GHANA

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. EDWARD KOFI OMANE BOAMAH, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION POLICY FORUM 2013, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND.

Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman
Your Excellency, the Secretary General of the ITU,
Elected Officials of ITU,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I thank you, Mr. Chairman for giving me the privilege to address this dignified assembly on the occasion of World Telecommunication Policy Forum 2013. My earnest thanks also go to the ITU and the concerned agencies for providing a great opportunity to exchange views on important policy issues that respond to the fast changing ICT environment.

I bring to this Forum the compliments of the President and people of the Republic of Ghana who remain convinced that the enabling capabilities of Information and Communication Technology will provide humankind with the recipe for socio-economic development and global peace.

We commend the ITU for helping to 'connect all the world's people – wherever they live and whatever their means'. The ITU is indeed contributing to enable the benefits of modern communication technologies reaches people in an efficient, safe, easy and affordable manner.

Mr. Chairman,
Since the release of the 'Maitland Report' and identification of the 'Missing Link', it is commendable that the ITU has committed itself to help bridge the widening 'Digital Divide'.

The telecom reforms and the creation of enabling environment undertaken in Ghana during the mid-1990s, have indeed yielded positive results and today, we confidently report that Ghana's total mobile telephone subscription has reached 26.5 million for a population of 24.5 million people.

Indeed, guided by the discussions of WTPF-09 in Lisbon, Portugal, Ghana has embarked on extensive broadband development to promote high-speed Internet development for use in governance, education, health, commerce, etc.

Presently, Ghana is served by four submarine cables: SAT-3 Cable; MainOne; Glo-1; and WACS Cable supplying more than 7.16 Terabits capacity. On 10th May 2013, the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) submarine cable system was inaugurated in Accra, bringing onboard additional 5.1 Terabits, to increase the overall submarine cable capacity to 12.3 Terabits, hence five submarine cables.

Complementing this is a national terrestrial optic fibre network that is being built to cover all the Districts and Constituency areas of the country. In June 2012, Ghana successfully connected its terrestrial optic fibre with those of neighbouring sister countries of Burkina Faso and Togo. We have also established a point of presence on the western border, preparing to directly connect with La Cote d'Ivoire, in addition to the submarine link. This is in fulfillment of ITU's Connect-Africa agenda.

The Ghana e-Government Platform Project is upgrading existing WIMAX sites to LTE and this will involve 90 sites and to enable the deployment of ICT Applications in education, health, commerce, Open Government and other business opportunities.

With the investment in broadband, Internet use is growing steadily with increasing capacity for the deployment of 4th Generation Applications. In partnership with the internet community, Government is supporting the development of critical internet infrastructure by arranging for the supply of three additional switches for Internet Exchange Points and a Root Name Server.

I am happy to report that the Ghana Internet Service Providers Association has confirmed that 45% of Internet traffic is handled locally through the existing Internet Exchange Point.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
It is in this respect that the delegation of Ghana salutes the ITU for convening WTPF 2013 to consider the draft opinions on how to advance the development of broadband and the Internet. Accordingly, we support:
- the promotion of Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) as a long term solution to advance connectivity
- fostering an enabling environment for the greater growth and development of broadband connectivity.
- capacity building for the deployment of IPv6
- the adoption of IPv6 and transition from IPv4
- multi-stakeholderism in Internet Governance, and
- operationalising the Enhanced Cooperation Process.

The delegation of Ghana is optimistic that the exchanges at this Forum will be guided by the need for inclusion and also take into consideration the spectre of the Digital Divide that we wish to close.

Once again, I thank you, Mr. Chair.