**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, HON. JOSEPH BUKARI NIKPE, AT THE NATIONAL BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP ON 4TH SEPTEMBER 2025, AT THE GHANA SHIPPERS’ AUTHORITY AUDITORIUM**

The Hon. minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture,

Members of the Diplomatic Community here present,

Chief Executives and Heads of State-Owned Institutions,

Civil Society Organization Representatives here present,

Distinguished Participants,

The Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to be here today on behalf of my Minister, Hon. Joseph Bukari Nikpe, at this all-important Stakeholder Engagement on the Draft National Blue Economy Strategy, under the theme “Our blue resources are indeed our future.”

Government, under the able leadership of H.E. John Dramani Mahama since assuming office, has been on an agenda to reset Ghana and position her on the path of sustainable growth and socio-economic development. A key part of this agenda is wealth creation through job creation, anchored on strategic policy initiatives such as the 24h Plus Economic Policy. This undoubtedly requires, among other things, that Ghana’s natural resources are harnessed in a sustainable and coordinated manner to ensure they propel socio-economic development, while benefitting both current and future generations.

As you all know, Ghana is blessed with a vast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), with sovereign rights over marine and economic activities within this zone. As a country, we are equally blessed with inland water resources such as lakes, lagoons, and numerous river bodies. The Blue Economy refers to how we, as a country, can leverage these water resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs, through integrated efforts—mindful of challenges and risks from unsustainable practices and threats to ecosystems.

The Blue Economy is therefore not new, but rather a renewed and expanded vision for how we interact with our marine and aquatic resources. It goes beyond traditional maritime sectors like fishing and shipping, to encompass a broad range of sustainable activities, including harnessing offshore wind and wave power, sustainable fish farming, developing eco-tourism that protects our beautiful coastline, among others. It also offers a promising framework for sustainable development, balancing economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

With Ghana’s over 550 km of coastline and significant inland water resources like the Volta Lake, the Blue Economy is not just a concept but a fundamental part of our national identity and a key to our future. The maritime sector already contributes significantly to our GDP, but we must unlock its full potential while ensuring its long-term viability.

As we embark on this journey, we must confront the challenges facing our marine environment head-on. These include, but are not limited to, overfishing and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, which threaten the livelihoods of our small-scale fishers and the health of our fish stocks; marine and plastic pollution; coastal erosion; and climate change, which poses a significant threat to our coastal communities and infrastructure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These challenges equally present immense opportunities for us, which has led to a well-crafted Draft Blue Economy Strategy—the very reason we are gathered here today. The draft strategy identifies key thematic areas such as Blue Health, Blue Wealth, Blue Knowledge, Blue Finance, Blue Equity, as well as Safety and Security. These have been carefully designed to cover the entire span of the Blue Economy.

Nevertheless, this strategy cannot be developed in isolation but must be a product of collective wisdom, shared knowledge, and diverse perspectives. This is why your presence today is so vital. This consultation is designed to be an inclusive platform where we can learn from each other. For this reason, I call on all of us to play our part in this enterprise:

• To the government officials: I urge you to listen to the on-the-ground realities and incorporate them into our policies.

• To the private sector leaders: We need your innovation and investment to drive growth and create sustainable businesses.

• To academia and researchers: We depend on your data and expertise to make informed, evidence-based decisions.

• To our communities and association representatives: Your traditional knowledge and firsthand experience are invaluable; you are the true custodians of our coastal heritage.

For us at the Ministry of Transport, we are fully on board this Blue Economy voyage and will continue to work with our sister ministries to implement this strategy when completed and adopted.

Let us work together to create a strategy that is not just a document, but a living blueprint for a prosperous and resilient Ghana. Indeed, “our blue resources are our future” and hold the key to a better tomorrow for generations unborn. It is therefore in our hands to unlock this potential.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this note, I wish to thank the Technical Committee and the entire organizing team for the hard work and commitment demonstrated so far. Our appreciation goes to you, distinguished participants, for honouring our invitation to be here. I have no doubt that with this level of commitment and hard work, together we can harness the potential of our ocean resources, promote sustainable development, and build a prosperous future for our nation.

I thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful deliberations.