

**SPEECH BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE
COMMISSION, DR. NII KWAKU SOWA AT THE PRESS LAUNCH OF THE
FIRST SECURITIES INDUSTRY WEEK AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL ON
TUESDAY, 10TH OCTOBER, 2006.**

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Ministers of State, Commissioners of the Securities and Exchange Commission, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Securities Industry, Ladies and Gentlemen of the press, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

We consider this morning's press launch of the first ever 'securities industry week' quite historic. The idea of setting aside a special period in the year totally dedicated to espousing activities in the securities industry has been on the drawing board for a long time and I am particularly happy that it is finally happening. This is not merely to follow the acts of our sister sectors in the financial industry, but more so because we in the industry feel we have a lot to offer and we ought to let the country know. So, ladies and gentlemen, we are, as it were, 'coming out'.

Mr. Chairman our "coming out" should be interpreted as a pedagogical gesture. We reckon that many do not know much about the securities industry. There have been cases when the Securities and Exchange Commission was looking for staff for its investigative department and a number of policemen applied for the position. There have also been instances where some security personnel have visited the offices of SEC to lodge complaints against their employers only to be turned away with disappointed faces. The few who have some knowledge about financial securities lack the intimate understanding of how the market really works. Mr. Chairman, it is our hope that the period from now, leading up to the celebration of the Securities Week, the general public will be educated on financial securities and the benefits the economy can derive from that part of the financial market.

Mr. Chairman, the theme for the celebration of the Securities Week is “The Capital Market: The Missing Key to Ghana’s Growth”. Mr. Chairman, this theme has been carefully chosen by the organizers to emphasize the importance of this industry to the economic development of Ghana. Over the past few years, there has been indication of macroeconomic stability engendered by prudent fiscal and monetary management. This macroeconomic stability notwithstanding, the real sector is not responding to the demand stimuli from the macro economy. Industries are shutting down instead of growing.

Mr. Chairman, while the intent here is not to engage in a full analysis of the cause of this lack of response from the real sector, suffice it to say that the pointer is in the direction of the instrument which links the monetary sector to the real sector: that is, the rate of interest. The high cost of capital could be the reason for the sub-optimal performance of the real sector.

Mr. Chairman, during the celebration of the Securities Week, experts will be invited to educate the public on how the capital market can offer an alternative avenue, to both holders and demanders of surplus funds.

Mr. Chairman, we need the media in this education venture. The whole exercise will be in futility if the media is not actively involved. We therefore urge you to take keen interest in the securities industry and communicate its benefits and attendant risks to stakeholders. Finding the right key to unlock the great potential of this country lies in the capital market. It will need a national crusade of education, awareness creation and active involvement of all to find the key and unlock the treasure to wealth creation.

Thank you.