

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE EASTERN REGIONAL MINISTER,
HON. SETH KWAME ACHEAMPONG AT A DAY'S STAKEHOLDERS
ENGAGEMENT ON LAND USE AND SPATIAL PLANNING, HELD
ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST FEBRUARY, 2023 AT THE ERCC
CONFERENCE HALL KOFORIDUA**

MUNICIPAL/DISTRICT CHIEF EXECUTIVES,

EXECUTIVES OF NATIONAL ENGINEERING CO-ORD. TEAM,

REGIONAL HEAD, NATIONAL PETROLEUM AUTHORITY,

REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES AND

INSTITUTIONS,

OFFICERS FOR THE ASSEMBLIES,

THE MEDIA,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It is a great honour and pleasure to be with you this morning for this all important meeting to discuss issues that border on land use and spatial planning. On behalf of the Regional Coordinating Council, I wish to welcome all of you to today's engagement. Again, since this is my first formal interaction with some of you for 2023, may I take the opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year.

It is our prayer that the new year would bring more blessings and improvement in our lives. I am particularly grateful to you for attending the meeting in your numbers. This is commendable and it will not be out of place to applaud for yourselves. It is a clear demonstration of your commitment to serve mother Ghana. So, I encourage you to keep up the good spirit of ensuring effective and efficient service delivery at the local level. This would go a long way to improve the socio-economic well-being of the citizenry. Remember that responding to a duty call is a blessing.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Spatial Planning is critical for delivering economic, social and environmental benefits by creating more stable and predictable conditions for investment and development, by securing community benefits from development, and by promoting prudent use of land and natural resources for development.

Spatial Planning, as a public function, has become more important over the years to ensure coherence in the approach towards creating sustainable cities, economies, and usage of natural resources.

It is possible to gain better command over how a city, region or territory develops. The function has several objectives relevant to sustainable planning and these include:

- Encouraging healthy competition between regions.
- Creating better relations and cooperation between the urban and rural areas.
- Enhancing accessibility for the communities to services and resources.
- Reducing the footprint of human activity on the environment.
- Expanding the knowledge base and making it more accessible to communities.
- Preserving the natural heritage.
- Taking steps to reduce or at least limit the negative effects of environmental disasters.
- Promoting tourism activities that can be sustainable.
- Developing and maintaining energy services while reducing the effect on the environment and improving safety measures for the communities, and
- Reducing the risk of duplication of development efforts.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Rapid urbanization is fast becoming a development challenge in the management of Urban Settlements in Ghana, especially in our Region and this calls for urgent measures to be put in place for effective land use and spatial plans to guide physical development. The core and peripheral areas of our region are being developed without recourse to planning regulations which is evidence of uncontrolled urban expansion, slums and squatter settlements as well as indiscriminate siting of temporary structures, poor sanitation, poor drainage, flood, among other forms of menace.

The Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925) mandates the Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to execute spatial planning functions through effective land use planning and management with the purpose of fostering sustainable development of human settlement, judicious use of land and overall socio-economic development of the Districts, as prescribed in section 83 of Act 936 and section 34 of Act 925.

Unfortunately, with all these legal provisions, land use and development has become haphazard in our various districts and the region as a whole, which has made it topical for discussion and proffering of solutions to control the situation.

I am hopeful that the outcome of today's stakeholder engagement, in addition to the implementation of the already existing plans at the Assemblies, could spearhead the revolution for achieving success in the region which may be used as benchmark for the development of other regions in Ghana.

On this note, I once again welcome you and wish you all fruitful deliberations.

Thank You for Your Attention

God bless us all.