**A BRIEF STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HON.YAW OSAFO-MAAFO, SENIOR PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP 4TH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AT TOMREIK HOTEL**

**ON 19TH OCTOBER 2022**

**Heads and Representatives of Ministries, Departments and Agencies**

**Members of the OGP National Steering Committee here present**

**Representatives of Civil Society Organizations and Academia**

**Friends from the Media**

**Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am delighted to be at this all-important Stakeholder Engagement on the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan being organized by the Public Sector Reform Secretariat under my supervision in collaboration with the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI).

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, as you may be aware, the Open Government Partnership is a global initiative that brings government leaders and civil society advocates together. It is aimed at promoting transparency, empowering citizens, fighting corruption and encouraging the use of new technologies to improve governance. Ghana signed up to the OGP from its inception in 2011. In fulfillment of requirements for member countries to co-create Action Plans every two years, Ghana has developed and implemented its OGP National Action Plans (NAP) in 2012, 2015 and 2017with a fourth Action plan currently in the implementation phase. I recount that for the advert of Covid in 2020, the 4th Action Plan would have taken place earlier.

As the spirit of co-creation demands, Government and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) came together to identify, discuss and validate key priority commitments for the 4th National Action Plan (NAP). Two of such discussions happened right here at Tomreik Hotel a year ago. The 4th NAP which contains 14 commitments was finally submitted in October 2021 spanning the period 2021-2023. Some of the highlight commitments are the **Right to Information, Beneficial Ownership Disclosure, Open Parliament and the Ghana Open Data Initiative.**

**Distinguished invited guest, ladies and gentlemen** previous plans have been consistently implemented with modest success in the attainment of commitments due to broad framing of some commitments which hinders implementation, lack of integration of commitments into priority plans and strategies of the government and civil society advocacy, and overloading of commitments which reduces the effectiveness of implementation efforts.

Implementing Ministries, Departments Agencies (MDAs) and collaborating institutions often know next to nothing about the Open Government Partnership and National Action Plans. Commitments are often not budgeted for, thus affecting smooth implementation.

This notwithstanding, the OGP initiative has demonstrated Ghana's desire to further expand and deepen the scope of open and accountable governance through the implementation of these Action Plans. In one way or the other, the government has started taking steps to advance accountability and transparency, increase citizen participation, and adopt new technologies to improve good governance. The numerous policy and legislative reforms spurred by the Initiative to combat corruption and improve accountability and transparency attest to this.

Some of the major policy and legislative reforms are the enactment of the:

1. Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989)
2. State Interests and Governance Authority Act, 2019 (Act 990)
3. Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992)
4. Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2018 (Act 982)
5. Witness Protection Act, 2018 (Act 975)
6. The Ghana Open Data Initiative which has led to increased access to government data for various data needs.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** efforts have been made since the submission of the 4th National Action Plan in 2021 to sensitize stakeholders particularly Implementing MDAs on their commitments and roles at their locations to surmount some of the challenges in the implementation of National Action Plans.

There was the need to meet key stakeholders in the implementation of the 4th Action Plan at a forum like this to sensitize them on the various commitments, implementation roadmap in the NAP-4, agree on steps to accelerate implementation and inform them about a monitoring framework developed to track implementation. It is therefore refreshing that the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), a CSO representative on the OGP National Steering Committee is collaborating with my Office to hold this engagement. I encourage others to emulate their example.

**The objectives of this engagement are to:**

1. Sensitize Implementing Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and **collaborating institutions** on the Open Government Partnership.
2. Review commitments and implementation roadmap in the 4th National Action Plan as well as agree on modalities for accelerating implementation of outstanding commitments.
3. Review and agree on a Monitoring Framework to track implementation of commitments NAP-4.
4. Facilitate collaboration among state and non-state actors towards the implementation of commitments

**It is expected that at the end of these discussions:**

1. Implementing MDAs would be sensitized on the OGP to secure their buy-in.
2. Implementing MDAs and collaborating state and non-state actors would be apprised of their roles and responsibilities as contained in the NAP-4 including agreement on steps to fast-track implementation.
3. A clear modality/framework to hold each other accountable for the implementation of the NAP-4 would be developed.
4. Implementing MDAs and their state and non-state actors would work together to accelerate implementation of commitments

**Ladies and gentlemen,** I use this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to all who have in one way or the other cooperated and supported the implementation of the OGP in Ghana.

Government on its part will continue to support and be committed to achieving the OGP objectives for **better governance for the benefit of citizens**.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion and a successful programme.

Thank you for your attention.