WASHKING

WASHKING AT 10: A DECADE OF DIGNIFIED SANITATION

Founder & CEO Anniversary Address | Prepared Remarks for Media

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Distinguished guests, representatives of government and our local assemblies, partners, teachers, colleagues, friends of Washking—and especially the students here today: good morning.

Ten years is a long time. But before I talk about what Washking has achieved, let me tell you where we began.

Some people see where I am today and assume the road must have been easy. They say, “You are lucky. Perhaps you came from a well-to-do home.” They do not see the uncertainty, the discipline, or the sacrifices behind the story.

Washking did not start with a fleet of vehicles, a boardroom, or large funding. It started with one opportunity: to build one toilet. We did the work. We reinvested what we earned. We used that first opportunity to prepare for the next.

Then came other jobs: repairing a faulty toilet, desludging, and taking on work connected with the GAMA sanitation programme. People saw what we could do. Some recommended us; others introduced us to subcontracting opportunities. Every assignment was a test. Every test helped us build our ability to handle more.

People often say you need nothing to become an entrepreneur. I understand the message: do not wait for perfect conditions. But starting is not the same as growing.

You need discipline. You need skills, integrity, and the willingness to pay the price. Yet even capable people sometimes need somebody to believe in them, recommend them, and open a door.

That is why I believe this: potential needs opportunity. And opportunity needs an enabling environment—tools, guidance, and trust. When someone gives you a chance, your responsibility is to give your best. And when you are in a position to open a door for someone else, do not keep it closed.

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Our journey has not been without difficulty. We faced financial pressure, setbacks, slow processes, and moments when something that should have taken days took far too long. We learned hard lessons about trust and managing people.

But we also learned that a mission cannot depend on one determined person. To last, it needs systems, accountability, people of character, and institutions that work.

From 18 toilets in our first year, Washking has gone on to deliver more than 1,000 sanitation installations and reach more than 8,000 people. Some of our facilities serve individual households; others serve many users. Behind every figure is somebody seeking a safer, more convenient, more dignified life.

Our earlier impact reporting also estimated nearly 1.4 million hours saved—time people would otherwise have spent walking to public toilets. That is time families can put back into school, work, and life.

Our earlier records show more than 329,000 Ghana cedis earned by artisans and more than 737,000 Ghana cedis in sales for local suppliers—over one million cedis in combined local economic activity. We also reported training 45 people in artisan and sales skills.

These are historical figures, not our full ten-year totals. They remind us that a toilet project can also mean work for a mason, income for a supplier, and skills for a young person.

Beyond what customers have paid for our services, we estimate that Washking has mobilised more than one million US dollars in external funding and support over the decade, separate from sales revenue.

We are grateful for supporters, including Grand Challenges Canada, and for recognition through the SEED Award and the Empowering People Award. We also learned through programmes such as the Toilet Board Coalition Accelerator and UNICEF StartUp Lab.

But the most important thing is not the money or the awards. It is what people's trust has enabled us to build—and our responsibility to make that trust count.

And here is perhaps our greatest lesson: building a toilet is only part of the challenge. Many families want safe sanitation, but cannot afford to pay for it all at once. A good product that people cannot access is not enough. A solution must work not only technically, but also financially for the family that needs it.

That is why we have kept working on better solutions, flexible payment arrangements, after-sales services, and ways to make sanitation accessible to lower-income households. For our next decade, financial access will remain central—not an afterthought.

We have also been building the ability to deliver: a management and technical team, stronger governance through our Board and advisers, operating systems, and practical logistics for moving people and materials. These are not trophies. They are tools for serving customers and delivering on promises.

We are still learning. But we are building an institution that can create opportunities well beyond its founder.

Sanitation needs far more than builders. It needs engineers, technicians, designers, finance specialists, software developers, teachers, and community leaders. To every student here today: your talent has a place in building a cleaner Ghana.

The future we are working toward is bigger than Washking: a Ghana where children have safe toilets at school; where women and girls have privacy and dignity; where families do not have to live beside human waste; where preventable illnesses like cholera are no longer a recurring threat.

A cleaner, healthier, more prosperous Ghana will take all of us: young people with ideas, public institutions that enable progress, businesses willing to innovate, and partners ready to contribute capital, expertise, and access.

Ten years ago, someone gave us an opportunity. We tried to honour it with our best work.

Now we want to open more doors: for artisans, for young entrepreneurs, for our partners, and for families who deserve dignified sanitation but cannot yet afford it. Somewhere in this room may be a student with an answer to a problem we have not yet solved. That person deserves the chance to try.

To the students: learn, prepare, act with integrity, and do not underestimate what you can contribute. To government, businesses, funders, and institutions: help us turn talent into opportunity and solutions into access.

The door somebody opened for us must not close behind us. Our first decade proved what one opportunity can begin. Our next decade is about what we can build together.

Thank you for believing in the dignity of every Ghanaian—and thank you for being part of Washking's journey.