

**WELCOME STATEMENT BY HON. HARUNA IDDRISU, MINISTER OF
COMMUNICATIONS DELIVERED TO THE 6TH ITU SYMPOSIUM ON ICTs, THE
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE, 7 JULY 2011.**

Mr. Chairman,

His Excellency, the Vice President of the Republic

The Director of ITU Standardisation Bureau, Mr. Malcolm Johnson,

Colleague Ministers

Hon. Members of Parliament

Heads of Telecom Service Providers

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

(All Protocols Observed)

We are very happy in Ghana to contribute to the negotiations on Climate Change. Indeed, this is a phenomenon that affects the whole of humankind and as observed by the UN Secretary General, 'Climate Change is the moral challenge of our generation' and the ITU is one of the most important stakeholders in terms of climate change'

It is therefore my pleasure to welcome you all to Accra and to the Sixth ITU Symposium on ICTs, the Environment and Climate Change, which will allow us to examine just how ICT solutions can mitigate the destructive consequences of climate change. Indeed, the ITU Secretary General has stated that 'ITU is committed to achieving climate neutrality and to working with our membership to promote the use of ICTs as an effective tool to combat climate change'.

We in Ghana, and generally all over the African continent continue to experience natural and environmental disasters year in and year out. The scale of destruction experienced, and the seeming helplessness by our countries when these disasters occur, demands that we adopt more pro-active measures to predict, manage and control the environment as much as possible.

There are a number of different causes of climate change, but it is the man-made climate change that is of major concern because it is contributing to the rapid warming of the planet, as a result of the release of greenhouse gases (GHG) primarily carbon-based emissions, including carbon dioxide and methane. It is predicted that average temperatures could rise by as much as 6 degrees by the end of this century.

As the ICT industry is growing faster than the rest of the economy it is expected that energy requirements of computers and data centres, fixed and mobile telecommunications will contribute significantly to the GHG emissions. However, since the main output of the ICT sector is information rather than physical goods, it is easy for ICTs to provide a solution to reducing GHG emissions from other sectors of the economy.

Several steps have been taken in Ghana, to protect the environment and strong partnership and collaboration has been developed between the Communications sector and the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to monitor and control radiation levels from telecommunications infrastructure deployment.

The national telecommunication policy, through a unified licensing and incentive programme, is also promoting the migration from separate networks to single, unified Next-

Generation Network platforms which reduces the number of switching centres and involves higher capacity equipment.

The Ministry is also pursuing the programme of migration from analogue to digital transmission of radio and television which envisages significant reduction of transmitter power.

Ghana is also implementing a national e-government network project, which will extend broadband infrastructure to all the corners of the District Assembly areas and allow the use of ICT to provide emergency communications to detect and mitigate disaster events. Sufficient frequency has been reserved for public protection activities.

Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear from the foregoing that Government has adequately positioned ICT to help address the issues of climate change. The one area that all stakeholders must agree, is the need to secure adequate financing and investment to address climate change aspect of national planning. Ghana, just like the rest of the developing world, would require assistance to finance the activities focusing on adaptation; technology transfer and capacity building; energy; transport; industry; agriculture, waste management; and economic diversification.

We trust that these concerns will be addressed in the course of our deliberations. The actions of the ICT industry have to be a coordinated part of a wider, global initiative, and that is why the ITU must continue to engage all stakeholders.

In all the consultations, the ITU can count on Ghana's commitment to securing a genuine change in the direction in which humanity is heading, in order to avoid a planetary crisis caused by climate change.

We thank the ITU for choosing Ghana to host the symposium on ICTs, the environment and climate change and we welcome you to Accra.

Thank you.