

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE RIGHT HON. JUSTICE D.F. ANNAN,**  
**SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA,**  
**AT THE**  
**OPENING OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF AFRICAN**  
**MINISTERS OF EDUCATION OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN EDUCATION (DAE) IN ACCRA**  
**ON 8TH FEBRUARY, 1996**

MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
ACCRA

MR. CHAIRMAN,  
HON. MINSTERS OF EDUCATION CONSTITUTING THE  
BUREAU OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION OF DAE,  
HON. MINISTERS OF STATE,  
HON. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT  
YOUR EXCELLENCIES MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF DAE,  
DISTINGUISHED INVITED GUESTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I consider it indeed a great honour for me, firstly, to welcome the Honourable Minsters of Education from our sister African countries to the premises of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, and to have the privilege of performing the official opening of this two-day meeting of the Bureau of African Ministers of Education of the Association for the Development of African Education. The quest for ways and means of developing the human resources of our African continent in order to extricate ourselves from the stranglehold of under-development and poverty has placed education as a high priority item on the developmental agenda of all African countries. The top priority being accorded to Education by all African countries is buttressed, not only by the perception that education is one of most potent agencies for developing the vast human resources of the continent, but also, and perhaps even more importantly by the fact that a participatory literate citizenry is the foundation for the democratic process, economic growth and the social well-being of a nation's population.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies and distinguished delegates, the search for ways and means of developing an appropriate system of education in our various countries which will enable all our people to receive good quality and relevant education in consonance with our individual national aspirations has meant that we must have the capacity to develop educational policies, strategies and plans which can be implemented to achieve the desired results. There is no doubt that as individual countries, we have sought to develop our educational policies, strategies and implementation plans within the context of our national peculiarities and priorities. However, it is also true that the problems confronting the development of education in various Sub-Saharan African countries have many commonalities such as high population growth in the face of dwindling national resource allocation to education, low enrolment ratios, low female participation in education, poor infrastructural facilities, inadequacy of teaching and learning materials, inadequacy of trained teachers, poor school management and supervision, to mention a few. Meetings of African Ministers of Education from time to time, to share experiences in the undaunting task of developing appropriate policies, strategies and implementable plans for educational development will enable us to learn from the good practices as well as from the failures of one another in order to enrich our individual repertoire of policy options and policy implementation strategies.

It is in this regard, Mr. Chairman, that the work of the Association for the Development of African Education (DAE), which brings African Ministers of Education and the international donor community together to deliberate on issues of education policy formulation, implementation and monitoring processes as well as the funding of African education becomes very crucial. Ministers of Education, as the initiators of educational policies for their countries are in the forefront of the education revolution which the world is witnessing. The

scientific and technological advances in the modern world have led to exponential increase in knowledge which makes it imperative that educational renewal becomes an on-going experience in every country. Through the work of the Association for the Development of African Education and its Working Groups, therefore, African Ministers of Education and the top professionals of their ministries and executing agencies are building up their capacity for the arduous task of renewing and developing their national educational systems.

Mr. Chairman, it is therefore a great privilege for us in Ghana to be hosting this two-day meeting of the Bureau of African Ministers of Education, the coordination body of the Caucus of African ministers of the Association for the Development of African Education. We in Ghana are at this point of time in the process of reformulating our policies on basic education as part of the reviewing process of the educational reforms which we started implementing in 1987. This is also in response to the constitutional requirement under our 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution which mandates that "The Government shall within two years after Parliament first meets after coming into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of free, compulsory and universal basic education." Our Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the donor agencies has prepared a document for the provision of Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education which has been approved by Parliament. From this, an implementation plan has been developed and is being considered by the donors for support.

In the policy document which we have prepared and its accompanying implementation plan, measures have been taken and strategies adopted which will enable us not only to expand access to and participation in a nine-year basic education course with the objective of achieving universal basic education by the year 2005, but also to improve upon the management, supervision and teaching

and learning in schools for the achievement of high quality educational delivery. Furthermore, we have explored the possibilities of employing other modes of educational delivery such as non-formal education and distance education in order to make education accessible to the excluded and the unreached in our society. To this end, we are establishing distance education centres as well as science resource centres, one in each of the 110 administrative districts of the country to enable wider sections of our youths to have access to scientific education.

The work of the Association for the Development of African Education by focusing on issues such as educational policy formulation and implementation processes, has been of immense benefit to us in reformulating our policies. Through its Working Groups on Education Sector Analysis, the Teaching Profession, Textbooks and Library, Female Participation, Vocational Education and Training, and Higher Education, we have been guided in dealing with specific aspects of our educational development to avoid the pitfalls of the past.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates, I am sure that other sister African countries are also going through similar experiences. The work of this two-day meeting of the Bureau will be very crucial to the work of the D.A.E. As the coordination body of the Caucus of African Ministers, the Bureau has the crucial role of galvanising the concerns of African Ministers and articulating them in the meetings of the Steering Committee of the DAE.

As you are aware, Mr. Chairman, the *raison d'etre* of the DAE is to assist in the development of education in Africa. African Ministers of Education should therefore assume the ownership of the DAE and lead in setting the agenda for its work. In this regard, I am happy to note that you are at this meeting going to, among other things, discuss and take decisions relating to follow up actions

on the DAE Biennial meeting held in Tours, France in October, 1995, deliberate on the Statutes and By-Laws of the organisation which is scheduled for approval at the next DAE Steering Committee meeting, examine the themes of the Working Groups in order to link them to the educational priorities of Africa, and identify those programmatic activities that have high priority for the African education community for inclusion in the DAE Programme for 1996. These are issues whose proper determination at this meeting will enable African Ministers of Education, as the leaders of the African education community, to take a leading role in setting the agenda for the development of education in this dear continent of ours. It is only by so doing that whatever funding will be contributed by the donor community will have the chance of making the desired impact on the development of education in Africa.

We need also to remember, Mr. Chairman, that any success we are likely to achieve in the development of education in Sub-Saharan Africa will depend on the vision and the mission we create for the development of education in our individual countries. This is a task which demands creativity, hard thinking and making of hard choices through trade-offs. I have no doubt that through the work of the Bureau of African Ministers of Education and the Caucus of African Ministers of Education of the DAE, we will be able to develop education in Sub-Saharan Africa to act as a catalyst in alleviating poverty in our society and improving the standard of living of the people of this continent.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware that the business agenda for your meeting is a very tight one. Nevertheless, I am sure you will find time, albeit your busy schedule, to visit one or two places of interest in Ghana, so that you will go back to your respective countries with some vivid memories of what Ghana looks like. We have very many places of interest in the country, and I am sure wherever you go, you will be accorded the usual Ghanaian hospitality. In the hands of our

Minister for Education, Honourable Harry Sawyerr, I have no doubt that you will experience what is best in Ghana.

Once again, Mr. Chairman and your Excellencies, I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to speak to you at the opening of your two-day meeting and it is with a great sense of honour that I declare this meeting of the Bureau of African Ministers of Education of the Association for the Development of African Education duly opened.

**Thank you**

SECRETARY OF THE ASSOCIATION  
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