ISSER hosts Centre for Energy Economics and Regulation

By Jonathan Adabre

The Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana, Legon has added a new professional research outlook to its research activities. It now hosts the Resource Centre for Energy Economics and Regulation (RCEER).

The center, established with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has ISSER, the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC), the Energy Commission (EC), the Energy Foundation (EF), the Ministry of Energy (MOE) and the Kumasi Institute of Technology and Environment (RITE) as associates from Ghana and the Institute for Energy, Law and Enterprise of the University Of Houston Law Center, Texas as partner from the USA.

The Coordinator of the Center, Dr. Felix Asante, who disclosed this to Public Agenda, said after the completion of the West Africa Gas Pipeline, natural gas would assume a dominant role in Ghana's energy sector.

Again he said with limited expert knowledge and scanty information on natural gas business and regulation in the country, the need for such a centre became more than relevant.

The center, according Dr. Asante, would in the future, become an independent resource centre for research, policy analysis, training, data and public education on energy and utility economics. It would also in the future, be responsible for the regulation and development of Ghana's energy sector policies and ultimately, for the West Africa sub-region. He said the center intends to equip a broad spectrum of professionals, including journalists, educators, people from both the private and public sectors with a better understanding of energy issues and delivery of information to the industry.

Tackling on the core activities of the center, the Coordinator said the goals of the centre would be to collect, store, process and disseminate energy and utility sector data and knowledge; conduct research to support energy and utility sector development and governance and to develop a curriculum on energy and utility economics for university and professional training. It would also educate the public on energy economics, energy policies, energy and socio-economic development issues by publishing reports and holding educational outreach activities.

The Center had since its inception produced a draft report, termed "The Natural Gas Primer" on natural gas as an alternative source of energy for Ghana's development. The report overviews the sources, uses and history of natural gas in Ghana. It also looks at the gas industry in the country and examines the achievements, the setbacks and the policy issues of the West Africa Gas Pipeline (WAGP) project.

According to Dr. Asante, the Primer would become-stop information shop on natural gas production, transmission, distribution and consumption in Ghana.

Industry watchers have lauded ISSER's initiative and said the resource centre has come in handy as it would provide expert information on natural gas to politicians and policy makers as well as journalists and the general public as a whole.

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