

**REMARKS BY H.E. DR. BENJAMIN AGGREY NTIM, MINISTER FOR
COMMUNICATIONS OF GHANA DURING THE UNCTAD XII
PRESENTATION, NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, 26TH MARCH 2008**

Distinguished Delegates

I would like to warmly welcome all of you and wish to say that it is a privilege for me to participate in this presentation/briefing which is being jointly organized by the UNCTAD Secretariat and the Ghana Permanent Mission in New York in connection with the twelfth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII) which will take place in Accra, Ghana, from 20th to 25th April this year, barely a month away.

This is the second time such a meeting is being organized in New York. It is recalled that a similar meeting was organized as a side event during the regular session of the General Assembly in September last year. That meeting was attended by the President of Ghana and some of his cabinet Ministers in order to demonstrate the strong political support by the Government and people of Ghana as host of such an important international event.

During that meeting, snapshots were provided as to what to expect in Ghana in terms of hotel accommodation, places of interest, tourist attraction, conference facilities, visa acquisition, travel requirements and other related matters. Since then, the UNCTAD Secretariat in Geneva has been working closely with the relevant Ghanaian authorities to finalize preparations and to ensure a successful conference. As I speak to you now, there is an UNCTAD inspection team in Ghana on a follow-up mission aimed at resolving all outstanding issues. In addition, our Geneva and New York Missions have been supporting the efforts of the UNCTAD Secretariat to resolve, in particular accommodation problems.

Today's presentation, in my view, is an even more important one, as we are just a few weeks away from the conference. Let me briefly give some highlights of the programme, the full details of which are available on the UNCTADXII website: WWW.UNCTADXII.ORG. On Sunday, 20th April there will be an opening ceremony. We are expecting several heads of state or Government to be present. This will be followed by the first plenary meeting and a welcome reception by the host country.

The High-level segment begins on Monday 21st April on the topic: “Trade and Development for Africa’s Prosperity: Action and Direction”. The Secretariat may wish to provide additional information on the programme

Most of you may now be familiar with the draft UNCTAD XII outcome document being negotiated in Geneva. I think the scope of interlocking issues, and the gaps that remained to be bridged to reach consensus reflect the complexity of the question of development.

We are mindful of the fact that UNCTAD XII’s deliberations are linked to other international processes that seek to tackle development issues from other angles. These include the preparations for the 2008 Review Conference of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development; work being undertaken by other UN agencies and other institutions to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and the initiatives for reforming the UN system.

Although we are aware that some of the issues may be contentious, we wish to take this opportunity to reiterate Ghana's appeal to all countries, developing and developed alike, to demonstrate sufficient goodwill, flexibility and political will required for a successful outcome of the Accra meeting.

Let me end my short remarks by expressing once again the appreciation of the Government of Ghana for the solid support it has so far received from the UNCTAD Secretariat, individual governments, organizations and institutions in our preparations. We are confident that we can continue to count on that support all the way through to the end of the conference.

I thank you for your attention.