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**EXCHANGE RATES**

## **Indoor air pollutants cause 50% of illnesses globally**

**21st February 2011**

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Cape Coast, Feb. 21, GNA - Mr Ebenezer Fiahagbe, a Senior Programme Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), has said indoor pollution has been as among the top five environmental risks to public health which also contributes to an annual 8.5 million deaths globally.

He said this at a seminar organized by the Environmental Science Student's Association (ENSSA) of the University of Cape Coast, as part of its annual week celebration on the theme "Our Environment, Our Life, Our Responsibility".

Mr. Fiahagbe said some indoor pollutants like carpets, detergent, asbestos ceiling, lead paints, stoves, disinfectants, dust and mites causes lung related illnesses like asthma, bronchitis, coughing, respiratory infections and cancer.

He said an individual's time spent is usually indoors which exposes everybody to the risk of suffering from convulsion, coma and unconsciousness due to indoor pollutant like the presence of lead in paints, drinking water, roofing sheets and carbon oxide from stoves, heater and chimneys.

Others include indoor pollutants like Randon gases in walls and formaldehyde based plywood and concrete walls also causes cancer, unconsciousness, cardiovascular diseases, headache, dizziness, burning sensation in eyes and throat, muscle spasms and vertigo.

Mr. Fiahagbe said World Health Organization (WHO) has stated in a recent report that over 300,000 lung related deaths are recorded annually with indoor pollutants like smoke from tobacco, pesticides, mold, mildew and dust mites which have identified as a major cause.

Prof. Christopher Ameyaw Akumfi, Member of Parliament for Techiman North, said laws and regulations on air pollution in the country are weak.

Hence, international industries exploit these loopholes to pollute the environment indiscriminately and cited the case of KOSMOS Energy who questioned the EPA after they were fined 40 million dollars for releasing poisonous gases into the air in one of their operations.

He said it was the prerogative of parliamentarians to ensure that laws on air pollution were promulgated and that laws should come with Legislative Instrument (LI) so that they could be properly implemented.

Prof. Ameyaw Akumfi said he was saddened that agencies like Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) were poorly resourced hence their difficulty in undertaking research to assist government to formulate good environmental policies.

He suggested that research findings on environmental policies carried out by international research agencies should be domesticated to fit the country's condition.

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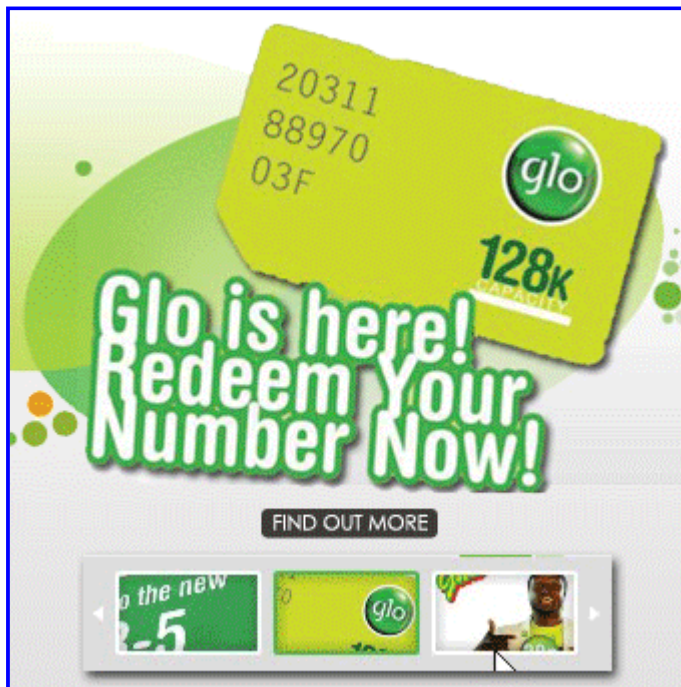
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