

STATEMENT BY HON. JOHN-PETER AMEWU, MINISTER FOR RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT, READ ON HIS BEHALF BY THE CHIEF DIRECTOR, AT THE STAKEHOLDERS' SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP ON THE RAILWAY MASTER PLAN HELD AT THE LANCASTER HOTEL, KUMASI ON THURSDAY, 20TH JULY, 2023

..... **Manhyia Adontenhene;**

The Ashanti Regional Minister; Hon. Simon Osei Mensah;

The Board Chairman of Ghana Railway Development Authority;

The CEO of Ghana Railway Development Authority;

The Ag. MD of Ghana Railway Company Limited;

Invited Stakeholders;

Our Friends from the Media here-present;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am making this statement on behalf of the Hon. Minister of Railway Development at the third and final stakeholder sensitization conference on the 2020 Railway Master Plan. The Hon. Minister expresses his deepest regret for not being able to join us today for this very important event due to an equally important national assignment.

From the introduction session, I noticed that stakeholders have been drawn from various sectors of our economy and this demonstrates the relevance of a vibrant railway network in a country like ours. Railway, as we have seen in other developed countries can be the backbone to our development agenda.

It is part of the vision of his Excellency the President of the Republic to make Ghana a transportation hub in West Africa and to achieve this broad vision, the Ministry had to revise the existing 2013 Railway Master Plan to serve as a road map to this vision.

NANANOM, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The objective of reviewing the 2013 Master Plan is to extend the railway network to all regional capitals including the six (6) recently created regional capitals and also connect the old and new mineral deposits to the Ports of Tema and Takoradi as well as the proposed Keta Port.

The plan is expected to be implemented in three (3) phases. After the implementation of the Master Plan, we expect to have a total of about 3,844km of a new standard gauge rail network across the country with a design speed of 80km per hour for freight service and 120km per hour for passenger service, as well as, a minimum axle load of 25tons per axle.

NANANOM, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

For us to achieve this vision, we need to strategically invest about 22 billion dollars in infrastructure and new rolling stock. These investments will in return give Ghanaians savings in transport cost due to lower transport cost by rail by passengers and other freight operators, savings in road maintenance cost and resultant savings in road accidents in the country.

NANANOM,

Since the setting up of the Ministry in 2017 by his Excellency the President, the country has seen unprecedented investment in the railway sector. Over a billion dollars of investments is currently being injected to revamp the railway sector.

For instance, Government has secured a 500 million Euro credit facility to develop the Takoradi Port to Huni Valley Railway Line as part of the Western Railway Line Development Project. Also, about 200 million Dollars is being utilized on the section of the Western Line from Kojokrom to Manso through Government's own internal resources. These two projects on the Western Line are being implemented by Messrs Amandi Investment Limited.

Additionally, a 6km Railway line is currently under construction as part of the Western Railway Line development project from Adum to Kaase here in Kumasi by Messrs David Walter Limited. The project is valued at about 48 million dollars and is being funded by the Government of Ghana through the consolidated fund.

Furthermore, the Ministry has recently negotiated a contract with AFCONS Infrastructure Limited of India for the construction of a 50km standard gauge line from Obuasi to Eduadin also in the Ashanti Region. Having already obtained Parliamentary approval for the implementation of this project, the remaining financing arrangements are at the final stages before the actual commencement of the construction works.

The outstanding sections of the Western Line from Obuasi to Dunkwa, Dunkwa to Awaso including the extension from Awaso to Nyinahini, will be undertaken by Government after securing the needed financial resources.

Government is also utilizing about 447 million dollars on the development of the Tema to Mpakadan standard gauge railway project which is currently about 98% complete. This project is being executed by Messrs AFCONS Infrastructure Limited through an India EXIM Bank credit facility.

Similarly, a 265 million dollar contract has been signed by Government with Messrs KEC International Limited of India for the construction of a new standard gauge line from Accra to Nsawam through Adjin-Kotoku as part of the Eastern Railway Line redevelopment project. This project will mark the beginning of the new Eastern Line from Accra/Tema through the Boankra Inland Port to Kumasi.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Unlike road transport, the construction of railways and associated infrastructure is capital intensive, currently we are doing on average about 4.5 million dollars per KM for rail construction not to mention the cost of land acquisition and compensation payments. The Ministry therefore plans to employ sustainable private financing schemes to bridge the huge financing gap.

The Government of Ghana will therefore partner the private sector to develop, operate and maintain the rail sector to accelerate the socio-economic advancement of our dear nation.

As we are all aware, His Excellency the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo is paying more attention to the railway sector, and this is clearly evidenced with the massive investment project currently underway across the country.

NANANOM, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Before I take my seat, I want to call on all stakeholders and well-meaning Ghanaians to come on board and continue to support Government to achieve the vision of developing a modern railway system; a legacy the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo intends to leave for this country before the end of his tenure as President of Ghana.

Nananom Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your presence here and wish you a very fruitful day.

Thank you.