

SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR KWASI KWAFO ADARKWA (IMMEDIATE PAST VICE-CHANCELLOR OF KNUST) AT THE SPEECH AND PRIZE GIVING DAY OF ON SATURDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2011 ATAM AT THE SCHOOL'S PREMISES

Chairman

Chairman and Members of the Board of Governors

Headmaster and Staff

Nananom

Parents and Teachers

Distinguished Invited Guests

Old Students

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am grateful to the headmaster and staff of this institution for inviting me to this occasion. I must say that I am highly impressed with your school's infrastructure and neat surroundings. I congratulate you for the sterling achievements the School has chalked in its history. It is an undeniable fact that, the School has brought a lot of meaning to the lives of many youth of this country. As an educationist myself, I am fully aware of challenges you are confronted with on a daily basis in your attempt to train the nation's youth into responsible adulthood and it is on this score that I would like to give special commendations to all the teachers of this School. Being a teacher myself, I know that a teacher must necessarily and at all times be patient, must inspire, must develop talent, kindle interest and help in moulding the character of the students you teach. I, therefore, say *ayekoo* to you all.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as we may be aware, Speech and Prize Giving Days have over the years been organised in our various schools to provide a platform through which the internal activities of institutions are brought to the public's notice. The occasion further serve as a stock taking exercise during which occasion various reports such as that of the Headmaster and School Prefect are read to shed light on not only the activities of the School, but areas the School has fallen short or need assistance. Various speakers are also invited to such programmes to speak

on varied topics of interest. Deserving staff and students and affiliates of the School are also, sometimes, recognised for their invaluable contribution to the success of the institution. In fact, prior to and during my term in office as the Vice-Chancellor of KNUST and even after my term, I have had the opportunity to speak at several of such occasions which have all been joyous occasions and I know yours would not be a departure from this norm.

Mr. Chairman, there is little doubt today about the fact that our nation's quest to develop and remain truly independent basically depends on educating the youth. The quality of the human resource base of every country is, without doubt, one of the most valued and important resources through which that country can accelerate development and achieve competitive advantage in this global world of ours that is characterised by competition, information communication technology and high level research, among others. This has culminated in the need to maintain high quality standards in all aspects of human life including education and in the quest to achieve this aim, several mechanisms and theories such as "*quality control*", "*quality assurance*", "*continuous improvement*" and "*total quality management*" among others have been propounded and used in several institutions and industries.

Following the above, the issue of quality education as a tool for national development has become a cliché and has assumed centre stage in almost all high level discussions so far as education and development are concerned. The reason for this trend is not far fetched as our society has realised the need to educate our populace especially, the youth for them to assume centre stage in the nation's development effort. Professionals such as administrators, planners, doctors, engineers, planners, teachers, nurses, mechanics etc who are today pioneering the nation's development effort all had to be educated. It is in fact because of the skills they attained in the course of their education that they find themselves at where they are today as education fine tunes students' creativity, their level of insight, and their analytical skills to issues and situations. Education generally acquaints students with unique ideas and stimulates their curiosity. This provides students with unique opportunities for personal enrichment and better future careers.

Mr. Chairman, quality education in my opinion is reflected in several contexts and is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills in general literacy, numeracy

and skills for life and has outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. It should also lead to the improvement of the quality of life of all Ghanaians by empowering the populace especially the youth to overcome poverty and raise their living standards. Our students should be trained to create through their entrepreneurial skills, the wealth that is needed for a radical socio-economic development. They must be equipped to fully fine tune their creativity, insight and analytical skills to be able to find affordable and sustainable solutions to our myriad development problems of poverty, diseases, illiteracy, under-industrialisation, youth unemployment and post-harvest losses among others. This means that, the kind of education that solves our daily problems and has specific content that depend on local and national values should be our own form of quality education. Through this, the entire education system will be tailored towards finding lasting solutions to immediate and strategic national development problems and not the mere acquisition of knowledge and certificates which over the years, has in one way or the other characterised our educational system.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, there are several dimensions of quality education but the UNICEF (2000) and UNESCO (2004) recognise five dimensions of quality education as the learner, the learning environment, the context, priorities and educational outcomes. This means that, for our education system to be described in the terms of quality, the education system must have students who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities, contents that are reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, well managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities, outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. Simply put, all must be well with the student, the learning environment and context must be right in terms of infrastructure, teaching and learning facilities for us to achieve quality education.

In addition to the above requirements, all stakeholders must play their respective and collective roles efficiently and effectively as required of them. In this direction, teachers must update their

lesson notes to reflect current trends and teach students efficiently with the care and discipline required and be role models for students. Headmasters must also play their supervisory roles to ensure effective teaching and learning. Parents and guardians also have a responsibility to provide decent accommodation and balanced diet for the proper physical and mental growth of the students. Industry must also have a say in the development of appropriate and adequate syllabi and curricular, the outcome of which will positively and directly influence industry's fortunes. The government also has the responsibility to see to the provision and proper maintenance of school infrastructure that has the capacity to provide conducive environment for teaching, research and entrepreneurship training, pay teachers well and provide teaching and learning materials. Students must also play their part in the effort through better learning.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, from the foregoing, it is evident that achieving quality education for national development is a complex effort which involve the maximum input of all stakeholders. I will urge all hands to be on deck and all stakeholders playing their respective part very well in order for us to be used as a reference point one day in our history.

I thank you all and once again, congratulate you on your achievement.