

**WELCOME REMARKS BY MR. JOSEPH WHITTAL, COMMISSIONER
CHRAJ, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AND
TRANSPARENCY WEEK,
LA PALM ROYAL BEACH HOTEL, LA, ACCRA,
4TH DECEMBER, 2017**

- Hon. Senior Minister
- Hon. Members of the Council of State,
- Hon. Ministers of State,
- Hon. Members of Parliament,
- Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
- Chief Directors and Chief Executive officers of MDAs
- Development Partners,
- Distinguished Colleagues,
- Distinguished Participants,
- Invited Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the launch of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Week, ***“ACT 6/0”***. I am indeed grateful to the Senior Minister, Hon. Osafo Marfo, for accepting our invitation as the Guest of Honour. Thank you, Hon Senior Minister.

I am also delighted by the presence of very eminent personalities and anti-corruption practitioners today. You are welcome.

Senior Minister,

Corruption, no matter how it is defined, remains one of the most daunting developmental challenges of our time. The pervasive view, as articulated by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in a message to the First Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), is that:

“In ways large and small, corruption hurts us all. It impedes social and economic development.

It erodes the public's trust, hurts investment and undermines democracy and the rule of law. It facilitates terrorism, conflict and organized crime". He had indicated earlier, on adoption of the UNCAC in Mexico, thus: *"Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish"*.

Senior Minister,

Several studies and surveys in Ghana and elsewhere support the view that corruption is a major impediment to economic progress, social welfare, service delivery and good governance in Ghana and the African continent as a whole. It is said that padding of salaries or what is generally known as “ghost names” on the public pay roll alone, costs Ghana thirty billion Ghana cedis annually. Corruption facilitates generalised disrespect for the law, is responsible for the provision of poor quality services in education, health, sanitation and electricity, among others. Corruption undermines and weakens democratic institutions and good governance, provides spurious reasons for abandoning development projects began by previous administrations in the name of fighting it, increases cost of business and governance and weakens professionalism through production of the proverbial “square pegs in round holes”, among others.

Senior Minister,

Corruption affects all sectors of the economy without exception: Public, private, civil society, media, and faith-based organisations. It is said that corruption is a system and we must fight it by improving systems and taking other measures. Therefore, not one single person, institution or sector can fight it alone, neither public education, nor law enforcement, nor prevention, standing alone, can effectively combat corruption.

That is why, the NACAP, the blue print for fighting corruption in the country, does not seek to put the blame on anyone sector, institution or individual for corruption. Rather NACAP seeks, among others, to *“...contextualise and mobilise efforts and resources of... Government, civil society, private sector, the media and individuals, “...to prevent and fight corruption through the promotion of high ethics and integrity and the vigorous enforcement of applicable laws”*.

Senior Minister,

Thus, we must address corruption as a collective responsibility. Promoting transparency and accountability and preventing corruption are responsibilities to be shared by all sectors of society. That is why, it is critical to foster public-private partnership in the prevention of corruption by, inter alia, increasing dialogue and cooperation and generally addressing practices that generate vulnerability to corruption.

Senior Minister,

As part of efforts to foster this partnership, the Commission has since the adoption of NACAP in 2014, taken significant steps in that direction. On 9th December 2014, the Commission organized a Conference with the view to building consensus on the fight against corruption. Another initiative was taken in 2015 with the organisation of a National Conference under the theme "NACAP: Ghana United Against Corruption". The purpose of that Conference was to facilitate continuous dialogue between Government and Stakeholders for the systematic and effective implementation of NACAP and to provide a forum for the public to interact with anti-corruption agencies and take stock of measures against corruption as a collective responsibility.

Senior Minister,

Those initiatives in 2014 and 2015 proved useful as they provided opportunity to foster local ownership, which is vital for the success of any anti-corruption measures anywhere in the world and today, we are gathered to launch the "Anti-Corruption and Transparency Week. I would like to express appreciation to the partners who worked together to make this possible:

- *The Office of the President;*
- *The Judicial Service;*
- *The Attorney-General Office;*
- *The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE);*
- *Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO);*
- *National African Peer Review Mechanism (NAPRM),*

- *The Ghana Police Service;*
- *The US Embassy;*
- *The Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) and its members;*
- *The European Union;*
- *Star Ghana;*
- *IMANI, and*
- *Penplusbytes*

Your efforts at organizing this historic week since adoption of NACAP are a practical demonstration of the PPP in the fight against corruption in the country which we appreciate very much.

Senior Minister,

I see the potential positive impact that this collaboration will bear on the forthcoming review of Ghana on the implementation of the UNCAC in 2018. As may you be aware, the implementation of criminalisation, Law enforcement and International Cooperation Chapters of UNCAC by Ghana was reviewed in 2015 and in 2018 the review of the chapters dealing with prevention and assets recovery, would be due. The review requires collaboration among the various institutions and sectors that play a role in preventing corruption as well as those who have the mandate to recover proceeds of corruption. Thus, the private sector, civil society sector and public sector institutions would be expected to play a role in this review.

Senior Minister,

Several activities have been lined up in the course of the week apart from the panel discussion slated in this programme today. They include the following:

- GACC and CHRAJ would organise regional dialogues on corruption
- GII and CHRAJ would organize debates/quiz competition on the subject of corruption among students of tertiary institutions.
- IMANI will organize a Public Sector Leadership Awards event

With the support of Penplusbytes, these activities would be live and active on social media and the hashtag, **#GhanaSaysNo**, is one means of disseminating information in the course of the week.

Senior Minister,

All these activities constitute a precursor to the NACAP National Conference and the celebration of the International Anti-Corruption Day on the 9th December 2017. We are privileged to have our Vice President H.E Dr Mahamudu Bawumia as Guest of Honour on the 9th December 2017, a day set aside to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the UNCAC in combating and preventing it. I have no doubt that you will have a very successful week and that the objectives of the programme, which include facilitating continuous dialogue among Government and Stakeholders for the systematic and effective implementation of NACAP, would be achieved.

Senior Minister,

Before concluding my remarks, I find a statement by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres , which was in his message to the just ended UNCAC Conference of States Parties (CoSP) on 10th November 2017 very instructive. He said,

"... we need the full engagement and support of the business and financial communities. We need civil society to continue its valuable work. Most of all, we need young people to engage and to change minds and practices so that the corruption of today plays no role in the future....we cannot do this alone. Ending corruption will take everyone's commitment and determination."

With this, Senior Minister, Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Once again, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the programme.

Thank you.