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Press Release:

VIAM Africa Cautions Government to Hasten Slowly with Conversion of Polytechnics

Accra, Ghana, April 22, 2015- VIAM Africa Centre for Education and Social Policy has issued a paper concerning the conversion of polytechnics in Ghana into technical universities. The paper has outlined the numerous challenges which technical institutions go through as well as the limitations of importing the German model of technical universities. Presently, institutional and programme accreditation requirements of the National Accreditation Board, together with other statutory institutional affiliation arrangements have not been concluded. This makes the premature conversion of Takoradi and Koforidua Polytechnics into technical universities questionable, when their University statutes appear not to have been enacted by Parliament as required by law.

Policy recommendations have been made in the paper for consideration if truly Ghana wants to achieve the aims stated by the committee for the conversion of the polytechnics. One of the recommendations is for a comprehensive secondary education system in which general secondary education (GSE) and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are delivered in the same school, with the view to stimulating a 'parity of esteem' between GSE and TVET. The success or failure of a technical university apart from all other factors identified relies prominently on the nature of the curriculum and the system of technical and vocational education in Ghana. We would advise government to slow down the conversion process, until at least two years. This would allow for a complete review of their curriculum and ensure they meet proper accreditation requirements, whilst addressing the structural weaknesses (e.g. progression) in the technical/vocational training system. In our view, such hasty policy interventions have often undermined the quality of our education system. The implementation of the 1987 and 2007 education reform recommendations are few examples.

VIAM Africa Centre for Education and Social Policy is one of Africa's leading progressive think tanks which provide independent reviews of education and social policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Our purpose is to conduct and promote research into, and the shaping of public opinion in crime and victimization, education and social stratification, education and climate change, education finance, governance, gender issue, corporate social responsibility and social policy (health & social care, poverty, welfare and social work).

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