

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1. **Do you think that the kind of constitution we have packaged for ourselves to govern us has separated the people from those who govern us? If so do we need to amend the constitution because we've given so much power to those who we elected that even if they are not performing and failing the people we are not able to address this?**

Regarding the constitution, we all agree that there is the need for constitutional reforms. In some countries there are permanent constitutional review commissions established to review their constitutions every 10 or 15 years. In Ghana we have the constitution review commission whose report (From Political to Developmental Constitution) is informative and addresses some of the questions.

The 1992 constitution was geared towards political expediencies of the people and it needed to be more development oriented. However within the current constitution there are still provisions that can be actively applied to development. Article 36(2) states “the most secured democracy is the one that assures the basic necessities of the life of people as the fundamental duty”.

2. **Our attitudinal change requires we do something about our educational system. What's your opinion?**

Educational Reforms form a major part of the long term plan and investment needs to be made in our educational infrastructure. Article 25 deals with the issue of access to education. Every year Ghana reports on “deprived areas” as it is a target to eliminate deprivation. These elements should be dealt with when the constitution is reformed.

In terms of transformation there are two areas that should be the focus of policy transformation:

- **Opportunity in education** at all levels, from kindergarten all the way tertiary. The education system in Ghana is frustrating; it is often who you know rather than your intelligence which ensures you get on the right course.
- **Opportunity in employment** - getting a decent job that pays well.

3. **How do we take care of long term planning in the framework of erratic technological changes?**

Technology is a tool for change. If the objective is for every Ghanaian child to have a secondary education, technology becomes a vital tool and by adapting to technology it is possible that children could eventually learn at home. Actively developing the use of technology rather than being passive users should be encouraged.

Technology is probably changing all the time and therefore we should be more proactive to be able to adapt. The plan for ICT education is that every Ghanaian child should understand programming, at the moment skills level vary, even for graduates. Dr. Thompson highlighted the issue that he receives application at NDPC from graduate students who are not able to use Word, Excel or PowerPoint. This proves that we need to be proactive in terms of the use of technology.

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

**4. Is our problem planning or implementing strategies to achieving what we've put in place?**

Strategies are flexible and they change over time. Political instability can affect strategies therefore policy consistency is important. Ghana has been ambivalent and sometimes destructive with regards to policy consistency. For example of this is in the 1970's when there was the revolution and house cleaning, we effectively destroyed Ghanaian businesses and our policies did not support the development of Ghanaian businesses. Our policies did not support the development of Ghanaian businesses and although it is the case that taxes were not being paid this wasn't a reason to destroy businesses.

Korea had a similar situation where certain companies were corrupt and evading taxes, but however a law called "illicit accumulation of wealth law" was passed and businesses were given the option, either go to jail or invest in strategic industries, skills, etc. Korea chose investment and today Korea gives Ghana aid. In 1962 Ghana had a per capita income 73% higher than that of South Korea however today the Ghana per capita income is 5% that of South Korea.

NDPC also identified a number of administrative and structural issues in terms of project / programme implementation one of which is inflation. Instability has led to issues in planning due to financial constraints. This is one reason why NDPC prioritise macroeconomic stability and try to be flexible in their strategies. NDPC favour a multiple futures approach so there is no single focus in terms of GDP growth or population levels but rather multiple possibilities. Currently some tertiary institutions offer degrees in futurology where instead of studying the past the future is now being studied.

**5. Is our problem thinking too big and leaving the smaller problems unresolved? Is there a model to follow such that we have a way of doing simple things in a bigger way?**

Is good to have a big picture and within that you have strategies. Within the NIP there are subsections; there is spatial planning, land ownership and land use etc and it is critical to implement reform.

For instance, the new prime minister of India is a visionary and he wants to increase infrastructure in India however the biggest obstacle to this is with land ownership. China also has similar issues whereby one person may refuse to sell therefore big infrastructure projects have to build around this one individual - CNN calls them China's Fingernail Highway system.

**6. How can we correct the JHS system structured to keep kids out of school?**

Dr Thompson supported free Senior High Schools and a continuation of the education reform of 2007 which incorporated Junior High Schools into the basic school system. The next logical step to Junior High Schools should be Senior High Schools however this requires investment and there is a need to be creative in how Ghana finances infrastructure expansion.

In some societies obtaining only a first degree is becoming inadequate for certain professions therefore offering a high school education should be minimum a minimum requirement to ensure an educated workforce, currently Ghana has only 2% of the working age population with tertiary education. Education is something we have to embrace but for Ghana to succeed we need to cut out our dependency psychosis. There's no way donors are

### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

going to help us raise our education level, this has to be done by ourselves. Education is ultimately is the only route out of our current problems.

Professor Quartey added civic education was required to transcend through the various levels of education in order to deal with inefficiencies and issues of corruption. Right from the onset, if we teach children the implication of corruption they will be aware of it, the problems that it can cause and this will help reduce the levels we currently see today. Also science based education is key requirement; the Ghana tertiary institutions are humanities centred and science based education is dying. This means that Ghana is not training the next generation for manufacturing but rather we are producing people who will market the products imported from other countries and creating jobs in these countries rather than in Ghana. We need to restructure and promote science education.

7. **“Someone raised the issue of the science graduates switching into switch into jobs designed for humanities because there is not a market for them” and how to address that.**

Dr Thompson stated that there’s currently a 60/40 ratio; with 60% in favour of science based education and 40% in favour of a humanities based education however the policy basis for a humanities based education cannot be explained. It must be noted however that there is no need to produce science students for the sake of producing science students – there must be a requirement from the economy.

There is a section of the NIP that focuses on the skills Ghana will require for infrastructural development over the next 30 years. There needs to be a strategy for human resource development based on our trajectory of economic growth, for example if Ghana wants to develop an automobile and food processing industry certain skills are required. This wasn’t done when the 60/40 ration was implemented. Professor Quartey added that a holistic approach to training was required and incentives required. Also science students should have basic knowledge of other disciplines due to changing technology. Versatility is the key.

Free Senior High School is a great concept according to Professor Quartey but he believes that the implementation of this will have to be well planned. Subsidies can’t be provided universally and therefore should be targeted to those that financially cannot afford. There is a question however over whether subsidizing is an efficient way of using limited resources. If subsidies are used it is suggested that beneficiaries should be involved to ensure that when funds are disbursed they are used properly and efficiently.

Dr Thompson ended this discussion stating that Ghana cannot fight the issue of corruption without ethics. In Kwame Nkrumah’s biography he said *“bribery and corruption which has been part and parcel of our colonial setup must be stomped out.”* The question over whether Senior High Schools should be educating some children at the expense of other children still exists however at the strategic level we should never underestimate the importance of free basic education in the transformation of nations. The market based approach is wrong. The United States overtook Britain as the leading economic power in the world by introducing free basic education. In the U.S, the Mecca of capitalism, 95% of secondary education is public schools. Investing in education from is like building roads it’s just the soft aspect, human capital instead of hard capital. Part of the problem with funding free High School Education is that people think there is no money to fund this however through technical and efficient allocation then money can be found.