

As we start the new year of 2011, I wish to congratulate the Registrar, members of Council, members of the various Committees of Council and all staff of the Council in the Member States for their steadfast dedication to meeting the vision of WAEC, i.e. 'To be a world class examining body adding value to the educational goals of its numerous stakeholders.'

I wish to acknowledge especially the support of Madam Registrar and the Vice Chairman, Hon. (Dr) Mator Kpangbai, who is also the Chief Government Nominee of the Republic of Liberia and the other Chief Government Nominees from Nigeria, Alhaji G Y Bello; Ghana, Ms Benedicta Biney; Sierra Leone, Mr Abdul Bayoh and The Gambia, Mrs Fatou Njie.

I recognize the enormity of meeting such goals in the midst of the many challenges in our various countries and the need to exercise prudent financial management of our resources contributed by national governments as well as from income generating activities mounted by the Headquarters in Accra. These challenges are clearly demonstrated by the quality and extent of the documentation produced by staff as working papers for the various committee meetings of Council, with oversight provided by the heads of affected sections in the National Offices under the ultimate responsibility of the Registrar.

My interaction with the staff in the three national offices already visited (Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone) during my almost two years in office, come March 2011, gave me a firsthand impression of the details required and demands in executing such tasks for the consideration of relevant Committees of Council. I must confess that were it not for my background in the University which is largely governed by committees as is the case at WAEC, this would have been quite a daunting challenge.

It is heartening to note some of the successes achieved during 2010. The progress made in the construction of the Printing Press as well as the Hotel Complex in Accra, the procurement process towards the construction of the Headquarters Complex at Agidingbi, Lagos as well as the re-possession of the Excellence Hotel & Conference Centre in Nigeria are landmark events that should make all of us proud as part of the WAEC family. I congratulate all those that are involved in these activities.

Staff Discipline

This has posed immense challenges to Council during 2010 especially more so with the emerging external interference experienced in some of the cases considered and the threat to the autonomy and international character of WAEC, a status which is embedded in its Convention to which all member states are signatories. We hope to continue to inform the authorities of member states of the remit of Council within the context of the legal instruments that established its operations.

Mainstreaming ICT Education

This issue has received on-going attention at various levels of Council with greater discussions emanating from IFAEAC meetings. Member states are encouraged to revisit the relevance of submission of candidates for Typing and Shorthand in the face of the fast expanding ICT environment existing in all works of life where our students will have to function.

In my inaugural address to Council during the 57th edition of the Annual Council series of meetings I stated that:

‘While we celebrate academic excellence in the recent awards ceremony, we will have to tackle the wider picture as well and take a systemic introspection of the performance of students at public examinations in member states and explore possible options at reversing this trend.’

Performance Profiles

Mathematics, Physics and English Language continue to challenge us in adopting innovative options to improve on the performance of students across the member states. The comparative country profile of results over the years is quite revealing and provides a basis for reflection and action. The low candidature in techvoc subjects continues to be worrisome.

Let me now congratulate specifically the Research Sub-Committee on producing well researched papers and documentation on a range of issues germane to our operations that

should influence our future operations, including examinations. I would hope that the results of these publications will be factored in our development activities in a bid to improve the way we do business.

The WAEC Website

The website has been a welcome addition to the portfolio of successes of the Registrar and her team. We encourage all to actively participate in its popularisation and access, so as to make it an enviable and interactive site comparable with any of the more renowned international sites.

Liberia's Participation in WASSCE

We are heartened by the progress and enthusiasm demonstrated by the Liberian Government in this regard with the assistance of the Registrar and assurances of the Chief Government Nominee and Vice Chairman of Council. We remain confident that following the road map of events, the date of 2013 will see students from Liberia fully participating in this examination.

Expanding the Membership of WAEC to Francophone States

I had as one of my goals in my inaugural speech as Chairman of Council, to introduce consultations with francophone countries in expanding the membership of WAEC to be truly reflective of a sub-regional body. Madam Registrar will recall that we have had a number of discussions on possible strategies to address this goal during my tenure. While investigating the nature of similar examinations in francophone countries, I discovered that there are comparable levels with the baccalaureate as an entry examination to universities in these states, which is recognized by many overseas universities. We could initiate discussions on examinations in French and English Language in selected countries such as Togo, Guinea and Benin, while inviting our francophone colleagues to our IFAEAC meetings for eventual recognition as Associate members of Council. These interactions could provide a basis for discussions at the meeting of ministers of education of ECOWAS where policy instruments can be formulated to support such partnership and expansion of our mandate.

Conclusion

May I thank you all once again for your support during 2010 and wish you a more successful and productive 2011 in good health with the cooperation of all.

Prof. Jonas A. S. Redwood-Sawyers
Chairman, WAEC

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