



## **OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE PREPARATION OF A LONG-TERM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR GHANA**

Accra International Conference Centre  
Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2015

**Former President Jerry Rawlings Former President John Kufuor Right  
Honourable Edward Doe Adjaho Your Ladyship Chief Justice Georgina Wood  
Your excellences and all our distinguished guests Ladies and gentlemen**

On your behalf, and indeed on behalf of all Ghanaians, I extend congratulations to the Chairman, members and staff of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) for working tirelessly to break the myth towards the promulgation of a long-term development plan for our country.

The Commission's willingness to engage and share ideas with all sections of the Ghanaian populace even at this stage when they are only about to commence the process of preparing the long-term plan is firmly in line with government's commitment to openness and transparency in all dealings.

I recognise the commitment of our two surviving former Presidents, the various political parties, our traditional authorities and the clergy to the process.

It signals a collaboration that will see to the development of a plan that is acceptable, all-inclusive, and which will tackle our developmental challenges with a common purpose.

**Clearly, Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are on course towards preparing a coherent and visionary road map for our long-term national development that will transcend the visions, aspirations and manifestos of Political Parties.

I cannot fail to recognise that the launch of this process is taking place on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of August- a special day in the history of the Ghana in a number of ways.

First, it was on this day, some 118 years ago in 1897, that a group of Ghanaians led by John Mensah Sarbah, the first Ghanaian lawyer, and Joseph Casely-Hayford, also a lawyer, established the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society (ARPS).

History (*and you all do know that I am student of history*), recalls that the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society waged a relentless campaign that saw the defeat of the Colonial Crown Lands Bill of 1897, that would have transferred control of our lands from the hands of the chiefs to the British monarch, as occurred in East and Southern Africa.

Exactly 50 years later, on 4th August 1947, a movement for national independence, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was launched.

Years later, the UGCC gave way to the Convention People's Party (CPP) which eventually led the nation to Freedom under the leadership of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

Also exactly 41 years ago today, we all, together, as a nation and one people, successfully transitioned from driving on the left side of the road to driving on the right. And those of you who are old enough will remember the very successful communication campaign that ushered in this event ***"pii pii pii pii, enifa enifa naa nyin, abenkum abenkum ye gyae"***.

All these events show what we can achieve when we work together as a nation without resort to our geographic, ethnic or political orientation.

We owe our current political dispensation in no small measure to our forebears who acted on the dreams they had for the nation and took the necessary steps without regard for the consequences.

In remembering them, all of us here today should never doubt what we can contribute, individually and collectively, to the process of national development.

Self-doubt, the 'Pull Him Down' Syndrome and cynicism have never yet built a nation. We must avoid it at all cost if we wish to live to our fullest potential as a people with a common destiny.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are starting today a journey we have shied away from for many years while admiring the great strides made over the same period by countries such as the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, China, and Brazil, to name but a few.

From them, we can learn that while short-and medium-term plans are important for managing the national economy, they play their transformative role in national development only when they are situated within the context of a long-term plan. The plan must capture the aspirations of the people and prepare for any challenges that may stand in the way of achieving those aspirations.

As we draw inspiration from the development history of these nations, let me be quick to add that one cannot and must not necessarily compare in a one-to-one function the ingredients, which include among others the geopolitics that culminated in the development of these nations.

Today, we are taking a clear and collective decision not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

With the launch of this process, we commit to taking a critical look back to our record of national development, drawing important lessons from our achievements and challenges alike.

It is a process that should afford us the opportunity to have honest and open discussions of our aspirations as a people and what we need to do to realise those aspirations.

As a nation, we have prepared and implemented various development initiatives over many years across many Governments. Our national development agendas have often reflected short-term development priorities that tended to change from one regime to the other, without the consistency and cohesion that provide stability and sustainability of results.

Across the nation, there is evidence of sound projects and initiatives - some dating as far as 1966 - that were begun with substantial resources –financial and human – but which were abandoned after a change of Government.

Such disappointments have been largely associated with the absence of a long-term development plan and the general lack of sense of ownership by the public of the national development process.

Our long history of development planning, which began in the 1920s, should count for something in the process we are launching today. Previous plans have ranged in length from two years to ten years, including three-, four-, five- and seven-year spans. Recent plans have been more comprehensive, covering a vast range of issues, while emphasising poverty reduction and growth.

These initiatives have included the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I, from 2003-2005), the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II from 2006-2009), the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA from 2010-2013), and currently GSGDA II covering 2014-2017).

We have never had a successful plan of more than a decade's duration, and in many respects this has cost us the consistency and coherence that come with a long-term view of national development.

Our previous attempt at a plan for longer than a decade was Vision 2020 (1996-2020), a 25-year plan, which was described by the then leader of the Minority, J.H. Mensah, as “suffering from glaucoma in one eye, and cataract in the other”.

He went on to declare that his party will not recognise that plan. No wonder it was immediately thrown into the garbage bin of history after 7<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

It is my fervent hope that the National Development Planning Commission and the country as a whole will reflect on why we did not succeed with Vision 2020 and use the lessons thereof to inform the preparation of this new effort at long-term development planning.

We have an opportunity henceforth to turn our fortunes around and make amends for our past failings and build on the gains we have made.

The process we are embarking on will yield fruitful insights and results.

We are starting on a good footing by bringing together, under one roof, people from across the political spectrum, from different walks of life, and from different geographical, ideological and academic domains and disciplines.

Each and every one of us has something to contribute to the process by sharing our experience, our aspirations, our resolve and our commitment.

At the end of the process, when we have all played our part, we can be sure of our collective ownership of the outcome document.

As Albert Einstein puts it, ***“The world we have created today as a result of our thinking thus far has problems which cannot be solved by thinking the way we thought when we created them.”***

I am convinced that all those who will in the next year or so make their voices heard in these consultations can make this a truly national exercise.

Another lesson we may draw from our experience is to be concise on what we develop.

I am sure we can agree that all the things we want can be translated as follows:

- The economy (make it transformative, inclusive and resilient)
- The society (make it equitable and tolerant)
- Our communities (make them safe and sustainable), and
- Our institutions (make them effective and efficient).

In this era of globalization, we also have the responsibility to play our role to secure a world of peace and justice.

**Your excellencies,**

Ghana, as a responsible member of the global community, is signatory to many global, continental and regional conventions, and has sought to include these documents and principles in national plans.

In this way, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) informed some of the goals of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA).

We greatly benefitted from collective participation in global agenda setting and the monitoring of achievements. We have done very well in some areas but not so well in others.

Poverty has declined but we need to make economic growth more inclusive, and we are making significant progress in this direction.

We will, by the end of this year, sign on to the new global development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With 17 goals and 169 targets, this agenda is more ambitious than any the world has ever had.

To the NDPC and managers of the process, we need to broaden participation, and make good use of technology to reach as many Ghanaians and well-wishers as possible. This is possible today because Government and the private sector have invested and continue to invest in broadband Internet and more ICT solutions.

We must give a prominent place around the table to our youth for them to tell us what their aspirations are.

This way, when we the older generation leave the scene for them to take full control of leadership, they would be implementing the agenda that they themselves have helped set.

They are already leaders in their own right.

Today's landmark ceremony must lead to a lasting legacy for generations yet to come.

On this note, I declare the process of consultations for the formulation of a Long-term National Development Plan for Ghana duly launched.

Thank you

And may God bless us all.

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