

**PUBLIC UTILITIES WORKERS' UNION OF TUC (GHANA)
HALL OF TRADES UNIONS
ACCRA**

PRESS RELEASE

REBUTTAL TO ALLEGATIONS MADE BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICE PRESIDENT REGARDING THE ELECTRICITY COMPANY OF GHANA RANSOMWARE INCIDENT DURING THE 14TH REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCIES IN COMMONWEALTH AFRICA

The Public Utilities Workers Union (PUWU) of the Trades Union Congress (Ghana) has taken note of the recent address delivered by His Excellency the Vice President, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia during the Annual General Meeting of the African Anti-corruption Agencies in Africa on the 9th of May 2024.

SABOTAGE OF ECG IT INFRASTRUCTURE

In the said address, the Vice President categorically indicated that the ICT staff of ECG sabotaged the digitalization of the payment system by putting a ransomware attack into the ECG ICT system of the company and further demanded a ransom.

He further stated that ECG's monthly revenue prior to the digitalization was at Four Hundred and Fifty Million (GHS450,000.000.00) which has increased to over One Billion Ghana Cedis (GHS1,000,000.00) monthly after the digitalization.

The Union respectfully DISAGREES with the statement of His Excellency the Vice President on his presentation relating to digitalization and sabotaging of the ICT system at ECG.

In September 2022, EOCO commenced forensic audit on the ECG Power App: They demanded for the payment platform architecture, databases, Application Programming Interface (API) documentation and the power app custom source code, including credentials to the backend prepayment systems. EOCO did not use its internal staff but had to use third-party IT professionals for the assignment. Consequently, it was not only ECG IT staff who had access to the ICT infrastructure of ECG. Could the sharing of the source code with external parties compromised ECG network security in relation to the scale of the September 2022 attack?

The first ransomware attack, occurred on September 28, 2022 which took a wide scope prompting the need to report the incident to the Cyber Security Authority, as required by regulation. The National Security thereafter took over the ECG ICT system as the attack was seen as a threat to national security.

In the midst of the takeover, the second and most severe of the ransomware attacks occurred on the 11th November 2022, at the time the National Security personnel had both full physical access and software administrative rights to all ECG systems. The National Security arrested and detained some ECG ICT staff for days but were later released.

We wish to state that it was the ECG ICT staff who used their system recovery strategy and worked tirelessly day and night to restore the systems and even assisted the National Security operatives on how to operate the ECG systems. The ECG ICT staff led the recovery effort, with the support of E-crime Bureau, a cyber security firm, invited by ECG Board.

In all these cases, the systems were restored with the major assistance by the ECG ICT staff. It is therefore factually inaccurate that National Security came in to recover the system, as reported by His Excellency the Vice President.

The Union wishes to put on record that the categorical statement made by His Excellency the Vice President was inaccurate and misleading. We wish to indicate that during the attack, personnel of the National Investigation Bureau launched an investigation into the incident of which we are yet to hear a conclusive report on the matter.

Accordingly, for the Vice President to state this as a matter of fact that the incident was a sabotage orchestrated by the staff of ECG to frustrate a project which will benefit the Company and Ghana as a whole is very unfortunate.

REVENUE INCREASE

ECG's financial performance is a matter of public record, as indicated in the company's 2019 Annual Report. The average monthly revenue for the period 2017 to 2019 was around GHS532.7 million. In the 2023 signed SIGA – ECG Performance Contract, the average monthly revenue is GHS631.3 million as at early 2022. These documents are available to the public on ECG website.

We further wish to put on record that the enhancement of aspects of digitalization into ECG work processes by the current Management has improved convenience to our customers and commitment exhibited by staff

has been the pivot of any observed improvement especially in the area of revenue mobilization. The Staff of ECG have no motivation whatsoever to sabotage any process, procedure or system designed to improve the work processes and as such must be commended.

The ICT Directorate already spearheaded the digitalization of ECG payment systems with the roll out of the ECG Power App and USSD (*226#) services dating back to July 2016. His Excellency the Vice President was invited as a guest of honor on the 18th of February 2020 to launch the ECG Power App at the Head Office of ECG. This launch was widely covered in both the electronic and print media.

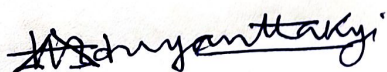
The accusations of sabotage and resistance to digitalization are not only unfounded but also damaging to the morale and reputation of our hardworking members.

The ECG ICT department has been at the forefront of digitalizing revenue collection for decades, a fact that seem to have been overlooked. The sophisticated ransomware attack attributed to internal sabotage has been proven to be the work of an international cybercriminal group (Lockbit), which further exonerates our members from such erroneous claims.

In conclusion, the commitment of ECG staff particularly ICT professionals, to the company's digitalization journey remains unwavering. The development and deployment of the power app in 2016 exemplify the dedication to innovation and progress.

ECG staff prioritize initiatives that enhance efficiency and service delivery. The provision of reliable electricity services in Ghana demands immense dedication and sacrifice from ECG staff who works under stressful and hazardous conditions.

We are fully aware of the several attempts by some key stakeholders to push for the privatization of ECG and the deliberate attempt to give ECG a bad name and hang it. We urge key stakeholders to refrain from disparaging our hardworking members and instead recognize their contributions to national development, in the face of many challenges including the shortage of critical resources for smooth operations.



MICHAEL ADUMATTA NYANTAKYI
GENERAL SECRETARY

DATED 13TH MAY 2024