<u>**OPENING SPEECH FOR THE 2026 ICEDEG AFRICA LBG'S MAIDEN POLICY DIALOGUE ROUNDTABLE DELIVERED BY ELLEN OFOSU ASIEDUAA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**</u>

<u>**Good evening,**</u>

Distinguished guests, representatives from the business community, civil society partners, media, and fellow citizens: I welcome you all to the ICEDEG AFRICA maiden policy dialogue roundtable 2026. Themed: ***ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE AND FISCAL POLICY EXPECTATIONS: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE AHEAD OF GHANA'S 2026 MID-YEAR BUDGET REVIEW.***

We gather here today at a critical juncture in our nation's economic journey. In November 2025, the government presented its fiscal vision under the theme: "***Resetting for Growth, Jobs, and Economic Transformation"***. In a few weeks, the Minister for Finance Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson will stand before Parliament to present the 2026 mid-year budget review. This legislative milestone is not just a constitutional formality, it is a vital checkpoint for our collective aspirations under the "Resetting for Growth, Jobs and Economic Transformation framework.

This dialogue serves as a vital bridge between policymaking and the everyday economic realities of our markets, corporate boardrooms, and the households. As stakeholders, our role today is to look beyond the raw data, analyze the policy direction, and ensure that our national economic strategy remains both resilient and inclusive.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the macroeconomic indicators over the first half of the year give us genuine cause for optimism. Inflation has moderated significantly from peaks of previous years, our Treasury bill rates continue to decline, and our credit ratings received a welcome upgrade by international agencies like Moody's. The relative stability of the Ghanaian Cedi has provided our business community with a predictable environment. These hard-won gains prove that our structural reforms under the IMF program are yielding foundational results.

However, a closer look at our first-quarter fiscal data for 2026 reveals a deeply concerning disconnect between policy promises and the reality on the ground, that we cannot afford to be complacent. While our primary balance remains positive, we are confronted with real operational pressures that demand our immediate attention.

The true metric of economic confidence is not found merely in spreadsheets and aggregated data. It is felt in the cost of business operations, the predictability of our exchange rate, quality public services, consumer protection, and the expansion of domestic trade.

Economic confidence is a shared currency. It requires government transparency to foster private investment and civic compliance. Let this dialogue serve as a clear indicator of our willingness to partner, critique and co-create a resilient Ghanaian economy.

Thank you, and I look forward to an impactful session.