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# Forum discusses oil palm industry

**P**ARTICIPANTS of a forum on palm oil production in Accra pose for the camera after the closing session.

The forum aimed at discussing issues affecting the production of palm oil in the country.

Organised by the State - Ghana Development Company Limited, it attracted stakeholders from the oil palm industry to address issues confronting the producers, particularly farmers.

Ms Adwoa Sakyi, African Regional Women's Co-ordinator of the International Union of Food and Agriculture, in an address, urged the participants to devise ways to ensure sustainable palm oil production in the country.

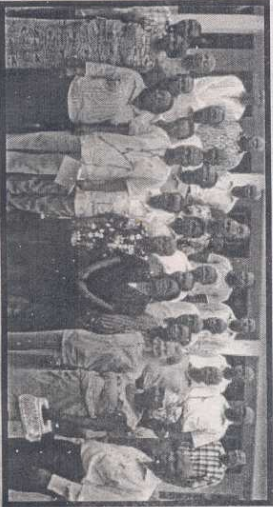
She was optimistic that they would come out with measures to address the challenges facing the producers of palm oil.

A facilitator, Mr. Walter Afiako, said the forum was to address bad practices in oil palm cultivation and production. Photo: Maxwell Bilson



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When the secretary-general of the International  
Trade



Mr. Walter Attako (right) and Ms. Abnora Sakyi, his colleague facilitator, listening attentively to the participants (INSETS: Group photograph of the participants and the facilitators)

# GAWWU cautions oil palm farmers

## •Against child labour

STORY: WILLIAM BEEKO

A one-day round table forum on labour issues and human resource management associated with oil palm plantation and palm oil production in Ghana has been held in Accra with a clarion call on oil palm farmers to desist from the practice of using children to work on oil palm farms.

Mr. Walter Attako, Personal Assistant to the

General Secretary of the General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWWU), who was also the facilitator for the forum, gave the caution in an interview with journalists at the opening of the workshop.

"Children are expected to go to school therefore it is illegal to allow them to go to the farms and work. That is cheap labour and we all need to crusade against that practice."

...Sometimes the children get tired after being used for that arduous task and they end up sleeping in class when they go to school," Mr. Attako lamented.

He further hinted that plans are afoot by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) to certify growers, millers, processors as well as other stakeholders along the supply chain to enable them to hit the international market.

"The certification by the RSPO has become necessary because the growers, millers, processors, farmers among others are targeting the international market therefore there is the need to certify them in order for them to operate within the required international standard. The RSPO was established in 2005 to address bad practices in oil palm cultivation and palm oil production."

...Oil palm was seen first in the tropical areas of West Africa and has long been recognised in West African countries, and is widely

used as cooking oil. Our target is to get to the international stage and show the world what we in the oil palm sector has got to offer," Mr. Attako pointed out.

The forum brought together the major palm oil producers of Ghana that included the Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Limited (GOPDC Ltd.), TOPP and BOPP Ltd, growers, out-growers, millers, processors as well as the Ministry of Employment, the Ghana Employers Association, the Labour Commission and the Trade Union Congress (TUC), to discuss critical issues like labour since it was within the principles and criteria document for certification. The event was sponsored by Solidaridad of the Netherlands, Chemico Limited and GOPDC Limited.