



• Justice Irene Charity Larbi (right) addressing the gathering



Provide comprehensive policy document on Free SHS

• Justice Larbi urges government

By Timothy Gobah, SALTPOND

AN Appeal Court Judge, Justice Irene Charity Larbi, has called on the government to provide a comprehensive policy document detailing the forms and structure of the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy and the roles of the various stakeholders.

She said for the citizenry to understand and appreciate their roles and responsibility in the new dispensation, the government must leave no room for doubt or speculation.

Addressing the 58th Speech and Prize-giving Day of Mfantsiman Girls Senior High School, last Saturday, she said, "policy clarity is never a luxury in the administration of a state".

The event, on the theme "Free SHS: The Role of the Parent and other stakeholders," was hosted by the 1987 and 1993 year groups. It was also used to inaugurate the school's solar lighting project.

Stakeholders

Justice Larbi said it was also important for the government to further engage closely with stakeholders with the view to ironing out the various challenges confronting the new policy.

She said while parents and old

students associations must do their bit, the primary source of infrastructure would have to be provided by the government.

"There can be no argument that the Free SHS will lead to an increase in enrolment that outstrips yearly increases that we have been accustomed to. The inevitable effect is that there will be increased pressure on the facilities in the schools," she stressed.

That, she said, required that teaching and learning materials would be adequate and available when needed, stressing that "subventions meant for the schools must also reach them on time."

"We sympathise with the position of the government. There is only so much money and there are unlimited

needs to be met. However, we daresay that there are very few more pressing needs than the education of our future leaders if this nation is to survive and compete in the global market place," she said.

Justice Larbi urged government and the educational authorities to pay close attention to the upholding of standards in the quality of instruction rendered to students in order not to compromise quality and standards.

She advised the students to pay attention to their studies, obey the school rules, lift themselves and one another up and seek the guidance of their teachers, parents and guardians so they could learn from their experiences.

Parents involvement

The Chairperson of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Ms Josephine Nkrumah, noted that free education did not imply the responsibilities of parents towards their children's education were over.

On the contrary, she said, parents would continue to be primary educators of their children beyond the classroom

and, therefore, needed to build a positive attitude of their children towards school.

Wireless network

The Minister of Communications, Mrs Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, announced that the ministry, through the e-Transform project, a World Bank-funded initiative, was financing Wireless Networks for selected senior high schools.

She said connectivity to those schools would afford the students the opportunity to conduct academic research at no cost and also assist them to access digital libraries and online course books.

Mrs Owusu-Ekuful entreated the school authorities and parents to acquire knowledge in cyber security-related issues in order to educate their children on the dangers associated with the use of the Internet.

The Headmistress of the school, Mrs Agnes Letitia Hawkson, said the school recorded no failures in last year's West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), adding that out of a total of 794 candidates presented, 765 passed in all the eight subjects, 20 in seven, five in six and three in five subjects, respectively.

She said 90.7 per cent of the students qualified in 2017 to enter tertiary institutions, adding that "the school also recorded 180 'A's in core mathematics, a feat she described as unprecedented.



The government has been urged to provide a comprehensive policy document detailing the forms and structure of the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy and the roles of the various stakeholders.