

Your Excellency, President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces
of the Republic of Ghana

Honourable Minister of Education

Regional Minister for the Greater Accra Region

The Chairman of Council

The Vice Chairman of Council

Your Worship, the Mayor of Accra

Leaders of Delegation and Chief Government Nominees on Council

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Former Chairmen of Council

Former Registrars to Council

Former Heads of National Office

Distinguished Friends of Council

Staff of the Council

Esteemed Guests

Members of the Fourth Estate

Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION

It is my singular honour and privilege to welcome you all to this occasion of the Formal Opening of the 59th Annual Meeting of Council - the Governing Board of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). I convey to this august gathering warm greetings from the Management and Staff of WAEC in The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. I welcome specially, the Chief Host of the meeting, the President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency, Prof. John Evans Atta Mills, ably represented here by the Chairman of the Council of State, Prof. Kofi Awoonor. Your Excellency, we sincerely appreciate your presence. We also appreciate your Government, not only for hosting the meeting but also for the warm

reception given to all delegates and for all the facilities that have been made available to Council for a successful meeting. Please have my assurance that we shall make all efforts to take advantage of our being here to explore as many of the geographical and other attractions offered by Accra, *the Gateway to Africa*, as possible.

ROTATIONAL PRINCIPLE

Your Excellency, the Annual Council Meeting is hosted in accordance with a rotational order agreed upon by the Governments of the Member Countries. Ghana hosted the meeting in 2006, Nigeria in 2007, The Gambia in 2008, Sierra Leone in 2009, Liberia in 2010 and the cycle begins again with Ghana hosting now.

The Headquarters of our organization is situated in Ghana. There is in each Member Country a National Office. In some of the countries, there are Zonal and/or Branch Offices. Ghana however has the singular privilege of hosting the International Headquarters and the Ghana National Office of the Council. So it is that every five years, when the Annual Council meeting is held in Ghana, the city of Accra hosts the International Headquarters, the Ghana National Office and the full strength of Council with delegates from all Member Countries of WAEC. This is a very enviable status that comes with a very tough combination of expectations and responsibilities which the Republic of Ghana has always met and discharged creditably to the admiration of other member nations. I have no cause to imagine that this year will be an exception. I therefore want to thank the Government of Ghana for the strength of its confidence in the Council and what it stands for. I want to assure the Government and People of Ghana that the Council will guard that confidence very jealously and ensure that it is not misplaced.

THE COUNCIL'S EXAMINATIONS

Your Excellency, WAEC conducts national as well as international examinations for candidates in the five member countries. The Council also conducts aptitude and selection tests as well as examinations on behalf of examining boards. I am pleased to say that all the Council's scheduled examinations were conducted successfully during the past year. The May/June and November/December 2010 editions of the Council's international examination, the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), were conducted for candidates in The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, except that Ghana did not present candidates for the May/June edition of the examination. The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) was conducted in The Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone. Liberia presented candidates for the 6th, 9th and 12th Grades examinations in May 2010. The National Primary School Examination (NPSE) was conducted in Sierra Leone while the National Assessment Test (NAT) was conducted in The Gambia.

PATRONAGE

The Council's international examination – the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) - was conducted for a total of **1,866,740** candidates in all the Member Countries during the reporting year. This figure included 1,394,365 school candidates and 472,375 private candidates. Out of this number, 10,677 candidates (or 0.57%) enrolled in The Gambia; 134,612 candidates (or 7.21%), made up of only private candidates in Ghana; 1,676,116 candidates (or 89.79 %) in Nigeria and 45,335 candidates (or 2.43%) in Sierra Leone.

The Council's main national examinations were conducted for a total of **704,233** candidates in 2010. Out of this number, 78,197 (or 11.1%) came from The Gambia, 357,008 (or 50.69%) from Ghana, 97,360 (or 13.82%) from Liberia and

171,668 or (24.38%) from Sierra Leone. The Council does **not** conduct national examinations in Nigeria.

The Council also conducted aptitude/selection tests for public and private institutions for a total of **16,990** in the various National Offices in 2010. The figure was made up of 154 testees from Ghana; 2,252 from Liberia; 14,530 from Nigeria and 54 from Sierra Leone.

On the whole, the Council's WASSCE, national examinations and aptitude/selection tests were patronized by a total of **2,587,963** candidates in 2010. This figure however, marked an overall decrease of 7.95% below the 2,811,757 candidates recorded in 2009.

RELEASE OF RESULTS

Your Excellency, the Council continues to improve on its target day for the release of the results of any examination. The results of the May/June 2010 WASSCE were released in The Gambia and Nigeria in August and in Sierra Leone in September, while those of the November/December 2010 WASSCE were released in all the Member Countries in December 2010.

EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

Examination malpractice has become a global issue in the conduct of public/external as well as school/internal examinations. The evil has assumed heinous dimensions in some countries, thereby making the conduct of public examinations a risky venture. The perpetrators of examination malpractice are desperate and daring as they carry out their activities with the connivance or active collaboration of misguided school authorities and examination functionaries. Examination malpractice is a social evil with dire implications for quality assurance and manpower development. The fight against this evil is therefore, not for examining bodies alone, but for all stakeholders in education – governments, school authorities, parents and all must be actively involved in a collective rage against the cankerworm.

WAEC has remained undaunted even by the criminal dimensions that have been introduced into examination fraud. We shall continue to apply stringent measures aimed at curbing the incidence of malpractice in the conduct of our examinations.

DEPLOYMENT OF ICT TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Your Excellency, the Council has continued to explore the many possibilities that ICT offers for the enhancement of the quality of our services. I am particularly delighted to state here that we have made significant progress in our march towards bringing all offices of the Council to a comparable level of IT deployment in service delivery. The registration of candidates is now done electronically for all examinations conducted by the Council in all its Member Countries. The on-line result checker facility is also available in all the offices. I must say that the much we have been able to achieve in this direction has been possible because of the tremendous support which the National Offices enjoyed from their respective governments. I therefore want to register my profound appreciation of government support in this direction. I must hasten to add, however that the acquisition of the physical ICT infrastructure is as capital intensive as the human capacity building that must complement it for guaranteed efficiency. It is therefore my hope that member governments will continue to hearken to our cry for support in both areas.

FINANCE

Your Excellency, inadequate funding has remained the Council's recurring challenge that is second only to examination malpractice. We have continued to step up our efforts at getting the member Governments to meet their financial obligations to the Headquarters and the National Offices. Whereas our efforts have yielded the desired results in some member countries, all that we have received in some others are pledges which remain yet to be fulfilled. We again appreciate the Member Governments that have met their financial obligations to the Headquarters and the National Offices, while we urge the others to translate their pledges into reality soonest.

WAEC ENDOWMENT FUND

Your Excellency, Distinguished guests, the WAEC Endowment Fund was inaugurated by Council at its 30th Annual Meeting in Liberia in 1982. Among the objects of the Fund are the promotion of educational development projects of an international nature, provision of prizes for outstanding performance by candidates in the examinations conducted by the Council, and conferment of honour on eminent citizens of the Member Countries who have made outstanding contributions to the Council's work. The Fund has consistently accomplished its objectives and discharged its responsibilities since inception.

In January this year, the *WAEC Endowment Fund Quiz Competition* for secondary school students took place in Lagos, Nigeria. The first prize of the completion was won by Nigeria while the second prize went to Sierra Leone.

Yesterday, the 16th *WAEC Endowment Fund Lecture, titled Towards Excellence in the Teaching and Learning of the Language of Science*, was ably delivered by an international scholar and son of Ghana, Professor D. A. Akyeampong. It was a refreshing experience for all of us in attendance. Our sincere gratitude goes to Prof. Akyeampong for the thought-provoking lecture that was so professorially delivered.

Today, still under the aegis of the WAEC Endowment Fund, the prestigious *Distinguished Friend of Council Award* will be given to an illustrious daughter of the Republic Ghana, Mrs. Sabina Ofori-Boateng, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the success of the Council's work. We extend our hearty congratulations to Mrs. Ofori-Boateng.

Sadly however, the WAEC Excellence Award provided by the Endowment Fund for outstanding performance in the May/June WASSCE each year will not be given out at today's ceremony because no candidate satisfied the selection

criteria for the Award in any of the countries that presented candidates for the examination. This is certainly food for thought for all stakeholders in education in all our Member Countries.

CONCLUSION

Your Excellency, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we are grateful to God that, for yet another year, the West African Examinations Council has been able to make positive and significant impact on the lives of the people of our sub-region. In the course of the year, the Council collaborated successfully with governments and other stakeholders in education to satisfy the people's educational aspirations, assisting in the development of sound education, ensuring the maintenance of educational standards and stimulating sustainable national development through capacity building and quality manpower production.

The various achievements of WAEC during the past year were made possible by the cooperation and support which it received from the member governments, Members of Council, and the Council's other stakeholders. While pledging our irrevocable commitment to ensuring that our service delivery is of impeccable quality, I want to use this occasion to express our profound appreciation to the President and Government of each Member Country for the assistance rendered to the respective National Offices and the Headquarters of the Council during the year.

I wish to thank the Honourable Ministers of Education and the Permanent Secretaries/Chief Directors of Education in the Member Countries for sustaining and strengthening the collaboration between WAEC and their respective ministries.

I also thank the Principals of secondary schools and their Teachers whose services as examiners, item writers, moderators, supervisors and invigilators made

the hitch-free conduct of WAEC examinations achievable in the various Member Countries.

I am equally grateful to our ICT service providers for assisting the Council and its numerous stakeholders to realize the full benefits of ICT deployment in service delivery.

Your Excellency, Honourable Minister of Education, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you all for the honour and privilege of your presence at this august occasion of the Formal Opening of the 59th Annual Council Meeting.

God bless you all.