KEYNOTE SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE OECD & ACCEPTANCE OF GHANA’S MEMBERSHIP OF THE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

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Thank you Ambassador Duquesne.

Thank you members of the Governing Board of the OECD for the acceptance of our application and the invitation to Ghana to become a member of the Development Centre of the OECD.

On behalf of the Good People of Ghana, we thank you for the opportunity to join the Centre.

Thank you Messrs. Rintaro Tamaki and Mario Pezzini as well as your staff who have worked very hard with us throughout the journey that brings us to this say.

I cannot forget my team- Ambassador Johanna Odonkor Svaniker, Finance Minister Seth Terkper and his team, and Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, Haruna Iddrissu, who led the Government delegation to the meeting of the Governing Board of the OECD in June this year to make Ghana’s case.
The benefits and opportunities available to our lower middle-income country as a member of the Development Centre are obvious.

That explains the importance we attach to the vision of the Centre to promote policies that improve the economic and social well being of a country’s citizens.

In applying to join the Centre, and as we go through today’s ceremony, as President, my satisfaction is the opportunity the Centre offers to share experiences with member states and seek solutions to common problems towards the promotion of growth and development.

The Development Centre has been conducting extensive analysis of the Ghanaian economy.

This has ranged from structural reforms to health financing, from migration to agriculture and private sector development.
By joining the Centre however, Ghana will now benefit from country specific reviews aimed at identifying the binding constraints to development and suggesting a strategy with specific policy reform recommendations to address these constraints.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ghana despite the present challenges, which we are tackling with impressive results, has enjoyed a long period of economic stability---Over two decades of rapid and broadly inclusive growth, reflected in rising incomes and falling poverty levels.

A real GDP growth, averaging 5.7% from 2001 to 2010 driven by a robust services and industry base, and Ghana attained a Lower Middle Income Country status in the latter part of 2010.

This has however had implications on Ghana’s development financing, as we now have to borrow on harsher terms for concessional facilities, dwindling grants from Development Partners and the associated implications on debt management and sustainability.
The biggest lesson here is to look for more sustainable and alternative ways of financing development, with emphasis on domestic resource mobilization.

The other strategy is devising more market-oriented and innovative ways of raising funds the execution of development projects.

We are implementing various measures to tackle the macroeconomic challenges, which resulted in high fiscal and current account deficits.

Fiscal consolidation and other macroeconomic policies are in place to address these short-term challenges.

We have also signed up to a three-year Extended Credit Facility Programme with the IMF, seeking to consolidate the macroeconomic stability gains and pave the way for sustainable macroeconomic stability gains and growth.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ghana is today the first African Member of the Development Centre, but we note the work the Centre has done in other African economies and the opportunity to share in the experiences from there.

My country is looking forward eagerly to deepen the cooperation with the OECD Development Centre on a wide range of activities.

On natural resources, the Centre’s Policy Dialogue on Natural Resource-based Development (PD-NR) can support Ghana’s efforts to improve governance in the sector by helping share its experience, gain exposure to and learn from peers facing similar challenges in a cost-effective manner.

On industrial development and smart industrial policies, Ghana is interested in participating in the OECD Initiative on Global Value Chains, Production Transformation and Development.
And when it comes to medium and long-term strategy, the Multidimensional Country Reviews (MDCR) on the model of several countries including Côte d’Ivoire, Kazakhstan or Peru will help the work of the National Development Planning Commission.

On improving domestic resource mobilisation and tax administration, Ghana has been invited to join an initiative led by the OECD Development Centre and the Centre for Tax Policy and Administration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to urgently request the OECD to help develop a blue print for Lower Middle Income Countries transitioning into Middle Income Countries to help guide the growth and development strategies of these countries.
For economies, including Ghana, which made the transition from a developing country to a lower middle income country and looking forward to becoming a full middle income country, our experience has at best been nothing but abrupt and disruptive.

The development of a blue print is one that Ghana will use its experience to help the OECD develop to benefit other economies.

Once again, thank you for the invitation and Ghana is indeed happy to join the OECD Development Centre.

Thank You and may God bless us all.