

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HON. IGNATIUS BAFFOUR AWUAH (MP), MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS, ON THE LAUNCH OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF FBCs/FBOs IN NORTHERN GHANA HELD ON TUESDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2018 AT THE MODERN CITY HOTEL IN TAMALE AT 10:00 AM.**

**Mr. Chairman;**

**Hon. Colleague Minister for Food and Agriculture;**

**Hon. Regional Ministers;**

**The Chairman, University for Development Studies  
Governing Council;**

**The Vice Chancellor, University for Development Studies;**

**The Korean Ambassador to Ghana;**

**Hon. District Chief Executives;**

**Directors and Heads of Departments and Agencies;**

**The Country Director, KOICA;**

**Regional Coordinating Directors;**

**Regional Directors of Food and Agriculture;**

**Distinguished Invited Guests;**

**The Media;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am extremely delighted to be a part of this historic event on the launch of Capacity Development Project of Farmer-Based Cooperatives (FBCs)/ Farmer-Based Organisations (FBOs) in Northern Ghana. It is very satisfying to note that, the goal of this project ties in very well with the mandate of my Ministry and my responsibilities as the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations.

**Mr. Chairman,** let me begin by expressing my profound gratitude to the Ministries of Employment, Food and Agriculture, Trade and Industry, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and all other stakeholders for their relentless efforts and commitment towards this laudable initiative. The significance of this project to the socio-economic well-being of the rural community cannot be overemphasized and therefore we must all roll our sleeves and work together as team to reap the huge benefits the project presents.

**Mr. Chairman,** permit me to also use this unique moment to welcome H.E. the Korean Ambassador to Ghana as today marks his first visit to the Northern part of our country and the appropriate time to witness for himself the numerous opportunities that abound in this part of the country. On behalf of the people of Northern Ghana, I say **Marhaba**, as we commence discussions on the implementation of government flagship policies and programmes such as “planting for food and jobs”, “one village, one dam”, “one district, one factory” just to mention a few. I say this because, this project is not only timely but relevant as it seeks to complement the various interventions introduced by Government. It therefore behooves on us to deepen our cooperation for the betterment of the lives of our people.

**Mr. Chairman,** the theme for the launch “**Cooperatives, Driving Change in Northern Ghana**” is well-crafted and fit-for-the-occasion. Without a doubt, the urgency to create jobs for the growing population particularly those in the rural areas has become paramount considering the fact that, rural-urban

migration is astronomically on the rise. You would all agree with me that, unemployment especially among the youth has almost become a national security issue thus interventions towards addressing this phenomenon are crucial to government. Ironically, we have allowed unemployment to infiltrate every sector of the economy as a result of our lip service to Cooperatives Development. **Mr. Chairman**, I have said it on a number of platforms and I think it is bear repeating. We have lagged behind as a country and a continent in general as a result of our inability to take advantage of the cooperatives movement. We have underestimated the strengths and benefits of cooperatives. Cooperatives are not a new idea, but are more relevant than ever if we look at the developmental challenges and opportunities the world faces over the coming decades. Today, the world of work is at crossroads, with the need to create over 600 million new jobs globally by 2030 to keep pace with the growth of the working population. What is more, the quality of jobs will need to be improved in order to enable people lift themselves out of poverty and informality. Cooperatives worldwide have shown their capacity to provide quality jobs and thus support sustainable development. Against this backdrop, I

am resolute in my commitment to strengthening the co-operatives movement so that smaller businesses can take advantage of group synergies to develop, grow and create more jobs. It is my fervent expectation that, the co-operatives bill currently being revised will be passed into law as early as practicable for a stronger regulation of the co-operatives system.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;** I wish to state without any equivocation that, our agenda of creating prosperity and equal opportunity for all as highlighted in our manifesto continues to be a priority. The goal of the project in improving the quality of life of rural residents in Northern Ghana while the planned outcome of increasing role of FBCs/ FBOs in rural development will not be compromised. This is crucial to our all-inclusive agenda for job creation and economic transformation. It is no coincidence that, the 2018 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government presented to Parliament for 2018 financial year is dubbed "Adwuma Budget". Undeniably, jobs are atop our development agenda. As a Ministry with the mandate to ensure decent work outcomes, we will do all we can to fully

operationalise our Employment Policies to create the much needed jobs. We will continue to engage, collaborate and share experiences towards the common goal of ensuring that decent jobs are created and skills developed through government's flagship policies and programmes as earlier mentioned not excluding the "Nations Builders Corp".

**Mr. Chairman,** as I bring my delivery to an end, let me reiterate that, one major challenge confronting our nation is the issue of sustainability. Indeed, we have not fared well in that regard. Research and Statistics show that, non-sustainability of projects and programmes over the years has been the bane of our underdevelopment. We have not been able to upscale nor replicate projects and programmes when funding ceases or projects come to an end. This is very unfortunate and unacceptable and should not be condoned whatsoever. Going forward, it is incumbent on us to mobilise resources in order to leverage on the benefits of such laudable projects upon completion or termination. As a matter of fact, we owe it a duty to bequeath to the people of Northern Ghana a legacy that they

can all be proud of. It has been done before and we must believe we can do it again.

**Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Invited Guests, The Media, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Having said this, it is now my singular honour and pleasure to declare the Capacity Development Project of Farmer-Based Cooperatives/ Farmer-Based Organisations in the three (3) Northern Regions of Ghana duly launched.

I thank you all for your rapt attention and for having me.

GOD BLESS US ALL.