

## **400 River Guards Recruited to Boost Ecological Conservation in Western Region**

Monday, March 17, 2025, the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, and Member of Parliament for the Ellembelle Constituency, inaugurated the Blue River Guards. The ceremony took place at the Naval Base, Ezinlibo in the Jomoro District of the Western Region.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Emmanuel Kwamena Anyimah, Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Support Services at the Minerals Commission, stated that the Blue Water Initiative aims to rehabilitate polluted water sources and transform affected areas into hubs of ecological and economic recovery. Mr. Anyimah emphasized that “Today’s gathering is not just a ceremony; it is a call to action. It is a reminder that our rivers-our-lifelines are under threat”. He noted that the inauguration of the Blue River Guards marks a significant milestone in Ghana's efforts to sustainably preserve its natural resources for both present and future generations. He encouraged the Blue River Guards to be dedicated to duty and adhere to the training protocols. Highlighting the role of the Minerals Commission, Mr. Anyimah said, “We are to provide regulatory support, technical guidance, and oversight to ensure the Blue River Guard programme succeeds.”

The Minister, Hon. Buah, emphasized that the Blue River Guards are a crucial component of the Blue Water Initiative. Hon. Buah, admonished the beneficiaries to remain committed to protecting Ghana's water bodies from pollution arising from the activities of illegal mining. He stressed that the Blue Water Initiative of President John Dramani Mahama, is spearheaded by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in collaboration with the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing, and the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology. This collaboration is expected to restore the river and water bodies from the menace of illegal mining. Hon. Buah mentioned that the goal is to recruit and train 2,000 Blue River Guards who will serve as the lifeguards and defenders, protecting and monitoring the health of the river bodies. He further stated that “this initiative is part of the government's social contract with the citizens of Ghana” and bemoaned the turbidity levels of water bodies, reaching alarming proportions, endangering citizens wellbeing and aquatic lives. The Minister called on all stakeholders to join the fight against the pollution of the river bodies, the depletion of forests cover, and degradation of the environment.

On his part, the Western Regional Minister, Hon. Joseph Nelson, commended Hon. Buah for undertaking this initiative and pledged to support the successful rollout of the Blue River Guards programme, as it will play a vital role in monitoring and protecting rivers from environmental threats.

Commodore Emmanuel Ayesu Kwafu, Flag Officer Commanding the Western Naval Command, expressed joy and emphasized that collective effort is required to combat environmental degradation. He praised the Minerals Commission for the support and urged the 400 recruited Blue River Guards to work hard, discharge their duties with honesty and dedication, and protect Ghana's water bodies and forest areas.

In his closing remarks, Awulae Agyevi Kwame, Paramount Chief of Nsein Traditional Area, expressed excitement about the initiative and highlighted the need for citizens to rally behind the Ministry to resolve the menace of environmental degradation.



Minister in a pose with Chiefs and dignitaries



Minister inspecting the parade of Blue Water Guards



Deputy CEO, Support Services delivering a speech



Minister addressing the gathering



Invited Guest at the function



Blue River Guards on the parade grounds



Paramount Chief speaking at the ceremony



Minister exchanging pleasantries with Chiefs