POWERING AFRICA'S DIGITAL ASSETS ECONOMY

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

by

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The Chief Executive & Head of Coverage, Africa,

The Chief Executive and Board of Standard Chartered Bank Ghana,

Colleagues from the Regulatory Community,

Captains of Industry,

Innovators and Entrepreneurs,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning.

As I begin this morning, I would like you to imagine a young Ghanaian entrepreneur. He runs his business from a smartphone. His customers are in Accra, Nairobi, Lagos, London, and beyond. Every day, he buys, sells, communicates, and receives payments across borders.

Technology has opened doors that his parents could scarcely have imagined.

Now, imagine asking him a simple question: *"**Do you feel protected**?"* Protected when he receives payments. Protected when he stores value. Protected when he deals with platforms that operate across continents. And imagine that after a brief *pause*, he responds with a question of his own: ***"Protected by whom?"***

Ladies and gentlemen, that question captures one of the defining challenges of our generation. Innovation is moving rapidly. Technology is reshaping finance. Digital assets are changing how value is stored, transferred, and exchanged.

Yet, institutions still have a responsibility to answer these fundamental questions:

How do we encourage innovation while preserving trust?

How do we unlock opportunity while protecting citizens?

How do we embrace progress without importing instability?

These are **not** merely technological questions. They are economic questions. They are policy questions. And increasingly, they are questions that affect millions of Africans every day.

Let me thank Standard Chartered for creating a platform for this important conversation. Institutions that endure for more than a century understand an important truth: The future belongs not to those who resist change, but to those who prepare for it.

This morning, I would like to share three things:

Why digital assets matter.

How Ghana is responding.

And what opportunities this creates for Africa.

My **central message** is simple:

Africa's digital asset economy must not be built on speculation. It must be built on trust, inclusion, and sound institutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, digital assets are no longer a future concept. They are becoming part of the financial infrastructure of the present. By credible estimates, this ecosystem already touches more than three million Ghanaians and represents activity measured in billions of dollars.

That is not a niche, a fringe, or a future projection. It is a present-day economic reality. The question is no longer whether digital assets will shape African finance. They already are. The real question is whether we will shape that future deliberately, and whether it will serve not only the largest institutions, but also the trader in Tamale, the entrepreneur in Kumasi, and the small business owner in Takoradi.

For too long, adoption ran ahead of regulation. Millions of citizens participated in a market operating largely outside the regulatory perimeter. So, Ghana made a choice. We chose not to ban what we did not fully understand. And we chose not to ignore what was already reshaping the financial lives of our citizens. Instead, we chose engagement. We chose to bring innovation into a framework where citizens are protected, confidence is preserved, and opportunity can flourish.

This is because regulation is not about saying no. It is about creating the conditions under which society can confidently say yes. That philosophy guides our approach. Through Act 1154, Ghana established a legal framework for virtual asset service providers. We strengthened cooperation between the Bank of Ghana, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Financial Intelligence Centre. We established a dedicated Virtual Assets Department. And through our Regulatory Sandbox, we continue to learn, test, and adapt before finalising long-term frameworks.

Ladies and gentlemen, as a central banker, it will be remiss of me to speak about digital assets without speaking about money itself. And in Ghana's case, that means speaking about the cedi. Our work on eCedi reflects our belief that innovation should expand inclusion, not restrict it.

But let me be absolutely clear: Whatever we build, tokenize, or otherwise, we must not displace the cedi. A strong digital ecosystem should strengthen public money. Not competing with it. The future may be digital. But public trust must remain at its centre. And that brings me to the opportunity before us.

First, trade and cross-border payments. Today, a business in Accra can sometimes find it easier to transact with Europe than with another African country. Digital settlement infrastructure can reduce cost, increase speed, and support the ambitions of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Second, the tokenisation of real assets. This can deepen capital markets, improve efficiency, and create new pathways through which businesses access finance.

Third, financial inclusion. Mobile money has demonstrated what happens when innovation is designed around people's lives. The next generation of digital infrastructure can extend opportunities even further, particularly for those who remain underserved by traditional financial systems.

But opportunity and discipline must remain partners.

Remember, Financial stability matters, just like consumer protection, integrity, and literacy. Innovation succeeds when people trust it. And people trust it when they understand it.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me close with an invitation. To innovators: engage with us. To banks: partner with us. To regulators across Africa: collaborate with us. Because interoperability is not an accident of technology. It is a policy choice. And it is a continental choice.

Imagine an Africa where a trader in Tamale transacts with a customer in Nairobi, Kenya, as easily as with one next door. Imagine an Africa where payments that once took days are completed in seconds. Imagine an Africa where small businesses access capital previously beyond their reach. Imagine an Africa where innovation is trusted because it is protected. Imagine an Africa that is not merely consuming the future but helping to create it.

That future is possible. But it will not happen by accident. It will happen through deliberate choices, partnership, and leadership. Ghana has chosen its posture. Open, but anchored. Innovative, but sovereign. Ambitious, but accountable.

The infrastructure of Africa's digital economy is being shaped today. Let us build it wisely. Let us build it responsibly. Let us build it to last.

And for the future we owe the next generation, and with gratitude, hope, and responsibility, I charge you.

Thank you.