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# ADDRESS BY HON. SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE (MP), MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIONS, AT THE AFRICA VIRTUAL ASSET SUMMIT (AVAS) 2026 ON THE THEME - "TOKENISATION: AFRICA'S PATHWAY TOWARDS BUILDING A TRUSTED, INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE DIGITAL ASSET ECOSYSTEM."

**KEMPINSKI HOTEL GOLD COAST CITY, ACCRA.**

**Honourable Dr Julius Debrah, Chief of Staff,**
**Honourable Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, Minister for Finance,**
**Dr Johnson Pandit Asiama, Governor of the Bank of Ghana,**
**Dr James Klutse Avedzi, Director-General of the Securities and Exchange Commission,**
**Dr Emomotimi John Agama, Director-General of SEC Nigeria,**
**Heads and representatives of the regulatory authorities of Morocco, Nigeria, Uganda, the WAEMU zone, Zambia and Burundi,**
**Our partners at the International Finance Corporation,**
**Industry leaders, innovators and sponsors,**
**Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning.

It is an honour to address this maiden edition of the Africa Virtual Asset Summit. I commend the Securities and Exchange Commission and its partners for bringing regulators, innovators and investors into one room. Your theme speaks to the heart of the matter. Trust. Inclusion. Innovation.

Let me begin with a simple question. What is tokenisation?

If you have ever sent mobile money, you already understand the idea. A value is recorded digitally. It moves from one person to another in seconds. Tokenisation takes that idea further. It turns a real asset into a digital token. That asset could be gold. It could be cocoa. It could be land, or a Government bond. The token can be divided into small pieces, owned by many people, and traded safely at any hour.

That is why tokenisation matters. It can open doors long closed to ordinary Africans.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me state Ghana's position clearly.

Virtual assets are not a passing trend. They are a necessary tool in a world driven by innovation. Ghana will not stand on the sidelines and watch this change unfold. We will not ban what our young people are already using. We will regulate it, make it safe, and make it work for our people.

The numbers tell the story. According to the memorandum to the Virtual Asset Service Providers Act, 2025 (Act 1154), Ghana ranks 29th in the world in cryptocurrency adoption. About 3.1 million Ghanaians use these assets. Activity on that scale cannot sit outside the law. It must be brought inside it.

That is exactly what we have done. In December 2025, Parliament passed Act 1154. For the first time, Ghana has a dedicated law for virtual assets.

Let me explain what the law does, in plain terms.

- **Licensing.** No business may offer virtual asset services in Ghana without regulatory approval. Higher-risk activities require a licence. Lower-risk activities require registration.
- **Clear supervision.** The Bank of Ghana is the lead licensing authority and oversees virtual assets used for payments. The Securities and Exchange Commission supervises virtual assets that are investment products.
- **Clean money.** Every provider must meet anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing rules, with the Financial Intelligence Centre in support. Under the Travel Rule, providers must share sender and receiver information when value moves.
- **Consumer protection.** Customer funds must be safeguarded. Providers must maintain minimum capital, strong cybersecurity, submit to audits, and report to regulators.

The Bank of Ghana and the SEC are now completing guidelines on anti-money laundering, prudential standards, consumer protection and cybersecurity. They are doing so in

consultation with banks, fintechs and the industry. Their regulatory sandboxes allow new products to be tested before they reach the public.

Act 1154 does not stand alone. It works alongside the Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038), the Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843), the Electronic Transactions Act, 2008 (Act 772), the Payment Systems and Services Act, 2019 (Act 987), the Securities Industry Act, 2016 (Act 929) and the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2020 (Act 1044). Together, they form one legal shield around the digital economy.

To the investor, my message is this. Ghana offers rules that are clear, predictable and coordinated. That is worth as much as any tax incentive.

Let me now speak to my Ministry's role.

The Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations does not license virtual asset providers. That is the work of the Bank of Ghana and the SEC. Our role is different. We set national policy for digital technology and emerging technologies. We build the infrastructure they run on. And we set the standards that government itself must follow.

Blockchain, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are now entering public service. They will hold land titles, pensions, procurement records and citizen data. Our policy direction is firm. No Ministry, Department or Agency should deploy an emerging technology in isolation. Every deployment must meet national standards set through the National Information Technology Agency. It must meet the Cyber Security Authority's security requirements. It must respect the Data Protection Act. Sensitive data must be hosted on sovereign infrastructure. And every system must speak to the others.

We do this not to slow innovation down. We do it so that innovation in government is safe, interoperable and accountable to the citizen.

A token, after all, is only a record. Its value depends on what stands behind it. The network that carries it. The identity of the person who holds it. And the institutions ready to enforce it. Let me take each in turn: infrastructure, identity and trust. Then I will speak about the people who will build this ecosystem.

First, infrastructure.

Under the Reset Ghana Agenda, we are building a modern, inclusive and secure digital economy. It is driven by knowledge, powered by innovation and grounded in national sovereignty.

To the technology leaders in this room, I say this. 5G is your next infrastructure partner.

Web3 is a speed business. A tokenised bond settling. A wallet receiving mobile money. A trader reading live prices. Each depends on the network beneath it. Here is what 5G changes.

- **Speed.** Transactions confirm in real time, on a phone, not only on a desktop.
- **Scale.** The network can carry millions of users at once. A tokenised offering will not collapse on launch day.
- **Reach.** Wireless broadband goes where fibre cannot. The farm gate. The mining community. The market stall. A cocoa farmer can verify a tokenised receipt where she stands.
- **Edge.** Computing moves closer to the user. Services and fraud checks run near the customer, anchored by the Ningo-Prampram hub.
- **Provenance.** Sensors in warehouses and vaults can confirm what is stored there. A token is only as honest as its data.

We have set a clear timetable. Our target is 70 per cent 5G population coverage by March 2027, as Ghana marks 70 years of independence. On 15 July 2026, the National Communications Authority approved removing the wholesale exclusivity framework.

Operators can now compete to build their own networks. Spectrum assignment will be completed before the end of this year. Licence conditions will require operators to serve underserved communities.

Fibre remains the backbone of all this. I must be frank. Illegal mining and road works keep cutting it. Protecting our rivers and protecting our fibre are the same national task.

So my challenge to Africa's innovators is simple. Do not design for yesterday's network. The road is being paved. Bring the vehicles.

Work is commencing on the National Artificial Intelligence Computing Centre. This will be our sovereign, AI-enabled nerve centre, offering not only government but our technology ecosystem compute, storage, and cloud services that are world-class, cutting-edge, and sovereign in design.

Our infrastructure must be sovereign. Through G-Cloud, our national cloud platform, we provide secure local hosting for government, financial and educational institutions. Distributed ledgers distribute records. They must not distribute jurisdiction. When a ledger holds a Ghanaian's land title, pension or bond, the State must be able to audit it, protect it and recover it. Sovereignty and decentralisation are partners, not rivals. And because data centres need reliable power, we're aligning our energy planning with this agenda.

Second, identity.

The oldest question in finance is simple. Who is on the other side of the transaction? In virtual assets, where value crosses borders in seconds, that question matters even more.

Ghana's answer is the GhanaCard. Our direction under Act 1154 is clear. Licensed providers should verify customers against the national register held by the National Identification Authority. This must be done through secure, consent-based and auditable systems. It turns

Know-Your-Customer from a paper exercise into a biometric one. It makes the market far harder for fraudsters to enter.

It must also respect privacy. A provider should be able to confirm that a customer is who they claim to be. Nothing more.

Identity is also the gateway to inclusion. Mobile money already reaches millions of Ghanaians that traditional banking never reached. Connect those rails to tokenised gold, cocoa and Treasury bills, and something remarkable happens. A market trader in Kumasi, or a fisherman in Ahanta West, can own a fraction of a national asset for the price of an airtime top-up.

For too long, others have priced and financed our commodities. Tokenised on rails our citizens can reach, they can be owned by the people who produce them. Our 50-million-dollar FinTech Growth Fund will help Ghanaian innovators build these products.

But let me add a caution. Access without understanding is exposure. Digital financial literacy must travel on the same rails as the products themselves. To every new user, I say: learn before you invest, and deal only with licensed providers.

Third, trust.

Cybercrime is now a global industry. Cybersecurity Ventures projected that its cost would reach 10.5 trillion dollars a year by the end of 2025. That is up from 3 trillion dollars in 2015. The International Monetary Fund's April 2024 Global Financial Stability Report found that one in five cyber incidents over two decades hit the financial sector. Direct losses exceeded 12 billion dollars.

Ghana is not immune. Our National Computer Emergency Response Team, CERT-GH, records thousands of incidents every year. The Cyber Security Authority has repeatedly warned the public about fake online investment schemes.

The Authority is therefore central to this ecosystem. Under Act 1038, it licenses cybersecurity service providers. It protects Critical Information Infrastructure across 13 sectors. It works with law enforcement and international partners to disrupt fraud networks. In the virtual asset space, it supports reviews of smart contract weaknesses, tracks cross-border scams, and helps the Financial Intelligence Centre trace illicit flows.

A smart contract is law written by engineers. Citizens must audit it before they trust it.

Finally, people.

Infrastructure without builders is a monument. Our answer is the One Million Coders Programme. The pilot trained 859 participants in Accra, Kumasi, Sunyani and Bolgatanga. Fifty-two per cent were women. The national rollout is now underway through 130 learning centres in all 16 regions. About 140,000 Ghanaians have registered. More than 10,000 have completed training. We are targeting 400,000 learners this year, and our leading public universities are making the programme compulsory for final-year students.

The curriculum covers coding, artificial intelligence and machine learning, with secure development built in. We are extending it to blockchain engineering and smart contract security. Through our Girls in ICT Programme, we will ensure this new economy is not built by half the population alone.

Our ambition is that these young Ghanaians build here and stay here. Through the Tech and Innovation Hub, the regulatory sandboxes and the African Continental Free Trade Area, we are creating a home market for homegrown Web3 solutions. Tokenised trade finance. Carbon credit platforms. Applications for our creative sector. All designed for a continent of 1.4 billion people. We should export the product, not the person.

Ladies and gentlemen, Africa must move from digital dependence to digital determination.

Ghana has a law. We have coordinated regulators. We have a national identity backbone, a sovereign cloud, a major hub under construction and a generation in training. But no single country can build a continental market alone.

As we move from vision to velocity, I urge governments, regulators and industry to commit to five actions:

- Harmonise our digital identity, data protection, cybersecurity and virtual asset frameworks. A compliant provider in Accra, Lagos or Kigali should not face three conflicting rulebooks.
- Recognise each other's licences, and agree common settlement standards.
- Share threat intelligence and enforcement information across borders.
- Invest in talent, and in the local infrastructure that gives that talent a reason to stay.
- Measure our progress publicly, and return to this forum with results.

Let me close where I began. Tokenisation depends on trust. Trust depends on secure infrastructure and sound law. And both depend on our collective will to build them.

Ghana has made its choice. We choose to innovate. We choose to regulate. And we choose to include every citizen, from the seasoned trader to the first-time user.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and a successful Africa Virtual Asset Summit 2026.

Thank you, and may God bless our homeland, Ghana, and our continent, Africa.