

New research fund for vari...

BY YAW KYEI

...as govt moves to support relevant, specific studies

IN addition to the book and research allowance introduced to support research works in the various public universities, plans are underway to establish a fund to motivate the institutions to improve the quality of their research, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has said.

Announcing the initiative at the Special Congregation of the University of Professional Studies in Accra yesterday, the

President emphasized that the fund would be used to support only “relevant” and “sector-specific” studies.

Unlike the book and research allowance, researchers will have to justify the relevance

of their studies and their contribution to the development of specific sectors in the country before they can access the fund.

The initiative, according to President Akufo-Addo, formed part of the measures

of his administration to reduce the cost of education in the universities, while supporting the quality of research.

The President reiterated the government’s commitment to provide opportunities



• President Akufo-Addo congratulating Nana Opoku-Ampomah, founder of UPSA



• Prof. Oquaye (middle) with the members of the Media Coalition against Galamsey

Media, Parliament collaborate to fight illegal mining

BY JULIUS YAO PETETSI

PARLIAMENT has reached an agreement with the Media Coalition against Galamsey (MCAG) to have a joint working group to intensify the fight against illegal mining.

The Speaker of Parliament, Professor Aaron Mike Oquaye who announced the imminent formation of the group in Accra yesterday said the group was expected to work for the next one year.

"I will take steps to invite the leadership of Parliament to establish a group in collaboration with you (the MCAG) to intensify the fight against galamsey," Speaker Oquaye told the leadership of the Coalition which had called on him in his office for Parliament's support in the fight against galamsey.

To be known as the Parliament and the Media Coalition Against Galamsey Group, Professor Mike Oquaye said the group would be formalised at the next board meeting of the Parliamentary Service and would have three members each, including a woman, from both sides of the House.

According to Speaker Oquaye, the need for Parliament to partner with those involved in advocacy against illicit mining was crucial as the House represents the entire population

who would be affected by the effects of the galamsey menace.

In the view of Speaker Oquaye, Ghana's reputation as the producer of the finest cocoa beans "is under galamsey attack. We are polluting everything including water which is equivalent to life."

He said there was the need to educate the people on what the economic benefits are and its adverse effects on the country and expects the joint group to take that as part of its mandate when formally put together.

The Convener of the Coalition, Ken Ashigbey, who had earlier bemoaned what he said was the failure of justice delivery system to give stiffer punishment to people who have been found guilty of galamsey crimes expressed his appreciation to the Speaker for the initiative.

He said there was no cohesion in the workings of agencies mandated by law to address environmental issues and asked that harmonisation of the operation of the agencies were done.

In his view, the galamsey menace had reached its current proportion because of "complete leadership failure" and was hopeful that the one year period in which the group would work would help reduce the menace.

Commending successive governments for their roles, Ken Ashigbey gave thumbs up for

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for sustaining the fight against galamsey and invited Parliament to join the coalition in its 'Red Friday' campaign by donning their red attire on the last Friday of May to drum home the message to the general public.

Co-convenor of the Coalition, Ms Carol Annang on her part said "one of the cardinal objectives (of the coalition) is to go through this process and get to the point where we can name and shame."

Doing this, she said involves a lot of financial injection and that government must commit funds to the operations of the coalition just as it does to Operation Vanguard, the joint Military-Police taskforce assigned to clamp down on illegal miners.

"Whatever Operation Vanguard is doing will not get to the people without us and so some consideration must be given to providing us with resources to be able to carry the story from where the galamsey is happening to the people who are the ultimate beneficiaries," Ms Annang appealed.

The First Deputy Speaker and the Majority Leader, Joe Osei Owusu and Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, who were at the meeting decried the galamsey menace and stated their readiness to support the joint working group to overcome the threat of galamsey.