

President emphasises knowledge in development process

Story: Daniel Nkrumah

THE President, Mr John Agyekum Kufuor, has stated that the country's strategy for future economic growth and development will hinge on improving on the knowledge base of the country.

He said quality in education would be provided with the delivery of enhanced social service.

These were contained in a speech read on his behalf at the opening of an international conference in Accra yesterday.

The three-day conference, organised by the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and the Cornell University, is being attended by 60 academicians from several countries.

One of the highlights of the conference will be the launch of the Economy of Ghana Network (EGN), which will serve as the focal point for people interested in good economic management to submit suggestions on the way forward.

President Kufuor said it was crucial that people deepened their knowledge in order to apply creativity and competitiveness in the production of goods and services and apply science and technology to production, fabrication and trade.

The President asserted that a well-educated citizenry was crucial to the adoption of sound democratic principles in social interaction locally and on the world stage.

"To achieve this objective, we must encourage behavioural change, not only for individuals but for the nation as a whole," he said.

The Chairman of the Council of State, Professor Alex Kwabong, who chaired the opening session, described the conference as very crucial, since it would provide the opportunity to "take stock of where we have come from, where we are and where we want to go".

Professor Ravi Kambur of the Cornell University observed that in almost 50 years of Ghana's independence, the essential objective for economic policy makers had not changed.

He said the thrust of the nation's economic policy was how to achieve a rapidly improving standard of living, particularly for the worst off.

He argued that globally, the economic environment had changed and posed challenges to such a policy.

A Senior Research Associate of the Overseas Development Institute, Professor Tony Killick, cautioned that maintaining the rate of progress of the recent past would leave Ghana classified as a low-income country for many years to come.

That, he said, would mean that almost all or most of the millennium development targets would be missed.

On his part, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Professor Kwadwo Asenso Okyere, said the oscillation of the performance of the economy was unhealthy and called on researchers to come up with recommendations for sustained growth.

He said the attainment of the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative should provide the platform for sustained development.