

# Set up commission to probe galamsey — Oppong-Fosu

By Kwame Asare Boadu

**A** FORMER Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr Kwasi Oppong-Fosu, has appealed to President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to put the illegal mining (galamsey) conundrum to rest by setting up a commission of inquiry into the matter.

He argued that in doing so, the President would be taking the appropriate steps to unearth the rot in the system and build trust nationally and internationally in his quest to fight the canker.

Speaking to the *Daily Graphic* in Accra yesterday, Mr Oppong-Fosu, who served as Minister in the Prof. John Evans Atta Mills and John Mahama administrations, said the alleged collusion and corruption in official circles that had led galamsey to persist had created a bad image for the country.

"The seizure of mining equipment from some sites as well as the prosecution and conviction of some Ghanaians gave hope that all was going

well in the battle to end galamsey."

"However, recent developments had thrown everything overboard and brought the country back to ground zero," he observed.

## Official complicity

Taking a look at some of the events that had characterised the failure in battling galamsey, Mr Oppong-Fosu said: "The first hint of official complicity in undermining this exercise was announced by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Hajia Alima Mahama, when she warned metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives during a workshop that the National Security has a list of those of them involved in galamsey activities."

The second time, he said, came from the Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission, Mr Kwadwo Owusu-Afraye, who lamented publicly the activities of galamsey operators in forest reserves with the backing of "some powerful officials".

Recent disclosures regarding missing excavators which suggest the complicity of party and government officials for the purpose of raising funds



• Mr Kwasi Oppong-Fosu

for the governing party are troubling developments for the country," he posited.

Mr Oppong-Fosu said the development pointed to a betrayal of trust on the part of the President in the people of this country.

## Doubts

He indicated that doubts would be

created in the minds of the international community about the government's commitment to the National Climate Policy since the Minister of Environment who is championing the agenda was the one allegedly presiding over the scandal.

"Galamsey has national and global security implications due to money laundering and arms trafficking operations as well as smuggling of gold. Also the environmental consequences undermine Ghana's declared commitment to the Climate Change Agenda," he added.

## President's assurance

Making reference to the President's assurance to the nation that he was prepared to put his presidency on the line to deal with galamsey which had caused massive environmental degradation and pollution, the former minister said Ghanaians had not forgotten that pledge.

The country, he said, must be mindful of its commitments to internationally agreed protocols on Climate Change, and take the galamsey fight seriously.