

‘As a critical stakeholder of the Ghana National Single Window (GNSW) you are invited to present a Paper on ‘Feedback/Testimonial of the GNSW’

Mr. Chairman I bring you fraternal greetings from the Managing Director and his Management Team on this auspicious day. Ghana Airports Company as Managers of the various airports in the country is a critical stakeholder in the Ghana National Single Window program initiated by the Government of Ghana on 1st September 2015 and the UNCTAD Empowerment Program for National Trade Facilitation Program as *‘Tools for Trade Development’*. As tools for Trade Development, the Single Window Program is to simplify, harmonize and standardize trade procedures to strengthen Ghana’s trade competitiveness, economic development and secure increase government revenue. Likewise, the Trade Facilitation Agreement of WTO contains provision for expediting the import, export and transit procedures including the movement, release and clearance of goods with a view to reducing related cost.

My job this morning is to give a testimony or feedback as key stakeholder on the Ghana National Single Window (GNSW). I want to crave your indulgence to quote a text from the Bible to precede my testimony.

‘We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the father and with His Son, Jesus Christ’ 1 John 1:3

Therefore, I testify to what I have seen with my eyes, which I have looked at and my hands have touched. My testimony may be subjective but bear with me.

Mr. Chairman, looking at the dramatic and the positive changes that have occurred in the Customs Cargo clearance processes, I can say that the Ghana National Single Window Project has taken the frontiers of trade facilitation and revenue assurance much further through wider stakeholder approach to establishing an automated and an integrated National Single Window based on International best practices.

Mr. Chairman, GACL is member of the National Trade Facilitation Committee, and specifically, serves on the Technical Committee on Fees and Charges on doing business through our frontiers/borders. We also serve on GNSW Technical Committee. The privilege of serving on these two trade facilitation platforms has

afforded me the opportunity to have a critical look at the positive changes in the air cargo delivery chain.

The GNSW and her technical partners: West Blue Consulting has assisted Ghana Customs to simplify, harmonize and standardize trade procedures and this has strengthened Ghana's trade competitiveness at the Airport. This indeed has had positive impact on Trade Facilitation through expedited clearing process while ensuring trade visibility and revenue assurance.

At the moment, I can say with certainty that the hustle and bustle that was associated with clearance of goods at the Airport Cargo Terminals has reduced considerably. All things being equal and by strict application of the PAARS system, an importer acting through a credible freight forwarder can clear a consignment within 24-48 hours. In 2016, I personally cleared cargo from the Aviance Cargo Warehouse in less than a day. I have also spoken to over 50 importers and agents and they all agreed that the clearing process and procedures is now faster and visible than pre GNSW.

The Ghana Airport Company Cargo Operations Unit operates on fivefold pillar and one of them is Trade Facilitation and Cargo data visibility through ICT. We are in the process of acquiring our Cargo Management System thanks to the inspiration we have received from GNSW and the support we hope to receive from West Blue Consulting.

Mr. Chairman, GACL have observed with much joy, the efficiency brought to bear on the Cargo delivery chain by Ghana National Single Window. Until the GNSW came on board, the free storage period of goods in the cargo transit sheds was 8 days. This persisted for over 20years because of the then long Customs documentation procedures, and difficulty in locating consignments in the warehouses. This situation invariably increased import cost and the trading public suffered. The GNSW single submission of data and the introduction of the PAARS has gradually reduced the free storage days from 8 to 4 days due to the speed and efficiency in the cargo clearance and delivery process.

The fact is that the system put in place by GNSWP has reduced the cost of doing business at the Accra Airport Freight Terminals. The hard evidence is that revenue from storage or demurrage to Ghana Airport has reduced by 48% since the GNSW leveled up in January 2017. The positive effect is that it has reduced the cost of

doing business at the Airport. Cargo handlers spend less time and resources on overstayed cargo in the Transit Sheds.

As a technical Committee member on Fees and Charges of the Trade Facilitation Committee, we consider this a laudable achievement and a plus to our trade facilitation index. We will like to say Ayekoo to GNSW, West Blue Consulting GRA (Customs Division) and all other Government Partner Agencies for the good work done. This is a win-win scenario for all.

Mr. Chairman another remarkable development is Value Creation by the GNSW/TFA Digitization process. At the 11th World Cargo Symposium held at Abu Dhabi on the 11th to 16th March 2017, among the topics discussed was digitization of Air Cargo to ensure visibility and revenue assurance in Air Cargo Business. It has been demonstrated by GNSW that electronic/digitization processing of Cargo transaction has clear savings and time in trade costs. Currently GNSW has adopted the Cargo XML, an International Standard for electronic communication between Airlines and other Cargo stakeholders such as Shippers, Freight Forwarders, Ground Handlers and Regulators including Customs and Security Agencies.

Mr. Chairman I want to conclude this testimony with a paraphrase from Celine Howcade, Head of Cargo Transformation at IATA: The disruption in the old order has come and stakeholders need to pick up the pace. GNSW/West Blue Consulting came, saw and conquered.

Well done GNSW, well done GRA (Customs Division), well done Ghana Airports Company.

Thank You.