

WELCOME ADDRESS

BY:

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**CHAIRMAN – NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION (NDPC)**

**AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE 40 YEAR
LONG-TERM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**AT THE ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE**

ON TUESDAY, 4TH AUGUST 2015

Your Excellency President of the Republic

The Rt. Honourable Speaker of Parliament

Your Ladyship the Chief Justice

Your Excellencies former Presidents Jerry John Rawlings and John Agyekum Kufuor

Chairman and Members of the Council of State

Honourable Ministers

Honourable Members of Parliament

Distinguished Religious Leaders

Nananom, Nii mε and Naa mε

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Representatives of the media

Invited Guest

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you all to this morning's program to signal the commencement of a process that will lead to the preparation of a long-term development plan for our dear country. This is a profoundly historic occasion and I'm deeply honored to be part of it as I hope all of you are.

The importance of a long-term National Plan to guide the Strategic Development and Transformation of a country is not always recognized. Yet

evidence around the world has shown that in the post-war period, and in the developing world, countries that have achieved spectacular successes in development and high-income growth have tended to be those that have had formal or informal long-term Plans and have pursued them with some consistency.

Development economists and social scientists have long noted that at independence Ghana's level of development was broadly similar to that of Malaysia, Taiwan and South Korea but that Ghana has lagged behind while these other countries have flourished and attained high-income status. Although the causes of this stark contrast are more complex than often acknowledged, it is clear that one basic reason for it is the fact that these countries did implement successive National Development Plans on a substantially consistent basis.

Malaysia introduced its first long-term plan in 1956 and has since implemented eleven successive five-year development plans, similar to South Korea which introduced its first long-term plan in 1961 and has since implemented over seven such national development plans.

To be sure, Ghana is not new to long-term national development plans. Indeed, we had our first attempt at a long-term national development plan in 1919 when Sir Gordon Guggisberg introduced the first 10-year national development plan to be implemented over the period 1920-1930. After that there were three more 10-year plans in 1930-1940, 1946-1956 and 1951-1961; and four 5-year development plans in 1951-1956, 1959-1964, 1975-1980 and 1981-1986. In between these plans were three 2-year plans and the 7-year development plan based on the policy document "Work and Happiness", and the 1963-1970

National Physical Development plan. The overlapping tenures and rapid succession of these plans speaks volumes!

Indeed the basic difference between Ghana's experience and those of Malaysia, South Korea and Taiwan has been the consistency with which they have implemented their plans while ours have been characterized by a great deal of discontinuity in implementation. With the exception of the 1951 five year plan and the three 2-year plans which went through their full length of implementation, almost all plans prepared have been truncated either as a result of a lack of resources to implement them or worse still for political expediency.

Mr. President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, there are lessons to be learned from the experiences of these countries that have done a better job of development planning and implementation as well as from our own national experience.

The lessons are many and varied but one key lesson is that a long-term development plan in a political environment that is characterized by competitive pluralism in contrast with a benevolent dictatorship cannot succeed unless it benefits from a large body of national ownership that cuts across partisan division and is seen to be demonstrably in furtherance of the supreme national interest. The challenge is to develop a long-term national plan that ensures the continuity over a long term horizon of public policy in the macroeconomic domain and in the public investment choices that are made and finally in the environment we create to spur private investment and savings. Indeed this challenge has been echoed in the conversations that we have had in the run up to this morning's launch event with key stakeholders, including the

six political parties that occupy our national political landscape. In recognition of this, the NDPC has carried out an extensive program of initial consultations and sensitization of the three arms of government, pre-eminent statesmen and the leadership of the political parties.

We first briefed you Mr. President, and you kindly offered us your support encouragement and wise counsel. Subsequently, we paid a courtesy call on former Presidents J.J. Rawlings and J.A. Kufour. Their encouragement and advice spurred us on to visit with and brief the leadership of political parties and seek their views on the process. Again we were greatly encouraged by the sentiments and constructive engagement. The Commission also paid courtesy calls on the Speaker of Parliament and Her ladyship the Chief Justice. Following our visit to the Speaker, Parliament graciously granted the Commission the opportunity to appear before the Committee of the Whole to explain the process for the launch of the long term plan. We benefited greatly from the very well informed and discerning contributions that honorable members made in the brief exchanges that took place. Since then, we have paid a courtesy call on the Council of State to brief them and seek the Council's support. Finally, given the obviously important role of the media houses in development communication, we organized a media dialogue event to discuss the concept and road map for preparing the long-term national development plan. Our message was well received with assurances of support in informing and educating the public in support of the long-term plan.

We are launching this process today to signal the beginning of the collation of views of all stakeholders in a bid to build a consensus on the future Ghanaians want. We expect this process to be very inclusive, involving all shades of opinion and socio-economic groups. We intend to begin with wide-ranging

regional consultations. Technical discussions will then be initiated to settle on the policies that will enable us achieve the future we want. And so Mr. President Ladies and Gentlemen we are launching the preparation of a 40 year plan. In doing so, we do not aim to impose an iron grid on all successive governments. On the contrary, we aim to establish a long-term framework within which they can build the medium-term 4 year plans, leaving parliament the opportunity to review the long-term plan every 10 years in accordance with fundamentally changed circumstances. This way we achieve the consistency and continuity that we desire for the preservation of the supreme national interest along with the flexibility that we must allow for different political party strategies.

Mr. President, Nananom Nii mɛ and Naa mɛ, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, over the 58 years of our history as an independent nation, the World has of course not stood still. In comparing ourselves with countries that were at our level of development at independence and have done so much better than we have - Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Jamaica, Tunisia, and Morocco - it is easy to fall into a feeling of hopelessness and cynicism, a feeling that perhaps there is something wrong with the Ghanaian. Indeed in our consultations in the run up to today's event, we heard views from some who felt that it was impossible to successfully implement a long-term plan in Ghana without a new Ghanaian being born. There were others who felt that a long-term plan can never survive the vicissitudes of political transitions. But we cannot and must not as a nation succumb to the cynicism of those who say we are doomed to failure and those on the other hand who believe that the very idea of a long-term plan is incompatible with a multi-party political system. On the contrary we as a nation

must be inspired by the patriotism and sense of purpose that fired our forebears and enable them to forge the legacy that we inherited, and, as Ephram Amoo exhorts us, build on it.

We have an elaborate program this morning that is at once festive, somber and, I hope you will all agree, inspiring, and I should now set the ball rolling.

I thank you.