

SIGNING OF FINANCING AGREEMENT FOR THE EASTERN CORRIDOR ROAD PROJECT

REMARKS BY HON. MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

The Government of Ghana, in recognition of the importance of good road infrastructure as a prime facilitator for the rapid socio-economic development of the country and to ensure the operational efficiency of road transport between the southern and northern regions, intends to implement the construction of roads from the sea ports to northern part of Ghana.

This need has been further heightened by the desire of our land-locked northern neighbours to cart their imports through our sea ports due to the situation in La Cote d'Ivoire. It has therefore become necessary to improve the condition of the major roads linking our ports to our northern neighbours. The eastern corridor being one of the major routes that links the south to the northern part of the country therefore needs urgent attention in order for the realisation of Government's objectives to provide access to land-locked countries.

The eastern corridor, stretching from the Tema port to Kulungugu, serves as the main link to eastern Burkina Faso and Niger. The stretch from Tema - Jasikan is in Good to Fair condition. The World Bank also supported us to upgrade the Jasikan - Dodi Pepesu section of the corridor. However the remaining sections on the corridor are in bad conditions thereby resulting in

longer travel times and high Vehicle Operating Costs. These sections will therefore need to be rehabilitated.

As part of Governments objective to provide transport infrastructure and services at minimum cost for accelerated economic growth especially in Agriculture, Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Transportation has programmed to link the Eastern corridor to the Central corridor through Bimbila and Yendi to Tamale. The linkage of these two major road corridors will provide travelers from the south with an alternative and shorter route to the northern part of the country.

We therefore wish to express our gratitude to the European Union for providing us with a total amount of 22.8 million euros for the upgrading of the Dodi Pepesu - Nkwanta section of the corridor. The Ministry is in the process of reviewing the feasibility and detailed design on the NkwantaYendi section with support of the International Development Association(IDA) under the Road Sector Development Programme. It is hoped that this section will be funded under the upcoming Transport Sector Development Programme.

We would also urge other Development Partners to emulate the example of the European Union to ensure the complete rehabilitation of all sections along the eastern corridor. This will go a long way to facilitate Governments objective of attaining a middle income level by 2015.

It is envisaged that the completion of the project will contribute to lower travel times and also ease the pressure on the Central corridor.

Once again I wish to take the opportunity to congratulate the European Union in their effort towards the economic development of the country.

We are most grateful.