

“Building a society of aspirations and opportunities in Ghana – the path to prosperity”

**Speech delivered by Nana Addo-Dankwa Akufo-Addo
at the 1st liberty lecture**

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Mr Chairman, Fellow Ghanaians, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Danquah Institute is to be warmly commended for initiating what hopefully will be these annual lectures, and I thank them most sincerely for giving me the honour of delivering the first in the series.

The Institute had originally scheduled this lecture to be held on 4th August to commemorate the special significance of that date in our nation’s history and thereby provide the rationale for these Liberty Lectures. However, on that day, I had to deliver a paper on “Outlawing Criminal Libel Laws in Ghana” in Pretoria, South Africa at a conference organized jointly by the new Institute of International and Comparative Law at the University of Pretoria and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, on the twin themes of “African Constitutionalism: Present Challenges and Prospects for the Future” and “African Constitutionalism and the Media”.

My speech on that day focused, fittingly, on that momentous enterprise of liberty. 10 years ago, on 2nd August 2001, when the then President of the Republic, His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, gave his assent to the enactment of the Criminal Code (Repeal of Criminal Libel and Seditious Libel Laws) (Amendment) Act, 2001 (Act 602). The repeal brought to an end a century-old legal regime repressive of free expression. By that singular deed, a historic victory was won in the struggle of the Ghanaian people for liberty, and, especially, for freedom of expression. My modest person had a happy and privileged role in that historic process by being the

Attorney-General who piloted the passage of the repeal through the Parliament of our Republic.

4th August 1897 was the date on which the first Ghanaian lawyer, the immemorial John Mensah Sarbah, his relative, the pioneering Pan-Africanist and celebrated author, Joseph Casely Hayford, together with Peter Awoonor Renner, Jacob W. Sey, George Hughes, J. P. Brown and others established the Aborigines Rights Protection Society in Cape Coast. The Society mounted an effective, successful campaign, mobilizing the chiefs and people, to oppose the infamous 1897 Crown Lands Bill, which sought to expropriate our lands to the British Crown. The Society, with the help of the mosquito, spared the Ghanaian nation the seemingly intractable problems that continue to confront many nations of Eastern and Southern Africa, which experienced settler colonialism and the expropriation of the lands of the indigenous people by the settlers. Thus, whenever we slap our two palms together to smash the life out of a deadly mosquito, let us just spare a thought for the contribution of its ancestors to our liberty. I don't mean spare their lives, just spare a thought. Ghanaian control over Ghanaian lands was preserved through the agency of the Society. 4th August 1897 was a truly seminal moment in Ghanaian history.

On that same fateful day, 4th August, fifty years later in 1947, the wealthy nationalist businessman George 'Pa' Grant, J. B. Danquah, R. S. Blay, Francis Awoonor-Williams, Edward Akufo-Addo, Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lamphey, known as Liberty Lamphey, Ebenezer Ako Adjei and others such as Cobbina Kessie, J. W. de Graft Johnson, William Ofori-Atta and John Tsiboe, the publisher of the Ashanti Pioneer, gathered in Saltpond, at a colourful ceremony attended by chiefs and people from all walks of life, to launch the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC of blessed memory), the nationalist organization which first lit the flame for the liberation of our country from British colonial rule. It was the body that subsequently brought Kwame Nkrumah down from London to act as its general secretary, and offered him a platform for his political career, and from which he broke away to form the Convention Peoples' Party, the party that led the final push for independence on March 6, 1957.

It can be seen that 4th August is, indeed, a special date in the Ghanaian calendar, a date which symbolizes our desire for liberty. It is, thus, entirely appropriate that the Liberty Lectures should

be promoted by the Danquah Institute, a body which owes its inspiration to the life and works of Joseph Boakye Danquah, that great champion of Ghanaian liberty.

Both the Institute and I are particularly grateful that the audience for this inaugural lecture includes no less a personage than the august figure of the former President of the Republic, His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, whose eight year stewardship of our nation gave the Ghanaian people a welcome, solid taste of the meaning of development in freedom. The rapid expansion of the economy that took place under his watch, now universally acknowledged even by his fiercest critics and detractors, bringing in its wake a marked improvement in the living standards of the Ghanaian people, together with the enhancement of the culture of democratic governance that his era witnessed, leaves many Ghanaians wondering how far down our development journey we would have been had the other post-independent governments worked with the same efficiency and zeal as his did. Excellency, Ghanaians continue to salute your leadership.

I am also very happy that this speech has in the chair my old teacher at Legon, the distinguished political scientist, Professor Yaw Twumasi, who is also the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Danquah Institute. Hopefully, what I have to say will be of the quality of these high personalities and this audience composed of our eminent cleric, Members of Parliament, former Ministers of State, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, academics, public figures, members of the media as well as ordinary citizens. I have taken *le droit d'auteur*, the author's liberty, to amend slightly the topic that the Institute proposed for this speech "Building a Society of Opportunities in Ghana", so that it reads "Building a Society of Aspirations and Opportunities in Ghana – the Path to Prosperity" as the latter reflects more fully the issues I intend to tackle tonight.

Let me use this occasion to wish my Muslim brothers and sisters *Barka Da Sallah*, which marks the end of Ramadan. Ramadan was the month in which the Quran was revealed: the fundamental liberating document for Muslims. In it, the Prophet Muhammad taught the faithful to fight for Liberty. And I believe that much of the upheavals we are witnessing in North Africa today are a direct response to the desire of people, especially the young people, to live lives of freedom and dignity.

Freedom in our Time

Throughout the ages, people have fought for liberty. One of the founding fathers of the United States of America, Benjamin Franklin said, “those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.” All human beings love freedom, crave for freedom when they don't have it, and often take it for granted when they do have it. But as former President Kufuor said at Ghana's Golden Jubilee Celebration at Independence Square, “freedom is a living flame to be constantly fuelled, and not a monument to be saluted and revered occasionally.”

We have learnt from experience and history that unless fuelled constantly and protected jealously and aggressively, freedom can be lost or more dangerously, it becomes the property of a privileged few. Mr. Chairman, we seek liberty in order that we may build right here in Ghana a true society of opportunities for every Ghanaian, because a free society is fundamental to availing equal opportunities for all in different fields of endeavour. Danquah, in 1928, described every Ghanaian citizen as an *'odehye'* – a royal of the land of his or her birth. Born free to live free. It follows that once every Ghanaian child is born free that child must be afforded the opportunity and liberty to develop his or her God-given talent in order to put that talent and the skills acquired to good use.

Freedom in our time has come to mean not just freedom from arbitrariness and interference, but also the freedom to aspire – the opportunity and the chance to live a rounded, dignified life as part of a society in which, for everyone, there is a place for choice and talent to flourish. It is normal for every individual to aspire to have a decent education, a decent job, a decent home, and to live in an atmosphere of security, law and order. But that freedom is not a license to do whatever you like. Liberty goes hand in hand with responsibility. So, the free citizen is also the responsible citizen.

This open society is not desired merely because it provides for freedom. It is desired because it also creates the enabling environment for a culture of enterprise, innovation and creativity, harnessing the energies of people for building prosperous economies. It is not by accident that freer societies have been more successful in producing prosperous people. They have been successful because such freer societies recognize the desire of people to better their lives

through their own efforts. All that they ask for is for the state to guarantee for them an environment that offers them the opportunity for progress, regardless of the circumstances of their birth. All too often we have situations where Government rather than empowering people and unleashing their entrepreneurial and creative spirits actually stands in the way of progress.

Building Strong Institutions

It is haphazard to govern and make the right choices without reliable data. Many of the measures discussed in all sections of this paper can only be envisaged if the underpinning analysis is based on reliable and timely data. Inflation management is central to the macroeconomic policies we are advocating and yet, even now, our experts have misgivings about the accuracy of the inflation data supplied by the statistical service.

It is imperative that an NPP administration, which is committed to evidence-based policies, makes it a priority to ensure that the statistical apparatus is as efficient and accurate as possible, according to internationally accepted best practices.

During my nationwide Listening Campaign, the cries of the people, whether it is about cost of education, bad roads, high cost of living, low retail sales, all come down to one thing: we need good jobs with good income. But the truth must be told. Unless we industrialise with the goal of adding significant value to our primary products, be they heavy or otherwise, we cannot create the necessary numbers of high-paying jobs that will enhance the living standards of the mass of our people. Raw material producing economies do not create prosperity for the masses. The way to that goal, the goal of ensuring access to prosperity, is value addition activities in a transformed and a diversified modern economy. In other words, the industrial development of our economy.

Ever since Governor Guggisberg left our shores in 1928, Ghana's economy has remained structurally rigid, depending largely on exports of primary commodities such as gold, cocoa, bauxite and timber. In 1928, seventy percent (**70%**) of our foreign exchange earnings were from gold, cocoa and timber. In 2007, about 65% of our earnings were from these same three products. Provisional data on the external sector indicate that total exports for 2010 was \$7.9 billion. Exports of cocoa fetched \$2.2 billion. Gold exports increased by 49.1 percent to \$3.8

billion. Other exports including non-traditional exports brought in \$1.7 billion. Of particular interest, cocoa and gold exports alone accounted for **\$6 billion or 76%** of Ghana's total exports for last year. In 2009, cocoa and gold exports accounted for **\$4.5 billion or 78%** of total exports. This year, being the first full year of oil production, it is possible that exports of gold, cocoa and crude oil alone will account for more than 90% of Ghana's export earnings.

We felt good when Ghana was praised for being the 2nd largest producer of cocoa, with Cote d'Ivoire and Peru, among the leading cocoa producers. This year, we have already hit the magic number of 1 million metric tonnes of cocoa, which was the target set by the Kufuor government. This was also the year that the target for having 50% of our cocoa processed locally was set. Sadly, my information is that this target for added-value has been missed. Touted as a leading producer of cocoa, raw gold, raw manganese and timber has done nothing to address the concerns of the hundreds of thousands of young men and women who do not have jobs. Even though the significant expansion of the economy over the last decade has brought about a higher average per capita income it is still limited in its capacity to generate decent jobs with decent pay for our youth. An expanded economy should not only mean having a wider variety of cheap imported goods to sell on our streets. An expanded economy should also mean an industrializing economy.

Manufacturing contributes a meager 8 to 9% to GDP. Ghana's manufacturing industry continues to be saddled with challenges that can be effectively addressed with sound policies. The cost of production (Producer Price Index) continues to increase, while we are told that inflation (Consumer Price Index) is at an all time low under the Fourth Republic. If these statistics are anything to go by, then it could only mean that we have given up on the globalization race, and have neglected our own local producers. A typical example is the Pharmaceutical industry. 'Counterfeit drugs are destroying local industry' was the front page report in the Business & Financial Times of today. 40 years ago, India had no pharmaceutical industry of note and yet it took a strategic policy of the state, starting with the Patents Act of 1970, to support the private sector to make India the world's second largest pharmaceutical

industry today, with over 20,000 drug manufacturers. Ghana and Nigeria have the biggest pharmaceutical industries in the whole of West and Central Africa. I'm even reliably informed that our drugs are considered to be of a higher standard. Nothing stops us from learning from the Indian experience to become the masters of this lucrative industry. Instead, what we have seen in recent years are rather measures that are counterproductive to the growth of the local industry, with Facility Audit Fees, for example, going up from \$7,000 in 2008 to \$15,000 today. At the same time the Food & Drugs Board has seen its share of the national budget decreasing in real terms.

I have stated before that "strong democracies are built by strengthening the institutions of democracy, rather than the power of men" and that "the gains we have made in our democracy due to the sacrifices of great individuals must be protected by great institutions." In order for industries in Ghana to have the liberty to grow and expand, the state must protect them from unfair competition. In order for us to build a society that meets the aspirations of people and opens up opportunities for all, government must prioritise its budgetary arrangements to ensure that funds are available to strengthen Parliament, the Judiciary, CHRAJ, EOCO, Food and Drugs Board, Standards Board and other institutions with more resources and where necessary, better personnel and greater efficiency. We cannot speak of access to equal justice when, for example, in the Volta Region, there are only five lawyers working for the Ministry of Justice, expected to prosecute cases in all five High Court locations and several Circuit Court premises in the region. But beyond the provision of resources, it is even more important that we promote and develop a culture whereby these bodies see themselves as independent public entities serving the wider public interest, not the temporary conveniences of the government of the day. Hence the critical importance of taking the measures that will assist the consolidation of our democracy.

PARLIAMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Today, there appears to be a mad rush for billions of dollars of loans, and we mention billions as if we are still in the era of the old billion cedis. Perhaps, we need to remind the current

custodians of the national purse that somewhere in between their time in opposition four zeros were knocked off the local currency. At the end of 2008, Ghana's domestic debt stood at GH¢4.8 billion, equivalent to \$3.33 billion. According to the Bank of Ghana, at the end of June 2011, Ghana's total domestic debt was GH¢10.8 billion, showing an increase of 30.4% over the previous 6 months alone, this was before the recent bond issue of GH¢300 million at 14% interest rate. Ghana's external debt stood at \$4 billion at the end of 2008. This has been rising but oil gives us that fiscal space to borrow more money to speed up our development. The point, however, is that we must proceed responsibly. Mr Chairman, current figures from Parliament are even more troubling. We may have to revisit our HIPC experience if we don't borrow responsibly. For example, some \$10 billion of loans have been approved by Parliament since President Mills took over. The danger with this development is three-fold: lack of adequate value-for-money assessment, debt sustainability issues and insufficient preparedness on how these loans must be spent. This NDC government has had plenty of resources at its disposal because of the expanded economy it inherited, record cocoa and gold prices on the world market, together with revenues from this newfound wealth, oil. To borrow a famous phrase: ***Na Sika No Wo He?*** What has been the impact of these massive resources on the lives of the people? Where are the projects?

The position of the Minority in Parliament on some of these mega loan deals has come under unfair criticism. Parliament has three basic functions of equal weight. The law-making function, the deliberative function (as the debating chamber of the nation) and the oversight responsibility, ensuring accountability. It is this last function which is germane to the prudent use of our resources by the state. Parliament has unique constitutional powers to authorise government to raise and spend public money and also has a responsibility, on behalf of the public, to hold government to account for this spending. This work goes to the heart of good governance and it is critical to the fight against corruption. Accountability is key to development. The Minority deserves commendation rather than condemnation for living up to their responsibility of insisting on financial scrutiny. Their warnings against the \$1.5 billion STX Supplier's Credit Facility were dismissed as the shrill cries of a jealous and jilted group who are

not interested in the welfare of the security forces. Now, we are told that the Castle has become the Alternative Dispute Resolution centre for the estranged partners of STX, while the only development at the commissioned sites for the STX housing are growing weeds.

A new propaganda is now being unleashed on the people of the Western Region against the NPP. On Friday, August 26, Parliament gave approval to the \$3 billion Master Facility Agreement (MFA) with the China Development Bank. We must welcome the readiness of the world's fastest growing large economy to provide Ghana with the needed credit to accelerate our development. But, since it is a relationship of mutual needs, 'I have oil you have money', it is the duty of our government to get the best deal for Ghana. This does not appear to be the case in this \$3 billion facility, plus \$450 million (or 15%) counter-funding from Government. The agreement of this MFA obliges us to pay immediately before any disbursement is made, a \$30 million Commitment Fee, a \$7.5 million Upfront Fee, and a \$101,400,000 interest rate per annum. Yet, there is no guarantee that Ghana will be able to meet the stringent oil-swap arrangements to meet the disbursement of the entire \$3 billion facility within the next six years, as stated. The cost of this commercial loan, which does not allow the projects involved to be subjected to a competitive tender process, could be higher than even the \$100 million plus annual interest rate quoted, because interest rates are at an all-time low and are bound to go up in the foreseeable future, compounding the financial burden of this facility on the Ghanaian exchequer. A commercial loan facility such as this that guarantees a minimum of 60% Chinese content, rather than a minimum of 40% local content, cannot be the best. The wide ranges in the estimated amounts stated for the 12 listed projects under the Subsidiary Agreements give clear indications that there has not been sufficient value for money analyses for the projects. What stopped Government from pursuing other funding options, as well, instead of lumping all these projects under one omnibus facility? Why are we not considering the option of leveraging some of these resources to ensure private sector participation and thereby reducing Government of Ghana exposure? What is stopping Government from peeling off some of these projects and funding them directly from our oil revenues? With interest rates at an all-time low,

what has stopped Government from issuing a sovereign bond on the international money market to raise money for some of these projects?

While it is really about what you do with the funds that you raise as a government, it is more importantly about optimising your economic capacity to create jobs and wealth and raise the living standards of the people. After nearly 20 years of a stable and free, democratic society, with a market economy, resources-rich Ghana today has the best opportunity since Independence, to undertake a deliberate and meaningful transformation of the economic structure. Voters agreeing and God willing, the next NPP government will take office with a clear programme of action for the industrialisation of Ghana – an economic transformation that touches every region of Ghana. As the experiences of the successful countries in Asia and elsewhere have shown, Government has a very important and positive role to play in spurring industrialisation and economic transformation. Having learnt from our own early industrialisation attempt and the experiences of others, the NPP government will actively promote Ghana's industrialisation and economic transformation. We will do this not by attempting to supplant the private sector or by engaging in activities that are best left to the private sector. Rather, we will provide active support for the growth of the private sector.

Key to this is the deliberate promotion of a public service that supports, not hinders, the growth of the private sector, the goose that lays the golden egg of prosperity and progress. In line with this we are proposing the establishment of a one stop investment promotion unit called the Economic Development Authority intended to be the lead government agency for planning and executing strategies to make Ghana a truly global business destination. The Ghanaian entrepreneur is calling for a policy that looks after his or her interest on the same basis as the foreign investor who is here to supplement our own local efforts.

Economic Development Authority

The challenge for Ghana is that many forms of investment are lagging. The country has only been moderately successful in attracting investment inflows over the past few decades, despite

its mineral resources. Even from an equivalent or lower FDI stock in 1990 a number of other countries, such as Senegal and Tanzania have performed much better at attracting investment.

I am proposing the establishment of the Economic Development Authority. The EDA's mission will be to create for Ghana, sustainable economic growth with vibrant businesses and good job opportunities. The Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), Minerals Commission, Free zones Board, Ghana Export Promotion Council, and Ghana National Petroleum Company (GNPC) will all need to be merged into the EDA. The EDA will develop a Local Content Policy to facilitate the greater participation of Ghanaians in the general scope of the economy.

We believe that government must be pro-active in providing the environment plus the opportunities for the private sector to create and share wealth for the greatest benefit of society. Often when we talk about the private sector, attention immediately goes to big business. But, the woman who sells my favourite fried yam in Kyebi, Atta Maame, is, indeed, the typical private sector operator in Ghana. Any policy for the private sector that ignores that vast combustion of activity in the informal sector is likely to have nominal impact on the structure of our economy. Our party believes in the ability of Ghanaian industry and Ghanaian industrialists and entrepreneurs. I shall not shy away from supporting local industries through a conducive and enabling business environment to grow and compete in our region and beyond. I will talk to them, listen and learn and do what will help them to become economic champions.

We are winners in so many fields. We need policies to promote Ghana as a centre of medical tourism in Africa. I see the Cardio-thoracic centre at Korle Bu as a sign of what we can do in Ghana in providing quality healthcare at globally competitive rates. Already Pro Vita in Tema and other private clinics have taking the lead in fertility tourism, for example.

Ladies and Gentlemen, for the people of Ghana to drive the development that we all cherish, we first have to believe in ourselves. We have to believe in our God-given abilities. We have to believe and know that we are human beings created in God's image, like any other human

being on this earth. We have to believe that whatever anyone elsewhere can do, we can also do and even better! We have to throw away a mindset of inferiority and looking to some other people to come and solve our own problems for us. With that attitude we will wait forever because nobody is going to solve our problems but ourselves.

It is disconcerting when you find out that our own Government does not believe in Ghanaians. A recent example had to do with the Government contracting a South Korean firm, STX, to build 200,000 houses in Ghana at the cost of \$10 billion. Notwithstanding representations and protests from the local Ghana real estate industry, GREDA, as well as the opposition NPP, civil society groups and many well-meaning Ghanaians, Government went ahead to contract this Korean firm to build houses in Ghana with the inducement of all sorts of incentives that we do not provide to the local real estate industry in Ghana.

We need policies that promote the development of big Ghanaian firms, especially in the road construction industry. I am therefore taking this opportunity to announce that God-willing, under the next NPP government in January 2013, Government will take active measures to place foreign investors and local investors on the same footing as far as incentives to enhance competitiveness are concerned.

For the real estate industry for example, my government will offer to them many of the same incentives that this NDC government has offered to the Korean STX. Our local real estate industry is also engaged in the provision of housing and has been trying to do so under very difficult circumstances and what is good for STX is also good for our local industries. Our party believes in the ability of Ghanaian industry and Ghanaian industrialists and entrepreneurs. We will support local industries through a conducive and enabling business environment to grow and move away from being mere raw material producers

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The economic transformation programme is to put Ghana onto a clear path towards a high income economy and Ghanaians into high income earners. We can't continue travelling the worn path of limited success of being exporters of raw materials. Albert Einstein, the great scientist, did not mince his words when he described as 'Insanity: the habit of doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.' Our problems require that we think outside of the box. Our thinking and approach to solving problems must be different from the thinking and approach that brought about the problems in the first place.

We have the human capital right here to make it happen. Healthy domestic manufacturing industries are essential to national prosperity. Those young boys at "Suame Magazin" in Kumasi are essential to our prosperity. The smart young people at Abossey Okai, Sekondi/Takoradi and other places will get the support they need from me. We need industrial parks in every Region. We need to support our indigenous manufacturing sector. I will support the idea of promoting domestic indigenous manufacturing in order to promote industrialisation and prosperity. Our small businessmen will form the foundations of our new industrial policy: And I will support them.

Ghana should be at the forefront of the industrialisation of West Africa. We will add value to our bauxite by building an Integrated Aluminium Industry and export manufactured aluminum products as was envisaged by the Kufuor government. We will add value to our iron ore and build a new Iron and Steel Industry. We will add value to our new found gas by developing a strong Petro-Chemical Industry in Ghana, using both private and public equity. Our salt will be part of this new vision. I want to see a West Africa that is working together to create jobs for its people; and providing decent lives for its population and I want to see Ghana being at the driving seat of that regional project.

During the last 8 years under an NPP government, thanks to the focused leadership of J. A. Kufuor, Ghana eventually discovered oil in commercial quantities in 2007. We have two options now: one, to treat the oil like we have done to gold and allow it to be exported in its raw

material form as crude or; two, use this as a perfect opportunity to transform the structure of our economy through industrialisation and value-added commercial activities. I believe we should use our oil revenues to create assets, not waste it in consumption and accumulate debt. This is the time for a visionary leadership, supported by a competent team, to move forward Ghana's agenda for industrialisation.

We will also provide the necessary support infrastructure by managing government resources and projects more efficiently. Equally as important, we will actively consult the private sector and work with the members to find timely, effective, and efficient solutions to their pressing problems so they can become competitive in today's global market place. The strategy will be built on leveraging our basic sources of comparative advantage namely, relatively inexpensive labour and natural resources from agriculture and mining, especially the emerging oil/gas sector, to develop a value-added industrial sector that is globally competitive.

We will need the construction industry to build the physical infrastructure needed to facilitate the industrialisation project, including a comprehensive transportation network. We will create growth and wealth creation poles in all ten regions of the country. We are determined to build a petrochemical industry here in Ghana, creating linkages with other businesses that will turn Ghana into a light industry centre for our region. We intend to convert our petrochemicals into hundreds of industrial and consumer products produced right here in Ghana, including plastics, paints, rubber, fertilisers, detergents, dyes, textiles, solvents and, hopefully, bitumen for road construction. From the petroleum we can get the preservatives to can food produced in Ghana, we can get plastics in which to preserve the processed food. The synthetic by-product from petroleum can serve as raw material for the manufacturing of different types of garments and footwear.

We will facilitate the setting up of a multi-billion dollar gas feedstock industrial estate in the Nzema area producing methanol, ammonia, urea and natural gas liquids, which hopefully will feed from the oil and gas industry in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. Ghana's bauxite deposits carry a potential value of \$350 billion, far in excess of what we expect to reap from crude oil. An

integrated aluminum industry, supported by a petrochemical industry can transform our economy within a decade. But this will not happen without a considered plan and programme. Our manifesto will outline such a plan and programme.

I am not arrogating to myself the right to lead Ghana's development for ten years as some political commentators and propagandists have mischievously sought to portray. Neither will I borrow the garb of arrogance and say I will hand over power peacefully in January 2021. The length of time a president stays at the helm of affairs of our country depends on constitutional limits and the will of the people expressed in free and fair elections, free of intimidation, and hopefully, free of propaganda and lies. That is why I am laying out my vision for moving Ghana forward, to give Ghanaians ample time to interrogate the issues and make an informed choice come election 2012.

Education

Education and Skills training is probably the most important source of empowering and providing opportunities to the youth to help drive Ghana's development and in the process create jobs. The countries that have done well, even without natural resources (for example, Japan) are the countries that have invested in education and skills training. This is not a secret, but it is surprising how long it is taking us to get learn this.

What the evidence from history and the experience of many countries have shown is that **it is not natural resources that build nations. It is people who build nations.** It is not gold that is going to build Ghana. If it was, it would have done so already. It is not cocoa that is going to build Ghana, if it was, it would have done so already. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not oil that is going to build Ghana. If it was, Nigeria for example, would have been one of the most developed countries on earth. **It is the people of Ghana, Ghanaians like you and I, and especially the youth of today, who are going to build Ghana.**

We have the unfortunate situation in Ghana where thousands of JSS students drop out of the education system each year because they cannot afford tuition fees to move on to Senior High School. What do we expect them to do? What opportunities are available to them? How competitive can they be in this global economy?

Too many of our children, nearly a quarter of a million each year, graduate from our Senior High Schools without access to our universities or the necessary skills for the job market.

Data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey Report of the Fifth Round (GLSS 5), September 2008, indicates that about 31 percent of adults (representing a little over 4 million people) have never been to school. A further 17 percent (representing 2.3 million people) attended school but did not obtain MSLC/BECE certificate. About 39 percent of adults (5.1 million people) have the MSLC/BECE certificate and only about 14 percent (1.8 million adults) obtained secondary or higher level qualification. Thus, about half (6.4 million) of adults in Ghana neither attended school nor completed middle school/JSS.

More worryingly, the data shows a clear gender gap in education with almost twice as many females (2.7 million) as males (1.4 million) never attending school. In addition, there are fewer females (0.7 million) than males (1.1 million) with secondary or higher qualification. Merely half of the adult population in Ghana can read and write in English or a local language. Again, there are substantial differences between the sexes. A little over 6 out of every 10 men, but only 4 out of every 10 women are literate. Disparities also exist between urban and rural areas. Almost 70 percent of adults in urban areas are literate whilst about 40 percent of adults in rural areas are literate. Another survey shows that 90% of students at the University of Ghana attended private primary schools, with only 10% of students coming from either a small town or village in Ghana. Again, too many of the few who get into our universities graduate without jobs. These are truly heartbreaking statistics.

Let us all take one deep breath and ask ourselves the question: **“Where are we heading?”** What chance do we have as a nation in this competitive 21st century when we churn out such appalling statistics showing the utter waste of our human resource base. With these kinds of terrible statistics if Ghana were a company it would have been declared insolvent, a non-viable enterprise that should be shut down. But, some of us are incurable optimists when it comes to the destiny of our beloved country. I believe that our ability to overcome these challenges will determine the future of our country. That is why I have repeatedly pledged to make education the foundational issue of the next NPP government.

A society that aims to transform itself into a modern productive player in the global market must get its educational policies right. I believe in freedom and I am the leader of a party that believes in freedom. Freedom presupposes the citizens' ability to make informed choices. Citizens can only make informed choices if they are empowered with the capacity to make those choices. The one with which an informed choice can be made is education. We believe that education is a right and not a privilege.

We ought to and we shall accord education the importance it deserves at the top of our priorities. An educated and trained workforce will transform our economy, an educated and trained population will give us the confidence required to deal with the rest of the world in the competitive economy.

We cannot do this unless we raise the bar for the minimum education that we provide for our school leavers. I am convinced that for tomorrow's Ghana the basic education has to be set at secondary level. I know this is an old refrain of mine and I know that the cost is high but I also know that the cost of not doing this is even more astronomical. We cannot afford the cost of not having an educated population or workforce.

The provision of quality education and skills training will therefore be at the top of our agenda. If you went around Accra or Tamale or Cape Coast, indeed if you went around the whole

country and asked people what they wanted most, the answer is the same and resounding: jobs, jobs and jobs.

Ladies and gentlemen, education translates into jobs, jobs and jobs. Or we can put it the other way, ladies and gentlemen, to get jobs, we need education, education and education.

Putting education at the top of our priorities means that we shall pursue the Teacher First policy that we have developed. It is only a crop of well trained, self confident and contented teachers that would deliver the educated and skilled workforce we require to transform our economy. Under the Teacher First policy, we shall restore the teaching profession to the status it once enjoyed and make it an attractive career choice.

We demonstrated this commitment to teachers during the NPP Administration led by President Kufuor and we believe we were on the way to restoring pride and confidence to the profession. I have heard the criticism that political parties are playing a political game with education and the future of our children by constantly changing the education policy. I think it is worth pointing out that on our part, the NPP has refrained from any ideological battles on the educational field.

Right at the outset, let us stress two things: First, **the next NPP administration will NOT, repeat, NOT seek to change the current JSS-SSS format for at least 4 years**, during which period we will seek to consolidate and strengthen the system. Any proposals for change even after this 4-year pause will be based solely on a professional evaluation to be conducted by the best team that we can put together, including experts from other countries that have demonstrated success in education reforms.

I am **committed to making post-JSS education free and making the secondary school level the first point of exit, both within the four years of an Akufo-Addo presidency**. People have already begun to murmur that this cannot be done; that this “promise” will come to haunt the NPP. The leadership of our party is in total agreement that being haunted by this promise is

preferable to being haunted by the spectre of several hundred thousands of Ghanaian youth thrown onto a job market with only the skills that a primary education imparts. The cost will be high but the cost of not doing so would be even higher.

Leadership is about making choices: the future NPP Government will make this choice and will pursue it with determination. It is totally consistent with the Party's vision of modernising our country; we cannot do less. We are aware that this will require that we carefully identify our spending priorities and imaginatively manage resources within the education sector. For the secondary school level (as for the primary), a policy of free education requires that we rethink the "model" of the senior high school (SHS) system.

In addition, we would make sure all major secondary and tertiary institutions have free access to wireless internet, not because it is in the interest of the students and teachers, but it is in our collective national interest. The knowledge available on the internet today surpasses what is contained in all our libraries put together and denying our students and teachers this information would put Ghana at a competitive disadvantage in this global economy.

As a veteran of the education sector put it, a SHS (like a primary school and a JHS), should be like a post office or police station, a development that every community deserves to have in adequate measure i.e. for all SHS-age children in that community who seek such an education. In such a community setting, the state's obligation will be to provide a class-room block, trained teachers, a library, a suitable laboratory/IT Centre, workshops, perhaps even a cafeteria in conjunction with a private food services provider. There will be no need for boarding facilities for most students. Those who think Ghana cannot provide this for its people are like those who would have discouraged our forefathers from riding bicycles; the feat must have looked perilous, even impossible, for many of our forebears!

The last NPP administration introduced policies and programmes that led to the doubling of enrolment in schools across board. We doubled enrolment at the basic level. Increased enrolment at the public universities from 44,000 in 2000 to 107,640 in 2008, and Polytechnic

enrolment from 18,470 in 2000 to 45,934 by 2009. By 2008, we had improved the percentage of GDP to funding for education by 92% from 3.8% of a GDP of \$3.9 billion to 7.2% of a 2008 GDP of \$16 billion. We will do more to make education not only accessible but able to produce the kind of human capital necessary for our development.

Employment

Ghana has remained and still is a nation of small holders, small-scale cocoa farmers, small-time businessmen and traders selling unfinished goods on the world market and the phenomenon of unemployment among the youth of Ghana is, without doubt, the biggest threat to social peace. We ignore it at our peril. We believe that bold initiatives must be taken with regard to this problem. The NYEP has shown its limits; it was never meant to be a job creation programme but one that provided apprenticeship employment. The big gap has been how to convert this apprenticeship period into an opportunity for learning habits of work, so that employers could see the value of taking on these graduates as permanent employees.

An NPP administration is, of course, committed to creating the conditions that will allow the private sector to flourish. But it recognises also that Government has a duty, certainly in the short-term, to contribute to the creation of employment opportunities, based on the NYEP model, but with a central role to be played by private sector employers. The improvements that are envisaged for the NYEP will include involving employers in a structured apprenticeship programme under which participating employers will be given incentives in the form of preferences in public sector contracting, as well as tax abatements (such as modified social security contributions, corporate income tax etc) in exchange for guaranteeing formal training for apprentices in NYEP-owned facilities in such trades as are deemed to be in demand by the private sector. From the foregoing, it becomes clear that the role of employers in the whole programme needs to be enhanced. We will engage with employers on the best way of doing this. But perhaps the most important task for policymakers is to be clear about the nature of

youth unemployment, to understand what the youth themselves can realistically expect, in order to fashion appropriate policies to address the phenomenon.

As I travel around the country I came across young men and women who have been reduced to street hawking for lack of skills for better paying jobs. They are not asking government to come and feed them. They are a proud but forgotten people. They are not begging society for alms. All that they ask for is to be given a hand-up so that they can also acquire the skills to make something better for themselves and contribute even more meaningfully to the development of our society. They want access to credit and capital and an enabling regulatory environment, in order to grow their businesses and take care of themselves and their families. That is the right way. That is the NPP way.

Self-employment will be promoted with support mechanisms such as credit, management training, and preferences in public procurement to give hope to the hordes of street peddlers in Accra, of kiosk owners, and of lotto and telephone card roadside entrepreneurs. The whole programme will need to become more rigorous, with a serious monitoring and evaluation component. Evidently, the Secretariat will need to be transformed into a more professional agency, insulated from politics by integrating its (better-qualified) staff in the public service. The employment effort will be closely integrated with the reforms in the secondary education sector (see above).

My administration will also seek ways to coordinate the functions of MDAs responsible for Industry and Employment. As a complement to the skills acquisition focus of a remodeled NYEP, an NPP Government will step up the use of specialised modules that will focus on building badly needed urban infrastructure and developing mechanisms for promoting sustainable development in rural areas (forest planting and maintenance, seasonal farm labour such as spraying in cocoa areas, dams, water points etc). This initiative will provide short-term training and employment to our youth while also providing needed infrastructure in our towns and valuable contributions in the rural areas. Tourism and Business Process Outsourcing have both

shown that high-paying jobs, which take advantage of demand from high-income clients based offshore, can be created locally. Special incentives will be put in place to attract both domestic and foreign investors in these and similar industries.

Education and Skills training is probably the most important source of empowering Ghanaians. The NPP will be guided by a new model of development with the following underlying principles that the market economy is the single optimal method of creating wealth, but the state must provide a safety net for the losers. Businessmen of all types, especially small and medium scale operators, will be encouraged to break into all aspects of economic activity: farming, industry and manufacturing. Development must be private-sector-led and the state should focus on long-term economic growth which means, in our view, expenditure by the state on health, education, infrastructure and human capital formation.

The fiscal space

However, the transformation of Ghana will not be possible without economic and financial systems that channel capital to businesses, credit and insurance services for low income individuals, smallholder farms, and micro enterprises. Under J. A. Kufuor, we took deliberate actions that led to an expansion of total credit to the private sector from 12.5% of GDP in 2000 to 28.4% of GDP in 2007. Over the last two years, the private sector has witnessed declines in credit from the banks. We will in this regard revive the NPP policy to make Ghana an international financial service centre to attract more investment and savings to help expand the capacity of our banks to borrow.

We will focus on policies that will close the gap between ideas and implementation. We will improve government capacity in contract negotiations -- an area where our nation has been grossly exposed in recent years. Our records show clearly a capacity for competent and imaginative management of the economy. We concentrated on growing the economy and providing the infrastructure that liberates the energies of individuals to concentrate on

entrepreneurship and innovation. We shall take that to the next level, which as I have said, is structural transformation.

Agriculture

The agriculture sector is one that presents the most serious challenges, in spite of some noticeable progress over the last ten years or so. But it is also the one area where success will be felt by the broad majority of Ghanaians, in the form of improved food security and dependable incomes for the large farming population in the generally deprived rural areas. The challenge as we see it is one of technology and we intend to apply the same vigor to tackling the challenge as we intend to do in education.

We see agriculture as a major wealth creation venture for the Ghana transformation project. Our vision for agriculture is to modernise the sector.

Ghana has the unique potential to feed its growing population, meet the raw material requirements of its processing industries, achieve food security and compete successfully as a leading supplier to countries in around us and beyond. Investing in agricultural transformation will constitute a major plank in our rural wealth creation and food security initiatives; yet the level of poverty in our rural areas in Ghana portrays the sector's inability to generate the values which can reduce the high incidence of rural poverty among our rural farming communities.

Modernisation will go beyond production to encompass post-harvest activities such as storage, processing, packaging and distribution. In the shorter term we shall apply short term solutions such as large scale reforestation to create jobs and claim back our environment. We have been slow in applying everywhere some of the chemical and biological enhancements that have helped increase cocoa yields three-fold in ten years. Especially in the Northern Savannah belt, which has enormous potential, we must bring to bear the results of local research and of technological innovation in places like Brazil. In the latter case, we know that the Savannah lands, which had lain uncultivated for years because of low yields, were treated with heavy

doses of potash over a period of time. Now Brazil has become a powerhouse of agricultural production. We can do the same in Ghana.

To realise the full potential of Ghana's agricultural sector, which currently contributes 39% to GDP, our policy will provide the basic infrastructure and act in close partnership with the private sector players in the sector to ensure timely and adequate investments that support a sustainable transformation of all the agricultural segments, including livestock, fisheries, poultry, forestry and high value staples and export crops.

Specifically, we will bring back the Ministry for Fisheries.

As a key imperative, the NPP will not consider the agricultural sector as a stand-alone sector. The sector will serve as the platform for socio-economic transformation and growth of our rural communities. This will be anchored on an integrated approach. The three themes will be to expand, intensify and diversify agriculture as currently being practiced, broadening the base and accessibility of various ecological zones to other high value food and cash crops.

For this reason, the Northern Savannah Ecological Belt, stretching from the Upper East through the Northern Region to the Upper West will benefit from a *diversification* of the agricultural base. Conscious efforts will enhance the development of existing indigenous food and cash crops, while new high value cash crops will be introduced and supported. This will result in the North emerging as the support base for the Sahel Region and beyond, in terms of food production and the supply of ancillary services. I dream of the day when the North of our country will be the granary and food basket, not just of Ghana, but also of West Africa.

When I outlined this dream during the campaign for election 2008, I was laughed at and the current government described my ideas as "pipe dreams". I outlined my plans to actualise this dream and named the implementing agency The Northern Development Authority (NDA). The idea has been taken by NDC and renamed SADA – the Savanna Accelerated Development

Authority. Sadly, the current NDC government has been unable to effectively implement it and fallen woefully short in the resources being committed to the project. The modernisation and transformation of the North is an important vision of mine. *Insha Allah*, it shall come to pass.

The Middle Belt of Ghana, spanning the Eastern, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions which have a good climate, large expanses of land and adequate water, will see the *intensification* in the cultivation of food and cash crops, besides Cocoa, particularly after access to the areas has been opened up. Successful cash crops, such as pineapples, which is already being well tackled by the private sector, will be supported to grow in production yields while the food crops will improve in volume and value to meet the food needs of Ghana and for exports.

The Southern Belt, stretching from the Western to the Volta Regions, and encompassing the Horticultural Belt, will see additional efforts aimed at the *expansion* of the base of all farming operations, with a view to meeting local processing needs and supplying the very competitive international markets with high value horticultural and floriculture crops, in order to diversify beyond Cocoa.

We will also have a programme to support our commercial farmers to exploit bigger opportunities. We will pick existing winners in commercial farming to give them the requisite incentives and access to funding to push them into major regional and global players. It is our goal to reverse the rural-urban population drift by taking some of the attractions of urbanity to rural Ghana, including the prospect of better paid jobs. We can once again make our countryside densely populated, with creative irrigation, extensive road and rail networks that can carry fertiliser and other inputs to the farms and farm output to the markets.

We will promote the use of petrochemical feedstock for a fertiliser industry and step up research on seeds, including genetic modification where it has been shown to be safe. Even as we do this, we need to develop strategies to counter the effects of climate change on agricultural productivity. It has been shown that rural industry has a beneficial effect on

agriculture sector productivity and rural poverty alleviation in general. Efforts to promote rural industry will therefore be strengthened through the promotion of research; development of rural transport and crop storage infrastructure, and a modern market information dissemination platform.

There is a growing global demand for oil palm plantations. Palm is far more productive per hectare than either soya or rapeseed for biodiesel and is the most significant vegetable oil in the world, accounting for 30% of world edible oil production in 2006/7. The Chinese government expects that biofuels will meet 15% of its transport fuel demand by 2020. India has set a target of securing 20% of its diesel fuel from biofuels by 2012. In early 2007, the EU Summit endorsed a minimum target for biofuels to constitute 10% of transport fuels by 2020. A growth in the demand for biodiesel of 52 metric tonnes between 2005 and 2030 in the EU alone is predicted as road transport fuel demand continues to rise. Ghana should not be left out of this. I intend to give active support to Ghanaian players in the oil palm industry to grow and compete with Indonesia and Malaysia in this increasingly lucrative business.

Mr. Chairman, building a society of opportunities means avoiding the Dutch Disease, which describes the syndrome where on getting a new resource, such as oil, other sectors which were key drivers of the economy, get neglected, and are virtually left to perish. Nigeria has suffered this syndrome in relation to its agricultural sector, for example in relation to cocoa, oil palm and groundnut production, when it became an oil producing economy. All arrangements towards the effective management of the sector will build on winning policies already on hand and will borrow from a successful transformational model, like that currently being prosecuted under Ghana's Millennium Challenge Account Compact, whose goal is to enhance economic growth and to reduce poverty, using agricultural transformation as the vehicle.

Solving Infrastructure Problems

Ladies and Gentlemen, to create opportunities for all in Ghana, there are certain basic problems that need a permanent solution. We are in a globally competitive world. Our children

are in competition with their peers in the United States, United Kingdom, France, China, Brazil, and India. It is sad to note that while for many of these countries the basic problems of water, sanitation, power, education, and health have been largely solved, for Ghana we are yet to resolve a single basic problem since independence.

While many Ghanaian children have to constantly look for water, their peers other countries have probably never experienced a situation of water not flowing through the taps. Problems with water also result in problems with sanitation and health. Many businesses and jobs have also been affected because of the absence of a reliable water supply. It is therefore important that some of these basic infrastructure problems are solved if we are going to create equal opportunities for all.

Unfortunately, the approach of past governments and the current government has been to tackle all our infrastructure needs at once given their importance but we end up not solving any of these problems because of our limited resources. Going forward, and God-willing, the next Government of the NPP under my leadership would focus on just a few infrastructure areas at a time to the extent that private sector participation is not possible. We will concentrate the resources in these few areas, solve the problem and move on.

One of the first key areas we are going to focus on is water and sanitation. I would like to be able to say that by the end of our first term in office, Ghana's water problems have either been solved or are well on the way to being solved. We want to move away from tackling problems to solving problems. Solving basic problems such as water and sanitation, power, and gas would go a long way to providing Ghanaians with equal opportunities to be competitive in the global economic environment that we find ourselves in.

Women

Mr. Chairman we cannot talk about building a society of opportunities if the women of our country continue to be left out of the mainstream of economic and political participation and

development. We need to widen life's opportunities for the over 50% of our population. I am in favour of affirmative action. With that I mean one that rewards companies and organisations that pursue a deliberate policy to promote gender equality.

When we say we are a party of the private sector and private capital, we mean the small-scale women entrepreneur, too. Our women are known to be industrious and innovative. Women have been known to move from small scale operators to large scale operators from an initial capital of just 50 Ghana cedis. To build a society of opportunity for all, we need to address more seriously, the issue of micro-credit for our women and bring sanity to bear in women's marital and property rights and increase support for the institutions which fight to protect women from the scourge of domestic violence.

Physically Challenged

Our quest for building a society of opportunities cannot be complete if we do not address the needs of the physically challenged. Socially and economically the physically challenged have received and continue to receive discouragingly separate treatment. They have been excluded from social and other developmental activities within our communities. Thus the physically challenged constitute one of the most marginalised and impoverished groups within the society. The physically challenged are more likely to be uneducated, unemployed and lack access to health care, vulnerable to abuse and socially marginalized.

To build a society of opportunities for all, we shall foster equal partnerships with societies catering to the needs of the physically challenged, pledging our commitment to building a society of opportunities for all, including the physically challenged. The likes of Prof. Bashirudeen Koray of the Attorney General's Department, whose appointment I had the honour of approving and others like Rev (Prof) Abraham Berinyu, Provost of the Wa Campus of the UDS, bear testimony to what the physically challenged can do in a society where all have an equal opportunity of exploiting existing opportunities.

Underpinning what my party believes in is the principle of social mobility, which means allowing every individual access to climb the ladder of self-improvement and wellbeing. We must allow the tree of Ghanaian ingenuity to grow. I want to lead a nation motivated by the desire to achieve. Let us be stern with ourselves. Let us believe in ourselves.

I believe that Ghanaians are not fated to be a mere audience at the theatre of great performance and achievement. We are capable of mounting the stage and putting up our own show. We have a choice to admire what others do or to motivate ourselves to do what we admire. It is our choice. We can choose to watch and marvel or to take up the challenge and opportunity to be counted. This country can be better than we ever thought it could be.

Either we run events or events will continue to run us. The 2012 Manifesto of the NPP will set vivid, detailed goals for the future, get the Ghanaian people to own it and have the discipline, dedication and determination to make it happen.

We have to make things happen.

I dream of the day when the North of our country will be the granary, not of Ghana but of West Africa. That time is just around the corner. I dream of the day when the masons and carpenters and plumbers graduating from our Colleges of Technology will build the best houses on our continent. Your future is bright.

I dream of a time in our lifetime, when many of those leaving our universities will have solid, reputable companies coming onto campuses to recruit them into good, well-paid jobs. That time is approaching us, ladies and gentlemen.

I dream of the day when West African companies looking for workers will come to Ghana or place adverts in our media in order to have access to the best work-force in Africa. We can bring that time closer than it may seem.

I dream of the day, when every child in our country, regardless of gender or economic circumstances can look forward to an education because all the children are our children. Surely, that time is within our reach.

This is change *and transformation that we can believe in and make together.*

We can build a society of aspirations and opportunities in Ghana and put our nation on the path of prosperity.

I urge you to believe in yourself, in your future, and in Ghana.

I believe in Ghana and so must you.

Let us work together for that brighter future. Join me. We can get it done... together.

Thank you.