

First Czech exhibition opens in Accra

By Sebastian Syme &
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GHANA and the Czech Republic have taken their relations a notch higher with the introduction of an exhibition dubbed 'Czech Days in Ghana', which is designed to support Czech-Ghanaian foreign trade companies in the two countries.

The three-day exhibition, which opened yesterday and is the first of its kind since the partition of Czechoslovakia in 1993, saw 19 institutions from the Czech Republic exhibit various products and services.

Business partnership

Opening the event, the Czech Ambassador to Ghana, Madam Gita Fuchsova, underscored the need for Czech companies in Ghana to partner Ghanaian businesses to strengthen business ties for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

She said her country had cooperated with Ghanaian partners in agriculture, energy production, mining, engineering, food processing, as well as education since Ghana attained independence.



• Madam Gita Fuchsova (2nd right) examining some products on display at the exhibition. Those in the picture include Dr Michael Kugblenu (2nd left) and Ms Jana Masinova (right), Director of Export of Veba textile, an exhibitor

According to her, the relationship between the two countries had enabled scores of Ghanaians to study in the Czech Republic.

Madam Fuchsova said a closer partnership among businesses of the two nations would create the avenue for those businesses to expand to create more jobs for their peoples.

Ghana-Czech relations

Ghana and the Czech Republic have a long-standing relationship, dating back to Ghana's pre-independence era. Relations between the two countries developed further immediately after Ghana's declaration of independence in 1957, following which diplomatic relations were established between the two countries in October 1959.

During the United Nations (UN) General Assembly session in September 1960, Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, met Antonin Novotny, the then President of Czechoslovakia, to discuss

opportunities for mutual cooperation.

Relations between Ghana and Czechoslovakia exponentially grew in early 1961 when Prague began to sell arms to Ghana and extended to the Ghanaian government a £5-million loan to help finance the Czechoslovak construction of a sugar mill, two shoe factories, a ceramic plant, tanning and plywood factories and a 200-bed hospital and for the purchase of equipment for four hydroelectric power plants.

Training

The President of the Czech-Ghanaian Chamber of Commerce, Dr Michael Kugblenu, noted that the relationship between the two countries had made it possible for some Ghanaians to be trained in the Czech Republic in fields such as medicine, mining, engineering and architecture.

He expressed optimism that the institution of 'Czech Days in Ghana' would further enhance bilateral

relations between the two countries, as well as create the avenue for Czech producers of goods and services to directly interact with Ghanaian businesses and invest in Ghana for business networking in the various sectors.

Mr Kugblenu said the Czech Republic had a lot to offer to facilitate the socio-economic growth of Ghana, in line with the vision of the government to create a business-friendly environment.

"Our purpose is to encourage and ensure that businesses from the Czech Republic and Ghana are able to succeed and become sustainable in either Ghana or the Czech Republic," he added.

The President of the Central Regional Business Network, Mr James B. Brown, made a presentation on the investment potential of the region and urged investors to take advantage of the various opportunities to invest there.

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