

African govts urged to dedicate 2% of annual GDP for digital infrastructure devt

BY CLIFF EKUFUL

THE Deputy Minister of Education, Dr Clement Abas Apaak, has called on African governments to dedicate up to two percent of their annual GDP to digital infrastructure development.

According to him, Africa's digital ambitions would not only remain difficult to achieve, but a mirage without substantial investment in infrastructure capable of supporting innovation and technological growth.

Dr Apaak made the proposal during a ministerial roundtable discussion at the eLearning Africa Conference held at the Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra yesterday.

The meeting brought together policymakers and technology experts to examine strategies for

advancing digital transformation and artificial intelligence across the continent.

"In my own thinking, part of what we should be looking at is to get African governments to commit at least about 1-2 per cent of their annual GDP towards a pool or a fund that would support the building of the continental-level digital infrastructure," he said.

According to Dr Apaak, such a commitment would help create the foundation needed to accelerate the adoption of digital technologies and artificial intelligence across Africa.

He said the continent must mobilise its own resources if it hopes to gain greater control over its technological future and reduce dependence on external actors.

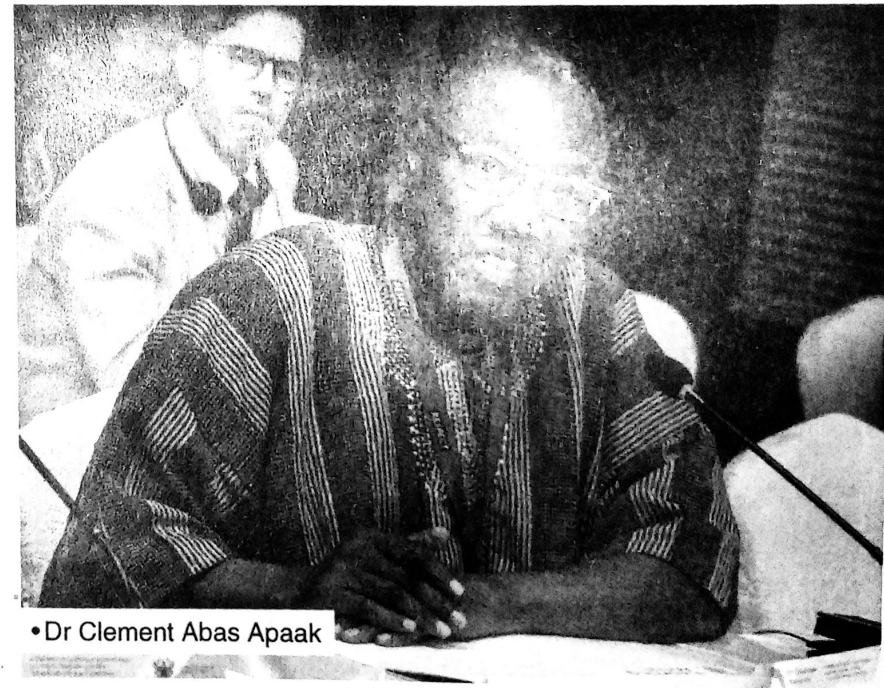
"So for me that is the biggest challenge that we ought to be addressing, where we can mobilise our own resources to build our own infrastructure, train our own

experts as part of the effort to domesticate AI in a way that would protect our history, our culture, and our value systems," he stated.

Dr Apaak noted that Africa's limited presence among the world's leading technology companies underscores the need for a stronger investment strategy, stressing that "Because if out of the 10 global giants in the area of technology, not even one is African, nine are American, and if our emails have to still bounce off Europe and America to get to us, then what is really our basis for trying to assert some semblance of independence?"

The Deputy Minister further stressed that ambitious plans and innovative ideas alone would not be enough without adequate financial backing.

"Thinking through all that we have said, fantastic ideas, very worthy of implementation, but Madam Chair, without the resources,



• Dr Clement Abas Apaak

how far can we go?" he said.

He urged African governments to work collectively to establish the infrastructure, expertise and financial resources required to po-

sition the continent as a stronger player in the global digital economy while ensuring that emerging technologies reflect African values and priorities.