



FBNBANK@25 GALA DINNER

ADDRESS BY

MRS. ELSIE ADDO AWADZI

SECOND DEPUTY GOVERNOR, BANK OF GHANA

OCTOBER 29, 2021



Your Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana ably represented by Hon. John Kumah, Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister for Finance

**H. E. Admiral Ibok Ekwe Ibas (Rtd.), Nigeria High Commission to Ghana
Hon. Kojo Opong-Nkrumah, Member of Parliament and Minister for Information**

Dr. Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan, Group CEO, FirstBank of Nigeria

The CEO, Board, Management, and Staff of FBNBank (Ghana)

Executives of the Ghana Association of Bankers and Bank CEOs

The Director of Banking Supervision, Bank of Ghana

Cherished Clients and Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

- 1.** A very good evening to you all. I bring you warm felicitations from the Governor, Dr. Ernest Addison, who would have loved to be here tonight but for an urgent official assignment outside the jurisdiction.
- 2.** Twenty-five years is a major milestone in the life of any institution, especially a bank. Having started in Ghana as International Commercial Bank some twenty-five years ago and acquired by First Bank of Nigeria in 2013, FBNBank Ghana Limited has consistently built a strong and enviable business in keeping with the FBN group's vision of a strong pan-African brand.
- 3.** Ghana's banking sector remains one of the most attractive on the continent for investors, and the presence of pan-African banks like First Bank Nigeria and international banks here is testimony to that. Our banking sector is stable, profitable, and resilient, supported by an enabling macroeconomic framework, regulatory and



supervisory reforms that have promoted resilience, good corporate governance, effective risk management, and innovation in the industry.

4. Thanks to necessary and difficult reforms undertaken by the Bank of Ghana in recent years, and policy and regulatory reliefs announced at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our banking sector was well-positioned to withstand the economic shock fairly well. Among other things, banks have played a critical role of helping to mute the effects of the pandemic on our real sector by restructuring loans and suspending loan repayments for customers who were negatively impacted by the pandemic. Banks provided new loans in the total amount of **GHC 27,850,500,963.01 from March to December 2020** to sectors of the economy like the pharmaceuticals industry, the textiles and garments industry, that were critical in helping to fight the pandemic, and helped to accelerate the recovery of our economy from the initial downturn and to support corporates and households in a number of value chains.
5. The banking sector's performance in 2021 to date has remained strong with sustained growth in total assets, deposits, loans, investments, and income, although credit risk remains a concern, which the Bank of Ghana continues to monitor closely as the pandemic rages on.
6. We expect banks to continue in their efforts to support a strong recovery of the Ghanaian economy. To this end, we expect banks to significantly increase credit to the private sector, and to offer reasonable and affordable interest rates to their customers. We remain concerned about the relatively high lending rates that banks continue to charge their customers, with spreads over and above the Ghana Reference Rate and very high fees, commissions and other costs imposed on customers which lead to the exclusion of many small and medium-sized businesses out of the credit market and by extension, impedes their survival and growth. As a nation, we lose significant opportunities to grow strong viable brands that can compete with



businesses across the African market and beyond if we do not provide mechanisms for financing our small businesses on a consistent and sustainable basis.

- 7.** We expect banks to deploy technology and strategic partnerships to promote access to finance for all segments of our economy through innovative products, services, and delivery channels. Our youth population, women entrepreneurs, persons who are differently-abled, persons displaced by migration or extreme weather patterns or pollution of our water bodies and farm lands, are all viable customer bases waiting to be nurtured so that they can fully participate in helping to build a more resilient economy. Banks must also do more in the area of financing the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy, guided by the Sustainable Banking Principles launched in November 2019 by the Bank of Ghana, the Ghana Association of Bankers, and the Environmental Protection Agency.
- 8.** In sum, we expect that our banking sector will remain safe and sound, provide attractive returns to shareholders and other investors, while protecting the interests of depositors and other customers, the broader economy, communities, and the environment. This is critical for building a strong, viable, and sustainable industry and economy that will stand the test of time.
- 9.** For FBNBank Ghana, we congratulate you, your shareholders, Board of Directors, Management, Staff, and customers, for making it a quarter of a century and for the significant achievements you have chalked thus far. We expect that you will continue to strategise to expand your footprints across the nation with more access points beyond your current 20 branches, by deploying additional branches, agents, and digital channels. We expect to see even more impact in our socio-economic landscape over your next 25 years and beyond, as you continue to pursue sound governance, risk management, and cutting-edge strategies to promote more inclusive and sustainable banking.



10. We look forward to seeing what the future of FBNBank Ghana unfolds, and we wish you every success!

I thank you for your attention.

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