

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER FOR
LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, HON. SAMUEL A.
JINAPOR, MP, AT THE 8TH UMAT BIENNIAL
INTERNATIONAL MINING AND MINERAL CONFERENCE,
HELD AT THE UMAT AUDITORIUM, TARKWA, ON
THURSDAY, 1ST AUGUST, 2024**

Prof. Chairman;

Western Regional Minister;

Members of the Council of the University of Mines and Technology (UMaT);

Members of Parliament;

Chief Executive Officers;

Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives;

Principals, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, and Faculty Members;

Captains of the Mining Industry

Our revered Chiefs;

Small Scale Miners;

Students;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I bring you warm greetings from the Vice President of the Republic, H.E. Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, who would have been so pleased to be here with you this morning, but for circumstances beyond his control.

Distinguished Guests, on behalf of the H.E. the Vice President, I thank and commend the University of Mines and Technology (UMaT), under the leadership of its highly respected Vice Chancellor, Prof. Richard Amankwah, for instituting this Biennial International Conference on Minerals and Mining. Indeed, since the early 1960s, this school, located in this historic mining town of Tarkwa, has contributed, significantly, to the development of mining in our country, and has trained many mining professionals who are holding strategic positions across the world.

This international conference, which we open its eighth edition this morning, and which seeks to present new developments, as well as exchange experiences and practices in mining, is testament to the University's commitment to promoting a sustainable mining industry. Not only does this accord with the aims and objectives of the University, it, also, advances Government's commitment of using mining as a catalyst for sustainable development.

The theme chosen for this Conference, "***Innovation in Mining and Mineral Processing; Expanding the Frontiers of Mining Technology,***" therefore, couldn't have been more apt. It underscores the critical role that innovation plays in shaping the future of our mining industry.

Prof. Chairman, the world's resources have come under severe stress due to rapid population growth and urbanisation, increasing agricultural production, an incipient demand for raw materials to meet the needs of our modern-day sophisticated lifestyles, and climate change. The demand for raw materials, globally, is said to have doubled in the last twenty (20) years.

This increasing demand for resources is, also, contributing to the climate crisis, thereby worsening the pressures on these resources, causing a form of vicious cycle between climate change and resources. Governments across the world are, therefore, taking measures to address these emerging challenges and improve the sustainability of land and the resources they provide.

The landscape of the mining industry, in particular, is evolving rapidly, and Ghana must position herself, strategically, to harness the opportunities presented by this dynamic sector. We must, therefore, continue to develop innovative measures that will promote sustainable mining practices, while protecting our environment, and contributing to national development.

The Miners' Creed says "***If you can't grow it, you have to mine it.***" This requires that we develop appropriate technologies for mining to ensure that mining contributes, meaningfully, to national development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our country has a long history of mining. Indeed, between the years 1493 and 1600, Ghana accounted for as much as thirty-six percent (36%) of global gold output. And today, we are the leading producer of gold in Africa, alongside substantial production of other minerals like bauxite, manganese and diamonds. But we cannot reap the full benefits of these minerals, and other mineral endowments if we fail to develop the right tools and technologies, through innovation.

It is by harnessing the power of innovation that we can maximise efficiency, reduce waste, and create a knowledge-driven mining sector.

It is by the power of technology that we can address the historical environmental and social challenges associated with mining, promote energy efficiency and build a circular economy.

And it is through innovation that we can increase production and add more value to the minerals we produce.

This Conference creates a unique platform for us to examine some of the most important issues in the mining industry, particularly the role of technology and innovation in building a green, sustainable and safe mining industry. It is an invitation to all of us, particularly industry players and academia, to assess past and current mining practices, vis-à-vis the industry we seek to build. And more importantly, it is a call to broaden our frontiers, and scale up research to develop affordable and innovative technologies to promote green and sustainable mining and mineral processing.

Mr. Chairman, let me now turn my attention to the topic I have been asked to address today, which is "***Critical Minerals: Ghana's Preparedness for Value Addition.***" This topic is very crucial today, given the prime role critical minerals play in green energy transition. These critical minerals, often rare and geologically complex, underpin our transition to a sustainable low-carbon economy.

They are essential for high-tech industries such as electronics, renewable energy, electric vehicles and defence, making their demand increasingly high across the globe.

This presents a great opportunity for countries endowed with these minerals. However, we cannot benefit, optimally from these minerals unless we invest in value addition. Today, Africa hosts a great deal of these minerals, including:

- ninety-one (91%) percent of the platinum group of metals;
- seventy-nine percent (79%) of phosphate rock;
- fifty-three percent (53%) of cobalt;
- forty-six percent (46%) of manganese;
- thirty-five percent (35%) of chromite;
- twenty-five percent (25%) of bauxite;
- twenty-one percent (21%) of graphite;
- six percent (6%) of copper; and
- substantial deposits of other minerals like lithium, iron ore, and rare earth elements.

And yet, we are unable to benefit from them because of what has become known as "***dig and ship.***"

Currently, African countries exploiting some of these critical minerals are exporting them in their raw forms, including Zimbabwe, which is exploiting the largest known lithium reserves on the continent, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which holds the largest reserves of cobalt, estimated at fifty-one percent (51%) of global cobalt reserves.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg estimates that the global lithium industry, at the mining stage, is about Eleven Billion US Dollars (US\$11,000,000,000.00), while the value of the industry at the highest end is over Seven Trillion US Dollars (US\$7,000,000,000,000.00). Should we be content with benefitting from Eleven Billion Dollars, when we can benefit from the Seven Trillion Jackpot? Absolutely Not.

It is for this reason that when we first discovered lithium in commercial quantities, the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo insisted that we treat it differently from the other minerals, and develop a special policy for the exploitation and management of our green minerals to ensure optimal benefit from these minerals for the Ghanaian people.

Accordingly, a Policy Statement on the exploitation and management of green minerals was presented to Parliament, and following inputs from Members of Parliament and other stakeholders, a proposal was submitted to Cabinet, which was approved after intense interrogation, revisions and modifications.

Among others, the Policy provides for a minimum royalty rate of seven percent (7%) for green minerals, an increase in State and Ghanaian participation in all green mineral operations to a minimum of thirty percent (30%), an enhanced local content and local participation, including listing on the Ghana Stock Exchange, and value addition and beneficiation for all green minerals.

Based on this Policy, we signed our first Mining Lease for lithium, which incorporates all these provisions, including a ten percent (10%) royalties rate, an increase in Government's free carried interest from ten percent (10%) to thirteen percent (13%) with additional State participation through the Minerals Income Investment Fund (MIIF), and the requirement to list on the Ghana Stock Exchange, which the company has fulfilled, by listing over six hundred million (600,000,000) of its ordinary shares on the Ghana Stock Exchange, giving Ghanaians the opportunity to own part of this company and its operations.

On the specific issue of value addition, the Lease enjoins the Company to establish a chemical plant for refining the lithium we produce, and in the event the Company is unable to do so, it would be mandated to sell its products to any company that establishes a chemical plant in the country.

This Lease, when ratified by Parliament, will give us the go ahead to implement its terms and ensure value addition to our lithium resources. Our non-negotiable policy is to retain, as much as possible, the full value chain of this mineral in our country, and ensure their linkages, backward, forward and side-stream, to other sectors of the economy.

Prof. Chairman, beyond lithium, we are expanding this policy to cover other green minerals which we have been mining already in our country. Our new mining lease for the exploitation of bauxite in Nyinahini in the Ashanti Region, for example, provides for a royalty rate of eight percent (8%), and contains mandatory provisions for the establishment of a refinery solution, in partnership with the Ghana Integrated Aluminium Development Corporation (GIADEC).

Indeed, we are in the final stages of laying before Parliament a Legislative Instrument, pursuant to section 28 of the Ghana Integrated Aluminium Development Corporation Act, 2018 (Act 976), to restrict the export of bauxite in its raw state. Hopefully, this Instrument will be passed before the tenure of the current Parliament ends on 6th January, 2025.

We have, also, concluded negotiations with the majority shareholder of Ghana Manganese Company, and very soon, H.E. the President of the Republic will cut sod for work to commence on a Four Hundred and Fifty Million US Dollars (US\$450,000,000.00) manganese refinery at Nsuta. This refinery will upgrade the quality of our manganese from the current twenty-seven percent (27%) to about forty percent (40%), leading to the production and export of various refined products, including battery grade manganese, one of the key components for the production of batteries for electric vehicles and energy storage systems.

Prof. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, what I have said so far, clearly demonstrates Government's preparedness for value addition to critical minerals produced in the country. This, we believe, will result in economic diversification and job creation, and position our country to leverage on her mineral wealth to drive industrialisation and enhance our competitiveness on the global stage.

To achieve this goal, certain fundamentals are *sine qua non*. First, we must invest in a comprehensive geological investigation to identify and adequately quantify our critical mineral resources, as a basis for a diversified and information-based mining sector.

We must invest in infrastructure, technology, and human capital to support the development of a robust minerals value chain. Institutions such as the University of Mines and Technology should continue to promote research and development, and institute appropriate skills and training programmes to produce the requisite capacities and facilities necessary to build and manage processing plants to add value to the critical minerals we produce.

We must train people to acquire the necessary expertise and the wherewithal to add value to our minerals locally. And we must develop innovations that make value addition to these minerals, more cost effective, efficient and easy.

Today, for example, we are told that only China has an end to end lithium – battery industry, with advanced mining countries like Australia, which accounts for over forty-three percent (43%) of global lithium production, exporting over ninety percent (90%) of their lithium spodumene to China. This, obviously, brings to the fore the challenges with value addition. But we are poised to retain, as much as practicable, a significant amount of the value in our country to ensure that we construct linkages to other sectors of our national economy.

Government has, already, put in place the policy and regulatory frameworks to incentivise and support investment in value-added activities. The Green Minerals Policy approved by Cabinet, for instance, provides for incentives for investments as one moves higher on the value chain of the industry. These incentives can only be harnessed if we build the necessary technologies and innovations that make value addition in Ghana competitive and cost effective.

As academic institutions, we must drive research that will lead to the requisite innovation and development of products and services based on our resources and which will bridge globally available technology to meet our needs locally and beyond.

Prof. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Captains of Industry, Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana's path forward in critical minerals industry lies in the intensification of research and development for value addition to our resources. A greater collaboration is required between regulators of the industry, industry players, universities and research institutions, the private sector, and international partners. Adding value to our critical minerals is not just desirable, but crucial to reaping their full benefits for national development. These minerals are not just commodities, but enablers of progress. Prioritising their value addition will enhance our competitiveness in the mining industry, and contribute, significantly, to socio-economic development, and unleash the much-desired prosperity for our people. Government, obviously, cannot do it alone. Public private partnership is, therefore, crucial, to drive investment in smelting, refining, and manufacturing.

Let this Conference, serve as a renewal of the commitment of all stakeholders in the mining industry to work together towards realising Ghana's potential as the hub of mineral processing and beneficiation. Ghana is, indeed, prepared for value addition to our critical minerals, and this preparedness rests on collaboration, innovation, and sustainable practices. Let us, therefore, work together to unlock the full potential of our mineral wealth, ensuring prosperity for all Ghanaians.

On this note, Prof. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Vice President of the Republic, H.E. Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, I declare this Eighth UMaT Biennial International Mining and Mineral Conference under the theme: "***Innovations in Mining and Mineral Processing: Expanding the Frontiers of Mining Technology,***" duly opened.

I wish you fruitful discussions, and look forward to the outcome of the Conference.

I thank you for your attention.