

MOVENPICK AMBASSADOR HOTEL, ACCRA – GHANA, 26 SEPTEMBER 2014



SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST ECOWAS MINING & PETROLEUM FORUM (ECOMOF 2015) BY:

- Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Republic of Ghana
- Deputy Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Republic of Ghana
- Director of Public Affairs and Environment of Ghana Chamber of Mines
- ECOWAS Commissioner of Energy and Mines

Chairman's Opening Remarks By Hon. Nii Osah Mills, Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Republic of Ghana

H.E. ECOWAS Commissioner for Energy and Mines
Hon. Minister of Energy and Petroleum
Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Members of the Media
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my honour to accept the Chairmanship of this Press Conference Launch of ECOMOF 2015.

ECOMOF 2015 is the 1st ECOWAS Mining and Petroleum Forum and Exhibition. It is an initiative of the ECOWAS Commission which, on 8th October, 2010, at a meeting of ECOWAS Ministers responsible for Mineral Resources Development in Monrovia, Liberia, recommended the organization of a regional mining and petroleum forum, as part of activities to promote and develop the mining and oil potentials of Member States.

At the request of ECOWAS, therefore, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum have agreed to host this Forum, "ECOMOF 2015", on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Ghana. The Forum which is the inaugural edition, is expected to take place at the Accra International Conference Centre from 6 – 8 October, 2015 and has, as its theme, '*Valorising West Africa's Mineral and Petroleum Resources through Regional Cooperation*'.

This theme ties in very well with the objectives of the Government of Ghana which is to ensure that our natural resources are not only exploited, but that additional value is created resulting in the sustainable development of our country. All the countries of the sub-region should expect similar outcomes as this is exactly what the current Africa Mining Vision adopted by the Africa Union, seeks to achieve. The timing of the forum is, therefore, very apt.

As we launch ECOMOF today, it is my expectation that we shall all lend our support to make it champion such development.

Thank you.

Welcome Address by Hon. Benjamin Dagadu, Deputy Minister of Energy and Petroleum, Republic of Ghana

Hon. Chairman and Minister for Lands and Natural Resources
ECOWAS Commissioner for Energy and Mines
Colleague Ministers,
The Local Organizing Committee (LOC),
The Media,
Distinguished Invited Guest,

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the launch of the first ever ECOWAS Mining and Petroleum Forum and Exhibition to be held in Ghana in October 2015.

Mr. Chairman, I consider the upcoming Mining and Petroleum Forum as an important milestone in the promotion of socio - economic integration of the West African Region and also to provide a platform for effective linkages in development of mineral and hydrocarbon resources which abounds, in the sub region.

Mr. Chairman, the West Africa Sub Region is blessed with a wide range of natural resources which should have propelled the sub region to economic growth and prosperity than we find ourselves now.

Unfortunately however, having exploited considerable volumes of these resources especially, the hard commodities, and to some extent, hydrocarbon in the region for well over a century, there is very little to show as far as improvement in the living conditions of majority of the people in the region is concern. Rather, human beings are continuously being displaced; our water bodies polluted; and the environment degraded; all as a result of natural resource extraction.

Mr. Chairman, Issues of diversification has been discussed for years and not much has been achieved though the region boasts of other resources which it could have diversified into.

Mr. Chairman, a lot more discoveries of oil and gas have been made in the sub region in recent times while other mineral deposits such as bauxite, iron ore, etc, are yet to be exploited. The Challenge now is how to integrate the exploitation of our natural resource endowment into the economies of countries in the Sub Region.

Harnessing natural resources for sustained development is both technically and politically difficult and success depends upon getting a chain of decisions right.

We need collective efforts rather than going solo for sustainable development and management of these resources to meet the needs of current and future generation.

It is therefore my hope that the upcoming forum with the theme Valorizing ***West Africa's Mineral and Petroleum Resources through Regional Cooperation*** will provide the needed platform to address issues on value addition to mining and oil products.

It is also my expectation that forum will bring to the fore technological advancement in natural resource extraction and also harmonization of legal, regulatory and taxation instruments as well as strengthening trade in mining and oil products the States .

Mr. Chairman, we need adequate, reliable and cost effective energy to tap the natural resources which abounds in the region and I consider the forum to provide the appropriate platform for this purpose.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to commend the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) in their preparations towards the upcoming Forum and as co-Chair of the host country, I wish to assure both the National and Local Organizing Committees of my ministry's support towards the success of the 1st ECOWAS Mining & Petroleum Forum in October 2015.

I want to thank all of you for your presence, and urge the media to help us organize a successful mining and petroleum forum in October 2015.

Thank you and May God Bless us all.

Remarks by Mr Ahmed Nantogmah, Director of Public Affairs and Environment of Ghana Chamber of Mines

Hon. Chairman,
Hon. Minister of Energy and Petroleum
Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
ECOWAS Commissioner, Energy and Mines
Your excellences, Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Heads of Parastatals
Captains of the Industry
Members of the Local Organizing Committee
Members of the Press Corps
Ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour for the Ghana Chamber of Mines to be part of the launch of ECOMOF 2015. At the heart of the Commission's mandate to integrate countries on the continent is the development and harmonization of business practices. The natural resource sector, where the depth and breadth of the continent's endowment is unmatched, provides an opening for the realization of a unified continent. We are therefore excited to be part of this forum which wields the potential to revolutionize the extractive sector in the west coast of Africa.

Mr. Chairman, Ghana's mining industry which predates independence, has evolved from a subsistence to a large scale industrial activity that underpins the structural transformation of our economy. Nearly 20% of all direct revenue mobilized by the Ghana Revenue Authority originated from the minerals sector in 2013, which incidentally was also the second and first highest producer of gold in Africa and West Africa respectively. In addition, data from the Bank of Ghana showed that the sector accounted for 37.6% of aggregate foreign exchange receipts in 2013.

It is on account of the pivotal role and progressive history of mining in the country that the Commission selected Ghana to be the host of this maiden forum. Again, the lot fell on the Ghana Chamber of Mines to lead the Commission's effort to establish an ECOWAS Federation of Chambers of Mines. This private sector-led association is expected to collaborate with ECOWAS governments in providing thought leadership to enable host countries optimize the benefits of their mineral resources in order to enhance the standards of living of our people.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have no iota of doubt that this forum and exhibition would foster the cross fertilization of best practices and policies in the mining industry across the member states and beyond. The Ghana Chamber of Mines pledges to support ECOMOF 2015. Thank you for your kind attention.

ECOWAS Commission Statement by Dr. Bangoura Morlaye (Commissioner, Energy & Mines)

Hon. Chairman, Minister of Lands & Natural Resources and Co-host Minister of ECOMOF 2015 – Mr. Nii Osah Mills;
Hon. Minister of Energy & Petroleum and Co-host Minister of ECOMOF 2015 – Mr. Armah Kofi Buah;
Other Hon. Participating Ministers of the Republic of Ghana;
Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions, Traditional Authorities, Intergovernmental and other International Organizations;
Distinguished Captains of the Mining and Petroleum Industry;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media Fraternity;
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to, on behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the President of ECOWAS Commission, and on my own behalf, express our most-esteemed gratitude, to **His Excellency, The President of Ghana and Chairman of Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, John Dramani MAHAMA**, and the Government and people of the Republic of Ghana for accepting to host the First *ECOWAS Mining & Petroleum Forum and Exhibition (ECOMOF 2015)* in Accra, Ghana and for the kind courtesies being extended to the delegation of the ECOWAS Commission in the preparations towards the event.

Hon. Chairman,

ECOWAS Commission is delighted to be able to inform you that ECOMOF 2015 in particular, and its subsequent editions will not only be the first of its kind guaranteeing to bring together on one platform, all the Hon. Ministers responsible for the Mining and Petroleum Industries in the Member States of ECOWAS, but also, ECOMOF 2015 coincides with the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Economic Community of West African States in 2015 since it was established on 28 May 1975.

I hope that notwithstanding the varied 'ifs' and 'buts' we may have concerning our Geo-extractive Industry, we can all at least, agree that it has been an anchor on which Member States are pursuing their economic and social development aspirations. As ECOWAS celebrates its 40th Anniversary in 2015, I believe one of the climax-events is for us to assemble as key-stakeholders of the geo-extractive industry to take stock and chart our next-steps going-forward.

As a Regional Economic Community, we should all undertake that effort, both at the government or governmental institutions' level, the private sector, as well as the civil society and the non-state actors, with our external partners.

Hon. Chairman,

I have no doubt that we are following the future prospects of the oil sector in the region, as well as the actions of the Community and its Member States to promote the diversification from the traditionally exploited minerals in the mining sector. We may also be aware that the broader society differ in opinion as to how the activities in the geo-extractive industry has benefitted the average citizen in the region.

There are endless issues we may wish to bring to the fore for constructive discussion. However, whatever our positions may be on the industry, we can as well agree, that we all aim for appropriate mechanisms to have equity in the development, management, and distribution of the optimum benefits that arise and will continue to arise from the geo-extractive industry. I can assure you that the highest Authorities of the Community share the same desires and aspirations.

It is in this light of satisfactorily addressing the question that the Authority of Heads of State and Government approved upon the recommendations at various levels through the ECOWAS Process, to establish and institutionalize the ECOWAS Mining & Petroleum Forum (ECOMOF) as the industry's platform for inclusive dialogue in the region. Indeed, how well the geo-extractive industry has benefitted us as a people is such a dynamic question that, it will for a long time continue to be a vexed and extensively debated question.

It is to align with our collective desire and aspiration to chart an inclusive path going-forward and towards our next-steps forward as a Community, that we decided the theme for ECOMOF 2015 as – *Valorising West Africa's Mineral & Petroleum Resources through Regional Cooperation*. The theme should assist set the tone for us to be forward-looking as we reflect on the question of how well we wish the geo-extractive industry to further enhance our collective well-being. It should not be challenging for us to agree on optimizing our value addition through regional cooperation.

The question then is, how should we collectively go about achieving this? Hence, we will at ECOMOF 2015 be reflecting over our next-steps going forward after 40 years as a Regional Economic Community.

Hon. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ECOWAS Mining & Petroleum Forum (ECOMOF) intended for institutionalization is unique. Its uniqueness lies with the participation of all the Hon. Ministers responsible for Mining and Petroleum in Member States. Intended to take place every two (2) years on a rotational basis between Member States, ECOMOF will provide a unique platform to interact with the respective Ministers in charge of mining and oil industry and their experts.

Participants of ECOMOF shall certainly not miss out on the Exhibition Stands of our fifteen (15) Member States at one platform over three-day periods. At ECOWAS Commission, we believe that together with the Member States and AME Trade Ltd., of U. K., the organizing consultant, we will achieve the aim herein for establishing the ECOMOF and deliver also on its prospects.

Hon. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have no doubt that ECOMOF 2015, which is the 1st edition, being hosted by Ghana, a Member State with renowned credentials in the geo-extractives industry will be interesting and useful the 'ECOWAS Community' to become what our people expect from it.

On behalf of the President of ECOWAS Commission and by myself, let me here assure everyone, of our firm commitment to seeing the realization of the geo-extractive industry in the Community, assuming its full integrated role as a development agent, for the well-being of us all.

As the Commissioner responsible for Energy & Mines, I will be counting on your full and unconditional support for our continuous commitments.

ECOWAS Commission joins the Government and the People of the Republic of Ghana to invite all participants for an exceptional event. I will be looking forward to the active participation of everyone at ECOMOF 2015 for fruitful results to develop our mining and oil industry.

Hon. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would finally like to state that the presence of high personalities to this event is the proof of the importance our highest Authorities give to the Forum.

With these few words, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.