

## 2020 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



ADJOA KHIAMAɔ

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Christmas season is a time of celebration, bringing the best feelings in most people, thereby making the world seem like a better place. 2020 has been a very difficult year in a lot of ways and it is my hope that the Christmas season will bring all of us some good cheer as we spend time with our loved ones.

I write this message with the greatest delight as the UKGCC ends this year on a positive note. The Chamber has survived and thrived in spite of the global COVID-19 pandemic that has caused great uncertainties in business communities worldwide. We began the year with exciting plans and even greater expectations. Our premier event was the Ghana Investment and Opportunities Summit (GHIOS) in London of which we were an event partner.

We brought along with us several participating companies from Ghana and scheduled a number of business matchmaking meetings for them because this is what we do: we operate on the platforms of business networking, commercial advocacy and provision of trade services. The summit was a great success by all standards, and we were rewarded for our efforts by the resulting uptake in the number of companies that contacted us about joining our Chamber.

That initial momentum, however, did not last very long because of the social ramifications of COVID-19. But for us, there was never a question of laying down our tools. We asked, "how can we continue to create networks and connect businesses?" In response, we swiftly re-evaluated our approach and forged on without missing a step. Excelsior - upward and onward to greater glory!

### Embracing the New Normal

#### Leading with Thought Leadership

Bolstered by the everlasting words of former UK Prime Minister,

Winston Churchill to "Never let a **good crisis** go to **waste**", we immediately moved our activities mostly to a virtual environment from March this year, and engaged our bigger and more resilient member companies as our knowledge partners. They shared their expertise with our members initially, and later with the general public. In doing so, we strengthened the capacity of all of our member companies to withstand this passing storm. This also affirmed what we knew already: that the sectors with high-levels of digitization weathered the storm much better and continue to thrive.

I will like to use this opportunity, therefore, to thank our member companies Ernst & Young Ghana, Vodafone Ghana, WTS Nobisfield, MTN Ghana, Absa Bank Ghana, Standard Chartered Bank Ghana, Consolidated Bank of Ghana, Bank of Africa, KPMG Ghana, Unilever Ghana, Contracta Ghana, Prudential Life Insurance Ghana, Fidelity Bank Ghana, Petra Trust and Tullow Ghana for sharing their resources in time, knowledge and experience with us and with the general public. We cannot thank you enough for enabling us to carry on engaging, in a very relevant manner, with our various publics throughout this year.

#### Physical Activities

We were only able to host two physical member networking events this year and Meridian Port Services (MPS) Ltd. and Ap-polonia City were our gracious hosts when we took groups to tour their facilities. We are grateful to both companies.

#### Virtual Networking Series

Our thanks also go to our member companies: G&J Technical Services, Devtraco Plus, HJA Africa, Agility Logistics Park, Holland Life Insurance, Docutech Ghana, Winmat Ltd., The Capital Group, Lancaster University Ghana, and Mount Laboratories who took up our offer to be spotlighted at our newly introduced member virtual networking series.

### Business Impact Survey Report

Our two COVID-19 business impact surveys and ensuing reports were well-timed, with the UKGCC in the forefront. The reports were well received by the Government of Ghana for which we received great commendation.

### Support from our Local & International Network

Our membership of the international network of British Chambers of Commerce proved to be an invaluable resource this year and we must thank Anne-Marie and her team, as well as the teams at the Cambodia British Chamber, Birmingham Chambers of Commerce and the British Chamber of Businesses in Southern Africa for partnering with us on a number of relevant webinars.

Our sponsors, Vodafone Ghana, Ghana International Bank, The British High Commission here in Accra through the Department of International Trade (DIT) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) demonstrated great faith in our capabilities, and I can say with a great deal of pride that we delivered beyond their expectations. Thank you for your support.

Thank you also to our media stakeholders, especially our partners The AM Group, The Multimedia Group and The Graphic Communications Group. We appreciate the great partnerships that exist between our organisations.

### **Immense Gratitude**

To all of our Members, we **ARE** because of you and we are very grateful for your patronage. You kept faith with us and supported our work. Without your support we would have had to shut down the Chamber. We do not take our commitment to each of you individually and collectively, lightly. We commit to delivering on all of our promises to you in 2021 and beyond.

The immense support of our Patrons, HE Iain Walker and HE Papa Owusu-Ankomah, our Executive Council, and UK Advisory Board members provided the leadership and the backbone that the Chamber needed to survive in this very difficult year and we are hugely grateful. The Team at the Chamber has been amazing! They believed in the vision of the Chamber and delivered beyond my expectations! I am proud of the Team and what we have been able to achieve together.

### **New Opportunities; Renewed Focus!**

It is an undisputed fact that 2020 has seen an unprecedented global health crisis. Even so, one of the things that we at the UKGCC understand very well is that trade is essential to saving lives and livelihoods. International trade must, therefore, continue to be seen as a necessary imperative. As the world recovers, businesses must base their recovery on the solid foundations of a greener, more resilient, and inclusive global economy. We are also confident, as the UK prepares to host the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in 2021, that businesses will utilise the many opportunities presented to operate in a green economy.

We all have been tried and tested. But as the end of the year

gradually nears, it is heartening to notice that businesses are slowly regaining their foothold. As mentioned earlier, the focus now turns to ensuring that we build back greener and stronger. I would like to reassure member companies of our continued support to ensure growth by sharing knowledge and ideas through programmes and various activities. We urge you to participate in our activities for 2021 and reach out to us for the information and support you might need to extend your reach and boost recovery efforts.

I want to especially welcome our new members. You took a leap of faith in such a difficult year to join our Chamber. Same as we offer to our already existing members, we look forward to a long-lasting relationship that delivers value to both our organisations.

We wish everyone remains healthy and safe and we believe that we will be able to overcome the difficulties of 2020 together. We encourage everyone to continue to care for and support each other and extend compassion to those who are in greater need.

Compliments of the season, and I am hopeful that 2021 will bring us better fortunes than ever before. But before that, as Ghanaians go to the polls on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020, I encourage those of us who are eligible to vote, to definitely exercise our civic responsibilities but to do it in a peaceful and responsible manner. To quote the former US President Thomas Jefferson, "We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate", so please participate.

Thank you!

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year ahead!

