

**ADDRESS BY HON. DR. KWABENA DUFFUOR,C.V.**

**FOUNDER, HODA HOLDINGS LIMITED**

**AT THE ANNUAL HODA THANKSGIVING SERVICE.**

**VENUE: ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE.**

**DATE: SUNDAY, 22ND JANUARY, 2017**

**THEME: HODA HOLDINGS – THE WAY FORWARD**

Directors of HODA Holdings,

Board members and Chief Executive Officers of the various companies,

Special invited guests,

Members of the HODA family,

My pretty Spouse, Akosua and my wonderful Children,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very Good morning and a Happy New Year to you all.

I am very delighted to see you all – this great family. It is exciting to see you as one family coming from diverse backgrounds representing different companies in the HODA Holdings. As you all know we have assembled here as one big family for a common purpose – to thank our Lord and Maker for many opportunities and blessings He bestowed on us over the past year. As individuals, we owe our very existence to God; as corporate bodies, there is so much to be thankful to our Lord for; and as a Group, we can only attribute our growth to God’s guidance and provision.

 I am particularly excited about the show of gratefulness and contentment that is shown on our faces as we sing and dance to God’s glory. We can only say Thank you, Jesus!

 HODA Holdings has metamorphosed tremendously in the past three decades. I still remember 32 years ago like yesterday when our journey started with only 10 members of this family. This was in April 1985 when Star Assurance Company Limited was born. Today, as I observe the number of family members seated here celebrating the story and looking at our records, I feel the growth and the transformation. Indeed, we have multiplied into thousands of employees working in divine multitude of companies.

As we continue to grow and expand, our biggest challenge as a family will continue to be how we all manage this large business entity and keep all of us together in unity and in love. While we exhibit great tenacity and hard work in our various companies, let us continue encouraging ourselves and, most importantly, grow a strong bond together as one family. Bonding is crucial at this stage of our growth because without it we will easily disengage and have barriers created among ourselves. And it was for this reason that Henry Ford of Ford Motors once said “***Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is a progress. Working together is a success”*** Today, we are a family more than a business and as such we need to foster a spirit of togetherness more than anything else. It is important to note, however, that the most essential ingredient in building a strong bond is **LOVE***.* It is for the love of each other and the spirit of bonding that we continue to engage in these meetings and I urge us all to continue and even make this bigger.

Over the years, we have worked hard at building strong brands; brands that are comparable to any global brand. Today, I am happy to say that our brands are strong and like every resilient global brand, they have to be well protected and guided. It is our duty to jealously grow, and protect the HODA brand and make it an iconic national brand. The HODA brand represents integrity and excellence in industry leadership and innovation. The stronger and more attractive our brand is, the higher the heights that we shall attain. All companies in the group should constantly look out for innovative ways to maintain the strength and attraction of our brand so as to reap the full benefits therefrom.

In line with the commitment to build our businesses on a spirit of togetherness, we have tasked HODA Directors to undertake a project that will bring all of us and our businesses further together. Going forward, we are going to commit resources to building our brand through **synergy,** which means that the various companies must align their various tasks, key functions and resources to the aspirations of HODA. We have to ensure that we build synergy across board and leverage on our strength as a big family to consolidate the key aspects of our business, reduce cost and gain from economies of scale. Accordingly, we have begun several projects towards ensuring a synergistic operation of HODA. In the area of technology, for instance, IT services, software and facilities can be shared without compromising the independence of the various companies. We are, therefore, putting in place the necessary infrastructure which will ensure we constantly upgrade our systems to keep up with the fast rate at which the world is evolving with technology. We are also moving towards adopting a common platform which will facilitate cross patronage of our numerous products and services. I will entreat all of you to maximize this opportunity and leverage on the platform to excel. We will institute a platform for knowledge sharing while seeing to it that we continuously upscale our technology to provide a solid backbone for growth.

In today’s business the customer is sometimes more sophisticated than even the service provider. Consequently, we need to invest in systems and tools that would keep us constantly ahead of customers and help us ensure their utmost convenience at all times. In response, we are putting in place a modern state-of-the-art contact center that would serve our common needs as a Group.

Currently, this conglomerate is blessed with companies active in almost every sector of the economy. This avails us the opportunity to leverage on the wide array of skilled work force that we have. Our HR directors should begin to institute programmes that would ensure continuous learning among our members while ensuring high levels of integrity, commitment, loyalty and productivity.

It is always the case that the people behind the most successful businesses in the world attribute their success, among others, to humility. This is because in the **bosom of humility, wisdom is not lacking!** Indeed no humble person lacks wisdom. As Saint Augustine, a renowned Theologian and Philosopher puts it, ***“It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels”****.* Let us all be guided by the good virtue of humility for therein lies wisdom and success.

This year would, no doubt, be another challenging but exciting year. We look forward to taking advantage of the various opportunities that would be created to enhance the fortunes of our businesses. I have no shred of doubt that this year will be another year of divine multiplication.

Dear HODA family members, Alice Walker, a Human Rights activist once said ***“thank you is the best prayer that anyone could say. I say that one a lot. Thank you expresses extreme gratitude, humility, and understanding”.*** These words hold a lot of substance, so allow me to say “thank you” to each and every member of this great family of ours for your sacrifices and commitment to the vision of HODA. Let us stay united in love and grow the business together for the reward to share is even greater.

Happy New Year! And May the Almighty God Love you all as I do.

Thank you.

**Dr. Kwabena Duffuor, C.V.**

**Founder**