

**DRAFT SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE 10th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION OF AFRICAN SHIPPERS' COUNCILS AT THE ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE ON 27th JANUARY 2016.**

YOUR EXCELLENCY THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES

THE MEDIA

INVITED GUESTS LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

It is with great pleasure that I join you on this occasion marking the 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Union of African Shippers Councils. I have been requested by the organisers of this Assembly to perform the role of chairperson on this auspicious occasion. My presence here this morning is an indication of my acceptance and I am indeed grateful to the organisers.

The occasion of a General Assembly is time for reflection. – A reflection on the impact of the various efforts made by the shippers' councils of Africa to bring efficiency into the trading, transport and Logistics activities of our countries.

I am informed that the General Assembly would take stock of activities of your Union over the last two years. While that is expected for an occasion such as this, my passion for Regional Integration and economic development through trade, compels me to charge you to use the occasion to also evaluate during your seminar sessions, the importance of trade costs or

generally speaking the cost of doing business in developing countries such as ours and its impact on Global and Regional Value chains.

In this regard, it will be needful to pay attention to the role of different trade facilitation measures such as the streamlining of border procedures, the development of appropriate infrastructure and the infusion of Information and Communication Technology into the regional logistics chains. With that, our respective governments could give consideration to the reshaping of policies that would positively impact our regional economic integration drive.

Indeed a recent study conducted by the OECD has shown that for developing economies to effectively participate in the global value chain, there should be effective linkages in activities such as farming, extraction of natural resources, research and development, manufacturing, design, management, marketing, distribution and post-sale services across the entire value chain. It will therefore be essential for Shippers Organisations to analyse the entire value chain of their respective economies isolate the common challenges and proffer solutions towards a removal of the bottlenecks that hinder a proper alignment of these linkages.

Ladies and Gentlemen, over the last couple of years I have observed at close quarters some of the efforts of the Ghana Shippers Authority towards a reduction in the cost of doing business at our ports through their publication captioned "DO NOT PAY MORE" often appearing in the national dailies. I am of the firm belief and conviction that its impact would only be truly felt when a monitoring mechanism is put in place to ensure compliance. At the same quarters, I have observed and keenly followed your efforts at capacity building for judges through the Maritime Law Seminars for the Judiciary, your consultative fora and stakeholder engagement seeking to address bottlenecks in the international trading system. These are indeed laudable and commendable. As shippers organisations within the sub-region it would

be my expectation that you would utilize the common umbrella that the Union offers to harmonise your approaches towards the resolution of the myriad of shippers problems and develop common templates for trade facilitation in the sub-region.

In conclusion I wish to state that there are challenges in all endeavours, so do not feel intimidated. With commitment and concerted efforts from all institutions, both national and continental, these challenges can and shall be overcome. This is the optimism for success in the new approach to integration in Africa. Regional initiatives characterized by direct involvement of the private sector in the formulation and implementation of a conducive policy environment, peer reviews from enterprising executives setting the pace for integration, and innovative solutions should define the new approaches that would enable us derive maximum benefits from integration.

Your Excellency the vice president, distinguished invited guests ladies and gentlemen. This is a very auspicious moment, presenting us with an occasion to further strengthen our bonds of partnership, friendship and regional integration. May I therefore in accepting to chair this function, welcome you all to the 10<sup>th</sup> General assembly of the Union of African Shippers Councils.

Thank you for your attention.