

VALENTINA WELCOME ADDRESS

GNSW Conference

9 May 2017

Honourable Ministers, senior representatives of the international organizations, representatives of the business community, distinguished guests, media team Good Morning.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all today to the 2nd Ghana National Single Window Conference - combined today with a strong focus on the coming into force of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

So much has been achieved since our first GNSW conference in December 2015. At that time, the Trade Facilitation Agreement was only recently opened for ratification by WTO Member States and it seemed it might take a long time before the necessary 110 ratifications would be realised. The fact that ratification has been achieved by so many developing as well as developed countries in such a relatively short time is a clear indication of our belief that this agreement will create many new opportunities for doing business globally.

December 2015 also marked the beginning of the work to implement the Ghana National Single Window Programme and I am pleased to say that tremendous progress has been made since that time in significantly reducing the time and cost of doing business in Ghana and making trade easier, but certainly we still have a long way to go and all hands will be needed on deck. I will be elaborating on this later in the programme.

Single Window is in fact a key tool for implementing the WTO Agreement as it has a major impact on simplifying trade procedures and facilitating Border Agency Coordination. It is also a key tool for addressing the information access requirements of the Agreement

Ghana is one of the original countries that ratified the WTO TF Agreement. With our Ghana National Single Window Programme touching on 14 Articles of the Agreement, we plan to embrace it fully, both in the letter and the spirit and will go far beyond its requirements in making Ghana a leading trading nation in the region and globally. I very much look forward to hearing the presentations on this topic from our distinguished speakers and I hope that you will find the Conference to be both informative and motivational.

I hereby wish you all Akwaaba to today's conference and a special Akwaaba to our beautiful country Ghana, to those who have travelled in from outside to join us today.

Thank You