

The meetings of various Committees of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), The Gambia were held in Banjul from Monday, 1st to Friday, 5th November 2010. The Committees that met during the period included the Gambia Aptitude Tests and Examinations Committee, the Gambia Appointments Committee, the Gambia Administrative and Finance Committee and the Gambia National Committee, which is the highest decision-making organ of the Council in The Gambia. The members of the Committees included Government Nominees, representatives of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Universities, Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools, and other interests. The Gambia Aptitude Tests and Examinations Committee, at its meeting, noted with deep concern the inability of The Gambia to be adequately represented at International Moderating Committee Meetings of the Council due to financial constraints. The Committee urged the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to give necessary assistance to the National Office to ensure that The Gambia is represented at the meetings of the International Moderating Committees for all the WASSCE subjects for which The Gambia presents candidates. This, the Committee pointed out, would ensure that the peculiarities of the country are adequately catered for in the development of the test papers.

The Gambia Aptitude Tests and Examinations Committee received reports on the examinations conducted by WAEC in The Gambia in the 2009/2010 reporting period. It also considered reports on irregularity cases and applied appropriate sanctions against perpetrators of the malaise – teachers, candidates and schools. It commended centre supervisors who stood firmly against malpractice during the conduct of the examinations, and the vigilant examiners who reported the cases of malpractice which they discovered during the marking of candidates' scripts. The Committee urged the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and the Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools to team up with WAEC in its efforts at sensitizing school authorities, teachers, candidates and other stakeholders on examination ethics in the country.

The Committee endorsed for implementation by government, teachers, parents, candidates, schools and other stakeholders the recommendations contained in the Chief Examiners' Reports on the Basic Education Certificate Examination, to enhance candidates' performance in subsequent examinations.

The Committee commended WAEC for introducing electronic registration of candidates for its examinations and urged the National Office and the Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools to sustain the sensitization of stakeholders to ensure the proper capture and correctness of all data fed into the system. It appealed to the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education to assist secondary schools in the acquisition of computers to enable them to keep pace with WAEC's current strides in the deployment of ICT to its operations.

The Gambia Administrative and Finance Committee, at its meeting, considered among other matters, the Reports of the Internal and External Auditors on the National Office Accounts. The Committee commended the National Office for its prudent management of resources and for ensuring strict compliance with the Council's existing monitoring mechanisms for the prevention of waste and fraud.

The Gambia National Committee, at its meeting, recalled with delight that the Republic of The Gambia blazed the trail in the conduct of the WASSCE in 1998 and had consistently presented candidates for the examination. It however, pointed out the importance of distinguishing a teaching syllabus or curriculum from an examination syllabus and urged the relevant government agency to expedite action on the preparation of a national teaching syllabus/curriculum for each subject of the examination.

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