

## Ghana to halt sales of second-hand underwear

Ghana plans to enforce a ban on the sale of second-hand underwear beginning in February, an official said on Monday (29 November 2010), citing the health risks involved in the hawking of the garments by street vendors.

"We are collaborating with the Ghana Standard Board to halt the importation of second-hand underwear into the country as a measure to promote good health and reduce government's expenditure on health," said Appiah Donyinah, director of import and export at the trade ministry.

The enforcement of the ban on imports and sales in the West African nation would extend to other used goods as well, including mattresses, handkerchiefs, socks and pants, he said.

"We banned the importation of these items into the country sometime in 1994, but the implementation was not effective," said Donyinah. "Now we are going to make sure that it is fully implemented."

Youths who sell wares on the streets of the capital Accra also deal in second-hand underwear that is brought in from outside the country and is cheaper than the new versions.

Second-hand goods are often brought in to Ghana and other African nations from wealthier countries.

"The government will throw us out of business should this ban come into effect. This is my only source of livelihood," Seth Opare, a dealer at Accra's Makorla Market, said.

Another dealer in second-hand pants said the ban was unfair.

"People patronise my goods because they are not expensive as compared to the new ones in the market," said Kwesi Anim. "The government must consider the plight of the poor and change their decision."

*Source: Sapa-AFP*