

**WELCOME REMARKS BY JOSEPH WHITTAL, COMMISSIONER FOR THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE AT A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON “20 YEARS OF THE AFRICAN UNION CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND COMBATTING CORRUPTION (AUCPCC): ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES” ON WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT THE CHRAJ CONFERENCE ROOM.**

THE RT HON. ALBAN KINGSFORD SUMANA BAGBIN, SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT,

HON. GODFRED YEBOAH DAME, MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL,

HON. EDEM SENANU, MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN UNION ADVISORY BOARD ON CORRUPTION,

MR. KISSI AGYEBENG, THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR,

COP. MAAME TIWAA ADDO-DANQUAH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AND ORGANISED CRIME OFFICE (EOCO),

MS. BEAUTY NARTEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GHANA ANTI-CORRUPTION COALITION (GACC)

MS. MARY AWELANA ADDAH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GHANA INTEGRITY INITIATIVE

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GHANA DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES' ASSOCIATION,

HEADS OF GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS PRESENT,

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you this morning to the Conference Hall of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative on my own behalf and of the

other Members of the Commission and the organisers of this event, to this roundtable discussion whose key objective is to generate discussions on the African Union Convention on the Preventing and Combatting of Corruption(AUCPCC) to increase its visibility and additionally interrogate key policy and implementation gaps relating to the Convention in the Anti-Corruption fight in Ghana as part of the celebration in Ghana of the 20 years Anniversary of the AUCPCC.

Mr. Chairman,

during the celebration of the main event in Arusha, Tanzania on the 11 of July 2023, Ghana was ably represented by this Commission where we took the opportunity in our presentation, to articulate the achievements that the country has made since the ratification of the Convention and what in our view were the main challenges facing implementation of the Convention and the recommendations for the way forward.

I am not sure it will be prudent to waste your time with a rendition of the position that we articulated because I have noticed from the programme that the Hon. Edem Senanu, the AU Advisory Board Member on corruption and Mrs. Mary Awelana Addah, the Executive Director of GII are to make presentations respectively on Ghana's efforts in the implementation of the Convention and Ghana's Anti-Corruption Legal Framework: Status of Alignment to the AUCPCC-Policy and Practice Gaps. I don't intend to take the wind out of their sails.

Mr. Chairman,

this roundtable discussion is very important for the anti-corruption fight and for our Commission in particular. As many of you are no doubt aware, Ghana adopted the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) in 2015 as the national strategy to fight corruption with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice as the coordinating institution. Prior to the adoption of the NACAP, our national anti-corruption efforts had been hinged on the following strategies:

- 1. embarking on moralising crusades by enlisting the help of religious and community leaders to exhort citizens to uphold the values of integrity and to manifest high moral ethics in their personal lives;**
- 2. public execution of persons for corruption;**
- 3. passage of draconian decrees that included the imposition of long custodial penalties;**
- 4. confiscation of properties found or believed to have been corruptly acquired by public office holders;**

- 5. declaration of a policy of zero tolerance for corruption;**
- 6. strengthening the nation's anti-corruption legislative framework through the passage of several anti-corruption laws;**
- 7. embarking on public sector and financial management reforms; and**
- 8. strengthening national anti-corruption institutions such as the Ghana Police Service, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, the then Serious Fraud Office (SFO) etc.**

However, these efforts did not yield the desired results because of the inadequate appreciation of the complex mix of factors implicated in corruption, the lack of public participation in the development and implementation of the anti-corruption measures, the failure to foster local ownership in the formulation and implementation of various strategies, the lack of effective and sustained coordination in the implementation of anti-corruption measures and the lack of political will among others.

Mr. Chairman, in formulating NACAP, we took into consideration the limitations and shortcomings that characterised our previous anti-corruption efforts and accordingly ensured that the NACAP strategy integrated anti-corruption measures into the programmes and activities of public sector organisations particularly MDAs MMDAs, Civil Society Organisations, and key actors in the private sector. This is what we have implementing since 2015.

Mr. Chairman, the formulation of NACAP also took into consideration important provisions in the AUCPCC and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), the global blueprint in the fight against corruption. In our discussions today on strategies and innovations, there is the need therefore for us to situate same within the context of the current national anti-corruption strategy.

Mr. Chairman, it is important to advert our attention to the fact that the NACAP is due to expire next year. The question we should ask ourselves is what next? Has NACAP succeeded in terminating corruption in Ghana? Do we have to fold our hands?

Fortunately, the NACAP document itself has attempted answers to these issues. Under activity 44 of Strategic Objective 2, an evaluation of the NACAP is to be done by the NDPC and the CHRAJ as lead implementing agencies with the collaboration of all MDAs. I believe that this evaluation will address the effectiveness and efficiency of the anti-corruption strategies that we have been implementing since 2015 and make innovative recommendations to address corruption. Although, this

roundtable discussion is not a national one, it is my sincere belief that these discussions would feed into our evaluation of the NACAP and give impetus to the formulation of NACAP 2 which we are mandated to do under Activity 45 of Strategic Objective 2.

I would like to strongly urge the Executive and in particular the AG and Cabinet to muster the political will to put before Parliament for passage into law two very important innovations in the anti-corruption legal framework in Ghana which will serve as the domestication of the AUCPCC and UNCAC: The Conduct of Public Officers Bill and the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill 2021. The Conduct of Public Officers Bill is better known in the public domain. In my view, the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill which the Attorney-General has consulted stakeholders on for input is lesser known but equally very important in the light of the domestication of the AUCPCC in Ghana.

This Bill seeks to introduce among others the offences of bribery of a foreign public officer and an officer of a public international organisation, embezzlement, misappropriation or other diversion of property by a public officer, bribery in the private sector, concealment of proceeds of crime and illicit enrichment

In welcoming you to this discussion, it is important that we brace ourselves to the national challenge that confronts us and accordingly inject enormous zeal and seriousness in our discussions.

Once again, you are most welcome.