

PRESS RELEASE

CECELIA DAPAAH'S REPORTED THEFT CASE AND EMERGING ISSUES: **NOTHING SHORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE AND TRANSPARENT INVESTIGATION IS NEEDED – GII & GACC**

The Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) and the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) have followed with keen interest, the recent news of the alleged theft of substantial amounts of money and personal effects belonging to Madam Cecelia Abena Dapaah, the Minister of Sanitation and the husband. The allegedly stolen sums of money – One Million Dollars (US\$1 Million), Three Hundred Thousand Euros (€300,000), and unspecified millions of Ghana Cedis – have sparked serious concerns about the source and intended use of these funds.

Much as we applaud the announced resignation of Honourable Cecilia Dapaah, it seems unconscionable to think of a public officer and a renowned political personality keeping such colossal amounts of money outside of the banking sector. Regrettable as the theft by workers of the Honourable Minister is, questions of the sources of the funds are legitimate and must be investigated by the various competent authorities. This is why the news of Madam Cecilia Dapaah's swift arrest and subsequent investigation by the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) must be commended even as we ask for transparency in the investigation.

In addition to our call for a transparent and comprehensive investigations, we also call for an immediate passing of the Conduct of Public Officer's Bill to strengthen Ghana's asset declaration regime. This Bill includes provisions on the amendments of the existing Asset Declaration Act to guarantee a robust Asset Declaration regime. The Conduct of Public Officer's Bill has been in front of Cabinet for more than a year with no clear commitment to having it laid before parliament for consideration and passage. We are also calling for strengthening the Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 2003 (Act 646) to provide for the reverse burden of proof in addressing illicit enrichment.

We also call for immediate protection of the two house helps named in the story since they serve as prime witnesses to the unfolding case.

What this case brings to the fore is that, the time has come in Ghana for the government to enact laws that will strengthen the Criminal Offences, Act 1960 (Act 29) and other anti-corruption laws to include reverse burden of proof in addressing illicit enrichment.

We strongly urge the President to take a decisive action in addressing alleged corruption cases and back his rhetoric on fighting corruption in Ghana by expelling the popular perception of interferences in corruption investigations, involving persons in his government.

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