



The Teacher

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GNAT

PURCHASES THE SWEDEN GHANA MEDICAL CENTRE



GNAT - WE LIVE TO TEACH!

**GNAT PURCHASES THE SWEDEN GHANA MEDICAL CENTRE
FROM GLOBAL MEDICAL INVESTMENTS AB (GMI),
ITS SWEDISH OWNERS:
OCTOBER, 2020**

The Swedish Owners of the Sweden Ghana Medical Centre (SGMC) Global Medical Investments AB (GMI) have officially announced that the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) has successfully concluded its purchase of the SGMC from them. “We are pleased to announce this fruitful step in SGMC's longstanding collaboration of hope with GNAT, a relationship that dates to 2013. For GMI, this transaction concludes its successful contribution in setting up Ghana's first comprehensive private cancer treatment centre, and it heralds a better future for cancer care in West Africa”, reiterated Messrs Global Medical Investments AB (GMI), in a statement, on the purchase.

From the time the cancer centre was envisaged by a group of Swedish and Ghanaian investors in 2007, to the official launch of the SGMC in 2012, those involved had one purpose: to reduce the burden of cancer in West Africa. This purpose was achieved through GMI bringing together Swedfund, the Swedish development finance institution and Elekta AB (Publ), a global leader in precision radiation medicine, to invest in a global-standard cancer treatment centre

located in East Legon Hills, Accra Ghana, in 2009. According to Hakan Bergstrom, Board Chairman of the SGMC, “GMI is pleased that with its investment and technical support, SGMC has emerged as one of the most advanced cancer centres in West Africa. With modern equipment and a highly qualified staff who have treated more than 6000 cancer patients, SGMC has achieved the fastest access to treatment by global standards”.

GNAT has been a significant partner in the SGMC's journey. Seven years ago, the leadership of GNAT made a strategic investment in the future health of Ghanaian teachers and their beneficiaries. With the realization that lifestyle diseases are now the leading cause of deaths in Africa, GNAT set up a unique fund for its members, guaranteeing that they could receive full access to cancer treatment without delay. GNAT further engaged in a nationwide awareness programme for teachers, hosting screening and educational events across various regions. Philippa Larsen, the President of GNAT, noted: “Already, GNAT's collaboration of hope with the SGMC has meant that we have many teachers who have been

given back their health and their lives to continue being educators”.

GNAT has now taken a bold step in continuing its mission, to be a vibrant, proactive, result-oriented teacher union, championing the cause of teachers and quality education for a brighter future by this acquisition of the SGMC. According to Mr. Thomas Musah, the General Secretary of GNAT, “the vision for a better future can best be achieved, if we have teachers who are healthy and well, and who are informed about the risks of lifestyle diseases”. He further states, “Good education and good health are the foundations for a brighter future”.

By acquiring the SGMC, the leadership of GNAT has placed the health of its members at the heart of its investment. Looking ahead, GNAT will use its acquisition to further benefit its members, while growing awareness in Ghana about the need for a healthier future. GMI believes that GNAT is well-placed to grow its extensive investment in cancer care for West Africans and recognizes the significance of the company now being a fully-owned Ghanaian entity.

Facts about Cancer

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- Cancer is the second leading cause of deaths in African countries, after heart disease
- Biological or internal factors, environmental exposure, occupational risk factors and lifestyle related factors are some causes of cancer
- About 15% of cancers are caused by viruses which can be prevented – that is why cancer awareness and screening matters.
- Some cancers can be inherited – knowing family health history is important
- Cancer can be prevented, treated and cured
- Once cancer happens, it changes the way you live the rest of your life
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, high rates of breast, prostate and cervical cancer are prevalent in most countries
- For Ghana and GNAT to take the lead against cancer, people need to be aware of the disease and early detection must be ensured.

Treating cancer is a costly process:

- Highly specialized machines using radioactive materials, are needed.
- Cancer drugs are very expensive
- Cancer treatment

options are unique to each patient, for best results

- Specially trained oncology staff must be on hand, to deliver cytotoxic and the radioactive treatments required.
- Disposing of cancer treatment waste is costly-done by special incineration

About The SGMC

- The Sweden Ghana Cancer Centre has been treating patients successfully, since 2011
- It has treated over 6000 patients from around West Africa and beyond, since its inception
- The SGMC has fastest turn-around time for cancer treatment plans, across all West Africa
- Private cancer drugs are carefully procured only from top licensed suppliers – no fakes
- The SGMC's mission is to take away the burden of cancer for patients and families
- The SGMC treats all types of solid cancer tumors
- Offers second opinions in cancer diagnostics
- Manages cancer patients after treatment care
- It has long term relationships – manages patients living with cancer for five years, through

remission

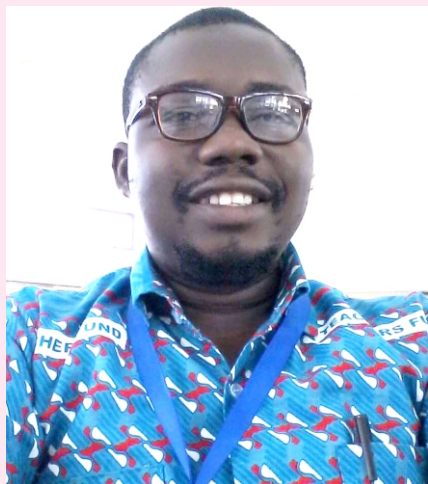
- Does collaborative research into Cancer Care and what works best for African cancer patients
- Offers all patients highly confidential (private) cancer care services and additional discreet arrangements for high profile cases (e.g. after hour treatments)

GNAT member benefits

- Member teachers and their beneficiaries have immediate access to cancer treatment – no waiting to see oncologists, clinical planning team and case management.
- Get treatment quickly, meaning better chance to fight and cure cancer
- For a small fee each month, teachers have a special cancer savings fund which covers all treatment costs thus no worries over planning, logistics, appointments, treatment schedules and medicines
- Sweden Ghana Medical Centre offers premium care services and accommodation for all GNAT patients
- Treats teachers and their beneficiaries from across all of Ghana's regions.

MAKING THE TEACHERS FUND WORK FOR YOUNG TEACHERS

By Napoleon-Bonaparte Afenyo



The GNAT Teachers Fund will be 22 years this year. The Fund started with a humble monthly contribution of One Thousand cedis (now Ten Pesewas), and took off amidst protests and bickerings from the rank and file of GNAT at the time. Despite the criticisms, strong opposition, threats of legal action and sometimes physical assaults, the Founding Fathers of the GNAT Teachers Fund stuck to their guns and implemented this policy, much to the chagrin of the people who were vehemently opposing a scheme which was to help teachers save money out of their monthly incomes, for the future.

The opposition to the Fund was so strong that it became one of the reasons why some graduate teachers decided to secede from GNAT and form their own labour union, upon the promulgation of the new Labour Act 766, coupled with the 1992 constitution, which

guaranteed the freedom of association. There has always been a thread of conflict that runs between the leadership of GNAT and some grassroots members of the Association, sometimes stemming from the lack of clear communication of policies and most times, deliberate mischief from people who had their own ulterior ends to meet. This conflict hinged on the false assumption that the leadership of GNAT was only interested in deducting dues from the members, at every least opportunity.

Today, the success of the Teachers Fund concept has become a vindication and a defeat of the long held notion that the Fund contributions were geared towards enriching the pockets of the Union Executives. The originator of the Fund and then General Secretary, Mr. Paul Osei Mensah has long retired and never benefited from the high returns that the Fund is yielding currently.

The irony is that, those who criticize the Fund a lot are mostly young teachers, who are joining it in its prime, when it has become profitable and attractive. Those who sacrificed for the sustenance of the Fund hardly got any significant returns on their own contributions before proceeding on retirement, since during their time, the Fund was in its formative stage and yet to get a sound footing. Young

teachers of GNAT should be grateful to these Founding Fathers for the foresight they had and the fortitude they displayed in not giving up, even when many of them were openly abused as criminals by some uninformed members.

Perhaps, the greatest pride leadership and members can take from the Fund is the fact that, contrary to the criticisms and attacks by the detractors of GNAT, as the result of the implementation of pro-teacher policies, the Fund has become a blueprint for other mushrooming unions, both within the Ghana Education Service and the Public Service in general.

The fact that competing unions in the GES have found it fit to set up similar Funds is indicative of the wisdom and foresight which gave birth to the GNAT Teachers Fund. It is interesting to note that, even infant unions have seen the wisdom in setting up such Funds, as an avenue of helping teachers to save.

The Fund is primarily a Pension Supplement and one of its biggest challenges has been the fact that some teachers feel they don't earn enough, as such, it is discomfoting for them to save out of the so-called meagre salaries they earn. Economists usually say that the needs and wants of man are endless and so long as one

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is alive, the appetite to spend money will always be high. Unfortunately, the expectations of young people have always been, to meet their needs and save whatever money they might be left with.

This mode of saving will leave people not saving any of their incomes at all, because practically, there will never be any amount left, since our needs far outweigh our incomes. The wise mode is to see savings as the first expense which needs to be dispatched with, before any other need is met. In this way, one is able to cut his coat according to the cloth available.

The Teachers Fund is one avenue which helps teachers to save money upfront, before his income hits his bank account. In fact, an anecdotal study of the saving habit of teachers reveals that aside contributions to the Teachers Fund, a large majority of teachers have no other life savings, anywhere.

CREDIT FACILITIES

Not only does the Fund invest in very good, stable and profitable business portfolios, it also extends credit facilities to teachers through the Loan Scheme and the Hire Purchase offered by its subsidiary, the Credit Mall.

With prudent management by the current Executive and Board of the Fund, interest charged on loans has seen a gradual decline from the original 23 per cent to the current 16 per cent, per annum. The thorny issue is that, Management would have

to navigate the slippery slope of keeping interest rates affordable and at the same time, ensuring that the fortunes of contributors don't dwindle as a result. It is refreshing to note that the returns on investment have also seen exponential increases in recent years, due to the healthy returns being churned out by the businesses that the Fund invests in.

BE WARY OF EMERGING FINANCIAL BODIES

In contemporary times, a lot of financial bodies are emerging and resorting to tricks to woo unsuspecting GNAT members, especially the young teachers with offers. One of their tools of deception is enticing them with ridiculously low interest rates on loans. Some promise loans to members at interest rates, as low as 8 per cent! This looks very juicy on the face of it, but it is a strategy that will crumble in the not-too-distant future. Even assuming that inflation is ten per cent, it means that should one contribute one hundred cedis into the Fund from which these loans will be sourced, the value of one hundred cedis will be completely eroded within ten months, at an inflation rate of 10 per cent a month.

This means that, not only will any person keeping his money in such a Fund not get any returns on his contributions, but will even lose the principal amount that he is putting in. This is a **CLASSICAL PONZI BUSINESS** module,

in which conditions are set to woo investors in the short term and sustained characteristically by robbing Peter to pay Paul, until the business grinds to a halt, in the medium term.

Experts in the financial market will always tell you that, any person or institution which promises you a package which is ridiculously profitable over and above the average prevailing rate, is most certainly a scam. A few people will enjoy the low interest loans in the short term, but the scheme will inevitably become extinct, within a short time.

This is the type of module that the US Company, Safeway Tilapia, DKM, God is Love and the others operated and their quick demise is evident for all to see. The only solution will be that, they would have to, in the medium term, increase the interest rates, if they are to survive. Those who put their faith in such mushrooming schemes are putting their future retirement benefits at risk. As a pension supplement, any amount one contributes into a Fund must of necessity grow at a rate which is above the rate of inflation. This is the only way by which one can be assured of a secured retirement income, many years later. Young teachers must not allow themselves to be hoodwinked into jeopardizing their future, by truncating their investment with the Teachers Fund, in order to begin from the scratch with institutions with uncertain futures.

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We cannot reinvent the wheel. Our future security lies in joining a Fund which has demonstrated viability and stability over the past 22 years. The Teachers Fund, like most human institutions, is not sacrosanct. The continuous success rests in young teachers bringing on board innovative ideas, to help make the Fund even better. The Youth Desk of GNAT has in recent times, established youth wings across all the Locals, Districts and Regions of GNAT. These wings are seen as the future of the Association and it is about time young teachers stopped sitting on the fence, but took active part in the running of the Association, at all levels.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The best change one can engender is the one which makes oneself the anchor of the change. We expect more young people to come on board and contest positions, to enable them influence union policy at all levels. This is a sure way of ensuring that GNAT survives in contemporary times and leaves lasting legacies for generations yet unborn.

The writer is the immediate past District GNAT Secretary for Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abirem (KEEA) in the Central Region.

DON'T HINDER DIPLOMA TEACHERS ON TOP UP PROGRAMME:

GNAT Appeals to District Directors By Severious Kale-Dery

The Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) has appealed to management of the Ghana Education Service (GES) to prevail on its District Directors of Education to desist from putting impediments in the way of Diploma holding teachers, from enrolling for the three semester top-up programme.

It said some District Directors were putting clauses in the way of some Diploma holding teachers who had not served four years in the service, from taking advantage of the top-up programme.

The General Secretary of GNAT, Mr. Thomas Musah, who raised the red flag last Saturday in an interview with the *Daily Graphic*, described the posture of those District Directors as “contrary to that of the Minister of Education, Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, and also the arrangement by the parties involved”.

“The Directors should not run ahead of us and be telling us that it should be four years. We

are saying that it is unacceptable, and they should not go against the pronouncement and the directives of the Minister.

“This is an intervention that the Minister of Education, the University of Cape Coast and the GNAT have reached and if any Director has any problem, then the three parties will have to look at it and not a District Director calling for something that does not exist”, Mr. Musah explained.

Government's Position

The Government, through the Ministry of Education, has collaborated with the University of Cape Coast to run a three-semester programme for all Diploma holding teachers, to enable them to upgrade themselves to degree holders (Bachelors in Education).

This move is to ensure that the minimum qualification required to teach in schools in the country is a degree (B.Ed), starting from the year 2022.

The programmes are Post-Diploma in Early Childhood Education (B.Ed), Post-Diploma in Primary Education (B.Ed) and Post-Diploma in Junior High School (JHS) Education.

It begins this 2020/2021 academic year.

Position Problematic

Mr. Musah explained that the position of those District Directors was problematic, since the days where teachers were made to serve for four years before upgrading were over, because the current discussion was a special intervention to address a problem.

“Hitherto, when you come out of College, you needed to do four years before you go and upgrade but now, that regime is no more there, because there is a reform that is saying that the entry point is first degree and from 2022, the first cohort with the first degree will be joining us,” he explained.

He recalled that when the diploma was introduced in the Colleges of Education and was made the entry point for the service, all those who were using the Cert A, were all allowed without any hindrance to go back to their nearest Colleges of Education to upgrade themselves, “and that has been the convention.”

Holistic Intervention

He recalled that the GNAT started the agitation for intervention of the Diploma holding teachers to attain a degree when the government started the education reforms in 2018, with the decision to convert the Colleges of Education into satellite campuses of some public universities.

Mr. Musah said the concern of the GNAT was that, the management of education could not ask one group of people “in the same scheme of framework to go and do a first degree and you are telling those with the Diploma to hold on for four years.”

Plight of Majority

“If you have opened one door for one group of persons to go and get first degree by 2022 and you close the door to the thousands of them that they should wait for four years, then, it would have been better not to start it at all,” the GNAT General Secretary explained.

Mr. Musah stated that such a move would worsen the plight of the majority, who were already in the system, “and that is why in the wisdom of the collaborators that; give these people that open door as their juniors are doing the first degree, let us regularize this particular top-up programmes”.

The GNAT General Secretary said it was therefore, good news when the Sector Minister at the World Teacher Day, announced the intervention programme for the Diploma holding teachers.

While thanking the Sector Minister for bringing into fruition the intervention, Mr. Musah urged all diploma holding teachers to take advantage of the intervention to get their first degree within a year.

Courtesy: *Daily Graphic; November 17, 2020*

GNAT/CTF NKABOM PROJECT OVERSEAS
---Giving Teachers The Confidence To Deliver
By Gifty Apanbil



The Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) have for the past sixty (60) years collaborated to organise Professional In-service Training Programmes for GNAT members in July, every year.

The main objective of this programme is to sharpen the professional skills of teachers, through the sharing of pedagogical skills between our Canadian and Ghanaian tutors, in selected courses.

The choice of the course and topics is based on feedbacks from:

1. WAEC Chief Examiners' reports
2. The teachers in the field
3. Monitoring and evaluation reports from the GES Directorates
4. Subject Teachers Associations
5. Pupils and Students

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5. Pupils and Students
6. Reports from Civil Society and International Organizations on education.
7. Syllabus

OBJECTIVES OF THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING

1. It is to sharpen the professional skills of the teachers in their subject areas.
2. To fill in knowledge gaps, by sharing experiences in the teaching of some dreaded topics in some of the subjects.
3. To share new pedagogies in the profession with our Canadian partners and among the participants themselves.
4. To provide a refresher course for teachers who left school, many years ago.
5. To create a forum for explaining educational policies to school administrators and teachers.
6. To enhance the professional development of the participants and provide skills for better understanding of teaching, learning and assessment processes.
7. Introduce teachers to new trends in the profession.

Based on these, the following courses are offered:

1. Basic School Administration
2. Primary Mathematics and Science
3. Special Female Maths/ Science
4. JHS English
5. JHS Maths
6. JHS Science
7. JHS French
8. JHS Social Studies

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9. JHS Basic Design and Technology
10. SHS English
11. SHS Maths
12. SHS Integrated Science

The following courses were introduced during the last 10 years:

1. Nkabom whole school readiness for literacy and numeracy
2. Nkabom beginning teachers' mentorship
3. Gender issues and gender friendly schools.

The last three programmes were designed to help upgrade the rural underserved communities and schools, by ensuring that the communities were empowered to play lead roles in the development of their schools and the community at large.

It was also to ensure that there is good school/community relationship that will enhance the total development of the child and that communities see the schools as their own. By this programme, communities have been able to write their own Community and School Profiles which outline their opportunities, strengths, weaknesses, and threats. GNAT/CTF have been able to link these communities to developmental partners through partners' forums.

TRANSFORMATION OF SCHOOLS

Through Nkabom, some deprived schools have had their schools transformed, the capacities of the teachers developed, school enrolments increased and the infrastructure of the communities improved e.g. Ashalaja in Ga, Bonkorvikorpe in Ho, etc.

In every region, the Nkabom is run in six (6) schools; amounting to a total of sixty (60) schools, in all.

The July Nkabom programme is the Professional Development aspect, which is aimed at equipping the teachers, most of who are very young, with skills to be resourceful and innovative in their pedagogy, so as to give of their best to their pupils.

The other objective is to help the schools and communities to:

1. Develop community profile booklets which give very clear pictures about the school and community, in the following areas:
 - a. History
 - b. Leadership – Government
 - c. Resources
 - d. Strengths
 - weakness
 - opportunities
 - threats
 - e. Needs of the school
 - Needs of the community
 - f. What the school can do for itself
 - What the community can do
 - g. What help is needed and where to get it
 - h. Who are their collaborators and allies

GNAT and CTF supervise and print these booklets free of charge for the communities and as many as they need. Partners fora are organised for the communities to look for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil societies interested in their projects, to assist.

GNAT and CTF from time to time, help these communities to review their profile books and add more achievements and new issues onto them.

Initially, the Canadians were part of all the courses but now, they only concentrate on the Nkabom, because in their view, GNAT has the capacity to handle the rest of the courses.

In 2018, the following regions benefited from the programme:

- Western
- Central
- Greater Accra

In each region, four hundred and thirty (430) teachers benefited from the programme. GNAT and CTF provided the following for the participants:

1. Accommodation
2. Feeding
3. Tuition

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4. Certificates
5. Course Materials
6. First Aid

It is worthy to note, that many Education Managers have gone through the GNAT/CTF Project Overseas programme.

In addition to this, GNAT runs the following professional development programmes for its members:

1. Special female Maths and Science for primary schools in deprived districts; after it, a whole science tool kit box is given to each participating school.
2. CCSTA – Consultative Council of Subject Teachers Association which GNAT sponsors, including the individual Subject Associations. It is a platform through which teachers share experiences.
3. GNATech – ICT programme for young teachers in the Regions – in 2019, Volta Region benefited from it; – one hundred teachers benefited. This was a one- week residential programme and was held in August.
4. JHS Maths, Science and Basic Design and Technology for deprived districts.
5. Early Childhood education in-service training

6. Research into Educational issues that will inform GNAT's inputs into Educational Policy formulation.

7. Resource Centre where teachers can produce TLMs free of charge.

8. E-Library and Library for research, with the needed reference books

9. Mentorship for beginning teachers

10. Gender sensitisation for school-friendly environments

11. Counselling Unit for teachers

12. Publication and distribution of supplementary readers with the support of the Pan African Teachers Association and the Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF).

13. Publication of Journal (The Teacher)

The GNAT/CTF Nkabom Project Overseas continues to empower our members to deliver in their various schools and offices, in order to remain relevant in the development of Mother Ghana.

The writer is the Deputy General Secretary, Education and Professional Development.

COMMENTS OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE AT THE GNAT FORUM ON WORLD TEACHERS DAY ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING CRISIS EDUCATION RESPONSES

DELIVERED BY MR. ANTHONY BOATENG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

I am excited to be here and wish to indicate to you the personal apologies of the Director-General who should have been here personally to address you. He sends his best wishes on this occasion and wishes you well in all your deliberations.

We at the GES are excited about such a forum, which seeks to share ideas on how to provide teacher leadership in developing crisis education responses, in a period like our current circumstances under COVID-19.

Indeed, the outbreak of COVID-19 in this country has affected virtually every aspect of our national life and the education sector, I say, has been one of the areas worst hit, leading to the closure of schools with, of course, the recent phased re-openings in context.

It is natural therefore, in any such human circumstance, to look up for leadership in dealing with the crisis and it is important that as teachers and educational workers, we adopt strategies for providing the needed leadership in overcoming the pandemic, which has pushed us into such crisis.

This is why the Management of Ghana Education Service finds the theme for this dialogue quite appropriate, but with the kind indulgence of the organizers and with the kind permission of this gathering, I wish to alter it slightly to read, 'Responsible Teacher Leadership in developing crisis education responses'.

I urge you to critically examine the relevance of the word 'responsible' in addition to the theme, since in such crisis situations, it is not every form of leadership which is critical, but the responsible one. Responsible Teacher leadership in developing crisis education responses should not focus more on sectional and group interest, but that interest which has the potential of completely overcoming the crisis and/or reducing the effect of the crisis on the nation as a whole.

Responsible Teacher leadership in such crisis situations should aim at ensuring that the future of the learners' education, is not jeopardized, but that steps and measures are taken to reduce the impact of the crisis on the children's future prospects.

Under such crisis situations, the required Responsible Teacher Leadership should realize that, times are not normal and therefore normal demands are not made on educational managers and authorities, as well as on parents/guardians and stakeholders.

Responsible Teacher leadership during such crisis situations should focus on innovative ideas that can ensure continuous education in safety and in security for all the participating groups, in the school environment.

Responsible Teacher Leadership in development crisis education should focus on creating an environment which is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling, so that all the players in the education service delivery can go about their respective roles, in security and safety.

It is important for the Teacher leadership at this time of crisis to appreciate the fact that, we are not in normal times. Thus, under such 'new normal' circumstances, it is important to realise that 'normal approaches might not be appropriate, though they might be preferable.

We as Management of GES look forward to your recommendations and proposals arising out of this forum which will support Government efforts at overcoming and/or reducing the impact of COVID-19 and therefore ensuring that our school system can operate, with little or no distractions.

Management of GES pledges its full support and cooperation in this enterprise and we have no doubt that we can count on your continued support and cooperation, in our collective march to providing the needed responsible leadership in developing responses to the crisis we currently face in our education service delivery effort.

Thank you.

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROF GEORGE K.T. ODURO, DEAN
(SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH (SEDO),
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, AT THE 2020 NATIONAL STATUTORY MEETING
OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF GNAT HELD AT THE
EVANS - ANFOM AUDITORIUM, KNUST, 30TH AUGUST, 2020.**



I am very pleased to be associated with the 2020 Statutory Meeting of the National Council of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT). I thank the Council for the opportunity granted me to address the meeting today. Most gratifying for me is the realization that this year's gathering offers members of the National Council the chance of self-evaluating the 90 years journey of GNAT as a Trade Union and deliberate on the 90th anniversary celebration of the Association.

Mr. Chairman, permit me to commend GNAT for attaining this milestone. Indeed, for a teacher-association to hit a Stone-Diamond/Emerald age and survive 90 years of socio-economic, competitive and political challenges and still remain very relevant to its members and the country, I cannot but agree that GNAT has clocked a feat worth

celebrating. I therefore congratulate you and previous National Council members, for sustaining the dreams of the Founding fathers of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT). Happy Birthday in advance!

As I reviewed literature on the 90 years historical development of GNAT as the Government School Teacher Union (GSTU) through its designation as the Gold Coast Teachers Union (GCTU) and finally as the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), it was instructive to note one fundamental motivation that triggered GNAT's secession from the Ghana Trades Union Congress (GTUC) in 1962: **'Teachers did not simply favour the GTUC's over-dependence on the CPP Government' (Osae, 1982).** GNAT opted out of the TUC **to avoid being dragged into ideological controversies associated with governments, whether in power or not.** It was on the basis of this a – political and all-inclusive orientation that the then President of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah granted the independence of GNAT from the GTUC on July 14, 1962, as a separate organization.

Within this historic a – political and all – inclusive identity of GNAT, my address seeks to provoke the thoughts of Council Members on one

key question: **In the next ten years (2020-2023), will GNAT be still recognized as an a-political, all-inclusive, reliable and unified teacher association in Ghana?**

Mr. Chairman, over the years, drawing largely from American and German literature, some schools of thought have played down the essence of teacher unionism. They have criticized Teacher Unions for undermining reforms in education and protecting under-performing and non-performing teachers. As a result, in some contexts, the essence of teacher unionism is unrecognized in national policy discourses. This notion notwithstanding, there is a plethora of reports that suggest that Teacher Unions have played and continue to play a major role in advancing the professionalism of teachers, influencing the making, implementing and shaping of educational policy, through policy advocacy and championing the cause of teachers. This is evident in the 90 years journey of the Ghana National Association of Teachers.

However, with the increased complex challenges facing Ghana's pre-tertiary education, which have necessitated vast changes in the role of teachers in schools, with teachers assuming more roles of facilitation rather than teaching, coupled with the

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mushrooming of competitive teacher unions in our country and political polarization which is fast permeating every sector of our economy as a nation, the question relating to reliability of GNAT and its capacity to sustain a unified all-inclusive and a-political identify in the next ten years should be of great concern to members of the National Council.

Admittedly, the complex challenges we are experiencing in our education sector does not only affect the welfare of teachers, but also the professionalism of teachers and the learning needs of students who are critical in the survival of the teaching profession. Coping with these complex challenges calls for a National Council leadership that will jealously protect the values which gave birth to GNAT and deliver quality services that will meet the increasing complex needs of teachers, students and the country as a whole. In these contexts, I challenge you as members of the National Council, to provide leadership that would enhance the professional confidence of teachers and contribute to improving the quality and efficiency of teacher performance in schools. Indeed, research is replete with evidence which recognizes leadership as a critical tool for accomplishing individual and organizational effectiveness and innovation (Engelen, Schmidt, Strenger, & Brettel, 2014). Through transformative leadership, leaders are more able to create conditions which promote

staff commitment to professional values and aspirations of organizations.

It must be noted that as National Council members, you can enhance teachers' commitment to what GNAT stands for, if at the National, Regional, District and Local levels, you provide leadership which makes each member of the Association feel he/she belongs, irrespective of gender, religious, tribal or political orientation. It is important that as National Council members, you role model a non-threatening and non-discriminatory working environment among yourselves and ensure same for your members. In my opinion, surviving the next 10 years will depend largely on your commitment as National Council members to the promotion of a sense of belongingness among members of your Association through what I term, a United Rigorous Advocacy Identity (URAI)... Every member must be made to feel he/she belongs.

Mr. Chairman, with the use of technology becoming key in our educational institutions following the COVID-19 experiences, GNAT's role in the next ten years can be relevant, if the National Council demonstrates practical commitment to the advancement of **e-teaching** and **e-learning** among its members, through unwavering advocacy and support for sustained capacity strengthening of teachers in the use of e-teaching tools. By so doing, the professionalism

of teachers will be ensured and the public image of your teachers enhanced, in the eyes of ICT-oriented stakeholders. Above all, GNAT should be seen as moving beyond better conditions of service advocacy to teacher professional practice enhancement and conducive teaching and learning environment advocacy.

Mr. Chairman, surviving the next ten years will also depend on the extent to which GNAT adopts a more proactive orientation towards finding solutions to educational challenges in the country. Indeed, GNAT's direct teacher welfare and professional enhancement engagements could gain more national recognition if, prior to each annual educational sector review meetings in the country, GNAT demonstrates a clear appreciation of issues which affect performance of teachers in the country, critically analyzes educational policy and practice trends and engages stakeholders on a national platform for a wider discourse on its professional position on issues. In such cases, the agenda for the Ministry of Education's Sector Review sessions will incorporate proactive positions of GNAT and thereby value, to the visibility and professional identify of the Association.

Currently there are outstanding issues that have been left at the mercy of politicians. GNAT's critical analysis of such issues and professional dissemination of its unified position on them would be very much helpful,

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even if Government does not implement the position of GNAT. I must admit that there have been press releases from GNAT on some educational issues but largely, these have been reactive rather than proactive. While urging GNAT to be more proactive in addressing educational challenges in the country, I also acknowledge the innovation the Association recently demonstrated by organizing a stakeholder forum on Teacher Leadership in Developing Crisis Education Response. This is highly commendable, but we need more of such engagements.

We are in an election year and educational issues occupy central parts of the manifestos of the various political parties. Could GNAT proactively engage the political parties on the educational components of their manifestos, particularly those which directly affect your members? Could GNAT commission a study into the following and create a dissemination platform for policy engagement?:

1. The quality of Distance Education teacher development programmes in the country and the employment of trained teachers through the distance education mode. Currently teacher-trainees through the distance education mode are discriminated against, in terms of placement. Should this not be of concern to GNAT?

2. Teacher professionalism and the paper and pencil mode of implementing the Teacher Licensure Policy.
3. Teacher professionalism and national service for trained teachers in Ghana, etc.

To sustain the impact of GNAT on educational quality enhancement and inspire unflinching trust in teachers, the National Council must be faithful to the cause of teachers, place national interest first and demonstrate objectivity in addressing educational issues, irrespective of which political party is in power. It is important that you internalize the fact that, GNAT is not a political organization. You (as a member of the National Council) were engaged as a Council member by virtue of **You being a human being, You being a teacher and You being a Ghanaian.** You were not engaged by virtue of your political affiliation or orientation. Your leadership decisions or positions regarding educational issues and the promotion of teacher welfare should therefore not be driven by political interest, but rather, national interest, driven by the lens of GNAT.

At this juncture, Mr. Chairman, permit me within the context of this presentation, to propose for your consideration, a theme for the 90th Anniversary celebration of your Association:

1. GNAT @ 90 : Achievements, Challenges and Prospects, or
2. GNAT @ 90: The future of teacher professionalism in Ghana, or
3. GNAT @ 90: Surviving as a reliable and vibrant teacher union in the 21st century.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I challenge you to guard against the situation where political activities tend to micro-manage GNAT, in matters of teacher professional development, teacher welfare and educational policies. It is only when, as national Council members, you protect the a – political orientation of GNAT and support teachers to adopt a non-partisan approach to the operationalization of their professional tasks that GNAT can maximize its impact as a teacher-Association, in the next ten years. Remember: **It is the politician who benefits when GNAT is politically divided.**

On this note, I once again congratulate you in advance, on your 90th Anniversary celebration.

Thank you.

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST TO RUN DEGREE TOP UP
FOR DIPLOMA TEACHERS:
APPRECIATION OF THE HON. MINISTER OF EDUCATION
FOR HIS ONEROUS EFFORTS**

The attention of the Ghana National Association of Teachers, GNAT, has been drawn to the announcement by the Hon. Minister of Education, Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh at the durbar to mark this year's World Teachers Day, October 5, in Cape Coast, that the University of Cape Coast, effective this year, would run degree top up for Diploma Teachers in the field. This is great and exhilarating news.

Earlier this year (23rd March), the Association wrote to the Hon. Minister, apprising him of the need for a one-year Top up programme for Diploma in Basic Education Teachers, to enable them earn the Bachelor of Education (B. ED) degree. Our assertion was that, the **Policy Reform on Teacher Education in Ghana, August, 2017** document had recognized that the current three-year Diploma in Basic Education Curriculum which is used for the initial training of teachers in the Colleges of Education has not adequately responded to the need to improve children's learning outcomes in the Basic School System, and went further to identify several other challenges faced by our school system, because of the kind of training offered to pre-tertiary teachers in Ghana.

The document went further to suggest that a fundamental rethinking and radical re-design of pre-service teacher training programmes was therefore required to achieve improvement in the quality of new teachers and the learning outcomes. Consequent to this, the Government initiated education reforms in 2017, aimed at transforming teaching and learning, and improve educational outcomes, and “to deliver quality education service at all levels that will equip learners...with the skills, competencies and awareness that would make them functional citizens who can contribute to the attainment of the national development goals”.

We are aware that flowing from this, the Ministry of Education continued with the Teacher Training Reforms in 2018, which culminated in the upgrade of the Colleges of Education into campuses of the existing public

Universities, to make them degree-awarding institutions (see **The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the 2018 Financial Year**) The aftermath was the development and design of a new four-year Bachelor of Education Curriculum for the training of teachers for the basic school system.

However, the Ghana National Association of Teachers, GNAT, realised that holders of the Diploma in Basic Education in the field had been left out in the scheme of things, and risked being looked upon by the new B. ED holders, and overlooked in the area of career progression; indeed, they were to carry the burden of “inferiority complex” in the face of their junior, but now Senior B. ED colleagues.

To avert this, the Association, in its 23rd March, 2020 letter to the Hon. Minister of Education, proposed that:

holders of the Diploma in Basic Education (now in the field) should be offered a one-year Top up, (to enable them) earn the Bachelor of Education degree, that this done, the Diploma in Basic Education Teachers would not be disadvantaged (in the scheme of things), nor worry, that their juniors in College will, in the next couple of years become their seniors in the profession and in rank, and subsequently earn more compensation than them.

The October 5 announcement at Cape Coast therefore comes to the Association as a great relief and elation. So also is the October 7, 2020 release of the University of Cape Coast, that its Institute of Education,

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), is to run a 3-Semester Bachelor of Education (Post-Diploma in Basic Education) programmes in the sandwich mode, starting in the first semester of (the) 2020/2021 Academic year, to make teachers with (the) Diploma in Basic Education get

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upgraded to Bachelor Degree, in effect, to enable holders of (the) Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) to be upgraded to a Bachelor's Degree.

The release goes further, that;

Applicants are encouraged to access admission forms online, **at no cost**, (and) will be enrolled automatically onto their choice of programme, which the University lists as follows:

- B. ED (Post-Diploma) in Early Childhood Education
- B. ED (Post-Diploma) in Primary Education
- B. ED (Post-Diploma) Junior High School Education.

University of Cape Coast however **insists, that only those who have passed the Diploma in Basic Education Examinations** (qualify), and **should fill the form**.

As stated earlier, the Ghana National Association of Teachers, GNAT is happy with

this development and compliments and appreciates the Hon. Minister of Education, the Ministry of Education, the University of Cape Coast, Stakeholders and all concerned for their untiring and onerous efforts at making this dream a reality.

We believe that with teachers with the right academic and professional competences at the helm of affairs, successes anticipated in the education enterprise would be attained, and Ghanaian children, and the country at large, would be better for it.

Long live GNAT!
Long live the Ministry of Education!!
Long live the University of Cape Coast!!
Long live Ghanaian children!!
Long live Ghana!!!

ISSUED IN ACCRA, AND SIGNED BY:

**THOMAS TANKO MUSAH
GENERAL SECRETARY**

DATED: 9TH OCTOBER, 2020

**GNAT'S ENDORSEMENT OF THE PUNCTUALITY CAMPAIGN:
STATEMENT BY VERONICA ADDO DONKOR
COMMUNICATION VOLUNTEER,
PUNCTUALITY GHANA FOUNDATION**

The President of the Ghana National Association of Teachers, Ms. Philippa Larsen, Supporting Executives of GNAT here present, the Founder and Lead Crusader of Punctuality Ghana Foundation, Mr. Emmanuel Amarquaye, the Media, fellow volunteers, ladies and gentlemen.

It is very gratifying to receive the endorsement of the Ghana National Association of Teachers, led by its President Ms. Philippa Larsen. Indeed, we feel highly honoured that you have accepted to partner us with this great and long awaited initiative, which seeks to create awareness of the need to up our game, when it comes to punctuality and productivity.

With the Ghana National Association of Teachers on board, we believe the campaign would thrive and succeed, because all of us

here present were shaped by teachers. We further welcome as many volunteers as possible, to come on board, by registering at our website.

We are pleased to report that the punctuality public education campaign has so far received 56 endorsements. Key among the fifty-six endorsers are; The Speaker of Ghana's Parliament, The Chief Justice, the Senior Minister, The Chairman of the Church of Pentecost, the Presiding Bishop of Methodist Church Ghana, and The Honourable Minister of Education.

The overwhelming endorsements received of the campaign is a clear indication that attitudes to time and work by most Ghanaians leave much to be desired. Poor attitude to time and work is even very prevalent in the way we manage our cities. The indiscriminate blocking

of roads for events to the detriment of other road users, is one such clear example.

What messages and signals are we sending to foreign investors and the world at large, if we can block a major road for funeral purposes, just because one individual has died? What message and signals are we sending out, if a public service which should have taken a day takes one month?

Being conscious of time and respecting other people's time is very fundamental to everything we do as a people and a nation. If we are conscious of time and respect other people's time, it would inform decisions made at both personal, institutional and national levels. It would inform the planning of our cities and the development of our infrastructure at large. Time consciousness and respect for other people's time must inform public service delivery. It must dictate the respect for the environment and respect for law and order.

Any person who is time conscious and respects the time of others would not waste the time of his fellow; anyone who has respect for

the environment would not litter it; you would not disobey road traffic regulations, to the detriment of others.

It is time we turned on a new leaf, and became conscious of time and respected the time of others. Punctuality Ghana Foundation and its volunteers are ready to lead the change. We want to walk our talk. We have accepted to be disciples of punctuality and productivity. We are ready to be models of discipline in the nation and we call on all of us present here today, to join the campaign.

Ghana needs the loyalty of each and every one of us. We must all live by the national pledge, by being faithful and loyal to Ghana, our motherland. If we all commit ourselves to be loyal and faithful to this dear nation of ours, the economic transformation and prosperity we all desire shall become a reality.

Thank you for giving me listening ears. God bless us all!

Dated: 23rd September, 2020

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
AT THE END OF ITS MEETING IN
KUMASI-ASHANTI REGION**

The National Council of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), having convened at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, between the period 30th September – 3rd October, 2020 and having extensively deliberated all the issues tabled before it, hereby issues this Communique.

1. The Government should give the issue of the legacy arrears the required prior attention. While the Ghana Education Service's position is that no teacher is owed, we the Teacher Unions still hold the view that some of our members are still owed. The National Council therefore, calls on the government to do whatever it takes to settle this nagging

and sore issue once and for all, to ensure peace on the education front.

2. The Ghana Education Service (GES) should take immediate steps to clear all arrears due teachers between 2017 and 2019.
3. The Ghana Education Service (GES) should, as a matter of urgency, take action on the upgrading of teachers who have completed further studies and are eligible for upgrading to the rank of Principal Superintendent.
4. The Ghana Education Service (GES) should again promote the backlog of teachers awaiting promotion to their next ranks/grades.

5. Government should take immediate steps to address all the irregularities and inequalities which have characterized the Pension Schemes, especially the Tier-2 scheme.
6. Government should expedite action on the One Teacher, One Laptop project to enhance efficient delivery in the classrooms.
7. Payment of teachers' Transfer Grant should be made through the Controller and Accountant General's Department.
8. Responsibility Allowance should be paid to all deserving teachers expeditiously.
9. As the Schools reopen soon, all protective equipment and other required logistics must be supplied to the schools, to ensure the curtailment of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.
10. Council equally calls on teachers, pupils and all concerned to observe the required social and health protocols on return to the schools, so as to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.
11. Council notes with pain, the flooding which has ravaged Northern Ghana and thrown the people into jeopardy, following the spilling of the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso. Council, therefore, urges Government to put in the necessary measures to bring life to normalcy and assist the people financially, if possible, to enable them to work to recover their losses and avert any security threats to that part of the country, and instability to Ghana as a whole.
12. Council affirms its commitment to the continued existence of a united and cohesive Ghana, and nothing should

be done to rock the ship of state. Thus, Council calls for a speedy and amicable resolution to the conflict which has reared its ugly head in parts of the Volta Region, so as to enable the citizenry to carry on with their lives and affairs normally and peacefully.

13. Council notes that the December 7 General Election is drawing nearer, steadily, and, therefore, urges the Electoral Commission, the political parties and Government to guarantee the citizenry peace and security before, during and after the voting. We urge all to be measured and civil in their discourses, tolerate one another's views and ensure a transparent and credible exercise whose outcome will be accepted by all.

We urge all to further remember that Ghana is the only country we have; thus, we cannot lose it through an electoral conflict from which we can never recover.

The clarion call to all, therefore, is peace, peace and peace; and we are sure we the citizenry can guarantee and deliver this peace post-December 7, 2020.

14. Council adopted **GNAT @ 90: Surviving as a Reliable and Vibrant Teacher Union in the 21st Century** as the theme for the 2021-2022 National Delegates Conference.

God bless us all!!

**ISSUED IN KUMASI, AND SIGNED BY:
PHILIPPA LARSEN (MS)
NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

DATED: 3RD OCTOBER, 2020



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**THE 1,000 SEATER
BEDIAKO
CONFERENCE HALL
GNAT HEADQUARTERS,
ACCRA**
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