

2019 MEET THE PRESS

PRESENTATION BY

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND NATURAL
RESOURCES**

HON. KWAKU ASOMAH-CHEREME

Mr. Chairman,

Deputy Ministers,

Chief Directors,

Heads of Agencies,

The Media,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure to be here this morning to brief you on the current status of implementation of Programmes and Projects being pursued by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources within the National Medium-Term Development Policy Framework (2018-2021) and other National and International Strategic Plans such as the Sector Medium Term Plans (2018-2021), the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030), the African Union Agenda (2063) and the Ghana Beyond Aid Charter and Strategy Document.

This is in line with the President's Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017-2024) "An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All

(2018-2021)". These Programmes and Projects are geared towards attaining Sustainable Economic Growth with the focus of creating employment and ensuring environmental sustainability as well as a favourable investment climate.

I am here with my two deputies, Hon. Benito Owusu-Bio and Hon. Naana Eyiah. Also present are the Chief Executives of the Forestry, Minerals and Lands Commissions, the Administrator of Stool Lands, the Acting Director General of Ghana Geological Survey Authority, the Chief Executive of the Ghana Integrated Aluminum Development Corporation, the Managing Director of the Precious Minerals Marketing Company, Members of the various Boards, the Directors of the Ministry and Agencies.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, my presentation will cover Key Programmes and Projects being undertaken by the Ministry to address the many challenges confronting the Sector.

Mr. Chairman, with your kind permission I wish to commence my presentation by touching on the Lands Sub-sector.

LANDS SUB-SECTOR

Improving Land Administration

Mr. Chairman, the Government's overall goal for land administration and management is to ensure an effective and efficient land service delivery system that would provide the foundation for socio-economic development. This entails providing efficient access by Government, MDAs, MMDAs, investors and individuals to land for agriculture, industrial, commercial, civic and residential development for investment in the lands sub-sector.

Mr. Chairman, efficient access to land is key to the success of Government flagship projects, Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 11 and 15, and the construction sector of our national economy. Relevant flagship projects that land is critical to include the following:

1. Revitalizing the Economy

- i. Investors attracted to the Savannah, Middle Belt and Coastal Development Authorities will require land for their investments;

- ii. Identification, creation and acquisition of lands for Industrial Parks and industrial activities are crucial to the National Industrialization Policy.

2. Revamp Economic and Social Infrastructure

- i. Land acquisition, statutory wayleaves and compensation settlement are critical activities under the railway network expansion to the northern Ghana and also the Tema-Akosombo rail link.

3. Transform Agriculture and Industry

Identification of suitable lands and efficient access to unencumbered lands are critical for the:

- i. 'Planting for Food and Jobs" beneficiaries;
- ii. "One Village, One Dam" for all year-round farming;
- iii. "One District, One Factory"; and
- iv. Warehousing Projects

Guidelines for Large Scale Land Transactions

Mr. Chairman, the Lands Commission in line with Government goal to ensure an effective and efficient land for socio-economic development has developed Guidelines for Large Scale land Transactions in Ghana. The guidelines are aimed at assisting customary landowners and resource users, investors and other decision makers to better appreciate the due process one must

follow to acquire land on a large-scale for investment purposes. Large scale in this regard is prima facie 50 acres and above but with exceptions depending on human rights and environment concerns triggered by the acquisition, the Guidelines may apply.

The objectives of the guidelines are to:

1. Minimize speculative acquisitions and any practices that would undermine state policy on land development;
2. Protect the interest of local communities by avoiding a situation where investors or individuals who acquire large tracts of land usurp the rights of the larger population and in the process subvert the intent of Article 36 (8) of the Constitution;
3. Safeguard the interest of genuine investors by ensuring that their acquisition lead to secured rights in the atmosphere of mutual trust so as to promote the principles in international law relating to foreign direct investments (FDIs);
4. Promote better land use and ensure that all acquisitions are made for uses that would conform to the land use plan of the areas involved;

5. Promote government development policy objectives by facilitating initiatives that would foster job creation, income generation and equity in resource distribution in line with Ghana's development agenda; and
6. Ensure that large-scale land transactions in the country conform to sustainable development goals and international best practices.

Urban Renewal Projects

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the Ministry in consultation with other stakeholders is consolidating the facilitation of Government's vision to put the Nation's Capital City on a competitive pedestal comparable to emerging major cities in the world. In line with this, the Ministry has facilitated the surveying and acquisition of appropriate legal interest in various land areas earmarked for these transformational projects. These include:

- i. Marine Drive Tourism Project;
- ii. Energy City Project;
- iii. Greater Accra Site for Industrial Enclave and Urban Renewal Project;
- iv. The National Cathedral Project;
- v. Redevelopment of Kumasi Sector 18
- vi. Redevelopment of Sekondi-Takoradi Beach Road; and

vii. Other Urban Redevelopment.

The Ministry with the involvement of the Lands Commission is also facilitating the following:

- i. Ghana-Togo Boundary Commission;
- ii. Verification and validation of the boundaries of the six newly created regions for final boundary survey works;
- iii. Satellite City Development Projects and other national initiatives.

Geospatial Policy

The Geospatial Policy to guide survey and mapping activities in the country has been submitted to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

Turnaround Time

Ladies and gentlemen, Ghana has two land registration systems namely the deeds registration system and title registration system. The latter is the registration system in the Greater Accra Region and parts of Kumasi.

Government's overall objective is to deliver land title certificate within 30 working days and Deeds registration within 14 working days.

Ladies and gentlemen, it will interest you to note that on Deeds registration which is mostly done across the country apart from the Greater Accra Region and parts of Kumasi, the average turnaround time for Deeds registration is currently within the targeted 14 days. Title registration within 30 days in Accra remains a challenge to the Lands Commission. To this end, government is exploring the best strategies and appropriate partnerships to implement the key activities aimed at reducing the time taken to register land transactions to meet the government's target.

Ladies and gentlemen, in line with the government's policy of Private Sector participation, the Ministry is further exploring strategies aimed at leveraging the potential of private sector capital and expertise in the land administration reforms. In fulfillment of this, as you will recall, a Market Sounding event was recently held under the auspices of the Office of the Vice President to measure the level of interest of the Private Sector. The event showed that the Private Sector was highly interested in the transformation agenda of the Land Sub-Sector.

In order to deepen the strategy, a market analysis and feasibility study has been undertaken to establish areas of participation of

the Private Sector within the laws of the country. Possible areas of Private Sector participation being considered include:

- digitizing and automating land registration processes to improve the speed and accuracy of land registration for both Deeds and Title
- preparing up-to-date and accurate maps through the development of digital orthophoto and topographical maps, and other spatial data.

This is aimed at increasing the speed, accuracy and reduction in the cost of land registration in the country.

STOOL LAND REVENUE MOBILIZATION AND DISBURSEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen, a number of activities were undertaken geared towards improving stool land revenue mobilization and disbursement to stated beneficiaries (Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, MMDAs, Stools and Traditional Authorities). These Revenue sources include Mineral Royalties, Timber Royalties, Ground Rent, Farm Rent and Mining Concession Rent.

In the year 2018 the Office mobilized a total amount of nearly GHS 58 Million. As at June 2019, a total amount of about GHS 50.0 Million representing over 40% of revenue target of GHS110 Million

was mobilized and disbursed. This shows a marked improvement over that of the previous year.

MONITORING OF PROJECTS BY MMDAs UNDERTAKEN WITH STOOL LAND REVENUE

The Ministry through the OASL monitored projects undertaken by MMDAs with their portion of Stool Lands Revenue they receive. This is to ensure that MMDAs prudently utilize such revenue.

Some of the projects include residential accommodation for health workers, Community Centre and Surgical Ward at Buipe, District Hospital at Asutifi-North and construction of schools in Damongo, Abidjan and Asawase to mention a few.

IMPROVING CUSTOMARY LAND ADMINISTRATION

A. Establishment of Customary Land Secretariats

In order to improve efficiency in customary land administration, three Customary Land Secretariats (CLSs) were established to bring the total CLSs established across the country to 94. These are at Anyaa Charbokwei, Bamvim and Yendi.

B. Development of Draft Handbook On Customary Land Administration

The Ministry through the OASL in collaboration with COLANDEF a Non-Governmental Organisation has developed a draft handbook for Documenting Customary Land Rights in Ghana to compliment Government's efforts at improving customary land administration.

It is estimated that about 80% of all lands in the country fall under customary ownership. The development of the handbook is therefore crucial to help resolve the myriad of challenges that plague the customary land administration system.

MINING SUB-SECTOR

Mr. Chairman, the benefits of mining to our country cannot be overstated. The sector is a key part of Ghana's economy providing jobs for thousands and generating revenue for the Government.

Notwithstanding these benefits, the negative impacts of mining cannot be ignored. Most prominent of these impacts is the environmental degradation. Government is therefore committed to ensuring that mining is done in a safe and environmentally friendly manner.

Mr. Chairman, permit me to highlight some key achievements as well as strategies being implemented under the Sector Medium Term Development Plan, SMTDP (2018 – 2021) to address the challenges of the mining sub-sector.

Contribution of Mining to Ghana's Economy

The sector has so far generated **GH¢ 1.3 billion** as government revenue, representing **17%** of total government revenue gathered for the year 2019, as collected by the Ghana Revenue Authority. This reflects an increase of **39%** in the sector's contribution to government revenue relative to the **GH¢ 980 million** contributed in 2018.

Merchandise Exports

An amount of **US\$ 3.3 billion** has been generated by the sector in 2019 as export earnings as compared to **US\$ 3 billion** generated over the same period in 2018, making mining a major forex earner for Ghana.

Job Creation in Mining

A. Direct Employment

Most importantly, the mining sector continues to generate employment for the people of Ghana, providing livelihood for thousands across the country.

As at June 2019, a total of **26,425 persons** are employed directly and indirectly by the mining sector. This is a marked improvement over last year's full year employment figure of **23,894**.

B. Indirect Employment

i. Local Content in Mining

Mr. Chairman, Ghanaian participation in the mining sector has been on the rise. In 2018, local procurement of goods accounted for **87.3% (USD 1.4 billion)** of total procurement in the mining sector. Whilst not resting these recent achievements, the Government in 2018, introduced a new category of services that will be provided solely by Ghanaians from mining communities.

As at June 2019, a total of twenty (25) local companies have been registered by the Commission to provide these services. Opening up this space is expected to generate more employment and benefit to the local economy.

ii. **Alternative Livelihood Programme**

Ladies and Gentlemen, whilst not relying solely on Industry to generate employment for Ghanaians, the Government, through mining sector agencies is undertaking alternative livelihood programmes within 25 mining communities in Eastern, Central and Western Regions. The aim of the programme is to generate economically viable non-mining jobs in mining communities as a way of stemming the menace of Illegal mining.

Let me say that, to date a total of over **5,301 jobs** (formal and informal) have been created in mining communities made up of **3,860 males** and **1,441 females** representing **73%** and **27%** respectively.

Investments in the Mining Sub-sector

Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana is an attractive mining investment destination in Africa. Over the years, the sector has seen a steady inflow of investment, and in 2018 a total of **US\$ 953 million** was pumped into the sector. Most of these investments went into

projects such as the Obuasi redevelopment and setting up of engineering and support service companies.

Mineral Production

In terms of mineral production, annual targets remain achievable. With respect to gold, **2.1 million ounces** have been produced by the country as at June 2019.

Production of bauxite also remains impressive. As at June 2019, **470,517 tonnes** of bauxite have been produced from the Awaso Mines.

Let me be quick to add that, Government has successfully mediated the recent labour unrest that threatened the bauxite mine.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY FOR IRON AND BAUXITE

Exportation of the nation's mineral ore in the raw state is of a great concern to the government. To stop this practice and to add value to the country's mineral deposit, government is vigorously ensuring to develop and add value to existing bauxite and iron deposits.

A. Development of the Aluminium Industry

To develop the aluminum industry through the Nation's bauxite deposit, Government through Act, 2018 (Act 976) established the

Ghana Integrated Aluminum Development Corporation (GIADEC) and set up a Board in March, 2019 to see to the management of the aluminum resource.

Ladies and gentlemen, GIADEC since its inception has focused its attention on the following;

- Identifying strategic investors to partner GIADEC in the development of an Integrated Aluminum Industry in Ghana.
- Developing a strong license to operate through sustained community engagement and shared prosperity.
- Establishing and operationalizing the structures required to operate efficiently and effectively in order to deliver value to government and other stakeholders.
- Actively managing relationships with existing operations.

Achievements of Ghana Integrated Aluminum Development Corporation (GIADEC) since its Inception

Ladies and Gentlemen, GIADEC has since its establishment embarked on the following:

I. Selection of Strategic Investors

- GIADEC launched a 3 Round Investor Engagement process earlier in the year and received Expression of Interest (EOI)

from 20 companies looking to invest across the bauxite – aluminum value chain.

- 16 reputable companies from different parts of the world, including Ghanaian firms, were pre-qualified to proceed to Round Two (2) of the Investor Engagement Rounds.
- A formal Request for Proposal (RFP) was sent out to the successful investors in August 2019.
- GIADEC has held a pre-submission investor briefing.
- Responses to the Request for Proposal are expected in October 2019.

II. Stakeholder Engagements

The Corporation has also engaged various stakeholders in the Bauxite – Aluminum value chain and visited host communities of the bauxite mining areas and their traditional rulers. The Corporation has also interacted with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) who have interest in the whole bauxite operation and associated environmental impacts, Ministries, Departments & Agencies including EPA, Minerals Commission, and Water Resources & Forestry Commission.

III. Confirmation of Bauxite Resource Deposit Estimate

An International consulting firm and its Ghanaian counterparts have been engaged to confirm the bauxite mineral resource

estimate in line with JORC - an international standard for measuring mineral resources.

- Verification drilling phase of the Bauxite Mineral Resource Estimate programme has commenced in Kibi and Nyinahin.
- Consolidation and digitization of all geological data on bauxite in Ghana has been done.
- Establishment of a database and data room at the Minerals Commission that holds all bauxite records in Ghana.

Plans are also advanced to halt exportation of raw bauxite as we pursue an Integrated Bauxite Alumina and Aluminum Industry.

B. Development Of Iron And Steel Industry

Ladies and gentlemen, Parliament recently passed the Ghana Iron and Steel Development Corporation Act, 2019 (Act 988 or the "GISDEC" Act). This Act seeks to develop the Iron and Steel industry along the value chain. Government is currently putting in place the Board of GISDEC.

Mr. Chairman, apart from the Iron ore deposits discovered at Sheini in the northern, Oppon-manso in the western, Pudo in upper west and Akpafu in the Oti regions, manganese is a key mineral that will support the development of the Iron and Steel industry.

Adding Value to the Precious Minerals

Mr. Chairman, the country has in the past been exporting gold without refining. Gold has also been exported with the true value or weight determined outside the country. To address the issue, government through the Precious Minerals Marketing Company (PMMC) for the past two (2) years is undertaking assaying to determine the right weight of minerals exported. Similarly, PMMC is establishing a gold refinery to compliment the only one in the country managed by a private company.

Financial and Technical Audit of the Mining Industry

To ensure sanity in the mining industry and optimal benefit from mining to the people of Ghana as well as investors, the Ministry is mandated by law to safeguard prudent management in the Mining Sub-sector. In this regard government is carrying out Technical and financial audit of the operations of the mining industry.

As I speak, the Government is looking into the operations of the sole manganese producer in the country to ensure that the company operates within laid out regulations and also to find out their operational challenges. Unfortunately, the outcome of the audit resulted into a disagreement between the operator and government. To resolve the issue, government constituted a

committee made up of some senior staff and leaders of workers union of the firm and that of government. The committee was mandated to look into the issues and advice Government accordingly. As I speak, the committee has submitted its report and is receiving the necessary attention.

As a follow up of the outcome of the technical and financial audit, Government is installing weigh bridges at vantage points along high ways between production sites to the Harbour. A Marine Surveyor has also been engaged at the Takoradi Harbour by the Minerals Commission to ensure recordings of the right tonnage of exported mineral ores.

Health and Safety in the Mining Sector

Health and safety in the mining sector is a priority of the Ministry. Working through sector agencies, a total of **905** routine mine inspections have been conducted so far as against **956** conducted over the same period in 2018.

Also, about **1,205** industry personnel passed various industry competency certificate examinations in 2019, as against **799** recorded in 2018. This is to ensure that, mine workforce have adequate knowledge in their fields of expertise as is required by law.

Implementation of an online mining cadastre system

In line with Government's aim of improving the ease of doing business in Ghana, the Ministry is implementing a paperless/online with our mineral right application system. Phase 1 (that is an online data repository) has been completed and piloted in Minerals Commission District two (2) offices (Bolgatanga and Tarkwa).

Phase 2 of the project, which involves the total digitization of the licencing procedure is underway and will be completed by December 2019. This platform once fully operationalized will allow:

- i. **improved Access to Information:** this will enable mining companies, investors, stakeholders and civil society to access mineral rights information from any part of the globe;
- ii. **Increase Transparency in Mineral Rights Administration & Associated Revenues:** Recording of all revenues related to the licenses, among others.

Management of Small-Scale Mining

Distinguished audience, with the ban on small-scale mining lifted in December 2018, the Ministry anticipated an increase in small scale mining activity. The Ministry is therefore pursuing strategies

that will ensure that the sector does not experience a relapse of activities that necessitated the ban. Some of the strategies include:

i. Stiffer Punishment for Illegal Mining

An amendment to the Minerals and Mining Amendment Act, 2015 (Act 900) has been made and assented to by H.E the President. This amendment seeks to apply stiffer punishment for those who are caught engaging in Illegal mining. The amendment increases the minimum fine to **10,000** penalty units and a maximum fine to **15,000** penalty units or a term of Imprisonment ranging from **15 years** up to **25 years** or both a fine and imprisonment.

ii. Ghana ASM Formalization Project

The Ghana ASM Formalization Project is due to be launched soon. This is a flagship project of the Ministry and in conjunction with other strategies expected to;

- Regulate and assist ASMs to improve efficiency of their operations.
- Ensure the use of appropriate, safe and affordable technology in small-scale mining.
- Develop Alternative Livelihood Projects in mining communities.
- Train miners on sustainable mining practices and extraction processes.

- Ensure Stakeholders enforce the Law reserving small-scale mining for Ghanaians.

iii. Community Mining Programme

The Ministry is also collaborating with other Ministries to successfully implement the Community Mining Programme. The programme is aimed at giving locals the opportunity to participate in mining in a well-structured way.

iv. Improved Geology for Small Scale Mining

Ladies and Gentlemen, responsible mining practice is a big challenge in the small-scale mining industry. As part of measures by Government to stop illegal mining and poor mining practices by small scale miners, the Government through Ghana Geological Survey Authority and Minerals Commission has delineated a number of areas to be geologically investigated to identify zones of high mineral potential for small scale mining. This is to enable small scale miners to mine only at areas with rich mineralized zones and reasonable probability of success and stop the bad mining practice of 'try and see' which has detrimental effect to the environment.

Diversification of the Mineral Economy

Ladies and gentlemen, in order to continue to diversify the mineral economy of the country to attract more investment into the Mining Sub-Sector, the Ghana Geological Survey Authority with the main

mission of providing geo-scientific data and information for the development of the nation is vigorously conducting geological field investigations across the country.

A. Clay Resource Development

Ladies and gentlemen, clay resource in the Country is inadequately utilized for development. As part of the government's agenda of poverty eradication and the one district one factory initiative and industrialization, the Ghana Geological Survey Authority for the last two years (2017-2019) has identified and evaluated **six (6) million metric tonnes** of Clay resources at Kwahu-Fodoa in the Kwahu West Municipality of Eastern Region which is suitable for the production of high quality bricks, tiles and electrical porcelain.

B. Intensification In Limestone Exploration Activities

Ladies and Gentlemen, the upsurge of cement factories in recent times, has led to the high demand for limestone in the Country to produce clinker to make production and supply of cement affordable to Ghanaians. In view of this, the Government through GGSA continues to intensify limestone exploration activities in the

Mamprusi West District in order to feed the cement industry. Geological pitting by Ghana Geological Survey Authority in the Mamprusi West district has identified large limestone deposits in an area of about **15,000 acres** suitable for clinker production.

C. **Increase Exploration Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Ladies and Gentlemen, the exploration companies continue to depend on the Government for up to date regional geoscience information for effective exploration activities and efficiency as well as in decision making in acquisition of mineral concession.

Mr. Chairman, in order to promote efficiency in mineral exploration in the country and attract more investors into the mining sub-sector, the Government through Ghana Geological Survey Authority has completed regional soil geochemical sampling covering an area of about **180,000 acres** in Tumu to aid and enhance mineral exploration activities in the Upper West Region.

Mitigation of Earthquakes

Recent earth tremors are indication that the fault systems in Ghana, particularly in Accra are still active and stress continues to build up on them. The country experienced two earth tremors on the 13th January and 2nd March 2019 with magnitudes **2.8** and

3.9 respectively on the Richter scale. These events followed the tremor felt on 24th March and 9th December, 2018, both with magnitudes **3.3** on the Richter scale.

In order to ensure the Country is adequately prepared to reduce the risk of any future earthquake /earth tremor, an amount of **GHS 2.8 million** was released in May 2019 by the Government to address the challenges with the Ghana Digital Seismic Network.

This includes;

- Cost of Service Level Agreement
- Cost of spare parts
- Cost of satellite renewal
- Cost of establishing solar power systems

Mr. Chairman, to ensure effective land use planning and decision making, Geo-hazard Mapping and Risk Assessment in Accra and around the Akwapim mountain range has been conducted.

FORESTRY SUB-SECTOR

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to brief you on some achievements within the Forestry sub-sector.

Implementation of the National Plantation Development Strategy

Ladies and gentlemen, the Ministry continues to restore the nation's degraded forest landscapes. Since 2017, emphasis has been placed on developing Forest Plantation as one of the Presidential Priority Programme of the Ministry. This strategy is aimed at achieving sustainable supply of planted forest goods and services to deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

Mr Chairman, from 2017 to date, an estimated area of **20,073ha** of plantation has been established by government. The Youth in Afforestation (YIA) programme has contributed immensely to the government plantation programme.

Aside of the Government Plantation established, the private sector has also contributed to the Programme by establishing an area of **16,060ha**.

From 2017 to July this year, the government and private sector plantation programmes have so far generated employment for **83,247 people**.

Production of Natural Forest Timber and Disbursement of Royalties to Stakeholders

The Forestry Commission continues to monitor the production of natural forest timber across the country for export and domestic use. Statistics indicate that from 2016 to 2018, a total volume of **2.1 million m³** of timber was harvested. This was made up of **1.7 million m³** representing **81%** from the forest reserves and **400,000 m³** representing **19%** coming from the off-forest reserve areas.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Forestry Commission and the Office of Administrator of Stool Lands are responsible for the management of forest proceeds from timber harvesting on behalf of stools and landowners. It is therefore the mandate of the Ministry through the OASL and MDF Board to disburse royalties accruing from natural forest timber stumpage and rent to key stakeholders after providing for Forestry Commission's management fees.

From 2016 to 2018, a total of **GH¢16.31 million** was disbursed to the beneficiary Stool Land Owners, District Assemblies and Traditional Authorities.

Timber Utilization Contracts

Ladies and gentlemen, under the Timber Resource Management and Legality Licensing Regulations, 2017 (LI 2254), holders of leases are expected to apply to the Forestry Commission to convert their lease-holdings to Timber Utilization Contracts within six months of the promulgation of the law. As part of the transparent process, the Commission placed advertisements in the national dailies between 6th and 28th May, 2019. As at mid-year 2019, **165** applications had been received. **Fifty-two (52)** of the applications which comprised **32 leases** and **20 permits** have been validated awaiting the Timber Rights Evaluation Committee (TREC) evaluation as required by law.

Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP)

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry has successfully implemented the Forest Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF) REDD+ Readiness Project and expected deliverables. The Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ programme (GCFRP) is the premier Emission Reductions(ER) programme amongst the five Emission Reduction (ER) programmes in Ghana's REDD+ Strategy.

The GCFRP aims to significantly reduce carbon emissions resulting from cocoa expansion into new forests frontiers through the

promotion and adoption of appropriate climate-smart cocoa practices, which would increase cocoa yield. Through this programme, Ghana aims to secure the future of its forests and make the cocoa sector climate-resilient, whilst sustaining and enhancing income and livelihood opportunities for farmers and forest users across the program area.

On the 9th of July 2019, Ghana signed an Emissions Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) with the World Bank which indicates the conditions of sale and purchase of any potential Emission Reductions from the programme over a six-year period (2019-2024). By this agreement, Ghana is eligible to receive results-based payment of **USD 50 million** for the reduction of **10 million tons** of Carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Mole National Park as a World Heritage Site

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, wildlife protected areas of the country under the forestry sub-sector are important for preserving biological diversity. They are major economic assets and sources

of formal employment in management, tourism and associated private enterprises. These opportunities arise not only inside the protected areas but also in their buffer zones and neighbouring communities.

Ghana has seven (7) national parks within the wildlife protected area. The Mole National Park, the largest wildlife protected area, is one of the favourite ecotourism destinations in Ghana. It also contributes to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.

From 2016 to 2018, the total number of visitors to ecotourism sites and zoological gardens (zoos) recorded was **611,998** and revenue generated amounted to **GH¢8.9 million**. In terms of visitation to ecotourism sites, Mole National Park recorded **51,432** over the period.

Ladies and gentlemen, to boost the ecotourism potential of Mole National Park, it is imperative that the wildlife status is scientifically documented. The last animal census conducted in the Park was in 2006, and there is an urgent need to update this information to allow for a review of its management plan and to proceed with an application to UNESCO to consider the Park as a World Heritage Site.

In order to get Mole National Park listed as a World Heritage Site, the Forestry Commission through the European Union Delegation in Ghana, undertook a wildlife census to update the number of species of animals in the park at a cost of **Euros 130,376.00**.

Combating Illegal Activities

Ladies and Gentlemen, the second approach of the Commission's law enforcement is the deployment of the fourteen (14) Rapid Response Teams to forest reserves and wildlife protected areas where illegal activities have been reported.

From 2016 to 2018, about **177,801** assorted lumber, **487** chainsaws, **355** dredging machines, **68** logs and **279** vehicles were seized. In addition, an estimated area of **3,277 hectares** of illegal farms was destroyed and 774 suspects arrested for forest & wildlife offences out of which 293 were successfully prosecuted.

In spite of all these efforts of the Rapid Response Teams and the National Task Force (Military and Forestry Commission Staff), illegalities continued across the nation's forest and wildlife protected areas.

Control of Illegal Rosewood Exploitation

Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to shed light of the recent public outcry on the menace of illegal harvesting and export of rosewood.

Rosewood export started in Ghana in 2004, with an initial export volume of only 18m³ in that year. The export volume and value have increased since 2009, when the Government granted permit to five (5) companies to remove all trees including economic trees in the reservoir, to make way for the construction of the Bui Dam. China is the dominant importer of Ghanaian rosewood, representing over 90% of the total exports.

Various Governments in the past have recognized the need to apply a ban as a measure to control its exploitation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In March 2019, the Ministry placed a ban on both the issuance of salvage permit and export of the rosewood in line with recent reports of over exploitation and illegalities in the system.

Although the ban is still in place and the Ministry has not issued any salvage permit since then, however there has been numerous media reports of exploitation and export of the species in which some international media houses have also carried the story.

If you will recall, there was a recent investigation by Environmental Investigation Agency in which some government officials were

sighted for corruption. Further to that, the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) have also petitioned the Government to investigate the matter.

Subsequently, I constituted a seven (7) man committee comprising of representatives from Civil Society Organizations, the Ghana Revenue Authority (Customs Division), Parliamentary Select Committee on Lands and Forestry to unravel the allegations made by the Environmental Investigation Agency.

As I speak, the Committee is in the Northern part of Ghana as part of their task to unravel the allegations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to assure the general public that the Ministry is poised to curb the illegalities in the rosewood trade and I would make available the findings of the investigation to the general public as soon as they are ready.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry will pursue government agenda to develop the mining sub-sector especially the Bauxite industry, the

Iron and Steel industry and also provide security of tenure for the citizenry and restore the forest cover of the nation whiles providing employment security for the youth.

Thank you

