

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CONVENOR - TES

National Commitment Statement – Ghana (Based on outcomes of national consultations, SDG 4 and existing related documents) September 2022 Transforming Education Summit in New York City

Introduction

Over the years, Ghana has shown a lot of commitment to United Nations' Conventions and initiatives. Some of these conventions include The UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities signed in March 2007, and the rights of the child (including the right to education) which Ghana signed in February 1990. In education, Ghana has continued to show commitment to providing equitable, inclusive and quality lifelong education for all its citizens to foster the achievement of SDG 4 and Agenda 2030. A lot of Government initiatives and interventions, including the free senior high school policy, school feeding programme and the education reforms attest to this commitment. However, whereas, these interventions are aimed at improving and ensuring equitable education for the citizenry, they have also come with some attendant questions, including how we provide quality education for all learners.

The teacher Education reforms, including the elevation of teacher training colleges to tertiary institutions (with their curricula reviews) and teacher professionalisation and licensing regime have changed the face of the teaching profession in Ghana. The basic and senior high schools curricula reforms that transformed our curriculum from objective-based curricula to standards-based curricula sought to address the issue of quality and relevance of our school system. However, the quality question in terms of 'What happen to students' after graduation has seen very little results. The new curriculum seeks to incorporate some life skills, including the 21st century skills and competences into the school system to engender entrepreneurial skills and values into the system.

COVID 19 Learning Recovery

The emergence of COVID 19 dealt a terrible blow to education all over the world, including Ghana. A world Bank report reveals that the about 10 months school closures from March 2020 affected approximately nine million students in kindergarten, primary, Junior and senior high schools. Its consequent impact on learning loss cannot be overemphasized. Ghana responded to the learning loss challenge by adopting technology to provide education to its citizens. The use of TV, radio, virtual platforms and social media for education became commonplace. To forestall future shocks, the Government also empowered the Centre for National Distance and Open Schooling (CENDLOS) to take initiative in exploring alternatives to the traditional school system, including the use of iboxes and icampuses. Thus, the use of technology in education has been given extra attention. Indeed, the world today cannot do without technology and Ghana has made some strides in that direction.

Government also acknowledges the need for proper planning and leadership in every endeavour. It is in this light that the Government supported the application of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) of the University of Cape Coast to become a UNESCO category 2 centre of excellence, to support with training, research and technical assistance in educational planning and leadership. We believe that a well-planned education system can withstand the shock of emergencies and pandemics.

Financing education as a common good

All the interventions and initiatives require funding to make them happen. The Government recognizes this and commits a chunk of its budget to education. At the Global Education Summit held in July 2021 in the United Kingdom (UK), the President of the the Republic of Ghana pledged to spend at least 23% of the national budget towards the development of education in the country over the next medium-term from 2021 to 2025 to ensure all Ghanaian children and youth needs are addressed for socio-economic growth and productivity. However, this is still not enough to meet the growing demand for education at all levels. Government is therefore exploring alternative means of funding education, without disadvantaging anyone. Government sees opportunity to increase education financing through exploration of public-private partnerships particularly in addressing the gaps in digital learning, STEM and TVET.

Commitment to Track 2

With the options available to Governments to make commitments to, we asked ourselves the question, education for what? During our national consultations led by the National Convenor Dr. Michael Boakye-Yiadom, it was obvious that Ghanaians wanted an education that would equip them to be useful citizen for life. This implied that the education system should equip learners with critical thinking, employable and entrepreneurial skills, as well as soft skills.

Considering all the commitment options available, track 2 seems to be an outcome, whereas the other tracks reflect inputs towards the outcome. Therefore, to ensure commitment, Ghana is focused on the outcome and galvanizes all effort to providing inputs towards the envisioned outcome – i.e., providing relevant skills for 21st century Ghana and beyond.

Next steps

Following this Summit, the Government will task the Ministry of Education and related ministries and agencies to provide leadership for crafting shared solutions for the transformation of education in Ghana. Specifically, Government will strengthen systems and empower these agencies, in partnership with stakeholders, such as the private sector, development partners and the TES National Convenor to:

- review existing timelines for SDG 4 and Agenda 2030 into more achievable short-term, medium-term and long-term targets with more efficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- provide additional resources for infrastructure, teacher development and T/L materials to further promote TVET in basic, secondary and tertiary institutions
- expedite action to fully implement Government's pledge to spend at least 23% of the national budget towards the development of education in the country over the next medium-term from 2021 to 2025
- ensure inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy school environment
- enhance quality teaching and learning and professionalism of teachers and the wider education workforce
- promote intentional equitable digital transformation in education, and
- identify more innovative sources and models of financing education.
- Promote accountability by key education sector actors

In conclusion, the execution of these proposals will ensure the achievement of national aspiration of developing the Ghanaian child into a school graduate and citizen with the requisite skills for life, work and sustainable development. Long live Ghana! Long live the United Nations!



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