



THE GNAT NEWS LETTER

Edition: March, 2022

GHANA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS

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POST-INVESTITURE SPEECH BY THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

REV. ISAAC OWUSU



On behalf of the newly-elected National Officers, I want to say a very big thank you for the opportunity given us to serve our members. In fact, this is the doing of the Lord and we give Him the glory. I would like to assure you, that we have finished GNAT politics and as such, we have to work for the GNAT family. I want to call on each of us to come on board for us to unite and forge ahead to make the Union relevant and vibrant in the 21st Century. Again, I want to assure our immediate-past National Officers, that we shall continue any unfinished business that they have left behind.

Our administration will make sure that the two structures in GNAT work perfectly and I want to assure the General Secretary and his Staff, that we shall give you all the necessary support to make sure we serve our members well. Once again, I want to say thank you and may the good Lord grant us all our heart desires in the year 2022.

Long Live GNAT!

Long Live Motherland Ghana!



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

THOMAS T. MUSAH



Teachers, particularly members of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), have over the years sacrificed a lot and contributed significantly to the development of Ghana's educational system. Indeed, that GNAT celebrated its 90th Anniversary in 2020 which was climaxed with its 6th National Quadrennial Delegates Conference in Kumasi, the Ashanti Regional capital, lent credence to this fact. As members of this great Association, our role in Ghana's socio-economic development should not be lost on us.

We can't lose sight then of the reality that, the country is having difficulties in its development, but it is true that our Great Members who teach in some of the worst conditions continue to do so because of the passion and commitment we all have to the country and its children. However, Teachers deserve better recognition and we as Administration and National Officers of GNAT, have it as a commitment to continue to work in the interest of our Great Members always and the agenda to seek better conditions of service for them despite the odds. We promote self-development, parity and the interest and wellbeing of members wherever they are.

COVID-19 brought a lot of hardship to the world and continues to wreak havoc, with Ghana also suffering its devastating effects. While we sacrifice our due, let us continue to unite to seek our greater interest, because without a united front, our power to ensure the continued existence of GNAT, the front of the thousands of teachers working hard to impart knowledge will be broken, weakened, and our ability to not only fight for today but for those teachers to come after us will be reduced. I believe in the power of unity and the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) is stronger together; for United We Stand, Divided We Fall!
God bless you all for your sacrifices. God bless GNAT and our country.



KNOW YOUR NEW NATIONAL OFFICERS





**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 6TH QUADRENNIAL
(53RD) NATIONAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE AT THE KWAME NKRUMAH
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KNUST), KUMASI,
FROM 2ND – 8TH JANUARY, 2022**

The Ghana National Association of Teachers, GNAT, having convened its 6th Quadrennial (53rd) National Delegates Conference, made up of six hundred and fifty-three (653) Delegates, forty-three (43) Observers, Foreign Guests, Organized Labour and Staff of the Association, at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi between the period 2nd – 8th January, 2022, on the theme: GNAT @ 90; Surviving As a Reliable and Vibrant Teacher Union in the 21st Century, and deliberated all the issues tabled before Conference, do hereby issue this Communique that,

Conference:

1. Accepts the President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's promise to provide ten thousand (10,000) units of affordable housing for teachers across the country within the next two (2) years, and would hold him to it, and the modalities for its implementation.
2. Calls on the Government to make real, its promise to address all outstanding issues concerning the full implementation of the Conditions of Service of Teachers.
3. Accepts the promise by the President of the Republic of Ghana to ensure that all outstanding issues regarding the One Teacher, One Laptop, as raised by the Teacher Unions (including the refund of the GH¢44.55) would be addressed promptly, to engender peace and tranquility on the educational front.
4. Endorses Otumfuo Osei Tutu II's call to Government to improve the Conditions of Service of Teachers, to motivate them to give their best to Ghanaian children and education in general.
5. Takes note of the difficulties teachers go through and the challenges bedevilling the centralized system of promotion (lower ranks), upgrading and posting in the Education Service and calls on the Service to take appropriate steps to decentralize the system, as well as put in appropriate mechanisms to address the said challenges.
6. Calls on GES to conduct an infrastructural audit in all schools and to address the challenges, especially in the Basic Schools, to ensure safe and conducive environment for teaching and learning.

7. Approves the 5-Year Strategic Plan of the Association (2022 – 2026).
8. Approves the acquisition of the Sweden Ghana Medical Centre (SGMC), for the treatment of GNAT members, their spouses and two (2) children below eighteen (18) years, with cancer-related ailments.
9. Approves that Retired GNAT members should also be rolled onto the SGMC, to benefit from the treatment.
10. In this regard, Conference adopts the increase of the monthly contribution of the cancer fund from GH¢2.00 to GH¢5.00 to meet the cost of treatment of members at the SGMC.
11. Approves the Constitution of an Interim Board, to oversee the work of the SGMC.
12. Again approves the Constitution of a Board for the SGMC Foundation, to oversee the management of the Cancer Fund.
13. Approves the Constitution of the ten-member Interim Committee to work in tandem with the Technical Committee, for the establishment of the GNAT Institute for Research and Industrial Relations Studies at the GNAT Village, Abankro, Ejisu.
14. Takes note of the assurance of the Ghana Education Service Occupational Pension Scheme (GESOPS) of the payment of the outstanding 20% of pension to deserving beneficiaries by the end of January, 2022 and would hold GESOPS to its word for it.
15. Commends the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for opening the Conference, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene, for gracing the Conference in royal splendour, and his message of exhortation to Government and teachers, Rev. Professor Emmanuel Adow Obeng, the immediate past President of the Presbyterian University College, Abetifi, for delivering the Keynote Address to Conference, Prof. (Mrs.) Rita Akosua Dickson, the Vice Chancellor of KNUST, the Foreign Guests, the Delegates and Observers, the Staff and all concerned, for making the Conference both historic and memorable.

The Association wishes all a very fruitful and prosperous 2022, and looks forward to a very tranquil quadrennial ahead. Hope to see you all at the 7th Quadrennial (54th) National Delegates Conference in 2026.

Long live GNAT!
Long live our members!!
Long live Ghana!!!

SGD: REV. ISAAC OWUSU
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

And may God continue to bless us all.

Dated this 13th Day of January, 2022

SUSTAINING THE GNAT CANCER FUND

In fulfillment of one of its objectives to meet the welfare needs of its members, the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) passed a resolution to authorise the deduction of Two Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 2.00) from each member per month.

The objective was to fund the treatment of any member who suffers cancer.

The treatment goes for all cancers, apart from blood-related cancers.

The Fund which operates on the principle of insurance, covers a member, his or her spouse and two children below eighteen (18) years of age.

The Fund is in collaboration with the Sweden Ghana Medical Centre (SGMC), a state-of-the-art oncology center for the treatment of cancer.

Through sensitisation and the many testimonies from members who have undergone treatment and the smiles that it has brought to many families, more people are benefiting from the Fund, now than ever before.

The fact that the cost of treating our members at the Centre continues to witness astronomical figures cannot be overemphasised.

A quick juxtaposition of the revenue from the Two Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 2.00) paid per member per month with the expenditure over the same period makes the picture clearer.

It is instructive to note that, the cost of treating one cancer patient ranges from Forty-Five Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 45,000.00) to Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 250,000.00). It has become very evident that, the Two Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 2.00) per member per month, can no more sustain the Cancer Fund.

In response to this reality therefore, the organisation proposed an increase to Five Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 5.00) per member per month, which was approved by Conference.



Patient treatment at SGMC

NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES

Since its inception in 2014, up to December 2020, a total of Six Thousand, Seven Hundred and Seventy-three (6,773) members have received treatment under the Fund. Out of this number, Three Thousand, Nine Hundred and Fifty-two (3,952) have been fully treated.

Sustain the Fund and Save Life...



THE GNAT

NEWS LETTER

GHANA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS | MARCH EDITION | 2022



TEACHERS MENTAL HEALTH IN COVID-19



HOW TEACHERS CAN MAINTAIN THEIR MENTAL HEALTH IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since COVID-19 was declared as a pandemic, it has claimed millions of lives worldwide. Strategies to curb the pandemic have caused the educational sector to experience drastic changes like adopting online or remote means to make teaching and learning easier, while helping to curb the spread of the virus among students.

The advent of techniques like social distancing, quarantine, and isolation have led to the emergence of strong emotions among teachers, especially those who work in schools in high poverty settings.

Research shows one in four (4) persons will be affected by mental illness during the course of their lifetime. Just like the general public, many teachers are struggling with the emotional impact of COVID-19.

Some experience fear and worry about their own health and that of family members, which have generally led to an increase in stress levels. Under stress, people become irritable, more reactive and less rational.

When these become intense and severe, they lead to further mental health problems which not only affect the teachers' decision-making



BY: DR. RUTH OWUSU-ANTWI

PRESIDENT, PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION OF GHANA (PAC)

ability but could also have long term detrimental effect on their overall mental well-being. Poor mental health of the teacher can have a detrimental effect on their students.



STEPS TEACHERS CAN TAKE TO MAINTAIN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

DR. RUTH OWUSU-ANTWI

1. BUILD YOUR PHYSICAL RESERVES

- Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals, at least, twice a day.
- Maintain an ideal weight for your height.
- Avoid caffeine



2. GET ENOUGH AND GOOD REST

- Break from your normal routines and pamper yourself, once in a while.
- Take a leave or break from work. Try to rest during vacations, instead of engaging in vacation and extra classes throughout the vacation period.
- Get enough sleep and be consistent with your sleep schedule, by going to bed and waking up the same time each day





3. MAINTAIN YOUR EMOTIONAL RESERVES

- Develop mutually-supportive friendships or relationships.
- Always be kind and gentle with others

4. KEEP A STRESS-FREE ENVIRONMENT

- A poorly organised living and work space can be a major source of stress. Maintain a well-organised and pleasant environment to avoid stress and increase productivity.
- Have calming and happy decorations in the office, in the classroom, in the staffroom, in the living room and in the bedroom
- Improve air quality at your working space; Open windows for fresh air as often as possible in place of air-conditioners.
- Avoid large amounts of background noise during the day, as the cause irritability, tension and headaches, in addition to loss of concentration.
- Bad lighting can cause eye strain and increase fatigue, as can light that is too bright, or light that shines directly into your eyes. Try working by a window and using bulbs that are moderate in brightness.
- Sleeping with bright lights on is no sleep at all.
- Learn to delegate.
- Make time for yourself in your schedule
- Live with an Attitude of Gratitude. Be Grateful to God for what you have instead of comparing yourself with your colleagues.



SCENES FROM THE 6TH QUADRENNIAL NATIONAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE AT KUMASI IN JANUARY (2022)



Teachers Delegate in the Great Hall, KNUST



A Syndicate Group Section



Delegate Singing the Teachers Song of Dedication



His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II in a Group Photograph with National Officers



HE President Akufo-Addo helps cut Cake to Climax 90th Anniversary of GNAT



IMPACT STORIES



BRAVING THE ODDS:
TEACHER SWIMS ACROSS RIVER TO TEACH PUPILS



POSTING TO DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES:
PERPETUAL KYEI-BAFFOUR TELLS HER STORY OF IMPACT, SACRIFICE AND LOVE



Teacher Kwame Mensah Swimming across the Dakar River

BRAVING THE ODDS: TEACHER SWIMS ACROSS RIVER TO TEACH PUPILS

Teachers in rural communities in Ghana endure a lot, in their bid to bridge the gap between their students and those in urban areas. Most of these teachers give up posting to the rural areas for better working conditions in urban centres. But, one teacher is changing the narrative. He's 36-year old Kwame Mensah, who is determined to impart knowledge to his pupils despite the challenges.

He has taught in Dakpam, Sabonjida and now Lompe all in the Nanumba North District of the Northern region for the past 13 years. Sometimes, his rickety motorbike breaks down, leaving him in the middle of nowhere, feeling dejected and worried. As part of his route to get to work, he has to cross the Dakar River around Kalande. And guess what? He swims across this river daily. He then walks another three kilometres to get to his destination.

He tells GNAT Newsletter, “the challenges I go through as a teacher in a rural community are numerous. I have to wake up very early due to the distance and worse of it swim across a river before getting to school, which is always a worry to my family “.

He adds that “teaching in a rural community is stressful, frustrating and even sometimes dangerous and government policies over the years have not given much consideration to the rural teacher”. Teacher Kwame Mensah wants government to help the rural teacher.



Teacher Mensah Paddling Canoe and Dressing up to work



Teacher Mensah in the Classroom Teaching



POSTING TO DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES: PERPETUAL KYEI-BAFFOUR TELLS HER STORY OF IMPACT, SACRIFICE AND LOVE



She is a trained teacher currently teaching at Ahidam D/A Primary School in the Juaboso district of the Western North Region. Despite the dilapidated state of the school and environment, Perpetual Kyei-Baffour has devoted herself to brightening the future of the children in the area. Aunty Pepe, as her pupils call her, completed her teacher-training education in 2019 and was posted to Ahidam in 2021. Initially, she didn't like the environment and asked to be reposted. However, the chief and elders in the community pleaded with her to stay and help turn their fortunes around.

"I was told, many teachers refuse posting to this area because there are no classrooms, teachers' quarters and other facilities that could promote teaching and learning. The children are lagging behind because even the parents cannot provide basic learning materials for them". Perpetual Kyei-Baffour says she's still in the community because she's realised that the pupils need her to make their lives better. She sometimes buys stationery, food and even gives her money to some of the pupils to buy their books and stationery. She's however worried about the dilapidated school block and how it has become a den for snakes that come in to attack them. She wants government to come to their aid.

GENERAL SECRETARY AND NATIONAL OFFICERS VISIT PRAMPAM GES DIRECTORATE AND SOME SELECTED SCHOOLS



GENERAL SECRETARY'S VISIT TO REGIONAL OFFICERS AT TAMALE IN PICTURES



GENERAL SECRETARY'S VISIT TO SALAGA IN PICTURES





NEWS

HIGHLIGHTS



INSTITUTE 'COLA' FOR ALL TEACHERS IN GHANA – GNAT, 3 GROUPS TELL GOV'T

Four teacher unions are asking government to institute a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for all teachers in Ghana.

The groups, Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), Ghana National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), Coalition of Concerned Teachers, Ghana (CCT-Ghana) and the Teachers & Educational Workers' Union (TEWU) say this will impact positively on the economic fortunes of teachers in Ghana.

In a statement to government, the teacher unions said “in recent times, Ghanaians have been experiencing incessant fuel increases, normally without advance notice; electricity is having its equal share of astronomical increases, while prices of foodstuffs and other consumables keep sky-rocketing!, all to the detriment of a helpless and hapless citizenry.

“The Teacher Unions recognize the economic challenges facing our members (teachers), like all other public sector workers. Despite the fact that their take home pay does not really take them home, they continue to give of their best to Ghanaian children, and we salute them for that!”



President Akufo-Addo in a Group Photograph at the 6th Quadrennial National Delegates' Conference

TEACHERS TO BENEFIT FROM TEN THOUSAND HOUSING UNITS

PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDO

President Akufo-Addo has announced plans to construct some ten thousand housing units for teachers across the country. The houses which will be acquired on mortgage and rental basis are expected to ease the accommodation challenges of teachers nationwide. Addressing the 6th Quadrennial National Delegates' Conference of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) in Kumasi, he said investment in education will transform the country's economy, thus his commitment to the sector. According to him, so far, his government has increased investment into the sector by 95% since he assumed office in 2017, with plans to do more.

"So great has this government's commitment to education been, that the public expenditure on education has almost doubled, from ₵20.700 billion between 2013 and 2016, in the Mahama era; to ₵40.400 billion, between 2017 and 2020, during my time; representing an increase of some 95%", Akufo-Addo disclosed. Touching on the welfare of teachers in the country, the President stated that, unlike in the past, the teaching profession appears to have lost its lucrative appeal and respect. In addressing the situation, he pledged the commitment of government to creating a more congenial atmosphere for teachers.

GNAT'S NEW NATIONAL OFFICERS FAMILIARISATION VISIT TO MULTIMEDIA GROUP



GNAT National Officers with Multimedia Group CEO and Management

The newly-elected national executives of the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) paid a working visit to the Multimedia Group Limited. The group was led by the National President of the Association, Rev. Isaac Owusu, to officially introduce themselves to the Multimedia Group Management Team. The move is part of efforts to continue to enhance the image of GNAT and make it more influential in matters regarding education and teachers in the country.

President of GNAT, Rev. Isaac Owusu told myjoyonline.com that “as newly-elected officers for the biggest teacher union in the country, we cannot do without the media, particularly the Multimedia family; so, we were very happy we got the opportunity to visit your outfit today”.

“It is about time we rebranded the Association to make it very vibrant in the country and if we’d be able to achieve that, we cannot do without the media. Our meeting today has been very fruitful and once you have given us the opportunity, we’d be able to communicate to the employer and give feedback to our members”. Meanwhile, GNAT wants government and relevant stakeholders to address the delay in supplying teaching and learning logistics to the various schools.



GHANA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS

Our Mission

To campaign effectively on behalf of our membership using legitimate channels for improved terms and conditions in line with National and International Labour Laws and provide Professional Development, Psycho-social and Economic services for our members in a Democratic, Non-partisan, non-sectarian and Environmentally responsible manner through Innovation and a Committed Workforce.



Our Vision

Become a vibrant, resilient, pro-active, result-oriented teachers' Union championing the cause of teachers and quality education for a brighter future.



Our Core Values

- Tolerance
 - Resilience
 - Unity
 - Solidarity
 - Transparency
- (TRUST)



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