**A BRIEF STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HON.YAW OSAFO-MAAFO, SENIOR PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE MEETING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GHANA’S OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP 4TH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AT TOMREIK HOTEL ON 19TH MAY, 2021**

**Heads and Representatives of MDAs and MMDAs**

**Representatives of Civil Society Organizations**

**Representatives of Private Sector Organizations**

**Representatives from Academia**

**Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is with great pleasure that I open this all important National Stakeholder Consultative meeting being organized by the Public Sector Reform Secretariat, Office of the President, in collaboration with the Ghana Integrity Initiative and the Steering Committee of the National Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, 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. In September 2011, Ghana signed onto the OGP and, in fulfillment of the requirement for member countries to develop and implement Action Plans every two years, Ghana developed and implemented its OGP National Action Plans (NAP) in 2012, 2015 and 2017 respectively through a broad-based consultative process among Government, CSOs and other stakeholders for submission to the Global Secretariat of OGP.

**Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,** the OGP presents an enormous opportunity for Ghana to demonstrate to its good people and the international community, its deepest commitment to pursuing open government.

The Government has shown great commitment through several achievements made under the various thematic areas through the implementation of three (3) OGP National Action Plans.

Key among them, under transparency and accountability, is the enactment of the Office of The Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959) which established the Office of the Special Prosecutor and the subsequent appointment of a Special Prosecutor.

Following years of persistent fiscal deficits, Ghana under the IMF-sponsored Extended Credit Facility (ECF) in the 2017-2019 period committed to promote fiscal discipline and transparency by the passage in December 2018 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2018 (Act 982) which capped annual deficit to no more than 5% of GDP and prescribed related censure of the Minister for Finance in the event of breaches. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 with its adverse effect on the economy of the country led to its suspension with the approval of Parliament.

The enactment in 2019 of the Companies Act, 2019 (Act 992) established the legal framework for the Beneficial Ownership regime in fulfillment of the resolution which made Beneficial Ownership disclosure mandatory for all implementing countries of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The Registrar General’s Department (RGD) is implementing a Beneficial Ownership regime based on the Act following the completion of the upgrade of its electronic register to enable it receive data.

In March, 2019 the Right to Information Bill was passed by the Parliament of Ghana (Right to Information Act, 2019 (Act 989) and became operational in January 2020. It is an important instrument for the promotion of transparency and accountability.

In April, 2019 a State Interests and Governance Authority (SIGA) was established by an Act of Parliament, State Interests and Governance Authority Act, 2019 (Act 990). The main purpose of SIGA is to ensure that the activities of all State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Joint Venture Companies (JVCs) were monitored to among other objectives, ensure;

1. promotion of efficient operations of the CSOs; and
2. adherence to good corporate governance practices.

In 2017 a major commitment under innovation and technology was for the Ministry of Communications and related Ministries and Agencies to finalize the Ghana Open Data Policy by 2018. Today Ghana is considered a leader in Africa in Open Data Initiative.

These achievements have not been without challenges; major among them is budgetary constraints which have made it difficult for Ghana to pay up subscriptions to the global OGP fraternity. However, attempts are being made to settle Ghana’s outstanding subscription bill.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**, Ghana is due to submit a fourth (4th) National Action Plan and as part of efforts towards the achievement of this objective, a Consultant has been engaged to facilitate and lead the process of developing Ghana’s Fourth (4th) National Action Plan. The Consultant has reviewed the previous three (3) National Action Plans (NAPs) and has undertaken Political Economy Analysis.

As the spirit of co-creation demands, it is imperative that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Government come together to discuss and identify key priority commitments for the 4th National Action Plan (NAP) and thus the Organisation of the National Stakeholder Consultative meeting to solicit inputs from stakeholders.

Virtual consultative meetings are also expected to be held during the NAP development process to ensure Ghana comes out with a National Action Plan (NAP) that meets the requirements of the OGP community.

The Consultative process seeks to particularly:

1. Report on the review of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd National Action Plans.
2. Report on the Political Economy Analysis on the governance architecture and capturing government’s policy priorities to inform the development of the NAP 4.
3. Identify, prioritize and agree on key areas for inclusion in the National Action Plan (NAP) 4.
4. Sensitize existing and potential Implementation Institutions and Agencies on OGP to secure their buy-in.
5. Review past approaches to implementing the first three (3) National Action Plans and agree on modalities to hold each other accountable for the implementation of the NAP 4.
6. Strengthen opportunities for interactions between government and CSO’s on their role in development through the open governance process.

The output of the stakeholder consultative meeting will be submitted to a national forum for validation. Your contribution therefore is very important to the success of the programme.

I wish to encourage all stakeholders gathered here today to bring their experiences to bear on the discussions to be able to achieve the objectives set out for this meeting.

Government will continue to support and be committed to the achievements of the objectives of OGP for improved governance and democracy in Ghana.

Thank you for your attention.