Acceptance speech by Mr. Johan Ferreira, incoming President of the Ghana Chamber Mines of at the 86th AGM of the Chamber held on Friday 30th May 2014 at the AICC, Accra.

Honourable Ministers of State

Captains of the Mining Industry

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Nananom

Invited Guest

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for honoring me with this opportunity of serving the mining industry.

Besides being a personal honour, having been elevated to lead the Newmont Africa Operations as the Senior Vice President for the Region earlier this month,

It is also a privilege for my company to assume the leadership of the Chamber at this time in history.

Assuming the leadership of the Chamber imposes a great deal of responsibility but I trust that with the support of all, we will be able to achieve our set objectives as an association.

May I also take the opportunity to express my gratitude to all stakeholders in the minerals industry especially to the out-going president of the Chamber, Mr. Dan Owiredu, for his extraordinary efforts.
in leading the industry during a period of great challenges. To Dan, I say Ayeekoo for a job well done!

Ladies and Gentlemen, the difficulties that we face as an industry is due to the profound changes the world is facing today and this has compelled the Chamber to continue to be more proactive in stimulating the sustainability and development of the mining industry.

You will all agree with me that we are facing many challenges, some that we can do nothing about, such as the gold price. But there are other challenges that we can do something about. In an era of low gold prices, the minerals industry is reeling under an unfavorable fiscal regime, coupled with the high cost of production, the fortunes of mining companies have further been blighted.

As we all know, an unfavorable fiscal regime poses greater risk to the mining industry and grossly affects investment in the expansion programmes of our member companies. While we are fully aware of the economic challenges facing the government, care must be taken to protect the proverbial hen that lays the golden egg.

Under my leadership, the Chamber will continue to collaborate with the government to create an enabling environment that would make us create more value for all our stakeholders. Whether it is through growing the pie or providing thought leadership to Government.

The question of what else we can do to assist the Government and our people always arise.
In my opinion, we can stay committed to the Bank of Ghana and assist to ensure the Cedi does not depreciate further. In addition, we as an industry need to continue to support and give our full commitment to local content and be the change agents by ensuring we are the catalyst to further growth in the local content sector.

Having mentioned shared value for all our stakeholders,

I will continue to champion the Chamber’s call for an increase in the share of mineral royalties returned by government for the development of our host communities. It is in this vein that the Chamber has been advocating for Mineral Revenue Utilization similar to the Management bill what pertains in the Oil and Gas sector. This we believe would ensure more transparency in the utilization of mining revenues.

Ladies and gentlemen, illegal small scale mining continues to plague our industry and the nation as a whole. We are aware of the government’s best efforts to clamp down on the menace through the activities of the anti-galamsey taskforce but there is still a lot more to do to protect our investments and the environment.

There has been a lot of talk about mainstreaming the activities of small scale miners and as a Chamber we will continue to work with stakeholders to mainstream and formalize small-scale mining to ensure that the country optimizes benefits from the sub-sector while managing the adverse impacts. In addition we will work with the authorities to strengthen the laws to make it difficult for the perpetrators to continue their trade.
Ladies and Gentlemen, though mines are finite, the essential contribution of our industry to society isn’t. Our contribution to national and human development is one of the most significant demonstrations of sustainability that any sector can make. The myriad of educational and training opportunities as well as health and other economic development activities provided by our member companies have contributed immensely to the development of our host communities even beyond the life of mine.

Indeed, while communities are demanding change, what they are looking for is investment, jobs, education, training and opportunities for their children. And this is something we cannot, and will not ignore, because we need the communities, and I believe that the viability and prosperity of our host communities is imperative.

The future of our Chamber and indeed mining in Ghana is to continue on the path of sustainable mining. We need the support of all our stakeholders to help us scale our present challenges and be able to continue improving the lives of our communities.

Under my Presidency, the Chamber would continue to partner government in its effort to make mining more meaningful to the communities and the nation at large.

We will look at revisiting our strategies, we firstly need to ensure that we rally our members together so as to harness and grow trust between industry members; and as a collective body, build trust with Government. After all, it is up to all of us to ensure that we have an
effective and influential Chamber, as the Chambers voice is bigger than each individual member’s solo voice.

Our external stakeholders know very little of the contributions our industry at large is making in the country because the great stories are not getting out and we are not telling them as much as we should. Under my leadership, I will work diligently with our staff to tell our stories.

As part of the strategy, we will review the subcommittee’s terms of reference, objectives and deliverables so as to ensure it is managed in an outcome based manner.

The Chamber and its subcommittees can go a long way to harmonize the practices applied to in the mining industry and ultimately endeavor to get consistency, but it is up to us!

Let’s ensure the Chamber adds value to each industry member individually and to the industry collectively through our support and participation.

Let me conclude by saying that as President of the Chamber, I am open to advice and suggestions for the future development of the mining industry and the strengthening of our Chamber.

In unity we stand.

Thank You for your attention and looking forward to a great tenure!