

**Consultative Group for Ghana / Annual Partnership Meeting  
June 19, 2007**

**Government Vision Statement on Human Resources Development  
for Accelerated and Shared Growth**

Hon. J.H. Mensah

Co-Chairs,  
Madame Chairperson,  
Distinguished Ministers and Members of Parliament,  
Representatives of our Development Partners,  
Members of the Private Sector and of various other institutions,  
Ladies and gentlemen:

Let me thank the organizers for inviting me to share in your work. I must first of all put it on the record that I am not an expert in human resource development, so that is for my own protection. Also within the short space of time available, there is hardly any possibility of exhausting a subject like human resource development. But I want to take you back a little bit to that meeting that you had with us at the International Conference Center two years ago. At that time we had the GPRS II, which has become fairly notorious, and which we introduced to you at that meeting. And I want to say straight away: in presenting that paper to you, I made it clear that we were in a process of transition in terms of national development policy. We were looking forward to getting out of the structural adjustment/HIPC mode and we were beginning to think “then what?”. Obviously that HIPC, structural adjustment, economic stabilization mode was not an end in itself. It was a preparation for building a new Ghana.

You have before you a paper on the subject. There is also a fuller version of that paper that we shall eventually share with all of you development partners that contains more statistical information. But let me say straight away that neither of those papers is a plan for the development of human resources of the country. It is mostly a review of what we’ve been doing so far and some of the policy stances under GPRS II. If we had a plan, of course, then we’d have dates and figures and intentions and projects.

In terms of the management of money, coming out of PAMSCAD and HIPC into a new era, we had to decide where do we get the biggest development value for money. Learning from the experience of various other countries, we had already taken the position then, that in the new vision that would develop, we would try and emulate the experience of those countries which had succeeded in developing their human resource potential as the foundation of their economic success. We also decided that if we did that and pursued the objective conscientiously, then it was legitimate for Ghana to go and that we could attain the status of a middle income country and the standard of living of middle income people within a measurable period of time.

So, let me emphasize that even though the benchmark of the MDGs had been internationally adopted as a minimal development ambit for all third world countries, especially countries such as Ghana, the intention of our national development planning and policy-making is not to stand on that MDG platform but to go beyond the MDG platform. You'll notice, however, from the papers that have been supplied, that we do not say very much about what we propose to do beyond the MDG platform, and I'll come to that matter presently. But the basic adjustment that had been achieved before, the stability, especially in the macro-economic sphere, and various activities under the MDG mode, were necessary pre-conditions for the new middle income objective. Very often, people want to confront the MDGs and middle income objectives, and sometimes our Development Partners are a bit confused about what we want to do. So let me explain.

If you have an illiterate population, you can hardly ever attain middle income status. But if you put everyone through primary education, which is the MDG objective, it is not enough to drive you into middle income status. So the MDG standards are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the new paradigm that we are trying to accomplish. So the programs and projects of GPRS have to proceed, even though we have not, as of now, defined very clearly our human resource plans with details of dates, times, and projects in the field of human resource development. There is no contradiction.

Now let us take, for instance, the place of education. The other day, I think it was Madam Robinson who said that the access to basic education should now come to be regarded as a human right. Like the MDGs goals, however, our human rights definitions do not really contain an answer to the question "what are the means of implementing those human rights, providing those facilities and services?". So the other day when we met here, I tried to draw your attention to the fact that we need to grow the economy, to improve the productivity of people, so that they could afford not only the basic services of education and health, but that they go beyond that. The documents that we will share with you are therefore a review of present developments and GPRS policies.

The investment figures in the documents before you today, the resources documents especially, are (1): only central government activity estimates and, of course, national development encompasses much more than central government development activities, and (2) as I said, they are based on answering the question "what will it take to implement in Ghana fully all the goals of the millennium development agreement?" Let me tell you, however, as a preview before we produce an educational development plan, some of the ideas that we have on this matter of human development, and I will start with education. Already when we took office in 2001, we found that the educational system that we had inherited, even on its own terms and standards, was not satisfactory, even for a third world country. It would certainly not support an economy driving forward to middle income status. Therefore, a commission was set up under Vice Chancellor of the University of Education at Winneba, Prof. Anamoah Mensah, to review the educational system that we inherited. I will not go into many of the things that this commission proposed, and I will not go into the Government's response which was delivered in the White Paper in the year 2004.

Let me just summarize it like this: we saw that there was huge gap in the supply of technically trained manpower; that the educational perspective was overly dominated by what we might call “grammar school” models and, for instance, if we look around this country and we try to count the number of agricultural training institutions, then you will be amazed that for a country which keeps on repeating that two-thirds of our people live in the rural areas, that we have so few, so few agricultural training institutions at all, any where.

I don't want to mislead you into the old chicken and egg situation, but we also found that all those countries that had done best had paid great attention to the access of their children to second cycle and tertiary education. This is an issue on which there continues to be a certain amount of ideological misunderstanding. It is not just a question of the prestige of a country having universities and so on. The fact is that if we do not have a sufficient supply of manpower with secondary and tertiary education, then you can not run even a third world economy properly, even a third world economy, let alone a second division middle income country. So, we should lay aside those bogus ideological arguments. And I would appeal to you: in reviewing your partnership with Ghana, in reviewing your activities and commitments to Ghana, please let us have agreement on this matter. Even if we were only concerned about producing good teachers for primary education, we still have to have good secondary and tertiary educational institutions. But we need to administer the country; everybody talks about good governance these days. You cannot conduct good governance in the modern world with a population that is restricted in its education to primary level attainments.

Let me therefore say that when we come to you with a plan for this sector of human resource development, already we have in the Ministry of Education revised perspectives in the educational strategies that we inherited. We will push further on that line, even though some of our universities are already bursting at the seams. Nobody can say that we producing every year enough people with tertiary education to drive a middle income Ghana. Just to put this in perspective a bit, I heard last weekend that now South Korea is producing more graduates with tertiary education than France is, and I think we must learn from those examples.

The financing of education is bound to be a very tricky matter. Madam chair, there is a danger that we must face up to: how do you pay for this education, how do you build the infrastructure and the facilities, but mostly, educational expenditure is on pay - for teachers and other people - it's on consumable books and this that and the other. How do you pay for this? We have unfortunately since independence fed ourselves with a wrong notion. It is good to say that education should be free, but for the nation as a whole, education cannot really be free. Somebody has got to pay. And so even though at the point of delivery of educational service we may decide not to charge the individual parent or guardian but finance it through the pocket of the consolidated funds, yet somebody has got to pay.

There are parts of our media and some of our people out there who have now developed a theory of complaining about somebody not giving them enough education, and we are all

full of admonition to look after the disadvantaged, even if there are disadvantaged who have to be helped out by the better placed. The fact is that as a community we have to pay the full cost of a good educational system. It is easier if the net recipients of educational assistance constitute say 10% of the population. Right now we define in our statistics a poverty line which embraces nearly 30% of our population. That makes it difficult if we just think in terms of disadvantaged and advantaged, it makes it difficult to find who is going to be the net contributor: because for the net recipients, for every net recipient, there must be a net contributor. There is a double-entry book keeping that you can't escape. And so I go back to what I tried to suggest to you the other day, the average productivity and therefore the average incomes of people ... [missing]

[missing] ...community, both us as government and you as donors. Our economic development community is not today spending enough on planning and on research and development. As Mats Karlsson said, we have to plan and get the best value for money, so we would appeal to you to contribute resources to a proper professional planning process, so that we are sure that what we are proposing to do will get the maximum returns for your money and ours.

I made a joke at your meeting two years ago that between DfID, AID, World Bank, and UNDP, and so on, you had more economists working for you than for the entire government. This is still the position today. So let me make a direct appeal: DfID, AID, World Bank, all of you: contribute to finance two or three positions each, so that we have a national planning team that is professionally able to provide us with a plan that will not only enable us to attain our overall development objectives but do so at reasonable efficiency and cost.

But let me, however, thank development partners for agreeing to walk the way with Ghana. Obviously the resource requirements for a post-GPRS program will be considerably larger than what you have before you at this meeting. But let me also remind ourselves, that the resources for our development will come primarily from ourselves. The Domestic resources have to carry the bulk of this task, but of course you can't wring water from a stone they say. So our emphasis on raising the productivity of the average citizen will be at the forefront of our proposals.

And as for the external resources, let me say that the other day when we met here, I was a bit surprised that the spokesman for the donor group managed not to refer to the OECD report on the trends in aid. If in the year after Gleneagles, the volume of aid has gone down rather than up, then there certainly is an issue which we cannot dodge. And let me optimistically comment to you, even now, that in the original proposals of the British Government and the Africa Commission a lot of these things need to be done up front. As I said, this is a chicken and egg situation, but in the power that Mats Karlsson talked about, these things have to be done up front and we will need a lot of money.

Thank you very much.