

30<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UNWHOLESOME RICE AT TEMA PORT**

The Food and Drugs Board wishes to bring to the notice of the general public that the consignment of 11466 metric tonnes (229938 bags) of Burmese rice on board MV Stephanis, which is currently at the Tema Port, will not be permitted onto the Ghanaian market due to quality and safety implications.

The fact of the matter is that prior to the arrival of the said rice, the Food and Drugs Board got information about the unwholesomeness of the said consignment for human consumption and that it had earlier been rejected by two West African neighbouring countries for the same reason. This information was immediately passed on to the National Security.

Upon arrival in Ghana on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009, it was noticed that there was no consignee in Ghana and the Product had not been registered by the Food and Drugs Board.

The Food and Drugs Board learnt that some sample of rice was allegedly taken from the consignment by an official of the Port Health Authority for testing at the Ghana Standard Board Laboratory.

The Food and Drugs Board had a meeting with officials from the Port Health Authority and CEPS and informed them that there was no way the said rice would be released onto the Ghana market since the safety and quality of the said product could not be guaranteed.

Furthermore, a meeting with CEPS concluded that the ship would be de-listed from its manifest.

Though the Food and Drugs Board had made its intention clear that the consignment should not be allowed entry into Ghana, information received indicates that the Port Health Authority had fumigated the said consignment. Why should there be that interest by Port Health Authority have interest to fumigate the consignment of unwholesome rice which has no consignee in Ghana and eventually sent it to Ghana Standards Board for testing?

What chemical did the Port Health official use to fumigate this unwholesome rice? Why did he take just one bag out of 229,938 bags?

In spite of all steps taken by the Food and Drugs Board, National Security and CEPS to prevent the berthing of the ship, MV Stephanis and the discharge of the said unwholesome rice consignment, our attention has been drawn to the fact that some officials at the Tema Port (Port Health and some others) took advantage of the Christmas

Holidays to allow the ship to come into berth and discharged 15,000 bags of weevil-infested rice into Shed 8 at the Tema Harbour.

Meanwhile the offloaded rice has been quarantined by the Food and Drugs Board, National Security and CEPS and kept under constant monitoring.

Furthermore, the Food and Drugs Board wishes to assure the general public that all necessary steps are being taken in liaison with the National Security, CEPS and other relevant state agencies to ensure that the said consignment is put back on the ship, MV Stephanis, and re-exported immediately.

**SIGNED**

**DR. STEPHEN K. OPUNI  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**