

KEYNOTE ADDRESS HON. SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE, MP
MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATIONS
LAUNCH OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY
25 FEBRUARY 2026 – NCA TOWERS ACCRA

Chairperson of the Board of the National Communications Authority
Director-General of the National Communications Authority
Honourable Deputy Minister,
Members of the Board,
Chief Director,
Former Board Chairpersons, Directors-General and Management of the
Authority,
Industry Stakeholders,
Friends from the Media,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Today, we gather to commemorate 30 years of communications regulation in Ghana, marking not only an institutional milestone but also asserting that deliberate policy, regulatory discipline, private investment, and national vision have been central drivers of the nation's development.

Communications today is not just a sector; it is a way of life. It is the infrastructure of opportunity. It supports education, governance, security,

financial inclusion, innovation, trade, and Ghana's participation in the global digital economy.

Before I proceed, permit me to pay tribute to two leaders whose contributions to Ghana's communications sector remain significant.

Hon. Edward Salia, whose leadership as Minister for Transport and Communications in the mid-1990s was instrumental in advancing telecommunications liberalisation and guiding the process that led to the establishment of the National Communications Authority under Act 524 of 1996.

Hon. Edward Omane Boamah, who served as Minister for Communications from **2013 to 2017**, played an important role in strengthening Ghana's regulatory environment and advancing the country's digital communications agenda. He mentored me in the field of communications. His passing in the tragic helicopter accident of 2025 was a profound loss to our nation.

In honour of their service to Ghana and to this industry, I invite us all to observe a brief moment of silence.

[PAUSE FOR SILENCE]

May their legacy continue to inspire our work.

The story of the NCA began with bold national decisions. The enactment of the National Communications Authority Act, Act 524 of 1996, under

President Jerry John Rawlings, marked Ghana's decisive shift toward modern communications governance.

Alongside telecom reform, Ghana's broadcasting space was opened through leadership between 1994 and 1996 that encouraged pluralism and private participation, laying the foundation for today's vibrant media landscape.

These reforms moved Ghana from monopoly and scarcity to competition, innovation, and national connectivity. In the years that followed, successive Ministers helped stabilise and expand the sector. In 1997, Hon. Ekow Spio-Garbrah strengthened the policy direction of communications governance.

From 1998 to 2001, H.E. John Dramani Mahama, then Minister for Communications, served as the Authority's first Chairman, guiding the Authority through its formative years. His vision and foresight laid the very foundations on which our sector thrives today.

Between 2001 and 2003, Hon. Felix Owusu-Agyapong led the Ministry and Board during a period of market expansion, before the Board was properly constituted under Mr Jude Arthur.

Under Hon. Albert Kan-Dapaah, the Government established the Ghana Investment Fund for Telecommunications (GIFTEL) — recognising that universal access required deliberate intervention. That initiative evolved into GIFEC, which continues to expand connectivity and digital opportunities for underserved communities. Today, the Ministry is

undertaking legislative review to transition GIFEC into DEIDF – the Digital Economy and Innovation Development Fund.

The growth of Ghana’s communications sector reflects sustained leadership across different administrations.

We acknowledge the contributions of predecessors who provided policy direction and expanded the sector, including:

- Hon. Mike Oquaye,
- Hon. Benjamin Aggrey Ntim,
- Hon. Haruna Iddrisu,
- Hon. Edward Omane Boamah, and
- Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekuful.

Each of these leaders, at different times, not only contributed to shaping policy, strengthening infrastructure development, and modernising regulation, but also laid the groundwork for Ghana to address future challenges by positioning the country as one of the most dynamic communications markets in the region.

Government policy frameworks have consistently guided sector development.

Among the most significant were:

- the **ICT for Accelerated Development Policy of 2003**, which set the foundation for Ghana’s digital transformation;

- the **National Telecommunications Policy of 2005**, which strengthened competition and infrastructure rollout;
- the **Digital Terrestrial Television Transition Policy of 2010**, which guided Ghana's migration to digital broadcasting;
- and most recently, the **Digital Economy Policy of 2024**, which places digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, innovation and skills at the centre of national development.

Through licensing, spectrum management, compliance monitoring, and market oversight, the NCA translated these policy directions into real sector growth.

As the sector evolved, Ghana established complementary institutions, including:

- the **National Information Technology Agency**,
- the **Data Protection Commission**, and
- the **Cyber Security Authority**.

Together with the NCA, these institutions form the backbone of Ghana's digital governance architecture.

Beyond its statutory regulatory mandate, the NCA has, over the years, played an important enabling role in strengthening Ghana's communications and digital ecosystem through targeted institutional and sector-wide support.

The Authority has contributed to the development of national digital capacity by supporting the construction of the Ghana-India Kofi Annan

Centre of Excellence in ICT, which continues to train professionals, promote innovation, and support Ghana's digital transformation.

The NCA also provided significant technical and financial support to Ghana's migration to digital broadcasting, including contributions to the Digital Terrestrial Television transmission network and the supporting solar infrastructure that helped extend coverage and improve system resilience.

In addition, the Authority has supported institutional development within the sector. It has made financial contributions towards the Ministry's office complex and provided foundational support to key governance institutions, including an endowment for the Ghana Domain Name Registry and support for the establishment of the Cyber Security Authority, which it continues to accommodate as part of strengthening Ghana's national digital security framework.

The Authority has also provided accommodation and support to the National Media Commission, recognising the complementary roles of technical regulation and content oversight in sustaining a balanced communications environment.

These interventions reflect the NCA's broader philosophy that effective regulation is not only about enforcement. It is also about enabling the growth of institutions, infrastructure, and partnerships that sustain a resilient and inclusive communications sector.

One of the most important responsibilities of regulation is to protect consumers. Over the years, the NCA has implemented several key consumer-focused initiatives, including:

- SIM Registration to strengthen security, accountability, and trust in communication use.
- Mobile Number Portability, empowering consumers with choice and competition; strengthened complaint resolution systems; and continued enforcement of service quality standards.

In 2025, the Ministry worked closely with the NCA and service providers to improve the value consumers receive from data services and to address concerns about fair pricing and consumer value in the pay-TV market, including DSTV subscriptions.

These efforts reflect a simple principle: Connectivity must not only exist — it must deliver value.

This commitment to consumer experience was reinforced only days ago when the NCA announced revised Quality of Service performance indicators for telecom services.

These revised benchmarks introduce stricter expectations for:

- voice call reliability,
- minimum data performance, and
- SMS delivery efficiency.

The objective is clear: to improve the consumer experience with voice, data, and messaging services across Ghana. The government fully supports these measures, recognising that reliable communications now constitute vital national infrastructure, as acknowledged globally by organisations such as the International Telecommunication Union, which highlights the role of connectivity in facilitating economic growth, social development, and access to essential services.

Looking ahead, the Government is undertaking one of the most comprehensive updates to the sector's legal framework since 1996. The Ministry is currently working on a package of approximately fifteen new and revised Bills aimed at modernising communications regulation, data governance, digital services, cybersecurity, and oversight of emerging technologies. This reform programme is intended to ensure that Ghana's digital ecosystem remains competitive, secure, and innovation-friendly.

At the same time, we recognise that infrastructure alone does not create opportunity. That is why the Government has launched the **One Million Coders Programme**, designed to equip Ghanaian youth with the digital skills required to compete globally.

Digital access must lead to productivity, and connectivity must translate into opportunity.

This is why the anniversary theme is both timely and purposeful:

“30 Years of Communications Regulation – Celebrating Impact, Advancing a More Inclusive Digital Future.”

Inclusivity means ensuring that every Ghanaian — regardless of geography, income, gender, age, or ability — can access reliable communications services and benefit from digital opportunity. The Government of His Excellency John Dramani Mahama is deliberate about inclusivity with the appointment of distinguished women to chair the Boards of the NCA, NITA, DPC, GDNR and Ghana Post. The One Million Coders programme has a quota for women and persons with disabilities.

As we mark thirty years of communications regulation in Ghana, we must recognise that the next chapter of our national story will be written in the language of digital transformation.

The future of our economy, our governance, and our global competitiveness will depend on how we harness the technologies now emerging around us. Across the world, 5G and next-generation broadband networks are redefining what is possible — enabling real-time services, intelligent infrastructure, remote healthcare, digital education, and advanced industrial systems. Ghana must position itself not merely as a user of these technologies, but as a nation capable of leveraging them for inclusive development.

The rise of Artificial Intelligence, big data, and automation will reshape how governments deliver services, how businesses compete, and how societies function. These tools can strengthen efficiency, transparency, and productivity — but only if guided by sound policy and trusted governance.

The expansion of the Internet of Things will connect farms, cities, transport systems, and energy networks, enabling us to build smarter, more resilient national systems.

At the same time, the frontier of connectivity itself is shifting. Advances in satellite broadband and non-terrestrial networks, including the emergence of Direct-to-Device satellite services, are changing how access is delivered. In the near future, a mobile device in the most remote community may connect directly to satellites, eliminating geography as a barrier to participation in the digital economy.

Cloud infrastructure, secure data ecosystems, digital identity platforms, fintech innovation, and next-generation digital services will form the backbone of Ghana's economic transformation in the decades ahead. But the question before us is not simply what technology will do.

The real question is what we will do with technology.

Our responsibility as a nation is to ensure that these innovations serve development, inclusion, and opportunity. We must build forward-looking regulatory systems, invest in digital skills for our young people, protect citizens in the digital space, and create an environment where innovation thrives.

The digital future we envision is one in which all Ghanaians, regardless of location or status, have the opportunity to connect, contribute, and benefit.

In line with this vision, at its last meeting, Cabinet took the bold policy decision to democratise Ghana's deployment of 5G technology. The decision has been taken to remove the current exclusivity mandate for the sole license holder and offer spectrum resources to the market through a national competitive bidding process, enabling network-led roll-outs of 5G technology. This does not cancel the wholesale model; it simply provides multiple options for our market players.

To this end, the Regulator will be receiving clear directions to begin the process for a spectrum auction within the next few weeks. Let me be clear – the vision is to achieve 70% population density coverage of 5G by the 70th Independence celebration of our beloved Nation next year. This will demand rapid deployment, infrastructure expansion, and considerable capital injection into the sector. It is a steep aspiration, but I am more than confident in the resilience and abilities of the fine men and women who run the National Communication Authority. I trust them to deliver!

If the past thirty years were about building access, the next thirty must be about building digital power — the power to innovate, to compete globally, and to shape our own technological destiny.

That is the Ghana we must build.

That is the future this sector must deliver.

And that is the responsibility before us all – policymakers, regulators, and service providers.

As we unveil the anniversary theme and logo today, let it symbolise more than celebration.

Let it symbolise a renewed national commitment:

- to regulation that protects citizens,
- to markets that encourage innovation and investment,
- to infrastructure that reaches every community, and
- to a digital future where every Ghanaian can participate safely and meaningfully.

In that spirit, I hereby declare the **30th Anniversary Celebrations of the National Communications Authority officially launched.**

Thank you, and God bless our homeland, Ghana.