

Health Development Partners' Speech
Ghana's Health Sector Annual Summit, 5-7 June 2023

Minister of Health: Honourable Kwaku Agyeman-Manu

Hon Nana Ayew Afriyie, MP and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Health

The chairperson of the summit, Dr. Anarfi Asamoah-Baah
Chief Director, MoH : Alhaji. Hafis Adam

Heads of Agencies of the Ministry of Health

Directors of the Ministry of Health

Health Development Partners

Ladies and Gentlemen

All other protocols observed.

Honourable Minister, Chief Director, on behalf of Health Sector Development Partners, thank you for the opportunity to join with your Ministry and agencies for this year's health summit.

The theme for this year's summit, Sustainable Financing for Primary Health Care towards Attainment of Universal Health Coverage in Ghana: Role of Stakeholders is appropriate and timely.

- **Ghana's achievement of the sustainable development goal three on health is predicated on attainment of Universal Health Coverage**, that is, ensuring all Ghanaians have timely access to needed health services of quality without financial

hardship. Ghana has grasped the challenge, with a comprehensive UHC roadmap 2020-2030. However Sustainable financing and a sound health financing strategy is critical to achieving UHC.

2022 has been a difficult year for Ghana – recovering from Covid-19 and a deepening of the economic crisis. We are encouraged by the remarkable resilience shown by the health sector in tackling multiple disease outbreaks while also expanding ground-breaking interventions such as the malaria vaccines for children under five, reduced malaria prevalence from 14.1% in 2019 to 8.6% in 2022, submission and approval of a WB Primary Healthcare project, submission of the Pandemic Preparedness Fund proposal, and submission of the GF GC7 proposal. We also commend the government for establishing the National Vaccine Institute and continuously strengthening the Food and Drugs Authority. It is our hope that Ghana will be able to produce the majority of its vaccines and essential commodities in the near future. We should take note that Animal health vaccines are already produced in Ghana and we can learn and build from that experience.

- The IMF programme is a welcome development, providing the needed support to help stabilize Ghana's economy and **improve sustainability of government financing**. However, 'tightening of the belt' continues and we must continue to make the best use of available funds. The commitment within the programme to protect social spending including that of the National Health Insurance Scheme is commendable but we must draw your attention to some issues:
 - **Strictly controlling allocations for Goods & Service and Capex**, and curtailing **wages and hiring** could negatively impact the ability of the health sector effectively address **existing gaps and inequities in services**.

- There is also no specific mention or protection of **vaccine financing, a well established health ‘best buy’ for governments, essential for cushioning the impact of health shocks**. We remain deeply concerned about availability of essential medicines, HIV, TB and Malaria commodities and medicines, family planning commodities and other sexual reproductive health commodities and routine childhood vaccines. These are central to delivery of quality *primary healthcare services and without them, health workers are placed in a difficult and untenable position*.
 - Underpinning the stockouts of essential medicines as well as the availability of co-financing fiscal space for vaccines, FP commodities and HIV, TB, Malaria commodities and medicines, is the reduced and delayed flow of funds to the NHIS to reimburse healthcare service providers, both in the public and private sectors.
- **With Ghana currently spending less than** the Sub Saharan average on goods and operations, greater protection for the Government’s health sector budget is required.
 - *We call on the government to protect the NHIS and prioritise sustainable domestic financing for procurement of health commodities and essential medicines including vaccines. We as development partners stand ready to work with the Ministry of health to provide technical support to realize this vision.*

Turning to the opportunities ahead

- **The 2022-2025 Health Sector Medium Term Development Plan** provides the needed strategic direction for making up for health gains lost and striving towards the attainment of the sustainable development goal on Health by 2030 – just 7 years away. We will shortly be presented with the report on health sector performance for 2022 that will form a useful benchmark

to measure our progress. *We would also like to suggest that Ghana conduct a Mid-Term review of the HSM TDP as well as a national Health Accounts, as this helps identify areas to address to hasten the progress towards the attainment of the UHC goals.*

- **We commend the MoH and its agencies for the pragmatic effort to reform primary health care service delivery through the Network of Practice (NoP) and Model Health Centres (MHC).** Effective implementation of these initiatives will require innovative financing at the primary level and services that it provides including curative, preventive services and health promotion. Effective collaboration between the service delivery and financing bodies of the sector would equally be essential **while involving the community from the onset.** We welcome Ghana's effort in drafting key documents such as the Essential health services package, the NoP guidelines and MHC guideline. Key tasks remain for operationalising the full package, reconciliation with the insurance benefit package, conducting the necessary financial and budgetary implication assessment, and strengthening the existing systems. We would also welcome the drafting of the Patient Referral Policy and look forward to its finalization.
- **It is remarkably opportune that with DP support, Ghana has been able to complete a comprehensive set of health sector surveys** – the Demographic and Health Survey, Harmonized Health Facility Assessment and Public Expenditure Review, climate change vulnerability assessment with others including Service Delivery Indicator survey, NCD risk factor survey PHC service delivery pathway analysis in progress. These present concrete opportunities for evidence-based prioritisation of interventions to make the best use of available resources - efficiently and effectively and accelerate progress towards health sector objectives. Ghana must seize

this opportunity and make bold decisions. *We call on MoH to utilise the surveys and learning from the recently concluded MoH end of year review and this Summit to inform workplans for the second half of 2023 and 2024 health sector budget and action plans.*

- **The health financing strategic plan – which will be presented at this summit, will guide our work as DPs in supporting you to actualise a sustainable domestic financing strategy and** intermediate objectives that include equity in resource distribution, efficiency, transparency and accountability. *We congratulate GoG for their efforts to make good on co-financing GAVI commitments in 2022 but note that the same needs to be done for the Global Fund under this current grant as well as for the upcoming grant 2024-2026. Without meeting the co-financing commitments Ghana will lose access to significant grant financing. Co-financing commitments continue and represent a fraction of global health investment in Ghana and every effort should be made to fulfil these. We as development partners are committed to work with GoG to ensure that a viable transition plan towards self-sufficiency in supporting the health sector is realized.*
- **Governance:** Greater accountability on sector governance would require periodic reports on effectiveness of governance structures, working groups, reviews and Health summits to inform workplans and budgets. We therefore encourage the Ministry to review and revise the existing Common Management Arrangement to reflect the current stakeholder landscape of the sector, particularly the increasing role of civil society and the private sector, and effectively implement the same. Knowledge management tools and the use of information technology should also be leveraged to achieve Aid effectiveness by aligning all our activities and resources on one plan, one budget and one report principle.

- We must all ensure that the sector management processes are fit for purpose and are implemented diligently.
- Minister, as Development Partners, we again thank you for this opportunity to join with MoH, private sector and all health stakeholders to discuss and agree concrete actions towards Ghana achieving sustainable financing for universal health coverage.
- We look forward to the results of the Holistic assessment and other presentations and virgorous but respectful deliberations. And we hope for full participation of Ministry of Finance at the Summit as they also are important stakeholders.

Your success is our success. Please be assured of our continued support and commitment to the health and wellbeing of Ghanaians.

We wish us all a productive Summit.

Thank You