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Ghana: Journalists Trained for ELearning Africa 2008

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Close to twenty journalists selected from newspapers and radio stations in Ghana have undergone training ahead of the "Third International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training" scheduled to come off in Accra from May 28 to 30.

The conference, an annual event for developing eLearning capacities in Africa, is expected to attract some 1,500 delegates with more than 260 speakers from 51 countries. It will feature four plenary sessions; 66 sessions in 11 parallel conference strands; 48 demonstrations and best practice examples; 14 workshops; and a number of exciting new features.

Dubbed eLearning Africa (eLA) 2008, the conference is anticipated to be the best so far and a reinforcement of its pedigree as a landmark in pan-African capacity building for ICT-enhanced education and training.

Ghanaian officials are looking forward to make the most of the conference whose magnitude and innovative features will provide an unprecedented opportunity for African professionals and stakeholders to benchmark, learn, share and network, thus strengthening the continent's many and varied educational technology initiatives and projects.

Touching on the ethical dilemmas that may confront a journalist in his/her coverage of an event of such nature, Dr Bonah Koomson, Lecturer, School of Communication Studies, Legon, said it was important for journalists to be guided by ethical standards. He urged them to exhibit a sense of judgement and pointed out that they will be covering the event as reporters and not as publicity officers. He stressed the need to ensure professional competence, saying, "Mediocrity is not a vocabulary in journalism." In the final analysis, he said three ingredients were critical: high integrity; a good sense of judgement; and respect and honour for the journalism profession. On the challenges journalists face in covering such events, Mr. Mawuko Zormelo, Editor in Chief, Network Herald, said the challenge always is to be knowledgeable in or be familiar with the particular subject matter. He said without understanding the subject, "the challenge is that you cannot communicate" to the public.

Giving the background of the event, Leopold Reif, a consultant in eLearning with Hoffman & Reif said the aim of eLA is not just to accommodate politicians and policymakers but also to involve people at the grassroots. He said eLA 2008 is not a conference where paid experts will come to speak but one that will feature participants of varied backgrounds: one-quarter of participants are speakers and between 100 and 200 are sponsors. Rev Emmanuel Kingsley Dadebo, Coordinator, eLA Secretariat, mentioned among other things that the conference will help promote Ghana's "National ICT for Development" programmes as show cases internationally.