The Commissioner for Energy & Mines of the ECOWAS Commission,
Colleague Ministers Responsible for Mines in ECOWAS Representatives of Ministers
President of ECOWAS Federation of Chamber of Mines
National Experts on Mining from ECOWAS Member States
Civil Society Organizations
Friends of the Media,
Invited Guests.

I am very honored to welcome you all to this important Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Mining in West Africa which is the Fourth in the series.

Today's meeting is historical, because for the first time in the Minerals and Mining Sector, a document called the Draft ECOWAS MODEL MINING AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT ACT (EMMMDA) and its implementation Matrix has been
developed to serve as a blueprint for mineral resource
development within the West African sub-region.
My information is that National Experts from Member States
have met on a number of occasions in Abuja, Niamey and in
Accra to critically review the document prepared under a
consultancy agreement with the ECOWAS Commission.

Having perused the Model Act, I am of the firm belief that it
is a detailed document that goes beyond a Mining Act. It
dealt essentially with many provisions relating to the mining
sector which otherwise would have been found in Mining
Regulations. This is important, as it would provide the
general framework for the harmonization of mining in the
sub-region to ensure that we derive optimal benefit from
our mineral resources.

The Commissioner for Energy and Mines, the ECOWAS sub-
region is geological endowed with world class deposits of
Gold, Bauxite, Diamonds, Manganese, Iron Ore and also with
significant deposits of Uranium, Gemstones, Industrial
Minerals among others. For example, gold production from
West Africa surpasses production from South Africa and
Australia. Given the fact that the region is largely
underexplored, there is high probability of future
discoveries of significant deposits. It is therefore important
that we, Ministers Responsible for Mining in the sub-region, re-position ourselves and ensure that our minerals and mining Acts are such that we derive the maximum benefit from the exploitation of these resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

I am convinced however that the draft document we shall be considering is forward looking and will help to address all the policy, legal and institutional gaps that have been identified over the years in our efforts at developing our mineral resources.

It is worthy to note that we shall also be considering the Draft Supplementary Act for adoption after considering the draft EMMMDA.

The Commissioner of Energy & Mines, Colleague Ministers, Invited guests, our National Experts following from a Consultative Meeting held in Dakar Senegal will also be presenting to us the Report of the Consultative National Experts Meeting on the State of Artisanal and Small Scale (ASM) Mining in the Region for our consideration and adoption. We can all attest to the fact the ASM sector in our various countries present us with great challenges in its regularization or formalization and I do hope that this report
will be the first step in the development of a regional framework to address the challenges we face especially in controlling the menace of illegal mining.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on a lighter note, Accra has a lot to offer in terms of its sandy beaches and places of interest. Please take time off and visit the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, the George Padmore and Du Bois Centers for Pan-African Affairs and Culture respectively and the famous Makola Market.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and once again, you are welcome.