

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY HON SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATIONS, AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE ONE MILLION CODERS INITIATIVE, AT THE GHANA-INDIA KOFI ANNAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN ICT (GI-KACE), ACCRA, ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH APRIL 2025, AT 10:00 A.M**

His Excellency the President, John Dramani Mahama

Ministers of State here present

Regional Ministers for Greater Accra, Ashanti, Bono and Upper East

Honourable Members of Parliament

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Representatives of Development Partners

Heads of Institutions

Executives from the NDC Party Headquarters

Industry Pioneers,

Our Bright Young Minds and Innovators,

Civil Society Advocates

Distinguished Guests

Friends from the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocols observed.

Good morning

I stand before you today with immense pride and a deep sense of purpose as we gather for the official launch of the One Million Coders Programme, a bold and transformative initiative that marks a new chapter in Ghana's digital journey. This is not just a programme; it is a promise

to our youth, to our future, and to the idea that no Ghanaian should be left behind in the digital age.

Let me take this moment to extend a heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you. Your presence here today whether as a policymaker, partner, industry leader, traditional authority, educator, or young innovator underscores your belief in the vision we are unveiling. I am truly grateful to all who honoured our invitation and made the time to join us for this important milestone.

The One Million Coders Programme stands as a flagship initiative of the John Dramani Mahama Government, driven by a simple but powerful objective: to equip our young people with the digital skills they need not just to survive, but to lead in the 21st-century economy. It is about preparing a generation of thinkers, builders, and problem-solvers who will shape the future of this nation with code in their hands and opportunity in their sights.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, you will recall that last year, His Excellency the President made a pre-election promise to launch the One Million Coders Programme, a bold initiative to train one million Ghanaians in coding and digital skills, empowering them to thrive in the rapidly growing Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) sectors. We have moved quickly to turn this vision into action to equip our youth for the future of work through the One Million Coders Program. Please note that this is happening within the 120-Day Social Contract period, and it tells you how committed and focused the President is. This is a bold step towards resetting and building the Ghana we want together, a Ghana of opportunity, innovation, and prosperity for all.

I firmly believe we are at a defining point in Ghana's digital journey, a moment where *Resetting Ghana* is not just necessary, but urgent. This is a call to action: to transform our economy, create sustainable jobs, and invest boldly in our people. We must harness science, technology, and innovation not as buzzwords, but as tools for inclusive growth. The One Million Coders Programme is designed to do exactly that, bridge the gap between what is taught in classrooms and what the job market demands, boost digital literacy nationwide, and equip our youth to compete, and thrive on the global stage.

The world is rapidly evolving, driven by technology and innovation. From artificial intelligence and blockchain to mobile apps and cloud computing, digital skills are no longer optional they are essential for survival in today's economy. Yet far too many of our young people remain on the sidelines of this revolution. In Ghana, it's estimated that only 7% of the youth have access to structured digital training, and across sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 60% of young people lack foundational digital skills. This gap isn't just a missed opportunity, it's a barrier to progress. We must break it down.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the One Million Coders Programme will provide comprehensive training in coding and digital skills initially in four locations and later spread out nationwide. Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT (GI-KACE) is leading the content creation and training of the programme. The Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre for Excellence in ICT has developed a standardised curriculum in multiple digital skills disciplines at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels to enable a uniform training ecosystem for all Ghanaians irrespective of the part of our Country in which they reside.

The initial courses for the pilot include:

- Certified Cyber Security Professional
- Certified Network Support Technician
- Certified Data Protection Manager
- Certified Data Protection Expert
- Certified Data Protection Officer
- Certified Data Protection Professional
- Data Analyst Associate

All the courses published for this programme will have fundamentals of coding embedded in the course delivery. There will also be elective coding courses to be run as part of the entire programme. All courses will be run in all the regions.

This initiative is a strategic investment in our youth, empowering them with in-demand digital skills that align with the jobs to be created under the 24-Hour Economy Policy. Ghana faces a youth unemployment rate of over 12%, and yet the digital economy is projected to create millions of new jobs across Africa by 2030. We aim to close that gap by addressing critical skills deficits and aligning training with industry needs. By partnering with the private sector, we are not only expanding access to opportunity but also ensuring relevance. Training one million coders is more than a number, it's a commitment to innovation, problem-solving, and preparing our youth to drive Ghana's industrialization and economic diversification from the front lines.

The benefits of this initiative are numerous. By creating a pool of digitally skilled individuals in different skilled areas, we will be able to drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic

growth in our nation. We will also be able to improve the quality of our education system, increase digital literacy, and enhance our nation's competitiveness in the global economy.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this initiative is designed to level the playing field. It will open doors for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, those too often excluded from the digital economy to gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. In Ghana, nearly one in five youth are not in education, employment, or training, and digital exclusion remains highest among rural populations, women, and persons with disabilities. By expanding access to digital skills, we are not just promoting inclusion we are actively reducing poverty and building a more just and equitable society.

To the young people of our nation, I say that this initiative is a call to action. We need your creativity, your passion, and your talent to drive innovation and entrepreneurship in our nation. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity and become part of the next generation of coders and innovators.

As we mark the launch of the One Million Coders Programme, let us remember that this is more than a ceremony, it is the start of a national movement to shape Ghana's digital future. It is a bold step toward inclusion, innovation, and empowerment.

Today, we welcome not only the beginning of a flagship initiative but also your support, your ideas, and your collaboration as key partners in this journey. To our youth, our stakeholders, and every guest present you are part of this vision.

On behalf of His Excellency, President John Dramani Mahama, and the entire Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, I once again warmly welcome you to this important occasion. We are honoured by your presence and energized by your commitment.

Together, let us launch this programme with purpose, unity, and ambition. Together, let us code the future of Ghana.

Welcome and thank you and God bless our Homeland, Ghana.