

Wave Tax on Computer Accessories-ICT Experts Appeal to Government

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) experts, computer dealers and users most of whom members of Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing have expressed great concern about tax slapped on imported computer accessories. Their concern stemmed from the fact that imported computers attract no or less tax but their accessories. They commended government for waving tax on assembled imported computers and argue that nontaxable imported computers have already created jobs for the citizens or residents of the countries from which they were imported.

They lamented that such situation is a contributory factor to the high cost of computers in the country thus making it almost impossible for majority of the average Ghanaian to own a computer and said it is detrimental to the rapid development of ICT in the country. The ICT experts and dealers further argue that it is more beneficial for the country to import computer accessories and assemble them here in Ghana rather than importing already assembled computer.

They therefore appealed to government to take a second look at the issue and wave taxes on computer accessories, saying this would encourage importers to bring in more of the accessories for local assembling of computers, thus creating jobs and making computers more affordable and accessible to the ordinary Ghanaian who would invariably own them.

The ICT experts made the appeal at the launch of Northern ICT 4D Series in Tamale to be held once every month. The series is a replica of the southern sector Cyber Series held monthly in Accra, the country's capital. The programme was launched under the theme, "ICTs and the Educational Reform". During an open forum, an ICT expert and dealer in computer and its accessories, Mr Kubuga Ken bemoaned the influx of high cost assembled imported computers in the country. "For all you know this have already created jobs for those who have assembled them.....government need to remove the tax on computer accessories so that we can assemble them here in our country to create jobs for our people" he added.

Presenting a paper on "ICTs Usage in the Classroom", Alhaji A.Y.M.B Ibrahim the Northern regional Deputy Director of Education in Charge of Planning corroborated the need for government to wave taxes on computer accessories. He justified that a chunk of the schools especially in poverty-endemic areas such as the northern sector of the country do not own a computer yet they write exams on it. According to him "if computers are assembled in the country most schools can afford to buy them". Alhaji Ibrahim bewailed the dumping of typewriters into the country, saying it retards the country's quest for attaining middle income status by the year 2015. He said all these could be done away with if computers are assembled in the country.

Presenting a paper on ICTs and Teacher Training in Ghana, Mr Tanko Rashid Computer, a tutor and Head of ICT Department at Tamale Teacher Training College hailed the compulsory computer component introduced in the new educational reform but took a swipe at the limited period. According to him, the one year allocated for trainees to become computer experts and teachers is inadequate and called on GES and government to take a second look at the issue.

Mr Rashid Computer categorized challenges of the teacher training institutions in training ICT teachers as Infrastructure, E-reading and Equitable Access. He said since the institutions have been upgraded to diploma awarding institutions, “government has to upgrade various ICT laboratories to internationally accepted standards”. He chastised obsolete equipment (both soft and hard wares) being used by the colleges and doubted whether they are really ready for implementation of the new educational reform. He urged government and individual philanthropists and organisations who donate computers to institutions to provide them with up-to-date ones in order for them to be abreast of modernity.

The launch of the monthly Northern ICT 4D series was done by the GINKS Chair, Jonnie Akakpo and urged the participants to keep the programme alive for the benefit of the northern sector and the country at large.

By Osman Dawda (podMEDIA)