

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN A. KUFUOR**  
**Ghana Zero Hunger Strategic Review**  
**Stakeholder Meeting**  
**Tuesday 24th January 2017, Accra**

I add my voice to earlier speakers to welcome you and thank you for attending this important event to launch the Ghana Zero Hunger Strategic Review. This is a subject that should be of prime interest to all of us.

I am particularly pleased to be serving as the Lead Convener for this national exercise, and I thank the Executive Director of World Food Programme (WFP) for inviting me to serve in this capacity. The invitation was readily welcomed because I have a longstanding commitment to helping to address the issues of hunger, food and nutrition; these are concerns that I believe all of you share.

As President of Ghana, my government gave full attention to these issues; I'm also convinced the new government will do the same. In retirement I have continued to support the search for lasting solutions. The Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, which I co-chair, has undertaken landmark studies and issued policy briefs to inform the world of the looming danger if measures are not taken to arrest the problems of food and related issues.

For instance, the [Foresight Report](#) by the Global Panel which was launched in Ghana last October during the [Africa Nutrition Day](#) has exposed the seriousness of malnutrition. It is established that almost a third of children in developing countries are underweight or stunted. The Report further reveals that the burden of disease risk factors linked to diet is higher than the combined risks of alcohol and drugs, smoking and unsafe sex. These alarming revelations underscore the need to have a comprehensive response to not just hunger but also nutrition.

Hunger can be very costly to a country. In a recent study of hunger in Ghana, it has been estimated that in 2012 alone hunger cost an estimated 6 percent of the country's GDP, amounting to GHC4.6 billion. This cost resulted from the failure to address nutrition, which has debilitating outcomes in terms of foregone productivity, decreased educational outcomes and increased health burden. This loss should not be allowed to continue.

Thankfully, the United Nations has taken a serious note of the challenge and has impressed upon all of us to act to save humanity.

In the new global development goals (Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the framers have placed emphasis on ending hunger, promoting food security, having an improved nutrition situation and promoting sustainable agriculture. These actions are contained in SDG2. This goal has targets for us as a country to achieve largely by 2030, although there are some that must be achieved by 2025.

The big question is, how prepared are we as a country to achieve these targets. One basic thing we must do is to know where we are, and I guess that is what we have started with this strategic review, which will lead us to developing a strategy paper to end hunger in Ghana.

In conformity with SDG targets, “we must ensure that we have enough nutritious and sufficient food all year round; we must promote efforts to end malnutrition; we must increase agricultural productivity; and also increase investments in agriculture for food security among others”. Ghana has enough natural resources, human capital and expertise to contribute to the processes that will make us end hunger. It is time again to take action as we have done previously when I was President of the Republic.

My government started the school feeding project which the previous government scaled up. It is also gratifying that our new government intends to launch the **‘Planting for Food and Jobs’** campaign, which promises to boost agriculture. It is important for all to come on board to make these initiatives effective.

It is against this background that I applaud the WFP for assisting Ghana to undertake this strategic review to identify the gaps in achieving SDG2. I am grateful to the WFP Country Director and the Regional Office for collaborating with the Government and the respective development and private sector partners to support the Zero Hunger Challenge toward eliminating food insecurity and malnutrition.

My expectation is that once the strategic review is completed and the gaps identified, partners and organizations will draw their strategies and programmes from the findings. By so doing they will assist Ghana's efforts towards achieving the SDG2 and related SDGs.

In conclusion, I wish to thank you for coming and for serving Ghana in your various capacities. We should work together towards declaring Ghana a zero hunger zone.