

WELCOME ADDRESS BY HON. ALHAJI COLLINS DAUDA (MP), MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE LAUNCH OF THE GHANA URBANIZATION REVIEW REPORT AT LA PALM ROYAL BEACH HOTEL ON THURSDAY, 14TH MAY, 2015

Mr. Chairman

His Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana

The Director-General of NDPC

Colleague Ministers

Chief Directors of various Ministries

Hon. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives

The Country Director, World Bank

The Head of Co-operation, SECO

The Resident Manager of AfD

Our Development Partners

Friends from the Media

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the launch of the Ghana Urbanization Review (GUR) Report. The Review was jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the World Bank with support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Development (SECO). The Review is meant to provide Government with additional data to evaluate the implementation of the Ghana National Urban Policy which seeks to provide a more comfortable environment for our urbanized population.

Mr. Chairman

I wish to recall earlier projects such as the Village Infrastructure Project (VIP), Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP), Urban I–V Project and the Urban Environmental Sanitation Project among others which were implemented with support from the World Bank. These earlier Projects contributed to the socio-economic transformation of Ghana. I wish to commend the World Bank for their continuous support in implementing other ongoing projects such as the Local

Government Capacity Support Project (LGCSP), Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) and the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area Sanitation Project (GAMA).

Mr. Chairman

Having implemented the National Urban Policy for the past three (3) years, the Urban Review Report which we are about to launch today provides new insights that will help the country deal more with the challenges of urbanization in a more realistic way. This is because it has considered lessons of other countries with similar challenges which have been woven into the report to enrich the implementation of our National Urban Policy and Action Plan.

Mr. Chairman

Urbanization in today's world has become a global phenomenon that affect societies by providing increased opportunities for economic growth while at the same time calls on countries to formulate new policies that will direct investments in ways that will to leverage the benefits of urban development.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am particularly excited about the Report because it provides recommendations for managing and integrating Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) through improved service delivery and by providing legal and financial backing for speedy economic development of MMDAs.

Secondly, the Report deals with the crucial issues of Municipal Financing for urban infrastructure development through this, it is possible to wean off well-endowed Metropolitan and Municipal Assemblies from Central Government Transfers, since some of them have the capacity to be financially autonomous and can generate adequate resources to invest in capital projects that would make their cities more productive, inclusive and resilient.

Mr. Chairman

It is my hope that after the launch of this Report, we should be able to deal more meaningfully with the challenge of integrated land use planning for effective urban development, provide strategic infrastructure development and regulate the transport sector for effective urban mobility and consolidate the gains made over the last 20 years of decentralization by also deepening fiscal decentralization and exploring more innovative ways for financing urban development.

Mr. Chairman

Finally, let me thank the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Development for their support and the World Bank for being faithful development partners. I am also grateful to the Authors of this Report, the Expert Urban Team and all those who, in diverse ways, contributed to the preparation of this Report.

Once again, it is my great pleasure to warmly welcome all of you particularly His Excellency, the Vice President, who, despite his tight schedule, accepted to launch this novel Report.

Thank you.