

**Statement by Ambassador Kwabena Baah-Duodu at The Opening  
Ceremony of the Regional Capacity-Building Workshop on Enhancing the  
Functioning of Cereals Markets in West Africa  
Accra, Ghana 9 December, 2010.**

Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this Regional Capacity Building Workshop on Enhancing the Functioning of Cereals Markets in West Africa, which is being organized by UNCTAD in cooperation with ECOWAS and the Network of Farmers and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa (ROPPA) and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

Before I proceed, permit me to thank the European Union for funding this workshop through the All ACP Agricultural Commodities Programme (AAACP). We are also indebted to the Government of Ghana for its support and hospitality; and GIMPA for the excellent arrangements made for this workshop. We further register our gratitude to the International Trade Centre (ITC), for sponsoring some participants to the workshop through the AAACP. We thank the West Africa Monetary Union (UEMOA), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the French Development Agency (AFD), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for sponsoring their own participation in order to share their experiences in the themes of interest to the workshop with us; and the OECD's Sahel and West Africa Club also for sponsoring key delegates from national food security boards in the region. Indeed, in the spirit of better coordination, the workshop is being held back-to-back with the forum of the OECD's Sahel and West African Regional Solidarity to Address Food Crises: South-South Cooperation and Regional aid Effectiveness. Outcomes of this forum will be presented to us this morning. This link also contributes to situating the meeting's purpose within the broader framework of South-South cooperation.

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As all of you know, the specific objective of this workshop is to improve the capacity of public and private stakeholders in the areas of innovative supply chain finance and commodity exchanges. To do so, it will combine presentations by experts with a sharing of experiences by stakeholders from the region. We hope that this will ultimately contribute to the improvement of the

state of food security in the West Africa region. This objective is even more pressing now than ever before, in view of the impact of the 2008 food crisis that led to some 53 million people in the developing world falling below the poverty line and more than 100 million additional people going hungry. Indeed, the food crisis of 2008 was a wake-up call to policy makers, many of whom were caught off-guard by dramatic price hikes and food security concerns. The crisis also drew attention to the level of investment in agriculture, as well as tensions surrounding domestic consumption and exports of agricultural commodities for either food or fuel. The challenge for countries, especially in the developing world is, therefore, two-fold: to increase production and export capacities, while at the same time maintaining their food security. Investment and trade policy at both the national and multilateral levels can play a hugely determinative role in the successful resolution of this problem.

In considering the way forward, we in UNCTAD believe that business as usual is certainly not an option. UNCTAD's Secretary General has called for new development paths in the wake of the global crisis. In his own words: "new development paths" are needed based on diversifying developing-country economies, on "a pragmatic balance" between the roles of the market and government policy, and on "reorienting international trade, financial, and monetary cooperation towards more equitable, sustainable, and coherent global governance systems."

At UNCTAD, over the years, we have tried to identify which policies work best for a given sector in which the comparative advantage of a specific country lies.

Success in the development of productive capacities depends on the extent to which governments are able to create favourable conditions for capital accumulation, technological progress and economic transformation. This requires, among others, investments in human resources and infrastructure, a better business environment, technology transfer and the development of regional markets.

The importance of regional trade for food security cannot be sufficiently underscored in this circumstance. Indeed, as highlighted in the ECOWAS's strategy document on *Regional Agricultural Policy for West Africa*, 80 percent of the region's food needs are currently met by regional produce. However, constraints to the optimal functioning of agricultural markets still prevail. These include limited access to finance and to modern commercialization techniques. UNCTAD contributes to alleviating these constraints by providing support to the development of innovative supply chain finance and commodity exchanges in the West Africa region.

With these objectives in mind, we can only aim for sustainability if the workshop is grounded in existing regional and continental policy initiatives.

The first session this morning is, therefore, devoted to situating the meeting in the overall regional policy context.

The remainder of the first day will focus on warrantage and warehouse receipt systems. Day 2 will focus on commodity exchanges. Each session will begin with a review of the regional experience, and 3 to 4 presentations of country cases focusing on different themes.

These presentations will be followed by group working sessions on the way to use and promote these instruments in the region. The conclusions of the group working sessions will then be presented and discussed in plenary.

The workshop will end at 13:00 on Day 3. By then, we hope that the workshop would have achieved the following:

- Identification of priority actions for the development of warrantage and commodity exchanges.
- Public policy Recommendations to regional organisations, other public stakeholders and donors on necessary conditions that ought to be met for the successful development of the above instruments.
- Recommendations to private stakeholders concerning practices and pre-conditions for the successful use of the above instruments.

Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish all of us a very fruitful workshop.

Thank you.

