

OPENING ADDRESS BY

**THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND
ECONOMIC PLANNING OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA,
KWADWO BAAH-WIREDU, M.P**

AT THE

**MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE 2ND SUMMIT OF
AFRICAN COCOA PRODUCING COUNTRIES,**

HELD ON

3RD AND 4TH SEPTEMBER 2007

AT THE

ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, ACCRA, GHANA.

- Your Excellency,
- Hon. Colleague Ministers,
- The Secretary General of COPAL, Ambassador Sona Ebai,
- Distinguished Ambassadors,
- Hon. Members of Parliament of the Republic of Ghana,
- Representatives from the Private Sectors,
- Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

1. I am filled with much pleasure and feel honoured for the opportunity to be here at this august gathering. I wish to express our profound gratitude to delegations who made it to Abuja, Nigeria last year for the maiden summit at which Ghana was selected as the privileged nation to host the 2nd summit this year.

2. On behalf of the Government and People of the Republic of Ghana, I wish to commend and thank my Colleague Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen for responding favourably to our invitation, making time and arrangement to gather here in solidarity with the African Cocoa Economy. On this note, I extend to Colleague Ministers the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality and warmth saying “AKWAABA” to the Ministerial Meeting and to Ghana.

3. Dear Colleagues, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, you may recall that the maiden Summit was held on 6th May 2006 in Abuja in Nigeria on the theme “Sustainable Cocoa Economy for

Africa". The prime objective was to discuss critical aspects of the African Cocoa Economy with the ultimate goal of ensuring that African Cocoa Producing Countries that collectively, account for about 76% of global cocoa beans output have remunerative returns. It is important to know that this year's summit will continue with the previous summit but to another level which is reflected in the theme ***"Defining a Policy Roadmap Towards a Sustainable African Cocoa Economy"***.

4. Indeed we are thankful to Nigeria and to His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria who upon realising certain pertinent issues, challenges and problems confronting the African Cocoa Economy, initiated the idea of a Summit of Heads of State and Government of African Cocoa Producing Countries to provide a common platform for discussing and formulating policies aimed at putting in place the necessary strategies. There are seventeen countries in Africa which produce cocoa. These are as follows:-

Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome & Principe, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda.

5. Cocoa is, therefore, produced in the West, Central Eastern and Southern Africa.

6. Colleague Ministers, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Cocoa sector has thus over the years proven to be the outstanding backbone of a number of our countries contributing significantly to employment generation, revenue, foreign exchange earnings, direct and indirect provision of Infrastructural and social amenities and economic development in totality. It may interest Colleague Ministers to note that Ghana is undertaking a Hydroelectric Power Project at a cost of US\$622 million and is being supported partly through a Cocoa Sales Agreement signed with the Government of the Peoples Republic of China. Its importance is further being proven as scientific research being carried on this “golden pod” is unearthing numerous nutritional, medicinal and health benefits that have the potential to breed a healthy workforce to develop our great, noble and beautiful continent.

7. To help address some of the challenges enumerated, there will be a presentation of three lead papers covering Africa and the World Cocoa Economy, quality issues and discussion on the worst forms of child labour. The objectives of the summit include strengthening co-operation among African Cocoa Producing Countries, efficient use of cocoa towards a sustainable African cocoa economy, value addition, promotion of consumption and the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

8. It is of interest to note further that, there are a number of upcoming meetings on cocoa that will also be taking place in Accra. The African Regional Executive Committee of the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) will be meeting just after this Summit. This will be followed by the ICCO Round Table Conference on a

Sustainable World Cocoa Economy from 3rd to 6th October, 2007 and the Annual Meetings of the Cocoa Producers Alliance from the 8th to 12th October, 2007 all in Accra. All these meetings will be discussing various aspects of sustaining cocoa production and consumption in the world.

9. These meetings will thus provide further opportunities to state the case of Africa.

10. Dear Colleagues, at the Abuja Summit a number of resolutions were passed and we need to take stock of actions taken so far in implementing these decisions in our various countries.

11. We realise that we can only achieve our objectives through unity. There is also the need to have a secretariat which can facilitate the implementation of these resolutions. At the moment, the Cocoa Producers' Alliance (COPAL) is the only Organisation promoting the interest of African Cocoa Producers at the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO); yet it is only seven African Producing Countries who are members of COPAL. There is strength in unity so I wish to urge all our colleague producing countries to join COPAL to facilitate implementation of our policies to achieve our common objectives.

12. Dear Colleagues, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Ghana would like to renew its pledge to contribute and support any effort to sustain the African Cocoa Economy. We are implementing most of the policies being formulated by the Cocoa Producers' Alliance, International Cocoa Organisation and that of the Abuja Declaration and continue to collaborate and partner all the stakeholders in the

African Cocoa Economy. It is our belief, therefore, that these efforts will continue to enhance productivity, production, processing, manufacturing and marketing in the industry, geared towards achieving satisfactory remunerative returns and a sustainable cocoa economy in Ghana, Africa and the world at large.

13. Colleagues, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, in our efforts to promote increased consumption for our increasing production as declared at Abuja, we had the opportunity to see, feel and eat many new cocoa products which many of us would never have known of had it not been the exhibition which took place in Abuja last year. To this end, a number of players in the cocoa chain such as the research institution, processors, manufacturers, agro-chemical companies and other stakeholders in the cocoa economy in Ghana have been invited to showcase the kind of cocoa products that Ghana has for the world cocoa economy. You are respectfully entreated to visit the exhibition stands to observe the products on display so that together we can promote consumption of these products in our respective countries.

On Tuesday we shall visit the Tetteh Quarshie Farm who introduced cocoa from Fernando Po in Equatorial Guinea to the then Gold Coast now Ghana in 1879. You will see the cocoa trees planted at that time. You will plant cocoa seedlings in our Golden Jubilee Farm but do not forget you will contribute fee of GH100.00 to maintain the seedlings. Your name tag will be attached to the seedling planted by you.

You will drive on one of our recently built roads which provides you with a beautiful scenery. You will also see Peduase Lodge built by

President Kwame Nkrumah in the 1960s and currently being rehabilitated by President Kufuor.

14. Colleague Ministers, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Government and people of Ghana, I warmly welcome you once again to Ghana and wish you a successful and fruitful meeting.

15. Thank you.

16. Accra, Ghana.

PROPOSED AGENDA

The agenda will include presentation of papers in the following areas:-

- i. Overview of World Cocoa Economy, Its Sustainability and the Role of African Producers in a Global Cocoa Supply;
- ii. Challenges of Quality and Standards in the Cocoa Industry;
- iii. Country Reports Highlighting Cocoa Policies; and
- iv. Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Cocoa Industry.

OBJECTIVES OF SUMMIT

1. Strengthening Co-operation among African Cocoa Producing Countries
2. Reinforcing International Co-operation in Cocoa
3. Promotion of Consumption
4. Value Addition
5. Efficient Use of Cocoa Towards a Sustainable African Cocoa Economy
6. Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Cocoa Industry.