

Solomon Tetteh

OPINION LEADER

TEMA NEW TOWN



*Image above:
Mr. Solomon Tetteh.*

*Image below: motor
repair shop in Tema
New Town.*



We meet Mr. Solomon Tetteh in Tema New Town at a motor repair shop close to the fishing harbour. He completed his education at Tema Tech(nical college) and is now an opinion leader of the community in Tema New Town.

Who are you?

I am Solomon Tetteh and I was born in this community. I used to work as machinist on a tanker and as a fisherman.

Can you introduce your community?

This community consists of the indigenous people of Tema. We had to move when the port was developed between 1958 and 1962, but we are not benefitting from the port. Barely any of us works there. Many of us are fishermen, but it becomes harder to catch fish, we now have to go further away and use four times as much fuel and spend a full night and day at sea to fish.

The port has degraded our community; there is no more sand here. Before, we used to be able to walk to the fishing harbour, but now the beach is gone and there are buildings in between. In the early morning a power barge wakes us up and vibrates through the community. If you lean against the wall of your house, it is moving. The power barge also emits gasses that might be bad for our health.

Does the new port development affect your community?

In a way it is good, bigger vessels will come with major commodities. But we will lose fishing grounds, which will negatively impact our catch, maybe by 10 to 15%. But this is not the biggest problem; we will lose more land

in our community as the sea takes it away. People will have to relocate. Pollution will also become worse, and it is already very bad.

How can the port development become better for your community?

It would be better if most of the workers for the new port could be taken from our community, so that the benefits also come here. Many of us cannot afford to go to school or stay in school. Maybe the port can also support us with education and provide health facilities.

What do you think the community will look like in 20 years time?

It will be bad. Look at the shore, the erosion and the rubbish. Every morning they come to collect the rubbish, but it is not enough. There is always more coming than they take away. This will keep affecting our health and we now only have a small health clinic for so many people. The roads are now very bad, full of potholes; I don't think this will change for the better.

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

I hope it will be better, that the port takes care of the whole community; it should not be a problem to help this small community. I hope for social interventions and improvements in our health care facilities. We also need a sea defence to prevent erosion of the coast. Not just rocks, the waves will get to it, but a large sand area to keep the waves far away.