

GRASAG National President's End of Year Message Delivered at this year's GRASAG Press soiree

Welcome to the end of year media soirée of the Graduate Students Association of Ghana.

The national Secretariat of the Association put this soirée together to interact with members of the press and position the Association to be a key player in Ghana's policy discussions.

GRASAG was formed in the year 1992 to bring together all Post Graduate Students in Ghana under one union to promote the well being of all post graduate students to foster national development.

The Association currently comprises eighteen local chapters and made up of about 30,000 graduates students across all public universities, some private universities and technical universities. GRASAG currently has a diaspora sector that handles the affairs of Graduate Students pursuing various post graduate studies outside the country.

The aim of the diaspora chapter is to consciously help our colleagues who have left the shores of Ghana to continue to feel part of the Academic community of Ghana and contribute to the intellectual discourse in the country. For this reason GRASAG has put measures in place to ensure international students will have the opportunity to present their research papers at the annual GRASAG research conference and workshops.

GRASAG is working hard to facilitate the integration processes of our colleagues once they return to Ghana after their studies.

Often times, Ghanaian Students studying abroad are faced with the dilemma of not being able to easily get employment in Ghana upon return. Even though this problem of lack of employment opportunities is not limited to only Ghanaian international students, the phenomenon has really deprived Ghana of the services of some very fine brains who have left the shores of Ghana and are doing amazing work in foreign countries.

I have the opportunity to interact with a great number of them on daily basis and I hope Ghana will one day benefit from their pool of knowledge.

It is important to note that GRASAG's membership comprises individuals who have adequate knowledge in all sectors of the economy, from Economy, Engineering, Agriculture, International Relations, Finance, Energy, to name a few. These are researchers who are able to review policies and make solid academic recommendations. We are hoping to bring all these knowledge to bare in support of Ghana's drive towards being a self sufficient country.

We cannot attain that enviable goal of Ghana beyond aid if we are not interested in the research output of our graduate students. Policies do not work based on sentiments and feelings but on solid research grounds. This is why it is worrying that we have not paid particular attention to post graduate research as a country.

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, Government of Ghana continues to pay lip service to research funding in Ghana. Successive budget statements presented to the parliament of Ghana neglect the important place of research in our Socio economic development process as a country. Till this day, Ghana does not have a National Research Fund to support post graduate research. This may be a major oversight that has escaped the managers of this great nation for so long. But we want to draw everyone's attention to this important miss by successive governments and there is the need to correct it now.

Without research we will always move one step forward and two steps backward because nothing we do is backed by data. We cannot sustain our Macroeconomic stability without proper research. If we do not take care as a country our development will be stagnant for a long time no matter the amount of investment we make as a country.

GRASAG understanding the times we find ourselves has established the GRADUATE RESEARCH TRUST FUND to provide meaningful funding to support post graduate research. This fund aims at providing all the financial needs of student researchers and ensure students working on cost intensive research works have access to funding. We need the support of all stakeholders, industry, private and government, to make this ambition a reality.

Beginning January 2020 GRASAG will embark on important projects and programs aimed at making the Association RELEVANT, VISIBLE AND VIBRANT .

Among this programmed include the:

- 0. SDG CHAMPION CHALLENGE
- 0. THE YEAR OF RETURN
- 0. THE GREEN PROJECT
- 0. THE MONTHLY DEVELOPMENTAL FORUM
- 0. RESEARCH CONFERENCES AND TRAINING
- 0. SHS MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

I will entreat all present here to kindly attend our programs and make sure you propagate the good news of GRASAG.

