

**ACCRA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE UNIVERSALIZATION
OF THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS (CCM).
ACCRA, GHANA
28-30 MAY 2012**

CONFERENCE INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear Conference Participant,

This is a welcome note as you prepare to join us at the Accra Regional Conference on the Universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCCM) to be held at the **La Palm Royal Beach Hotel Accra, Ghana** from **May 28 – 30, 2012**.

In this note, you will find some important information about the conference and Accra. Do take time to read it.

THE CONFERENCE

The objective of this regional meeting is to overcome challenges currently faced by States considering ratification or accession of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) in order to further extend the reach of the treaty throughout the Sub-Saharan region, and to assist States Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention, so as to accelerate its implementation.

Participants of the Accra Regional Conference (28th and 29th May, 2012) hosted by Ghana are made up of technical and policy experts and Civil Society Organizations dealing with issues related to cluster munitions in Sub-Saharan African States.

The 30th May workshop will deal specifically with implementation challenges experienced by States Parties working with the implementation of Treaty obligations.

The Conference is being organised by the Government of the Republic of Ghana in cooperation with the Governments of Togo and Zambia, sponsored by the Government of Norway, and supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

All participants are expected to register for the Conference.

Registration will take place at the Homowo Conference venue at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel as follows:

SUNDAY MAY 27, 2012

15:00 – 19:00

MONDAY MAY 28, 2012

08:30 – 09:15

ACCOMMODATION

Arrangements have been made for sponsored participants at the **La Palm Royal Beach Hotel** on Bed and Breakfast basis

Hotel Information:

Location	Accra – La Beach Road, Accra (Approximately 30 minutes' drive from the Kotoka International Airport, Accra)
Type	4 Star Hotel
Internet	WIFI. Has wireless access
Telephone	(+233-30) 2 215100 (+233-30) 2 215111 (+233-(0) 244342621 - 4 (+233-30) 2 771700
Fax	(+233-30) 2 771717
E-mail	lapalmres@gbhghana.net
Website	www.gbhghana.net/la-palm

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND VISA INFORMATION FOR GHANA

A valid passport and an entry visa are required to enter Ghana. Visas are required by all except nationals of ECOWAS, Kenya and Singapore.

Note: You may be refused entry on a passport that is due to expire within six months of your departure date.

If you are applying for a visa at the Ghana diplomatic mission in your place of residence, you may quote the following names as references:

- (1) **Mr. Leonard Bortey TETTEY**, Ghana National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons [NACSA], P. O. Box M 42, Accra. Telephone: +233 302 669071. Fax: +233 302 687410
- (2) **Mr. Akunu DAKE**, Chief Executive Officer, Heritage Development, P. O. BOX CT 1780 Accra, Ghana. Tel. (+233 – [0]302) 760441, 770808. Fax: (+233 – [0]302) 760441

Gratis visas on arrival are being arranged on the participants' behalf. **Visa on arrival applicants will need to have the approval letter from the Ghana Immigration Service before they can travel.** For those who wish to stay beyond the conference period, visas can be extended whilst in Ghana.

ARRIVALS

The arrival terminal at Kotoka International Airport is small/cozy. Before completing Immigration formalities, you will need to complete a card. The cards are on counters on the right-hand side just before the Immigration officers' booths. Some airlines also hand out immigration cards on board the flight. Kindly ask the cabin crew if they have

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them available on the flight. For the section requesting your address in Ghana, you can write the name of your hotel.

AIRPORT MEET AND TRANSFER

La Palm Royal Beach Hotel will offer courtesy bus service from and to the Airport.

On arrival, look out for someone holding the Hotel placard **La Palm Royal Beach Hotel** or the inscription **ACCRA CCM** after coming out from Customs in the visitors welcoming area of the Airport. The Local Organising Committee also intends to have a Welcome Desk in the baggage area with inscription: **WELCOME – ACCRA CCM CONFERENCE**

If for any reason, you are not met on arrival, go to the Airport Information Office outside the meeting area and seek assistance to call the Heritage Development (Event Manager's) airport protocol team led by **Kathryn** on her mobile numbers **0205555881, 0244769959**

If you have to go to your Hotel by yourself, we will recommend that you use an airport official taxi to the hotel. They can be found parked at the street next to the meeting area. They could cost you anything between GH¢20 – GH¢30 (about US\$15 – US\$20)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WEATHER

Ghana's low latitude and proximity to the equator give it a typically tropical climate. Temperatures approach or exceed 30 degrees (80 Fahrenheit) most days of the year, with virtually no seasonal variation. May/June is fairly wet.

The Conference venue and rooms are air-conditioned. (Taxis are not)

COMMUNICATION

English is the lingua franca and you will find that most people speak it.

Five reliable telecommunications networks are available in Ghana (two fixed and four mobile). The Ghana country code is +233. You may want to get a local sim card for your cell phone when you arrive. If you have a multi-system mobile phone, it is possible to get a local SIM card which is not expensive.

The Hotel will offer WIFI internet access for residents of the Hotel. Passcodes will be offered on check-in.

CURRENCY

The official currency is the Ghana Cedi (GHS) (Cedi pronounced See Dee).

Current rates vary according to time. It is recommended that you change currency at an established foreign exchange bureau. The Hotel also offers Foreign Exchange Bureau services. You can also contact the Conference Secretariat for foreign exchange assistance.

You may also exchange money at any of the banks. *Note that banks are closed on Saturdays and Sundays; Exchange Bureaus are opened on Saturdays.*

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Kindly note that it is advisable to bring US Dollars, British Pounds or Euro. You may find it difficult if not impossible to change other currencies.

If people approach you asking to change money, refuse nicely.

Note that Credit cards are not widely used in Ghana, although the hotels accept credit cards payments with a surcharge. Plan on bringing much of your budget in the form of cash particularly if you plan to spend time outside the hotel. Travelers cheques are not welcome in many places of business. You can however use your Visa or Master Card at ATMs at many of the banks and get Cedis.

TRANSPORTATION

The Conference is residential and therefore buses will not be provided for shuttle services for participants.

Note that taxis can be hailed from the street, or you may ask your hotel to assist in getting one. Taxis are not metered and the fare is subject to bargaining. The friendlier you are, the more successful the bargaining. As a rule, you should not have to pay more than GHS15 for the ride from La Palm Royal Beach Hotel to the city centre.

Taxis take a maximum of 4 people. Taxis in Accra may operate like mini buses, picking up unrelated passengers as they ply their route. When you hail an empty taxi state from the beginning, that you want "dropping"; i.e., that you want the taxi to take you directly to your destination. You must negotiate your fare before getting into the taxi. The fare is determined for the distance, regardless of the number of passengers. If you take a taxi by yourself, Ghanaian taxi drivers prefer that you sit in the front passenger seat. *It is also advisable to share taxis at night.*

SAFETY

Ghanaians pride themselves as being some of the friendliest people in the world, and the level of crime against visitors/tourists is remarkably low. However, like any other country or metropolitan city, normal precautions are still advisable.

These security guidelines are useful:

Always keep travel documents and valuable possessions under lock. Please ask your hotel receptionist for assistance.

If handbags have a shoulder strap, wear strap across body

Avoid wearing attractive jewelry; do not display cell phones too casually; it could be snatched

Do not put valuables in exterior pockets of pants, backpacks, or in bags that are open at the top.

You may keep wallet in exterior pocket only if pocket is buttoned.

Hold on tightly to camera and cell phone.

MEALS & DINING

La Palm Royal Beach Hotel will provide breakfast inclusive in the room rate.

Lunch will be provided for registered participants at the conference venue and the cost is included in the conference package. Participants will be given coupons for lunch.

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There are a host of eating places at Osu, a commercial hub about **15 – 20 minutes' drive** from the conference venue. Many of the more popular ones are located on the main OSU-R.E. street, popularly referred to as "Oxford Street". Some of the more popular are: for "fast" Western food (eat-in or take-away) , - the "Osu Food Court" and "Papaye" (chicken and rice or chips/French fries); "Frankies"; Chinese - "Dynasty"; Indian - "Haveli", salads "Sunshine Salads. Others in the general Osu area are: Chinese - "Regal" (off the main road); Indian - "Kohinoor"; Chinese & Indian - "Noble House", Italian (incl. pizza) "Mama Mia's"

We however strongly suggest and implore you if you can to try Ghanaian food - you will enjoy it, but it may be too spicy for some.

There are Ghanaian restaurants such as "Country Kitchen" in the Osu-Ringway residential area and the Trafix Restaurant at the National Theatre which serves a buffet lunch delight. "Maquis Tante Marie" serves both Ghanaian food and dishes from Francophone Africa. The more adventurous may also try a "chop bar" - a popular one around the Osu area is "Asanka Local". If you just want great "chicken and chips" (French fries) or chicken and rice, "Papaye" on Oxford Street is popular, for both eating in and take-away.

The nearest Ghanaian restaurant not far from the conference venue is "Next Door".

Some of the most popular Ghanaian dishes are: "red-red" (fried ripe plantain with beans stew - either plain/vegetarian or with meat/chicken/fish); banku (something like a large, slightly sour dumpling made of ground maize/corn) with grilled tilapia and pepper; fufu (like sticky mashed potato, but made from cassava, plantain or yam) and a thick soup (try especially the groundnut/peanut and palm-nut soup; the soup may also sometimes be served with omo tuo or rice balls); Jollof rice (rice cooked with tomato paste and spices very similar to paella); and waakye (rice with black-eyed peas - a preferred choice of vegetarians).

SHOPPING

"Oxford" Street is the easiest and most accessible shopping venue. You can get local souvenirs and clothing there (including at Woodin, a specialty African print fabric shop). There are also a number of supermarkets; the best-known is Koala, where you can get mostly anything.

For those who have the time, a visit to the Makola market in the Central Business District would be of interest. This is the best place to get "Java print" fabric. The Arts Centre nearby is also a popular stop for souvenirs. Friendly bargaining is a must!

PLACES OF INTEREST

W.E.B. Du Bois Centre for Pan African Culture in Cantoments, M-F 9:00-4:30 (0302 -776-502)
George Padmore Library, Ridge Circle, M-F, 8:30-5:00; Sat 10:00-4:00 (0302 - 247-768, 228-402)
Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park
Independence Square
Makola Market (downtown)
Beaches, e.g. Labadi Beach, Coco Beach
Aburi Botanical Gardens (an hour and half drive from La Palm Royal Beach Hotel)

YOUR HEALTH

Jet lag aside, you should be fine.

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Do take the usual precautions when travelling including the medicines for malaria; this is after all the West Coast of Africa!

Although there are different schools of thought regarding whether or not short stay visitors ought to take malaria prophylactics (preventive). It is important thing to remember that the anopheles or malaria-carrying mosquito is active in the dark, approximately from 6.00 p.m. To avoid being bitten, use insect or mosquito repellent and/or wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers. If you forget to bring your own, insect or mosquito repellent can readily be bought at any pharmacy.

Hotel rooms are usually protected by a variety of means against mosquitoes; if you find the odd, stray one, do call reception and they will take care of it. Keep doors closed to avoid mosquitoes entering rooms.

Many pharmacy shops dot the conference hotel and venue.

It is advisable to obtain supplementary medical/travel insurance. However, excellent public and private medical facilities in Ghana do cater for essential medical needs. First aid services will be available at the conference venue and in the Conference Hotel.

You are strongly advised to avoid eating food purchased from street vendors; if you must, ensure the food is cooked and still warm/hot. Tap water or water from plastic sachets may not be the safest to drink. Factory bottled water or spring bottled water are easily available.

In the unlikely event that you need a doctor, we will recommend the public military hospital called '37', located about 20 minutes' drive from the conference venue. Please contact the conference secretariat if you need any medical assistance.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Leonard Bortey Tettey (LOC - Secretary / Liaison)	-	0244288798
Akunu Dake (Event Manager)	-	024-4693827

(In case you're calling from outside Ghana or from a roaming mobile phone, add +233 and drop the first 0.)

Time Zone: Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)

Electricity

Electricity is 220V AC at 50 cycles. Stabilizers are required for sensitive devices, and adapters are required for appliances using 110V.

AKWAABA – WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU! WISHING YOU AN ENJOYABLE STAY IN BEAUTIFUL GHANA!

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