

## **WELCOME ADDRESS BY VALENTINA MINTAH**

### **Ghana National Single Window Media Trade Facilitation Workshop**

**HELD AT THE ROYAL SENCHI RESORT, AKOSOMBO**

**4<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2016**

Our media partners from Ghana and Nigeria, Our International Experts, West Blue Colleagues

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome and to say how grateful I am to you for accepting our invitation to attend this Workshop.

With the media being the proverbial mouth and ears of any society, we deem it critical to organize this Trade Facilitation workshop as a foundation builder for a truly long-term partnership in our quest for institutional building, nation building and ultimately the strengthening of our continent Africa.

During this interactive workshop, we will look at Trade Facilitation, particularly the Single Window Concept, using the Ghana Project as the Case Story. In the last few days, stakeholders both public and private sectors were called upon to converge at this very venue, to identify and analyse bottlenecks and redundancies in procedural and documentary requirements in Ghana's international trade supply chain, with the view to recommending improvements in the business processes and ICT infrastructure.

This was a most vibrant and productive session where all participants in the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect, adopted a non-protectionist attitude to critically analyse the AS-IS business processes to identify redundancies, duplications and bottlenecks. The outcome of this was recommendations on policy reviews and the TO-BE business processes and ICT infrastructure to enable the required transition from a culture of delays and high costs of doing business to a culture of Faster, Simpler, Automated and Predictable means of processing Imports, Exports and Transit in Ghana.

It is common knowledge that excessive bureaucracy is the most severe constraint to trade processing in Africa. That African Importers and Exporters remain uncompetitive in the global business arena is largely attributable in part to the number of days it takes to complete import and export processing and their attendant costs. The collaboration of our sister countries – Ghana and Nigeria on trade facilitation activities can only bring about further gains in our quest for increased intra African trade, with the realization of efficient processes and movement of goods.

No matter how much is done as individual Institutions and countries in addressing these bottlenecks, it cannot be compared with the positive and timely impact that can be achieved with the joined up efforts of all stakeholders.

When we join forces and pursue the goals of the National Single Window Concept, it would be relatively easy to create a solid foundation which will enable us achieve the 50% Better, Faster and Cheaper Trade across Border Indicators and beyond.

At this juncture we would like to extend our sincere thanks to those who have travelled from Nigeria and Accra for joining us and for the support you have provided us and continue to provide with our various programmes.

I now declare this Workshop open and wish us all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention