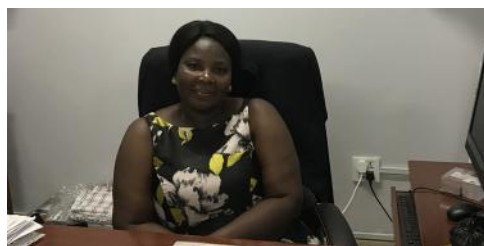


Christopher & Monica Afedzi

RUNNING A HOTEL

TEMA CITY



*Images above:
Mr. and Mrs. Afedzi.*

We meet Mr. Christopher Afedzi and Mrs. Monica Afedzi of the Crismon Hotel at the director's office. Their hotel won the Tourism Award of Ghana in 2016.

What is your business and how long have you lived here?

We are the owners and managing directors of the Crismon hotel in Tema Community 5. We started this business in 1998. First we had only two rooms, but we have consistently reinvested the profits. We built it up to the current luxurious hotel with a pool, lounge and dining area, and party and conference rooms.

Does the new port development affect your business?

Well, it will a little for sure, as we are here in Tema and close to the port. Some contractors from the new port development come here, which creates extra business for us. We are currently expanding our hotel, which we would have done anyway, also without the new port; but of course we hope this port will help the business to grow. The port can create an inflow of people. But if we want to keep them in Tema, this city needs to be attractive.

Could the port expansion help to make Tema more attractive?

As we said, Tema needs to adjust. Look outside! We still have a dirt road in front of our hotel. We keep everything clean, but guests are surprised when they first see it, they do not expect this for such a good hotel. With the port expansion, first of all the infrastructure needs to be upgraded to good standards. They have started with some roads now, and this is really the number one challenge and necessity. To manage entrance to the new port and prevent traffic building up, we need network planning for traffic flow. That and better quality roads will ensure a faster flow and everything will look nicer.

Another way to make Tema more attractive is development of tourist attractions. That would be fantastic. At this time, people don't have any reason to stay in Tema; they all go to Accra. We have the Greenwich Meridian that could be exploited for example; and look at the Sakumono lagoon. When we started the hotel here, we could walk from the entrance to the green shores of the lagoon and enjoy views of nature. Now there are

many illegally built houses in between and the lagoon itself is dirty and not accessible. But it was named a protected RAMSAR site, because some birds come every year, and it could be made into a national asset. If it would be dredged and opened up, all the way from the Green Mountains at Ashana to the sea, it would attract tourists. There could be little boats on it. And maybe a bridge crossing, which would ease the traffic even more.

What do you think this place will look like in 20 years time?

I think the lagoon will not be there any more; it will be choked. And the new port will attract more workers, and the illegal housing will spread further. So Tema needs to be well planned and some policies have to be implemented; for infrastructure upgrades first and other issues as well. But we are positive; we think the good roads will come.

What do you hope this place will look like in 20 years time?

We hope cruise ships will arrive in the new port. When the minister came to visit the new port of Tema, we've heard on tv that this is possible. The dredging is so deep that these big ships can land here. To make these tourists stay in Tema, we need the tourist attractions. And I hope we will have good roads, tarred roads. That's my first priority. That everything will not be so dirty and we won't need to clean the dust from our hotel every day.