art city which till now attracts international attention. It was through their Arts Development Plan that leapfrogged their national development. The country has been able to globalised its multi-ethnic arts for global consumption. This has contributed to their economic empowerment. Singapore's early years of development after independence without prioritization of her Arts and culture experienced a stunted economic growth until it showed active interest in using the arts in national development.

Your Excellency, we, the undersigned art-based civil society organizations, respectfully, request your support to our plea for robust development of the Creative Arts in Ghana.

Thank you.

Accra, 22nd February, 2017

Singed

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