

CONCEPT NOTE

2ND Annual Forum On Government, Industry and Academia Collaboration (AFGIAC 2018)

According to the Government of Ghana and other international organizations, about 60% of the unemployed population in Ghana is made up of the youth, mirroring the epidemic of youth unemployment currently rampant around the African continent¹. The African Business Centre for Developing Education (ABCDE), an education centered NGO, is among numerous public and private institutions that are eager to find practical solutions to youth, especially graduate, unemployment. Towards this end, ABCDE, will be hosting a one-day unique Forum on **May, 10th 2018** at the GAAS Auditorium on the theme: **“Commercialization of Scientific Research: Promoting Youth Employment in Agribusiness.”** It will be second in the annual series of forums on Government, Industry and Academia Collaboration (AFGIAC).

The forum will be in collaboration with the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (GAAS), the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI), Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and some principal universities and educational institutions. In recent years, the CSIR, for example, has identified the need to improve the commercialization of agriculture as a poverty alleviation intervention, by partnering farmers with private institutions to improve productivity and output. In 2016, the CSIR hosted an open day on the theme “Agricultural Research: A Catalyst for National Development.” The occasion day provided the opportunity for research scientists to interact with policy makers, farmers, industrialists and other users of research results.² The proposed AFGIAC 2 forum by ABCDE will add to the dialogue by bringing together researchers, farmers and in addition possible capital investor bodies, with the objective of catalyzing the process of commercializing agriculture.

As agriculture is the backbone of the Ghanaian economy, and the sector which can most readily absorb unemployed youth, it is imperative that government, industry, academia, student/youth organisations and NGOs all take a keen interest in this forum. AFGIAC 2 seeks to contribute to youth employment by increasing the access and knowledge by the youth to Ghana’s scientific discoveries in the agro-sector, and to enable them engage with other intermediaries such as financial institutions in order to commercialize the scientific findings.

The Forum will facilitate dialogue, debate, and awareness about commercial opportunities in the agri-business sector, as well as the research findings and business initiatives currently underway. The event will be a platform to connect relevant stakeholders and assist in the identification and commercialization of products from public and private agricultural research institutions. The Forum will highlight the strides being made in food and agricultural research in Ghana and discuss how recent graduates can become active in agribusiness with very

¹ Ghana Statistical Service :: (2016). Retrieved January 25, 2018, from <http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/>

² C. (n.d.). CSIR pushes for commercialization of its agricultural technologies. Retrieved January 25, 2018, from <http://www.csir.org.gh/index.php/component/k2/item/323-csir-pushes-for-commercialisation-of-its-agricultural-technologies>

modest financial investments. Participants will have the opportunity to identify all the services and support systems available to an agribusiness venture, with primary focus on youth employment.

Conference Structure

This is a one-day intensive forum. Its structure has been designed with the aim of ensuring targeted discussions, networking with the most active stakeholders, with a view to extracting practical ideas that can be used by unemployed graduates.

The forum will feature an opening speech and a number of sessions including keynote presentations by the Ministries and relevant agencies of Food and Agriculture, Trade and Industry, Education, Employment, Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation. Panel discussions, business networking and mentorship sessions are also featured. An exhibition of research findings and food products developed based mainly on local research findings will be displayed.

Proposed Topics:

1. Recent scientific research and findings in the food and agri-sector
2. Youth in Agribusiness Incubation (Trade & Investment Opportunities)
3. Financing Agribusinesses in Ghana
4. Nurturing Enterprising Youth in Agricultural Technologies
5. Training in Agribusiness Incubator Management
6. Mentorship & Business Networking
7. Designing Financial Products for Agro-business Incubation
8. Supporting Youth Incubation, Youth Networks & Agripreneurship
9. Business and Development Partners Priority Support Areas for Youth Engagement in Agribusiness Trade and Investment

Forum's Objectives:

- To transform the mindset and perceptions of the youth towards agribusiness;
- To integrate youth engagement in agribusiness incubation as a policy in Ghana to attract investment, intensify production and add value;
- To persuade and lobby the Ghana Government to recognize the youth as a valuable public resource, human capital and force for change that will drive 'agripreneurship' and innovations in the agribusiness value chain;
- Pursuing strategies that encourage and support public and private investment and use of public/private partnerships in financing youth agribusiness and technical skills training;
- To drive agribusiness development in Ghana;
- Developing, adopting and implementing the national strategy, action and investment plan for youth agribusiness incubation;
- Advocating for increased support and engagement of the youth in policy making and program implementation forum in this sector;
- Creating funds and other available support mechanisms for the youth in agribusiness incubation;
- Commercializing innovative technologies for value addition, productivity and competitiveness;
- Engage the youth in research, development and utilization of innovative agricultural technologies;
- Enhance access to production, utilization of modern technologies and good agricultural practices to increase efficiency.

Additional Features

Exhibition:

During the Forum an exhibition and demo market will be organized to showcase innovations, products and services in agribusiness. Participants will visit stands, see demonstrations of revolutionary products and prototypes at the demo market and may consult and research outcomes at the poster sessions.

Participants will also be able to visit the exhibition a couple of times during the day. There will be coffee-breaks, lunch and drinks at the end of the day.

Networking Events:

Lack of opportunities for university academics to meet industrialists is a salient issue. In response to this, the event will seek to bring together youth industrial leaders in agribusiness, government representatives and university academics in informal sessions for networking purposes.