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PRESS RELEASE

BAN ON IMPORTATION OF USED ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

AIRPORT, ACCRA - The attention of the Energy Commission has been drawn to pieces of information put out by a group calling itself **Concerned Importers of Used Appliances**, ostensibly to register their protest to the intended ban on the importation of used electrical appliances.

At the said press conference, the group made certain inaccurate statements and claims about the Energy Commission with specific reference to the intended ban on the importation of used household electrical appliances. By this release, we intend to correct the erroneous impressions created:

1. The group claimed that they had an inconclusive meeting with the Energy Commission. This claim is incorrect. The Commission had a very productive and conclusive meeting with the National Executives of GUTA, of which they are members, on October 6, 2021. At the said meeting, the rationale of the ban and the effect of the used appliances on the national economy, consumers, the environment and the appliance market as a whole was explained to them.
2. The group again said that the Energy Commission's claim that the trade in used appliances would turn Ghana into a dumping ground is false. The use of the terminology DUMPING has been misconstrued or misunderstood by the group and we would take this opportunity to explain the term. Dumping is defined as the practice of exporting to another country or territory products that:
 - a. contain hazardous substances;

- b. have environmental performance lower than is in the interest of consumers or that is contrary to the interests of the local and global commons;
- c. can undermine the ability of the importing country to fulfil international environmental treaty commitments; or
- d. are often too inefficient to sell in the appliances markets of the countries of manufacture or their export inflicts economic, social, and environmental costs on vulnerable populations in the receiving countries.

These inefficient appliances could be **new** or **old** and place a heightened demand on energy supply, increase power plant emissions and harm public health, agriculture and local ecosystems. Money spent on misused electricity impoverishes communities and unbalances trade. From the above, it is clear that DUMPING is not restricted to used appliances only. To assist consumers to identify and desist from patronizing inferior, used and inefficient electrical appliances, Ghana introduced and began enforcement of Minimum Energy Performance Standards and Labels for electrical appliances in 2005. In particular, individual households have made huge savings since the enforcement of these standards.

EFFECTS OF USED APPLIANCES

1. Dumping

- i. **Economy:** Used appliances are high energy guzzlers. In 2003, a study conducted by the Energy Foundation revealed that a whopping 30% of the total national electricity generation was wasted on used appliances. This puts pressure on the economy to increase generation capacity which requires the building of more power plants and also buying fuel to run these power plants. This robs the economy of monies needed to develop essential sectors like health, education and roads. It should also be emphasized that markets that are inundated with used appliances scare away investors who want to build assembly plants.

- ii. **Individuals:** Unsuspecting individuals who patronize the used appliances are robbed of their hard earned money in payment of high electricity bills and high maintenance costs. The maintenance cost becomes so high because of lack of spare parts in view of the obsolescence of the technology. The stock pile of appliances in repairers' shops around the country attests to this fact.
- iii. **Environment:** The more power plants we build to meet the ever-growing demand; the more fossil fuel we burn with its attendant emissions that pollutes the environment. Secondly, appliances contain hazardous substances and that is the reason why disposal is done in an environmentally friendly manner. The indiscriminate burning of the discarded appliances in search of valuable metals is a major climate and health concern. Following the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015, Ghana has recently developed an action plan to transition to net zero carbon emissions by the year 2070 and the ban on the importation and use of these used and inefficient appliances will contribute hugely in attaining net zero emissions within the stipulated period.

Now, going by their understanding of dumping, until the Greater Accra Regional Minister's recent bold decision to abolish activities at Agbogbloshie and its environs, Agbogbloshie had become notorious as the most toxic spot in the world. The **Concerned Importers of Used Appliances** has stated that there is no place in Ghana that can be described as a dumping site of discarded equipment because there is a recycling plant in Ghana. Let it be put on record that the Commission is never against Ghana becoming a circular economy. In fact, that is the global trend and Ghana needs to move with the tide. Recycling should rather target products that are consumed in the country and recycled at the end of their useful lives in Ghana, and not those that are imported for the purposes of recycling. The begging question is, what happens to the debris after the recycling if Ghana is turned into a global recycling hub?

3. The claim by the group that used products are more durable than the new ones is a fallacy and contradicts their earlier assertion that their activities provide feedstock to the local recycling plant. If the used appliances are so durable, how do they become feedstock to the local recycling plant? The

group's further claim that their used appliances are energy efficient because they come with power ratings is untrue. Energy efficiency is not determined by power ratings alone but also the age of the appliance. The older the appliance, the more energy inefficient it becomes compared with new ones.

4. The group sought to discredit the health implications of dumping of used appliances. The health implications of dumping of used appliances in the country could be dire. We want to refer Ghanaians to the numerous scary results of studies conducted in and around Agbogbloshie which abound on the internet. One study in Agbogbloshie revealed that children living in and around the area suffer from upper respiratory diseases, have high lead content in their blood and have low life expectancy rate.

Just recently, a newly published research by the Francis Crick Institute with Cancer Research UK has revealed how air pollution can cause lung cancer in individuals who have never smoked in their lives. This is the sad threat we are exposing our citizens to and we must wake up to this global call and safeguard the health of citizens, especially our children, to whom the future belongs.

Nobody discounts the claim that importation of used appliances provides jobs for a section of Ghanaians. However, development should be sustainable and sustainable development is what ensures socioeconomic development while maintaining environmental integrity. Turning one's country into a junk yard cannot lead to sustainable development, regardless of the jobs that it creates. The number of persons engaged in the used electrical appliance market is negligible compared to how many persons a single appliance factory can employ.

5. The Energy Commission would like Ghanaians to be aware that Europe has passed stringent environmental laws that makes disposal of obsolete appliances expensive. They are therefore always on the lookout for countries that do not have environmental laws or have weak enforcement of their environmental laws and ship all the junks to them. More often than not, environmental companies in Europe collect money from their governments for recycling and disposal but ship them to Africa and the

developing countries for sale and thereby gaming the system. An environmental company that shipped 17 containers of used refrigerators and freezers to Ghana in November 2013 was caught and the appliances were seized and destroyed. Our unsuspecting kinsmen have become the conduit through which these unscrupulous foreign companies perpetuate their diabolical climate injustices contrary to the Vienna Convention.

6. The Energy Commission has a mandate to fulfill the Act that established it; i.e. ensuring the efficient utilization of indigenous energy resources and that is exactly what we are doing. Our intention is a far cry from what the group wants Ghanaians to believe, i.e. destroying their livelihoods.

Let us all work together to build our economy, society and the environment in a sustainable manner.

Oman bɛyɛ yie, na ɛfiri yen ara.

May God bless our homeland Ghana.

For more information please call us on 0302813756/7 or email us at info@energycom.gov.gh.

**ISSUED BY ORDER OF
ENERGY COMMISSION**

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