

New shoe factory opens at Akosombo

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Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III (4th from right) and some executive of World Shoes, including Emmanuel Ohonme, (2nd from left), President and Founder of the organisation

Benjamin Xornam Glover Oct - 12 - 2023 , 06:27

The Paramount Chief of the Akwamu Traditional Area, Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III, has inaugurated a \$20-million local shoe manufacturing company which seeks to produce shoes from plastic materials Ethylene-vinyl acetate (EVA).

World Shoes Limited Ghana has the capacity to manufacture annually five million pairs of EVA shoes ranging from casual boat shoes stylish brogues, smart loafers, to hiking shoes.

According to the promoters of the project, the siting of the factory in the Asuogyaman District in the Eastern Region would create jobs for the residents in the area.

World Shoes, which operates from the premises of Akosombo Textile Limited, making use of the abandoned factory floors, has so far created 1,050 jobs for people in the Asuogyaman District, and is a classic example of the import substitution programme for rubber shoes.

Factory

The use of some of the ATL factory floors for other businesses forms part of an initiative by Akosombo Industries Company Limited, which also runs ATL, to utilise the vast infrastructure resources due to the collapsed textile business as a result of the importation of cheap textile products onto the Ghanaian market.

Speaking at the inauguration of the factory last Tuesday, the Omanhene of Akwamu commended the promoters of the factory, President and Founder of World Shoes, Emmanuel Ohonme, and Co-owner of the organisation, Benjamin Kojo Taylor, for extending their investment to his traditional area.

He said the ripple effects and acts of kindness exhibited through such an intervention would benefit the people of the area through the creation of employment, training opportunities and economic activities.

“This factory represents a beacon of progress and prosperity for our community, and embodies the spirit of our Akwamu Arising agenda,” he said.

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The new shoes produced by the factory

Odeneho Akoto III expressed the hope that the ultimate outcome of the economic progress brought about by the factory would bring the people closer together with the aim of building a better, more prosperous Akwamuman.

“More importantly, these shoes go beyond covering the feet and protecting against disease, they facilitate education, transformation, dignity and empowerment, all very important weapons against poverty, and you are all already aware that I have declared war against illiteracy and poverty in this community,” he said

Vision

For his part, Mr Ohonme said the vision to establish the factory was borne out of having donated millions of World Shoes to needy children around the world through the Christian missionary, Samaritan's Feet and their partners, stressing that there was the need to now

establish a global brand that would not only transform lives but also uplift communities and nations.

He said World Shoe products would form part of an integrated bundle of healthcare services that addressed broader public health and environmental sustainability mandates.

He indicated that versatile designs of the footwear were intended to provide comfortable, breathable support in a variety of climates and conditions, stressing that the products, made from durable EVA foam and infused with antimicrobial and biodegradation agents, would contribute to a holistic strategy for public health, while reducing waste and the environmental impact of the footwear industry.

He expressed optimism that the company would use Ghana as its base to produce shoes for the local market, the sub-region, the African continent and the rest of the world.

Mr Taylor said they believed the new World Shoe factory was a demonstration of how African innovation could propel African development and create change on a global scale.

Model

“By creating a model that provided people with affordable, high-quality, eco-friendly shoes, we can support education, health and economic outcomes while protecting the environment.” he added

He said the initiative offered a chance to create manufacturing industries and jobs for the youth, stressing that for any developing country to succeed with its economic development plan, governments must focus on industrialisation to address the youth unemployment challenge, by attracting private sector investments.