



Wednesday, September 9, 2026

**ADDRESS BY THE HON. SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE (MP),
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATIONS, AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY — COHORT
ONE, DIGITAL SKILLS PROJECT**

ALISA HOTEL, ACCRA

Chairperson,
Acting Country Director, Plan International Ghana,
Representative from Nokia,
Officials of Plan International,
Distinguished stakeholders in Ghana's digital economy,
Members of the Press,
Parents, guardians, and families of our graduates,
And most importantly, our graduating class,

Good morning.

I did not come here today to give you a speech. I came here to celebrate a victory — yours. So before I say another word, will everyone in this room please turn to the twenty-six young people seated before us and give them the applause they have earned.

Twenty-six young people walked into this programme three months ago as learners. Today, they walk out as builders. Not people who can talk about technology. People who can build with it. There is a world of difference between the two, and that difference is exactly what we are here to celebrate.

A moment that is real, not abstract

When we speak of Ghana's digital transformation at the national level, it can sound distant — policies, broadband targets, regulatory frameworks, figures in a report. I want to tell you plainly: transformation is not a document. It is not a slogan on a banner. It is not abstract at all. It looks exactly like what is happening in this room today.

It looks like twenty-six young Ghanaians who did not simply sit through lessons about technology, but built with it—who each walked away from a keyboard with a working capstone project, solving a real problem for a real community, using their own two hands

and their own sharpened minds. That is not training for training's sake. That is Ghana's future workforce, standing right here, proving in real time that it is ready.

And that is precisely what excites me most about this programme: it did not ask you to memorise technology. It asked you to practise it. To fail at it, fix it, and finish it. That is the only kind of digital skill that survives contact with the real world — the kind you built with your own hands, under pressure, on a deadline, until it worked. Cohort One, you did not just learn. You made things. Remember that feeling, because it is the feeling of competence, and nobody can take it from you.

I want to commend Plan International Ghana for the vision behind the Digital Skills Project, and for its deliberate, sustained commitment to reaching girls and young people who too often stand furthest from the opportunities the digital economy creates. I also want to acknowledge Nokia, whose funding and partnership made this possible. A commitment to closing the digital divide means little without partners bold enough to invest resources exactly where they matter most — and this cohort, and the projects you built, are the proof that this investment is paying off.

Why this moment matters, more than ever

Graduates, I will not stand here and tell you that digital skills are “the future.” They are the present, arriving faster than anyone expected. Agriculture, health, finance, education, the creative arts, public service — every sector you can name is already being reshaped by digital tools, and that reshaping will only accelerate. The young people who understand how to build with technology, not merely consume it, will decide what comes next — in their communities and far beyond. I want that to be you.

This is why my Ministry continues to place digital literacy, digital inclusion, and youth-focused technology programmes at the centre of our national development agenda — not at the edges. You cannot build a digital economy on infrastructure alone. Fibre, towers, and data centres do not build a nation on their own. You build a digital economy on people —

skilled, capable, community-rooted people who know how to turn a hard problem into a working solution. That is what stands before me today, and it is a magnificent thing to see.

Government's commitment to digital skills

This conviction sits at the heart of Government's digital transformation agenda. Through the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, we are building a digital economy in which every Ghanaian — regardless of gender, geography, or economic background — has a genuine opportunity to participate. Not a promised opportunity. A real one.

A central pillar of that agenda is the One Million Coders Programme, through which Government is pursuing an ambitious, deliberate goal: equipping one million Ghanaians with relevant, practical digital skills. This is not a slogan. It is a national programme, and the numbers show it. As of August, the One Million Coders Programme had registered 141,954 accounts nationwide. We have recorded the strongest demand in exactly the skills our economy needs most: cybersecurity, data analytics, and artificial intelligence.

I have watched, with real admiration, as ordinary Ghanaians have refused to let scepticism and mockery define their choices. I think, for instance, of a construction worker whose decision to enrol and build new digital competencies became, for a time, an object of ridicule in certain quarters online rather than commendation. That reaction says far more about our discomfort with reinvention than it does about him. To him, and to every Ghanaian making that same quiet, determined choice: this Ministry sees you, and Ghana will be built by people exactly like you. Do not ever let anyone shrink your ambition to fit their small imagination.

To our graduates, this is also an invitation. The OMCP stands ready to help you go further—into cybersecurity, data analytics, AI, or project management—and I encourage Plan International and our other partners here to explore formal collaboration with the programme, so graduates like you have a clear pathway to keep building, not a finish line.

Government is also deepening this agenda through Memoranda of Understanding with leading universities—including the University of Ghana, KNUST, GCTU, UCC, and UPSA, among others—integrating OMCP courses into degree and diploma programmes so students graduate work-ready, not merely qualified.

Our ambition goes far beyond issuing certificates. We want to raise a generation with real, practical competencies in software development, artificial intelligence, data science, cybersecurity, animation, gaming, business process outsourcing, and the emerging digital fields we have not even named yet. Because, ultimately, the success of any digital-skills programme must be measured not by how many people pass through it, but by what they go on to do with what they were given. Can they find meaningful employment? Can they build businesses? Can they solve problems? Can they create jobs for others? Can they improve their communities? Those are the only outcomes that truly matter — and Cohort One, you are already answering yes.

No girl should ever be left behind.

I am especially encouraged that this programme deliberately set out to equip girls and young people with digital competencies. Let me say this as plainly as I can: Ghana cannot build an inclusive digital economy while leaving half of its talent on the sidelines. It is not possible. It will not be allowed.

We must keep tearing down the barriers that keep girls and young women from entering technology-related fields. Through initiatives such as Girls-in-ICT, the Government continues to expose young girls to digital skills, mentorship, and career opportunities in technology, because talent is universal even when opportunity is not.

To the fourteen young women graduating today: hear me clearly. You have a place in Ghana's digital future, and it is not a small place at the back—it is a seat at the front, wherever decisions are made. Do not allow anyone, anywhere, to convince you that technology is not for you. Become software engineers. Become cybersecurity professionals.

Become data scientists. Become AI researchers. Become technology entrepreneurs. Build companies. Lead institutions. And when you succeed — and you will — reach back and pull another girl up with you. Excellence that is not shared is only half finished.

On the capstone projects — the heart of this programme

I understand that each of you developed a capstone project addressing a real community or societal challenge using the skills you acquired. I want you to know that this detail matters to me more than almost anything else about this programme, because it tells me exactly what kind of graduates you are.

This was never simply about learning to code, or design, or operate a piece of software in isolation, sealed off from the world. It was about looking squarely at a problem in your own community and asking: how can I use what I now know to fix this? That instinct separates good technologists from transformative ones — the instinct to turn skill into service. Hold onto it fiercely. Whatever you go on to build next — a business, a career, further study, a community initiative — keep asking that question. It will never stop being the right one.

A charge to the graduates: go and be excellent

To the twenty-six of you graduating today: you are now ambassadors — not by title, but by evidence. Every young person in your community who sees what you have built, who hears how this programme changed the direction of your life, will look at digital skills differently because of you. That is influence, earned the hard way, and I charge you to use it generously and without apology.

Do not graduate today and settle for competent when excellence is within your reach. Competent finishes the assignment. Excellent changes the room. You have already shown, through your capstone projects, that you know how to push past the easy answer to find the right one — do not lose that habit the moment the applause ends. Chase mastery, not just completion. Chase the standard that makes people stop and take notice, not the standard

that merely satisfies a checklist. Ghana does not need more people who can get by. Ghana needs people like you, who insist on getting it right.

I ask you to carry three things with you as you leave this hall.

First, skills compound. What you have learned in these three months is a foundation, not a ceiling. Keep building on it through further learning, mentorship, and relentless practice. The moment you stop learning is the moment the world moves on without you — do not let it.

Second, community is a resource, not an afterthought. The best technology solutions in Ghana will not come from copying what works elsewhere. They will come from young innovators like you, who understand local problems intimately and build solutions rooted in that understanding. Your proximity to the problem is your competitive advantage. Guard it.

Third, doors are opening — walk through them, and hold them open behind you for others. Especially to the young women graduating today: Ghana needs more of you in technology leadership, not fewer. Do not wait for permission. You have already earned your place, and excellence, not apology, is the only introduction you will ever need.

Closing

To Plan International, to Nokia, to the facilitators, mentors, and staff who guided this cohort over the past three months: thank you for doing the patient, unglamorous work of building people, not just running programmes. That work does not always make headlines, but it is exactly the work that moves a country forward, one graduate at a time.

Government appreciates your investment in Ghana's young people. The challenge of building Ghana's digital workforce is too important, and too large, for Government to carry alone. We need stronger partnerships among Government, development partners, technology companies, academia, training institutions, and the private sector — all pulling in the same direction.

I therefore encourage you to build on the success of this first cohort and expand this programme, so that many more young Ghanaians — particularly girls, young women, and underserved communities — can stand exactly where these twenty-six stand today. And I invite the private sector to go beyond training and help build bridges to internships, apprenticeships, employment, and entrepreneurship. Training must connect to opportunity, or it remains only a promise.

And to our twenty-six graduates: look at what you have already done. Now imagine what you will do next. Ghana is proud of you today — and I do not doubt at all that Ghana will be even prouder of what you go on to build.

Go from this hall and be excellent. Not eventually. Starting now.

Congratulations, Cohort One.

Thank you, and God bless our homeland, Ghana.