

**REMARKS BY HON. MOSES ANIM, DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FISHERIES AND
AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT AT THE LAUNCH OF THE 39TH NATIONAL FARMERS'
DAY CELEBRATION HELD ON 27TH SEPTEMBER 2023 AT THE FORECOURT OF THE
MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

Hon. Minister for Food and Agriculture

Hon. Regional Minister

Hon. Colleague Deputy Ministers

Chief Executive of COCOBOD

Managing Director, ADB

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Representatives of Development Partners, Civil Society Organisations

Members of the Media

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in the official launch of the 2023 National Farmers' Day Celebration which also marks the 39th edition of the celebration since its inception. I extend to you all greetings from Hon. Mrs. Mavis Hawa Koomson, Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development who has not been able to join us today due to other prior state engagements.

On behalf of the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, I wish to express appreciation to our various sponsors who through their generous donations in kind and/or in cash, we have been able to improve on the awards presented to the hardworking farmers and fishers over the years. With their support, we have been able to motivate our farmers and fishers to work harder to ensure that we meet our food and nutritional requirements. I wish to once again appeal for your support to make this year's celebration a memorable one for the farmers and fishers.

Ladies and gentlemen, National Farmers' Day is a special occasion to celebrate and appreciate the hard work and dedication of our farmers and fishers, who are the backbone of our food system and economy. The celebration also provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the importance of the agricultural and fisheries sectors to national economic development.

The theme for this year's National Farmers' Day Celebration ***“Delivering Solutions for Sustainable Food Security and Resilience”*** reflects the vision and commitment of Government to transform the fisheries and aquaculture sector into a viable industry that contributes significantly to national development. The theme highlights the importance of addressing the diverse challenges confronting the fisheries and aquaculture sector to increase fish production, create additional job opportunities, and reduce fish import. It also underscores the need to protect, restore and improve livelihood systems in the face of threats that impact agriculture, nutrition, food security and food safety.

Ladies and gentlemen, research on the contribution of fish to food and nutrition security in Eastern Africa: Emerging trends and future looks in 2019 reports that fish contributes 17% of animal protein and 7% of all proteins and are crucial for over 3 billion people in developing countries. Fish provides high-quality essential amino acids, omega-3 fatty acids, and minerals. As such, fish is widely recognized as “nature’s superfood. In Ghana, fish constitute about 60% of the animal protein intake of Ghanaians with annual per capita fish consumption over the last decade ranging between 20 and 25kg, which is much higher than the average of 14kg for the ECOWAS region. The fisheries and aquaculture sector is therefore key to the effort of Government to achieve national food and nutrition security.

In spite of this, the sector is confronted with challenges such as overfishing, marine pollution, the impact of climate change, Illegal Unreported, Unregulated (IUU) fishing, post-harvest losses, low-value addition, high cost of fish feed, as well as, low technology and diversification of farmed species. These issues have significantly impacted the sustainability of the fishing and aquaculture industry, and threaten the resilience of the sector.

To address these challenges and harness the opportunities in the sector, especially the aquaculture industry, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development is pursuing short, medium, and long-term measures to sustainably manage the fisheries resources and develop the aquaculture industry. These include:

- i. Formulation of a new National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy for the sector.
- ii. The development of the Marine Fisheries Management Plan (2023-2026) to restore depleted fish stocks and improve governance in the sector
- iii. The development of the Ghana National Aquaculture Development Plan (2024-2028) to help improve the practice, management and sustainable development of aquaculture as a viable business
- iv. Construction of the National Aquaculture Centre and Commercial Farms to provide skills training in various aspects of aquaculture including production, farm management, fish health, feed formulation, and processing for the youth to take up aquaculture as a viable enterprise. The first batch of 24 students graduated in August this year and the second batch is currently in session.

- v. Moratorium on new marine artisanal canoe entrants as a fishing effort reduction strategy to reduce the excessive pressure on the marine fisheries resources.
- vi. Deployment of Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) on industrial trawlers as pilot from April 2023 and will be extended to cover tuna vessels by 2025. The EMS uses onboard video cameras, Global Positioning System (GPS) and Sensors to automatically track and verify fishing activities on board fishing vessels
- vii. Implementation of a Ministerial Directive on trawl gear selectivity to help reduce the catch of juvenile fish and address the issue of excessive bi-catch and fish stock depletion.
- viii. Pilot of Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) on trawl vessels to track operations of vessels at sea. The EMS uses onboard video cameras, Global Positioning System (GPS), and sensors to automatically track and verify fishing activities on board fishing vessels.

The EMS data will be used to monitor and improve compliance with regard to gear deployment, transshipment at sea, verification of catch and bycatch, provide evidence for prosecution, as well as, collect biological data for stock assessment and fisheries management.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development will continue to collaborate with relevant stakeholders and development partners in the sustainable management of the fisheries resources for current and future generations. It is our fervent hope that we shall together garner solutions for the fisheries and aquaculture sector towards sustaining national food security.

Thank you.