



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO GHANA

STATEMENT OF HER EXCELLENCY THE AMBASSADOR OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, MRS. DIANA ACCONCIA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF HER LETTERS OF CREDENCE TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO

It is an honour for me to present to Your Excellency the letters by which the President of the European Council, Mr Donald Tusk and the President of the European Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker have accredited me as Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Ghana.

Your Excellency, the European Union has a long standing partnership with Ghana under the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement. Over the last 40 years, there has been an active and friendly cooperation and dialogue between us. We value highly our close partnership with Ghana and we share a broad common agenda to promote peace and security, regional integration, democracy, rule of law and human rights as well as to tackle global challenges such as climate change.

The EU has also been a major provider of development aid to Ghana and to the African continent in general, and has supported Ghana's development priorities with substantial financial assistance over the years. But there is shared feeling on both sides that we have to bring our partnership to next level.

Your Excellency, you are a strong promoter of Ghana Beyond Aid – and I could not agree more with you. The EU is changing the focus of its relations with Africa from a "donor-receiver" relationship to a partnership based on common interests and values. President Juncker has called it an Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs. The EU wants to bring more private investment to Africa, and will mobilize traditional and innovative financial instruments to work directly with the private sector to provide the infrastructure and the solid manufacturing sector that Africa needs to create jobs for its young people.

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I have no doubt, Your Excellency, that Ghana will be a key partner to implement this ambitious plan. Ghana has recently experienced strong growth and developed its economy, becoming a lower middle income country and improving the well-being and prosperity of its people. Ghana therefore has great assets to become a privileged destination for private investment: it is politically stable, thanks to the commitment to democracy and rule of law by its successive governments, it has natural resources and fertile land, it has young and dynamic population. And it has a government with a focus on development and on creating a conducive environment for business.

And let us not forget that Ghana also benefits from the Economic Partnership Agreement that allows Ghanaian companies to export to the EU free from duties and quotas and this can be a further incentive for investors to choose Ghana as a hub for their manufacturing activities in the region.

In other words Ghana is, and can become even more in the future, a driving force and a leader for the development of the African continent. I am looking forward to working with you to make this happen and support Ghana in its efforts to consolidate middle income status.

Your Excellency, the partnership between Ghana and the EU is not only about promoting economic growth. We both want economic development to be sustainable. We are both committed to fighting against Climate Change and implementing the Paris Agreement. We are both determined to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – with your personal involvement as co-chair of the group of SDG Advocates – and the EU will support Ghana, by integrating the Government's SDG objectives in our budget support programme. The EU is also working with Ghana to issue licences to make sure that timber exported to the EU only comes from sustainable sources, and to fight against illegal fishing and depletion of ocean resources.

To maximise the benefits from economic growth, good governance is paramount. I would like to commend the Government's engagement to improve public finance management and

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tackle the problem of corruption. The creation of the Office of the Special Prosecutor and the presentation of the Right to Information Bill before Parliament are promising developments and we are following their progress closely.

Last but not least, no sustainable and sustained development is possible without building up education and skills that multiply the opportunities for young people to access qualified jobs. Your Excellency, your Government's effort to boost secondary education shows that you have a long term vision for Ghana.

I take this opportunity to express my wish that the EU and Ghana can continue to work together to strengthen the multilateral institutions, more necessary than ever in this complex world where no country can walk alone.

Your Excellency, as I present to you my letters of credence, may I express my hope and confidence on furthering and deepening the strong political and economic relations between the European Union and the Republic of Ghana.

I wish to assure you that in representing the European Union to the Republic of Ghana I will devote myself to mobilizing both the knowledge and the resources for the realization of the partnership objectives and projects, in which your Government and the European Union are working together.

Accra October 2018

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