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Cabinet approves reforms in land sector

Story: Timothy Gobah

THE Cabinet has given approval for the implementation of the proposal for legal and institutional reform in the land sector.

Under the proposed re-organisation, the Survey Department will become a functional department of the corporate body which is expected to be better resourced and re-oriented to meet the challenges of the times.

The President announced this in a speech read on his behalf by the Senior Minister, Mr J.H. Mensah, at the Fifth Regional Conference of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) and the Ghana Institution of Surveyors (GhIS) in Accra yesterday.

He said the activities planned under the Land Administration Policy (LAP) involved an inventory of all state acquired and occupied lands, while there were also plans to survey and demarcate boundaries in the country.

"It is expected that the private sector survey will be contracted to undertake the inventory exercise, as well as other surveying activities under the LAP," he

said.

He said the rapid urbanisation in developing countries had resulted in the unhealthy and lopsided concentration of populations.

The President said the small and medium-sized towns were experiencing the negative effects of these movements towards the cities.

He said in the past surveyors and town planners were only regarded as technical people who were not involved in the solution of social and political issues, but noted that "those of you who are responsible for managing our physical environment are also involved in resolving the most profound moral problems of contemporary human existence."

"At the superficial level, the rapid urbanisation has brought in its wake increasing and profitable demands to create imaginative city and high-class residential areas. These can perhaps sustain the qualitative and productive lives of a minority of our citizenry, as well as commercial real estate investment and tourism," Mr Kufuor said.

He said with the rapid population growth in the urban areas, it had become

impossible for governments to provide tolerable levels of infrastructure and social services such as water, energy, education and health care.

President Kufuor said the result had been poverty, unemployment, inadequate shelter, poor or non-existent sanitation, air pollution and other forms of environmental degradation.

The President quoted a UN statistics which indicated that substandard housing, unsafe water and poor sanitation in densely populated areas in developing countries were responsible for 10 million deaths which occurred annually worldwide.

He therefore called for a collaboration with professional groups in the process of national planning and management, to make urbanisation a force for social advancement rather than deterioration.

The President of the FIG, Prof Holger Magel, said surveyors had to serve society by implementing a humanitarian principle such as equality of opportunities.

He said there was inseparable relations between administration and good governance.