

Speech: DFID Ghana Country Director's speech at Education is GREAT event

Honourable Ministers

British High Commissioner

Director General of Ghana Education Service

Ladies and Gentlemen

Boys and girls!

Good afternoon everyone and happy Universal Children's Day.

Today marks the 59th anniversary of the date that world leaders came together at the United Nations to adopt the Declaration and the Convention of Children's Rights.

Today is a day for celebrating children's rights, to continue to press for action that will improve the lives of children around the world, and to recognise that the future belongs to our children and our grandchildren – not us.

And what this means is education.

Education has the power to change lives and to open the door to better employment, more active citizenship and well-informed health decisions that can benefit future generations.

This is why the UK has invested £400 million in the education sector in Ghana over the last 20 years. This investment in Ghana's future has supported over 700,000 girls and boys in primary and secondary school over the past 10 years.

We are celebrating today – not just Universal Children's Day – but also the enduring strength and depth of the UK-Ghana partnership on education. We're honoured to be joined by the Minister for Education Honourable Dr Prempeh, and the British High Commissioner Iain Walker.

The recent visit of Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall showcased the UK-Ghana education partnership and the huge potential, huge energy and huge drive of Ghana's youth – from young adults opening new businesses to younger children learning to read.

Our UK-Ghana partnership is evident at every level of Ghana's education system – and across a range of British government institutions based here in Accra.

So let me briefly tell you about the breadth of UK support to education in

Ghana ...

At the school level, the UK has focused on supporting quality teaching – the child may be the future, but the teacher is the key to unlock that future. Through DFID's T-TEL programme we have supported all public colleges of education in Ghana to improve how they train teachers.

Now, over 15,000 new teachers a year are going into schools with more practice and better skills to teach inclusively, at the right level and subject.

T-TEL has also supported universities to develop a new 'world-class' 4-year Bachelor of Education degree curriculum, which – from this year – will make teaching a degree a profession for the first time.

The British Council has supported teachers already in the classroom to develop, through the UK's 'Connecting Classrooms' programme.

The UK Government has also focused on inclusion in schools. Our Girls-PASS programme has supported over 99,000 disadvantaged girls across Ghana with scholarships which were vital for them to complete secondary school.

DFID's other girls' education projects with Varkey and Discovery are using innovative technologies to improve learning outcomes for marginalised girls.

And we are delighted that the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs has been appointed as one of the 12-member high-level platform on girls' education, which is testament to Ghana's international leadership. We look forward to working together in this vital area.

Our support to inclusion goes beyond gender. Through the UK's investments in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), we have contributed to improving education delivery in the 75 most deprived districts in Ghana.

We have also focused on reaching boys and girls in the poorest, rural communities through DFID's Complementary Basic Education programme – supporting over 248,000 out-of-school children to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills, and ensuring that they continue to learn and progress through the formal school system.

Can I take a moment here to applaud the Government of Ghana ... under the Honourable Minister's leadership, the Ministry of Education is now taking on leadership of CBE, and we welcome the commitment that 1% of the basic education budget will now go to CBE to reach the 450,000 children still out-of-school in Ghana. This is a practical demonstration of "Ghana Beyond Aid".

At the tertiary level, the UK has supported almost 2,500 Ghanaians to study in UK universities, gain degrees and develop their professional skills over the last 60 years, through the Commonwealth and Chevening Scholarship & Fellowship programmes.

From this year, and to mark its 60th anniversary, the Commonwealth Scholarship is changing so that students from the Commonwealth can study in

other countries apart from the UK. I hope Ghana will be one of these centres of excellence for others in the Commonwealth.

We don't just send students to the UK. We have also supported Ghana's own university system. 25 years ago, UK's ODA funding helped establish the University College of Education in Winneba. It became the first institution to pioneer a distance education programme, enabling teachers to upgrade professionally.

Today it is a major independent teacher training institution which has trained tens of thousands of educators across Ghana.

At the same time, universities which started in the UK are now established in Ghana. University of Nottingham's PGCE distance learning course is available in Ghana, and the University of Lancaster has a campus in Accra.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The education partnership between the UK and Ghana is now maturing to support Ghana move beyond aid.

His Excellency the President's vision for a self-reliant Ghana is truly inspiring and is applauded by the UK and all development partners. In the long term, economic development and investment in human capital is the sustainable pathway to self-reliance.

But "Ghana Beyond Aid" must address the issue of why, despite record economic growth, inequality in Ghana is rising. Ghana Beyond Aid can't just be about Ghana's "self-reliance" through industrialization. It has to address the "self-reliance" of the poorest and most marginalized Ghanaians.

That's why we are so excited to support the Ministry of Education's ambitious new agenda for reform, which sets out in practical terms how the vision of Ghana Beyond Aid will be implemented in the education sector, in line with the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030, and Sustainable Development Goal 4.

This new approach aims to ensure no child is left behind, and improve learning outcomes for all Ghanaian children.

The UK Government supports this shift, and this means an even sharper focus on the partnership between our two countries. We want to support the Government of Ghana to enhance the quality of the education system, through the right technical assistance and key reforms which will have the most beneficial impact on teaching and learning.

This means targeted support to leave no child behind and to make education inclusive for all. It requires stronger partnerships between education institutions in the UK and Ghana, and with other development partners.

To deepen our support for reforms, inclusion and partnerships, I am pleased to announce three new packages of support from the UK:

Firstly, new support through DFID (of up to £4.5 million) will support the

Ministry of Education's new Reform Secretariat to drive forward implementation of reforms which will directly improve teaching and learning and support the education sector to self-reliance.

Secondly, a new Girls Education Challenge 'Strategic Approaches to Girls' Education' project through World Education (a £9.6m investment) will focus on the most vulnerable girls. Together with two-year transitional funding and technical assistance from DFID for CBE, these interventions will support over 60,000 out-of-school children to enter school, at least 2,000 of whom will be girls with disabilities.

Thirdly, on behalf of the UK Government I am also pleased to announce a further phase of the British Council's Connecting Classrooms programme, which will support schoolchildren to develop core skills through training teachers and school leaders, and provide more school partnerships and exchange visits between Ghana and the UK.

The UK will also continue to support the MoE's teacher education reform through ongoing technical assistance from DFID's T-TEL programme over the next two years.

Through these efforts, we will build stronger and longer-term partnerships between education institutions in the UK and Ghana, and with other development partners, and create more opportunities for professional dialogue between policymakers.

Next week, the British Council will facilitate a visit from Ghana's tertiary education sector to the UK to learn about our Universities & Colleges Admission Services' admission model – and I hope UK universities can also come here and learn from Ghana's new teacher education curriculum.

And in January we look forward to welcoming the Hon. Minister of Education to London for the next Education World Forum, the annual meeting of Education Ministers from around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in conclusion

Education is the cornerstone of critical thinking, creativity, choice and capital, and will be the key enabler of Ghana's inclusive economic transformation and development.

The UK's offer in education is broad, varied and delivered through the Department for International Development, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the British Council and our countless partners.

But it has a singular focus on supporting inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

As we work together to support Ghana to become self-reliant in the education sector, we look forward to continuing to grow the partnership between our two countries, the UK and Ghana.

Together – in a partnership beyond aid – we want to help ensure that every

Ghanaian child, boy and girl, is given the opportunity to receive a good education and that no child gets left behind.

Thank you.