



UCC holds public lecture on agriculture

FROM DAVID O. YARBOI -TETTEH, CAPE COAST

THE Provost of the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences of the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Professor Livingstone Kobina Sam-Amoah, has advocated for the implementation of reforms that would enhance the use of irrigation in agriculture production.

He explained that, the country would experience the challenge of food shortage if it fails to take advantage of the availability of water bodies to construct dams to promote agriculture while improving on food security.

In his view, Ghanaians have to

blame themselves for neglecting the available opportunities that come with the availability of water bodies to improve on agriculture, saying, "In this country, rain water and river bodies are left to go into the sea without any effort to use the water in crop production."

Prof. Sam-Amoah said this at an inaugural lecture held at the campus of the university.

Speaking on the topic: "Ensuring food security: damming water or damming our future?" he underscored the need for the country and the African continent to prioritise irrigation in food production.

He noted that in some parts of the world, irrigation remains the dividing line between abundant food and no food at all, saying, "Irrigated agriculture represents

20 per cent of the total cultivated land, but contributes 40 per cent of the total food produced worldwide."

He stated: "Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the lowest portion of the cultivated area that is irrigated, just over three per cent against 21 per cent at the global level. At the same time, it has the highest prevalence of undernourishment, 25 per cent in 2011-2013 as against 12 per cent at the global level."

Prof. Sam-Amoah explained further that less than two per cent of the total cultivatable area in Ghana was irrigated despite considerable potential for development and emphasis on irrigation development in the nation.

Prof. Sam-Amoah noted that the performance and productivity

of existing irrigation schemes, particularly those that were publicly developed were generally low.

He, therefore, called for the rehabilitation of existing irrigation schemes as well as the construction of new schemes to improve on agriculture production in the country.

"If we continue to rely on rainfall as our main source of meeting crop water requirements, then we will be risking our future, that is damming our future," he said.

Prof. Sam-Amoah commended the government for its One-Village-One-Dam policy and noted that the initiative which aims at promoting all year round agriculture if implemented would increase food production.

He further called for the regular monitoring and evaluation of

irrigation schemes in the country to determine the availability of water for agriculture as well as challenges regarding the schemes for effective delivery.

He indicated that effective irrigation would help reduce the more than \$600 million import of rice into the nation and advocated the need to tackling all challenges within the sector.

Prof. Sam-Amoah also stressed the need for collaboration among the various agencies in the promotion of irrigation due to the critical role that food security plays in the development of any economy.

He urged the nation to adopt institutional reforms in the implementation of reforms for water resource management specifying the use of water for agriculture production and other uses.