More to benefit from School Feeding Programme

Story: Justice Baidoo

ABOUT 1.5 million school-children across the country are expected to benefit from an expanded school feeding programme by 2012, the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Mr Samuel Ofosu Ampofo has said.

The programme, which is a collaboration between the Government of Ghana and its Dutch counterpart to feed school pupils with a balanced meal per day has already increased coverage from below 600,000 pupils in 2008 to over one million school-children as of September, 2011.

He said the Government of Ghana had solely funded the programme since January, 2011.

Mr Ofosu Ampofo, who was speaking at a workshop on the development of a national policy for the School Feeding Programme, said the government was spearheading the implementation of the policy which would streamline the structural arrangements for the programme’s implementation.

The one-day workshop was expected to discuss modalities and propose a roadmap leading to the formulation of a national school feeding policy.

According to Mr Ofosu Ampofo, the government is currently investing more resources into the programme to benefit more school pupils in the country.

He said the government had already procured 10 four-wheel vehicles to be distributed to the various regions to enable them run their activities effectively.

The ministry did a retargeting programme to ensure that the school feeding programme was rearranged to benefit pupils from deprived communities in the country.

According to the minister, the process had led to the removal of some schools from the beneficiary list of the programme to make way for more schools from more deprived areas.

He called on the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies which had some of their schools removed from the beneficiary list to mobilise internally generated funds to support the schools to continue with their feeding.

Mr Ofosu Ampofo reiterated the government’s commitment to sustain the programme, adding that the ministry was going to ensure that all the budgeting and their related payments were done at the district level to cut down the bureaucracy involved in the process.

The National Co-ordinator of the School Feeding Programme, Mr S.P. Adamu, underscored the need for a national policy for the programme to clearly spell out the role of each stakeholder in the implementation process.

According to him, it is important to explore ways of fostering private participation in the programme, and that a policy will be able to fashion modalities for the attainment of the objectives.

Mr Adamu said the retargeting process undertaken had brought much improvement to the programme.