



Press release
For Immediate Release

UN Human Rights Body Says Ghana's Education System Faces Serious Challenges Due to Rapid Development of Private Education

(Accra, Ghana, 25 June 2015) The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has expressed serious concern about the rapid development of private education in Ghana and called on the government to pay attention to this growing trend.

In its [Concluding Observations](#) issued on 10th June 2015, the Committee notes that *“Private education [is] developing very quickly, without the necessary supervision regarding the conditions of enrolment, the quality of education provided, and the transparency and efficiency in the management of education resources”*.

These observations confirm findings made by the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition (GNECC) as part of a study on the issue between August 2014 and June 2015.

Notwithstanding undeniable evidence on the ground, very little attention is being given to this serious issue now because most people have come to accept the role of private education provision as an indispensable one. The Minister of Education, Honorable Naana Jane Opoku Agyeman, at a recent press briefing stated that *“reports that Ghana is ceding public education to the private sector has no basis in objective reality”*. This comment was also reflected in Ghana's submission last week at the ongoing 29th Human Rights Council in Geneva by Ghana's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

While GNECC acknowledges the remarkable strides made in expanding access to education as a result of key interventions such as the capitation grant, gaps remain in the implementation of these interventions and in publicly provided education in general which is creating a demand for private education even among the poor.

According to the CRC, this shows that *“primary education is not genuinely free, particularly due to the limited efficacy and efficiency of the Free Compulsory Basic Education Policy and the*

Capitation Grant because of the monetary contributions parents and/or guardians still have to make by paying levies, mainly affecting children in difficult socio economic situations.”

GNECC’s research also showed that poor parents are making huge sacrifices to send their children to private schools due to the poor condition of public schools and growing perception that private education offers the best opportunity for educational and social mobility although our [research](#) and that of [others](#) showed this is not necessarily the case.

The Government cannot ignore the impact that increasing commercialization within the education system would have on efforts to build cohesive and peaceful society. A system that creates segregation and widens socio-economic disparities is a threat to our peaceful existence as a State and should not be encouraged. GNECC welcomes the recent comments made here in Ghana by the nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka on the importance of [investment in public education](#) if the continent is to move forward.

The Chairperson of GNECC, Mr. Bright Appiah, also welcomed the recommendations made by the CRC and the need for government to protect education as a public good. He noted:

“We must bear in mind that education is a public good and the right to free compulsory basic education is guaranteed in Ghana's constitution as well in international law. We therefore need the support of everyone to push government to fulfill its obligation of investing in public education as a priority (government's role includes attracting and channeling private investments and donor funding into public schools) while it strengthens monitoring and regulation of private education providers to ensure that they do not exploit aspirations of citizens to give their children the best quality of education possible.”

On this basis we welcome the call by the Committee on the Rights of the Child for the Government to **“Assess and address the consequences of the rapid development of private education in the State party and its impact on the full realization of children’s right to education in accordance with the Convention and ensure the effective and efficient regulation and monitoring of private education providers, through the Private School Desk within the Ghana Education Service”**.

The Concluding Observations on Ghana can be found here: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/GHA/INT_CRC_COC_GHA_20799_E.pdf

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