



**Millennium
Development
Authority**
Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction



MiDA meets the Press

The Millennium Development Authority (MiDA) has taken its turn at the Meet the Press series to outline the status of implementation of the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) Ghana Program. The Chief Executive Officer of MiDA, Martin Eson-Benjamin stressed the fact that the total amount of \$ 547 million will be fully and effectively utilized to the benefit of Ghanaians.

According to Mr Eson-Benjamin, as at the end of April 2010, MiDA had committed 74% of the Compact Funds, which represents over \$401million worth of contracts, consultancies and other Project implementation expenditure which have been signed and work has either been done or is ongoing. Over \$154 million of that amount which represents 30% of the Compact sum has already been re-disbursed. These are payments which have been made in the course of the implementation of Projects and Project Activities.

Under the five year Program which is being implemented in thirty Districts around Ghana, 47,000 out of the targeted 60,000 farmers have received free Technical and Business Skills training. Each farmer trained, has received and worked with farm inputs worth \$230. The result of the innovative arrangement of giving inputs to farmers as starter packs is that, farmers have increased their yields. In maize production for instance, yields have increased from an average of three or four bags per acre, to over fifteen bags.

Mr Eson-Benjamin said, Agriculture Credit have been delivered through Participating Financial Institutions to over 9,600 individual farmers who have in some cases used the loans as seasonal and other working capital or for the purchase of capital asserts. Almost 20 million dollars has been disbursed so far. To facilitate the credit delivery process training has been provided for personnel of rural banks and financial NGOs on Credit and Loan Management. This is in addition to providing assistance to participating financial institutions to have branches closer to their customers to serve them better thereby to reduce the tendency to default in loan repayments, which is a major challenge.

Mr. Eson-Benjamin assured Ghanaians that construction of the 14.1 kilometre section of the N1 Highway will be completed by the end of 2011. The \$125 million project to upgrade the present single carriage way into a three lane dual carriage way to reduce the bottlenecks in accessing the International Airport and the Port of Tema with farm produce will help increase Ghana's horticulture production and export base.

Mr Eson-Benjamin enumerated the other projects that MiDA is undertaking and gave the assurance that at the rate of implementation MiDA will achieve its targets by 2012 when the program is scheduled to finish.