



**ADDRESS BY H.E. JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF GHANA AT THE 77TH ANNUAL NEW YEAR SCHOOL AND
CONFERENCE
ON TUESDAY, 6TH JANUARY 2026 - UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**

**THEME: BUILDING THE GHANA, WE WANT TOGETHER FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



**Madam Chairperson of the University Council,
Her Excellency Mrs Mary Chinery-Hesse, Chancellor of the University of
Ghana,
Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo, Vice-Chancellor,
Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Registrar,
Members of the Council of State,
Honourable Ministers of State,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Our distinguished guests from the Republic of Estonia,
Provosts, Deans, Directors and Heads of Department,
Traditional Authorities,
Partners of the Annual New Year School,
Faculty and Staff of the University of Ghana,
Participants,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends of the Media,**

INTRODUCTION

It is both an honour and a privilege to join you at this 77th Annual New Year School and Conference, a national intellectual tradition that, for over seven decades, has provided Ghana with a rare space for reflection, evidence-based debate, and policy influence. I commend the School of Continuing and Distance Education of the University of Ghana and all partners for sustaining this invaluable national institution.

This gathering opens not merely a new year but a season of national introspection. It invites us to interrogate where we are, how we got here, and—most importantly—where we must go together as a people. The longevity and relevance of this Conference affirm the enduring role of academia in shaping Ghana’s democratic and developmental journey.

THE NATIONAL MOMENT

The theme—“Building the Ghana We Want Together for Sustainable Development”—captures both our collective aspiration and our shared responsibility. Ghana stands at a defining crossroads. After nearly seven decades of independence, the question before us is no longer whether we can govern ourselves, but how well we govern, how equitably we grow, how sustainable our growth is, and how resilient we build our nation.

It is important to note that the Ghana we want cannot be built by any one individual or administration. It requires partnership, discipline, innovation, and national consensus. It demands that we move beyond rhetoric to implementation, beyond short-term fixes to long-term solutions, and beyond narrow interests to the national interest.

Growth and consolidation must be permanent. We must continuously strengthen state institutions, grow our economy, and consolidate accountable governance. We cannot build the Ghana we want if progress made under one regime is reversed under another. Our economic development programmes must be medium to long-term. We cannot build the Ghana we want if, after every regime change, economic development programmes are discarded and replaced with entirely new ones.

This is why I have decided to make this second mandate, graciously granted to me by Ghanaians, count. I have pledged to raise our economy and governance to a level that no succeeding government can reverse. We must demonstrate that democracy works and that our people can have faith in their leaders to uphold their interests and create opportunities for national prosperity.

PILLAR ONE: BUILDING A VIBRANT AND RESILIENT ECONOMY

Madam Chairperson,

A sustainable Ghana must rest on a productive, diversified, and resilient economy—one capable of withstanding shocks while creating opportunity for all. Our development model must decisively move away from excessive dependence on raw material exports toward value addition, industrial production, and knowledge-based enterprise.

We will roll out a policy this year that requires value addition to our minerals, petroleum and agricultural products before export.

It is in this context that my Government has placed the 24-Hour Economy and the Accelerated Export Development Programme at the heart of our Reset Agenda. This programme is not a slogan; it is a structural transformation strategy—to extend productivity beyond daylight hours, deepen manufacturing, support logistics and agro-processing, and create millions of decent jobs across the value chain.

This can only be achieved in an environment conducive to investment. This is why my administration has moved quickly to implement the urgent reforms required to stabilise and grow our economy. We have achieved measurable success, including a stable currency, touted as the best-performing in the world for 2025;

inflation falling from 23.8% to just above 5% by the end of 2025; debt falling from above 66% at the end of 2024 to 45% by the end of 2025; and foreign reserves rising from \$8.9 billion in 2024 to \$13.8 billion in 2025.

We are strengthening domestic revenue mobilisation, restoring fiscal discipline, rebuilding confidence in the financial sector, and supporting indigenous enterprise. Economic resilience is not achieved through austerity alone, but through production, inclusion, and shared prosperity.

PILLAR TWO: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AS THE ENGINE OF GROWTH

Distinguished Guests,

No nation has ever risen beyond the quality of its people. Human capital development—education, skills, health, and innovations are therefore the foundation of sustainable growth.

We must improve learning outcomes at all levels of our educational system, especially at the basic level, to equip our children with the critical learning skills needed to prepare them for higher education.

Our focus is not only on access but also on quality and relevance. From early childhood education to TVET, from tertiary institutions to lifelong learning, we are aligning education with the demands of a modern economy—digital, green, and globally competitive.

In this regard, I am pleased to reaffirm the Government's commitment to the Digital Youth Village and the Centre for Digital Youth Development, initiatives pioneered here at the University of Ghana. As promised, my Government has already invested GHS 80 million, with an additional GHS 70 million allocated for the 2026 fiscal year. This project will serve as a national model for sixteen digital hubs of excellence that will support the 24-Hour Economy, digital entrepreneurship, innovation, and academic delivery.

Our youth are not a problem to be managed; they are assets to be empowered.

PILLAR THREE: GOOD GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND NATIONAL DISCIPLINE

Madam Chairperson,

Sustainable development is impossible without public trust in institutions. Good governance is not abstract—it concerns how power is exercised, how resources are managed, and how decisions affect ordinary lives.

My government is strengthening anti-corruption institutions, restoring respect for the rule of law, and insisting on value for money in public spending. Accountability must be real, not rhetorical. Transparency must be systemic, not selective.

This is why this year we will establish an Independent Value for Money Office (VFM) to ensure that every cedi spent on behalf of the people delivers real value.

But governance reform also requires national discipline—a culture where rules are respected, public resources are protected, and civic responsibility is embraced. Development is not delivered solely by the government; it is sustained by citizens who believe in the system and contribute to its success.

We will engage with all political parties and stakeholders to assist the Constitutional Review Implementation Committee in advancing the recommendations of the CRC.

PILLAR FOUR: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Distinguished Participants,

We cannot build the Ghana we want while destroying the natural foundations of our future. Environmental degradation—from illegal mining to deforestation and pollution—poses a direct threat to food security, water systems, livelihoods, and public health.

Our development path must therefore be climate-smart and environmentally responsible. We are implementing sustainable mining practices, protecting forests and water bodies, investing in renewable energy, and strengthening climate adaptation for vulnerable communities.

Development and environmental protection are not opposing goals. When properly managed, they are mutually reinforcing imperatives.

PILLAR FIVE: INCLUSION, COHESION AND SHARED NATIONAL PURPOSE

Madam Chairperson,

A divided nation cannot sustain development. The Ghana we want must be inclusive, cohesive, and fair—where no region is left behind, no gender is marginalised, and no generation is excluded.

Inclusivity must be reflected in resource allocation, infrastructure development, social protection, and leadership opportunities. Progress must be measured not only by GDP growth but also by reduced inequality, improved social mobility, and improved quality of life.

National unity is not uniformity; it is shared purpose amid diversity.

THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIP

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Conference reminds us that national development is a collective endeavour. Academia must continue to provide evidence and ideas; the private sector must innovate and invest; civil society must engage and hold us to account; traditional and religious institutions must uphold values; and the media must inform with integrity.

The Annual New Year School has consistently provided a platform where ideas meet policy and dialogue informs action. I look forward to the Communiqué and recommendations from your deliberations, and assure you that they will receive serious consideration.

CONCLUSION

The Ghana we want is not an illusion. It is achievable—through discipline, hard work, unity, and visionary leadership. The choices we make today will shape the inheritance we leave tomorrow.

Let us therefore build with purpose, govern with integrity, and act with courage—knowing that sustainable development is not a destination but a continuous national commitment.

I thank you for your dedication, patriotism, and service to Ghana.

I hereby declare the 77th Annual New Year School and Conference duly opened.

May God bless us all,

And may God bless our homeland, Ghana.