



Trades Union Congress (Ghana)

Headquarters Secretariat, Hall of Trade Unions

P. O. Box 701, Accra - Ghana

Website: www.ghanatuc.org - Email: info@ghanatuc.org

Tel: 0302-662568 / 669675 / 666803 / 667161 / 669649

Fax: 233-302-667161 / 660618

PRESS STATEMENT

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

On Tuesday, 13th September, 2017, the President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, officially launched the Free Senior High School Programme.

Information from the Ghana Education Service (GES) indicates that more than 400,000 BECE candidates have successfully been placed into various Senior High Schools (SHS) across the country. According to the Ministries of Education and Finance, half of the amount needed to fund the Free SHS programme for the current academic year has been released to the schools with assurance that the remainder would be disbursed by mid-term.

The TUC would like to commend the President and his government for keeping one of NPP's campaign promises. We are particularly impressed with the careful planning and rigour with which the various government ministries and agencies have gone about the implementation of the programme.

We would like to assure government of our support for the Free SHS programme. This is the most important social intervention programme that has been implemented in our country since independence. We believe it is the most equitable way to distribute the country's resources to all Ghanaians regardless of their socio-economic background. We agree fully with President Nana Akufo-Addo's statement that "the cost of providing free secondary school education would be cheaper than the alternative of an uneducated and unskilled workforce..."

Data from Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) show that only 15 percent of all Ghanaians who are 15 years or older had attained

secondary education or higher. The statistics further indicate that 19.5 percent of Ghanaians have never attended school; 44.6 percent did not complete MSLC/BECE; and only 20.9 percent completed MSLC/BECE. After 60 years of independence these statistics are not only shameful, but they are also a barrier to sustainable and inclusive development.

We expect the Free SHS programme to dramatically improve access to education in all parts of the country. But we should not end there. Government should address all other related issues and to ensure that quality of education improves.

The Free SHS programme provides immense opportunities for young people. The programme will increase the pool of educated young Ghanaians in the labour market. It will also increase the number of students seeking university education. Harnessing these opportunities will depend on the preparations we make today. The challenges with job creation need to be addressed to ensure that Free SHS does not produce a pool of educated and frustrated young people. That will be costly for the country. The only way the cost of Free SHS will pay for itself will be to put beneficiary Ghanaians to productive work. Additionally, government should begin to think of expanding infrastructure at the country's universities to ensure that the universities can absorb the large number of SSS graduates in the next few years.



Dr. Yaw Baah
Secretary General
Trades Union Congress (Ghana)

18th September 2017