

**SPEECH BY H.E. AMB. GINA AMA BLAY AT RECEPTION
TO COMMEMORATE THE 61ST INDEPENDENCE
ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA,
MARITIM HOTEL, BERLIN, 6TH MARCH, 2018**

**Excellencies, Colleague Members of the Diplomatic
Corps;**

**Religious, Traditional and Societal Leaders of the
Ghanaian Community in Germany;**

My Dear Compatriots;

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to welcome all of you to this reception, held in commemoration of the 61st Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Ghana. On behalf of the President, Government and people of Ghana, I thank all of you for honouring our invitation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

61 years ago, on this day, Ghana's first President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, proclaimed the then Gold

Coast as an independent country, free from British colonial rule. In so doing, the new state, which assumed the name Ghana, did not only become the first sub-Saharan African country to be independent, she became the embodiment of the dreams and aspirations of the rest of the African people to be free from colonial rule.

Ghana, therefore, championed the African liberation struggle, with the unshakable belief that in order for her own independence to achieve the desired impact, it had to be directly linked with the total liberation of the rest of the African continent. The end of Apartheid in 1991 and the subsequent establishment of a united, democratic South Africa effectively brought the struggle for political liberation on the continent to an end.

But like many other countries in Africa, the road to economic development and prosperity of Ghana has not been smooth. Ghana has had her fair share of political instability relating to our quest for nationhood.

By 1992, however, Ghanaians had come to the firm conclusion that the best path to sustainable economic development and prosperity was the establishment of a constitutional, multi-party

democratic society, anchored on the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Since then, we have not wavered in that resolve.

Today, therefore, Ghanaians all over the world are celebrating their modest achievements. We are, however, quick to recognise that the country has not yet reached her desired level of development. The Ghanaian economy is still largely informal and agrarian, and very much dependent on the export of raw materials. This has not enabled us to achieve our aspiration of building a strong and robust economy capable of creating jobs and withstanding the unfavourable forces of the global market.

It is against this backdrop that upon assumption of office, the President of Ghana, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, launched the agenda which happens to be the theme for this year's Independence Anniversary: “**GHANA BEYOND AID**”.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Agenda of a Ghana Beyond Aid is a quest to build a self-reliant, self-confident, optimistic and prosperous nation with a strong and thriving

democratic society in which mutual trust and economic opportunities exist for all. It is an initiative aimed at weaning the country off foreign aid through robust domestic revenue mobilisation, among other policy initiatives.

The President has been championing this agenda through several initiatives. Key among them has been the introduction of a monetary policy that is stabilising the local currency and significantly reducing the cost of borrowing. Targeted tax cuts, the provision of stable power supply and a reduction in electricity tariffs for industries have all combined to reduce the cost of doing business and to boost industrial output.

The Government has also taken specific steps to lead Ghana and her economy into the new digital age. These include the introduction of an e-business registration system, a paperless port clearance system, a digital addressing system, a mobile interoperability system, and a national identification card system, all of which are designed to formalise the Ghanaian economy, reduce the cost of doing business, and facilitate interaction between businesses and their clients.

Our quest to promote accountability and to tackle public sector corruption has also led to the establishment of the Office of Special Prosecutor. We hope that the Office will deal decisively with acts of corruption and help hold public officials accountable for their stewardship.

Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are pleased to observe that our vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid is resonating quite well with many of our development partners. We are particularly happy that Germany is showing keen interest in supporting and promoting this Agenda.

Last week, our President, Nana Akufo-Addo, was here in Germany as part of efforts to deepen our bilateral relations and promote German trade and investment in Ghana. His discussions with the Federal Chancellor, H.E. Dr. Angela Merkel, and several German businesses emphasised Ghana's determination to take her relations with Germany beyond development cooperation to increased trade and investment activities.

Indeed, Ghana's bilateral relations with Germany over the past 61 years has been cordial, and I dare add that recent activities from both sides

is driving the relations towards new heights. We remain grateful to the German Government for its continuous support to Ghana through various development assistance packages. Ghana particularly appreciates her inclusion in the G20 Compact with Africa, an initiative by the German Federal Government aimed at improving the conditions for private investment in selected African countries.

But we are even happier that the German Government is encouraging the German business community to invest in Ghana, in line with our vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid. The visit to Ghana in December 2017 by the Federal President, H.E. Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, in the company of a high-powered German business delegation, was a strong indication of the repositioning of German economic cooperation with Ghana, and we are pleased with that development.

Furthermore, the decision to hold the 3rd German-African Business Summit (GABS) in Ghana in February 2019 is in consonance with our vision. We expect the Summit to further deepen business ties between Germany and Ghana, and by extension, the larger African continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Moving forward, therefore, we want our engagement with Germany to be characterized by increased trade and investment activities. Ghana is rich in human and material resources, with considerable deposits of gold, bauxite, iron ore, oil and gas. The country also has a vibrant ICT sector, large tracts of arable land and a relatively youthful, educated and dynamic population. We, therefore, want to develop a partnership that is sustainable and that enables citizens of the two countries to optimally harness their potentials for development.

I therefore wish to reiterate the call of our President to the German business community to take advantage of the increasing business-friendly environment to do more business in Ghana. Major policies of the Government, such as the One-District-One-Factory, the Planting for Food and Jobs and the One-District-One-Dam, could serve as platforms for entry into Ghana by new German businesses.

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate Ghana's 61st Independence Anniversary today, I consider it a time for some

reflection. It is a moment to acknowledge our past and present failures; but also a moment to celebrate our success story. Even more, it is a moment to rekindle hope in the Ghana Agenda – the unwavering belief that together, we can translate our vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid into reality. It is a moment to be proud to be Ghanaian and to be associated with Ghana. And that is why I am excited to be able to invite all of you to join us to build a self-reliant Ghana, a **GHANA BEYOND AID**.

And may I now invite all of you to kindly raise your glasses and drink to:

- The further strengthening of bilateral relations between Ghana and Germany, and
- The continual growth, unity and prosperity of the people of Ghana and Germany.

Long live Ghana!!

Long live Germany!!

Long live Ghana-Germany relations.

Thank you.