

# Members of the Christian Council

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## **This is your role:**

You are a member of the *Christian Council*, an ecumenical umbrella organisation representing a variety of Christian churches in Ghana. Many members have close contacts with the government. At the same time, as church representatives, you are obliged to take care of the social concerns of church members.

Your association is divided on the Chinese loan offer.

## **These are your group's tasks:**

1. Read all the documents your group has received.
2. Select a chairperson from the work group. This person will represent the work group on the panel at the hearing.
3. All members of the group advise the speaker. You and your colleagues will consider convincing arguments for the hearing. Prepare a maximum 3-minute introductory statement. Also consider how the arguments of the ministries could be refuted.
4. Additionally, prepare a statement or critical question for each member of your organisation who will sit in the audience at the hearing.

## **Information for the *Christian Council*:**

The newspaper states that the Ministries of Finance and Economic Affairs are strongly committed to accepting the loan.

The Ministry of Finance advocates that an oil production law be passed as soon as possible. This law is intended to regulate how income is distributed. It provides the conditions for all people to benefit from oil and reduce poverty in the country:

1. The Oil Production Act stipulates that all payments made by the oil companies to the Ghanaian state are disclosed.
2. Three quarters of oil and gas revenues must flow into the state budget and be used primarily for agriculture, education, and road construction. The rest is to be saved in a sovereign wealth fund for future generations and a stabilisation fund for times of crisis if the price of oil falls.

Another bill stipulates that Ghanaian specialists must be trained and that 90 percent of the contracts must be awarded to Ghanaian companies.

The ministries expect huge economic growth that will benefit all population classes.

The *Christian Council* largely supports the government's plans. However, it is important to you to ensure that economic growth really benefits all people.

In addition, you fear that some social and political problems will be exacerbated by oil production:

*Poverty caused by rising rents and housing shortages*

In Takoradi, the future oil capital, the first signs of the oil rush can already be seen. The first oil companies are opening offices. The workers will be taken to the drilling platforms from there. We can already see that everything is becoming more expensive: school fees, cost of living, and above all rents. It will be difficult to find small apartments. The landlords are waiting for the foreign workers who can afford expensive apartments.

The *Christian Council* fears that Ghana will become a separated country between the few who live in great wealth and the many who are driven further and further into poverty.

*Prostitution and crime are on the rise*

Your association knows from many years of experience that cities that grow fast without coordination always attract prostitution. There are young women who cannot afford to live in the city because of the high prices. They see prostitution as a way to survive. And then there are also foreign workers, often young men without families,

who visit sex workers. They can spend a lot of money on alcohol and drugs in clubs. This gold-rush sentiment also creates a climate of increasing crime.

Your association also fears that HIV/AIDS infections will increase. As a precaution, your association is already training social workers in Takoradi, in particular for the expected problems. Unfortunately, schools and study places for social work are still lacking.

### *The rise of corruption*

The planned oil production law, to which the ministries like to refer, does not regulate how the money that flows into the national budget is to be distributed. The committee members who must monitor compliance with the law should be appointed by the president. What this means for the future is uncertain. It can prevent corruption, but it can also encourage it.