

ANNEX 1 – Ministry of Education (MOE)- Language Policy

White Paper on the Report of the Education Reform Review Committee, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, October 2004

14.0 THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

14.1 Government accepts the recommendation that the children's first home language and Ghana's official language, English, should be used as the medium of instruction at the kindergarten and primary level. Government is aware of the importance of children's native language as an effective communication tool for reading learners at this level. Government is also mindful of the depth of research, which provides a scientific basis for the use of the parental language as a medium of instruction, and of communication generally, in the early stages of education, thus the formulation of a policy to that effect.

14.2 The difficulties, however, of implementing that language policy pushed Government to review the modalities of its application. Given the great multiplicity of Ghanaian languages, the most obvious of these difficulties is how to provide for a class of children with diverse home language as is increasingly the case in both urban and rural school settings.

14.3 Government is very much aware of its responsibility to promote Ghanaian culture, especially through the use of local languages. Hence, every effort would be made to promote the development of teaching and learning materials in Ghanaian languages, together with support for the training of teachers in the use of Ghanaian languages in teaching. Government, therefore, further accepts the recommendation of the Committee that where teachers and learning materials are available and linguistic composition of classes is fairly uniform, the children's first language must be used as the dominant medium of instruction in kindergarten and lower primary school.

14.4 At the same time, it is also well established that an early and routine acquaintance with second, third or even fourth languages confers on children great advantages in their lifelong proficiency in those languages. The facts of geography impose on Ghana a necessity to promote among wide segments of the commercial and financial sector's work forces a proficiency in the French language. Being an English-speaking country is also a source of considerable competitive advantage in international economic and political relations, which Ghana needs to build upon. Therefore, government has in the past encouraged a policy of early introduction to English and French, which is intended to maintain in a balanced way the primary use of mother tongues in kindergarten and primary school and then with increasing intensity in high school.

14.5 It is the decision of Government that apart from assuring primary-tongue proficiency in English by the end of primary school, the study of French to work-a-day standard will also

become compulsory in second cycle education, and the Junior High curriculum should accordingly work up to the policy. This means in particular that all pupils at Junior High level should attain good working and communication proficiency in English. Second cycle institutions should then be able to concentrate on enrichment of communication skills in English rather than spending so much study time in the remedying of basic deficiencies that have been carried over from the primary level.

[End of Annex 1]