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EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT II PUBLISHED

Africa Education Watch (Eduwatch) has published the second edition of its annual Education Accountability Report (EAR II). The Report is a summarised review of key findings and recommendations in three different Auditor-General's reports on Pre-University Educational Institutions (Second-cycle institutions and Colleges of Education etc), Technical Universities, the Ministry of Education together with selected Departments and Agencies for the year ended 31st December, 2020.

Key findings of the EAR II

- a. Pre-University Educational Institutions recorded financial irregularities in cash management, procurement and stores, payroll, contract management, and tax infractions amounting to over **GH¢ 42 million**, indicating a **78%** increase in financial irregularities from the 2019 value of **GH¢ 23 million**. This is due to a lack of commitment on the part of managements of these institutions to implement previous audit recommendations and enforce compliance to public financial management and procurement laws and regulations.
- b. Technical Universities recorded a **92.32% decrease** in amount involved in financial irregularities from GH¢ 170.6 million in 2019 to GH¢ 13 million for the 2020 financial year, indicating improvement in compliance in Technical Universities.
- c. The Ministry of Education and selected agencies recorded financial irregularities amounting to GH¢ 21.9 million; resulting mainly from cash management irregularities amounting to about GH¢ 20 million, indicating weak compliance with Public Financial Management Laws and Regulations.
- d. There is a general low level of compliance, weak internal audit capacity and control systems especially, in institutions and agencies located in the newly created regions.
- e. Some 79 GETFund and other special funded projects under construction in 27 institutions in 8 regions had been delayed or abandoned for periods up to 14 years.
- f. There is laxity in the performance of oversight functions of Governing Councils/Boards over management of institutions and weak collaboration between Justice Sector Agencies and Auditor-General to prosecute offenders. The lack of effective accountability contributes to the recurring financial irregularities.

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The following recommendations are made to strengthen compliance with Public Financial Management and Procurement Laws and Regulations to increase financial accountability in Educations Sector Institutions.

1. The Ministry of Education and the Office of the President must hold members of the Boards / Governing Councils of Educations Sector Institutions responsible for major financial irregularities in the Auditor-General's reports. Board members who supervise the occurrence of significant financial irregularities should be dismissed.
2. Boards of Educations Sector Institutions must be oriented on their roles in ensuring compliance with Public Financial Management and Procurement Laws and Regulations and supervise the implementation of Audit Report recommendations.
3. The Ministry of Education must develop a plan to complete all the 79 abandoned infrastructure projects identified in the report. The plan must include a reliable source of funding and timelines for completion.
4. The Ministry of Education must adopt a robust monitoring system to ensure all misappropriated funds identified in the Auditor-General's reports are duly recovered from various individuals and institutions, and feedback submitted to the Auditor-General.
5. The Ministry of Education must in collaboration with the Audit Service and the Public Service Commission ensure qualified internal auditors are deployed to all Educations Sector Institutions in the newly created regions, while building the capacity of existing ones.
6. The Public Accounts Committee of Parliament must demand an appraisal of the implementation of Audit Recommendations in previous Audit Reports ahead of public hearings on new Audit Reports.
7. Heads of Educations Sector Institutions whose agencies were cited for major breaches should be sanctioned publicly to deter others from repeating same.
8. The Attorney General's Department and Economic and Organized Crime Organization (EOCO) must strengthen its collaboration with the Auditor-General to investigate and prosecute offenders.

The Report is available on our website; www.africaeducationwatch.org

Accra, 17th May, 2022.

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