

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE DEVELOPMENT – REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING
WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING THE FUNCTIONING OF CEREALS MARKET IN WEST AFRICA**

A Statement by the Hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, Ms. Hanna Tetteh at the Regional Capacity Building Workshop on “Enhancing the Functioning of Cereals Markets in West Africa”.

Your Excellencies,

The Minister of Food and Agriculture,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Ladies & Gentlemen of the Media

It gives me great pleasure to be with you this morning and to have the opportunity to make a statement at this workshop on enhancing the functioning of cereals markets in West Africa. Generally speaking access to markets, and ensuring the development of effective and efficient markets is one of the major challenges facing the private sector within our sub region. Despite the fact that we have been working for years to establish an economic union, the building blocks of that union are yet to be put together in such a way as to create an integrated West African market for goods and services.

The importance of achieving a very well organized and efficient cereal markets in West Africa cannot be over emphasized. As we make strenuous efforts at regional integration, food security becomes an issue of great importance. One of the important means of ensuring food security is to ensure fair and stable incomes to our farmers who engage in the production of cereals in the sub-region – a guarantee for continuous and increased production.

The 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.

Since the 1980s, trade in agricultural commodities in Ghana has undergone massive liberalization which has encouraged the development and enhancement of private trade. However, there have been serious constraints which increase transaction costs, leading to lower margins to the farmers, higher procurement costs for commodity processors and ultimately higher retail prices.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

An important intervention in addressing these constraints is the development of exchange trading and warehouse receipt systems. Commodities exchanges helps in managing risks, facilitates trade and finance. They offer transparency in trading processes by monitoring the conduct of members and brokers through the enforcement of rules and regulations. They also ensure and guarantee contract performance in terms of deliveries and payments and most important of all, provide reliable and timely dissemination of market information to all trading parties.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is the objective of the Ministry of Trade and Industry to establish a commodity exchange and to develop a regulated warehouse receipt system that will assure price stability and sustainable provision of affordable finance especially to farmers who can further use their commodities as collateral. In this regard, I am very pleased that the Securities and Exchange Commission is working feverishly to put in place the necessary policy and regulatory framework to supervise and regulate the system.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that this workshop will afford us the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of these systems that ultimately will bring efficiency into the West African cereal markets.

Thank you.