1. Protocol List
   - Chairman and Members of the Audit Service Board
   - The Auditor-General
   - Distinguished Invited Guests
   - Members of the Audit Service
   - Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

2. INTRODUCTION
I am deeply honoured for this opportunity to participate in this year’s Accountability Lecture of the Audit Service. I am speaking today in my own capacity as member of the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and the immediate past Rector of GIMPA. More importantly, I am speaking on behalf of Mr. P.V. Obeng, Chairman of NDPC, who graciously asked me to speak on his behalf today. I thank him for the honour, but I am fully responsible for the contents of this presentation.

Ghana has embarked on this ambitious journey to become a middle income country within the shortest possible time. Some even argue that we are already there. The critics are however quick to point to our developmental shortcomings to discount the notion that we are a middle income country. At any rate, to reach that coveted destination of middle income status, we have crafted a progressive agenda to grow the economy, generate employment, reduce poverty and improve our social life. On a balance scorecard we are doing well as a nation, and we have cause to celebrate. We have already surpassed the state that some designate as the pre-condition for development, i.e., political stability.
Equally significant is the fact that our management of the economy has improved significantly in recent years.

3. CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY
The people of Ghana since the implementation of the 1992 Constitution have spoken loud and clear that the preferred form of government is constitutional democracy. Recent events, as painful as they are, provide hopeful signs that our democracy is maturing and deepening. On the brighter side of our national grief, the smooth and successful transition of power gave us the opportunity to affirm the supremacy of the Constitution and the institutions of government. Maturity also means that we are confident that the structures and procedures established to promote constitutional rule are working well and can withstand unanticipated serious shocks.

First and foremost, constitutional rule means the Constitution is supreme. Further to that, constitutional democracy means limited government where the people of Ghana are the legitimate source of government power. The people’s sovereign power is enshrined in the Constitution and is channelled through various governance structures, institutions and officials who exercise the powers on behalf of the people. The institutions and structures are carefully crafted not only to provide checks and balances on each other, but more importantly, to promote good governance. Unfortunately, good governance does not work without accountability, rule of law, public participation, and transparency.

In this election year, I must recall that political systems are intended to answer the most fundamental question in politics – “who gets what, when and how”. Governments attempt to secure power to answer this question. A combination of factors, such as past history, instability, poverty, relatively young institutions, political patronage, etc., have intensified the competition for political power in Ghana. This is not surprising since the control of political power gives legitimacy to the government to manage the limited national resources. All across Africa there is a perennial problem with the
proper management of state resources as governments have managed to monopolize power and misuse state resources for personal gain.

In Ghana, executive power is vested in the President to execute policies and programs through the bureaucratic machinery of ministries, municipalities, departments, and agencies (MMDAs). Legislative power is vested in the Parliament of Ghana; and the Judiciary is the guardian of the Constitution and the Laws of the land.

The Constitution has placed upon our respective officials, institutions and structures, the responsibility for safeguarding and proper utilization of the limited resources of the nation. The officials holding key offices are “agents” or “custodians” holding positions of trust on behalf of the people. They are required by law and convention to account for the exercise of their powers and responsibilities to the people of Ghana. Accountability, therefore, becomes a crucial element in our drive to sustain constitutional democracy and promote good governance. The Constitution in turn gives the people of Ghana, in their individual and collective capacity, certain rights and obligations, one of which is to hold governments accountable.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOOD GOVERNANCE
Accountability and good governance are two sides of the same coin. Accountability must be treated as a key pillar in our quest for good governance. The drive toward good governance will be elusive if accountability is not taken seriously. In simple terms, accountability means public officials are answerable for their actions or behaviours, that is, they are accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders.

In simple terms, governance refers to the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage the affairs of the nation. Most definitions of governance rest on three dimensions: authority, decision-making and accountability. The governance system determines who has power to make decisions, how other actors make their voice heard, and how account is rendered.
According to the UNDP good governance exists where those in positions of power are perceived to have legitimacy; there is appropriate voice accorded to those whose interests are affected by the decisions; the exercise of power results in a sense of overall direction that services as a guide to action. The hallmark of good government includes accountability; rule of law; fair and efficient system of justice; broad popular involvement in political, social and economic processes; capacity to management; and transparency. It entails the existence of efficient and accountable institutions, structures and processes.

Good governance leads to good management, good performance, good stewardship of public money, good public engagement and, ultimately, good outcomes. As succinctly put by former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, good governance is *sine qua non* for development. I may add that good governance and accountability are considered key ingredients for sustained development.

Ghana’s goal for accelerated development has been described in various development plans as Vision 2020; Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRSI); Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRSII); and the current Ghana’s Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA). The underlying goal of all these development is to become a middle income country by achieving high GDP growth rates, employment generation, poverty reduction, the Millennium Development Goals, increases in welfare, living standards, etc. All the various development plans recognize the importance of good governance, accountability, participation, rule of law, and transparency.

5. IMPORTANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability as defined involves several related stages: responsibility, answerability and enforcement.

- Responsibility – public officials have the responsibility to executive policies and take actions professionally and ethically in the public interest. They are accountable for the outcomes and consequences of their actions.
• Answerability – refers to the obligations of the government, its agencies and public officials to provide information about their decisions and actions to justify them to the public and oversight institutions.

• Enforcement – suggests that the public or the institutions responsible for accountability can sanction the offending party or remedy the contravening behaviour.

Accountability is extremely important by ensuring that public officials:
  • Perform to their fullest potential
  • Accept responsibility for their actions
  • Provide value for money in their provision of public services
  • Make information available to the public to assess their performance
  • Maintain the confidence of the public in the government
  • Consult and respond to the community they are meant to serve
  • Provide information for the public to monitor and evaluate their actions to justify the use of public resources

6. PARTICIPATORY ACCOUNTABILITY
Effective accountability requires the participation of strong, efficient and capable state institutions, civil society organizations, the media and the entire citizenry. Citizen participation could be either direct or indirect through intermediate institutions or representatives. As an aspect of democratic governance, citizens must be free to participate; there must be free flow of information; citizens must be well informed and organized. This requires freedom of association and an organized civil society. Accountability allows the public to ask how and why the government is doing.

Strong institutions and effective governance structures play a very important role in ensuring accountability. The Constitution establishes several institutions and mechanisms to enforce accountability. The mere establishment of institutions and structures is not enough; we must ensure that they work well as envisioned by the framers of the Constitution. As a
renowned scholar once put it, it is easier to frame a constitution than to implement one.

Within the context of participation, two types of accountability must be considered – horizontal and vertical. Horizontal accountability refers to the capacity of state institutions to check abuses by other public agencies and branches of government, or the requirement for agencies to report sideways. In this context, effectiveness of accountability in Ghana depends on the capacity of state institutions such as Parliament, Audit Service and the Judiciary to perform their roles. Vertical accountability is the means through which citizens, mass media and civil society seek to enforce standards of good performance on officials. Strong and capable state institutions and active citizen and civil society participation can provide an active voice to put pressure on public officials to act in the public interest and ensure accountability.

7. THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS
In order for participatory accountability to work, the institutions of government must work. The checks and balances provided for in the Constitution must be respected and protected.

a. The Constitution is supreme. We must respect and protect the integrity of the Constitution. Thank goodness no government in Ghana has the audacity to tamper with the Constitution to prolong its stay in power.

b. The leadership role of the Executive is crucial in building and maintaining the system of good governance and accountability. Actions of the Executive must be lawful, transparent and fully accountable. The Executive must have the “political will” to do what is right. An Executive that is “off track” poses serious challenges to the entire governance system. The President as the Chief Executive must have the will and the muscle to hold his officials and agencies accountable.

c. Effective Parliament is required to act as a horizontal check on the power of the Executive. It is Parliament that holds the Executive politically accountable. Parliament acts as the watch dog and
regulator. Scrutiny and oversight over the Executive ensure accountability. The oversight function helps identify problems of policy failure in execution of laws.

In Ghana, our past history and current practice of Executive dominance have rendered Parliament subservient. Parliament must be strengthened in order to ensure effective political accountability. Parliamentary structures such as the committee system and the power of the purse entrusted to the legislature must be made to work.

d. The role of the Judiciary is also critical in sustaining accountability and good governance. The Judiciary must effectively exercise its responsibility, without fear or favour, for upholding the Constitution and the rule of law to ensure that all government agencies adhere to the Constitution. It is impossible to have accountability without rule of law. The Law Courts are required to defend the Constitution and protect the institutions of democracy. To be effective, the Judiciary must operate in a free and independent environment.

e. Most constitutions create independent watchdog institutions that have the power to exact accountability. The role of the ombudsman readily comes to mind. The ombudsman typically assumes responsibility for investigating citizen’s complaints against a public authority or institutions and to seek redress. In Ghana, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) investigates complaints of fundamental rights and freedoms, injustice, corruption, abuse of power, etc., and takes appropriate action. In South Africa, the Public Protector is charged with the responsibility for strengthening constitutional democracy by investigating and redressing improper and prejudicial conduct, maladministration and abuse of power in state affairs. Most African institutions have also established anti-corruption agencies which also operate as watchdog institutions. We may include the Economic and Organized Crime Unit in Ghana and the Anti-Corruption Agency in Nigeria and Kenya.

What is our assessment of the formal institutions to ensure accountability? The Constitution gives too much power to the Executive. Consequently, the
Executive is too dominant and overshadows the Parliament. The bureaucratic machinery is weak thereby making internal administrative oversight ineffective. Parliament is weak, subservient and dependent on the Executive making it difficult to play its oversight role effectively. The charges and counter charges against the Judiciary makes you wonder if the goal of an independent judicial system is a myth or reality.

I have refrained from talking about the Audit Service as a major watchdog institution. I am aware of where I am today; I do not want to preach to the choir. Suffice it to say, that the Auditor-General has the oversight responsibility to examine and report on the truthfulness and fairness with which public officials and institutions have executed their duties and accounted for their stewardship.

If the auditing function works as mandated by the Constitution, it moves the entire government system to achieve accountability, promote good governance, and instil confidence in our governance. As a nation, we have a responsibility to ensure that the Audit Service is fully resourced and truly independent to deliver on its mandate. Like most Ghanaians, I get captivated by the hearings of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament. When I appeared before the Committee in my capacity as Rector of GIMPA in 2010, the issues before the Committee involved “cold cases” that occurred in 2004 and 2005. This is a problem that must be addressed between the Audit Service and the Parliament.

8. COMMUNITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION
Community and individual participation reinforce accountability and good governance. Today’s electorate is an active participant in the political process. Politicians and public officials who attempt to take the electorate for granted do so at a great risk.

Government that works best is said to be the one closest to the people. Government must respond to the needs of the people and be accountable to the people. To be effective, the government must consult the people at large but more importantly the various stakeholders and interest groups.
Broader consultation improves the policy making process and generates effective policies. Popular participation should be understood in terms of active involvement of citizens in decision making and implementation. In short, government is expected to take into account the views of those who may affect or are affected by respective government policies.

The last significant group in the framework for providing accountability and good governance is civil society. Civil society organizations are those organizations and networks that lie outside the formal state apparatus. These include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, professional associations, chamber of commerce, community groups, religious societies, student groups, the media, “foot soldiers, the “Association of Unemployed Graduates”, etc.

In a democracy, the government has a duty to provide legal and regulatory framework, which allows the necessary space for civil society to operate freely. Accountability requires active civil society voice and participation. We have seen some hopeful signs of civil society activism in public hearings and draft legislations in Ghana. We are also encouraged by the high degree of community empowerment, a variant of which is the phenomenon of foot soldiers. The media plays a vital role in putting issues on the national agenda and informing citizens of their rights and responsibilities. Despite some of its excesses, the freedom of the media in Ghana is a big plus in the drive to ensure accountability in government.

9. CONCLUSION
The progressive national development agenda that we have crafted to achieve middle income status depends on an efficient and effective government machinery. With the 1992 Constitution, we as a nation have been building and nurturing institutions and structures to promote good governance and national development. Through participatory accountability, our national development goals and development plans will be realized. I am very optimistic about the direction that we are heading as a nation.
Good governance connotes, among other things, a governmental system that is accountable. Accountability requires effective participation by oversight bodies and the general public. The rule of law and transparency reinforce accountability. We can all testify to the fact that in Ghana the establishment of structures is not enough; we must ensure that they work well. As a former Vice President of the Republic put it; “we are famous for crafting nice policies and programs for our neighbouring countries to implement”.

In the pursuit of our national development goal, we must treat accountability and good governance as challenges along the way. Overcoming these challenges must be the pre-occupation of every Ghanaian. The mindset of all well meaning Ghanaians must be to promote accountability in good governance. This is not the work of the Audit Service alone. The Executive, Parliament, Judiciary, Civil Society, Traditional Authority, the Media, Labour Unions, Political Parties, and ordinary citizens must be active participants in the drive to achieve accountability in government. This is a worthwhile goal within our reach. Let’s go for it!

Thank you for your kind attention.