

PRESS RELEASE

GHANA HOLDS NATIONAL DAY

Ghana will celebrate its national day at the on-going World Exposition 2005 on Thursday, June 30, 2005 under the theme Sustainable Development of Natural Resources- A Key for Wealth Creation. Ghana's presentation focuses on four key elements:

- Cocoa- From Seedling to Chocolate and Beyond
- Ghana's traditional signature textile "Kente" which is a rich and colourful hand-woven textile worn by royalty and on special occasions
- Eco-tourism attractions
- The legacy of Dr. Hideyo Noguchi, the father of Ghana-Japan relations



Location and Climate

Ghana is bounded on the north and northwest by Burkina Faso, on the east by Togo, on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by Cote d'Ivoire. Formerly a British colony known as the Gold Coast, Ghana was the first nation in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence (1957). The country is named after the ancient empire of Ghana, from which the ancestors of the inhabitants of the present country are thought to have migrated. The total land area is 92,100 square miles (238,537) square kilometres).

The climate of Ghana is tropical, but temperatures vary with season and elevation.

Except in the north, two rainy seasons occur, from April to June and from September to November. In the north the rainy season begins in March and lasts until September. Annual rainfall ranges from about 40 inches (1,015 millimetres) in the north to about 80 inches (2,300 millimetres) in the south-east. The harmattan, a dry, north wind, blows from December to March lowering the humidity and creating hot days and cool nights in the north. In the south the effects of the harmattan are felt in January. In most areas the

highest temperatures occur in March, the lowest in August. The average annual temperature is about 86F (30C).

Economy

Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana has roughly twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Gold, timber, tourism and cocoa production are major sources of foreign exchange. The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture, which accounts for 36% of GDP and employs 60% of the work force, mainly small landholders. The thrust of Government policy priorities include tighter monetary and fiscal policies, accelerated privatization, and improvement of social services.



Highlights of National Day Programme

- 1. Cultural Exchange and fashion show with Ichinomiya Town, Ghana's Friendship Town for the Expo 2005 on Wednesday, June 29' 2005.**
- 2. Live presentation of Ghana on NHK TV on Wednesday, June 29, at 5.30 p.m. featuring the National Dance Group of Ghana, the Ghana Dance Ensemble.**
- 3. Official National Day Program and Flag Raising Ceremony at the Expo Hall on Thursday, June 30, 2005 at 11.00 a.m. The Guest of Honour will be H.E. Alan Kyerematen, Ghana's Minister of Trade and Industry. This will be followed by cultural performance by the Ghana Dance Ensemble and a fashion show featuring Japanese models from Ichinomiya Town showcasing Ghanaian garments made by Lizdon Fashion House, one of Ghana's leading Fashion Houses.**
- 4. There will also be a chocolate demonstration and quiz show at the Ghana Stand and the Africa Joint Pavilion Event Space to be accompanied by a musical**

performance featuring the Ghana Dance Ensemble and the Ghana Embassy Resident Band based in a Tokyo that plays both traditional and contemporary Ghanaian popular music.

5. More musical shows will be held between July 1 and 3 at the Africa Event Space by the two groups to entertain patrons to the Ghana stand in particular and the Africa Joint Pavilion in general. The Ghana Dance Ensemble will also perform at the UN Pavilion on 1st July at 10.00 a.m., as part of activities marking the UN Day and Week at the Expo.

All visitors are invited to come to join Ghana to celebrate its national day, enjoy the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality and relish its rich traditional culture that will be on display during the period and beyond.



Profile of the Ghana Dance Ensemble

The high profile of the National Dance Company marks the culmination of a development initiated by the first President of the Republic of Ghana in 1962 when the Ghana Dance Ensemble was established under the directorship of Professor J.H. Nketia at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana and Professor A. Mawere Opoku, its founding artistic director. The current artistic director, F. Nii-Yartey assumed that responsibility in 1976 and has since enlarged the group's well-grounded standard artistic repertoire to include the creation of what is termed the Tradi-Contemporary African dances and dance-theatre productions.

Resident at the National Theatre of Ghana, the Ghana Dance Ensemble has performed to roaring ovations and received raving reviews in the media on nearly all continents of the world. With aesthetically pleasing dances that combine ancient folk and contemporary dance forms, the rich polyrhythm of percussion and mellifluous melodies, the group has proved itself a worthy ambassador of Ghana.

The group has performed to several standing ovations in France, US, Denmark, Korea, UK, Japan, Qatar, Indonesia, Germany, Zimbabwe, Angola and several other locations world-wide.

The programme notes of the group on this Expo tour will include the following:

1. **Kpanlogo:** A traditional dance of the Ga Traditional Area of Accra, Ghana. It is rich in mimetic and theatrical expression and is an infectious dance for the youth and very danceable too.
2. **Ahengoro:** Depicting ceremonial events like Akan festival, or Durbar, this dance form demonstrates the loyalty of the people to chiefs as fathers of families and the community.
3. **Gonje Music:** The one –stringed fiddle is played as a solo instrument. The performer sings as he plays with other gonje players. Gonje players sing praises of kings and individuals with their instrument.
4. **Other performances** will include Adowa, Takai, Bamaya, Sikyi, Atsea and others.

Profile of the Ghana Embassy Resident Band

The Ghana Embassy Resident Band is made of seasoned Ghanaian instrumentalists who have acquired considerable dexterity over the use of both traditional musical instruments (like Jembe Drums, Dudumda Drums and Dondo) and contemporary ones like guitar, keyboards and electric drums. The group combines traditional music with a modern contemporary upbeat popular Ghanaian musical forms to create a harmonious blend of African rhythm that appeal to various musical tastes.



Originally formed in Tokyo in 1998 by five Ghanaian musicians under the management of Asante Plan of Japan, the group has performed to raucous applause at the several

musical and cultural festivals across the length and breadth of Japan. In May this year the group performed to the admiration at the African Joint Pavilion Event Space as part of activities marking the Special Event Day for the Ghana Stand.

In addition to their normal musical tours, the Ghana Embassy Resident Band also runs musical workshops for schools across Japan.

Their repertoire for the National Day performances will include songs like Somaja, Adewemi, Sika, Asafo, ABCD, Edina Benya, Repete and Kro Hen Kro, among others.

For further information, please contact the co-stand directors:

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