

Africa should deal with rapid urban population growth

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African leaders have been urged to act decisively to tackle the rapid urban population growth to stop the slums menace.

Dr Imoro Braimah, Head of the Department of Planning, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), said African leaders needed to focus on the development of comprehensive policies to supervise and control urbanization.

He said anything short of that could have damning socio-economic and health consequences – increase in number of slums, congestion, urban poverty, over-stretching of resources and communicable diseases. These, undoubtedly could stall sustainable development, he added.

Dr Braimah was addressing a day's forum on urbanization at Akyawkrom in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality in the Ashanti Region. It was held under the auspices of the Ministries of Local Government and Rural Development and Water Resources, Works and Housing.

'The Urban Future—Spatial Planning and Urban Development in Ghana' was the theme. The participants were drawn from Ashanti, Eastern and Brong-Ahafo Regions.

It provided the platform for the gathering, which was made up research scientists, technocrats and representatives of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies to brainstorm and find ways to deal with the challenges posed by urbanization.

Dr Braimah drew attention to the need for the government to concentrate on addressing the rising youth unemployment.

He said the way forward was to step up the effort at making agriculture attractive to the youth and to also develop other indigenous trades, which would encourage them to stay in the rural areas and stop their drift to the urban areas in search of jobs.

Dr Kwaku Agyemang-Mensah, Ashanti Regional Minister, in a speech read on his behalf, asked the Assemblies to rigidly enforce their bye-laws on illegal construction of structures.

Source: GNA