

**CLOSING REMARKS BY THE HON. DEPUTY MINISTER OF LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MLGRD) AT THE 14TH ILO
REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR LABOUR BASED PRACTITIONERS AT THE
ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CETNRE,
SEPTEMBER 09, 2011**

Mr. Chairman,

Hon. Ministers,

Country Directors of UN Agencies in Ghana,

Chief Directors and Heads of Departments and Agencies,

Various Directors of the ILO here present,

Participants of this Seminar,

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank the organizers for the opportunity to give closing remarks at this important meeting of great minds. Coming at this crucial moment of our development, where there is widespread global agitation against youth unemployment and underemployment, a situation that is posing a serious threat to national security and orderly development, this seminar has proven to be very fruitful in the sense that, it has once again forcefully brought home the point that, employment creation and the provision of decent work cannot be overlooked if we are to make strides and sustain the growth and development of our economies.

As indicated in my opening remarks, our Ministry has commenced the implementation of a World Bank funded "Ghana Social Opportunities Project" a key feature of which, is a Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPW) component that seeks to provide job opportunities for the rural poor and marginalized through the use of Labour Based Methods (LBTs). It is

instructive to note that, as a show of the Ministry's commitment to the adoption of LBTs as an instrument for poverty reduction and rural development, a significant 63% (US\$56 Million) of the total project envelope of US\$89.1 million has been assigned to this component alone. It is for this reason that the ministry as an entity sponsored as many as 48 Persons mainly made up of District Engineers, who are expected to be in the frontline, of project implementation to participate in this 5-day event.

Mr. Chairman, for us as a Ministry, we are of the firm belief that in order to ensure the widespread adoption of LBTs, there is the need for the lead Ministries and other relevant institutions such as ILO to forge a closer collaboration and leverage the efforts of each other in popularizing the concept. Though this process has begun in Ghana, it is hoped that, it will be sustained and further enhanced to ensure the achievement of our shared vision of a significant shift towards the use of LBTs.

Having sat through 5 days of deliberation on various perspectives on the use of LBTs, it has been observed with great concern how the discussions have tilted heavily towards the road sector. Whilst this could be explained by the fact that it was the road sector that hosted the earlier pilots that were held on the use of the technology and therefore remain the single sector with most of the expertise, suffice it to say that we as a country may have to start learning quickly from the experiences of countries such as India and South Africa. These countries have gone beyond the road sector and are applying the technology to other equally important public services like waste management, provision of irrigation schemes and climate change prevention and adaptation activities like, afforestation, contour bonding and terracing. Though potentials for these and other related areas exist in our country, there is currently a capacity deficiency regarding the application of LBT to these sectors. It is this observation that has informed our ministry's decision to collaborate with the Ministry of Roads and Highways and the ILO to transform the Koforidua Training Centre into a Centre of Excellence for the training of persons in LBT for all sectors.

As a Ministry that is in the process of implementing a project that will rely heavily on LBTs as an implementation method, we concede that we have a lot to learn, especially in the areas

of targeting, ensuring an effective and reliable payment system and managing the expectation of beneficiary communities and the relationship between the workforce and service providers in order to avoid conflicts. We would therefore, from time to time, call on those of you who have experience in these areas to come to our aid. We hope that we would not be denied the opportunity when the need arises.

Mr. Chairman, permit me at this juncture to remind all practitioners of the importance of involving the decentralized structures in the implementation of LBTs in their various countries. This, when done, will certainly lead to a further popularization of the technology as a worthy option and hasten its mainstreaming.

To those of you who were sponsored by our Ministry to attend this conference, especially the personnel from the various District Assemblies, we hope that you have found it worthwhile and will justify the expenditure that has been made on you by letting the lessons learnt and experiences acquired reflect in your output.

Before I assume my seat Mr. Chairman, I wish to re-affirm our Ministry's commitment to the drive towards the widespread adoption of LBTs and pledge that in view of the enormous potential that it has for poverty reduction (which seem to be at the heart of most of the interventions that are being implemented by the ministry), we will make an incremental effort towards its mainstreaming. We are therefore already looking forward to the 15th edition of this august meeting where we will be fully represented to share our exciting results and experiences with you.

Thank you.