

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND
NATURAL RESOURCES, HON. SAMUEL A. JINAPOR, MP, AT
THE FORTY-THIRD MANAGEMENT DAY CELEBRATION OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA BUSINESS SCHOOL (UGBS),
HELD AT UGBS, ON WEDNESDAY, 7TH JUNE, 2023**

Mr. Chairman;

Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana;

Dean of the University of Ghana Business School;

Provosts, Deans and Directors;

Heads of Departments;

Faculty Members;

Staff and Students of this Great University;

Headmistress, Staff and Students of the University Basic School;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is always good to be back in the premier university in Ghana, the University of Ghana, where I had the privilege of undertaking my legal education about a decade and half ago, which formed the basis of my professional career. The quality of the wholistic education I received explains why after a few years, I had to come back to this same University to pursue my Master of Laws Programme.

I am grateful to the Business School, under the leadership of Professor Justice Nyigmah Bawole, for the invitation to deliver the Keynote address at this Forty-Third (43rd) Management Day Celebration of the University of Ghana Business School. I am informed that, since its introduction in 1980, the Management Day Celebration has consistently provided a platform for bridging the gap between academia and industry, as well as discussions on key national and global issues. With the theme for this year's celebration, "***Accounting for Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability: Our Collective Responsibility,***" I am confident that today's event will rekindle in us the need to work together to protect our planet.

It is, indeed, refreshing to note that the Business School is not focusing only on financial and economic matters, but also on global issues such as climate change. As an academic community, we have a responsibility not only to advance knowledge, but, also, find solutions to the challenges that confront us as a people, and I commend the organisers for the choice of this theme. It is, therefore, not surprising that the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, has chosen the University of Ghana as the venue for his commemorative tree planting exercise on the Green Ghana Day.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the climate crisis remains one of the most fundamental threats to our development, our survival and the subsistence of planet earth. Indeed, with less than seven (7) years to the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate change has been identified as the most significant impediment to the realisation of these Goals, dragging millions of people into poverty.

We are told by the experts that having temperature rise above two degrees Celsius (2°C) can have catastrophic and irreversible consequences on our peoples and planet. Thus, in the 2015 landmark Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the world committed to keep global average temperatures well below two degrees Celsius (2°C), and possibly, at one point five degrees Celsius (1.5°C) above pre-industrial levels by the turn of the century, and to half global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. But today, at current rates, there are fears that average global temperature could reach in excess of three degrees Celsius (3°C) by the end of the century. The impact of this looming disaster is already being felt across the globe, including extreme weather conditions that produce cyclones, hurricanes, sea-level rise, flooding, droughts and irregular rainfall patterns, among others.

Unfortunately for us, here in Africa, due to the agrarian nature of our economy and our low adaptation capacities, we are more susceptible to these impacts. And thus, even though we are the least contributors to this climate crisis, estimated at approximately four percent (4%), we bear the brunt of its adverse consequences.

For example, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) in its recent report on the State of Climate in Africa, observes that with the current rate of deglaciation, all of Africa's glaciers will melt and disappear in the next two decades, and this will lead to drought, floods and extreme heat for some One Hundred and Eighteen Million (118,000,000) people, and cause the continent's economy to shrink by three percent (3%). This will derail all the gains we are making towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

That is why we cannot look on while the crisis continues. We must shoulder our responsibilities towards keeping our planet cooler. Our response to climate change must be urgent, inclusive and comprehensive, in a way that strengthens the resilience of our ecosystems, and it must involve both individual and collective actions from the youth, Civil Society Organisation (CSOs), political and traditional leaders, local communities, public and private sectors actors, as well as the academia. We all have a role to play.

Mr. Chairman, fighting anthropogenic climate change requires that we establish a long-term path for environmental sustainability that caters for the needs of today's generation and that of tomorrow's, with healthy ecosystems of fauna and flora. Government continues to adopt policy measures geared towards environmental sustainability and socio-economic development, both at the micro and macro levels.

Our 2012 Climate Change Policy articulates different sectoral policies and interventions across the forestry, transport, energy, waste, agriculture and other sectors needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

In addition to the Policy, our updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), recently submitted to the UNFCCC, contains thirty-four (34) mitigation measures and thirteen (13) adaptation measures to address climate change towards a potential reduction of sixty-four million tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (64,000,000 tCO₂e) of Greenhouse Gases by 2030.

These mitigation and adaptation measures are drawn from five (5) key sectors, and include a shift to renewable sources of energy at a larger scale, the promotion of electric vehicles, adoption of technologies that produce energy from waste, climate smart agriculture and reduction in deforestation and forest degradation. These Nationally Determined Contributions, are divided into conditional targets, which are to be achieved from Government funding with support from the international community and private sector, and unconditional targets, which are targets to be achieved from Government funding. More importantly, the conditional targets which require partners' support have the potential to achieve about sixty-one percent (61%) of our planned emission reductions by 2030.

This clearly underscores the need for a concerted effort from different stakeholders to achieve climate solutions at scale. It also, demonstrates the need to define a broad level platform of accountability from various stakeholders, for the impacts of climate change are not selective in their effect on sectors.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, within the Forestry Sector, a number of these policies and programmes are already being implemented. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report (IPCC AR5) estimates that deforestation and forest degradation contribute about twelve to fifteen percent (12%-15%) of the global Greenhouse gas emissions. But if well managed, forests, and other nature-based solutions have the capacity to contribute about a third of global climate solution. We are, therefore, working to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including illegal logging, expansionist agricultural production, wildfires, wood-fuel extraction and illegal mining, while at the same time, pursuing aggressive afforestation and reforestation programme.

Under the Ghana REDD+ Strategy, for example, we are implementing the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme (GCFRP), and the Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project (GSLERP), to restore our lost forests, increase cocoa and shea yields, provide alternative and additional livelihood schemes and reduce greenhouse Gas Emissions in the High Forest and Savannah Zones, respectively.

The Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme, which was launched by President Akufo-Addo in 2019, has already recorded emission reduction of nine hundred and seventy-two thousand, four hundred and sixty-five tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (972,465 tCO₂^e) for the first accounting period between June and December 2019, which has been verified and validated. This has generated results-based payment of Four Million, Eight Hundred and Sixty-Two Thousand, Two Hundred and Eighty United States Dollars (US\$4,862,280), which we have begun receiving. This makes Ghana the second country in Africa, and the third in the world, to receive result-based payments from the Carbon Fund.

We are, also, implementing the Forest Plantation Strategy, under which some six hundred and ninety thousand hectares (690,000 ha) of forest was cultivated between 2017 and 2022, through initiatives such as, forest plantation, enrichment planting and trees-on-farm.

And in 2021, we launched the Green Ghana Project, under which over thirty million trees were planted between 2021 and 2022, with some twenty-three million (23,000,000) of these trees surviving and doing very well. In two days' time, specifically on Friday, June 9, 2023, we will be holding the third edition of the Green Ghana Day, where we have committed to plant, at least, ten million (10,000,000) trees. I want to use this opportunity to call on all of you gathered here, as well as all Ghanaians and residents of Ghana, to come out in your numbers to support this national tree planting exercise on Friday.

Other programs such as the Forest Investment Programme (FIP), the Ghana Landscape Restoration and Small-Scale Mining Project (GLRSSMP) and the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programme (NAELP) are also supporting forest landscape restoration activities across the three ecological zones of our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, all these national efforts must feed into global concerted actions to halt climate change. Ghana, as a respected member of the international community, therefore, continues to play her role to ensure accountability of actions towards the goals of the global climate change agenda. Within the natural resources and forestry sector, we continually engage in phenomenal initiatives that promote collective knowledge sharing and learning. These include the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) Dialogue, launched at COP26 in Glasgow, in 2021, as a transformative initiative to protect forest resources while enhancing livelihoods and sustainable production and trade of commodities; the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP), launched at COP27 by Ghana and the United Kingdom with twenty-four (24) other countries, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, last year, to bring together governments and partners to implement solutions that help reduce forest loss and land degradation while supporting sustainable development, in accordance with the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030; and the Cocoa and Forest Initiative (CFI), launched at COP23, in Bonn, Germany, in 2017, with Cote D'Ivoire and thirty-six cocoa and chocolate producing companies to halt deforestation and forest degradation in the cocoa value chain.

Almost all these programmes employ a mix of implementation approaches that require multi-stakeholder funding and/or participation. The private sector must provide the financial and technical support needed; local communities must be ready to uptake innovation that fosters positive climate action; civil society must continually engage in outreach to engineer broad level understanding of climate trends; academia and research institutions must continually research and publish new information about climate vulnerability and impacts; and, of course, the media must engage in dissemination of accurate information to educate the wider populace on all these actions. This is a collective responsibility that we must bear for each other in addressing climate change.

Climate solution implementation approaches in the forestry sector alone, provides clear evidence of the shared responsibility for climate action towards environmental sustainability for both national and global stakeholders. Today, corporate organisations and business entities are being bound by sustainability and green protocols that demand that they work towards net-zero targets, adopt science-based methods to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their business supply chains, and finance projects that off-set their difficult to abate emissions.

And to ensure compliance, experts are required to assess corporate entities' Environment Social and Governance (ESG) impacts in their supply chains. This provides a rare opportunity for academia, including the University of Ghana Business School, to train and equip business experts with the rudiments of these assessments and how to conduct them, benchmarked against international best practices.

Mr. Chairman, the role of academia, now, more than ever, is very crucial to the fight against climate change. You have a unique responsibility to promote accountability, define pathways and challenge conventional status quos. Over the years, most of climate related environment, social and governance assessments, as well as use of remote sensing for inventory data, have, largely, been led by foreign institutions. We must work to change this narrative. On this Forty-Third Management Day, and in the spirit of our collective responsibility towards environmental sustainability, I want to challenge the University of Ghana Business School, the University of Ghana community in general, and the entire academia in the country, to re-define teaching and research to be climate innovative and sensitive. This will ensure that we produce experts and ready market executives to fill vacancies in environmental sustainability.

Carbon trading, sustainable production, green economy and several other linkages are the contemporary issues preoccupying the attention of the world's academia. We have to catch up.

Mr. Chairman, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Dean, Faculty, Staff, Students, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, even though mitigating and adapting to climate change has a number of challenges, it, also, provides new spaces for sustainable development, partnerships and employment of special expertise for new and creative technology demands and application. Government will continue to lead the coordination and implementation of climate -smart policies, by providing an enabling environment that promotes inclusivity, transparency and accountability, as well as secures the trust and ownership of, particularly, local communities and the private sector. But, ultimately, success will depend on how we all work together, private sector, academia, civil society, non-governmental organisations, local communities, traditional authorities and the media. The task may be daunting, but relenting is not an option. We must continue to foster the needed partnerships that deliver results, and provide the needed technical and financial resources to finance innovative climate action for people and planet.

Together we can achieve the one point five degrees Celsius (1.5°C) target, while promoting sustainable development. Ghana has a historic role to pay, therefore, let us roll up our sleeves, join hands together and work to protect our future.

I thank you for your attention.