

**KEYNOTE BY THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA, HONOURABLE PROF. KWABENA FRIMPONG-BOATENG AT THE
11TH GOVERNING BOARD MEETING OF WASCAL ON 19TH OCTOBER, 2017.**

Your Excellency, The German Ambassador to Ghana,

Representatives from The Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany, WASCAL Governing

Board Members,

Gregor Lammann
Ambassadors of WASCAL member countries
Chairperson, SASOP

Executive Management of WASCAL, Friends from the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am very delighted to be here to deliver the keynote for this important gathering this morning. I would first of all want to extend the gratitude of the Government and people of Ghana to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, through the Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) for the immense support towards the establishment of this Centre of Excellence for Climate Change in West Africa.

I also want to congratulate The Board, Management, and Staff of WASCAL for the various roles in bringing WASCAL this far.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we all are very much aware of the magnitude of threat climate change poses to the development of this country and West Africa as a whole. The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that global temperatures could rise another 1-2°C by 2050 and 2-5°C by ~~20100~~²¹⁰⁰, depending on the additional quantity of greenhouse gases humans emit into the atmosphere over the coming decades.

The type and extent of different impacts will vary across regions and over different timescales. Most scientists agree that the impacts of climate change are likely to be overwhelmingly negative and that developing countries are likely to suffer greater impacts than wealthier industrialized countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Climate Change is an all-encompassing threat that is happening now, destroying livelihoods and costing lives. It affects every country, every community and every citizen.

It is a threat to the world's supply of fresh water, our source of life; it is a threat to the World food supply, as rising temperatures and prolonged draught render fertile areas unfit for grazing or crops.

In our sub-region, almost 80% of our population live on agriculture, and exploitation of natural resources which depend on natural conditions. Agriculture contributes to nearly 50% of the GDP in most West Africa countries.

Coastal zones are particularly susceptible to climate change as they are subject to several different and often reinforcing, physical and biological climate related impacts.

These include sea level rise, higher risks of exposure to extreme events (such as intense storm, storm surges, and flooding), salt contamination of freshwater resources, and climate related changes to marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Humans are also vulnerable to coastal zone changes as one-quarter of the world's population resides within 100 km distance and 100 m elevation of the coastline.

In Ghana more than 25% of the population now resides along the coastal belt if the main cities of Greater Accra Metropolitan Area, Cape Coast, Sekondi – Takoradi and Aflao. More are expected to move to coastal areas. Many of the world's largest cities and industrial facilities are located on the coast. Ghana's foremost industrial cities of Accra and Tema are located along the coast.

Ladies and Gentlemen, anytime I get the platform to dialogue or speak on occasions like this, I recognize the opportunity to interact with strategic players like you who bring on board diverse solutions to combat climate change.

The fight against climate change --mainly attributed to man-made activities- is progressively becoming more intense as a result of its unremitting adverse impact on people's source of livelihood and survival, and I will therefore commend WASCAL for the pivotal role it is playing in this effort through its three key focus areas: Climate Services, Research and Capacity Building.

Distinguished Guests, over the past few months the Government of Ghana has taken very deep interest in protecting the environment of its people, particularly our water bodies, which have been polluted through illegal mining, popularly known as "Galamsey". We are determined to fight a well-fought battle to restore the purity and portability of our rivers, lakes and streams which are the source of livelihood for our people.

Dear Governing Board Members, I am glad that one of the foremost documents that H.E the President of the Republic of Ghana signed upon assuming office was the Host Country Agreement, between the Government of Ghana and WASCAL in February this year, thereby granting WASCAL full diplomatic status with accompanying privileges in Ghana. This demonstrates the level of importance Ghana attaches to the work of WASCAL in this country and within the sub-region.

We believe that our support to this worthy cause will even be more conspicuous in the coming years, as we seek to continue promoting sustainable development as a government machinery, by deepening and strengthening market driven Research and Development for sound Environmental Governance, Science, Technology and Innovation through intensive awareness creation, collaboration and partnerships.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we know that climate change cannot be tackled from the periphery. It demands thorough research and building capacities of people to be able to identify the causes, effects and solutions from the grassroots, and these climate services are precisely what WASCAL is providing the governments of West Africa.

UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon once said: "*Climate change does not respect border; it does not respect who you are - rich and poor, small and big. Therefore, this is what we call 'global challenges,' which require global solidarity*".

Also Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the President of Liberia, said during the 2012 Summit for Sustainability in Africa that: "*While the problems might manifest themselves at the local level, the solutions will only work if they are global*"

Its *therefore* only right that with the support of the Government of Germany, Ten(10) countries in West Africa came together to establish WASCAL.

I will urge Governing Board members to deliberate on the sustainability of WASCAL as we cannot continue to only rely on a single donor. Five (5) years after establishment as an institution is enough for us to diversify the sources of funding and with good will it should be possible to do so. I wish to urge the 10 Countries that constitute WASCAL to ~~pay~~ ^{meet} their financial obligations. I don't think our contributions can sustain WASCAL but they give a strong signal to our German friends that we not only appreciate their assistance but are also committed to utilise the output from WASCAL to make our countries and the world a better place.

The Government of Ghana will collaborate with you to ensure that any support that WASCAL needs to have smooth operations in Ghana, is be provided. My doors are permanently opened and I look forward to a deeper dialogue with you on how we can complement each other to foster a consensual relationship towards the achievement of climate change agenda. Your services are paramount to us as a Ministry, and we surely look forward to building stronger partnerships with you. I wish you a fruitful planning session, and to those coming from outside Ghana, I say Akwaba, meaning, WELCOME!

Thank you and I wish you fruitful deliberations!