

MADINA INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

LAUNCHING CEREMONY

DRAFT SPEECH FOR HIS EXCELLENCY

ALHAJI DR. MAHAMADU BAWUMIA

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Chairman of M.I.S.T Council

The Hon Ministers and Ministers of State Present here

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

The Hon Member of Parliament for Adenta

National Chief Imam

The Chancellor of MIST

Members of M.I.S.T Council

The National Chief Imam and Ullama

The Chief of Madina and his Elders

Invited Guests

Members of the Security Services

Members of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalaam Aleikum

I am, indeed, happy to be with all of you today to participate in this history –making event of the launching ceremony of the Madina Institute of Science and Technology.

When I received the invitation for the ceremony here, I started wondering what type of place it would be. Later reports that it is a full blown university with appropriate physical infrastructure did not prepare me for what I saw on entering the campus.

I wish to start by expressing my gratitude and that of the government of the New Patriotic Party to the sponsors for the heavy expenditure they have, no doubt made here. I have

refrained from calling it investment because I understand it is basically a humanitarian gesture and not an commercial venture.

Council Chairman, there is no gain saying that the development of every nation hugely depends on the state of its manpower. A country richly endowed with resources but grossly lacking an adequately developed manpower base will forever remain underdeveloped in the midst of abundance. This accounts for the importance the NPP government attaches to education in general in the country.

The government is particularly impressed by the fact that the sponsors of the Madina Institute of Science and Technology have decided not to go the way most sponsors of private tertiary educational institutions went before. The training of more engineers at this stage of the country's development is most welcome. The myriad of construction works, industries and factories springing up daily because of the enabling business environment being fostered by the government, means many Electrical, Mechanical, Civil and Oil and Gas Engineers will soon be in high demand. This will further be boosted when the government's one district one factory programme takes off. If our educational system does not produce them, we would have to look outside for them at astronomical costs.

My word of caution, however, is that M.I.S.T should produce practical engineers. The unfortunate situation where some of our academic institutions produce engineers who can hardly undertake the simplest of tasks in their areas of specialization has cost us, as a nation, immeasurable fortunes and should not be countenanced again. I have been told that the authorities of this Institute are mindful of this anomaly and have taken steps to address it by arranging to bridge the gap between academia and industry. Of course, most of the other university colleges started by making the same pledge but shortly after taking off, followed the easier route charted by their predecessors. I hope M.I.S.T would dare to be different.

Council Chairman, our government welcomes M.I.S.T with open arms because it will increase the number tertiary educational intuitions available to our Senior High School graduates. The government's free Senior High School programme will not only increase the number of Junior High School graduates who can now continue their education at a higher level, but would also impact positively on the level of retention in the schools. We, therefore, expect that very soon, the Senior High Schools will literally churn out graduates from the secondary level. Most of them will qualify to go to the university but the state universities will not be able to absorb them all. We expect this institute to position itself to admit some of the best Senior High School graduates and turn them into productive useful citizens. I had a look at your programmes-academic and non-academic and I am convinced that you are on the right path. Simply stay on course and do not cut corners.

The NPP government is not oblivious of the useful role the private sector is playing in the educational delivery system in the country. For some time now players in this sector have called for the government's intervention to reduce the costs involved in operating these institutions through subventions from the Ghana Education Trust Fund. The reasons they advance for their plea are valid. The main problem, however, is how to implement it to advantage of the students. The government will continue to look for the best way to intervene without compromising the autonomy of the institutions. We, therefore, wish to assure all concerned that the government is not sleeping over the issue and would not hesitate to come in once a permanent solution to the problem is arrived at. Meanwhile, students of M.I.S.T can access funds for their fees and other needs from the Students' Loan Trust Fund.

At this stage, I wish to call on our sons and daughters who are lucky to be here today to make the best out of the opportunity being offered them for very soon, the place will be a hot cake and others who may like to be here will not get the chance as easily as they did. As pioneers, you will definitely, once in a while, be confronted with challenges. Never give up and never resort to unorthodox means to try to resolve them.

Council Chairman, I also have a piece of advice for parents who have their wards here and for that matter in other university institutions in the country. They should play their complementary role in the building of the future of their children. They should not abandon them to their fate once they leave their homes for the campuses of their various universities. Most of them are young and inexperienced and find it extremely difficult to cope with the vicissitudes of life. They need understanding and encouragement to overcome the challenges of a sometimes seemingly unfair world.

Council Chairman, on behalf of the NPP government and all Ghanaians, I wish to thank Sheikh Ahmad al Imadi from Qatar as the lead sponsor of MIST for putting his trust and sadaqa, of all places in the world, in Ghana, West Africa. I also wish to thank Sheikh Nasser Mansour for being the visionary of MIST and bringing together various sponsors and stakeholders to make MIST a reality. May Allah bless them. It is my hope that the University Council and the Administration you have put in place to run the Institute will play their role well to achieve the objectives for which you have established it.

On this note, I pronounce the Madina Institute of Science and Technology duly launched. Thank you.