



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Friday, 7th March, 2025

The House met at 10.59 a.m.

[MR FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER IN
THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, there is no Message from the President neither a Formal Communication by the Speaker. May we proceed to take the item numbered 5 — Correction of *Votes and Proceedings and the Official Report*?

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND
THE OFFICIAL REPORT**

Hon Members, *Correction of Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 5th March, 2025.

Pages 1...11—

Hon Members, the *Votes and Proceedings* of the 28th Sitting—

Yes, Mr Kingsley Nyarko?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, please on page 11, the second paragraph, the last word I see—You are a renowned lawyer, does the word *sub judice*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Do you mean the second paragraph?

Prof Nyarko: Yes, the second paragraph. Sub judice, is it j-u-d-i-c-e or c-i?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: It is well noted. There is a spelling mistake there. The word is *sub judice*.

Prof Nyarko: Then the next paragraph, in the last sentence, there should be a consequential correction to it. Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member, you have the Floor.

Mr Emmanuel Drah: Mr Speaker, I was here but I think they have marked me absent.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Table of Office, take note.

Yes, Hon Member you have the floor?

Alhaji Seidu Haruna: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Hon Member for New Edubiase, Abdul-Salam Adams was in the House on Thursday but he has been marked as absent.

Yes, Hon Kingsley Nyarko?

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, I come under Article 102 of the Constitution, Standing Order 64(3) to raise an issue of quorum. We are less than 91 in this Chamber.

Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Are you raising the issue of quorum on *Votes and Proceedings*?

Prof Nyarko: When you read Order 64(3), it says that any time during the Sitting, when a Member realises that we do not have the required number, he or she can raise the issue of quorum. That is what I have done.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Well, Hon Members, we would need to deal with this issue and come out clearly at what point a quorum is supposed to be raised. Whether one can raise quorum on Prayers; on a Message from the President; on a Communication from the Speaker; or when one is correcting their own *Votes and Proceedings*. I believe the quorum should be at the commencement of public business. That is my view. I stand corrected.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, if you read Order 64(3), it is clear and specific with no ambiguity that “A Member may draw the attention of the person presiding at any time during a sitting...”, my understanding is that when Prayers are said or read, Sitting has started so there is no ambiguity regarding our Standing Orders. None at all.

Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Clerks - at-the-Table, please do the needful by ringing the bell for 10 minutes.

Hon Kingsley Nyarko, I have ordered the Clerk to ring the bell for 10 minutes as required. Then we will follow the procedure.

Hon Members, the *Votes and Proceedings* of the 28th Sitting, dated Wednesday, 5th March, 2025, as corrected, is adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, the *Official Report*—

Yes, Hon Jerry Shaib?

11.09 a.m.

Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. This is just to bring to your notice that the 10 minutes has started and now we have about seven minutes. I am just bringing that to your attention.

Mr Richard Acheampong: Mr Speaker, you just announced that the bell should be rung, so if you leave the counting of the time in the hands of Members, it would get you confused. So, the Clerk-at-the-Table can handle the timing for all of us.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Clerks-at-the-Table are my timekeepers. No Member of Parliament is my timekeeper, so when the 10 minutes is due, the Clerks would prompt me.

We would take the *Official Report* of Friday, 21st February, 2025. Hon Members, any correction?

Yes, Hon Minority Leader?

Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, one of our duties in this Chamber is to accord one another with respect and show courtesy so that we can live together in this Chamber as a family, although we have our views.

Mr Speaker, Hon Jerry Ahmed Shaib is in Leadership. He is one of the five Leaders on the Minority Side. He raised an issue of time to draw the attention of the Speaker. I also know that the Hon Member for Ho Central—*[Interruption]*—Ho West, thank you for the correction, Hon Bedzrah, Mr Speaker, though he did not speak into the microphone, got up *[...Expunged by order of Mr Speaker]*, throwing his hands.

With the greatest respect, the least we can do is to extend courtesies. Hon Shaib is in Leadership, so if the Hon Bedzrah disagrees with him, he can calmly rise from his place like I did. When he catches the eye of the Speaker, he would tell Mr Speaker what his prayer is. When Mr Speaker rules, Hon Bedzrah could either abide or use the right processes to challenge him.

Mr Speaker, my Colleague is in Leadership so I do not think it is appropriate for him to receive such a treatment from a senior Member in the way and manner that Hon Bedzrah did. In this Chamber, it is now obvious to us that one does not need to act for records to capture the person to even trigger a petition. We are enjoying the new

precedent. So, we have taken notice of his conduct. He did not need to speak into the microphone. I am pleading with you, Mr Speaker, that this having been brought to your attention, should please address it.

I humbly submit.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: What are you bringing to my attention?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with respect, I am bringing to you the *[...Expunged by order of Mr Speaker]* conduct of our Colleague, Hon Bedzrah, because when the application was made, he *[...Expunged by order of Mr Speaker]* shouted on Hon Shaib; he raised his voice.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: What exactly did he say?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, it is a disorderly conduct.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: What exactly did Hon Bedzrah state?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, he is right here. He shouted, “What is this?” That is what he did, throwing his hands. *[Uproar]* Oh, all right. Leave them.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members! — Hon Minority Leader, are you done?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with respect, because of the noise that came from the other Side, I

wanted to wait on them so that I can advance my point.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, if we all agree to extend courtesies, we should do so. Hon Jerry Ahmed Shaib is a Leader, and we brought the matter to your attention. The posture of Hon Bedzrah and the way he acted was not appropriate. In the least, Hon Shaib is his Leader. Hon Bedzrah is senior, but once somebody who is a first-timer is made a Leader, all courtesies and respect must be accorded him. I do not think that it was appropriate for him to use those words against Hon Jerry Ahmed Shaib, although it did not go into the microphone. That is all my prayer for your attention.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, before giving the floor to Hon Emmanuel Bedzrah, I order that wherever the Minority Leader used the word — should be expunged from the records.

Hon Bedzrah, you have the floor.

Mr Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzrah: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity. Mr Speaker, I agree that Hon Jerry Shaib is in Leadership and should be given the courtesy.

Mr Speaker, first of all, I want to draw your attention to the fact that the Minority Leader is improperly dressed. This is not parliamentary dressing; this is unparliamentary, and Mr Speaker, you must ask him to go back and come

properly dressed to the floor of the House. Mr Speaker, I want the Minority Leader to bring to the House, the statement that I made to the effect that it was — to the Leader from his Side.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, you ruled from Order 64 which says that the bell should be rung, and you called the Clerk to ring the bell. That is in order according to our Orders. So, why would any Member, having heard you clearly state that the bell should be rung, rise again to the effect that we have seven minutes to the time of your ruling? What does that mean? So, I stood up to tell Hon Shaib that because he was not at Ho and the Minority was not at the orientation programme, when the Speaker is giving a ruling, he would stand.

These are some of the things that we need to learn as new Members of the House. An Hon Member can be in Leadership, but if the Hon Member does not know it, he does not know it, and he must learn. Our Friend, Hon Jerry Shaib must learn the Rules of this House and stop interrupting anyhow. We would continue to help them.

Mr Speaker, when I came to this House, the first thing that happened to me when I started speaking was that, Papa Owusu-Ankomah, stood up more than three times just to interrupt me and after that, he called me and told me that he did that because he wants me to learn the rules of the House. Hon Jerry Shaib must learn the rules of the House.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, in the absence of any correction, the *Official Report* of Friday, 21st February, 2025, is hereby adopted.

Hon Members, we would take the item numbered 6, the Business Statement.

Yes, Minority Leader?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

I believe that I brought a matter to your attention. The Member for Ho West got up; in fact, he did not deny his action, but went further to attack the Hon Colleague in Leadership. Mr Speaker, he should learn—You heard it, so I would not want to repeat it.

11.19 a.m.

What is it that he did that makes him think that his rising to draw your attention to a matter, amounted to he acting wrongly?

Mr Speaker, we would continue to extend courtesies to Colleagues and the Chair. If we bring matters to your attention and nothing is done, and even the Member, who is the offending party, decides to escalate it by going after the Member who is complaining in such a manner, Mr Speaker, what it means is that it would create a platform for this House to condescend. He has condescended by the words he has used against a Leader on this Side. I have seen three of our Colleagues in Leadership on the other Side seated. Three of our Colleagues in Leadership, at least, Hon

Ricketts-Hagan is the acting Leader, and he has heard the words that are being used to describe a Leader on our Side.

To end it, he now goes further to talk about my dressing. Mr Speaker, with respect, this is Cubavera. When we were young, they called it *akrakyefoɔ* shirt: a gentleman's wear. Sometimes, we should not use some form of ignorance to rather say things that we do not know. How do you say that Cubavera—*[Interruption]*—No, how does he say it for *Hansard* to capture that Cubavera is a shirt which when one wears, amounts to improper dressing and is not parliamentary? The last time, somebody attempted to say that Cubavera is a pyjama, and Mr Speaker corrected that person. This is a gentleman's shirt and very unique.

Mr Speaker, so, to gloss over it would mean that the Chair is indirectly endorsing what he has said. Mr Speaker, I have said, time without number in this Chamber, that we in the Minority are observing a certain trend of precedents. There is no problem. We are observing it, and if these continue, *Hansard* would record, and I am sure that, one day, we would all rely on it as a good authority if nothing is done about it.

I so submit.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, we would take the item numbered 6 — Business Statement.

[Pause]

Hon Members, the Clerks-at-the-Table would do the needful, so let us take the Business Statement—

The normal practice is that the Clerks-at-the-Table would count the Members and report to me based on which I would take a decision. So, when I say the Clerks-at-the-Table should do the needful, what is the needful in the circumstances? It is the counting.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Vice Chairman of the Business Committee/ Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan) *on behalf of the Chairman:* Mr Speaker, the Committee met today, Friday, 7th March, 2025, and arranged Business of

the House for the Ninth Week ending Friday, 14th March, 2025.

Mr Speaker, the Committee accordingly submits its report as follows:

Arrangement of Business

Formal Communications by the Speaker

Mr Speaker, you may read any available communications to the House.

Question(s)

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee has scheduled the following Ministers to respond to Questions asked of them during the week:

	<u>No. of Question(s)</u>
i. Minister for Energy and Green Transition	6
ii. Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs	5
iii. Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection	3
iv. Minister for Lands and Natural Resources	3
v. Minister for Health	5
vi. Minister for Foreign Affairs	3
vii. Minister for Roads and Highways	<u>5</u>
Total Number of Questions	<u>30</u>

Mr Speaker, in all, seven Ministers are expected to attend upon the House to respond to 30 Questions during the week. The Questions are of the following types:

i. Urgent – **1**; ii. Oral – **29**

Statements

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Order 91(2), Ministers of State may be permitted to make Statements on Government policy. You may also admit Statements by Hon Members in accordance with Order 93.

Papers and Reports

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Order 97, Papers may be laid during the week and reports from Committees may also be presented to the House for consideration.

Motions and Resolutions

Mr Speaker, Motions may be debated and their consequential Resolutions, if any, taken during the week.

Briefing of the House

Mr Speaker, upon the receipt of a request addressed to you by the Government Statistician to engage Hon Members on Ghana's statistical products, especially the digital platforms, the Business Committee in line with your directives, has scheduled to hold the said engagement at a Committee of the Whole meeting on Wednesday, 12th March, 2025.

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee has also re-scheduled the Minister for Foreign Affairs to brief the House on the deportation of Ghanaian Citizens in the United States of America and related matters on Friday, 14th March, 2025.

Hon Members are to take note and avail themselves for the briefings on the said dates.

Presentation of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government

Mr Speaker, the Minister responsible for Finance, on the authority of the President of the Republic, would present to this honourable House the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government of Ghana for the year ending 31st December, 2025, in accordance with Article 179 of the Constitution on **Tuesday, 11th March, 2025**. The Business Committee, therefore, urges Hon Members to take note and be present in the House on the said date.

Submission of Budget Estimates

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee urges the Ministry of Finance, other Ministries and Bodies to submit their sectoral estimates to Parliament on time for the consideration and approval of the House.

Reminder on the Post-Budget Workshop

Mr Speaker, in view of the presentation of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government, a post-Budget workshop will be scheduled for the participation of all Members of Parliament. The venue and time will be communicated in due course.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 216(2) and subject to Standing Order 67, the Committee submits to the House the order in which

the Business of the House shall be taken during the week.

Tuesday, 11th March, 2025

Roll Call

National Pledge

Statements

Questions

Presentation of Papers

- (a) Annual Report on the Petroleum Funds for the 2024 Fiscal year.
- (b) Annual Report on the Collection and Utilisation of the African Union Import Levy for the 202 Fiscal year.

Motions

That this honourable House approves the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government for the year ending 31st December, 2025.

Committee sittings

Wednesday, 12th March, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Urgent Question

Mr John Darko (Suame): To ask the Minister for Energy and Green Transition the causes of power

fluctuation in the Ashanti Region, Suame Constituency in particular and what the Ministry is doing to provide stable power supply to the people in the Ashanti Region.

Questions —

***24. Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (Mpraeso):** To ask the Minister for Energy and Green Transition the plans of the Ministry to provide electricity to the communities along the Volta River within the Kwahu South Municipality to aid farmers in irrigation to ensure an all-year round production.

***25. Dr Abdul Kabiru Tia Mahama (Walewale):** To ask the Minister for Energy and Green Transition the steps the Ministry is taking to extend electricity to new areas in the following communities in the Walewale constituency: i. Walewale Kperiga ii. Walewale Tampulin iii. Walewale Kukuazugu iv. Nasia v. Kparigu vi. Janga vii. Yaama viii. Wungu ix. Wulugu and Kpansekpe.

***43. Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for Energy and Green Transition the measures being taken by Government to address the rising cost of energy and its impact on businesses and households.

***44. Ms Patricia Appiagyei (Asokwa):** To ask the Minister for Energy and Green Transition the

state of the rural electrification interventions made by the Government since 2017.

***49. Mrs Laurette Korkor Asante (Atiwa West):** To ask the Minister for Energy and Green Transition when the electrification extension which was to be undertaken as an emergency turnkey project in 2024 in the following communities will begin: i. Kwabeng ii. Abomosu iii. Tumfa iv. Muoso v. Sankubenase vi. Asunafo vii. Asamama viii. Akwabuaso ix. Ekorso x. Gyamase xi. Pameng xii. Awenare xiii. Akropong xiv. Banso xv. Bomaa xvii. Abisim xviii. Safarikrom xix. Yamama xx. Akukuso.

***26. Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (Offinso North):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when the University of Local Governance and Development Bill will be re-laid to allow the operationalisation of a university in Akumadan in the Offinso North Constituency.

***27. Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (Kwabre East):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when work will resume on the Mampongten Market which has been abandoned since 2008 in the Kwabre East Constituency.

***28. Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (Kwabre East):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when work will resume on the abandoned Astroturf at Aboaso, funded by the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) in the Kwabre East Constituency.

***29. Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (Offinso North):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs when the ongoing construction of the six-unit classroom block in Akumadan and Nkenkaasu and the teachers' quarters in Brehoma, rural clinic at Akrofua will be completed under the Integrated Rural Development Project II.

***34. Dr Kingsley Agyemang (Abuakwa South):** To ask the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs the plans for the Kantamanto and Kwadaso Wood Village markets that have been destroyed by fire.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee sittings

- Committee of the Whole – Government Statistician to brief the House on Ghana's Statistical Products

Thursday, 13th March, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Questions —

***18. Mrs Mavis Nkansah-Boadu (Afigya Sekyere East):** To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection what measures the Ministry is taking to ensure the full compliance to section 87 of the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560) which prohibits child labour exploitation.

***19. Mrs Mavis Nkansah-Boadu (Afigya Sekyere East):** To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection what plans the Ministry has to address the increasing number of streetism among children of school going age.

***36. Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection the plans of the Ministry to ensure the continuity of the Kayaye Empowerment Programme.

***50. Mr Anthony Mmieh (Odotobri):** To ask the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources when the Ministry intends to introduce a Legislative Instrument to regulate the operation of the Lands Act, 2020

(Act 1036) to ensure uniformity in land administration throughout the Country.

***51. Mr Anthony Mmieh (Odotobri):** To ask the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources what the Ministry intends to do in digitalising the services being rendered by the Lands Commission across the Country to ensure easy accessibility.

***52. Mr Anthony Mmieh (Odotobri):** To ask the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources what Government policies the Ministry intends to undertake to curb corruption within the Lands sector.

***33. Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (Kwabre East):** To ask the Minister for Health when the Agenda 111 Project at Wadie Adwumakase in the Kwabre East Constituency will be completed.

***35. Mrs Laurette Korkor Asante (Atiwa West):** To ask the Minister for Health when the Agenda 111 Project at Abomosu in the Atiwa West Constituency will be completed and operationalised.

***60. Mr Seth Osei-Akoto (Atwima Mponua):** To ask the Minister for Health the immediate plans of the Ministry to furnish and operationalise CHPS compounds that have been completed and situated at: i. Kyekyewere ii.

Bedabour iii. Okyerekrom and Gogoikrom communities.

***61. Mr Seth Osei-Akoto (Atwima Mponua):** To ask the Minister for Health when the training facilities at Tamodumase Nursing College will be improved for the trainees to have full benefits of being educated.

***62. Mr Rudolf Amoako-Gyamerah (Upper Denkyira West):** To ask the Minister for Health the immediate plans of the Ministry to continue the projects of the previous Government on the Agenda 111 Project of which the Upper Denkyira West Constituency is one of the first beneficiaries but has been abandoned by contractors due to financial issues.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee sittings

Friday, 14th March, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Minister for Foreign Affairs to apprise the House on the deportation of Ghanaian Citizens in the United States of America.

Questions

***55. Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko (Effia):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what the Ministry intends to do to ensure the completion of the Effiakuma Number 9 Bypass Road (Part of Effia Lot 2) as the current state of the road poses great challenge to motorists and the community.

***56. Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko (Effia):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what the immediate plans of the Ministry are, to fix the non-functional Effiakuma Number 9 traffic light as the current state of the traffic light poses a great danger to road users and the community.

***57. Mr Seth Osei-Akoto (Atwima Mponua):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the plans of the Ministry to rehabilitate an old bridge that serves communities of: i. Kotokuom ii. Katakwiwa and Akonkye through to Apanemadi in Atwima Mponua Constituency.

***58. Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko (Effia):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what the Ministry intends to do to ensure the completion of the CDH road as the current state of the road causes grave challenges to motorists and the people.

***59. Mr Anthony Mmieh (Odotobri):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the measures the Ministry is putting in

place to ensure that all contractors return to complete projects abandoned for the past six years within the Amansie Central District.

***40. Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs the plans of the Government to ensure the accessibility of the chip-embedded passport launched by the previous Government on December 2nd 2024.

***63. Mr Frank Asiedu Bekoe (Suhum):** To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs how Ghana intends to reconcile the new Alliance of Sahel States (AES) with ECOWAS, taking into cognisance the foreign policy of Ghana:

- i. Pan Africanism ii. Good neighbourliness
- ii. Non-Alignment and Multilateralism.

***64. Mr Frank Asiedu Bekoe (Suhum):** To ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs whether the current Government fully subscribes to Article 4(M) and 4(P) of the AU Constitutive Act taking into account the relationship between the Government and the current Military Leader in Burkina Faso.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee sittings

Respectfully submitted.

11.29 a.m.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Business Statement has been presented, but before I take comments, I acknowledge the presence of students of Methodist Girls' High School, Mamfe, led by the headmistress, Mrs Winifred Arthur. They are from Akuapem North, and are 56 in number.

[Students and Headmistress of Methodist Girls' High School were acknowledged.]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: We also have students from Okuapeman Senior High School, led by Rev Richard Koranteng Afari, the headmaster. They are also from Akuapem North, and are 55 in number.

Our dear students, may you have a fruitful visit to the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana.

[Students and Headmaster of Okuapeman Senior High School were acknowledged.]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we have members of Coalition for Youth Development in Okyeman, led by Akomaning Yeboah, a convenor, in our midst. They came to present a petition. May you enjoy your stay in Parliament.

[Members and Convenor of Coalition for Youth Development, Okyeman, were acknowledged.]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I may want to suspend the House for 10 minutes to engage the Leaders. The House is accordingly suspended.

11. 32 a.m.— Sitting suspended

12.13 p.m. – Sitting resumed

Hon Members, the Business Statement was under consideration, but I would like to give the floor to the Hon Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, you relied on Order 64 (3) to take a decision, and we have resumed under Order 65 of the rules of this House. Let me make a short statement, and to tell the Majority that it is not enough to use their mouth to intimidate the Minority, that they are a Majority. *[Uproar]*

Yes, they should continue to use their mouth; they claim they are Majority. Now, they do not even have quorum for proceedings. Quorum for proceedings *kraa ay3 din ama mo [Uproar]* Count if they even have quorum for proceedings. They do not have. If you count, they are about 50. They are not even up to 60. *[Uproar]* Then count now!

If you want to challenge; if they want to talk law, they should talk law. They claim they are 187. *[Interruption]* So where are their 187? *[Interruption]* They

are working somewhere. This is the Chamber of Parliament. In the interest of governance, for the good of governance, we will co-operate with them. *[Hear! Hear!]* But when their Side are holding the stronger part of the stick, they call for a pound of flesh. Today, they are asking for mercy. We are in Lent. We are in Ramadan. We will extend to them mercy and on Wednesday, they were talking law. So where is the super-Majority? Where is their super-Majority? Mr Speaker, for the good of our country and governance, let us proceed but please, they should make sure they bring their Members in. It is the Deputy Whip's duty to bring his Members in. Their so-called super-Majority. They should bring them!

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon Minority Leader. Hon Members, the Business Statement has been presented. I will therefore welcome comments from Members.

Hon Kennedy Nyarko Osei?

Mr Kennedy Nyarko Osei: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the Business Statement for the ensuing week, I have seen that the Hon Minister for Finance has been programmed to appear before the House. Mr Speaker, before I go on with my submission, the Deputy Majority Leader who did the presentation of the Business Statement is not on his seat. So, I do not know who would be responding to the issues that I would raise. Yes, I need your direction.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Please go ahead and raise your issue.

Mr K. N. Osei: All right. Mr Speaker, like I was saying, Tuesday we are going to have the Budget Statement and Economic Policy being read and I want to put this on record in this House.

This is my fourth term in this House. There has not been any instance that in just a few days to the presentation of Budget Statement, Committees have not been constituted. This is not acceptable, we are the lawmakers, we are supposed to do the right thing, but if we are doing the wrong thing, then what do you expect those outside to take us for? I know Mr Speaker is the chair for the Committee of Selection. We cannot, and I am putting it—We cannot accept to have the Budget Statement and Economic Policy being read on Tuesday when Committees have not been formed. We should not. If this House cannot do it, then we should not accept the presentation of the Budget Statement in this House on Tuesday. It has never happened. Why are we doing this to ourselves? It is like nobody cares. Is it deliberate? Is it intentional not to get this thing done? And we are happy nobody cares about it? I am so emotional, do not worry about it. It is normal. I think that we have to take this seriously and get it done. If there is nothing wrong with it, let us do it today. If we are not able to do it today—Monday is not a Sitting day. When are we going to do it? And are we going to read the Budget? I have seen my senior Colleague, my neighbour and a very good Friend, Hon Sampson Ahi saying that I should stop—*[Interruption]*—How

can I be out of order? I am raising a germane and important matter to this House. Mr Speaker, you are the Chairman and you need to say something. We need to bring a closure to this matter. We cannot raise this matter again. Let us bring a closure to this it.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Kennedy Nyarko Osei, look at the item numbered 10 on today's Order Paper, at commencement of public proceedings. *[Uproar]*

Mr K. N. Osei: This has been on the Order Paper, I do not know, for Christ's sake, how long?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I am reliably informed that we are taking that particular business today.

Mr K. N. Osei: Mr Speaker, I would take a cue from you. If that is what you are saying, I would take a cue. We are in the Chamber. Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Sampson Ahi?

Mr Sampson Ahi: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Even though my Colleague is raising a very important matter, I just want to draw his attention that composition of Committees is the duty of the Select Committee and that has to do with the Leadership. But asking that without that, the Minister for Finance cannot come here on Tuesday to read the Budget, I do not think we should blame the Executive if we are unable to

compose the Committees in Parliament. So, if we have anything to say, we have to ask our Leaders. When are they going to present to the House the composition of the newly constituted Committees? But to give a caveat that if it is not done today, the Minister for Finance cannot come here as if the Executive is holding on to the composition of the Committees. Just to draw the attention that this has nothing to do with the Executive. It is solely the activities of Leadership and for that matter, Parliament. And just to say that, this is not even part of the Business Statement. So, I wanted you to rule him out of order. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Sampson Ahi, he said it, but I do not think he intends that. That is not his intention. And I have drawn his attention...

12.22p.m.

Mr Sampson Ahi, he said it, but I do not think he intends that. That is not his intention and I have drawn his attention to the fact that, the item numbered 10 (a) and (b) is talking about the composition of the Committees.

Hon Minority Leader?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, my Colleagues will come in on some other matter, but there is a preliminary issue to address. Hon Ahi says that that responsibility is in the hands of Leadership. That is true. Mr Speaker, he would have been more accurate if he had said that the delay is coming from the Majority Leadership.

Well, let *Hansard* capture this; our Side has been ready ever since—*[Interruption]*. Do not worry; the Hon Member can speak into the microphone.

Mr Speaker, on their Side, they are telling us that they are waiting for four more nominees, and until that happens, they would not have a full picture. So, we are only indulging them. If they think they are ready, let us finish this thing because Members are apprehensive on this matter. The delay is coming from the Majority Side, so they should blame their Leadership, not us. They should blame the Majority Leadership and not bring us into their troubles.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Second Deputy Majority Whip?

Mr Richard Acheampong: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, we on this Side are ready with our list—*[Interruption]*. This is the list. There is an agreement that Leadership, together with Mr Speaker, will convey a meeting today, that is the Committee of Selection, to conclude on this matter. That is why it has been listed and we will take it. The Minority Leader is aware. It is here; we are ready.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Second Deputy Majority Whip, at least at commencement, we can lay the Report.

Mr Acheampong: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: So that the Committee would conclude its meeting

and then it is distributed. Probably, it can even be taken before the close of the day.

Mr Acheampong: Very well, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Nyindam, on the Business Statement, but not on the composition of the Committees.

Mr Matthew Nyindam: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, I am surprised you are so lenient with the Second Deputy Majority Whip on this matter. You have been so lenient with him. I remember two weeks ago, you were comfortably in your seat, just like you are this afternoon when this matter came up, and I told you that I did not trust him; his assurances were not assuring enough. What is the withdrawal about this matter?

Mr Speaker, I am surprised he is holding some documents in his hands saying, "This is the list". I can easily say, "This is the list". I can easily say that. Mr Speaker, you asked him and he assured us that the following Tuesday, the Report would be taken on this Floor, and with the Committees, everything was set. Fortunately for him, the Majority Chief Whip, Mr Dafeamekpor, entered and assured you that the Reports were ready and we were going to take the Committees.

That was two weeks ago, only for you to allow him to lay it today. Mr Speaker, you do not even have a Report of it and you are saying he should lay it. You do not have it; I know that you do not have

it. I am surprised that the Deputy Minister-designate for Food and Agriculture is saying that the Committees do not have a link with the Budget Statement and Economic Policy. I am surprised. I am surprised because the Committees would do justice to the Budget Statement and Economic Policy, and the Budget Statement and Economic Policy would be referred to the various Committees depending on the Committees or the sectors. For the Hon Member to sit here and tell us that the Budget Statement and Economic Policy has nothing to do with Committees, I am surprised.

So, Mr Speaker, you are being too lenient with the Second Deputy Majority Whip.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Nyindam, I think his concern was the fact that Hon Kennedy Nyarko Osei stated that without the composition of the Committee, the Budget Statement and Economic Policy would not be read.

Mr Nyindam: Mr Speaker, rightly so, because if the Minister comes to the Floor today and reads the Budget Statement and Economic Policy, Mr Speaker, where would you refer the Budget Statement and Economic Policy to? Who are those going to work on the Budget Statement and Economic Policy? Mr Speaker, who are those Committees that would deal with the estimates?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Nyindam, you know that the Budget Statement and Economic Policy will be taken, it will be debated, then the

estimate will come for the distribution to the Committees. So, definitely, I believe strongly, before the Budget Statement and Economic Policy hearing, the Committees would have been composed. So, rest assured. Hon Nyindam, rest assured.

Mr Nyindam: Mr Speaker, I do not want to take your assurances because you are not the one to do the work. Mr Speaker, it is the Leadership and those responsible to form the Committees and present the Committee's Report to the Floor.

So, Mr Speaker, I do not know why you are lenient with him. I want to appeal to you that even when the Budget Statement and Economic Policy is presented, the debate itself would be based on the Committees. Committee Members are supposed to debate the Budget Statement and Economic Policy.

So, Mr Speaker, today, let us be assured, not the kind of assurances that were given two weeks or three weeks ago. By close of today, if this is not done, then, Mr Speaker, on Tuesday, when the Budget Statement and Economic Policy is going to be read, I will urge the Leadership on our Side—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Matthew Nyindam, the gospel according to Matthew has been recognised.

Mr Nyindam: All right, Mr Speaker, since you have recognised the gospel according to Matthew, and according to Nyindam aspects—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Matthew Nyindam gospel has been recognised.

Mr Nyindam: Mr Speaker, by close of today, let us take this particular Report.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the audience.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Members, on the Business Statement, I recognise Hon Ricketts-Hagan, Deputy Majority Leader.

Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I think the Second Deputy Whip did say that the Committee of Selection and the two Leaders have agreed to meet with Mr Speaker today. So, I do not know where the concern is. Well, let us forget about last week; we are talking about today. The two Leaders at the Business Meeting agreed that they will meet today on this matter. So, let us not talk about last week; we are talking about today.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Assafuah?

Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

About three weeks ago, I indicated to the Majority Leader of the Question that I filed, which failed to appear in the Business Statement. Later on, I was told

that I was supposed to have made some corrections to it, which correction I have made. But unfortunately, today, I still do not see it in the Business Statement. It is in respect of a Question that I filed to the Minister for Defence. That Question is still not in the Business Statement. I will call on the Majority Leader and the Business Committee to re-look at that because I will be happy to find—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Assafuah, last week's Questions are yet to be rescheduled. So, it will be rescheduled. Your Question will be rescheduled.

Mr Assafuah: No, I filed four Questions; three of them are here. I know the Ministers are already running away from the Questions.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: That one will be rescheduled—

Mr Assafuah: As to why the Ministers have not appeared before the House—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Are all the four Questions directed to the same Minister?

Mr Assafuah: No, but as I said—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, so it will be rescheduled; the fourth one will be rescheduled.

Mr Assafuah: Very well; thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Mr Second Deputy Speaker?

12.32 p.m.

Mr Andrew Amoako Asiamah: Mr Speaker, thank you.

I think, with respect to Hon Assafuah's question, there were four Questions, and I admitted three; I had some issues with one, and it was put on hold. So, we, probably, need to discuss it with him and see how best to address it, but three Questions were admitted. I think the Question has been asked.

Mr Assafuah: Mr Speaker, respectfully, I was told about the anomaly in the Question, to which I made a correction. I have submitted it to them, and I was expecting that today, I would find it.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: So, that one would also be admitted through the same process and scheduled. But your point is that you have four Questions; three are scheduled, but the fourth one is not. And the Second Deputy Speaker is telling you that there was a problem with the fourth Question; that is why, probably, it is not coming with the three that have been admitted. So, if you are saying that you have reworked on the Question and resubmitted, of course, it may not come with the three that have already been admitted, and, surely, that one will also come.

Prof Kingsley Nyarko?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Hon Speaker, yesterday, we observed our 68th Independence Day.

Mr Speaker, under Order 92, we are supposed to make ceremonial speeches. Next week is going to be a very busy week for us. Since I have been in this House, this is the first time that, before Independence Day, we were not given the opportunity to celebrate our heroes. I do not know the Statements you have admitted for today, but I worked on a Statement for the consideration by the House. If this is not done, Mr Speaker, it will be very bad for our democracy; it is 68 years of statehood, and we could not—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, you know that Statements are supposed to be processed and admitted to be taken. So, if you have a ceremonial Statement, I think you should timely submit the ceremonial Statement to be admitted. The fact that it is a ceremonial Statement does not mean that, probably, you send a Statement to the Office of the Speaker at the time that the Speaker is sitting over here.

Hon Members, let me use the opportunity to announce to the entire House that, first of all, the Statement must be submitted to the Whip. The Whip will go through the Statement and recommend the admission or otherwise to the Speakers. The Speaker will also read through the Statement and if the Statement is admitted, it is transmitted to the Table Office. Then the Table Office will programme the Statement to be taken. But many a time, we do not do it that way.

While we are presiding, they pass on a Statement to us to admit, which is not the

right procedure. So, Hon Members, if it is a ceremonial Statement and you cannot bring the ceremonial Statement at least three days before the ceremonial day, there will be a difficulty getting the Statement programmed to be taken.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, with respect, probably, you are making a general statement.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, it is a general statement.

Prof Nyarko: But in my situation, it was done a week prior to the 6th March, and I remember even two days before, I sent you a copy. My point is that something should have been done here either on Wednesday or even today. We cannot let yesterday pass by.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Who did you submit the Statement to?

Prof Nyarko: I submitted it to My Chief Whip. I have been in this House for four years; I know the procedure. I sent it to my able Chief Whip, and I was told that it had been worked on. And Mr Speaker, with respect, when I did that for confirmation, two days before, as you are saying, I sent it to you personally. But my point is that, granted, 6th March is a very important day in our history, and if this day just went unnoticed—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Do you have the Statement now and want to make the Statement?

Prof Nyarko: I have it, but I am saying that we cannot overlook a day like

this. How can we?—[*Interruption*]—This is not right. It has never happened in this House, at least, since the time I have been here.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Prof Kingsley Nyarko, I believe I used the opportunity to state clearly the procedure that the Statement will have to be taken through. You are saying you gave it to your Whip to be recommended and admitted. So, that really is a process, and I do not expect you to castigate Parliament in that regard.

Hon Suhuyini?

Alhaji Suhuyini Sayibu Alhassan: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I wish to share in the concerns of my Hon Colleague, Professor, who spoke before me. The concerns are germane, and I agree that, having been here for a while, this is the first time I am also noticing that we have had to mark Independence Day celebration without these special Statements being admitted. It is my information that it will be done today, but that would have been after we have celebrated Independence Day.

Mr Speaker, I just want to use the opportunity this conversation presents to urge our Colleagues in the Minority to understand that the Business of this House is usually in two folds: we have Members' Business and we have Public Business. Mr Speaker, I do appreciate the excitement sometimes with which our Colleagues in the Minority imitate some of the things that some of us used

to do when we were in opposition, like the raising of quorum.

But Mr Speaker, it would be nice to, and if they would listen to me, we were always careful, and because of these concerns, we were advised mostly to separate Members' Business from Public Business. So, we were not noted for raising quorum during *Votes and Proceedings*, for example, or during Members' Business. Because when Members have Questions to ask or have Statements to make and one raises an issue of quorum at that time, it affects the Business of Members. But if, perhaps, one targets Public Business to raise quorum, then one may be achieving whatever political aim they are seeking to achieve.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much, and I thank him very much for raising this concern and for drawing the attention of the House for the need for this important Statement to be made.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Suhuyini, we have dealt with the issue of quorum, so bringing the issue of quorum back to the Floor, I think you are out of order.

Mr Alhassan: Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, you are out of order.

Yes, Hon Ayeh?

Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for recognising me.

Mr Speaker, I want to, again, commend the Business Committee for a good job, but I have in my hands the *Official Report* for 25th February, and there is a Statement here: Deportation of Ghanaian citizens in the United States of America.

Mr Speaker, column 114 have you on record, saying that:

“Hon Member, it is noted. I would invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs to come to the House on Friday, a week today, to, at least...”

—[*Interruption*]—It is in the Statement.

12.42 p.m.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Foreign Affairs is on the Business Statement to respond to that—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, if you look at the Business Statement, the Minister for Foreign Affairs has been rescheduled for next week Friday.

Mr Ayeh: Mr Speaker, it is something I wanted to draw your attention to. This a very critical issue that virtually the whole world is taking an interest in. First, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was here to brief Members about something as a Committee of the Whole. I do not know why he is coming again to respond to Questions and that particular matter, the deportation of Ghanaians in the United States, has not been attended to.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: When it is here and you do not see the need for him to come and brief us on that particular issue, it is a different matter altogether, but once a directive has been given, he is accordingly rescheduled to appear on Friday per the Business Statement under consideration.

Yes, Hon Member?

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama: Mr Speaker, I have a small comment on the item numbered 5 at page 2 of the Business Statement. Even though we are not taking correction of the Business Statement but comments, I realised that there is a small mistake there that the Committee would have to take note of, and it reads:

“Mr Speaker, the Business Committee urges the Ministry of Finance, other Ministries and Bodies to submit to ...”

The “to” there must be expunged to read, “... to submit their sectoral estimates to Parliament”. So, the “to” should rather come after “estimates”.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: It is noted. Hon Kennedy—All right, do you have another one?

Dr Mahama: The other issue I have is that on 26th February, 2025 the Minister responsible for Trade, Industry and Agribusiness was expected to come and answer some Questions. In the Business Statement for the ensuing week, it has not found expression in the Business Statement. I was wondering whether it is

an oversight because she was supposed to come on 26th February, but that did not happen, and now we have the Business Statement for the ensuing week and we still do not have the Minister for Trade, Industry and Agribusinesses coming to the House to answer those Questions.

Mr Speaker, I would want you to direct that maybe it should be captured and addressed within this week.

Mr Speaker, thank you

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, the Question had to be rescheduled because of the presentation of the Budget Statement on Tuesday. So, definitely the Minister would come.

Mr Boamah-Nyarko —*rose*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member for Effia, is it on the Business Statement?

Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko: That is so. Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, let me commend the Business Committee for the Business Statement, but I have observed that in the Business for next week, we do not have the continuation of the debate on the Message on the State of the Nation.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, we are winding up the debate today, so there would not be any need to programme it for continuation.

Mr Boamah-Nyarko: Why? Mr Speaker, we were supposed to debate it

for four days. When was it reviewed to—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I am giving you the information that Leadership have agreed that we wind up with the debate on the Message on the State of the Nation today—

Mr Boamah-Nyarko: So, you are now giving us the information—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: So, once there is that agreement, there is no need programming it for next week. So, you take the information from me.

Hon Member, may you resume your seat

Mr Boamah-Nyarko: I am guided by that, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Business Statement is accordingly adopted.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with respect—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Well, I would rescind my decision and give the floor to the Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, thank you so much for the opportunity. First, let me thank the Chairman of the Committee for arranging the Business for the ensuing week, and to also commend the Deputy Majority Leader for standing in for the Chairman in respect of that Report. We have received them, but there are a few

issues that I would want to put across for the Leader of Government Business to consider for the ensuing week.

Mr Speaker, first is the issue of revocation of appointments. We have become aware through a press statement that the Ghana Education Service (GES) has taken a new posture now which is very commendable. That is, they have directed all those who were affected to appear before a committee for verification and validation, so that the matter is resolved. That is fair enough.

I would, however, pray that you direct the Leader of Government Business to invite or get the Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment to come to this House to apprise us of the total number of those who have been affected, especially so when there are state-owned agencies that have also taken that step to terminate appointments.

These state-owned agencies generate their own revenue and are very independent. They do not depend on Government subventions, so it is important for the Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment to apprise this House of steps being taken to address certain excesses of the said directive. So, Mr Speaker, I want that to be addressed as my first point.

Second, we know that we have a Minister for Works, Housing and Water Resources. This week, we heard of the tidal waves in the Volta Region. The assemblyman for Agavedzi has addressed the press and said the tidal waves destroyed 51 houses and

displaced over 300. Yes, we have heard that Mr President has visited the people, but this thing goes beyond blankets, mattresses, and food. I—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: So, Hon Minority Leader, the points that you are raising, do you want it to find expression in the Business Statement?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, yes, the practice has—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Other than that, you would allow me to adopt the Business Statement, so that you can raise it as a matter of public importance.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, no, with respect, not to challenge you, I am only expressing a view. Normally, the practice, as I have come to know, is that it is an opportunity for us to raise these. Then, if the Leader of Government Business finds it worthy of considering and based on your directive, the Business Statement gets amended. But if you rule it out, then we leave it as it is.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I would want to give you the opportunity to raise it as a matter of—

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: This particular one?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: All right, then I would drop it and move to the next one.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: So, that after the Business Statement is adopted, then you can bring it to the Floor.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I would oblige you. I would yield to that directive. So, I will drop that point two, and move to my point three.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: That is so.
12.52 p.m.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Thank you.

Mr Speaker, point three has to do with a statement by a Colleague of this House, and I would implore the Leader of Government Business to, again, ferry this to the Minister for Finance to properly put this matter in context because it is a major matter.

This is what Hon Ampem has been telling the media. He told *Channel One TV* and *Citi News* that the Government is going to reintroduce an alternative way to generate funds through a certain gap the Government has identified in VAT, meanwhile the Government is going to scrap the e-Levy and Betting Tax. Mr Speaker, he is not in charge of fiscal policy, but this is out there. We would want the Hon Leader of Government Business to get the Minister for Finance to clarify this matter. Ghanaians are not ready for new taxes because this is what they themselves said while they were in opposition.

Mr Speaker, my next point has to do with the learned Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. I would also want to

pray the Leader of Government Business to invite the Attorney-General to brief us on his directive to state investigative agencies to arrest people. Mr Speaker, the Attorney-General himself granted an interview here to say that he authorised the arrest of Prof Ameyaw Ekumfi. I have read Article 88 of the Constitution. The learned Attorney-General does not have the power to order an arrest, his powers under Article 88(3) provides that “The Attorney-General shall be responsible for initiation and conduct of all prosecutions of criminal offenses.” Mr Speaker, this is very important.

We earlier heard about the *nolle prosequi* where he said that he took the decision without the President even knowing. Now he says that he directed the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) to arrest Prof Ameyaw Ekumfi. He himself said that to the press.

Mr Speaker, it is important that the respected Attorney-General is brought before the House to address this all-important matter next week because it is sending shivers down the spines of Ghanaians regarding the position of our law. And it is the Attorney-General arrogating certain powers to himself outside of the Constitution so I would want him to put this matter to a peaceful rest.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, how is a criminal proceeding initiated?

Osahen Afenyo-Markins: Very well. Mr Speaker, per our laws, criminal proceedings in our courts start with a

State Investigation Authority. In this case, we have the CID and the NIB and they are all under the Minister for the Interior. These bodies have the power to investigate, including Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) and other institutions of state who have been given the power to investigate.

Mr Speaker, even if you come to the Special Prosecutor, our law granted him that independence, although he took his powers from the Article 88 of the Constitution but he does not report to the Attorney-General. So, Mr Speaker, to hear the Attorney-General say he has authorised the arrest for purposes of investigation makes one curious. And if he comes here, he can clarify.

The fact that prosecution starts with investigation does not mean that the Attorney-General is responsible for investigation because investigation would have to be completed and the docket ferried to his office; it is at that point that as the Attorney-General, will now be seized with the matter and to look at it as to whether or not it is prosecutable. But for the AG to order an investigation, Mr Speaker, I am still learning so I would put that across. The learned the Leader of Government Business, can take it up. If the Attorney-General comes here and he says that by the constitutional powers he has, he can order investigation and direct the state to arrest people, let the record say so. But for now, I am curious and I think he does not have those powers. But it is for him to come here and clarify.

Mr Speaker, my last point. I would want the Leader of Government Business to get the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources to update this House on steps he is taking on this *galamsey* issue because he came to the House to make a Statement about these *galamsey* challenges.

Mr Speaker, we are hearing from the media that NDC party executives are mobilising to frustrate the Task Force. He should come and update us, how far he has dealt with this matter. Because for now, the Task Force is unable to do its work, to operate, and they are still destroying our water bodies. He should be programmed to come to this House to update us on the status of the situation. Mr Speaker, it is getting out of hand especially when they even blocked the Dunkwa-on-Offin Bridge and will not allow the Task Force to cross and there was a confrontation.

Mr Speaker, I believe that these matters can properly be addressed by the Minister if he is brought to this House so that, since it is within his purview, he would be able to address us on same.

Mr Speaker, I rest my case and leave it for the Leader for Government Business to address and then we can make progress.

Thank you so much indeed.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Ayariga?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the Hon Minority Leader was at the Business

Committee Meeting and we discussed the Agenda. He could have raised the matters that he wanted to raise to be captured in the programming of the work of the Business Committee in the ensuing week. Nevertheless, the issues that he has raised, are not matters that he is incapable of raising through the various media provided by our Standing Orders; the Standing Orders are clear.

He can ask a question of the Minister. If he asks a Question of the Minister, the Minister will come here and provide the answers. He can make a Statement on any of the matters. I do not see how the Business Committee will, based on his commentary that he has run, summon Ministers to come and provide the information that he has requested. I think that we must avoid preferring to use media platforms to do our work, when the rules are clear on how we should do the work. Let us take the issues one after the other.

Mr Speaker, what the Deputy Minister Nominee said is not a matter in relation to which this House should summon him to come and answer. He has been nominated to go to the Ministry of Finance and he has granted an interview and given some indications regarding government strategy, which will be in the Budget and the Budget Statement will be presented to us on Tuesday so he should just bid his time. On Tuesday, he will hear exactly the details of what he meant. I know what he meant. I know because I am just coming from Cabinet Meeting. I know what he is alluding to. On Tuesday, when the Minister for Finance comes here, he will tell him exactly the details

of what the Deputy Nominee is alluding to.

1.02 p.m.

On the issue of the Attorney-General, Mr Speaker, my junior who has been a serious practitioner, and I commend him because he spends a lot of time practicing, knows that EOCO, the main investigative body for economic and financial crimes, sits under the aegis of the Attorney-General so he can direct them to conduct investigations.

When they conduct investigations and it is obvious that the crime is suspected to have been committed, he can direct that the person should be arrested except, of course, that those who go to effect the arrest must comply with the Criminal Procedure Code. That is all. At the time of effecting the arrest, did they comply with the Criminal Procedure Code?

Whoever directed the arrest—In fact, an ordinary citizen can direct an arrest. I can go to the police station and report that I suspect that the former Minister has committed a crime and I have evidence that he should be arrested. If the police listen to me and see in my statement some basis for going to arrest him, they can go and arrest him. Of course, when he is arrested, he is also entitled to all his constitutional rights at the time of being arrested and subsequent to being arrested. So, I am surprised that the Minority Leader is bringing this up today. If he has an issue, he should please ask a Question of the Minister, and he would come and respond.

As for the issue of the tidal waves, again, he can ask a Question. He can ask a Question of the Minister for Works and Housing, exactly what measures he is taking to deal with the matter long term. But, we watched television and listened to the news, and the President gave clear directives regarding resolving the matter long term. He directed the Minister for Finance to make budgetary provisions for some infrastructure to be put in place there to deal with this problem.

On the sea defence project, the President gave clear directives. So, it is not the Minority Leader raising the issue today that would lead to some decision on what to do. What to do has already been decided upon by the President and clear directives given, so the Minority Leader would add nothing to the exercise by raising it here.

The Minister for Lands and Natural Resources came here, made a Statement, and subsequent to the Statement, he organised a conference for Members of Parliament for us to sit together, think through the problem and strategise on how to solve the problem, and the Minority Side refused to attend. They refused to attend to such a matter as important as how to reclaim our environment and how to deal with the menace of *galamsey*. A Minister organised a conference and the Minority Side refused to attend. Now they are saying that the Minister should come and tell us what he is doing. He told us what he would be doing at a conference. He told us, and they did not come, so how would they know what he is going to do

and what we all agreed to do as Members of Parliament to assist the Minister?

Mr Speaker, please, if they want to ask the Minister a Question so that he will come to the Floor and answer, they can do so. But the Minority Leader should not use the Friday discussion of Business Statement to introduce new matters all the time and convert it into a platform for making Statements when the Minority Leader knows clearly what the rules are. Mr Speaker, he knows what to do and I believe that he will be properly guided.

Mr First Deputy Leader: Hon Minority Leader?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Day in, day out, we learn of new precedents, and it is good for *Hansard* under the Ayariga Leadership. I do not raise lame arguments; I always come fortified. The issues I raised were all issues within the rules.

Reading Order 91(1), our rules provide, “The Speaker may make a statement on any matter of interest to the House.”. Mr Speaker, apart from the Speaker hearing a matter and raising this to the House, a Member may draw Mr Speaker’s attention to enable Mr Speaker make a statement and make directives. Therefore, it is not only the tools of Questions and Statements that a Member is limited to, but to also bring matters to your attention to make a directive.

The Majority Leader is aware that Speakers after Speakers have ruled on

this issue of Business Statement. It is allowed. I remember Mr Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu objected to Business Statement being a platform for Members raising issues generally. He raised them under Prof Aaron Mike Oquaye, and under Rt Hon Speaker, Bagbin. But on all of these occasions, the Speakers ruled that no, these are important matters that the Majority Leader would have to take on board.

So, Mr Speaker, I am simply saying that what the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice said, was in respect of National Investigation Bureau (NIB). I was not talking about the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO); I was being specific. But if as a Member of Parliament, I cannot bring a matter up for the Leader to ferry same to the Minister to make a Statement on, then how else am I supposed to express my views?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Well, Hon Minority Leader, the Majority Leader made a statement which we should take seriously. It is that you are a Member of the Business Committee and some of the matters that you are raising, you have the platform to address those issues at the Business Committee and then it will translate into the Business Statement before the House.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, on that, he is right, but in context, if I am a Member of the Committee and issues come up after the Committee meeting, the right place to raise this issue is the floor of the House. But I have heard him; he knows that Members are not limited. Except that –

the Majority Leader has to pay attention to me – he knows that Members are not limited. So, he cannot now claim that today—When he was the *de facto* legal advisor –should I bring his *Hansard*? Today, the Majority Leader is saying that we are limited; we should not raise issues. When he was the *de facto* legal advisor in the Middlebench, he raised several issues and wanted the Business Committee to take them on board. So, what has changed? Mr Speaker, I have raised them, and it is for him to take up. I rest my case.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Business Statement for the ninth week, ending 14th March, 2025, as presented, is hereby adopted.

Hon Members, let me once again acknowledge the presence of the Coalition for Youth Development in Okyeman, led by Hon Akumeni Yeboah. You are welcome. You presented a petition. The Clerk has received it for and on behalf of the Speaker of Parliament. Accordingly, issues contained in the petition will be addressed. Thank you for coming.

[Members of the Coalition for Youth Development, Okyeman, were acknowledged]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we also have students from Rich Jane Educational Complex led by Mr Stephen Sesshie, Head of Department. They are from Kpone-Katamanso Constituency and they are 60 in number.

[Students of Rich Jane Educational Complex were acknowledged]

1.21 p.m.

Hon Members, order!

Hon Members, do not worry; I am taking note of every behaviour.

Hon Ahmed, are you on your feet?

Hon Members, by the Business Statement today, the Minister for Foreign Affairs has been rescheduled for next week. Questions accordingly have also been rescheduled. So, can we move to the item numbered 10?

Item number 10 — Presentation of Papers by the Leadership of the House.

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul: I do not know what you and the Clerk to Parliament addressed, but Members of Parliament here are totally confused. You said a petition was—*[Interruption]*—It is all right.

My Leader says that—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Well, I was of the view that, since the petition is addressed to the Speaker, I just acknowledged their presence that they have brought this petition. The copy of the petition is addressed to the Speaker himself because his name has been specifically mentioned. It is not just addressed to—We do not—It is not just addressed to—

Hon Members, it is for the purposes of acknowledging the members.

Hon Members, order!

Some Hon Members — *rose* —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Baafi Okyere, why are you up?

Hon Assafuah, why are you up?

Why are you on your feet?

Hon Members, kindly resume your seats—*[Uproar]*

Hon Majority Leader?

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, many of my Colleagues opposite have been in this House for the past four years, and they understand the style of the Rt Hon Speaker. Indeed, last week, in relation to another petition, he drew attention to the procedure for presenting petitions. He drew attention and cautioned that, henceforth, we should follow the procedure for presenting petitions in this Chamber, last week. Last week, I was here.

I have presented petitions on behalf of petitioners in this House before, and the procedure is very clear. You have a Minority Leader who was once a Majority Leader, got deposed as Majority Leader briefly, and then fought back to become a Majority Leader very briefly as well—And he understands the procedures. He knows. He knows how a petition is presented to this House.

Please, it is becoming too much. When we just sidestep our Rules, we are supposed to be 276 people in this Chamber. If we decide to sidestep the Rules and everybody wants to do whatever he or she wants to do, this place will become totally ungovernable.

Please, the Rules are clear on what to do when you want to present a petition. I have heard the details of the petition on radio. I saw that they came to the House; they met the Clerk to Parliament, they presented it to the Clerk to Parliament, they read it before the Clerk to Parliament, he accepted it, and said he will forward it to the Speaker. But that is not the procedure. He is here, so if he feels strongly about the matter, he should encourage them to go through the procedure.

If you recall, when those who were affected by the financial sector clean up exercise marched here on a number of occasions with petitions—But none of the petitions were read on the floor of the House until they went to the Speaker, and the Speaker advised them on how to submit a petition. They came to me, and I then took them through the whole process, and the Speaker took the petition, referred it to a special Committee. The Committee heard the parties and then presented a Report, and then the House took some decisions relating to the Report and directed the Ministry of Finance to implement the recommendations of the Committee. This is our procedure.

So, please, let us follow the procedure. I have no issue with any of them. They

are citizens, and they can bring their petitions. But those who want to advocate on their behalf in this Chamber know how they should come. So, please, they should come properly.

Mr Speaker, the Minority leader knows how to come by petition to this House. The former Minister for Defence knows how to come to this House — *[Interruption]*—I heard it on the radio. If I want to present it to the House, I would follow the procedure. I am saying that if I want to present the petition, I would follow the procedure—*[Interruption]*—He knows there is a petition.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Nitiwul, I never read the petition. I acknowledged the people in the Gallery that they have brought petition. But I never read any petition. You were seeking to ask what the petition is about. Do you understand? So, if I acknowledge them that they have brought a petition, must you know what the petition is about before it is referred to the Committee? No, we would follow the procedure and refer the petition to the appropriate Committee. I have even indicated that the petition was specifically addressed to the Speaker. I would not be announcing it to the House before it gets to the Speaker. But for the purposes of acknowledging them at the Public Gallery, I made that particular statement.

So, Hon Member, let us follow the procedure in doing things.

I always say that when the procedure is set down for a right to be exercised, we need to follow the procedure in

exercising the right. So, I do not think that acknowledging them in the Public Gallery should lead to the fact that the petition should be read to the House.

Mr Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, thank you for acknowledging them.

But Mr Speaker, if a Member of Parliament were to walk out today and is being asked that some people came to present a petition, what would we say? What are we going to say? You told us and acknowledged them that they have brought a petition. So, if I walk out today and my friends were to ask me that some people came to present a petition to Parliament, the Speaker acknowledged them and what the petition was about, Mr Speaker, what would I say? Should I say I do not know? I think that is wrong.

Mr Speaker, is it difficult to ask what the petition is about? Is it a secret or what? Is it a state secret? Or is it a security secret?

1.22 p.m.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us make progress.

Hon Members, can we take the item numbered 10?

Before then, we also have students from Lamasa and Patience International School located at Akuapem North, led by James Owusu Mensah, the headmaster. They are 95 in number.

[Students of Lamasa and Patience International School and Headmaster were acknowledged.]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, kindly resume your seat.

Yes, Hon Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, one more time, I want us to be properly guided on our rules.

Mr Speaker, the Majority Leader just spoke extensively on what, in his view, is the right procedure to follow when it comes to Presentation of Petitions. Mr Speaker, some few days ago, we had a group from the Volta Region who presented a petition and it was in connection with a statement that a Member was overhead, allegedly, to have made. The Speaker read the petition out to the House and actually told the House what the petition was about and made some further comments.

Mr Ayariga —rose—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, I recognise the Hon Majority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I would want you to recognise him, but just a moment. I think that the two of us should have a much more decent practice. I listened to him to make his point. At least, he would have a right of being heard by you, so he should take note. But this interruption does not help matters, so I would plead with him to let me finish.

I heard the Speaker make some statement on the petition. So, at least, Members in the House knew what the petition was about. A moment ago, you said the petition is addressed to the Rt Hon Speaker himself; therefore, you cannot even read or say anything about it to Members. But, Mr Speaker, you are the one in the Chair. You are presiding. It is not addressed to the Rt Hon Speaker in his personal capacity. So, Mr Speaker, if Members are asking you to, at least, share with them the content, I do not think that they are demanding—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, let me just place on record that it was addressed to the Speaker in his personal capacity. That is why I indicated that his name has been specifically mentioned. I said so, that his name has been specifically mentioned.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with respect, if they addressed it to the Rt Hon Speaker and they say to his attention and mention their name, I yield to you as the presiding officer. But it does not mean, in my view, most humbly, the fact that his name is there, that it is to him personally. However, that is your ruling; I would not belabour that.

Mr Speaker, the Majority Leader said he has heard on radio about this petition. I have also heard, and I know the concerns of the petitioners regarding one of their own who was denigrated in this House. I believe that at least, pointing out that indeed, this is the petition and this is the title of it, you are not going into the details of it. Not at all; you are not.

So, Mr Speaker, there is precedence here. The other petition that was received some few days ago, a statement was made. Mr Speaker, we would have to be fair. To the extent that, the Rt Hon Speaker said the person should own up or else—Mr Speaker, this is the extent to which comments were made, so—*[Interruption]*—No, but we are dealing with the presiding officer. The one presiding should, at least, be able to tell us what the petition is about. That is as simple as that. We are not saying he should get into the merits or otherwise—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, the petition is governed by Standing Order 99 and we all know the content of Standing Order 99. However, in Parliament, we are masters of our own rules, so in a circumstance of this nature, whether the petition complied with our own Standing Orders is a matter that should be determined. So, allow us to do that particular determination, rather than saying that an action should be taken on the petition by reading out the petition.

Hon Minority Leader, read Order 99.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, first of all—**[Some Hon Members: Read]**—Mr Speaker, fortunately, this is the page, I am there. I have been reading Order 99. This is where I am, so they should take their time. We would get there.

Mr Speaker, if my Colleagues would indulge me, I referred to a petition that was received some few days ago and I

have referred to *Hansard*. Decisions and actions of Speakers are part of precedence.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, my request is for you to read Standing Order 99, so that the entire House—

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Do not worry, I will get there. I am laying a foundation.

Mr Speaker, this petition is about a statement that was made when Hon Murtala Muhammed Ibrahim was making a contribution on that commemorative day when a Statement on J. B. Danquah was made. He made certain serious allegations against J. B. Danquah and quoted a book. The family members are here petitioning Parliament, telling you that, indeed, those derogatory remarks are offensive. So, Mr Speaker, all that we wanted to know from you is the content. You are, however, saying that per Standing Order 99(5), the petition would have to go through a certain procedure. We are not challenging that. We know. Mr Speaker, all we are saying is that yes, upon informing the House that there are petitioners here and having acknowledged them, what is it about? That is all. We are not saying that determine the matter here and now because we all know that they are contesting the attack on a hero of this country. We are aware. The Majority Leader himself acknowledges that he heard it on radio. The words that were used to describe him is our problem.

1.32 p.m.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I think we can make progress.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, just to correct the records, the communication from the Speaker last week was not as a result of the petition. Let me tell you that while he was abroad when the comment was made in this Chamber, he called me and directed an investigation and he told me he was going to make a formal communication. It just coincided that the petitioners were in the Chamber that day. And just as you have recognised them, he recognised them, but then he made it known that petitions are not presented that way. And that if you have a petition, you pass it through your Member of Parliament or any Member of Parliament and that Member of Parliament will go according to Order 99 and that is how a petition is formally brought before this House. He said so and I was here. You were here. So why does he try to misinform? Because people are watching us. They are learning our practices. So, we should communicate properly what our practice is so that tomorrow if there are other petitioners out there, they will understand how petitions are presented to this House.

But when the Speaker has told the whole world how petitions are presented, some people come and they do not comply with it and we are drawing attention that look, this is how it should be done. Admit that that is how it should be done. If you want other favours, ask for those favours. But do not create the impression that as a matter of right, the

content of the petition must be read. That is not something that should be demanded. That is my point and I am saying that we all know what the petition is about. We all know because it is on radio. It started about three days ago. I saw it on social media this morning. I listened to the radio this afternoon when I was driving here from Cabinet meeting and then I heard it. So, I am saying that we all know what it is about but it is addressed to the Speaker. Let him decide whether he wants to admit it and then let him take the necessary action and let us leave it there and then continue.

Mr Speaker, you asked for us to take item numbered 10. *[Interruption]*

We have a long day today. Today is Friday.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with respect, it is very rich to hear from the Majority Leader concerning the incident that, Mr Speaker only heard one side and said that he was going to investigate. Because, Mr Speaker, the other side against J. B. Dankwa, of blessed memory, was even said into the records. So, for the Majority Leader to say that the Speaker's comment only coincided with the petition and that the Speaker had called him on phone while abroad to say that he was going to investigate the other side makes it very rich. And I find it very curious because somebody, a Member of Parliament, described J. B. Dankwa in very unpalatable words and used certain language against his person, referred to a book which never described J.B. Dankwa as such. So, if the Majority

Leader is now telling us that the Speaker did not hear that one and only heard the other and promised to investigate, then we leave it to posterity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, with all due respect, can we make progress? Please, let us look at item numbered 10.

Mr Ayairga: Mr Speaker, the item is not ready yet. The Committee on Selection was supposed to meet but we have not met yet. So, when we meet, we would bring the Report and we want to do that today. So, Mr Speaker, if it is possible for you to take your Reports, the Appointment Committee Reports, numbered 12.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us take the item numbered 12, Motion.

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan): Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the motion is given, the motion for the adoption of the Twelfth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Minister of State and Deputy Ministers may be *moved* today.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Motion is moved. Any seconder?

Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib): Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Motion moved and seconded and it is for consideration of the House.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

Resolved accordingly.

MOTIONS

Twelfth Report of the Appointments Committee on the President's Ministerial Nominations.

Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan): Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this honourable House adopts the Twelfth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers.

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I would like to make few comments on the Report and ask the *Hansard* to capture the entire Report as having being read.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Appointments

Committee regarding His Excellency the President's nominations for ministerial and deputy ministerial appointments in accordance with Articles 78(1) and 79(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217 of Parliament. The nominees considered were:

- Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba – Minister of State-designate for Public Sector Reforms
- Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Finance
- Mr Ebenezer Oklety Terlabi – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of the Interior
- Mr Samson Ahi – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness, and Industry
- Dr Clement Abas Apaak – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Education
- Mr Richard Gyan-Mensah – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Energy
- Mr John Kofi Setor Dumelo – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The Committee conducted a thorough vetting process, which included a review of the nominees' qualifications, professional backgrounds, and responses to key national concerns. The vetting process also involved the publication of

their names in the media to allow for public input, as well as the review of confidential reports from relevant security and tax authorities.

Each nominee provided detailed responses regarding their strategic plans and policy initiatives for their respective ministries. Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba emphasised enhancing public sector efficiency through digitalisation and capacity-building programmes. Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem focused on fiscal discipline, revenue mobilisation, and private sector development to stabilise Ghana's economy. Mr Ebenezer Okletey Terlabi addressed security concerns, including border protection, prison reforms, and improving security personnel welfare. Mr Sampson Ahi highlighted strategies to enhance trade facilitation, industrialisation, and financial support for small and medium-sized enterprises. The Nominee discussed his personal and professional background, including his commitment to public service, presidential ambitions, and lessons learned from past experiences.

Mr Richard Gyan-Mensah addressed a range of energy and power-related issues, including privatisation, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and cost reduction, while emphasising his commitment to supporting the substantive Minister in implementing key policies and initiatives. Dr Clement Abas Apaak also addressed various education-related issues, including the sustainability of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) Programme, decentralising food procurement in

schools, reintroducing Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), addressing teacher welfare, and promoting sporting activities in schools. He also emphasised his commitment to support the Minister in implementing key policies and initiatives. Mr John Kofi Setor Dumelo addressed various policy and development issues, including agricultural policy, economic and social concerns, and food security and production, highlighting challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions. Based on their demonstrated competence, knowledge, and expertise, the Committee, by **consensus**, recommends to the House the adoption of its report and the approval of all four Nominees.

1.0 Introduction

On Tuesday, 11th February, 2025, His Excellency the President, John Dramani Mahama, in accordance with Article 78(1) and Article 79(1) of the 1992 Constitution, formally submitted to Parliament the nomination of the following Hon Members of Parliament for ministerial and deputy ministerial appointments:

- i. Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba, MP – Minister of State-designate for Public Sector Reforms;
- ii. Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem, MP – Deputy

- Minister-designate for the Ministry of Finance;
- iii. Mr Ebenezer Okletey Terlabi, MP – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of the Interior;
- iv. Mr Sampson Ahi, MP – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness, and Industry;
- v. Dr Clement Abas Apaak, MP – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Education;
- vi. Mr Richard Gyan-Mensah, MP – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Energy; and
- vii. Mr John Kofi Setor Dumelo – Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Pursuant to Order 217 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, the Rt Hon Speaker referred the nominations to the Appointments Committee for vetting and subsequent submission of a report to the House for consideration.

2.0 Reference Documents

The Committee referred to the underlisted documents during the consideration of the nominees:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament; and
- iii. The Curricula Vitae (CVs) of the nominees.

3.0 Consideration of the Referral

Pursuant to Standing Order 217(10), the names of the nominees were published in the newspapers for the attention of the public. The publication also requested memoranda from the public regarding the nominees. The Committee subsequently sought and obtained Confidential Reports on the nominees from the Ghana Police Service and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). The Committee also requested that the nominees submit tax status reports from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

The Committee held a public hearing on Monday, 24th February, 2025, to consider the nominations. The nominees subscribed to the Oath of a Witness before the Committee and answered questions from Hon Members. The nominees were asked questions relating to their curricula vitae, eligibility, competencies, issues of national concern, and those pertaining to the offices to which they have been nominated. The Committee, after its deliberations, reports on the nominees as follows:

4.0 MS LYDIA LAMISI AKANVARIBA (MP) MINISTER OF STATE-DESIGNATE, PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS

4.1 Background

Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba was born on 7th October 1973 in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. She began her education at Lartebiokorshie 1&2 Middle School in Accra, where she studied from 1985 to 1987. She then attended New Juaben Secondary/Technical School from 1987 to 1989 before proceeding to Sandema Secondary/Technical School, where she obtained her O-Level qualification between 1989 and 1992. For her A-Level studies, she attended St. Mary's Secondary School from 1992 to 1994.

In pursuit of a career in healthcare, Hon Akanvariba enrolled at the Presbyterian Nurses Training College in Bawku, where she studied General Nursing from 1995 to 1998. She later advanced her education at Central University College, earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2011. In 2016, she obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from MountCrest University College, further broadening her professional expertise.

Her professional career commenced with her mandatory practical training at the Presbyterian Hospital in Bawku in 1998. Following this, she served as

a Staff Nurse at Saboba Medical Centre from 1998 to 2000. She continued her service at the Presbyterian Hospital in Bawku, where she rose through the ranks, serving as a Senior Staff Nurse from 2000 to 2005, a Nursing Officer from 2006 to 2009, and subsequently as a Senior Nursing Officer from 2009 to 2011. Her career then took a turn towards disaster management when she joined the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) as a Senior Disaster Management Officer, a role she held from 2013 to 2017. She later ventured into business leadership and served as the Managing Director of Noryini Commercials Limited in Accra from 2017 to 2020.

Ms Akanvariba entered frontline politics and was elected as the Member of Parliament for the Tempene Constituency in the Upper East Region in 2021. Since joining Parliament, she has served on several committees, including the Select Committee on Communications and the Committee on Poverty Reduction Alleviation from 2021 to 2024. In 2024, she served as a Member of the Standing Orders Committee, the Committee on Local Government and Rural Development, and the Security and Intelligence Committee.

Beyond parliamentary work, she has held leadership roles such as Treasurer of the West African

Parliamentarians Network on Internet Governance since 2024. She also previously served as the PTA Chairperson of Falsyd Foundation School from 2014 to 2021.

Ms Akanvariba has actively participated in numerous high-profile conferences and capacity-building programmes. She was part of the International Delegation of Parliamentarians to the International Religious Summit in Washington DC in February 2025 and attended the Digital Policy Symposium at the African Internet Governance Forum. She took part in Cyber Week in Tel Aviv in June 2024, and the Policy Forum–High-Level Governance meeting in Kigali also in June 2024. She attended the Internet Governance Forum in Dakar in 2024, and the Forum on International Freedom in Africa in Dar es Salaam in September 2024 and 2023. She was also a delegate at the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra in 2023 and contributed to the Annual Impact Round-table Discussion (AIRTAD) & Robotics.

She also participated in the Socialist International (SI) Council meeting in Geneva in July 2022. Additionally, she partook in Internet Governance Forum in Ethiopia in 2022.

Outside her professional and political commitments, Ms Lydia

Lamisi Akanvariba enjoys reading and cooking.

4.2 Questions Asked of the Nominee and her Responses

4.2.1 Enhancing Productivity in the Public Sector

When the Nominee was asked about measures that will help improve productivity in the public sector while upholding the legal framework governing its rules and appointments, the Nominee affirmed her commitment to building upon existing structures while introducing targeted enhancements. She outlined her vision of establishing an efficient, modern, and responsive public sector that aligns with the Government's agenda and effectively addresses the needs of the citizenry.

4.2.2 Strategies to Achieve Efficiency and Modernity in the Public Sector

In response to a question on the specific measures to achieve the efficiency and modernity outlined earlier, the Nominee emphasised her role as a collaborator and leader. She stated her commitment to engaging both State and non-State actors to work alongside the public sector. Additionally, she highlighted the importance of capacity-building and the adoption of new technologies to enhance service delivery, ensuring a more efficient and modern public sector.

4.2.3 Position on Public Sector Employment and Job Revocations

In response to a question regarding the revocation of public sector employment by the new Administration, the Nominee recounted her personal experience of losing her position as a Senior National Disaster Management Officer in her district in 2017 following the change in Government. She also expressed concern over the dismissal of approximately 13,000 Ghanaian youth who had been employed in the public sector during the same period.

The Nominee assured the Committee that she had no intention of terminating employment in the public sector. Instead, she emphasised her commitment to implementing Government policies and agenda aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability within the sector. She further clarified that she would not be responsible for public sector employment, as there is a designated Minister in charge of that sector.

4.2.4 Ensuring Merit-Based Recruitment in the Public Sector

When questioned on recruitment based on merit, integrity, pragmatism, and diligence, the Nominee emphasised her commitment to training and capacity building as key strategies

for strengthening public institutions. She expressed her intention to enhance the hiring process within the public sector, ensuring that recruitment is based on competence and professionalism. Additionally, she proposed the organisation of a national dialogue forum on public sector recruitment, aimed at fostering a transparent, fair, and efficient hiring process.

4.2.5 Addressing Apathy and Resistance to Change in the Public Sector

In response to concerns about apathy and resistance to change within the public service, the Nominee acknowledged the presence of long-serving staff who are often reluctant to adopt new approaches, even when such changes would be beneficial to the State. She identified bureaucracy as one of the key challenges hampering efficiency in the public sector.

As a solution, the Nominee proposed the adoption of innovative strategies and dialogue to shift the existing mindset and improve productivity. She emphasised that effective communication of goals and the rationale for change would be instrumental in achieving the necessary transformation within the public sector.

4.2.6 Composition of the Public Sector, Challenges, and Proposed Reforms

When questioned on the composition of the public sector, its challenges, and the reforms she intends to introduce, the Nominee referenced Article 190(1) of the 1992 Constitution and defined the public sector as the part of the economy controlled by the Government. She explained that public sector reform involves strategic interventions aimed at improving efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness in public service delivery.

Regarding the challenges that confront the public sector, the Nominee highlighted key issues such as bureaucracy, limited resources, political interference, corruption, and resistance to change. She stressed that these factors significantly hinder productivity and public service efficiency.

In outlining her proposed reforms, the Nominee expressed her commitment to engage State and non-State actors from various sectors to strengthen the institutional framework, manage limited resources effectively, and leverage technology to eliminate corrupt practices.

On the sustainability of these reforms, she stated that the roadmap for public sector reforms began with the National Action Plan 1 and has progressed to Plan 5. She expressed confidence that

adhering to this structured approach would yield tangible success in transforming the public sector.

4.2.7 Digitalisation and E-Governance in Public Sector Transformation

When asked whether she believed that digitalisation and e-governance were the key drivers for transforming the public sector, the Nominee affirmed her position in support of these initiatives. She highlighted the significant progress made with the Government Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) and the current payment system, acknowledging their role in improving efficiency and transparency.

The Nominee, however, noted that more could be done in advancing e-governance across public institutions. She assured the Committee of her commitment to collaborating with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to strengthen digital platforms and enhance service delivery. Her goal is to ensure that the public sector becomes efficient, modern, and robust through the adoption of technology-driven solutions.

4.2.8 Budgetary Allocation for Public Sector Reforms

When questioned about the availability of sufficient budgetary allocation to implement reforms in the public sector, the Nominee explained that funding for her office would be provided through allocations from the Presidency. She expressed confidence that the Minister for Finance would make the necessary provisions to support the effective operation of her Ministry.

In response to concerns regarding the possibility of inadequate budgetary allocation, the Nominee firmly stated that the President would not appoint her to an office without ensuring the availability of adequate resources to execute Government programmes and policies. She reaffirmed her commitment to working within the allocated resources while ensuring the efficient implementation of public sector reforms.

4.2.9 Performance-Based Accountability in the Public Sector

In response to a question on the use of performance-based accountability, which involves rewards or sanctions based on a balanced scorecard to evaluate staff, the Nominee emphasised the importance of performance appraisal as a key assessment tool. She asserted that productivity is directly linked to motivation, and as such, it is essential to reward

employees who demonstrate excellence in their work.

To ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, the Nominee proposed the adoption of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as a means of measuring efficiency and output within the public sector. Additionally, she highlighted the need to provide a conducive working environment, as this would enhance motivation, efficiency, and overall productivity among public sector employees.

4.2.10 Decentralisation of Digital Systems for Effective District Administration

In the Nominee's response to a question on the decentralisation of programmes such as the GIFMIS at the district level to enhance the effective operation of district assemblies, she acknowledged that challenges in the utilisation of the system could be either technical or human-related.

To address these issues, she assured the Committee of her commitment to collaborating with the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology, and Innovations to advance the Government's digitalisation agenda. She further pledged to work towards the decentralisation of digital systems, ensuring that district assemblies have the necessary capacity and

infrastructure to operate efficiently.

4.2.11 Legacy and Aspirations as Minister of State for Public Sector Reforms

When asked how she wished to be remembered at the end of her tenure, the Nominee expressed her commitment to building upon existing reforms while leveraging technology to enhance transparency within the Ministry. She emphasised her desire to leave a legacy of accountability, inclusive governance, and citizen participation.

Furthermore, the Nominee highlighted her vision of fostering open engagement between Government and civil society, ensuring that public sector reforms are transparent, participatory, and aligned with national development goals.

4.2.12 Independence of the Public Services Commission in Recruitment

When asked about her commitment to ensuring the independence of the Public Services Commission in the recruitment of qualified personnel into the public sector, the Nominee assured the Committee of her dedication to preserving and upholding the existing structures that align with government policy. She further stated her intention to strengthen systems where necessary, ensuring that

recruitment processes remain transparent, merit-based, and independent of undue influence.

4.2.13 Addressing Bureaucracy in the Public Sector

When the Nominee questioned on the prevalence of bureaucracy in the public sector and the measures she would take to address it, she acknowledged that bureaucracy remains a well-known challenge in public administration. She noted that since many public sector employees benefit from the bureaucratic system, there may be resistance to change.

To mitigate this, the Nominee proposed engagement with public sector staff, emphasising the need for orientation and continuous training. She underscored the importance of capacity-building initiatives to help employees understand the necessity of reform and encourage a shift towards a more efficient and responsive public service.

4.2.14 Knowledge of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative

When asked about her familiarity with the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Initiative, the Nominee responded in the affirmative. She stated that the initiative comprises 16 key pillars, which are categorised under four

main thematic areas: transparency, accountability, citizen participation, and technological innovation. She emphasised the significance of these principles in fostering good governance, public sector efficiency, and inclusive decision-making.

4.2.15 Challenges to Public Sector Reforms and Proposed Solutions

In response to a question on the factors that hinder Government efforts in reforming the public sector, the Nominee identified the lack of political will as a major obstacle. She emphasised the need for a national dialogue on public sector reforms devoid of partisanship, to ensure continuity and long-term progress.

The Nominee asserted that if successive governments build upon the reforms initiated by their predecessors, the public sector would experience sustained improvement. She also highlighted the issue of favouritism and nepotism in public sector employment, which she attributed to the absence of strong political commitment to merit-based recruitment.

On the broader issue of reform, the Nominee maintained that Government alone cannot effectively implement public sector reforms. She, therefore, proposed the active involvement of the private sector as a key stakeholder in driving the needed

reforms and ensuring the sustainability of initiatives aimed at improving public service delivery.

4.2.16 Enhancing Dialogue in Public Sector Reforms

When asked about her approach to dialogue within the public sector space, the Nominee emphasised her commitment to broad consultations with all relevant agencies across various sectors. She reiterated her belief that Government alone cannot undertake public sector reforms and stressed the importance of engaging the private sector as a key stakeholder in the reform process.

The Nominee affirmed that fostering inclusive dialogue and collaboration between public institutions, private entities, and civil society would enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of public sector reforms.

4.2.17 Position on the 24-Hour Economy Policy

When the Nominee was questioned on the relevance of the 24-Hour Economic Policy in light of His Excellency the President's statement that it is optional, she stated that she would align with the President's policy direction and implement it as directed by the Government.

She further noted that if the Government decides to proceed with the 24-Hour Economic Policy, it would be a positive step for national development. However, she highlighted the importance of enhancing security measures to support the Policy's implementation. While acknowledging that significant recruitment has already been made within the security sector, she emphasised that additional personnel should be employed to ensure public safety and efficiency in a 24-hour economy framework.

4.2.18 Sustaining Public Sector Reforms from the Previous Administration

When asked about the sustainability of public sector reforms initiated by the previous administration, the Nominee highlighted the existence of the National Action Plan 4 (NAP4), which was co-created with the National Action Plan 5 (NAP5). She acknowledged these as notable achievements in the public sector that should be sustained and built upon.

Recalling a briefing at the Ministry, the Nominee pointed out that several reforms had been implemented in key institutions such as the Passport Office, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA), and the Births and Deaths Registry, among others. Additionally, she noted that some

Legislative Instruments were passed during the implementation of NAP4, further contributing to institutional efficiency and modernisation within the public sector.

4.2.19 Specific Interventions in Fighting Corruption

When questioned on her specific interventions in combating corruption in the country, the Nominee emphasised her commitment to leveraging technology and innovation as key tools in promoting transparency and accountability.

She further stated that in addition to technological solutions, she would prioritise engagement with stakeholders and invest in capacity building for employees and service providers. By equipping public sector workers with the necessary skills and fostering a culture of integrity, she aims to reduce corrupt practices and enhance efficiency in public service delivery.

4.2.20 Policy and Legislative Interventions

When the Nominee was asked about the specific policy and legislative interventions she would introduce, she stated that she would prioritise the use of technology and innovation to enhance efficiency, transparency,

and accountability in the public sector.

Additionally, she emphasised the importance of engagement with all sectors, including public institutions, private stakeholders, and civil society, to ensure that policy reforms are inclusive, practical, and effectively implemented.

4.2.21 Plans to Increase Productivity in the Public Sector

When asked about her plans to enhance productivity in the public sector, the Nominee affirmed her commitment to re-orienting the workforce to foster a culture of efficiency, dedication, and excellence. She emphasised that motivating public sector employees and instilling a strong work ethic would be key strategies in ensuring increased productivity.

4.2.24 Finalising New Action Plans

In response to a question on finalising new action plans for more focused and improved sector reforms, the Nominee assured the Committee that NAP4 will conclude in June, while NAP3 and NAP5 have already commenced. She further noted that these action plans will be assessed at the end of the year to evaluate their impact and effectiveness in advancing public sector reforms.

4.2.25 Rolling Out a Programme for Birth and Death Records

In response to a question on capturing birth and death certificates at health facilities to prevent issues of date of birth alterations, the Nominee affirmed that it is feasible to implement a nationwide system for recording births at the time of delivery. She cited the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) as an example, highlighting how insurance renewals can now be done online. She emphasised that similar digital solutions could be introduced for birth registrations to ensure efficiency, accuracy, and integrity in vital records management.

4.2.26 Introducing Reforms in the School Feeding Programme

Regarding reforms in the School Feeding Programme, the Nominee affirmed that measures could be implemented to monitor how the programme is impacting schools and students. She emphasised that the provision of adequate infrastructure would significantly enhance accountability and transparency in the system.

On the rollout of digital applications to monitor the delivery, quality, and quantity of food items under the School Feeding Programme, the Nominee assured the Committee that she would collaborate with the

Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations to develop the necessary infrastructure and digital services to streamline the process.

4.2.27 Ability of the Nominee to Lead the Ministry Effectively

Addressing concerns about her competence to lead the Ministry of Public Sector Reforms, the Nominee disputed the assertions made by private legal practitioner Mr Martin Kpebu, who questioned her capability for the role. She acknowledged that everyone has the right to express their opinion, but emphasised that her experience in the public sector makes her qualified for the position.

She provided a narrative of her career progression, noting that she began as a staff nurse and rose to the rank of Senior Nursing Officer, accumulating over 15 years of public service experience. She further highlighted her tenure at NADMO as a Senior Disaster Management Officer, reinforcing her expertise in public sector operations and leadership.

The Nominee explained that her primary responsibility at the Ministry is to collaborate and provide leadership to ensure that the public sector structures function efficiently. She assured the Committee and the public that the President was fully aware of her capabilities before nominating

her, dismissing any doubts about her competence. She further remarked that if experience alone were the sole criterion for leadership, then professors would always be appointed as presidents, as they possess vast knowledge and experience.

4.2.28 Tax Payment Discrepancy

When the Nominee asked about why she paid higher taxes in 2023 compared to 2024, she explained that she had failed to file her tax returns in previous years. As a result, when she eventually did so in 2023, it incurred penalties that increased the amount of tax she had to pay.

4.2.29 Familiarity with the Affirmative Action Act

Regarding her familiarity with the Affirmative Action Act, the Nominee confirmed her awareness of the Act and stated that she had participated in Committee deliberations on the Bill as a friend to the Committee. However, she admitted that she had not read all sections of the Act but had a general understanding of its provisions. She also noted that the Affirmative Action Act was one of the key achievements of NAP4 in 2024, further emphasising its significance in promoting gender equity and inclusivity.

4.2.30 Encouraging Women Participation in Leadership Roles

When asked about her plans to increase women's participation in politics and leadership roles, the Nominee shared that she has an inspiring life story, which she believes can inspire young women. She further stated her commitment to mentoring young ladies within the Ministry, supporting them in achieving their aspirations, and encouraging their involvement in leadership.

4.2.31 Gender Equity Responsibilities

In the Nominee's response to a question on the specific responsibilities of the sector on gender equity and equality, she acknowledged that she has not read the entire Act. She would read and identify the relevant provisions and ensure that all statutory requirements are implemented in the interest of both men and women.

4.2.32 Allocation of Funds Targeting the Welfare of Women and Children

When questioned about the equitable allocation of public funds to programmes specifically targeting women and children, the Nominee assured the Committee that there are existing policies and programmes at the Ministry that focus on gender-related issues. She emphasised that when given the opportunity, she would ensure

these programmes and policies are effectively implemented and sustained.

4.2.33 Legacy in Her Constituency

On the subject of her achievements in her constituency, the Nominee stated that she has contributed significantly to its development by constructing two (2) Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds, providing 500 dual desks for schools, and supporting 172 students over the past four years. She also indicated that she had assisted the education office in her constituency, particularly in managing financial challenges due to delays in fund disbursement. The Nominee mentioned that she could provide further details upon request.

4.2.34 Digitalisation in the Public Sector

When asked about ensuring both urban and remote communities benefit from digital advancements, the Nominee underscored the importance of digitalisation as a key driver in the public sector. She assured the Committee that when given the opportunity, she would collaborate with the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations to provide the necessary infrastructure and communication tools to facilitate digital reforms in the public sector.

4.2.35 Study Leave

Clarifying concerns about her study leave while pursuing a bachelor's degree in Nursing from 2009 to 2011, the Nominee explained that her salary was stopped in 2010, and she had to sponsor herself in 2011. She further indicated that she practiced as a nurse for 11 years before leaving the profession in 2010.

4.2.36 Public Sector Recruitment

On the issue of revocation of employment due to irregularities in public sector recruitment, the Nominee expressed that she would be hurt if recruited nurses had their appointments terminated. However, she added that if their appointments were not processed through due process, revocation would be justified to uphold accountability and integrity. She further acknowledged that political interference and favouritism have created issues in public sector recruitment. She noted that some individuals have been employed without meeting the necessary qualifications, describing such practices as corrupt and a lack of accountability. Using herself as an example, she stated that if her own employment had not followed due process, she would not be upset if it were revoked.

When asked whether she would engage the Government to

reconsider the termination of appointments of public sector workers recruited before elections, the Nominee emphasised the need for a level playing field in public sector recruitment, ensuring fairness and transparency in the process.

4.2.37 Constituents' Perception

Responding to concerns about some constituents perceiving her as indecisive and unresponsive to their calls, the Nominee acknowledged that everyone has their shortcomings and expressed her hope that those affected would forgive her. She assured the Committee that she takes such concerns seriously and is committed to addressing the issues raised by her constituents.

4.2.38 NDC Manifesto

When asked if she had a copy of the NDC Manifesto and whether she was involved in drafting it, the Nominee stated that she did not have the Manifesto with her at the time but could retrieve a copy if required. She also clarified that she was not part of the drafting team but is familiar with its core policies and commitments.

4.39 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **MS LYDIA LAMISI AKANVARIBA**

as Minister of State, Public Sector Reforms.

5.0 MR THOMAS NYARKO AMPEM DEPUTY MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR FINANCE

5.1 Background

Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem was born on 14th February, 1978, in Anum, Eastern Region. He began his education at Anum Presbyterian Primary and Junior Secondary School, where he studied from 1984 to 1991 and sat for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). He then proceeded to Anum Presbyterian Secondary School, where he completed his Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) in 1994.

In pursuit of a teaching career, Mr Ampem attended Peki Training College from 1995 to 1998, where he obtained the three-year Teacher's Certificate "A". After serving with the Ghana Education Service (GES), he furthered his education at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Sciences (Economics/Geography) from 2001 to 2005. He then pursued a Master of Science in Finance at Virginia Commonwealth University, USA, from 2008 to 2010.

Mr Ampem's professional journey began as a teacher at Volta River Authority Junior Secondary School No. 1, Akosombo, from 1998 to 2001. During his time in the USA, he worked as a substitute teacher at Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia from February to August 2008 and later transitioned into the banking sector, serving as a personal banker at Wells Fargo (formerly Wachovia) Bank in Glenn Allen, Virginia, from 2008 to 2010. Upon returning to Ghana, he assumed a role in public administration, serving as the Director of Finance at the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee (IMCC) on Decentralisation Secretariat at the Office of the President from April 2012 to September 2013. He was later appointed District Chief Executive for the Asuogyaman District from September 2013 to January 2017.

Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem has served as a Member of Parliament (MP) since January 2017. During his tenure, he has actively contributed to parliamentary affairs, holding key roles such as Chairman of the Budget Committee, Deputy Ranking Member of the Finance Committee and Committee on Gender, Children and Social Welfare, and also as Member of Local Government and Rural Development Committee.

In addition to his parliamentary work, he has held several leadership positions, including serving as President of the Students' Representation Council (SRC) at KNUST from 2004 to 2005 and President of the University Students' Association of Ghana (USAG) from 2004 to 2005. He was also the National Secretary of the Ghana National Association of Teachers on Campuses (GNATOC) from 2002 to 2003 and served as Assistant Choir Master at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, Woodbridge, Virginia, from 2006 to 2010.

Mr Ampem is married with three children and is fluent in English, Twi, and Guan. His hobbies include teaching, singing, playing tennis, and reading.

5.2 Questions Asked of the Nominee and his Responses

5.2.1 Measures to Foster a Business-friendly Environment for Private Sector Growth

When asked to outline specific measures the Ministry of Finance can implement to create a more business-friendly environment that supports private sector growth and job creation, the Nominee referenced the NDC Manifesto and emphasised that there is no universal policy or intervention that applies to all areas of the private sector. Instead, he highlighted the need for sector-

specific tailored interventions, particularly in agriculture, where targeted support and financing would be essential to driving growth. He pledged to collaborate with the Minister for Food and Agriculture to develop and implement these interventions.

The Nominee also underscored the importance of macroeconomic stability as a critical foundation for private sector growth. He emphasised the need for industry-specific initiatives and stressed that the Government must provide essential infrastructure, such as a stable power supply, to create an enabling business environment. He assured the Committee that when appointed, he would support the substantive Minister for Finance by providing strategic advice and assistance in ensuring that policies align with private sector development and economic growth objectives.

5.2.2 Enhancing Compliance to Increase Revenue Mobilisation

The Committee sought from the Nominee specific measures that the Government could implement to boost revenue mobilisation, given plans to scrap the e-Levy and betting tax, while ensuring the provision of essential public services and key social intervention programmes.

In response, the Nominee stated that the Ministry of Finance was in the final stages of preparing the 2025 Budget, which would outline

specific revenue-enhancing measures. He cited a medium-term revenue strategy report from the previous administration, which revealed a VAT gap of approximately 61 per cent, meaning that only 39 per cent of potential VAT revenue was collected. He expressed his commitment to support the Minister for Finance to improve tax compliance to enhance revenue collection.

On how compliance would be ensured, given challenges faced by the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) in revenue collection, the Nominee assured the Committee that he was ready to work closely with the substantive Minister and the GRA, while leveraging technology to strengthen revenue mobilisation. He acknowledged the valuable expertise of professionals within the GRA and expressed confidence that with strong leadership and appropriate incentives, compliance issues could be effectively addressed. He also pledged to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to implement these strategies.

As part of revenue-enhancing measures, the Nominee highlighted the introduction of a VAT lottery, which would incentivise the collection of VAT receipts by offering rewards to individuals who request VAT invoices during their transactions. When asked about collecting

revenue from Amazon Web Services, which now includes VAT on services provided to Ghanaian customers, the Nominee stated that he would work with tax experts to develop appropriate mechanisms for the collection of these taxes.

5.2.3 Leveraging Digitalisation for Revenue Collection

When asked about his plans to assist the Ministry of Finance in leveraging digitalisation to enhance revenue collection and financial system improvements, the Nominee emphasised the crucial role of technology in revenue mobilisation. He affirmed that the Ministry would build upon existing digital infrastructure to enhance tax collection, stressing that governance is a continuous process. He assured the Committee that all available digital resources would be fully utilised to improve public financial management and revenue collection.

5.2.4 Implementation of the Ghana Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS)

The Nominee was questioned on how he would support the effective implementation of the Ghana Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) to achieve financial discipline and maximise savings, given that many government agencies still make payments outside the system due

to challenges such as internet connectivity.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged the challenges in implementing GIFMIS and explained that many procurements are made without designated budget lines and outside the GIFMIS system, which undermines expenditure controls. He stressed that if GIFMIS were properly enforced, such off-system payments would not occur. He further indicated that all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) must be fully integrated into the system to ensure effective implementation and expenditure control.

5.2.5 Payments to Contractors

The Nominee was asked to confirm reports that the Minister for Finance, Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, had made payments to some contractors and to explain how such payments were made from the GH¢68.13 billion approved by Parliament as expenditure in advance of Appropriation. The Nominee refuted the claim, stating that the Minister for Finance had not yet made such payments.

5.2.6 Payments to Bondholders Under the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP)

The Committee inquired about how the Minister for Finance managed to pay GH¢6.081 billion

to bondholders under the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP).

The Nominee confirmed that the payment had been made and disclosed that provision had also been made for an additional GH¢9 billion to settle debts maturing in July 2025. He emphasised the importance of focusing on the positive financial signals that these payments send to the financial market instead of politicising the issue.

5.2.7 Financial Discipline, Expenditure Cuts, and Savings

When the Nominee was asked whether he agreed that significant savings could be achieved through expenditure cuts, a lean government, and prudent financial discipline, particularly in response to the shortfall in revenue that would arise from the removal of the e-Levy and betting tax, he responded in the affirmative. He stated that the Government's ongoing efforts to reduce expenditure and enforce fiscal discipline would result in substantial savings.

5.2.8 Interest Rates on Government Securities

The Nominee was asked what advice he would offer as Deputy Minister to help lower interest rates on Government short-term securities, particularly treasury

bills, given the Bank of Ghana's recalibration of the base rate and the Government's intent to shift from short-term to long-term securities to benefit businesses.

The Nominee disclosed that the Minister for Finance had already begun working closely with the Bank of Ghana to reduce interest rates. He noted that these efforts had led to a recent reduction in interest on Government short-term securities by approximately 400 basis points over the past two weeks.

He also reiterated his support for the Minister's commitment to expenditure control, emphasising that if the Government succeeded in increasing revenue while reducing spending, the financing gap would shrink, thereby reducing Government borrowing and ultimately lowering interest rates.

5.2.9 Funding Government Expenditure and Reducing Borrowing

The Nominee was asked to outline the Ministry of Finance's plans for funding Government expenditure while reducing borrowing. In response, he emphasised that the Government's strategy will focus on aggressive revenue generation alongside expenditure cuts to raise the needed funds. He stressed that without strict expenditure control, set fiscal targets cannot be achieved. He assured the Committee that given the current

economic challenges, the Government is committed to ensuring all stakeholders align with this strategy.

5.2.10 Free Senior High School (Free SHS) Policy and Education Financing

The Nominee was asked whether he would advise the Minister for Finance to continue with the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) Policy and explore alternative funding models to ensure adequate and efficient resource allocation to the Ministry of Education, given concerns about the financial burden of the programme.

In response, the Nominee affirmed his support for the continuation of the Free SHS Policy and assured the Committee that the NDC Government has no plans to cancel it, as assured by the President. He, however, indicated that the primary challenge of the Policy is not funding but rather its implementation. He emphasised that addressing the implementation challenges would ensure better resource allocation and programme efficiency.

5.2.11 Strengthening the Role of Asset Managers in the Financial Sector

The Nominee was asked to suggest ways to enhance the role of asset managers in the banking and financial sector to make them more efficient and effective. In response, he pledged to support the Minister

for Finance in developing strategies to enhance the capacity of asset managers and asset management companies. He highlighted the importance of risk assessment and prudent investment strategies, which are critical to contributing to economic stability and financial sector growth.

5.2.12 Expanding the Tax Bracket to Improve Revenue Generation

When asked whether he would advise the Minister for Finance to expand the tax bracket to include individuals and organisations that currently do not pay taxes, the Nominee affirmed his commitment to exploring strategies for tax expansion. He explained that broadening the tax base would help generate more revenue without increasing tax rates, thereby avoiding additional burdens on existing taxpayers.

He pledged his support to the Minister for Finance in implementing effective tax policies, leveraging industry experts at the GRA, and utilising technology to widen the tax net.

5.2.13 Debt Management and Sustainable Fiscal Policies

The Nominee was asked how he would assist the Minister for Finance in managing the country's debt. He acknowledged that Ghana's debt situation is a

significant challenge and stated that the Minister has identified debt management as a priority.

He emphasised that Ghana is currently under a structured debt repayment programme with strict limitations on new borrowing. The Nominee assured the Committee of his full support in ensuring Ghana successfully navigates and completes the programme. He also stressed the importance of developing sustainable financial strategies to prevent future debt crises and called for a national dialogue to address long-term debt sustainability measures.

5.2.14 Managing the Impact of Foreign Aid Cancellation

The Committee sought to understand how the Nominee would support the Minister for Finance in managing the impact of the withdrawal of USAID and other foreign aid programmes. The Nominee confirmed his awareness of the aid cancellation and referenced the President's directive for the Minister to seek alternative funding sources to bridge the financing gap. He assured the Committee that provisions are being made in the 2025 National Budget to address the shortfall. He further emphasised the need for proactive planning, given the decline in external assistance from donors such as DANIDA and USAID, and

advocated for sustainable financial independence strategies.

production and improve price stability.

5.2.15 Free Tertiary Education Policy

The Nominee was asked whether the Government's promise toward free tertiary education remains valid, given the Minister for Education's statement that parents could proceed with payments and later be reimbursed. He affirmed the Government's commitment to supporting new tertiary students by covering admission fees for first-year students across the country. He mentioned that provisions are being made in the upcoming Budget Statement for this Policy but acknowledged that fluctuations in the number of students admitted make it difficult to estimate the exact financial commitment.

5.2.16 Addressing High Inflation Rates

The Committee inquired about how the Nominee plans to assist the Minister for Finance in reducing the country's high inflation rate. The Nominee expressed his commitment to achieving the Government's target of 8 per cent \pm 2. He acknowledged that food inflation is a major driver of overall inflation and emphasised that reducing food prices would significantly impact stabilising inflation. He pledged to collaborate with the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Food and Agriculture to enhance food

5.2.17 Public Sector Salary Adjustments

The Nominee was asked whether he considers the 10 per cent increase in base pay for public sector workers adequate, given the level of inflation in the country. He responded that the President was fully aware of the economic conditions and personally participated in the negotiation process that led to the base pay increase. He emphasised the importance of leadership by example, citing the Government's efforts to reduce expenditures, including minimising the number of Ministers and Government Appointees.

The Nominee asserted that the Labour Unions' agreement on the 10 per cent pay increase was influenced by the President's strong commitment to fiscal discipline.

5.2.18 Timely Release of Statutory Funds

The Nominee was asked to provide insights into how he would support the Minister for Finance in ensuring the prompt release of statutory funds, particularly the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), National Health Insurance Fund (NHIA), and Ghana Education Trust Fund

(GETFund). In response, he affirmed his support for fiscal decentralisation and assured the Committee that he would work closely with the Minister to ensure timely fund disbursements, particularly to the DACF, to strengthen local governance and service delivery.

5.2.19 Market Tolls and Revenue Generation

The Nominee was asked whether he would consider enhancing the collection of market tolls as an alternative source of revenue for local governments. He acknowledged that while market tolls do not generate significant revenue, they are still important for funding local government activities. He stated that he would explore ways to improve toll collection efficiency at the district level.

5.2.20 Establishment of Gold Board (GOLDBOD)

The Committee sought the Nominee's opinion on the establishment of the Gold Board and its benefits. The Nominee explained that the Government intends to use the Gold Board to mobilise revenue from small-scale mining operations. He added that the Gold Board is expected to help stabilise the Ghanaian cedi and operate similarly to the Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

5.2.21 Sustainability of Scholarships and Student Financial Aid

The Nominee was asked how he would advise the Minister for Finance in resolving challenges faced by Ghanaian scholarship beneficiaries. He emphasised the need for proper planning and fiscal discipline in awarding scholarships based on available financial resources. He also advocated for the timely release of funds to the Scholarship Secretariat to ensure that beneficiaries receive their stipends without delay.

5.2.22 Promoting Female Entrepreneurship and Gender-Responsive

Budgeting

The Nominee was asked how he would assist the Minister for Finance in supporting female entrepreneurs, given their limited access to financial support. He stated that the issue would be addressed through the establishment of the Women's Development Bank, which would provide adequate financing for female entrepreneurs. He also acknowledged that programmes like Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) and Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC) could contribute but emphasised that the Women's Bank is specifically

designed to support women-led businesses.

5.2.23 Unemployment Insurance Benefits

When the Nominee asked about the possibility of introducing unemployment insurance benefits, he stated that current economic conditions do not allow for immediate implementation. However, he expressed optimism that such a programme could be introduced in the future once economic conditions improve.

5.2.24 Stabilisation of the National Currency

The Nominee assured the Committee that the Minister for Finance is committed to working closely with the Bank of Ghana to maintain price stability, which is key to stabilising the national currency.

5.2.25 Tax Exemptions and the One District, One Factory (1D1F) Policy

The Committee sought the Nominee's opinion on the One District, One Factory (1D1F) Policy of the previous Administration and the tax exemptions associated with it. In response, the Nominee explained that while the current Administration is not opposed to tax exemptions under the 1D1F Policy, concerns remain about the methodology used to select

beneficiary companies and the magnitude of exemptions granted. He emphasised the need for a fair, transparent, and systematic approach to ensure that value for money is achieved when granting tax exemptions.

On the issue of whether the current Administration would offer tax exemptions to the private sector, the Nominee confirmed that such exemptions would be granted but more strategically and equitably. He emphasised that any tax exemptions provided must generate significant economic benefits for the country.

5.2.26 The 24-Hour Economic Policy

The Nominee was asked to elaborate on the Government's proposed 24-Hour Economic Policy. He explained that the Policy applies to specific sectors, particularly those in productive industries such as construction, agriculture, and manufacturing, where round-the-clock operations can significantly increase employment and productivity.

He further stated that the Government had identified certain institutions, including the Passport Office and the DVLA, that could transition to 24-hour operations. He disclosed that efforts are already underway to implement 24-hour services at the Passport Office and pledged his support for Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs, Food and Agriculture,

Works and Housing, and Roads and Highways to ensure the successful rollout of the Policy. Additionally, the Nominee suggested that private sector entities that adopt the 24-hour economy model could be incentivised through reduced electricity tariffs and enhanced security measures during night operations.

5.2.27 Strengthening Economic Growth through Industrialisation

The Nominee was asked how he would support the Minister for Finance in driving industrialisation to boost economic growth. He responded that industrialisation remains a core pillar of the Government's economic agenda and that he would work with stakeholders to ensure access to affordable financing and critical infrastructure for industrial expansion. He reiterated that job creation and economic transformation are closely linked to strengthening domestic industries, reducing import dependency, and increasing export earnings.

5.2.28 Improving Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Inflows

The Nominee was asked about measures to increase Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows into Ghana. In response, he highlighted the importance of creating an investor-friendly

business climate, emphasising macroeconomic stability, transparent regulatory frameworks, and enhanced infrastructure. He assured the Committee of his commitment to supporting initiatives that attract more foreign investment and ensuring that investments directly contribute to job creation and economic development.

5.2.29 Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for Infrastructure

Development

The Nominee was asked how he would assist the Minister for Finance in strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to boost infrastructure development. He responded that PPPs are crucial for closing the infrastructure financing gap, particularly in sectors such as transport, energy, and housing. He pledged to support efforts to streamline PPP regulations and improve transparency in contract negotiations to attract private-sector investment in infrastructure projects.

5.2.30 Addressing Youth Unemployment through Entrepreneurship

Support

The Committee sought the Nominee's views on tackling

youth unemployment beyond traditional public sector job creation. The Nominee emphasised the need for expanded entrepreneurship support programmes and pledged to collaborate with the Minister for Finance to increase funding for start-ups and small businesses. He highlighted the role of business incubation hubs, access to credit, and technical training in empowering young entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses.

5.2.31 Mobilising Domestic Resources for Development

The Nominee was asked about his views on improving domestic resource mobilisation to reduce dependence on external loans and aid. In response, he emphasised that the Government must prioritise domestic revenue generation through tax efficiency, digitisation, and the expansion of revenue collection mechanisms. He reiterated that Ghana should not overly rely on donor funding but instead develop sustainable financial models to fund its development agenda.

5.2.32 Strengthening Financial Sector Stability

The Nominee was asked about how he would support the Minister for Finance in ensuring financial sector stability. He affirmed that regulatory oversight must be strengthened to prevent financial

sector crises. He also noted that he would work with the Minister to reinforce banking sector regulations and enhance consumer protection mechanisms to boost investor and depositor confidence.

5.2.33 Strengthening the Role of Cooperatives in Economic Development

The Committee inquired whether the Nominee would support the expansion of cooperative models in key economic sectors. He affirmed that cooperatives play a critical role in rural economic development, particularly in agriculture and artisanal industries. He assured the Committee that he would work with relevant agencies to develop policies that encourage cooperative formations and access to cooperative financing schemes.

5.2.34 Strengthening the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) for Effective Tax Collection

The Nominee was asked how he would support the Minister for Finance in ensuring the GRA operates efficiently. He responded that the GRA's capacity must be enhanced through technological integration, staff training, and stronger anti-corruption measures. He reiterated that if tax compliance improves and leakages are plugged, revenue collection will be significantly increased without imposing higher taxes on citizens.

5.2.35 Addressing Challenges in the Real Estate and Housing Sector

The Nominee was asked how he would support policies to make housing more affordable. He acknowledged that housing remains a major challenge in Ghana, especially for low and middle-income earners. He stated that he would support innovative financing mechanisms, including mortgage guarantees, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), and Government partnerships with developers to address the housing deficit.

5.2.36 Strengthening Ghana's Social Protection Programmes

The Nominee was asked how he would ensure Ghana's social protection programmes remain financially sustainable. He responded that programmes such as LEAP, NHIS, and MASLOC are critical for social stability and that he would support measures to improve their financial sustainability through better targeting and accountability in fund utilisation.

5.2.37 Strengthening Ghana's Capital Markets

The Nominee was asked how he would support the Minister for Finance in strengthening Ghana's capital markets. He responded that deepening Ghana's capital markets is crucial for mobilising long-term investment capital. He pledged to

support policies that encourage more listings on the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE) and improve investor confidence in capital market instruments.

5.2.38 Expanding Access to Credit for SMEs

The Committee asked about strategies to expand credit access for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The Nominee acknowledged that SMEs face challenges accessing financing due to high-interest rates and collateral constraints. He assured the Committee that he would work with financial institutions to improve SME access to affordable credit facilities.

5.2.39 Strengthening Public Expenditure Accountability

The Nominee was asked about how he would support transparency in public expenditure management. He affirmed his commitment to strengthening accountability mechanisms through enhanced reporting, budget tracking, and digitisation of public expenditure systems.

5.2.40 Strengthening Ghana's Export Sector

The Nominee was asked about strategies to boost Ghana's export sector. He emphasised the need for

industrial policy interventions that would enhance value addition in export industries, particularly in agriculture and manufacturing.

5.2.41 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **MR THOMAS NYARKO AMPEM** as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Finance.

6.0 MR EBENEZER OKLETEY TERLABI

DEPUTY MINISTER- DESIGNATE FOR THE INTERIOR

6.1 Background

Mr Ebenezer Okletey Terlabi was born on 3rd September, 1963 in Odumasi Krobo, Eastern Region. He began his basic education at Akro Primary School, Odumasi Krobo, where he studied from 1969 to 1975. He proceeded to Presbyterian Middle School 'B' in Odumasi Krobo, where he sat for the Common Entrance Examination in 1978. For his secondary education, he attended Manya Krobo Secondary School from 1978 to 1983, where he obtained his Ordinary Level (O-Level) certificate. He then pursued his Advanced Level (A-Level) certificate at Pope John Secondary School from 1983 to 1985.

Mr Terlabi furthered his education at the University of Ghana, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry from 1986 to 1989. Seeking to deepen his expertise, he continued his studies at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), where he obtained a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree in Biochemistry from 1998 to 2000.

Mr Terlabi has held various professional roles throughout his career. He began as a Research Assistant at the Department of Pharmacology, University of Ghana Medical School, from 1989 to 1990. He later worked as a Research Officer at the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Centre for Research into Plant Medicine, Mampong-Akwapim, from 1991 to 2002. His career in academia saw him serve as a lecturer at the Department of Biochemistry, KNUST, from 2002 to 2011.

Mr Terlabi entered politics when he was appointed Deputy Minister for the Eastern Region from 2011 to 2012. He subsequently served as Deputy Minister for Defence from 2013 to 2014 and later as Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources from 2014 to 2015. As a Member of Parliament, he has served on several parliamentary committees, including the Committee on Local Government (2012–2016), the Committee on

Trade and Industry, and the Committee on Environment, Science, and Technology, where he was the Vice Chairman in 2016 and later became the Ranking Member from 2017 to 2021.

Mr Terlabi is a professional member of multiple scientific associations, including the West Africa Network of Natural Product Scientists (WANPRESS), the Chemical Society of Ghana, the Biochemical Society of Ghana, and the Ghana Science Association. He has supervised various research projects, including Letsyoe (2007), which focused on the formulation and characterisation of flavour ingredients in *Tetrapleura tetraptera* (Prekese), and Allain A.G. (2006), which examined the subchronic toxicity potential of *Adutwumwaa Bitters*.

In addition to his research supervision, he has authored several publications, including *Toxicological Assessment of Parquetina Nigrescens in Rats* (2006) and *Knowledge, Perception, and Attitude of Tertiary Education Students Towards HIV/AIDS – Proceedings of the 24th Biennial Conference of the Ghana Science Association*.

Mr Terlabi has participated in several scientific conferences and workshops, including the 1st Scientific Meeting of the Western Africa Network of Natural Products Research Scientists in

August 2004, the WHO Conference on Good Laboratory Practice in August 2004, and workshops on Improved Pedagogy and Research Proposal Writing, as well as Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Training, organised by the Quality Assurance Unit of KNUST in 2004.

Mr Ebenezer Oklety Terlabi is married with three children. His interests include reading, driving, research, and development initiatives.

6.2 Questions asked of the Nominee and his Responses

6.2.1 Measures to Curb Security Threats

The Nominee was questioned on the porous nature of Ghana's borders, which pose security threats such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, terrorism, and weapons trafficking. In response, he acknowledged that border security remains a serious concern and requires strong collaboration with neighbouring countries. He emphasised that border security is an expensive venture that demands capital-intensive investments in sophisticated surveillance gadgets. To augment the existing logistics, he highlighted the need for Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, vehicles, and border video surveillance equipment. The Nominee assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would

recommend to the substantive Minister the procurement of more sophisticated gadgets to secure Ghana's borders. He strongly believed that such measures would curb emerging security threats and violent extremism in the country.

6.2.2 Addressing Inadequate Funding for Feeding of Prisoners

When the Nominee was asked how he would assist the Minister in addressing the inadequate feeding allowance for prisoners, which currently stands at GH¢1.80 per day, he admitted that the amount was woefully inadequate to provide inmates with three balanced meals a day. He emphasised that proper nutrition is critical for the health and well-being of prisoners. To address this, he proposed that prisoners engage in large-scale farming to feed themselves and generate revenue by selling excess produce commercially. He suggested that proceeds from such farming ventures could be used to support the Free Senior High School feeding programme.

6.2.3 Improving Accommodation for Security Personnel

The Nominee was asked about his plans to address the accommodation challenges faced by security personnel, including congestion, lack of privacy, poor living conditions, and inadequate amenities. He responded that he

would recommend to his Minister the provision of decent accommodation, particularly in newly created districts where officers lack proper housing. Additionally, he noted that some security personnel currently occupy prime lands, making it possible to collaborate with the private sector to develop modern housing units. This, he explained, would enhance the efficiency and morale of security personnel, allowing them to better protect life and property across the country.

6.2.4 Policies to Reform the Security Sector

When asked about potential policy reforms in the security sector, the Nominee emphasised that poor maintenance culture is a major challenge, not just among security agencies but across the country. He stressed that a strong maintenance culture should be instilled in the security services to prolong the lifespan of Government assets and facilities. If approved, he assured the Committee that he would prioritise maintenance funding and awareness programmes to ensure that security infrastructure is well-maintained to improve the working environment of personnel.

6.2.5 Sustaining Security and Political Stability

The Committee inquired how the Nominee would ensure Ghana remains peaceful, given that the

country's ranking on the Global Peace Index (GPI) dropped from 40th in 2022 to 55th in 2024. The Nominee acknowledged the troubling trend but maintained that Ghana remains one of the most peaceful countries in the region. He noted that investing in security technology is crucial for maintaining peace and security. He emphasised the importance of deploying surveillance technology and intelligence-based security operations to protect Ghana's political stability, enhance foreign investment, strengthen the cedi, and maintain overall national security.

6.2.6 Enhancing Disaster Response at NADMO

When asked how he intends to support the Minister in improving disaster response at the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO), the Nominee stated that disaster response requires substantial funding. He noted that securing adequate financial resources is crucial for NADMO's operations. He assured the Committee that he would collaborate with the Ministry of Finance to secure adequate funding to enhance NADMO's ability to respond effectively to natural and man-made disasters.

6.2.7 Tackling Overcrowding in Prisons

The Nominee described the overcrowding in Ghana's prisons as a major concern that requires a coordinated and holistic approach involving multiple stakeholders, including lawmakers, the Judiciary, prosecutors, court administrators, and oversight bodies. He proposed collaborations with foreign countries that have well-established prison systems to adopt best practices for managing prison populations. He also recommended that the Minister engage the private sector to develop a robust and modernised prison system, similar to models adopted in developed countries. Additionally, he advocated for the relocation of some prisons to create more spacious and humane conditions for inmates.

6.2.8 Strengthening Military-Police Cohesion in Internal Security

Operations

The Nominee was asked about frictions and operational overlaps between the Ghana Police Service and the Military in handling internal security operations. He responded that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for internal security operations are well-defined, with the Military only stepping in when necessary. However, he acknowledged that in

any human institution, tensions may arise. To promote collaboration between the two forces, he suggested clearer operational guidelines and increased joint training exercises. Additionally, he proposed using sports and social activities to strengthen relations between the Police and the Military, fostering teamwork and mutual respect.

6.2.9 Capacity Building for Police and Security Services

When asked how he would assist the Police and security services in acquiring capacity-building opportunities to enable them to rise through the ranks, the Nominee emphasised that training is a critical aspect of security effectiveness. He stressed the importance of systematic training programmes to enhance knowledge, skills, and shared operational terminologies. He pledged to support comprehensive training programmes, including workshops and specialised skill development initiatives, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of security personnel.

Recognising the evolving nature of global security challenges, the Nominee highlighted the importance of technology-driven training. He assured the Committee that he would, upon the Minister's recommendation, introduce advanced security

training programmes using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and modern technology. These initiatives, he explained, would equip security personnel with the latest tools to handle emerging security threats and enable them to rise through the ranks based on merit and competence.

6.2.10 Manpower Levels in Security Services

On the issue of recruitment into the security services under the Ministry of the Interior, the Nominee was asked whether he had any plans to increase their numbers to an appreciable level. In response, he explained that all government sector recruitments require financial clearance before they can proceed. He acknowledged that with the introduction of the 24-hour economy, there would be a greater demand for security personnel, making recruitment necessary. However, he assured the Committee that any recruitment process would be based on merit. He pledged to work closely with the Minister to ensure that the right individuals are recruited to strengthen the security services.

6.2.11 Strengthening Small Arms Regulation

Regarding how the Nominee would assist the Minister in changing the licensing regime for small arms in Ghana, he

acknowledged that Ghana has established laws and regulatory agencies, such as the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, responsible for managing and controlling the proliferation of illicit small arms. However, he admitted that despite these measures, the illicit circulation of small arms remains a serious challenge. To address this issue, he pledged to work with the Minister to introduce legislative reforms aimed at enhancing the licensing regime and decentralising the small arms licensing process to improve monitoring and regulation.

6.2.12 Reviewing Police Barriers and Checkpoints

The Nominee was asked about the numerous police barriers and checkpoints dotted across the country and whether their presence serve a useful security purpose. He acknowledged that the prevalence of police checkpoints has raised public concern and admitted that the situation needs proper assessment. However, he pointed out that police operations are sometimes intelligence-led, meaning that some barriers serve critical security purposes. He assured the Committee that he would recommend to the Minister that a proper evaluation be conducted to ensure that all police barriers serve their intended purpose and are effectively

managed to avoid unnecessary inconvenience to the public.

6.2.13 Addressing Challenges with Naturalisation

On the issue of naturalisation and ensuring that all applicants meet the legal requirements under Section 14 of the Citizenship Act 2000 (Act 591), the Nominee stated that he would ensure strict adherence to the legal provisions governing naturalisation in Ghana. He acknowledged that granting citizenship to foreigners is a sensitive issue, with potential implications for national security. He assured the Committee that all naturalisation applications would undergo thorough scrutiny to prevent any security threats. Additionally, he indicated that when necessary, he would seek legal advice from the substantive Minister to ensure that all decisions on naturalisation align with the law and national security interests.

6.2.14 Establishing Health Facilities for Security Personnel

When asked about strategies to establish health facilities to support security personnel, the Nominee acknowledged the need for improved healthcare services for personnel under the Ministry of the Interior, including the Prisons, Fire, and Immigration Services. He emphasised that security personnel play a vital role in national security

and deserve access to quality healthcare. He assured the Committee that he would continue reminding the Minister to acquire the necessary funding for the establishment of health facilities dedicated to security personnel.

6.2.15 Leave to Update Curriculum Vitae

It was observed from the Nominee's CV that the period within which the Nominee served in some capacities, which he termed community services, was omitted. The Nominee sought the leave of Mr Chairman to amend his CV to include information on the period in which he served in those capacities, which was granted. He subsequently amended the CV with the following: Chairman, Akrokerri College of Education Council from 2009 to 2011; Vice Chairman (NDC) Oforikrom Constituency, Kumasi from 2004 to 2008; Consultancy Services (Assessment of safety of foods and drugs for Foods and Drugs Board) from 2005 to 2008; and Chairman, College of Science Welfare Committee (KNUST) from 2003 to 2008.

6.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **MR EBENEZER OKLETEY TERLABI** as Deputy Minister for the Interior.

7.0 MR SAMPSON AHI (MP)

DEPUTY MINISTER- DESIGNATE, MINISTRY OF TRADE, AGRIBUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

7.1 Background

Mr Sampson Ahi was born on 14th September, 1976 in Sefwi Bodi and hails from the Western North Region of Ghana. He is a Christian and is married with five children. The Nominee began his primary education at Bodi Anglican Middle School and proceeded to Bibiani Secondary School from 1989 to 1996. From 1994 to 1996, he pursued his Advanced Level (A-Level) studies at Nkroful Secondary School. After completing his secondary education, he enrolled at the University of Ghana from 2001 to 2007, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree in Political Science. He further pursued a Master's degree in Governance and Leadership at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). In addition, he holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from GIMPA.

The Nominee undertook his national service as a teacher at Anglican Junior High School from 1996 to 1997. He later assumed the position of District Manager at Armajaro Ghana Limited, Adabokrom District, from 2002 to

2003, and subsequently rose to Sector Manager from 2003 to 2004 in the same company. His political career began when he was elected as Member of Parliament for the Juaboso/Bia Constituency from January 7, 2005, to January 13, 2013. During this period, he also served as Deputy Chief Whip from January to May 2013. He was later appointed as Deputy Minister for Water Resources, Works, and Housing from May 2013 to January 2017. Currently, he serves as the Member of Parliament for the Bodi Constituency and as an ECOWAS Parliamentarian.

The Nominee has had significant international exposure and has represented Ghana at various international conferences and delegations. He was nominated on multiple occasions by the Ministry Delegation to the World Water Day Conference in South Korea and participated in the 7th Africa Water Week and the 2nd International Conference of Eau-Afrique (African Water) in Gabon from 20th to 24th March and 29th October to 2nd November 2018, respectively. He also joined the Parliamentary Delegation to the Agriculture Show in Coventry, United Kingdom, from 1st to 4th July 2009. These represent just a few of his international engagements and contributions.

The Nominee has served on several Committees of Parliament, including the Committee on Food,

Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs, Committee on Gender, Children and Social Welfare, Appointments Committee, Committee on Privileges, Committee on Works and Housing, Committee on Energy, and Committee on Government Assurance. As a member of the ECOWAS Parliament, he has served on the Political, Peace, and Stability Committee and is the Chairman of the Committee on Education.

His hobbies include singing and reading.

7.2 Questions asked of the Nominee and his Responses

7.2.1 One District, One Factory Policy

When the Nominee was asked about his understanding of the One District, One Factory (1D1F) Policy, he explained that the initiative, introduced by the previous Administration was designed to industrialise the nation by establishing factories in all districts. The primary goal was to generate employment opportunities and boost national revenue through the export of products manufactured by these factories. While acknowledging the commendable objectives of the Policy, the Nominee emphasised that its implementation has faced several challenges, hindering the full realisation of its intended benefits.

7.2.2 Business Regulatory Framework

Regarding the introduction of a Business Regulatory Framework by the Ministry under the previous Government, the Nominee was asked how he would ensure that businesses benefit from its provisions. He responded that upon receiving approval, he would review the Framework and the relevant Bill in collaboration with the Minister to ensure that businesses are adequately supported and can fully take advantage of its provisions to enhance economic growth.

7.2.3 Trade Facilitation at the Ports

The Nominee was questioned on how he would ensure compliance with the Shippers Authority's mandate to approve fees and charges for entities in the sector, as outlined in the Amendment Act. In response, he stated that he would carefully study the approval mandate and offer recommendations to the sector Minister to enhance compliance. He also pointed out that one of the primary concerns in trade facilitation is Ghana's inability to add value to cocoa before export. If approved, he pledged to initiate an industrialisation drive aimed at establishing a cocoa processing company in the Western North Region to enhance the country's

competitive edge in the global cocoa market.

7.2.4 Agribusiness in Ghana

When the Nominee was asked about strategies to bridge the gap between agricultural production and processing to position Ghana as a potential agribusiness hub in the sub-region, he suggested that incorporating agribusiness into the Ministry's mandate is a key step. He further recommended a focused effort to add value to agricultural products, ensuring that they are marketable both domestically and internationally to drive economic growth and improve agricultural sustainability.

7.2.5 Garment and Textiles Industry

On the decline of the garment and textiles industry, which has seen Ghana lose its lead to Benin, the Nominee outlined several strategies for revitalising the sector. He explained that the once-thriving industry, which employed approximately 30,000 Ghanaians, has faced numerous challenges that have led to its decline. He cited the case of the Juapong Textile Company, which closed down due to a significant debt burden, as an example of the challenges faced by the industry. To restore the industry's viability, he emphasised the need for strategic partnerships and investment to create jobs and

generate wealth through the textile and garment sector.

7.2.6 Ghana Free Zones

In response to a question about transitioning from export processing zones to special economic zones, the Nominee stated that this shift could be achieved by reviewing Act 504, which governs the Free Zones. He stressed the importance of an investment promotion strategy focused on enhancing incentives to attract investments into the sector. The Nominee expressed his commitment to ensuring Ghana's Free Zones Authority plays a pivotal role in economic growth and industrialisation.

7.2.7 Trade Liberalisation in the Cement Industry

Regarding the regulation of cement quality and pricing, the Nominee explained that the current prices and quality are influenced by competition among the 15 companies operating in the sector. To address this, the Ministry has established a committee comprising representatives from the Ministry, the Ghana Revenue Authority, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ghana Standards Authority to oversee pricing regulations. He further assured the Committee that quality control is enforced by the Ghana Standards Authority to

ensure that cement production meets the required standards for durability and safety.

7.2.8 Foreigners in the Retail Market

When asked about measures to protect indigenous retail businesses from foreign competition, the Nominee committed to working closely with the Minister to safeguard local businesses from the negative impact of foreign involvement in the retail space. He noted that according to the law, a foreigner can only be permitted to trade in the retail industry if they have invested one million United States Dollars (US\$1,000,000) in the sector. However, he acknowledged that foreign retailers often dominate the market because they have more financial resources compared to local traders. He assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would work closely with all stakeholders to ensure strict enforcement of retail regulations and that foreign traders who fail to meet legal requirements would be sanctioned.

7.2.9 Revamping the Pwalugu Tomato Factory

In response to a question about the revamping of the Pwalugu Tomato Factory, the Nominee assured the Committee that in line with the ruling Government's Manifesto, efforts would be made to restore the factory to full operation with a primary focus on tomato paste

production. He acknowledged that a steady supply of raw materials, particularly tomatoes, would be critical for the success of the factory. To address this, he pledged to collaborate with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to boost tomato production and ensure consistent supply for the factory's operations.

7.2.10 Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

When asked about Government support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the Nominee highlighted that the 2025 Budget includes provisions aimed at supporting these businesses. He assured the Committee that all available resources and financial support mechanisms would be explored to ensure that SMEs receive the necessary assistance to thrive.

7.2.11 Trade Facilitation in the Western North Region

When asked about his expectations regarding trade facilitation in the Western North Region, the Nominee expressed concerns about the lack of adequate development in the Region despite it being a major cocoa-producing area. He emphasised that with the current Government's focus on value addition, he expects to see the establishment of a cocoa processing plant in the Western North Region. This, he explained,

would increase national revenue, create jobs, and spur economic development in the area. He assured the Committee that he would work closely with the Minister to make this expectation a reality.

7.2.12 Job Creation in the Western North Region

On how he intends to create jobs for the people of the Western North Region in his capacity as Deputy Minister, the Nominee aligned himself with the President's vision of job creation for the youth. He noted that once sustainable job opportunities are created at the national level, the people of Western North would also benefit immensely.

7.2.13 Financial Support for SMEs

When asked how he intends to provide financial support to small-scale traders and entrepreneurs, the Nominee acknowledged that over 80 per cent of traders in Ghana fall into this category and require substantial financial assistance. He assured the Committee that the Government is committed to improving the livelihoods of these traders by providing the necessary financial support. He also emphasised the role of agribusiness initiatives in transforming the trade sector.

He further revealed that the 2025 Annual Budget Statement, which

is set to be presented soon, has made specific allocations for small-scale traders to improve their businesses. If approved, he pledged to harness all available financial resources to support small-scale businesses, making trade more profitable and attractive for local entrepreneurs.

7.16 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **MR SAMPSON AHI** as Deputy Minister for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry.

8.0 DR CLEMENT ABAS APAAK

**DEPUTY MINISTER-
DESIGNATE, MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION**

8.1 Background

Dr Clement Abas Apaak was born on 11th June, 1970. He is a Christian, and he is married with seven children. He speaks Buli, Kasem, Hausa, Twi, English, Wali, and Dagbani.

The Nominee's educational journey began with primary school, which he attended from 1976 to 1982 at various institutions, including Bawa Barracks Primary School, St Peter's Primary School, Roman Catholic Primary School, Anglican Primary School, and

Sakasaka Primary School, all located in different parts of Ghana. He then proceeded to secondary school, attending Dzudzeidayiri Middle School, Community Day Secondary School, Sandema Secondary Technical School, and Nandom Secondary School from 1982 to 1991. He then proceeded to the University of Ghana where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology and History in 1996, and the University of Brussels, Belgium for an International Certificate in Archaeology in 1998. In 1999, he acquired an MPhil in Archaeology from the University of Bergen, Norway. The Nominee earned a PhD in Archaeology from Simon Fraser University, Canada in 2008.

Dr Apaak was a Teaching Assistant at the Department of Archaeology, and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana from 1996 to 1997. He also worked as a Benefits Representative at Kelly Staff Leasing, San Diego, USA from 1999 to 2000. While at Simon Fraser University, Canada, he was a Teaching Assistant at the Department of Archaeology from 2001 to 2002; Graduate Issues Officer of the Simon Fraser Student Society from 2002 to 2004; Coordinator of the Teaching Support Staff Union from 2002 to 2004; and President of the Simon Fraser Student Society from 2004 to 2005. He was the Coordinator, Education to Facilitate Integration; Centre for the Integration of

African Immigrants; and Heritage Canada Funded Project, New Westminster, Canada from 2007 to 2008. He was also a Contract Researcher for the Simon Fraser University Institutional Strategic Plan on Africa from 2008 to 2009; and Sessional Lecturer at the Department of Archaeology from 2004 to 2009. He became a lecturer at the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, University of Ghana from 2010 to 2013, and a Station Manager of Radio Universe, University of Ghana from 2011 to 2013. From 2013 to 2017, he served as a Presidential Staffer at the Office of the President. He is currently the Member of Parliament for Builsa South, a position he has held since 2017.

The Nominee has held other political positions including: House Prefect, Sandema Secondary School (1988 to 1989); Entertainment Prefect, Nandom Secondary School (1990 to 1991); President, International Students Union, University of Bergen, Norway (1997 to 1998); Leader, Tenants Union, Fantoft Students Hostel, Bergen, Norway (1998 to 1999); Chairperson, African Students Association, University of Bergen, Norway (1998 to 1999); Graduate Representative to the British Columbia Provincial Component of the Canadian Federation of Students, Canada (2002 to 2003); International Student Commissioner, Canadian

Federation of Students, Canada (2002 to 2003); Chair, Louis Riel Tenants Association, Simon Fraser University (2003 to 2004); Board Member, Africa Awareness, University of British Columbia (2003 to 2005); Senator, Simon Fraser University Senate (2002 to 2006); Board of Governor, Simon Fraser University (2002 to 2006); Deputy Secretary, National Democratic Congress (NDC), Canada Branch (2010 to 2013); National Organiser, Commonwealth Hall Alumni Association (Old Vandals), University of Ghana ((2011 to 2013); and Member, National Media Commission (President's Appointee), (2012 to 2015).

As a Member of Parliament, the Nominee has served as a Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (2017 to 2019); and the Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee on Education (2019 to 2024). Additionally, he was the Chair of the Ghana-Canada Parliamentary Friendship Association (2023 to 2024); and the Chair of the Parliamentary Caucus on Disability (2024).

Dr Apaak has volunteered in different capacities since 2000. He was a Public Relations Official of the Ghana Association of San Diego from 2000 to 2001; Producer and Host of African Connection on CJSF 90.1FM at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, Canada, from 2003 to

2009; and Director of Media and Public Relations for the Afrikadey Festival in Vancouver, Canada, during the same period. He also founded and chaired the Association of Canadian Students for Darfur (2003 to 2009). He served as a Resident Scholar with the Association of Global Citizens, Ghana Branch (2010 to 2014), and as Convener for the Forum for Governance and Justice (2011 to 2013). He was also a Tutor at D-block, Commonwealth Hall, University of Ghana (2012 to 2013), and as a Member of the Academic Board of the University of Ghana, Legon (2012 to 2013). Additionally, he was the Patron of the Nandom Secondary School Old Boys Association, Legon Branch, during the same period.

He has been the recipient of several academic scholarships, fellowships, and awards in recognition of his outstanding academic performance, leadership, and commitment to humanitarian causes. He was awarded the Norwegian Government Scholarship at the University of Bergen in 1997, followed by the Graduate Student Fieldwork Grant in 1998. At the Simon Fraser University, he received multiple honours, including the President's PhD Research Stipend, Graduate Fellowship, William Steward Volunteer Leadership Award, and Eileen Purkiss Memorial Award in 2004. His humanitarian contributions earned him the Dr B.

Ambedkar Humanitarian Award in 2006.

Further, in recognition of his leadership and community service, he received several awards. In 1999, he received Certificates of Service from both the International Students Union of Norway and the Tenants Union of Fantoft Students Hostel. Later, in Canada, he was honoured with the Vision Leadership Award (2006), the Hero Award from Youth for Human Rights International (2006), and the International Peacemaker Award from the YMCA Greater Vancouver (2006). In 2007, he received the Eye Opener Award from the Simon Fraser Campus Radio Society and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Padang Lutheran Relief Church. His service at Simon Fraser University was further recognised in 2008 with Certificates of Service from the Board of Governors and the Senate.

In sports, he earned Full Colours for excellence in volleyball from the Amalgamated Clubs of the University of Ghana in 1996 and was recognised for his distinctive contribution to sports by the Junior Common Room of Commonwealth Hall the same year. He won a bronze medal in volleyball at the 14th Ghana

University Games (1994) and a silver medal at the 13th Ghana University Games (1993).

The Nominee likes writing, research, dancing, debating, volleyball, and table tennis.

8.2 Questions asked of the Nominee and his Responses

8.2.1 Retraction of a Social Media Post

The Nominee was asked to read a post he published on the social media in 2024. He acknowledged being the author of the post and admitted that he used harsh language in his statements and conceded that he was excessive in blaming the entire Government for the actions of a few individuals. He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to clarify his position and recognised the need for more measured language in political discourse.

8.2.2. Free Senior High School Programme

The Committee sought the view of the Nominee on whether the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) would be cancelled or sustained. The Nominee gave an assurance that the Free SHS Programme, which was introduced by the previous Government, will not be cancelled. He emphasised that the current Government recognises the importance of the initiative and its impact on the educational

landscape in Ghana. Instead of discontinuing the Programme, the Nominee affirmed that the Government will work to enhance it. This improvement, he said, will focus on making the Free SHS Programme more efficient and better catered to the needs of students, ensuring its sustainability and success in the long term.

8.2.3 Implementation of the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) Programme

The Nominee made it clear to the Committee that the effective implementation of the Free Senior High School dominated the campaign of the NDC. On the issue of student feeding, the Nominee acknowledged the current challenges facing Senior High Schools in terms of feeding the students. He informed the Committee that the Government is yet to present a formal budget to address this issue comprehensively. In the meantime, the existing arrangement, though temporary, involves making resources available to heads of educational institutions to ensure that students are fed. He added that the Government is committed to finding sustainable solutions for feeding programmes, which will be outlined in the upcoming budget proposal.

8.2.4 State of STEM Education in the Country

The Nominee reiterated the critical role of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in shaping Ghana's future. He acknowledged that STEM education is capital intensive, which could pose challenges in the long run. In light of this, the Nominee indicated his commitment to exploring avenues for external support. Should he be confirmed, he intends to advise the Minister for Education to approach bilateral and multilateral organisations for assistance in covering the financial costs associated with STEM education. Agencies like the MasterCard Foundation, which has supported educational initiatives in the past, would be called upon to collaborate in funding and enhancing STEM programmes.

Regarding the novelty of STEM in Ghana, the Nominee clarified that while STEM as an educational field is not new, STEM schools in Ghana are a recent development. He stated he was aware of the various new programmes that have been added to the STEM education initiative and considers these programmes essential for achieving the project's objectives. These additions will help ensure that the goals of the STEM education project are met, paving

the way for a more tech-savvy and skilled workforce in Ghana.

8.2.5 Decentralising the Procurement of Food Items in SHSs

When asked whether he will consider decentralising the procurement of food items in the second cycle schools, the Nominee made it clear that if that will be of immense benefit to the schools with regard to timely delivery of food items, he will not hesitate to recommend that to the Minister for Education to consider it for implementation.

8.2.6 Re-Introduction of Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A) in Schools

The Nominee admitted that the re-introduction of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is a vital step towards enhancing collaboration between parents and educators in the educational system. The Nominee's response on the reintroduction of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) emphasised that PTAs have not been completely cancelled but rather their functions and contributions have been diminished. The Nominee acknowledged the importance of PTAs in facilitating communication between parents and teachers, addressing school challenges, and mobilising resources for infrastructural development. He expressed a commitment to supporting the

Minister in implementing policies that would reinstate PTAs to their former status, thereby enhancing collaboration and support for schools and students.

8.2.7 Double-Track System

The Nominee's response on the double track system clarified that there are currently 413 schools still running this system, correcting an earlier misstatement of about 600 schools. He outlined some major challenges of the double track system specifically accommodation, feeding, and an erratic academic calendar. The Nominee expressed a commitment to working with the Minister for Education to address these challenges, aiming to create a more stable and supportive environment for students.

8.2.8 Supply of Textbooks to Schools

The Nominee affirmed the importance of having adequate textbooks available for every child, even as the education system moves towards digital technology. He indicated that textbooks should not be entirely replaced by technology, and if consulted by the Minister, he would advocate for ensuring that all schools have access to both textbooks and digital resources for effective teaching and learning. The Nominee emphasised that the two resources are complementary and

essential for a well-rounded educational experience.

8.2.9 Optimising e-Learning in Service Delivery

The Nominee acknowledged that technology plays a significant role in almost every facet of life. He expressed a commitment to supporting the Minister in optimising and upgrading e-learning initiatives, emphasising the importance of technology in enhancing educational services. The Nominee further stated that any specific strategies for improvement would be determined by the Minister, as he is there to support the policy decisions made at the Ministry.

8.2.10 Capacity Building of Teachers

The Nominee emphasised the critical importance of capacity building for teachers to adapt to evolving educational practices. He highlighted the need for ongoing professional development and support to ensure teachers can upgrade their skills effectively. He expressed his readiness to assist the Minister in implementing programmes that focus on enhancing the capabilities of teachers and improving their teaching environments.

8.2.11 Free Tertiary Admission and Tuition

The Nominee confirmed that the Government's promise of free admission and tuition applies to all first-year students in public tertiary institutions, including nursing and teacher training colleges. He reiterated that this Policy is part of the Government's commitment to making education accessible. The Nominee also indicated that the implementation timeline for this promise would be determined by the Minister.

8.2.11 Challenges Facing the West Africa Examination Council

The Nominee was questioned regarding the current state of the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), particularly focusing on the delayed release of funds from the central government, the withholding of examination results, and the persistent issue of examination malpractice. In response, the Nominee highlighted the financial constraints faced by WAEC as a significant challenge. He expressed that if consulted by the Minister, he would advocate for the Government to fulfil its financial obligations to WAEC in a timely manner. He emphasised that years of advocacy and partnership with stakeholders have yet to yield the desired outcomes.

The Nominee further identified the inability of WAEC to employ its own staff for invigilation and supervision as a major contributor to examination malpractice. He

argued that granting WAEC the resources to recruit and deploy its own personnel would significantly mitigate these malpractices, thereby enhancing the integrity of the examination process.

8.2.12 Introduction of Competition to break Monopoly of WAEC

The Nominee was also questioned on the possibility of introducing competition to address recurring issues such as the withholding of examination results and the subsequent disruption of the university academic calendar. In his response, the Nominee clarified that, as a Deputy Minister, he is not in a position to make policy decisions. However, he indicated that if consulted by the substantive Minister, he would recommend a national dialogue on the country's assessment methods. Such a dialogue, he believes, would provide insights into the root causes of these challenges and inform the development of effective solutions.

The Nominee reiterated his commitment to supporting the Minister in any policy direction deemed appropriate to address these pressing concerns.

8.2.13 Decline in Authority of Teachers in the Educational Sector

The Nominee was further questioned on the decline in teacher authority, which has led to

increased absenteeism, truancy, and incidents of violence in second-cycle schools. When asked for his views on addressing this issue, the Nominee acknowledged the gravity of the situation but noted that as a Deputy Minister, he is not in a position to make policy decisions.

He emphasised the role of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in addressing these challenges, distinguishing it from the previous Parent Association model. Additionally, he advocated for dialogue with teacher associations to understand the challenges they face on the frontlines of education. Such engagement, he argued, would provide valuable insights for shaping policy directions and ensuring a conducive environment for teaching and learning in second-cycle schools.

8.2.14 Drug Abuse in Second-Cycle Schools

The Committee urged the Nominee to support the Minister in addressing the growing menace of drug abuse within the educational system, spanning from basic to tertiary education. The Nominee acknowledged the detrimental impact of drug abuse on students, who are a critical investment into the future of the nation.

He stressed the need for a concerted effort involving parents, educators, and institutions to

tackle this issue effectively. While expressing confidence in the Minister's commitment to addressing the challenge, the Nominee highlighted the importance of instilling values in students. He argued that nurturing and supporting children must be complemented by a strong emphasis on values, which should be a cornerstone of the nation's educational and societal framework.

8.2.15 Teacher Salaries, Awards, and the Teaching Environment

When questioned about the salaries of teachers, the Nominee expressed concern over the current remuneration structure. He assured the Committee that he would work diligently to support the Minister in facilitating the timely release of salaries for teachers. While acknowledging that he is not the policy maker, the Nominee emphasised his personal belief that teachers play the most critical role in society, as every individual is a product of their influence. He stated that if it were within his power, he would advocate for teachers to be compensated more generously than any other profession, given their invaluable contribution to national development.

Regarding the teaching environment, the Nominee agreed that significant improvements are needed. He highlighted the importance of addressing

transportation challenges as a key factor in enhancing the overall teaching and learning experience.

8.2.16 Schools Operating Under Trees

The Committee drew the attention of the Nominee to an earlier statement by the Minister that approximately 5,000 schools in the country are still operating under trees. The Nominee was urged to assist the Minister in reducing this number and was asked whether he was aware of the budgetary allocation earmarked for addressing this issue.

The Nominee admitted that he was not privy to the specific budget details but expressed confidence that he would be fully briefed upon assuming office. He described the prevalence of schools under trees as inconsistent with the nation's status and developmental aspirations. He attributed the issue to the country's inability to keep pace with the demand for educational infrastructure amid rapid population growth.

The Nominee explained that the lack of adequate infrastructure has led some communities to establish makeshift schools while awaiting government intervention. He called for a unified effort to mobilise the necessary resources to

address this challenge promptly, ensuring that all students have access to proper educational facilities.

8.2.18 Teacher Housing and Transportation

The Nominee was asked to share whether he would advise the Minister to continue the teacher support initiative introduced by former President Kufuor, which focused on improving housing and transportation for teachers. In response, the Nominee affirmed his commitment to advocating for the continuation of such initiatives, emphasising their importance in addressing the welfare needs of teachers and enhancing their working conditions.

8.2.19 Emergency Infrastructure Drive and Continuity of Projects

Referring to the NDC Manifesto, the Nominee was asked about his intentions regarding the continuation of infrastructure projects initiated by the previous Government. The Nominee assured the Committee that the NDC Administration, under H.E. John Mahama, remains committed to fulfilling its promises. He specifically highlighted the completion of uncompleted STEM schools as a priority, underscoring the Administration's dedication to advancing educational infrastructure.

8.2.20 Teacher Training Allowance

When questioned about the status of the teacher training allowance, the Nominee clarified that the allowance has not been scrapped. He was further asked whether the Minister intends to scrap the allowance in the future. The Nominee responded that he does not believe the Minister has any intention of scrapping the teacher training allowance. He reaffirmed the importance of the allowance in supporting teacher trainees and maintaining the quality of teacher education.

8.2.21 Enhancing Sporting Activities in Schools (Funding)

The Nominee was questioned on his interest in promoting sports at the basic and secondary school levels, as well as strategies to raise funds to support sporting activities in schools. In response, the Nominee highlighted his personal passion for sports, noting that he is a sports enthusiast. He also pointed out that the Minister shares this enthusiasm, being a football player himself.

The Nominee identified inadequate funding as the primary challenge hindering the development of sports in schools. He expressed confidence that the Minister, given his passion for sports, would explore innovative ways to engage the private sector in supporting school sports. Additionally, he emphasised the

need for national support to allocate resources for sporting activities, which he described as a critical aspect of education that cannot be overlooked.

The Nominee further proposed providing financial support to district directorates of education to organise inter-school sporting activities. He acknowledged the existing challenges and called for collective efforts to address the issue, underscoring the importance of collaboration to ensure the promotion and sustainability of sports in schools.

8.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **DR CLEMENT ABAS APAAK** as Deputy Minister for Education.

9.0 MR RICHARD GYAN-MENSAH DEPUTY MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY

9.1 Background

Mr Richard Gyan Mensah was born on 20th June, 1982 in Accra, and he hails from Gomoa Asempanyin in the Central Region of Ghana. He is married with children, and he is a Christian. He speaks English, Fante, Twi, and Ga.

The Nominee began his education at the Cosmos Preparatory School, Lapaz from 1993 to 1995, and the Abeka Motorway 2 Junior High School from 1995 to 1998. He proceeded to Apam Senior High School for his Senior Secondary School Certificate from 1999 to 2001. He furthered his education at the University of Cape Coast, where he earned a Bachelor of Education in Psychology from August 2003 to May 2007. Between 2023 and 2024, the Nominee obtained some certificates including: Strategic Leadership Training from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), May 2024; Advanced Certificate in Leadership and Communication from Knutsford University College, July 2023 to November 2023; and Advanced Certificate in Monitoring and Evaluation from Knowledge Tree International, Dubai, January 2023 to March 2023. He later pursued a Master of Science in Accounting and Finance at the University of Ghana from August 2016 to May 2017. Since 2016 to date, he has been undertaking the Chartered Accountant Part III Certification with the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana. Currently, the Nominee is awaiting graduation for a Master of Arts in Energy Law at the University of Ghana, which he began in October 2023.

The Nominee served as a pupil teacher at Bentina Preparatory School, Tabora, Accra from September 2001 to August 2003. He also undertook teaching practice in Accounting at City Business College from January to February 2007. From July 2007 to January 2010, he was an Accountant at Trust Hands Auto Centre Limited, and within the period, from January to August 2008, he rendered his National Service at Gomoa Dominase D/A JHS as a Mathematics and ICT teacher. In January 2010, he joined Union Oil Ghana Limited as a Key Accounts Manager, where he was until January 2014. He became the Head of Finance and Planning at Petrosol Platinum Energy Limited, a position he held from February 2014 to November 2019. At Desert Oil Ghana Limited, he became the General Manager from November 2019 till January 2021.

Currently, he is the Member of Parliament for Gomoa West, a role he has held since January 2021. He has served on various committees of Parliament including: Committee on Members Holding Office of Profit, Committee on Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Committee on Security and Intelligence, and the Committee on Youth and Sports. He was also the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Budget. Additionally, he was a friend to the Committee on Finance, a Member of the Young

Parliamentarian's Forum, Climate Parliament Ghana Caucus, and the Population and Development Caucus.

Since 2013, the Nominee has offered consultancy services to different organisations including: Radiance Petroleum Limited; Seam Oil Company Limited; IBM Petroleum Limited; Desert Oil Ghana Limited; and Westol Petroleum Limited (NOVA).

As regards leadership positions, the Nominee was a Finance Committee Member of the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), University of Cape Coast Chapter from 2005 to 2006. He later became the President of Gomoa Students and Associates from 2006 to 2007. From 2007 to 2010, he served as the Board Secretary of Trust Hands Auto Centre Limited. During this period, he was also the Finance Secretary of the Prince of Peace Society, Methodist Church Ghana, a role he held from 2007 to 2014. He was also the Circuit Auditor for The Methodist Church Ghana from 2008 to 2018. From 2016 to 2017, he took on an academic leadership role as a Student Representative for the MSc. Finance and Accounting programme at the University of Ghana Business School. He served as a member of the Board of Directors of PETROSOL MS Limited from

2017 to 2021, and Gomoa Senior High Technical School from 2000 to date. He was also the Technical Director of the Downstream Petroleum Institute from 2016 to 2022.

Mr Gyan-Mensah has participated in several conferences and capacity-building programmes, some of which are: Ninth Global Conference on Young Parliamentarians, Vietnam, Inter-Parliamentary Union (2023); Stepping Up the Fight Against Corruption in Developing Countries, USA, World Bank (2023); The Global Parliamentary Forum (GPF), USA, World Bank and IMF (2023); Training on National Budget (2021 to 2024); and Paris Professional Seminar on Mergers and Acquisition, France, Columbia Law School (2024).

The Nominee is a Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana. Some of his research projects are: Impact of the Deregulation on the Downstream Oil Marketing Companies in Ghana (2017); Curbing Downstream Petroleum Revenue Leakages (2018); and Environmental Law Compliance in the Ghanaian Downstream Petroleum Sector (2024).

Mr Richard Gyan-Mensah likes reading, teaching, and travelling.

9.2 Questions asked of the Nominee and his Responses

9.2.1 Local Participation under ECG Privatisation

In response to a question about whether the proposed privatisation plan of the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) would allow for local participation, the Nominee informed the Committee that the intended privatisation of ECG would not cover the entire operations of the company but only the distribution and billing sector. He stated that the Local Content Act passed by Ghana recognises and encourages the participation of local businesses in every industry, and the same principle would be applied in this case. He assured the Committee that indigenous businessmen who wish to invest in ECG would be given the opportunity to do so when the privatisation process begins.

9.2.2 Cylinder Recirculation Model

The Nominee was asked to express his thoughts on concerns raised by LPG distributors that the roll-out of the Cylinder Recirculation Model (CRM) by the National Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NPRA) should be suspended because it could negatively impact their operations. The Nominee stated that as an industry player, he was well aware of the concerns

raised by LPG distributors. However, he believes the matter requires further investigation and that there should be engagements between the parties involved to properly understand the issues and find a viable solution.

The Nominee further explained that at the moment, both the CRM and the traditional LPG distribution system are running concurrently. He assured the Committee that he would consult the substantive Minister for possible engagement with LPG bottling distributors to gain a deeper understanding of their grievances and to facilitate a resolution that would benefit all stakeholders.

9.2.3 Intermittent Power Supply

The Nominee was asked to confirm whether the intermittent power supply currently being experienced in parts of the country could be described as "Dumsor". The Nominee acknowledged that there were power outages in certain areas but clarified that the current interruptions were due to ongoing maintenance works on the West African Gas Pipeline, which supplies gas to thermal plants for electricity generation.

He explained that many of the power plants that rely on gas were currently non-operational due to these maintenance activities, resulting in the shortage of

electricity supply. However, the Nominee assured the Committee that the Government had secured enough liquid fuel to mitigate the shortfall. He further assured that the problem would be resolved by the 6th of March, 2025.

The Nominee also urged Ghanaians to be patient with the Government during these difficult times, as efforts were being made to ensure a stable power supply.

9.2.4 Use of Technology in Power Generation

The Nominee was asked whether he subscribed to the view that ECG, being the last in the value chain, should be empowered to deploy technology across all its operations to reduce generation losses and enhance revenue collection. In response, the Nominee strongly agreed with the assertion and stated that the deployment of appropriate technology across the power generation and distribution chain would minimise human intervention, reduce inefficiencies, and make power generation more cost-effective.

9.2.5 Cost of Electricity vis-à-vis Renewable Energy

The Nominee was asked to share his opinion on the argument that due to the high cost of electricity, the country should intensify efforts to promote renewable energy

sources such as solar and nuclear power. In response, the Nominee stated that these were policy matters that should be championed by the substantive Minister.

He, however, noted that the country already operates a mixed power generation system and welcomed the advocacy for increased adoption of renewable energy. He disclosed that the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition would focus on expanding renewable and nuclear energy, including solar energy, to enhance power supply at a lower cost to consumers.

On whether he would consider advising the substantive Minister to explore the policy of using oil grips for power generation in areas such as Afadjato to reduce the cost of electricity, the Nominee responded in the affirmative.

9.2.6 Transition from Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy

On the question of how the Nominee would advise a developing country like Ghana, which seeks to leverage oil exploration for economic development, to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, the Nominee explained that transitioning to renewable energy does not mean completely abandoning fossil fuel.

He stated that the transition should be a gradual process, ensuring that the country strategically shifts to cleaner energy sources while maximising the benefits of its existing fossil fuel resources. He added that efforts must be made to ensure that in the long term, Ghana achieves a net-zero carbon emissions target.

9.2.7 Promoting Commercial Tree Planting

The Nominee was asked whether he agreed with the assertion that instead of focusing solely on tree planting for environmental benefits, commercial rubber and palm tree plantation farmers should be supported to increase their plantations for both economic and environmental purposes. In response, the Nominee stated that the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition is not directly responsible for tree planting, as this responsibility falls under the Tree Crop Authority. He emphasised that the Authority's focus is not only on planting trees for commercial purposes but also for food security and environmental sustainability.

The Nominee agreed with the assertion that tree planting should serve both economic and environmental benefits rather than focusing solely on one aspect.

9.2.8 Dwindling Investments in the Upstream Sector

The attention of the Nominee was drawn to the declining investments in the upstream petroleum sector, and he was asked whether he anticipated any changes in the fiscal regime governing the sector to reverse the trend.

In response, he stated that he would support the substantive Minister in making the upstream petroleum sector more attractive to investors. He added that agreements and fiscal policies governing the sector would be reviewed to create a more investor-friendly environment.

9.2.9 Production Shortfalls in Oil Fields

The Nominee was asked what plans he would propose to boost oil production in fields that have been recording shortfalls. In response, he explained that this was primarily a policy issue.

However, he acknowledged that many oil wells in Ghana are currently producing significantly lower volumes than expected. He disclosed that output had dropped from 175,000 barrels per day to 89,000 barrels per day, which he described as alarming and discouraging.

Despite this, the Nominee assured the Committee that the Government was looking into bringing additional wells on board to boost oil output.

9.2.10 Energy Efficiency and Conservation

Speaking on strategies to promote energy efficiency and conservation, the Nominee stated that education and public awareness campaigns would be key to achieving this objective. He stressed the importance of encouraging consumers to use less electricity during peak hours and ensuring that existing energy regulations are fully enforced.

The Nominee pledged to support the substantive Minister in intensifying public education on energy conservation and promoting the use of modern, energy-efficient appliances.

9.2.11 Cost of Power

The Nominee was asked about plans the Government intends to deploy to reduce the cost of electricity for consumers. In response, he referred to the substantive Minister's previous statement during his vetting, where he indicated that the NDC Administration would consider introducing nuclear power as a base load source to reduce electricity costs significantly.

The Nominee assured the Committee that he fully supports this policy initiative and will encourage the Minister to pursue its implementation. He explained that nuclear power, as a reliable base load source, would provide affordable energy and improve the overall stability of the power supply system.

9.2.12 New Tariffs

When asked whether the Government intends to adjust electricity tariffs, the Nominee explained that 60 per cent of the cost of power in Ghana is determined by generation and distribution losses. He stated that if these losses are properly managed, electricity costs would decrease significantly.

He, however, noted that tariff adjustments depend on various economic factors, including the price of crude oil, foreign exchange rates, and operational inefficiencies within the power sector. He assured the Committee that he would work closely with the substantive Minister to introduce policies aimed at reducing generation and distribution losses, thereby lowering electricity tariffs in the long run.

9.2.13 Declaration of Support for Minister

The Nominee was asked to declare his readiness to support the substantive Minister in implementing key policies, including: The universal street lighting project in line with the Government's 24-Hour Economic Policy; and the application of the Energy Sector Levy Act (ESLA) funds for their intended purposes. In response, the Nominee answered all three questions in the affirmative, assuring the Committee of his full commitment to supporting these initiatives.

9.2.14 Use of Solar Energy

When asked about his stance on pushing for the use of solar energy in Government institutions, the Nominee affirmed his support for the Minister's position that solar energy adoption must be encouraged in public institutions to reduce dependence on the national grid.

Again, he was asked whether he would also support the Minister in ensuring that tertiary institutions install solar energy systems. The Nominee promised to discuss this with the Minister and to explore the feasibility of installing solar power in tertiary institutions. He also assured the Committee that he would work with the Minister to extend solar-powered lighting systems to markets across the

country to improve security and economic activities at night.

9.2.15 Status of Roads in Gomoa West Constituency

Responding to concerns about the status of roads in the Gomoa West Constituency in the Central Region, the Nominee admitted that a vast majority of the roads within the constituency were unmotorable, posing significant challenges to residents and hindering economic activities. He stated that over the past eight years, only a few road sections had been constructed, and many contractors working on road projects had abandoned the sites due to delays in payment of certificates.

The Nominee, however, disclosed that one of the contractors working on the Assin township road had recently returned to the site to complete the project.

9.2.16 Government Support to the Nominee

In response to a question on what kind of support he received from the Government during his first term as a Member of Parliament, the Nominee stated that the support he received was mainly in the form of statutory allocations, such as the DACF; the GETFund; and the NHIA Fund. He emphasised that these statutory

allocations were crucial for undertaking various development projects within his constituency.

When asked what specific projects these funds were used for, the Nominee listed the following: construction of CHPS compounds to improve healthcare access in his constituency; support for the construction of community centres to enhance social and economic activities; renovation of dilapidated schools and health facilities to provide better learning and healthcare environments; provision of medical equipment to health facilities to improve service delivery; and educational support for students and the youth by facilitating their engagement in economic activities and scholarship programmes.

The Nominee assured the Committee that he remains committed to leveraging Government support to bring further development to his constituency.

9.217 Documents Required of the Nominee

The Nominee was asked to furnish the Committee with proof of taxes he had paid from 2018 to 2020, as well as the permit in his name, which allows him to run his retail outlet business. The Nominee agreed and has submitted the stated documents.

9.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **MR RICHARD GYAN-MENSAH** as Deputy Minister for Energy and Green Transition.

10.0 MR JOHN KOFI SETOR DUMELO

DEPUTY MINISTER- DESIGNATE, MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

10.1 Background

Mr John Kofi Setor Dumelo was born on 3rd February, 1984 in Accra, Greater Accra Region, Ghana. He hails from Likpe-Bala in the Oti Region. The Nominee began his education at Christ the King School from 1989 to 1999 and continued to Achimota Senior Secondary School, where he obtained his West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) from 2000 to 2002.

He pursued higher education at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Administration in 2020. He furthered his education at GIMPA, earning a Master's degree in Governance and Leadership in 2022. In 2024, he obtained a

Master's degree in Natural Resource Law from the University of Ghana School of Law.

Mr Dumelo has been actively involved in entrepreneurship. Since 2014, he has served as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of KSD Ventures, and since 2015, he has been the CEO of Melo Foods, a company focused on agricultural and food production. His leadership roles extend beyond business; he held key positions such as President of the Chess Club at Achimota School (2002), Queens Hall Planning Committee Member (2004-2005), Organising Secretary of the Civil Engineering Students Association at KNUST (2005-2006), President of the Old Achimotans Association (OAA) at KNUST (2006), and Communications Officer for GIMPA TEIN in 2019.

Since 1991, Mr Dumelo has also built an illustrious career in the film industry, earning widespread recognition for his performances. He won Best Actor at the Afro-Australian Awards (Australia) and Best Actor in a Supporting Role at the Africa Movie Academy Awards (Nigeria) in 2011. He also received the Best Actor in a Lead Role award at the 2012 and 2013 Ghana Movie Awards and was named Best African Actor at the 2012 African Entertainment Awards in Malaysia.

In addition to acting, Mr Dumelo has received multiple honorary awards for his contributions to the African film industry. These include the Contribution to the African Film Industry Award from the City of Philadelphia, USA (2013), and the Best Humanitarian Award at the African Heritage Awards, USA (2014). In 2017, he was awarded Best Actor, West Africa at the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO).

Currently, Mr Dumelo serves as the Member of Parliament for the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency.

Beyond his professional and political engagements, the Nominee enjoys farming, watching documentaries, political engagements, humanitarian work, reading, listening to music, and driving.

10.2 Questions asked of the Nominee and his Responses

10.2.1 Verification of Nominee's Official Name

The Nominee was questioned about the accuracy of his name as listed in his Curriculum Vitae. Specifically, the Committee sought clarification on whether his full name was "John Matthew Kofi Setor Dumelo." In response, the Nominee confirmed that he does not use the middle name "Matthew" in any official capacity.

or on his academic certificates. He was accordingly granted leave by the Chair to amend the records to reflect this correction.

10.2.2 Private Business vis-a-vis Public Service

The Nominee was also asked about the sustainability of his business as he transitions into public service. He responded that he had taken steps to ensure the continuity of his business by delegating operational responsibilities to a trusted individual. When pressed on whether he would prefer to maintain his business and focus on his role as an MP, leveraging opportunities from his Party's Manifesto promises for agriculture to expand his business before eventually transitioning into the public service, he firmly disagreed with this notion. He stated that it was a privilege to be called upon by the President of the Republic of Ghana to serve in this capacity and emphasised his full commitment to public service.

10.2.3 Learning Opportunity

The Nominee was asked about what he intends to contribute to complement the efforts of the Minister. In his response, he expressed deep admiration for the Minister, highlighting the significant expertise and experience he possesses in both politics and agriculture. He articulated his understanding of the

role as a valuable opportunity to learn from a seasoned politician, emphasising the importance of gaining insights from someone who has demonstrated mastery in the agricultural sector. The Nominee further indicated his intention to work collaboratively with the Minister, aiming to enhance the Ministry's efforts in addressing challenges with agriculture in the country.

10.2.4 Presidential Ambitions

When questioned about his potential presidential ambitions, the Nominee humbly noted he does not have any such immediate intention and that there are many senior party members ahead of him. However, he remained open to future aspirations, stating that if it was the will of God for him to ascend to the high office of President, he would consider such a path.

10.2.5 Acknowledging Political Excesses

The Nominee was questioned about the political excesses often associated with campaign platforms and whether there were any statements he wished he had not made. In response, he recalled a particular incident involving former Member of Parliament, Ms Lydia Seyram Alhassan, who had been his opponent in previous elections. He admitted to using offensive language during a

particular campaign that he later regretted. He noted that he took immediate action to rectify the situation by issuing an apology the day after the incident. He further mentioned that his apology was publicly available on social media.

10.2.6 Regrets about Entering Politics

When asked whether he had any regrets about transitioning from the private business life to mainstream politics, the Nominee firmly responded in the negative.

10.2.7 Inspiring the Youth of Ghana

The Nominee was questioned about his plans to inspire the youth of Ghana, particularly in his constituency, which has a large population of tertiary students. The Nominee expressed his desire to encourage young people to follow their passion and pursue their dreams. He indicated that his varied background in the movie industry, business, and politics might serve as an inspiration for the youth, to motivate them to follow their passions and contribute positively to national development.

10.2.8 Party Policy on Food and Agriculture

Regarding his Party's policy on food and agriculture, the Nominee confirmed that he is well acquainted with the policy, which seeks to achieve food sufficiency

for Ghana. He elaborated on the key objectives of the policy, stating that it aims to transform the agricultural sector through strategic measures such as increasing local food production, reducing post-harvest losses, and ultimately feeding local industries while exporting the surplus.

10.2.9 The Concept of the 24-Hour Economy

Defining the 24-hour economy, the Nominee stated that it involves dividing one job into three shifts for three people. He indicated that almost all sectors would be included in the modelling programme to support this initiative. When asked about the expected timeline for implementing the 24-hour economy framework, the Nominee noted that the budget for the year is yet to be read. He anticipates that clear guidelines regarding the 24-hour economy will be outlined once the budget is read. He also acknowledged the potential establishment of a dedicated Secretariat within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to facilitate the 24-hour economy initiative if deemed necessary.

Regarding the process of ensuring food sufficiency and its integration into the 24-hour economy initiative, the Nominee noted that Ghana currently operates with only one farming season. However, the 24-Hour Economic Policy aims to

facilitate year-round farming practices, which is vital for achieving food sufficiency. This transition would ensure a consistent and reliable food supply throughout the year, enabling Ghana to continuously feed local industries. The Nominee emphasised that by attaining food sufficiency, the country can support the operations of various sectors, thereby aligning seamlessly with the concept of a 24-hour economy.

10.2.10 Tax Exemptions for the Agro-Industry

The Nominee was questioned about the removal of tax exemptions on agricultural inputs, such as fertilisers and insecticides, and its impact on the agro-industry. He acknowledged the challenges posed by this change and expressed a willingness to discuss with the substantive Minister the possibility of reinstating these exemptions if deemed necessary.

10.2.11 Expectations from Nominee's Home Region

In response to a question about what the people of the Oti Region should expect from him as Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture, the Nominee asserted that he will be a Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture for the whole of Ghana, stating that he would represent the interests of farmers

across the entire country. He acknowledged the unique agricultural needs of different regions, including the Oti Region, and expressed his intention to address these specific requirements effectively.

The Nominee also highlighted his dedication to supporting farmers in Oti Region, particularly in areas such as ginger production, while also ensuring that farmers in other regions receive the necessary assistance tailored to their agricultural practices.

10.2.12 Unemployment in Ghana

The Nominee identified unemployment as a critical national issue. He expressed the Government's commitment to "resetting" the country, with a particular focus on creating job opportunities, especially within the agricultural sector. While the Nominee recognised that the Government may not be able to resolve all unemployment issues, he intimated that efforts would be made to address and improve the situation.

10.2.13 Revocation of Appointments

The Nominee confirmed that he was aware of discussions regarding the mass dismissal of Ghanaians resulting from a directive from the Chief of Staff. He acknowledged that some of the affected individuals are his

constituents and added that the information he has indicates that there would be a review of the appointments of those who were dismissed. He emphasised that this review process would determine who might be reinstated, and suggested that there is a possibility for some individuals to be re-employed based on the outcomes of the review.

10.2.14 Participation of Youth in Agriculture

In response to questions about strategies to encourage youth participation in agriculture, the Nominee outlined his commitment to inspiring young individuals to engage in the sector. He plans to leverage social media to present agriculture as an exciting and dynamic field. He also emphasised the importance of encouraging young individuals to begin with small-scale projects and gradually expand as they gain experience and resources.

The Nominee assured that the Government is focused on providing essential items to support youth in agriculture, specifically mentioning the “Nkoko Nketenkete” project as a starting point for young farmers. He also mentioned that capacity-building training will be offered for start-up farmers. When asked about the timeline for these initiatives, the Nominee stated that

he would consult with his Minister and communicate the expected commencement to all the relevant stakeholders.

10.2.15 Women Banking Initiative

The Nominee provided insights into the Women Banking Initiative, highlighting that it is aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs. He stated that the initiative is designed to provide financial support to women by lending money at relatively lower interest rates, to empower them to expand their businesses and enhance their economic development. He explained that by offering loans at lower rates, the initiative seeks to alleviate the financial barriers that women often face in accessing credit, thereby enabling them to grow their businesses and create more job opportunities within the economy.

10.2.16 The Issue of Food Inflation in the Country

On the issue of food component of inflation in the country over the past eight years, the Nominee was asked how he would support his Minister in addressing the situation. He stated that he would assist the Minister in implementing measures to control food inflation and stabilise prices.

10.2.17 The Issue of Cocoa Farm Sale to Illegal Miners (*Galamsey*)

The Nominee was asked about other measures he would put in

place to ensure that farmers do not offer their farms to illegal miners, apart from the Minister's promise that cocoa farmers would be paid 70 per cent of the world market price. The Nominee informed the Committee that the Minister's answer was one of the best solutions to the problem, adding that right pricing would deter farmers from selling their cocoa farms. Additionally, he suggested the need for restructuring the entire mining industry to prevent cocoa farmers from giving out their farms to illegal miners.

However, he emphasised that the main solution lies in ensuring that farmers are paid the right price for their produce. When asked when the 70 per cent payment should be expected by farmers, the Nominee stated that it would take effect with the new farming season in October, but he was not in a position to commit to a specific date for the commencement of the new pricing.

10.2.18 Involvement of the Private Sector in the External Marketing of Cocoa

The Nominee's view was sought on the involvement of the private sector in the external marketing of cocoa. He stated that Ghana must be innovative in the cocoa sector, and if involving the private sector would improve market share,

export performance, and the overall cocoa industry, then it is a step in the right direction.

10.2.19 Challenges in the Agriculture Business

In response to a question on the challenges the nominee encountered in the agriculture business sector, he informed the Committee of several key challenges, including: access to credit facilities, the land tenure system, and lack of machinery to plough land. He further indicated that land tenure issues often arise when landowners reclaim farmland after noticing improvements made by the farmer. This, he noted, is a major problem for farmers.

On the issue of machinery, the Nominee explained that during the rainy season, there are long delays in getting access to tractors. Farmers often have to wait months after booking before a tractor becomes available, and by then, the rains may have stopped, affecting crop yield. He emphasised that while farmers face numerous challenges, the most significant remains access to credit facilities.

10.2.20 Addressing the Challenges in the Agricultural Sector through

Women Banking

When asked whether some of the challenges in the agricultural sector could be addressed through the Women Banking Initiative, the Nominee responded in the affirmative.

10.2.21 Publication of Food Insecurity on the World Bank Website

The Nominee was asked about the indication of food insecurity on the World Bank website, which projected food shortages in West and Central African countries, including Ghana. The Nominee stated that the Ministry of Food and Agriculture has launched an irrigation plan to irrigate 10,000 acres of land. This initiative, he noted, would provide the necessary fertile lands for crop production, thereby ensuring food sufficiency.

10.2.22 The Problem of Food Importation into the Country

The Nominee was asked how he would support the Ministry in reducing food imports into Ghana. In response, he highlighted that Ghana imports significant amounts of tomatoes, particularly during the rainy season. To address this, he emphasised that implementing irrigation schemes would allow farmers to cultivate crops all year round, thereby reducing reliance on imported food; and encouraging local poultry production, such as the Nkoko Nketenketete Project, would ensure that Ghanaians

consume locally produced food rather than imported products.

He assured the Committee that these measures when effectively implemented, would help decrease food importation into Ghana.

10.2.23 The Knowledge of PFJ (I) and PFJ (II)

The Nominee was asked about his knowledge of the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) I and (PFJ) II Initiatives. He responded that while he was aware of the programmes, he had not read extensively on them. However, he acknowledged that some aspects of the programmes would be reviewed, with certain policies either being preserved, discontinued, or modified to better serve Ghana's food security needs. He emphasised that the primary focus should be on ensuring food sufficiency for the population.

10.2.24 The Problem of Climate Change and Food Production

The Nominee was asked about the impact of climate change on food production in Ghana. He stated that climate change has adversely affected agriculture, citing examples such as excessive flooding, droughts, and unpredictable weather patterns. He mentioned that one of the solutions to combat drought is the implementation of irrigation schemes and the use of drought-resistant seeds.

Further, when asked about the number of irrigation schemes in Ghana, the Nominee stated that he was aware of 223 irrigation schemes, out of which 189 are functional. He identified the largest irrigation scheme as the Kpong Irrigation Scheme, covering 300 acres of land, followed by the Tano Irrigation Scheme, which spans 241 acres. The Nominee reiterated the need for expanding irrigation systems across the country to combat climate-related challenges and enhance agricultural productivity.

10.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **MR JOHN KOFI SETOR DUMELO** as Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture.

10.0 Conclusion

In accordance with the provisions of **Article 78(1) and Article 79(1) of the 1992 Constitution**, as well as **Standing Order 217**, the Committee duly considered the nomination of the candidates by His Excellency the President. Throughout the vetting process, the nominees demonstrated competence, knowledge, and expertise in matters relating to their respective Ministries.

Having thoroughly assessed their qualifications, experience, and responses, the Committee, by consensus, recommends to the House the adoption of its report and the approval of the following nominees:

- i. Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba as Minister of State, Public Sector Reforms;
- ii. Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem as Deputy Minister for Finance;
- iii. Mr Ebenezer Oklety Terlabi as Deputy Minister for the Interior;
- iv. Mr Sampson Ahi as Deputy Minister for Trade, Agribusiness, and Industry;
- v. Dr Clement Abas Apaak as Deputy Minister for Education;
- vi. Mr Richard Gyan-Mensah as Deputy Minister for Energy and Green Transition; and
- vii. Mr John Kofi Setor Dumelo as Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture.

Respectfully submitted.

1.42 p.m.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Members, Motion moved by the Chairman of the Committee. Any seconder?

Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib): Mr Speaker, we second the Motion.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Motion moved and seconded and it is for the consideration of the House. Any indication as to the number of comments we are taking?

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Six-six

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Question proposed.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: This House adopts the Motion and accordingly approves the nomination of Hon Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba, Minister of State for Public Sector Reform; Hon Thomas Nyarko Ampem, Deputy Minister for Finance; Hon Ebenezer

Okletey Terlabi, Deputy Minister for the Interior; Hon Sampson Ahi, Deputy Minister for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry; Dr Clement Abas Apaak, Deputy Minister for Education; Hon Richard Gyan-Mensah, Deputy Minister for Energy; and Hon John Kofi Setor Dumelo, Deputy Minister for Food and Agriculture.

Hon Members, the Speaker should take the Chair.

1.48 p.m. — [THE SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

[Pause]

The Speaker: Yes, Deputy Majority Leader?

Mr Ricketts-Hagan: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I just want to take the opportunity to thank you and Hon Members for adopting the 12th Report of the Appointments Committee.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE PRESIDENT

Absence from Ghana

The Speaker: Hon Members, please, I have a message from His Excellency the President and I need to read it to the House.



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Jubilee House

The President

7th March, 2025



Rt. Hon. Speaker,

NOTICE OF ABSENCE FROM GHANA

Pursuant to Article 59 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, I write to formally inform you of my intention to travel to Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from 8th to 10th March, 2025.

During my absence, the Vice President, Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, shall, in accordance with Article 60(8) of the Constitution, assume my duties.

JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA

**THE RT. HON. SPEAKER
OFFICE OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
ACCRA**

cc: The Vice President
Jubilee House
Accra

The Chief of Staff
Jubilee House
Accra

The Speaker: Leaders, what is the guidance?

Mr Ahiafor: Rt Hon Speaker, we have to take the 13th Report, the Motion numbered 14.

The Speaker: Leadership of the Minority, what do you say to that?
1.52 p.m.

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

I have just been served with a copy of the Report, so I do not know your pleasure, but I just got served.

The Speaker: Yes, please?

Mr Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, a copy of this Report was distributed since Wednesday. The Committee met on it in the morning, went through the Report, approved it, and it was laid on Wednesday and copies distributed.

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, I pray we proceed to have it seconded. Although I was just served with a copy, it was just for the purposes of discussions with the First Deputy Speaker. I remember there was a certain engagement on this, so my prayer is that we proceed.

The Speaker: All right, thank you so much.

So, Hon Members, the item numbered 14 at page 5 of the Order Paper. Chairman of the Committee?

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

Chairman of the Committee (Mr Bernard Ahiafor): Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provisions of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a Motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the Motion is given, the Motion for the adoption of the Thirteenth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nomination for Appointment as Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers may be *moved* today.

The Speaker: Any seconder?

Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib): Yes, Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

Resolved accordingly.

The Speaker: So, we move to the substantive Motion, which is the item numbered 15.

Chairman of the Committee?

MOTION

Thirteenth Report on His Excellency the President's Nomination for Deputy Ministers

Chairman of the Committee (Mr Bernard Ahiafor): Mr Speaker, I beg to move:

That this honourable House adopts the 13th Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nomination for Appointment as Deputy Ministers.

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I present your Committee's Report, and I urge the *Hansard* to capture them as having been read.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Appointments Committee of the Ninth Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana on the nominations submitted by His Excellency the President, John Dramani Mahama, for appointment as Deputy Ministers. The nominations, in accordance with Article 79(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217, were referred to the Committee for consideration and report.

The Committee reviewed the backgrounds, qualifications, and experiences of the Nominees, taking into account their educational and professional achievements, work experience, and leadership roles.

Additionally, the Nominees responded to questions relating to their competencies, policy perspectives, and strategies for addressing key sectoral challenges.

The Nominees under review include:

1. **Mr Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini** as Deputy Minister for Roads and Highways;
2. **Dr Justice Srem-Sai** as Deputy Minister for Justice and Attorney-General;
3. **Alhaji Yusif Sulemana** as Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources;
4. **Mr Yussif Issaka Jajah** as Deputy Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts;
5. **Ms Rita Naa Odooley Sowah** as Deputy Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs;
6. **Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui** as Deputy Minister for Works, Housing, and Water Resources; and
7. **Mr Ernest Brogya Genfi** as Deputy Minister for Defence.

The key findings of the Committee's assessment of the Nominees revealed a strong grasp of sector specific issues and actionable strategies to enhance their respective ministries. The Nominees

demonstrated competence, integrity, and policy knowledge, affirming their commitment to supporting sector ministers in policy implementation, governance reforms, and public service delivery. The Committee rigorously examined the Nominees' public records, security clearances, and financial standing.

The Nominees addressed critical national issues, including road infrastructure development, judicial efficiency, natural resource governance, tourism, local government, housing, water resources, and defense reforms. They provided comprehensive strategies and proposals to tackle these issues, showcasing their expertise and dedication to national development.

They expressed confidence that the Nominees' appointment will strengthen governance, enhance public service delivery, and contribute positively to national development. The Committee urges the Nominees to uphold professionalism, accountability, and dedication to national service in their respective roles.

1.0 Introduction

On Tuesday, 11th February 2025, His Excellency the President of the Republic, John Dramani Mahama, in accordance with Article 79(1) of the 1992 Constitution, conveyed to Parliament a formal communication nominating the following individuals for appointment as Deputy Ministers:

- i. Mr Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini, MP, as Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Roads and Highways;
- ii. Dr Justice Srem-Sai, as Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General;
- iii. Alhaji Yusif Sulemana, MP, as Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources;
- iv. Mr Yussif Issaka Jajah, MP, as Deputy Minister-designate for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts;
- v. Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah, MP, as Deputy Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs;
- vi. Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui, MP, as Deputy Minister for Works, Housing, and Water Resources; and
- vii. Mr Ernest Brogya Genfi, as Deputy Minister for Defence.

Pursuant to Order 217 of the Standing Orders of Parliament, the Rt Hon Speaker referred the nominations to the Appointments

Committee for consideration and report to the House.

2.0 Reference Documents

The Committee, in the course of its deliberations on the nominations, referred to the following documents:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament; and
- iii. The Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of the Nominees.

3.0 Consideration of The Referral

In accordance with Standing Order 217(10), the names of the Nominees were duly published in the national newspapers to afford the general public the opportunity to submit memoranda in respect of the nominations. Additionally, the Committee sought and obtained Confidential Reports on the Nominees from the Ghana Police Service and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). The Committee further requested that the Nominees submit tax status reports from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

On Wednesday, 26th and Friday, 28th February 2025, the Committee convened a public hearing to consider the nominations. In accordance with established parliamentary procedure, the Nominees subscribed to the Oath of a Witness before the Committee and responded to inquiries from Hon Members. The questions posed related to their curriculum vitae, eligibility, competencies, matters of national

interest, and the specific portfolios to which they had been nominated.

Having duly considered the submissions and responses of the Nominees, the Committee hereby presents its report on the nominations as follows:

4.0 MR ALHASSAN SAYIBU SUHUYINI DEPUTY MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

4.1 Background

Mr Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini was born on 12th September 1979, in Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana, where he also hails from. He is a Muslim, married with three children, and is fluent in English, Dagbani, and Twi. The Nominee is known for his proactive nature, strong interpersonal and communication skills, and well-developed organisational abilities. He has a deep interest in extensive reading, research, community work, and leveraging his influence to advocate for a more just and equitable society.

His formal education began at Bishop Junior Secondary School, where he pursued his Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) from 1992 to 1994. He then proceeded to Ghana Secondary School in Tamale from 1995 to 1997, where he successfully obtained his Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE). In 2000, he enrolled at the Tamale Training College, where he obtained his Certificate A in Teacher Training, completing his studies

in 2003. With a keen interest in journalism, he further pursued a Diploma in Journalism at the African Institute of Journalism from 2006 to 2008. His academic journey continued at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Public Administration from 2009 to 2011 and later earned a Master of Science degree in Development Management from 2011 to 2013.

Throughout his career, Mr Suhuyini has held several leadership roles, demonstrating his dedication to public service and advocacy. He served as Vice President of the Teacher Trainees Association of Ghana from 2002 to 2003. At GIMPA, he was elected as the President of the Student Representative Council (SRC) from 2010 to 2011, a role that allowed him to further develop his leadership and governance skills.

The Nominee has actively participated in numerous international training and development conferences. He was a delegate at the United Nations Climate Change Conferences COP26, COP27, COP28, and COP29, underscoring his commitment to global environmental governance. In 2023, he took part in the Parliamentary Dialogue on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) in Qatar. He was also selected for South Korea's Next Generational Leaders from Africa Programme, an initiative sponsored by the Government of South Korea. In 2014, he represented Ghana as a delegate at the International

Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), a Department of State Professional Exchange Programme (U.S.A), where he gained further insights into governance, leadership, and diplomacy.

Mr Suhuyini has received several awards and recognitions for his contributions to national discourse, politics, and media. Between 2014 and 2018, he was listed among the Top 10 Best Members of Parliament (Committee Level) by Pan African Republic Honorary. In 2019, he was adjudged the Most Promising MP at the Northern Excellence Awards. He also received the Gold Category Award at the Suma Traditional Council Adinkra Awards. Before his entry into mainstream politics, he was recognised for his excellence in broadcast journalism, winning Talk Show Host of the Year at the Ghana Radio and Television Personality Awards in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

As a Member of Parliament, the Nominee has served on various Committees within the Legislature. He has been a Member and a Deputy Ranking Member of the Lands and Forestry Committee, before becoming its Ranking Member. He has also served as a Member of the Appointments Committee, the Parliamentary Population Caucus, and the African Parliamentarians' Network Against Corruption (APNAC), actively engaging in legislative oversight and policy-making.

Mr Suhuyini's professional career spans media, governance, and public

administration. He began as a presenter at Diamond FM in Tamale from 2003 to 2006 while also serving as a classroom teacher at Jimli Junior Secondary School from 2004 to 2006. In 2006, he transitioned into mainstream media as a reporter for Citi FM and later worked as a reporter and newscaster at Metro TV in 2007. From 2007 to 2015, he hosted a Morning Show at Radio Gold FM, later rising to become the News Editor from 2013 to 2015. His expertise in public administration led to his appointment as a Board Member of the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority from 2013 to 2017 and as Director of Communications for the National Hajj Board from 2014 to 2017.

Currently, Mr Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini is a thirdterm Member of Parliament for the Tamale North Constituency in the Northern Region. He has held this position since January 2017, representing his constituents on the ticket of the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

4.2 Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Responses

4.2.1 Axle Load Regulations

The Nominee was invited to share his views on the establishment of a committee to examine axle load regulations and the potential challenges associated with the investigation. In response, he commended the proactive approach of the Minister for Roads and Highways and the Minister for Transport, who had personally visited key locations to assess the situation

firsthand. He observed that their initiative reflected a commitment to addressing the adverse impact of axle load violations on the nation's road infrastructure.

The Nominee expressed his unequivocal support for the investigative efforts, emphasising the imperative need to curb the overloading of vehicles, which contributes significantly to road deterioration and imposes a financial burden on the State. He was optimistic that the findings of the investigation would inform robust policy interventions to strengthen compliance with axle load regulations and ensure the sustainability of Ghana's road network. He further noted that beyond punitive enforcement, the ultimate objective should be to uphold weight restrictions to preserve road integrity and prolong the lifespan of national road infrastructure.

4.2.2 Public-Private Partnerships for Road Funding

The Nominee was invited to express his views on whether privatisation presents a viable solution for financing road construction, particularly in light of the unsustainability of traditional funding sources such as loans and grants. In his response, he acknowledged that Ghana has yet to construct roads through a formal public-private partnership (PPP) model, but noted that ongoing discussions on the subject were promising. He expressed optimism that these deliberations would yield practical outcomes that could contribute to the financing of critical road infrastructure.

In response to a further enquiry regarding the factors to be considered in assisting the Minister for Roads and Highways in prioritising roads for PPP development, the Nominee indicated that roads in high-traffic areas, highly populated regions, as well as those leading to agricultural zones, mining sites, farmlands, and tourism destinations would be the most suitable candidates for such partnerships.

The Nominee further advocated for the exploration of alternative financing models such as leveraging investment portfolios from pension institutions to channel funds into critical infrastructure projects, including road construction. He emphasised that such investment models could offer long-term economic returns while reducing dependence on conventional financing methods.

4.2.3 Road Construction Prioritisation

When questioned on whether he would advise the Minister to suspend the awarding of new contracts and instead focus on settling arrears owed to contractors for existing projects, the Nominee emphasised that it is not within his purview to advise the Minister directly. However, he assured the Committee that he would support the Minister's decision-making and offer recommendations when necessary.

He acknowledged the significant financial burden on the Ministry of Roads and Highways, noting that current commitments exceed GH¢100 billion, with arrears amounting to approximately

GH¢50 billion. Given this fiscal reality, he expressed confidence that the Minister would make well-informed decisions that serve the best interests of the nation.

4.2.4 Prioritising Road Development in Rural Areas

The Nominee was asked if he would consider engaging the Minister to prioritise districts that do not have double-bitumen surface roads to ensure equitable development. In response, he acknowledged the severity of the situation, recognising that many districts still lack properly paved roads. He emphasised that infrastructure development should be a priority for underserved communities and assured the Committee that he would work closely with the Minister to ensure rural road networks receive the necessary attention.

4.2.5 Public Pressure for Road Construction

The Committee raised concerns about public agitation for road construction, noting that delays often lead to protests and demonstrations across the country. The Nominee was asked what measures he would take to ensure that ongoing projects are properly executed, contractors remain on-site, and communities have access to essential road infrastructure.

In response, he acknowledged the frustrations of the public, but noted that effective communication and engagement with stakeholders would be

essential in managing expectations. He committed to discuss these concerns directly with the Minister before making any public pronouncements, recognising that unfulfilled assurances could further escalate tensions.

4.2.6 Cost-Effective Road Construction Materials

The Nominee was questioned on whether he would consider the use of more affordable and sustainable materials to reduce road construction costs. In his response, he emphasised that technical decisions regarding materials should be guided by engineers at the Ministry of Roads and Highways, who possess the requisite expertise to assess and implement the most suitable options. He assured the Committee that should he be approved, he would fully support any initiative aimed at promoting cost-effective road construction without compromising quality and durability.

4.2.7 Utilisation of the Road Fund

The Committee observed that funds allocated for local road projects are sometimes managed at the national level, leading to neglect of urban roads. The Nominee was asked if he would support efforts to ensure that the Road Fund is directed toward its intended purpose. In response, he acknowledged that misallocation of funds has been a persistent issue and noted that urban road authorities are sometimes unaware of available resources, resulting in inefficiencies. He expressed confidence in the Minister's leadership and assured the Committee of his commitment to

support measures that would enhance the proper utilisation of the Road Fund.

4.2.8 Private Real Estate Developers and Road Infrastructure

The Committee noted that many private real estate developers construct high-end properties but leave roads undeveloped, placing the burden on the Government to complete infrastructure projects. The Nominee was asked whether he would consider advocating for policy reforms that require real estate developers to contribute to road construction in their respective areas.

In his response, the Nominee recognised the need for broader discussions on private sector involvement in road financing. He noted that alternative funding models, including private sector participation, could significantly alleviate pressure on Government resources and accelerate road development. Furthermore, he highlighted that Ghana's land tenure system presents challenges for infrastructure planning and advocated for a national dialogue to address these structural issues, ensuring that future development projects are undertaken in a more coordinated and sustainable manner.

4.2.9 Road Maintenance and Long-Term Infrastructure Planning

The Nominee, when questioned on strategies to ensure the long-term sustainability of roads, underscored the importance of discipline in road maintenance. He indicated that the

Ministry of Roads and Highways has a dedicated unit responsible for routine maintenance with funds allocated periodically for such activities. He expressed confidence in the Minister's strong work ethic, stating that he believes accountability and proper maintenance practices will be rigorously enforced under the Minister's leadership.

The Committee further raised concerns regarding road infrastructure challenges and sought the Nominee's views on addressing the main issues. In response, he acknowledged that potholes contribute significantly to traffic congestion and road accidents. He reiterated the importance of routine maintenance and stressed that the prioritisation of repairs is essential. Additionally, he highlighted the need for consistent streetlight maintenance, particularly in light of the Government's consideration of a 24-Hour Economy Initiative.

The Nominee also observed that the placement of billboards falls under the jurisdiction of local government authorities, emphasising the need for strict enforcement of regulations to prevent obstructions that could compromise road safety. To tackle these challenges, he called for enhanced stakeholder collaboration among various agencies to improve road safety and overall user experience.

The Nominee further expressed his willingness to explore the possibility of reintroducing a programme aimed at engaging the youth in roadside maintenance. This, he suggested, would

not only enhance road conditions, but also create employment opportunities for young people.

4.2.10 Functionality of Traffic Lights

The Nominee acknowledged that traffic lights have been a long-standing issue, with some remaining non-functional for extended periods despite efforts to repair them. He assured the Committee of his commitment to collaborating with the Minister and taking advice from engineers on best practices and technical solutions. In addition, he indicated that the Ministry may need to explore proactive maintenance contracts to ensure that traffic lights do not remain out of service for prolonged periods. He reiterated that ensuring the functionality of traffic lights is essential for road safety and smooth traffic flow.

4.2.11 Female Participation in Technical Fields

When questioned on deliberate efforts to create opportunities for women in technical fields, the Nominee acknowledged the necessity of encouraging greater female participation in the sector. He proposed the designing of tailored programmes and a review of technical training curricula to make them more inclusive and attractive to women.

The Nominee noted his personal investment in promoting gender inclusivity and assured the Committee that he would engage with the Minister to discuss concrete initiatives aimed at

increasing female representation in technical roles within the road sector.

4.2.12 Enforcement of Traffic Regulations Using Technology

The Nominee strongly endorsed the use of technology to enhance traffic law enforcement, recognising its pivotal role in modernising road safety measures. He cited a Bill that was previously brought before Parliament to introduce technological interventions, but noted that the debate was unfortunately overshadowed by discussions on MPs' use of sirens.

Despite the diversion from the core issue, the Nominee reaffirmed his commitment to engage the Minister, the National Road Safety Authority, and the Motor Traffic and Transport Department (MTTD) to explore and implement technological solutions for improved traffic regulation enforcement.

4.2.13 Reintroduction of Road Tolls with Technology

The Committee sought the Nominee's view on the potential reintroduction of a technology-driven toll system to prevent traffic congestion. In response, the Nominee confirmed that the Ministry is already working on developing and deploying such a system. He stated that the Government is engaging private sector partners who specialise in toll technology implementation and that he fully supports this initiative. He emphasised that a technology-driven toll

system has the potential to improve traffic flow, enhance revenue collection, and significantly reduce congestion at toll booths.

4.2.14 Poor Rural Road Conditions

The Nominee underscored the critical importance of rural roads, particularly in supporting agricultural productivity and the livelihoods of rural communities. He highlighted that he and the Minister hail from rural areas, which gives them firsthand experience of the challenges faced by these communities. He assured the Committee that the Minister already prioritises rural road maintenance, and expressed confidence that ongoing efforts will continue to address infrastructure deficits in rural areas.

4.2.15 Relevance of the Position of a Deputy Minister

In response to an enquiry regarding the relevance of the Deputy Ministerial role under Article 79 of the 1992 Constitution, which grants the President the power to appoint Deputy Ministers in consultation with the relevant Minister of State, the Nominee emphasised the significance of the position.

He argued that the role of a Deputy Minister is vital for the efficient functioning of a ministry, particularly during emergencies that require immediate decision-making and action. The Nominee further stressed that the effectiveness of a Deputy Minister largely depends on his working relationship with the substantive Minister, and that a strong partnership

ensures seamless policy implementation and operational efficiency within the Ministry.

4.2.16 Assurance to Construct More Roads

The Committee enquired about the Nominee's commitment to support the Minister in accelerating road construction efforts, particularly in the northern regions. In his response, the Nominee assured the Committee that he would work with the Ministry to leverage all available resources to expedite road construction projects.

Regarding the Eastern Corridor Roads, the Nominee pledged to consult with the Minister to ensure that this strategic road network receives the necessary attention. He acknowledged the economic significance of the Eastern Corridor Roads and committed to support initiatives aimed at ensuring its timely completion.

4.2.17 Tarred and Bitumen Roads

The Nominee was questioned on the prioritisation of districts lacking tarred and bitumen roads. In response, he assured the Committee of his commitment to work closely with the Minister to ensure that such districts receive the necessary infrastructure upgrades. He emphasised the importance of bitumen roads in enhancing transportation efficiency, reducing vehicle maintenance costs, and improving accessibility in both rural and urban areas.

4.2.18 Use of Green Materials for Cost-Effective Road Construction

The Committee enquired about the possibility of adopting environmentally friendly and cost-effective materials in road construction. The Nominee assured the Committee that he would collaborate with the Minister and technical experts within the Ministry to explore sustainable construction practices. He further stressed the need to adopt innovative green materials that are cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable, aligning Ghana's infrastructure development with global best practices.

4.2.19 Rehabilitation of Public Roads

In response to a question on the allocation of the Road Fund and collaboration with local government authorities to ensure routine road maintenance, the Nominee affirmed his commitment to ensure efficient and transparent utilisation of funds. He recognised the importance of maintaining existing roads to prevent further deterioration and pledged to support initiatives aimed at improving nationwide road rehabilitation efforts.

4.2.20 Construction of Bridges

The Committee sought assurance on the continuation of the construction of five critical bridges in Daboya, Yapei, Tolon, and Buipe in the northern part of the country. In response, the Nominee pledged to actively monitor the progress of these projects and keep the Ministry informed to ensure their timely

completion. He acknowledged the significance of these bridges in improving connectivity and facilitating economic activities in the regions, assuring the Committee of his dedication to support their successful execution.

4.3 Recommendation

The Committee, by a Majority decision, **UNANIMOUSLY**, recommends to the House the approval of **Mr Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini** as **Deputy Minister for Roads and Highways**.

5.0 DR JUSTICE SREM-SAI DEPUTY MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL

5.1 Background

Dr Justice Srem-Sai was born on 1st June, 1983 in Accra, Greater Accra Region, and hails from Aveme in the Volta Region. He is a Christian of the Catholic faith and is single with one child. He is fluent in English, Ewe, and Twi and has interests in driving and physical exercise.

His early education commenced at St. Michael's Catholic School in Aveme, Volta Region, where he studied from 1985 to 1994. He then moved to Teberebie Goldfields Basic School in Tarkwa, where he completed his Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) from 1995 to 1997. His secondary education took place at Tarkwa Secondary School, Tarkwa,

where he obtained the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) from 1998 to 2000.

The Nominee pursued tertiary education at the University of Ghana, Legon, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts in Management and Psychology from 2002 to 2006. He later enrolled in the University of Ghana School of Law, earning an LL.B. from 2007 to 2009. His legal education continued at the Ghana School of Law, Accra, from 2009 to 2011, where he obtained the Qualifying Certificate in Law (QCL) and was called to the Ghana Bar as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Ghana.

Furthering his specialisation, he pursued a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in Insurance Law and International Human Rights Law at the Cardiff School of Law and Politics, Cardiff, Wales, UK, from September 2012 to September 2013. He later attended Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA, USA, from August 2013 to May 2014, where he earned a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in Corporate Law, Governance, and Finance. His academic journey culminated in a Doctor of Laws (Ph.D.) in International Human Rights Law from the University of Leeds School of Law, Leeds, UK, from October 2017 to June 2021. His research focused on the UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and disability work rights in Ghana.

Throughout his education, Dr Srem-Sai has held various leadership roles. He was the Assistant School Prefect (Boys) at Teberebie Goldfields School, Tarkwa, in 1997. At the University of Ghana,

Legon, he served as a Member of Congress for the Legon Hall Junior Common Room (JCR) and as a Member of the General Assembly and Vice-Secretary for the Students' Representative Council (SRC) from 2005 to 2006. While at the Ghana School of Law from 2010 to 2011, he was a Member of the Disciplinary Committee for the Board of Legal Education and Chairperson of the Judicial Committee for the SRC. Additionally, from 2011 to 2012, he served as Secretary to the Legal Committee.

Dr Srem-Sai is a member of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA) and the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG). His academic contributions include numerous publications, journal articles, and conference papers. His works cover diverse legal fields, including human rights law, constitutional law, corporate governance, and disability rights. Notable among his publications are: *Disability Human Rights Law and Policy in Ghana – In Pursuit of an Improved Social Image*, Ius Gentium: Comparative Perspectives on Law and Justice Series, Palgrave Macmillan (Springer Nature Publishers) (Forthcoming); *Committing Ghana to International Agreements: A Review of the Roles of Parliament and the President*, (2021) Vol. 29(2) African Journal of International and Comparative Law, 204-222; *Amending the Entrenched Provisions of the 1992 Constitution: A Nuanced Legal Perspective*, in P. Atupare & K. Quashigah (Eds.), *As a Matter of Public Law and Rights in Ghana* (Durban: Lexis Nexis Butterworths, 2020), 21-32;

Equality for Persons with Disabilities: The Vulnerability of Autonomy, presented at the Workshop on Autonomy and Vulnerability, Emory University School of Law, Atlanta, GA, USA (February 2018); and *Corporate Governance and the Capital Market in Ghana: The Stymieing Role of the State*, (2018) Vol. 26(3) African Journal of International and Comparative Law, 285-308.

Additionally, he has presented papers at international conferences across the USA, UK, South Africa, Georgia, and Ghana, covering topics related to constitutional law, disability rights, governance, and legal frameworks.

Professionally, Dr. Srem-Sai has accumulated vast legal and academic experience. His career began as a National Service Personnel at the United Bank for Africa (UBA) Ghana Ltd. from August 2006 to August 2007. In July 2010, he interned at the Corporate/Commercial Law Department of Oxford & Beaumont Solicitors International, a leading corporate law firm with offices in Accra and London.

Between November 2010 and February 2011, he served as the Lead Facilitator for a constitutional review platform sponsored by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF). He also worked as a Junior Associate at Law and Development Associates (LADA) from June 2009 to September 2012,

contributing to legal consultancy projects.

His expertise in constitutional law saw him appointed as an Associate Researcher for the Constitution Review Commission of Ghana from 2010 to 2011, a presidential commission tasked with reviewing the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Subsequently, he worked as Manager of Legal and Regulatory Affairs at SAB Miller Plc., Accra, from February to July 2012, overseeing the legal compliance of Accra Brewery Limited and Voltic Ghana Limited. In 2014, he became a Managing Associate at LADA Group (Lawyers & Notaries), Accra, where he worked until 2017.

His academic career commenced as a Senior Lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) from September 2014 to August 2024, where he taught Constitutional Law, Public International Law, International Human Rights Law, and Commercial Law. Between October 2019 and February 2020, he also served as a Lecturer in International Human Rights Law at the University of Leeds School of Law, UK.

Currently, Dr. Srem-Sai holds multiple leadership positions. Since February 2017, he has been an Executive Fellow at the Institute of Law and Public Affairs (ILPA), a law and public policy think tank in Accra, Ghana. Since October 2020, he has served as the Founder and Managing Partner of Praetorium Solicitors, a private law firm in Accra specialised in general legal practice. Furthermore, he has been a

Senior Lecturer at the University of Ghana School of Law, Legon, since April 2024, where he lectures on Constitutional Law, Administrative Law, Criminal Law, and International Human Rights Law.

Dr Justice Srem-Sai has demonstrated extensive legal expertise, academic excellence, and policy leadership, making significant contributions to legal education, governance, and human rights in Ghana and internationally.

5.1 Questions Asked of The Nominee and His Responses

5.2.1 The Nominee's Perspective on Article 78(1)

The Nominee was questioned on his previously published article, *Parliamentary Oversight in Ghana*, which examines the constitutional requirement that the President appoints the majority of Ministers from Parliament. In his response, the Nominee elaborated on his concerns regarding the potential impact of this requirement on ministerial effectiveness.

He contended that appointing ministers primarily from Parliament could weaken their effectiveness, as many politicians might prioritise securing ministerial positions over their legislative duties. This, he noted, could result in a diminished focus on parliamentary responsibilities, with Members of Parliament (MPs) being more invested in serving the Executive rather than fully engaging in legislative oversight.

The Nominee further emphasised that this arrangement might foster a system where political loyalty takes precedence over merit and expertise. He argued that such a scenario could create an environment susceptible to corruption and mismanagement of public resources, as individuals might be appointed based on their allegiance to the ruling Government rather than their technical competence.

Additionally, the Nominee highlighted the inherent conflict of interest that arises when MPs serve both the Executive and the Legislature. He explained that these dual obligations could compromise a minister's ability to make independent and objective decisions in the best interest of the nation, as their roles within the Executive and Parliament might require them to serve competing priorities.

To address these concerns, the Nominee advocated for a stronger emphasis on merit-based ministerial appointments, ensuring that individuals with the requisite expertise and experience are selected. He maintained that a system where competence is prioritised over political affiliations would enhance ministerial efficiency and ultimately improve governance outcomes.

5.2.2 The Nominee's Stance on Legislating the Sale of State Assets

The Nominee expressed strong support for legislation that mandates rigorous oversight and approval before the sale of State assets. He emphasised

the importance of transparency and accountability in such transactions, acknowledging that while revenue generation is crucial, State assets should not be hastily sold without due consideration of long-term national interests.

The Nominee asserted that such legislation would serve as a safeguard against corruption and mismanagement. However, he also highlighted the need for exceptions and flexibility in the legal framework to allow for asset sales in specific circumstances that serve national development objectives.

While expressing general support for such legislation, the Nominee clarified that his endorsement would depend on the specific provisions and the broader context of any proposed law. He reiterated his commitment to ensure that any policy on State asset management aligns with national economic priorities and good governance principles.

5.2.3 The Nominee's Stance on the Law of Double Jeopardy

The Nominee reaffirmed his strong belief in the principle of double jeopardy, describing it as a fundamental protection of individual rights and a cornerstone of justice. He argued that allowing an individual to be prosecuted twice for the same offense would undermine legal finality and expose individuals to harassment, financial hardship, and emotional distress.

5.2.4 Empowering District Courts Through Decentralisation of Justice

The Nominee underscored the need to decentralise the justice system to make legal services more accessible nationwide. He emphasised that expanding district courts would enhance efficiency, reduce the burden on higher courts, and ensure swift and equitable justice delivery.

Furthermore, he argued that localised courts would be better positioned to address the specific legal concerns of communities, foster a more inclusive and responsive legal system. He reiterated his commitment to support initiatives that promote accessible, efficient, and equitable justice administration.

5.2.5 Ensuring Effective Judicial Administration by Posting Judges and Lawyers to the Hinterlands

The Nominee addressed concerns about the unequal distribution of judicial personnel across the country, particularly, in rural areas. He assured the Committee of his dedication to ensure a transparent and merit-based system for posting judges and lawyers. He pledged to collaborate with the substantive Minister to ensure that the allocation of judicial officers is guided by expertise, experience, and the needs of various jurisdictions. Additionally, he committed to engaging stakeholders to ensure that judicial postings are done fairly and equitably, thereby strengthening the justice delivery system nationwide.

5.2.6 Supporting the Minister Across the Three Divisions of the Ministry

The Nominee expressed confidence in his ability to support the substantive Minister across the key divisions of the Ministry—namely, the Civil Division, the Attorney-General’s Division, and the Legislative Drafting Division. He highlighted his expertise in civil litigation, prosecution, and legislative drafting, which positions him to contribute effectively in these areas. He assured the Committee that he would work diligently to protect the Government’s legal interests and ensure the development of sound legislative documents.

5.2.7 Clarifying the Memo Controversy Discussed on Joy FM’s News File

When questioned about a recent memo controversy discussed on *Joy FM’s News File*, the Nominee clarified that he had evidence of the memo’s existence but could not present it before the Committee. He explained that the document was an electronic version he had seen from an official source in his private capacity as a citizen.

5.2.8: Best Practices for Representing Clients in Quasi-Criminal Matters

The Nominee emphasised the importance of adhering to best practices and professional ethics in legal representation. He asserted that in quasi-criminal matters, lawyers should file a

notice of appearance before representing a client or suspect. He explained that filing such a notice ensures transparency, notifies the court and opposing parties, and allows the lawyer to receive necessary case updates. Furthermore, this practice demonstrates professionalism, upholds the integrity of the judicial process, and fosters public trust in the legal profession.

5.2.9 The Nominee's Perspective on the Possible Scrapping of Ex-Gratia Payments

When asked about the issue of ex-gratia payments, the Nominee acknowledged the complexity of the matter, particularly in light of the Constitution and the President's position on the issue. He noted that Article 71 and Chapter 8 of the 1992 Constitution provide the legal framework for ex-gratia payments but recognised the President's commitment, as outlined in the NDC Manifesto, to abolish the practice. The Nominee outlined three possible approaches to address the matter: Legislative action; constitutional amendment; and committee recommendations on the non-payment of ex-gratia.

5.2.10 Addressing Excessive Remand Periods in Ghana

The Nominee expressed deep concern over the prolonged remand periods in Ghana, calling the situation unacceptable. He emphasised that detaining accused persons for extended periods without trial violates fundamental human rights and erodes

public trust in the justice system. To address this issue, he proposed reforms to prioritise timely trials, improve case management, and enhance judicial efficiency. He also suggested increasing the number of judges and court staff, implementing more effective case tracking systems, and allocating adequate resources for investigations and prosecutions.

5.2.11 Funding of the Nominee's PhD Studies

The Nominee disclosed that he received funding from the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) for his PhD studies. He explained that his institution, GIMPA, applied for the sponsorship on his behalf, and he met the eligibility criteria as a Ghanaian. He stated that pursuant to Act 581 of 2000, Section 221, the GETFund covered his tuition fees, approximately £20,000.00 per year, along with accommodation and upkeep expenses. The Nominee expressed gratitude for the financial support, which enabled him to complete his four-year PhD programme without significant financial strain.

5.3 Recommendation

During the consideration of Dr Justice Srem-Sai, the Minority Side staged a **WALKOUT**. Subsequently, the Committee, by **MAJORITY DECISION**, recommends to the House the approval of the nomination of **Dr Justice Srem-Sai as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General**.

6.0 ALHAJI YUSIF SULEMANA

DEPUTY MINISTER- DESIGNATE FOR LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

6.1 Background

Alhaji Yusif Sulemana was born on 29th July, 1972 in Bole, his hometown, located in the Savannah Region of Ghana. His early education began with English and Arabic lessons at the Nahadatul Islamia in Bole from 1979 to 1983. He continued his primary and junior secondary education at the Bole R/C Primary 'B' from 1984 to 1986 and Bole Junior Secondary School from 1987 to 1989.

The Nominee then proceeded to Damongo Secondary School, where he obtained his General Certificate Examination - Ordinary Level (GCE O-Level) from 1990 to 1993. He later enrolled at the Tamale Training College, undertaking a three-year Post-Secondary Certificate programme from 1995 to 1998. During this period, he also pursued GCE Advanced Level studies as a private candidate, which he completed from 1997 to 1999.

In 2001, the Nominee gained admission to the University of Ghana, Legon, where he studied Banking and Finance and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Administration degree in 2004. His commitment to continuous professional development saw him earning an Executive MBA in Project Management from the University of Ghana between 2009 and 2011.

Furthering his academic journey, he pursued an MPhil in Development Finance at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), successfully completing the programme between 2018 and 2020.

The Nominee also acquired a Diploma in International Trade from The Institute of Export and International Trade in London, which he obtained from 2021 to 2022. He is currently undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at the Nobel International Business School (NIBS).

Alhaji Sulemana has pursued various professional certifications, including an International Business Certificate from Temple University, Fox School of Business, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; a Certificate in Forging Alliances with USA Business from Stony Brook University College of Business, New York; a Certificate in Corporate Governance from the Institute of Directors, Ghana (IoD, Ghana); a Certificate in Monitoring and Evaluation from GIMPA; and a Certificate in Public-Private Partnership (Strategies, Methods, and Project Structuring Techniques) from the Institute of Public-Private Partnership, USA, Washington DC. Additionally, he is pursuing a course to become a Chartered Development Finance Analyst at the Chartered Institute of Development Finance.

Alhaji Sulemana has had a distinguished professional career prior to entering public office. From 1999 to 2001, he worked as a subject teacher in the Ghana Education Service (GES). He

later transitioned into the corporate sector, serving as Ghana Country Director of Educate Africa Totally, a US-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), from 2002 to 2004.

Between 2004 and 2010, he held various managerial positions at UNIBANK Ghana Limited, before moving on to Export Trade, Agriculture and Industrial Development Fund (EDAIF)—now known as Ghana Exim Bank—where he worked from 2010 to 2016 in several management capacities.

Currently, Alhaji Sulemana is serving his third consecutive term as Member of Parliament (MP) for Bole-Bamboi, a position he has held since 2017. His vision for national service is guided by a strong desire to contribute meaningfully to nation-building through policy implementation and legislative work.

In the Eighth Parliament, he served on several key Committees and Caucuses, including: Deputy Ranking Member, Parliament Ad-hoc Committee on Poverty Reduction Strategy; Vice Chairman, Muslim Caucus of Parliament; Chairman, Savannah Regional Caucus; Member, Parliament Standing Committee on Public Accounts; Deputy Ranking Member, Parliament Select Committee on Trade, Industry, and Tourism; and Ranking Member, Parliament Select Committee on Trade, Industry, and Tourism.

The Nominee has also contributed significantly to academic research, co-authoring notable publications, including: “A Decomposition Analysis

of the Nexus Between Employment and Credit in West Africa’s Biggest Economies” (2024) – Co-authored with Nuhu, P. & Bukari, D.; and MPhil Thesis: “*Economic Growth, Industrial Growth, and the Employment Nexus in Ghana*”

Alhaji Sulemana is married with four children. He is multilingual, speaking English, Gonja, Wali, Twi, and Hausa. His personal interests include debating and playing volleyball.

6.2 Questions Asked of The Nominee and His Responses

6.2.1 Policies to Improve Land Administration

The Nominee acknowledged that the development of policies to enhance land administration falls under the primary responsibility of the Minister. As Deputy Minister, his role would be to assist in policy formulation, implementation, and execution. He assured the Committee that he would work closely with the Minister to ensure that land administration reforms are effectively implemented to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accessibility in the sector.

6.2.2 Disparity Between Gold Revenue and Gold Production

The Nominee identified gold smuggling as the primary cause of the discrepancy between gold production and revenue generation. He explained that illegal gold trade allows individuals and entities to smuggle gold to neighboring countries with lower tax

rates, thereby evading Government's revenue collection. He assured the Committee that if approved, he would support the Minister to implement policies and enforce measures to curb gold smuggling, strengthen border controls, and maximise Ghana's economic benefits from its gold resources.

6.2.3 Land Swapping

The Nominee explained that land swapping is an arrangement in which Government land is exchanged with private individuals or entities in return for infrastructure development beneficial to the State. While recognising its potential for promoting national development, he emphasised the importance of transparency, fairness, and due process in such transactions. He assured the Committee that he would work with the Minister to ensure that land swapping agreements are competitively structured, properly assessed, and aligned with national development priorities to maximise value for the State.

6.2.4 Protection of Natural Resources, Especially in the Northern Sector

The Nominee expressed deep concern about the degradation of natural resources in the northern sector, particularly due to the felling of shea trees for charcoal production. He underscored the economic value of the shea tree and proposed the introduction and enforcement of strict laws to prevent indiscriminate destruction. Additionally,

he called on traditional leaders and district assemblies to assist in public education on the economic and environmental benefits of preserving shea, baobab, and kiln pulp trees.

On the issue of water bodies, he highlighted the devastating effects of illegal mining on water treatment and supply. He assured the Committee that if approved, he would work with the Minister to take decisive action against illegal miners operating in water bodies, ensuring their arrest and prosecution to serve as a deterrent to others.

6.2.5 Regulating Small-Scale Mining for Sustainable Development

The Nominee stated that while licensed small-scale miners should not face a complete ban, the sector requires regulation to ensure sustainability. He noted that the Minister has set up a technical team to review mining operations and the licensing regime, and once the report is available, appropriate policy measures will be implemented. Regarding illegal mining, he referenced the President's directive that seized equipment from illegal miners should not be destroyed. Instead, he emphasised the need for a structured approach to handling seized tools and equipment while ensuring responsible mining practices.

6.2.6 Lands Commission

When asked about challenges at the Lands Commission, the Nominee pointed out the inefficiencies in land registration and the poor record-keeping

system that has led to multiple ownership claims on the same land. He proposed the digitisation of land records, which would enable citizens to verify land ownership online before purchasing property.

Additionally, he emphasised the need to establish district land offices to streamline land administration, reduce congestion at the head office, and curb land disputes. He assured the Committee that if approved, he would support the Minister in implementing modern land administration reforms to improve efficiency in land registration and ownership verification.

6.2.7 Galamsey Issues

On the issue of illegal small-scale mining (*galamsey*), the Nominee acknowledged that it is linked to unemployment and economic survival, particularly in rural areas. He proposed categorising miners based on their operations: Miners operating on land should be regularised using technology to identify designated mining zones; and Miners operating in water bodies and forest reserves should be removed completely to protect the environment.

Regarding mining licenses, he emphasised the need to train licensed small-scale miners on sustainable mining practices. He also advocated for collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to make farming a viable alternative to illegal mining, ultimately reducing unemployment in rural communities.

6.2.8 Encroachment of Lands and State Acquisition of Land

The Nominee stressed that State lands must not be allocated to politically exposed persons. He informed the Committee that the President has tasked a team to assess and reclaim illegally acquired State lands. He assured that if approved, he would work with the Minister to protect public lands and ensure transparent land allocations that serve national interests.

Regarding lands owned by State institutions, he noted that many agencies struggle to safeguard their lands due to legal challenges and inadequate resources. He pledged to support them with legal and technical assistance to protect their lands from encroachment. However, he reiterated that State institutions must take proactive steps to safeguard their lands.

6.2.9 Views on Termination of Employment

The Nominee emphasised that employment decisions in the public sector must be based on merit and due process, rather than political considerations. He argued that it is inappropriate for outgoing Governments to rush employment processes for partisan gains. If approved, he pledged to assist the Minister in ensuring that employment policies uphold fairness, transparency, and stability in the public service.

6.2.10 Compensation of Communities Situated along the Volta Basin

The Nominee acknowledged the long-standing grievances of communities along the Volta Basin regarding inadequate compensation. He assured the Committee that if approved, he would work with the Minister to review and restructure the compensation framework to ensure that affected communities receive fair and timely compensation.

6.2.11 Relationship with Sector Minister

The Nominee was commended for his strong working relationship with the Minister. In response, he acknowledged that he had worked closely with the Minister as Deputy Ranking Member on the Committee of Trade and Industry. He assured the Committee of his commitment to maintaining and strengthening this collaboration to ensure the successful implementation of policies and mandates assigned to them by H.E. John Mahama.

6.3 Recommendation

The Committee, by a **MAJORITY DECISION**, recommends to the House the approval of the nomination of **Alhaji Yusif Sulemana** as **Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources**

7.0 MR YUSSIF ISSAKA JAJAH DEPUTY MINISTER- DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND CREATIVE ARTS

7.1 Background

Mr Yussif Issaka Jajah was born on 21st October, 1979 and hails from Bole in the Savannah Region of Ghana. His early education began at Darul Hijra Islamic School, where he studied from 1989 to 1994. He proceeded to Accra High School in the Greater Accra Region, where he obtained a Certificate in Business from 1997 to 2000.

The Nominee furthered his studies at the Institute of Professional Studies (now the University of Professional Studies, Accra - UPSA), where he obtained a Bachelor of Science in Accounting in 2009. His academic journey continued in the United Kingdom, where he pursued a Master of Arts in International Oil and Gas Management in 2011. In 2012, he became a Chartered Accountant, having successfully completed the professional qualification of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG).

Demonstrating a commitment to academic excellence and specialised expertise, Mr Jajah pursued further postgraduate studies at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). He successfully completed an MPhil in Development Studies in 2019 and later obtained a Master of Science in Energy Economics in 2021.

The Nominee undertook his mandatory National Service at the Institute of Professional Studies (now UPSA), Alumni Secretariat, from 2009 to 2010.

Mr Jajah is currently serving as a Member of Parliament for the Ayawaso North Constituency in the Ninth Parliament of Ghana. His tenure in Parliament spans multiple terms, having been re-elected from the Seventh through the Eighth Parliament, demonstrating his dedication to public service and legislative governance. Throughout his Parliamentary career, the Nominee has actively contributed to several Parliamentary Committees, including the Finance Committee, Roads and Transport Committee, Energy Committee, Defense and Interior Committee, and Parliamentary Affairs Committee.

The Nominee has an extensive background in Energy Economics, Development Finance, and International Oil and Gas Management. His studies in Energy Economics at GIMPA focused on key areas such as econometrics, macroeconomics, energy markets, and energy regulation. His MPhil in Development Finance provided him with expertise in public sector finance, corporate finance, project management, and microenterprise finance. Additionally, during his time at the University of Dundee in Scotland, he pursued an MBA in International Oil and Gas Management, focusing on petroleum policy, project management,

and financial analysis of energy ventures.

Mr Jajah's professional career is marked by research, consulting, and financial management experience. From 2013 to 2016, he served as a Research Fellow at the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralisation Secretariat, where he played a key role in designing and implementing decentralisation reforms in Ghana. His work included researching local governance structures, policy implementation, and contributing to national development strategies. In addition, he worked as a consultant for the Management Development & Productivity Institute (MDPI), specialising in petroleum policy, local content, and stakeholder management. His contributions in this field have been instrumental in shaping Ghana's energy and natural resource management strategies.

The Nominee's leadership capabilities have been evident throughout his career. He served as the Treasurer of the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) from 2007 to 2008, where he managed the financial administration of the student body. He has also undertaken significant research in Energy Economics and Development Finance, focusing on issues such as The Impact of Energy Consumption on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Inflows in Ghana and Financial Inclusion in Sub-Saharan Africa. His research outputs have been recognised in both policy and academic

fields, underscoring his expertise and contributions to economic policymaking.

Mr Jajah is a member of several prestigious professional organisations, reflecting his commitment to the energy and finance sectors. These include the Chartered Institute of Development Finance, Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG), Association of International Petroleum Negotiators, Ghana Oil Club, and the Energy Institute in London, UK.

Mr Jajah combines academic excellence, extensive professional experience, and a strong commitment to public service. His leadership roles in Parliament, expertise in energy and finance, and contributions to Ghana's economic policies make him a valuable asset to national development, particularly in the energy sector and broader economic governance.

7.2 Questions Asked of The Nominee and His Responses

7.2.1 Contribution of Tourism to GDP

When asked about the contribution of tourism to Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and his plans to enhance the sector, the Nominee noted that tourism was once the third-largest contributor to the country's GDP, generating approximately 3.18 billion cedis in revenue. However, he emphasised that despite its significant potential, the sector has not received the level of investment necessary to sustain and expand its growth. He, therefore, stressed the need for massive investment

in infrastructure, marketing, and policy initiatives to revitalise the industry, attract more international visitors, and fully harness tourism as a key driver of economic development.

7.2.2 Rehabilitation of the Salaga Slave Market

On specific measures to enhance the Salaga Slave Market, the Nominee stated that the Ministry was actively engaging with UNESCO to explore ways to preserve and promote the site. He indicated that discussions were ongoing to secure technical and financial support aimed at restoring, maintaining, and developing the Salaga Slave Market into a well-recognised heritage site. This, he emphasised, would attract both domestic and international tourists, while ensuring that its historical significance is properly documented and appreciated.

7.2.3 Boosting Sports Tourism in Ghana

Answering a question on how he intends to promote sports tourism, the Nominee stated that revitalising sports tourism as a means of creating career opportunities for young people is very important. He emphasised the crucial role that sports play in the socioeconomic development of the country and reiterated his commitment to supporting the Minister in collaborating with the Minister for Youth and Sports to develop sports tourism initiatives.

7.2.4 Lack of Relaxation Areas at some Tourist Sites

When the Nominee was asked about his plans to address the lack of seating and relaxation areas at some of Ghana's tourist sites, he acknowledged the concern and informed the Committee that steps were already being taken by the Ministry to resolve the issue. He explained that the current Minister had initiated measures aimed at improving visitor experience by ensuring the availability of designated rest areas at various tourist attractions. He further emphasised his commitment to supporting and collaborating with the Minister to successfully implement these initiatives, with the goal of enhancing comfort and accessibility for both local and international tourists.

7.2.5 Boosting Domestic Tourism

Addressing the issue of domestic tourism, the Nominee acknowledged ongoing efforts by the current Minister and noted that significant groundwork had already been laid to promote local tourism. He expressed his commitment to building upon those initiatives.

He emphasised his intention to support the Minister in engaging Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) across the country, in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs. The goal of this initiative, he explained, would be to identify and showcase lesser-known tourist sites in Ghana that may not yet have been fully developed. Once these potential tourist attractions are unearthed, he pledged to support the Minister in facilitating their development into viable tourism assets.

Furthermore, he outlined a plan to transfer the management and upkeep of these sites to the respective local assemblies, ensuring their sustainability and proper maintenance.

7.2.6 Educational Tourism

The Nominee was questioned about his plans to encourage domestic travel to historic tourist sites while providing meaningful learning experiences for Ghanaians. He indicated that he would assist his Minister in engaging other Ministers, particularly the Minister for Education and the Minister for Transport, to organise trips to historical sites, museums, and cultural landmarks. These initiatives, he noted, would foster national pride among young people.

7.2.7 The Creative Arts Fund

The Nominee was asked to share his thoughts on the obstacles hindering the implementation of the Creative Arts Fund. He pointed out that the Creative Arts Industry Act, 2020 (Act 1048) paved the way for the creation of the Creative Arts Fund, but unfortunately, its implementation has stalled since Parliament's approval. He briefed the Committee on his sector Minister's progress in setting up the Fund, highlighting that the Minister had drafted the Legislative Instrument (LI) required to operationalise the Act. He further indicated that Cabinet had approved the LI, and it was awaiting presentation to plenary for finalisation.

7.2.8 Religious Tourism

The Committee sought the Nominee's opinion on the effects of decreased Hajj costs on the Muslim community. In his response, the Nominee acknowledged that the previous Government made Hajj unaffordable, forcing Ghanaian Muslims to undertake the pilgrimage without proper accreditation, making their experience even more difficult. He emphasised that Ghanaian Muslims now have a favourable opportunity to undertake the sacred Hajj pilgrimage, fulfilling their religious obligations under more affordable and structured conditions.

7.2.9 Heritage Tourism

The Nominee outlined his strategy to revitalise Ghana's heritage sites and boost tourism, revealing that the sector Minister had launched an initiative to collaborate with global organisations like UNESCO, as well as other interested parties, to support the development of Ghana's tourism industry. He expressed confidence that these efforts would restore and develop the country's abandoned and deteriorating heritage sites, making them attractive to both local and international tourists.

7.3 Recommendation

The Committee by **MAJORITY DECISION**, recommends to the House the approval of the nomination of **Mr Yussif Issaka Jajah** as **Deputy Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts**.

8.0 MS RITA NAA ODOLEY SOWAH

DEPUTY MINISTER- DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CHIEFTAINCY AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

8.1 Background

Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah was born on 2nd July, 1968 in La, located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. She began her early education at Achimota Primary School, where she studied from 1974 to 1980. She subsequently attended Nungua Secondary School from 1980 to 1985, where she successfully obtained her G.C.E. Ordinary Level Certificate.

Seeking to enhance her technical skills, the Nominee pursued Computer and Secretarial Training at Omari Computer Institute from 1988 to 1989. She further acquired specialised certifications, including a Certificate in Women in Public and Corporate Governance Leadership in April 2018, and a Certificate in Executive Leadership in Action in October 2021 from the Knowledge Tree International Institute. Committed to lifelong learning, she pursued higher education and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work from the University of Ghana in November 2024.

Prior to her active involvement in politics, Ms Sowah built a distinguished professional career in both public and private sectors. She commenced her career as a Computer Operator at the Department of National Lotteries, where

she worked diligently from November 1989 to 1998. She later transitioned into managerial roles, serving as Manager of Maridor Laundry Services from October 1998 to 2004. In November 2005, she assumed a role at the Office of the Member of Parliament for the Dadekotopon Constituency, where she worked until 2009. She also contributed to governance and administrative functions as Secretary at the National Premix Secretariat from July 2009 to June 2013.

From July 2013 to January 2017, the Nominee was appointed as the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) of the La Dade-Kotopon Municipal Assembly, a role in which she spearheaded several local governance and community development initiatives. Since 2021, she has served as the Member of Parliament for the Dadekotopon Constituency, effectively representing her constituents in the Eighth and Ninth Parliaments of Ghana.

Throughout her public service career, Ms Sowah has held key leadership roles. From 2010 to 2012, she was a Counsellor at the La Sub-Metro Council of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. She also played a pivotal role in urban transportation policy development as a Director at the Greater Accra Passenger Transport Executive from 2014 to 2016. Additionally, she served as the National Treasurer of the National Association of Local Authorities from 2015 to 2017.

Within Parliament, Ms Sowah has demonstrated commitment to legislative work. She previously served as Ranking

Member on the Committee on Members Holding Office of Profit in the Eighth Parliament and currently holds the position of Treasurer of the Greater Accra Parliamentary Caucus in the Ninth Parliament.

The Nominee has actively engaged in international cooperation through participation in conferences, working visits, and benchmarking exercises. She attended the 7th World Urban Forum Conference in Colombia in April 2014, followed by a working visit to Brazil in July 2014 to study the Urban Transportation System. In July 2024, she participated in a benchmarking visit to the Malawian Parliament, and in October 2024, she attended the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah is passionate about reading and assisting the vulnerable, demonstrating her dedication to public service and community development.

8.2 Questions Asked of The Nominee and Her Responses

8.2.1 Reforms in Local Governance

Responding to a question on which areas of the local government structure require reforms, the Nominee emphasised the urgent need to digitise revenue collection processes within local governance structures. She indicated that this would prevent revenue losses and ensure that local assemblies have sufficient financial resources to implement development projects,

thereby reducing their dependency on central Government allocations.

On measures to improve Internally Generated Funds (IGF) for the assemblies, the Nominee proposed the adoption of robust strategies for the collection of property rates, business operating permits, building permits, and other levies. She added that it is crucial to provide comprehensive training for revenue collectors and conduct sensitisation programmes among taxpayers to emphasise the importance of their contributions to local development.

The Nominee was of the view that these measures would strengthen local governance systems, foster a culture of accountability and transparency, and ensure that communities benefit directly from resources generated within their localities.

8.2.2 Payment of Allowances to Assembly Members

When asked whether the proposed payment of allowances to assembly members, as outlined in the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Manifesto, is sustainable, the Nominee noted that assembly members require adequate financial resources to effectively discharge their duties, which are pivotal to the country's decentralisation process. She further emphasised His Excellency the President's commitment to resource these members, acknowledging their crucial role in local governance.

Regarding whether unit committee members should be included in this initiative, the Nominee admitted that while many assembly members are already on the Government's payroll as public sector workers, the Government intends to commence the policy implementation with assembly members. However, unit committee members may be considered in subsequent phases.

On the equitable nature of the policy, the Nominee indicated that numerous districts face challenges due to limited IGF, and this initiative seeks to ensure universal access to financial resources for all assembly members to enhance their efficiency.

On whether the policy contravenes Section 11(2) of the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), the Nominee assured the Committee that the initiative aligns with the Act and pledged to assist the Minister in ensuring the smooth implementation of the policy.

8.2.3 Election of Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs)

When asked whether she subscribes to the election of MMDCEs, the Nominee reaffirmed that His Excellency the President remains committed to this vision, and she intends to support the Government in making it a reality.

Regarding how this initiative would be executed, the Nominee stated that the Ministry would rely on the guidelines proposed by the Constitutional Review Committee.

She expressed optimism that this approach would align with the broader goal of enhancing democratic governance and accountability at the local level, ensuring that MMDCs are directly accountable to the people they serve.

8.2.4 Boundary Disputes Between Assemblies

On mitigating incessant boundary disputes among districts, the Nominee informed the Committee that such disputes often arise due to competition for revenue sources. She pledged to assist the Minister and collaborate with the Electoral Commission, Regional Coordinating Councils, and traditional rulers to mitigate these disputes.

She emphasised that the Ministry's collective goal is to ensure that each assembly secures the necessary revenue for local development, enhancing the efficiency of decentralisation.

The Nominee further suggested that engaging stakeholders would help establish clear boundaries and resolve existing disputes, ultimately improving revenue collection and fostering cooperation among local governance structures.

8.2.5 Indiscriminate Development at the Aburi Mountains

When asked about the Ministry's plans to enforce the green belt policy, the Nominee revealed that the Ministry has adopted a comprehensive strategy with the Land Use and Spatial Planning

Authority (LUSPA) playing a pivotal role.

She stated that every development project must be backed by a permit to ensure compliance with environmental and safety standards. However, some private developers have erected buildings without obtaining permits, leading to indiscriminate construction on waterways, exacerbating flooding and environmental degradation.

To address this, she proposed strict enforcement of assembly laws and stiff fines for offenders. This approach, she noted, would mitigate flooding risks and preserve the natural beauty of areas such as Aburi, which are crucial for tourism and environmental sustainability.

8.2.6 Revitalisation of Mandatory Projects under the Previous NDC Government

When asked whether she would advise the Minister to revitalise the policy allowing assemblies to use their District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) for key projects, the Nominee responded in the affirmative. She pledged to encourage assemblies to leverage both the DACF and IGF to undertake essential projects such as school and health facility construction, highlighting the importance of these initiatives in boosting local development and improving socio-economic conditions.

8.2.7 Ensuring Gender Equity in Local Governance

When asked whether she would advise the Minister to ensure gender equity in recruitment at the assemblies, the Nominee affirmed that the Minister would strictly adhere to the Affirmative Action (Gender Equality) Act, 2024 when making appointments.

She proposed mentorship programmes for young girls to encourage leadership skills and political participation, collaboration with traditional rulers to raise awareness, and subsidised filing fees for women candidates to reduce financial barriers and promote women's involvement in national governance.

8.2.8 Collaboration between Chiefs and Queen mothers

On strengthening cooperation between chiefs and queen mothers in mentoring the girl child, the Nominee assured the Committee that she would work closely with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection. She proposed training workshops for queen mothers to enhance their mentorship capacities and advocated for their full inclusion in traditional councils to allow them to contribute meaningfully to community development.

8.2.9 Provision of Sheds for Market Women

When asked about providing sheds for women in local markets, the Nominee highlighted the harsh weather conditions under which these women operate, which negatively impacts their health and business operations.

She pledged to support the Minister in procuring affordable sheds for market women, ensuring that they receive adequate protection and improved working conditions.

8.2.10 Weaning Off La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly from Central Government Funding

When asked whether La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly should be weaned off Government funding, the Nominee responded in the affirmative. She proposed enhancing the collection of property rates and levies within the Municipality, stating that as one of the more affluent assemblies, it is well-positioned to operate independently, allowing less endowed assemblies to access central Government support.

8.2.11 Chieftaincy Conflicts in Greater Accra

On mitigating chieftaincy conflicts in Accra, the Nominee acknowledged that many disputes stem from succession battles and land issues, often exacerbated by political interference. She proposed engagements with the National and Regional House of Chiefs and judicial committees to explore peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms.

8.2.12 Digitalisation of Revenue Collection

When asked whether she would recommend digitalisation in revenue collection, the Nominee strongly supported the initiative, citing its efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and ability

to prevent revenue leakages. She highlighted challenges associated with manual collection, such as financial discrepancies and misappropriation, and stressed that digital platforms would enhance transparency and accountability.

8.2.13 Plans to Enhance Coastal Cleanliness

On measures to keep beaches clean, the Nominee indicated significant progress in reducing open defecation due to increased household toilet facilities. She proposed collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Creative Arts, traditional rulers, plastic producers, and stakeholders to ensure coastal cleanliness contributes to national revenue generation. The Nominee emphasised effective waste management systems and recycling programmes to preserve coastal ecosystems and enhance tourism.

8.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends by *CONSENSUS* the approval of the nomination of **Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah** as **Deputy Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs**.

9.0 MRS GIZELLA AKUSHIKA TETTEH-AGBOTUI, (MP) DEPUTY MINISTER-DESIGNATE, MINISTRY OF WORKS, HOUSING AND WATER RESOURCES

9.1 Background

Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui was born on 30th November, 1970 in Awutu Obrachire in the Central Region of Ghana. She had her tertiary education at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), where she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Design in Architecture in 1997. She further pursued professional qualifications and acquired a Diploma in Architecture from the Ghana Institute of Architects (GIA) in 1999. Her academic journey continued with a Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) in 2001, followed by a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Marketing from the University of Ghana Business School (UGBS) in 2007. Additionally, she holds professional certifications, including Project Management Professional (PMP) in 2008 and International Airport Professional (IAP) in 2017.

Mrs Tetteh-Agbotui is a seasoned politician, architect, and project management professional with a career spanning over 27 years. She is currently serving her second consecutive term as the Member of Parliament for Awutu Senya West Constituency, making history as the first MP in the constituency to secure two consecutive terms since 1992. Beyond her parliamentary role, she is an Associate Member of the Ghana Institute of Architects (GIA), a Certified Project Management Professional (PMP), and an expert in infrastructure development, urban planning, and public-private partnerships.

Her professional career encompasses architecture, project management, and corporate governance. Over the years, she has led and advised on key infrastructure projects in Ghana, including the Ghana Civil Aviation Training Academy (GATA), Kotoka International Airport Terminal 2 expansion, Tamale Runway Project, and various residential and commercial developments. She has been actively involved in designing and managing mass housing projects, private apartment complexes, and office buildings for major institutions.

In addition to her extensive technical expertise, Mrs Tetteh-Agbotui has held significant leadership positions on multiple boards and committees. She has served on the boards of the Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL), the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), and several entities within the Josping Group of Companies. Her leadership has been instrumental in shaping policy development, risk management, corporate compliance, and climate change adaptation strategies in various sectors.

Her contributions to public service and national development extend beyond her parliamentary duties. She has served on several key Committees in Parliament, including the Energy Committee, the Appointment Committee, and the Works and Housing Committee. Additionally, she is the Chairperson of the Ghana-Hungary Parliamentary Friendship Association and an active member of the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE).

She has also played a vital role in the NDC's 2024 Infrastructure Committee, where she has contributed to the advancement of national infrastructure policies.

Mrs Tetteh-Agbotui is deeply committed to corporate governance and policy advocacy. Her leadership within the Josping Group of Companies has been pivotal in advancing risk management, compliance, and sustainability initiatives. Furthermore, her engagement with the Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL) underscores her dedication to enhancing Ghana's aviation infrastructure and regulatory framework.

She has also demonstrated a strong commitment to community service and mentorship. She has held leadership roles within the Rotary Club of Accra-South and the Rotaract Club of KNUST. She has also served as a facilitator for the Ghana Institute of Architects and the BUSAC advocacy programme, addressing building regulations and enforcement challenges in Ghana.

Mrs Tetteh-Agbotui's extensive experience across public and private sectors, combined with her expertise in governance, project management, and infrastructure development, makes her an exceptional leader. Through her dedication to professional excellence and public service, she continues to drive impactful change across multiple sectors, positioning herself as a distinguished parliamentarian and an advocate for sustainable national development.

9.2 Questions Asked of The Nominee and Her Responses

9.2.1 Regulation of Fees and Charges under the Ministry

In response to a question regarding the regulation of consultancy fees for professionals under the Ministry, the Nominee noted that the Ministry of Works and Housing had oversight of these professionals, with the last revision of the fee schedule occurring on December 6, 2021. She further elaborated that the fee structure covers various professional roles, including Project Director, Principal Consultant, Senior Consultant, Consultant, and Junior Consultant.

The Nominee emphasised that each project typically involves a multidisciplinary team, comprising architects, civil engineers, quantity surveyors, electrical engineers, and mechanical engineers, with the composite fee for these professional services set at 16.5 per cent of the anticipated project cost. According to the Nominee, this percentage ensures fair compensation for the collaborative efforts of the professionals involved in project execution.

9.2.2 Review of the Real Estate Act to Reduce the Cost of Housing Units

In response to a question about the review of taxes on real estate to reduce the cost of housing units, the Nominee acknowledged that she was not an expert

in taxation. However, with the guidance of the Minister, she emphasised the importance of engaging key stakeholders, particularly real estate developers, to provide insights that would support fair and effective tax policies in the housing sector. She further highlighted the need to ensure streamlined taxation policies that would promote investment, encourage compliance, and prevent issues such as double taxation and excessive financial burdens on developers and homebuyers.

9.2.3 Standardisation of the Built Environment

When asked about the standardisation of the built environment to prevent disasters, the Nominee emphasised the importance of adhering to established regulatory frameworks. She stressed the need for strict enforcement of building codes, engagement of certified professionals in construction projects, and the use of high-quality materials. Additionally, she advocated for regular inspections and stakeholder engagements to ensure compliance with industry standards, safety measures, and best practices. According to the Nominee, these measures would help enhance safety, sustainability, and resilience in the built environment.

9.2.4 Accommodation for Government Workers

In response to a question on the provision of affordable housing for Government workers, particularly teachers working in rural areas, the Nominee acknowledged that discussions

had already taken place regarding the District Housing Scheme, which aims to decentralise housing for better accessibility. She emphasised that the availability of teacher accommodation directly impacts education quality, as a lack of housing discourages teachers from accepting postings to remote areas. She asserted that with the guidance of the Minister, the Ministry would initiate policies and projects to provide accommodation close to schools to address this challenge.

9.2.5 Perennial Water Shortages in the Country

When questioned about measures to tackle persistent water shortages, particularly in urban areas like Tamale, the Nominee acknowledged the severity of the issue and noted that the Ministry was already undertaking planned and active pipeline projects to resolve the problem. She further stated that the Minister was adopting a nationwide approach to address inadequate water supply and highlighted illegal mining activities as a major contributor to water scarcity. The Nominee advocated for multi-sectoral collaboration among the Ministries of Works and Housing, Lands and Natural Resources, and Local Government to enhance water supply reliability.

9.2.6 National Rent Assistance Scheme

In response to a question regarding the review and continuation of the National Rent Assistance Scheme, the Nominee stated that she would support the

Minister in evaluating the existing framework and adopt appropriate strategies to enhance the scheme. She emphasised the importance of affordability, accessibility, and efficiency in the housing sector, while also addressing tenant-landlord relations and sustainable housing development.

9.2.7 Operationalisation of the Saglemi Housing Project

On the issue of completing the Saglemi Housing Project, the Nominee informed the Committee that the President had tasked the Ministry to assess, cost, and fund the project to ensure completion. She acknowledged reports of theft and vandalism affecting many of the housing units and stressed the urgent need for intervention. She assured the Committee that the Government had committed to completing the Saglemi Housing Project within four years and that the Ministry would collaborate with other agencies to ensure proper allocation and occupancy.

9.2.8 Tackling Flooding in the Country

When asked about her approach to address flooding, particularly in Accra, the Nominee affirmed the existence of ongoing projects, such as the Greater Accra Resilience and Integrated Development (GARID) Project, to improve flood control mechanisms. She stressed the need for an attitudinal shift towards responsible waste disposal and urban planning, alongside regulatory measures such as green spaces, wetland

preservation, and proper drainage systems.

9.2.9 Enforcement of the Rent Act

In response to a question regarding compliance with the Rent Act, particularly concerning rent advance payments, the Nominee noted that the Act stipulates an advance payment of no more than six (6) months. However, she pointed out that enforcement has been a challenge due to multiple stakeholders being involved. She indicated that the Ministry would engage with stakeholders to ensure effective implementation and review of the Rent Act.

9.2.10 Housing for Tertiary Students

Addressing concerns about landlords charging high rental fees for students, the Nominee acknowledged the issue of demand-driven price increases. She emphasised the need for dialogue with relevant stakeholders to ensure that students have access to affordable housing. She also stated that she would support a thorough needs assessment to determine whether Government intervention in student accommodation is necessary.

9.2.11 Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in Affordable Housing

When asked about her stance on PPP arrangements for affordable housing, the Nominee highlighted ongoing initiatives in areas such as Ridge and other Government-owned lands. She

underscored the importance of private-sector investment in complementing Government efforts to deliver affordable housing efficiently. She further stated that with the guidance of the Minister, an appropriate PPP model would be adopted to accelerate project delivery while ensuring cost efficiency.

9.2.12 Completion of Ongoing Housing Projects

The Nominee acknowledged that many housing projects remain incomplete due to financial constraints and suggested that the Ministry prioritise securing adequate funding and engaging competent contractors. She recognised budget constraints and fluctuations in material prices as key challenges, but emphasised the importance of timely fund disbursement to prevent cost escalations.

9.2.13 Terminology of "Affordable Housing"

Responding to concerns about the perception of "Affordable Housing", the Nominee clarified that the term does not imply low quality. Instead, cost-saving measures are implemented to keep housing prices manageable, including the use of ceramic tiles instead of porcelain, standard sanitary ware, simpler window designs, and cement flooring in some cases. She emphasised that these adjustments allow for affordability while maintaining durability and functionality.

9.2.14 Gender-sensitive Affordable Housing

On the incorporation of gender-sensitive designs in housing projects, the Nominee stated that housing is generally unisex, but she acknowledged the need for adequate sanitation facilities, security features, and spaces conducive for small-scale economic activities for women and children. She further emphasised that district housing projects could serve as models for best practices, promoting better sanitation and safer living conditions.

9.2.15 Drainage Challenges in the Constituencies

In response to concerns about storm drainage issues in areas like Weiya, Gbawe, and Bortianor, the Nominee highlighted ongoing drainage projects and Government's commitments to improving stormwater management. She stressed the need for continuous dredging, green infrastructure, and sustainable urban planning to minimise flooding risks.

9.2.16 Gender-based Financial Collaborations

When asked about collaborations with financial institutions to provide better housing finance options for women, the Nominee affirmed that such partnerships were feasible. She suggested that banks could develop financial products, including affordable mortgage packages, tailored specifically for women. She acknowledged that high-interest rates

pose a challenge but emphasised that ensuring financial accessibility for women is crucial for broader economic empowerment.

9.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui** as Deputy Minister for Works, Housing and Water Resources

10.0 MR ERNEST BROGYA GENFI DEPUTY MINISTER- DESIGNATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

10.1 Background

Mr Ernest Brogya Genfi was born on 14th June, 1984 in Kumasi and hails from Fomena Ayaase in the Adansi North District. He is married with four children and speaks and writes English and Twi fluently. He is a Christian.

The Nominee began his primary education at Holy Rosary Catholic School in Kumasi, where he studied from 1989 to 1999. He proceeded to Kumasi Academy for his secondary education from 2000 to 2002. He later enrolled at Kumasi Technical University (formerly Kumasi Polytechnic), where he pursued a Diploma in Business Studies from 2003 to 2005. He further obtained a Professional Administration and Management Consultancy Certificate (Part II and III) from the Chartered Institute of Administrators and Management Consultants between 2009

and 2011. His academic pursuits continued at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), where he earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration from 2016 to 2018. He later obtained a Master of Arts in Marketing Strategy (Political Marketing) from the University of Ghana, Legon, between 2019 and 2020. Additionally, he obtained a Graduate Diploma in Business Studies from the Institute of Commercial Management, UK, between 2020 and 2021. The Nominee further pursued legal studies at Wisconsin International University College, Accra, obtaining a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from 2023 to 2025.

Professionally, the Nominee has acquired extensive experience across various sectors. His career began as a teacher at Glad Tidings International School in Kumasi from 2002 to 2004. He later worked as an Accounts Officer at Gerofix Rent-A-Sign Limited from 2005 to 2008. Between 2009 and 2011, he served as a Public Relations Officer at the Information Services Department in Kumasi. His expertise in marketing led him to the National Trust Holding Company (NTHC), where he served as Head of Marketing from 2012 to 2013. From 2013 to 2015, he served as Personal Assistant to the Deputy Minister for Youth and Sports, Mr Joseph Yammin. He subsequently held an elected position as an Assembly Member at the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly from 2015 to 2017. The Nominee completed his national service at the Parliament of Ghana, where he worked in the Office of the Minority

Chief Whip from 2018 to 2019. He later assumed the role of Project Manager for Joberg Foundation Ghana from 2020 to 2022, overseeing community development projects in Accra.

Politically, the Nominee has been an active member of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) since 2005 and has held various leadership roles within the Party. He was the Regional Youth Organiser for the NDC in the Ashanti Region from 2014 to 2018 and served as the Party's Parliamentary Candidate for the Suame Constituency in 2016. Since 2023, he has been Deputy Director for Special Duties for the NDC. Additionally, he has played critical roles in grassroots mobilisation, serving as Spokesperson for the Organised Youth of Ashanti (OYA) from 2007 to 2014, and has been a member of the Arise Ghana Movement since 2022. He has also served in various party positions, including Deputy Propaganda Secretary for the Suame Constituency in 2014, Elections Coordinator for the Kwadaso Constituency in 2004 and 2008, and TEIN Organiser at Kumasi Technical University in the 2004/2005 academic year.

The Nominee has participated in various professional development programmes both locally and internationally. In 2017, he took part in the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) on Youth Leadership and Volunteerism in the United States. In 2015, he participated in the Labour Party Conference and Training in the United Kingdom. He has attended several workshops and seminars, including the

Change Management Workshop in 2015, Succession Planning and Transitional Management Seminar in 2012, Role of Professional Administrators in the Oil and Gas Economy Seminar in 2011, Earned Value Management Seminar in 2010, and Integrated Marketing Communication Seminar in 2010.

The Nominee is a graduate member of the Chartered Institute of Administrators & Management Consultants (CIAMC), Ghana, and a certified member of the International Professional Managers Association (IPMA), UK.

In his personal life, he enjoys reading and listening to music.

10.2 Questions Asked of The Nominee and His Responses

10.2.1 Military Involvement in Business and Democracy

The Nominee, in response to a question on how the military's engagement in business activities might pose a threat to democracy, explained that such involvement could have constitutional implications. He noted that since the Constitution permits the military to engage in activities that contribute to national development and poverty reduction, he would assist the Minister in delivering on the vision of the President, particularly in overseeing the military's business engagements to ensure they align with national interests.

10.2.2 Military Training for National Service Persons

On the military training component that the President intends to incorporate into the National Service Programme, the Nominee expressed full support for the initiative. He assured the Committee of his commitment to assisting the Minister in ensuring that the training meets required standards while incurring no additional cost to the State.

10.2.3 Military Training Institutions

When asked about developing military training institutions into full-fledged universities, the Nominee emphasised the importance of strengthening military education. He highlighted the need to improve infrastructure, modernise training methods, and integrate new technologies to meet evolving security challenges. He further expressed full support for initiatives that enhance professionalism and expertise within the Armed Forces.

10.2.4 Civil-Military Relations

The Committee raised concerns regarding civil-military relations, citing past incidents such as the lynching of Major Mahama and recent reports of military assaults on civilians. The Nominee acknowledged that Ghanaians hold the military in high regard, but unfortunate incidents could damage public trust. He pledged to support the Minister in promoting civil-military engagements and collaborating with institutions like the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) to foster mutual respect,

adherence to the rule of law, and stronger civilian-military relations.

When asked about public perceptions of mistreatment by the military, the Nominee stressed the importance of mutual respect between soldiers and civilians. Drawing from his experience in a military family, he noted the discipline and professionalism instilled in military personnel and assured the Committee of his commitment to improving civil-military engagement.

10.2.5 Expansion of the Armed Forces

Regarding the 2015 military expansion project, which aimed to increase personnel to 50,000, but remains unfinished, the Nominee acknowledged the challenges associated with expansion. He supported the gradual increase in military personnel and emphasised the need for rank promotions to align with operational capacity. He committed to working with the Minister to ensure resource allocation aligns with expansion goals.

10.2.6 Legacy and Vision for the Ghana Armed Forces

The Nominee was asked about his vision for the Ghana Armed Forces. He stated his goal of helping to build a professional, disciplined, and modern military capable of handling both internal and external security challenges. He emphasised that the military should be a pillar of national stability, contributing to peacekeeping, security, and development while upholding

democratic principles and constitutional values.

10.2.7 Deployment of Soldiers in Civilian Operations

The Committee raised concerns that deploying military personnel for operations typically handled by the Police could lead to unnecessary violence. The Nominee clarified that maintaining law and order is primarily the duty of the Ghana Police Service, but acknowledged that the military's role in protecting national security is also vital. He stated that military deployments should only occur when Police capacity is exceeded and assured the Committee that the Minister of Defence had reaffirmed that soldiers would only be deployed when necessary.

10.2.8 Military Brutality

On the issue of military brutality and ensuring accountability, the Nominee was asked how he would ensure that soldiers act within their mandate. He reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening civilian-military relations and assured the Committee of his support for accountability measures to prevent excesses.

10.2.9 Women in the Military

The Committee raised concerns about gender representation in the Armed Forces, particularly the goal of achieving 30 per cent female participation. The Nominee acknowledged the challenge but stated that laws supporting women's inclusion in the military exist and must

be fully implemented. He pledged to assist the Minister in ensuring gender representation and addressing the unique needs of female officers.

10.2.10 Afari Military Hospital

On ensuring the completion and operationalisation of the Afari Military Hospital, the Nominee assured the Committee that the Government considers this project a top priority. He emphasised the President's commitment to completing the hospital and stated that he would work closely with the Minister to fast-track its operationalisation for the benefit of the military and the general public.

10.2.11 Defence Industries Holding Company (DIHOC)

When asked about supporting DIHOC's efforts to manufacture military vehicles locally, the Nominee affirmed his commitment to enhancing Ghana's defence industries. He noted that this initiative began under the late President Atta Mills and pledged to work with the Minister to ensure its success and sustainability, reducing reliance on imports.

10.2.12 Housing for the Military

When asked about his plans to ensure continuous Government support for military accommodation, the Nominee acknowledged the importance of providing decent housing for military personnel. He pledged to work with the Minister to ensure that ongoing military

housing projects are completed and new projects initiated.

10.2.13 The Ghana-US Military Cooperation Lawsuit

The Nominee was questioned about the lawsuit he filed at the Supreme Court challenging the contractual agreement between the Government of Ghana and the United States of America, which aimed at building a US military base in Ghana. The Nominee confirmed being the plaintiff in the writ and stated that one of the issues he challenged, per his understanding of the 1992 Constitution, was that there were no signatories to the agreement. He noted that the Supreme Court, however, ruled that an agreement between two countries, as in the case of Ghana which was presented to Parliament for ratification, does not necessarily require signatories.

10.2.14 Graphic Online Publication

The Nominee was questioned about the veracity of the publication by *Graphic Online* to the effect that he was disqualified from the NDC primaries in the Suame Constituency on the grounds that he had forged signatures in his nomination forms. The Nominee noted that he was never disqualified and that he won the primaries and represented the NDC at the Suame Constituency in the 2016 Parliamentary Elections. When asked whether he has issued a rejoinder to rebut the publication, he stated that he did so at an interview he granted.

10.2.15 Open Letter to the Embassy of the United States of America

The Nominee was asked if he could confirm authorship of an open letter to the Embassy of the United States of America regarding an alleged training of militants by NPP at the Bondase Military Camp, a facility Ghana established with support from the U.S. Government. He confirmed having authored the letter, which was a *Facebook* post. He was again asked whether the post was based on evidence or it was a political statement. The Nominee conceded that it was not based on evidence and that it was a political statement, adding that going forward he will confirm such statements before taking any step.

10.2.16 Facebook Post on 22nd August 2019

The Nominee was asked whether given the opportunity he would amend the post he made on the 22nd August 2019 on his *Facebook* account impugning some wrongdoings against the former President. The Nominee explained that the post was not directed at the person of the former President but at the government of the time. He noted that it was a political statement and that given the opportunity, he would improve on the language of his posts.

10.3 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Ernest Brogya Genfi** as Deputy Minister for Defence.

11.0 Conclusion and General Recommendation

In accordance with the provisions of Article 79(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217, the Committee duly considered the nominations of His Excellency the President. Upon thorough scrutiny of their qualifications, experiences, and responses to questions, the Nominees demonstrated competence, knowledge, and expertise on matters relating to their respective Ministries.

At the point of decision on Mr Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini, Dr Justice Srem-Sai, Alhaji Yusif Sulemana, and Mr Yussif Issaka Jajah, the Minority had walked out. Mr Chairman, therefore, put the question on each of the Nominees, and the Committee, by a **Majority** decision, **UNANIMOUSLY** recommends to the House the adoption of its Report and the approval of the nomination of the following Nominees:

1. **Mr Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini**, MP as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Roads and Highways;
2. **Dr Justice Srem-Sai** as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General;
3. **Alhaji Yusif Sulemana**, MP as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources; and
4. **Mr Yussif Issaka Jajah**, MP as Deputy Minister for the Ministry

of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts.

The Committee, however, recommends by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the following Nominees:

5. **Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah**, MP as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs;

6. **Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui** as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Works, Housing, and Water Resources; and

7. **Mr Ernest Brogya Genfi** as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Defence.

Respectfully submitted.

The Speaker: Any seconder?

Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib): Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

The Speaker: Hon Members, the Motion is moved and seconded.

Question proposed.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: Hon Members, the Motion numbered 15 on the Order Paper is accordingly adopted and the House has, therefore, proceeded to grant prior

approval for His Excellency to appoint the following nominees to the various portfolios:

We have, from your Report, Dr Justice Srem-Sai as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General; Hon Alhaji Yusif Sulemana as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources; Hon Yussif Jajah Issaka as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts; Hon Alhaji Suhuyini Sayibu Alhassan as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Roads and Highways; Hon Rita Naa Odoley Sowah as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs; Hon Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources, and Mr Ernest Brogya Genfi as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Defence.

Hon Members, with this prior approval, I will proceed to communicate your decision to His Excellency the President for the instruments of appointments to be issued to our Colleagues as decided by you.

I thank you so much for a good job done. This is a very comprehensive Report. [*Hear! Hear!*]

We will now move on to—

Yes, is there any—Majority Leader?

2.02 pm.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, we had programmed to take a few more speakers on the Motion to thank the President for presenting the Message on the State of the Nation to this House and then leadership will wind up. We are also hoping that we will hold a meeting of the Committee of Selection and have the Report, so that we could take that. This is because of the Budget presentation next week Tuesday, when you may be referring aspects of the budget to the various Committees.

Mr Speaker, for now, if we could take a few more speakers.

The Speaker: Yes, Second Deputy Minority Whip?

Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib: Mr Speaker, we agreed at Conclave that it would be six from each Side, and then leadership would round it up to make it seven.

[pause]

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the strategy at the Business Committee meeting, which we want to suggest to you, is to crave your indulgence so that we will have the debate continued, so that you can indulge us and convene a meeting of the Committee of Selection, approve your Report, have it laid, while the debates are ongoing. Then we can come back and take the Committee Reports, by which time they would have exhausted the list of contributors to the debate and then we can wind up as Leaders, and adopt the Report of your Committee.

The Speaker: I advise that the Leaders—I do not know who you assigned at the Committee of Selection level to go through the last disagreement as to the Leadership of some Committees. It was brought to my attention by the secretary to the Committee and I have given some directives. This morning, I called him and he said he had not yet heard from the Leaders on those—There were about seven to 14 Committees or so. There is still no agreement as to who should be Chairman and who should be Ranking Member. So, it was brought to my attention, and I gave the directive to the secretary. I think he submitted it to the Leadership and he has not got the feedback

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I believe under your Chairmanship we will be able to resolve those matters.

The Speaker: Do you want us to do that at the meeting?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I think so. With your guidance, we would easily resolve the matter.

Mr Shaib —*rose*—

The Speaker: No problem. So, we will start this—Yes, please?

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, this is just to concur that under your Leadership, we are able to resolve all these matters. So, we would rather submit to your Leadership.

The Speaker: No problem. All right, we would go on. I will start then, and the Members of the Committee of Selection could then move to finalise that and then come back to the House. So, I will start the debate and then the Second Deputy Speaker is available to continue. If he is tired, the First Deputy Speaker is also available to take over again.

So, let us move on to the Motion on the Message on the State of the Nation and that is the item numbered 11 at page 4 of the Order Paper:

“That this Hon House thanks H. E. the President for the Message on the State of the Nation which he delivered to Parliament on Thursday, 27th February, 2025.”

It has been moved, seconded, and a number of you have contributed. I have a guide here from the Leadership of both Sides. I will start from the Majority Side and the first person on the list is Mr David T. D. Vondee. The time allocation, I am informed, is 10 minutes each. It has been reduced from 15 to 10 minutes, is that the case?

Mr Shaib: I thought that has been taken back to 15?

That is so, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: It is 10 minutes as the guide.

Yes, Hon Member you may proceed?

MOTION

MESSAGE ON THE STATE OF THE NATION, 2025

(*Moved* on Tuesday, 4th March, 2025, by the Hon Member for Cape Coast South, Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan and *seconded* by the Hon Member for Bimbilla, Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul)

[*Resumption of debate from Wednesday, 5th March, 2025*]

Mr David Theophilus Dominic Vondee (NDC — Twifo Atti Morkwa): Mr Speaker, thank you for this beautiful opportunity to contribute to the Motion and to thank His Excellency John Dramani Mahama for the Message on the State of the Nation.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama delivered the Message on the State of the Nation so perfectly and timeously. We have heard a lot of people talk about the Message on the State of the Nation and tried to thank Mr President. Those who want to raise issues are raising them, but I looked at the Message on the State of the Nation in terms of infrastructure and I realised that the previous Administration destroyed the fabrics of infrastructure of this country. I thank His Excellency John Dramani Mahama for making a very bold statement that he is going to rebuild this country and will rebuild this country properly.

I have heard that our debt stock has risen to something around GH¢721 billion. Mr Speaker, let us all know that that is not the only money that the previous Administration got. These moneys we are mentioning do not include the oil revenues that came in, all the E-Levy money they got, all the betting tax they got, and all the other revenues that they got. No. But the point is, what did they use the money for?

Mr Speaker, let us take a very typical Housing Programme like the Saglemi Housing Project. Before His Excellency John Dramani Mahama left power in 2016, for the Saglemi Housing Project alone, we had built 1,502 houses. Their complaint was that the Saglemi Housing Project was too expensive, and that is not true. At the time those houses were built, US\$200 million—Even their own Minister of State at the time they were in Government, Samuel Atta Akyea, paid part of that money, US\$7 million, but look at it.

Come with me, take your calculators and let us compute. Put US\$200 million to 1,502 houses. We are looking around US\$130,000. At the time, under His Excellency John Dramani Mahama's economy, US\$1 was GH¢4. So, that gives us only about GH¢520,000. They cannot say that house was too expensive; so, workers could have those houses. Unfortunately, when they took power, they destroyed this economy, sent the cedis to GH¢17 to US\$1. That is why they were shouting that the houses were expensive.

Mr Speaker, recently, before they left power, they had decided to sell the Saglemi Housing. When they came, they never built one house. Yet the little that His Excellency John Dramani Mahama built, they decided to sell it.

Mr Speaker, go there. We went to that site. I was part of the Committee on Works and Housing in 2023. We went there, and it was horribly placed. All the fittings, all the electricals, all the wiring, and all the glasses that were fixed on these houses were removed. All because they wanted to paint pictures that the houses were not good and that they needed so much money to complete those houses, so that they could have an opportunity to sell it.

Mr Speaker, go there and see the houses now.

2.12 p.m.

Unfortunately, you did not even build one.

Mr Speaker our roads. Two weeks ago, the Minority, almost all of them, filed a Question, and they were asking the Hon Minister for Roads and Highways, Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza that their roads were deteriorated. I thought they said they had completed all the roads in Ghana so why were they asking him to come and fix their roads? Mr Speaker, the fact is that we had a government, which of course is the Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's/Bawumia's government who came to destroy the infrastructure of this country and never added one.

Mr Speaker, Agenda 111—

The Speaker: Hon Members, I thought the understanding was that there should not be interruptions.

Mr Vondee: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection.

The Speaker: He interrupted? Is it just the Leadership or everybody is allowed to stand for and on behalf of the Caucuses if there is any such interruption to be made? Or just any person?

Yes, please?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the understanding is that there should be no interruption. That is the understanding. And we have only used Leadership since we started for interruptions. So, he can pass his objections to his Leader. It is an understanding we have. If we start doing that, this debate will degenerate. So, if he has a strong objection, he can pass it through his Leader.

Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib: Mr Speaker, ordinarily there would not have been any intervention from our Side. But when the Hon Member on the Floor is making statements which are misleading and untrue, and actually defamatory, there is the need for us to call the Rt Hon Speaker's attention to that. And I am sure that was why my Hon Colleague stood up to catch your eye.

Mr Vondee: Thank you very much for your protection.

The Speaker: I have not said anything yet. *[Laughter]*

Hon Members, you know the Rule of the House is that at any time the House could suspend the operation of any of the Standing Orders as contained in the Standing Orders of Parliament. And so, if it is a decision of the House or even an understanding that there should be no interruption, that will be a guide to the Speaker. The Speaker can abide by it, or the Speaker will proceed to enforce it.

Now, if there is a window that it should be passed through the Leaders, that will be observed, as of now, I am not clear on it. But the last time I presided; I did not allow interruptions. I wanted the debate to flow and so I would advise that we do that, note down the points you disagree, when it is your turn, and with the numbers that we have, I am sure a lot of you would get the opportunity to do that then you can raise your objection or disagreement.

Please let the debate flow.

Yes, Hon Member, you can continue.

Mr Vondee: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your direction and protection.

On 2nd August, 2023, Public Procurement Authority (PPA) approved the sale of Saglemi Housing. Mr Speaker, it was the NPP government that was in power, and they approved the sale of Saglemi Housing. Mr Speaker, they never built any Housing project for the past eight years that they were in

government. I know what I am talking about.

Mr Speaker, on roads, the Members of Parliament on the other Side filed many Questions three weeks ago, and they were throwing questions at the Hon Minister for Roads and Highways about their roads yet they told Ghanaians that they had constructed all the roads in this country so which of the roads were they talking about that they should construct for them?

Mr Speaker, from here to London, one will not do 13,000 kilometers. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo claimed he had constructed more than 13,000 kilometers. A check revealed that he did only 600 and the rest were potholes that he patched. Yet they sat in this Chamber throwing Questions and so on, that they should do their roads. Which of the roads were they saying they should do for them?

Mr Speaker, with regard to Agenda 111, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, after paying US\$400 million on Agenda 111, not even one of the hospitals that they claim they are building is operationalised and have people going there to take medical service. Mr Speaker, after eight years, after US\$400 million, why are they doing this to our country? Even if you share US\$11 million to each hospital, at least 36 of these hospitals must be ready and operationalised. Where is the money?

Mr Speaker, let us continue to commend His Excellency John Dramani Mahama. You see our economy, His

Excellency John Dramani Mahama would have said that, we have also won the election, let us celebrate. After all, you know, this 68th Independence celebration, would have been one of those things—But Mr Speaker, look at the modesty that His Excellency John Dramani Mahama introduced into the celebration of this Independence Day. It tells you he is somebody who loves Ghana.

Mr Speaker, US\$11 million was paid for Pwalugu Dam when there was no sand at the site.

Mr Speaker, I heard the former Minister for Finance saying that His Excellency John Dramani Mahama is terminating and that he is a Terminator One. They should not worry; they have not seen anything yet. Mr Speaker, those who spent the money meant for Pwalugu Dam will be terminated. Mr Speaker, you see the Agenda 111 Project, they will account for US\$400 million and if they do not, they will be terminated.

Mr Speaker, you see the most expensive hole that is dug in Accra for the Cathedral, that is the most expensive hole in the whole of West Africa. Mr Speaker, do you know one of the most shameful aspects of that hole? They went to Israel to go and import stone, a huge gravel stone. They carried it, paid money for it to come and put there; are they building *voodoo* house? That is more than US\$50 million. *Wallahi* we would terminate them if you do not pay that money.

Now let me advise those of them who stole money, the Chairman of the ORAL Committee is here and I am so happy he is here. Those of them who took money better go and bring the money and give it to His Excellency John Dramani Mahama quietly, otherwise termination would happen.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama built 73 schools within four years. His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and the NPP built zero schools within eight years.

Mr Speaker, thank you so much for the opportunity, but to remind Ghanaians that the NDC government will come and repair this economy. Like His Excellency John Dramani Mahama said, he will build the economy like the way he solved the *dumsor*. And after that, Ghanaians should not go and give this country to the country wreckers to destroy us again. Let us continue to have faith in the NDC and the NDC government so that this country will progress. Giving the country to the NPP is a sign of destroying this country and the country will not progress. Trace them from the time of the late former President Nkrumah and look at our independence today.

We would have been progressing if Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo did not come and destroy whatever His Excellency Dramani Mahama did in 2016. Mr Speaker— [*Hear! Hear!*]

The Speaker: Hon Member, you were timed off long ago, so your microphone was not on for some time.

Mr Vondee: Let me take it again.

The Speaker: Hon Member, it is now the turn of Hon Nyarko Osei.

Mr Kennedy Nyarko Osei (NPP — Akim Swedru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to support the Motion to thank His Excellency the President for delivering the Message on the State of the Nation as the Constitution requires.

Mr Speaker, I just listened to my Colleague who spoke, and he made some unfounded claims and allegations which, in my opinion, as a house of records, we should not allow such to remain in the *Official Report*. Mr Speaker, I would not have responded to some of the issues that he raised. I would have gone straight to make my comment, but it is important to address one of the two issues that he raised.

The first one, he talked about H. E. former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and his government claiming that they have constructed over 13,000 kilometres of road. Mr Speaker, I want to put on record, and I want us to settle this matter for good. I think there has been some kind of erroneous interpretations and misinformation going on as to how many kilometres of roads were constructed by the NPP Government.

Mr Speaker, I find it disturbing that even my Colleague who now happens to be the Minister for Roads and Highways and my former Ranking Member, Hon Kwame Govers Agbodza, sought to also repeat the same comment or the

same misinformation that they are putting out.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Roads and Highways have always had how they categorise all their project or construction activities as a Ministry. So, a person cannot just go to the Ministry and say he or she is looking for the number of roads constructed and they would just quote a figure for the person without giving classification or categorisation of it.

2.25 p.m. — [MR SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

There are eight categorisations of road activities at the Ministry of Roads and Highways. The technical people will tell a person that there is rail gravelling, resealing, asphaltic overlays, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. These are all road activities. Mr Speaker, every road in this country, except those that are yet to be engineered, are captured as existing roads in this country.

One cannot tell me that the reconstruction of Asamankese to Akroso Road, is not a road that has been constructed. Then the person does not understand what road construction means. That is what I am telling them that, reconstruction is part of the construction activities of the Ministry. If they do not know, they should just listen to me. If we are talking about resealing, let me teach them. Maybe they do not know so let me teach them—*[Interruption]*. It does not matter. If the Hon Member is an engineer, then he should know better that there are

classifications or categorisations of road works at the Ministry, and therefore, he cannot tell me that—

In any case, during the Majority's previous administration when they did a total of 4,700 kilometres of road, re-gravelling, asphaltic overlay, resealing, reconstruction and rehabilitation were part of it. Do they understand these kinds of works? What do they mean? So, when they come here and create some kind of impression—

Let me even say that if we take out gravelling from even the 13,000 kilometres that we are talking about, we still have 7,000 kilometres and would still beat the 4,700 kilometres that their government did. So, when they come here, they should not make any unfounded claims and some kind of allegations.

Mr Speaker, when the NPP Government took over power, the then NDC Government had gone for a loan of about GHC1.5 billion from United Bank for Africa (UBA) using road fund. The President, H. E. John Dramani Mahama, came to this House and said we could not pay even those who have done small jobs. Which money were they expecting the road fund to use when they had encumbered all the money? They encumbered GHC1.5 million and quarterly, GHC200 million that was supposed to be accrued to the road fund was being channelled to pay for these loans. It took President Akufo-Addo and his government to reinvest this loan that they had taken so that they would be able to extend the repayment period and

reduce the interest on it, so that we could get some money. Do they know how much was coming into the road fund after the re-fencing? That was the only amount that the government was using, so it was not sufficient. They cannot come here and create an impression.

Now I want to move to commitment. There have been several brouhahas surrounding commitment. I want to use this opportunity to also tell my friends on the other Side and the President that commitments are not outstanding liabilities in the books that the Ministry is going to pay. So, when they come here and they create the impressions that they have 1.5 billion commitments, these are some of the roads that—The last time I challenged the Minister for Roads and Highways here, that he should go back and do a better audit on those ones. By the time he completes those audits, he will see that he has to cancel most of the contracts that were given. So, these are not commitments but liabilities.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the President also talked about the District Road Improvement Programme (DRIP) machines. I find it so disingenuous that the President, who spoke vehemently against the DRIP project is now instructing—He did not only speak against it, he even impugned some corruption in the process. Now the President says that they should take the machines from the district to the regional capital. The intention was to help the district to be able to fix the bad roads.

So, Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity.

2.32 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me listen to the Deputy Minister-designate for Road and Highways. [*Hear! Hear!*]

You have 10 minutes

Alhaji Suhuyini Sayibu Alhassan (NDC — Tamale North): Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to commend His Excellency the President for the brilliant delivery of the Message on the State of the Nation last week.

Mr Speaker, my Colleague, a while ago, was strenuously trying to defend the indefensible. It is not in this Chamber that we would be taught the different classifications of road works. Mr Speaker, what is contentious is the fact that His Excellency the former President, Nana Akufo-Addo, stated categorically, Mr Speaker, and with your permission I would quote:

“...that some 10,875 kilometres of new roads have been constructed in these five years”.

Mr Speaker, the emphasis is, was, and has always been in our debate on new roads; that was what the former President said. So we are not uneducated about the classifications of road constructions, whether re-gravelling. We are not uneducated, but we are saying that the former President was wrong when he said that he had constructed 10,000 kilometres of new roads. Because if that were the case, we would not have had my boss having to fill the many Questions

that he was asked to answer only last week Friday. Many Members would have had their roads done already.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank H. E. President John Dramani Mahama but to also indicate to this House and to the Ghanaian public that H. E. President Mahama, unfortunately, perhaps, because of his nature, did not deliver the state of the nation. Mr Speaker, H. E. President Mahama, after four years in Government, was voted out, and after eight years of experiencing Nana Akufo-Addo and Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, the people of Ghana came to a conclusion that his four years was better. So, out of 276 constituencies, he won 217 constituencies. He won in 217 constituencies: a vote of confidence in his last four years.

Mr Speaker, H. E. John Dramani Mahama, unlike the President we had before, in this Message on the State of the Nation, did not boast about the margin of his victory. One Message on the State of the Nation, he did not speak about.

Mr Speaker, H. E. John Dramani Mahama, again, did not speak about the fact that, ever since he took over, he has not had a V8 carrying a special chair for him wherever he goes as President of the Republic of Ghana—[*Hear! Hear!*]—That state of the nation today was not captured in the President's delivery.

Mr Speaker, like I indicated, I want to talk about the state of the nation His Excellency John Dramani Mahama did not deliver. Mr Speaker, no V8 is

carrying a special chair. He did not speak about it. Again, we have seen His Excellency the President attend national functions where chiefs are adorned in their traditional clothing, trying to rise for him and he has asked them to sit down, so that he would come and greet them because that is magnanimity. Mr Speaker, His Excellency, in his Message on the State of the Nation, failed to report this as a new state of this country.

Mr Speaker, I commend His Excellency the President for all the things he said, but I am also amazed that he did not report about how governance or government has become very responsive. Mr Speaker, only when he took over, we noticed that senior high schools were going to be closed down because they did not have food. Mr Speaker, you have seen the videos online. The school children are now being properly fed. That is a President who is responsive. That is a Government that is responsive to the national need. Mr Speaker, the President did not speak on this.

Mr Speaker, there was also a bridge that frustrated children who used that bridge to access education in this country. The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) have since immediately moved in to fix that bridge. Mr Speaker, there were labour negotiations; for the first time in a very long time, we had the sitting President leave the comfort of his office and go to join labour to negotiate a base pay for workers in this country. Mr Speaker, that is magnanimity and that was missing in the Message on the State of the Nation. Even as I commend him

for all that he said, I am amazed that he did not capture all of this in his Message on the State of the Nation.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency the President is also empowering a lot of young people, which is never seen before in Government. The difficult choice of picking 60, given the overwhelming support and votes that he got in this country, he still managed to ensure that young people were given the opportunity. I am proud to be one of them, and I thank him very much for the opportunity—[*Hear! Hear!*]
—If you go to our state institutions, you will find a lot of young people who have been given the opportunity, and it is my hope that these young people would live up to expectations and give another reason young people should be given the opportunity to serve in various roles in this country. Mr Speaker, the President, again, failed to report on this matter, perhaps, because of his nature and his magnanimity.

Mr Speaker, *Hajj* fares have been of concern to many Muslims in this country—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Suhuyini, we are talking about the Message on the State of the Nation, so those ones, he did not find them necessary to mention, why—

Alhaji Alhassan: Mr Speaker, I am saying that—When our Colleagues on the opposite Side rise, they talk about some of the things that the President did not speak about and they consider important, and it is allowed. Mr Speaker,

I am also highlighting some of the things that he did not speak about that I consider important.

Mr Speaker, I am saying that *Hajj* fares have been drastically reduced. Mr Speaker, the amazing part is that it did not even have to take a Muslim in the Office of the President or a Muslim in the Office of the Vice President for this to be done. That is the beauty of this country. It is not about your faith; it is not about your religion, but it is about your convictions. So, I am happy that, under his watch, *Hajj* fares have been drastically reduced even though the President did not capture this in his Message on the State of the Nation.

Mr Speaker, again, only a couple of weeks ago, before he came here for the Message on the State of the Nation, he had, through the Ghana Airports Company Limited (GACL), cut sod for the construction of a special terminal that would process *Hajj* pilgrims. Mr Speaker, that, again, did not have to take a Muslim at the Presidency or a Muslim at the Vice Presidency for this to happen. That is the beauty of this country, and that is the beauty of the relationship and the opportunities that we give each other, regardless of faith.

Mr Speaker, he also did not touch on the fact that he is forming the leanest Government ever. Mr Speaker, 60 Ministers, including Regional and Deputy Ministers, and he has not even done the 60 yet; it is still 56.

2.42 p.m.

Mr Speaker, clearly, if you pick President Akufo-Addo's 2022 Report, that is before this House, when he was reporting on staffing at the Presidency, about 44 appointees at the Presidency were senior Presidential staffers. So, if we were to go by the logic of my Friend, Hon Samuel Abdulai Jinapor, the last time he spoke, then we will be talking about 300 appointees of Nana Akufo-Addo. If we are going to compare, based on the analysis that he did, that senior Presidential Staffers are at the level of Ministers.

Mr Speaker, the last Report, 2022, that Nana Akufo-Addo presented to this House on staffing at the Presidency, about 44 of them were senior Presidential Advisors. After that, about 138 of them were Presidential Advisors. Should we add this to the about 100 ministers that he had appointed, then we would be talking about 300 Ministers of State.

Mr Speaker, we also had a very modest Independence Day celebration. In my district, I was informed that a budget of GH¢66,000.00 had been cut down to about GH¢20,000.00. That is commendable, Mr Speaker.

On this note, I thank you for the opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much.

Hon Members, I believe we will go through the debate the way we have started. I am not going to entertain any

interjections. We have respected ourselves, let us move on that way.

Let me come to Hon Dr Nana Ayew Afriye. Dr Afriye, you have 10 minutes.

Dr Nana Ayew Afriye (NPP—Effiduase/Asokore): Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to take my turn on the Motion to thank the President, as on page 4 of the Order Paper, and in line with the constitutional provision of Article 67 and Standing Order 72.

Mr Speaker, as this is the first address by the President, I would want to touch base with the manifesto of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), which would actually influence the direction of the Budget.

Mr Speaker, if we go to the manifesto of the NDC, at page 108, touching on sustainable funding for health services, there are six pillars of health systems that govern and run health systems all over the world. Financing is a very critical one, and that is why I stand to use the manifesto of the NDC. At page 108, Mr Speaker, it says:

“The next NDC government will explore innovative and alternative ways of funding the health sector and prioritize efficient allocation to priority sub-sectors to achieve 21st-century health financing. We will:

1. establish the Ghana Medical Care Trust Fund to support the cost of care for persons with chronic diseases such as

kidney failure (dialysis), cancers, and heart diseases;

2. de-collateralize the National Health Insurance Levy and ensure that the total revenue (100%) accrued to the NHIS levy is set aside for only health-related purposes...”

Mr Speaker, conspicuously missing from the President’s Message on the State of the Nation was number 2 of his own manifesto promise, which is to uncap the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA). I have a strong feeling that something is changing, and nobody spoke about it. This is because healthcare finance is a very topical issue, and for him not to have mentioned number 2, but touch base on number 1, I am looking forward to a certain inconsistency; and somebody is trying to play smart or act smart. Definitely, eyes are watching.

Mr Speaker, I go back to item number 1 in their manifesto, which is establishing the Ghana Medical Care Trust Fund to support the cost of care for persons with chronic diseases such as kidney failure (dialysis), cancers, and heart diseases. Mr Speaker, do we need to establish a medical trust fund to look at these diseases, or to support medicare in terms of health financing?

Mr Speaker, listening to the President, his emphasis was non-communicable diseases. May I say and put on record that the vote on account or the expenditure in advance of appropriation that was done in this House to care, a budget of GHC57 million, that would

take care of all dialysis patients in this country. Now, the estimated cost of care was between 20 to 57, but the Minister provided the upper ceiling, and that was because the pricing unit of NHIA has made recommendations in September, and it was approved by the board. So, if we are going to establish a trust to be able to finance dialysis, which has been provided for already, I stand to say that this is an error, and this resetting is dangerous, cannot be tolerated, and cannot be done.

Mr Speaker, may I go on to say that it provided for heart diseases. Heart diseases are already indicated in the NHIA benefit package and therefore, I do not get why there must be a need for a Ghana Medical Trust Fund which is already being financed.

In terms of cancer, Mr Speaker, breast cancer has been included. In those days when they were in Government, there was none. Whether the resetting means they will take it off, I do not know, but breast cancer and cervical cancer has been taken care of. Mr Speaker, all the four leading causes of death of cancer in children have been taken care of. I do not know what this medical trust will do because it is already in the package.

Mr Speaker, may I go to Agenda 111. The President said three of them—Is it one or three is operational? Mr Speaker, in terms—[**Some Hon Members:** None]—None is operational. Mr Speaker, for all those not operational, they need staff to be posted. The responsibility of posting of staff is not

with us, it is with them. They have to post staff there and get it operational.

Mr Speaker, between Suame to Bole Bamboi, those days when the former President was there, there was only a micro or a mini clinic that was in Bole. On that stretch from Suame to Afigya Kwabre, Offinso, Wenchi, Bole, and Wa, there was only a micro clinic. By virtue of Agenda 111, there is a project ongoing in Suame, Afigya Kwabre South, Afigya Kwabre North, Offinso South, Offinso North, Techiman, Wenchi, and even in Bole Bamboi.

Mr Speaker, we are talking about financing. An amount of 400 million has gone into it. Yes, 400 million of dedicated financing from the Annual Budget Funding Amount (ABFA). But they are saying that the private sector should take care of that. Mr Speaker, they must demonstrate commitment to financing. From the budget, the same ABFA that the NPP used, they can also make an allocation in this budget from ABFA.

Apart from that, may I say, they go for concessionary loans and they are asking for PPP, which is good. I am into the private sector in healthcare financing. If you give me the opportunity, I would take the juicy ones in the capital cities. What will happen to the rural folks who need healthcare the most? That is what I am talking about. Mr Speaker, there is no option than the NDC Government, led by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, to make some provision in this Budget from ABFA to continue Agenda 111.

Mr Speaker, Agenda 111 or Onuado Healthcare, as in the NDC manifesto at page 104, is no substitution for Agenda 111. The Onuado vans, as in the manifesto, is allowing vans to go to deprived areas to provide specialist care among others. This is extremely contradictory to a permanent measure of providing healthcare in all areas. We are talking about universal healthcare coverage by 2030. Making healthcare affordable, accessible and available to all. It is not in those days where there is none; one needs to get a van to provide specialist surgeries. And they leave, within two hours, if something happens to somebody, where would the vans be to go and take care of them? Those are stopgap measures, and they should prioritise Agenda 111, and not that of Onuado, which is just a temporary measure.

Mr Speaker, there is the network of practice by the Ghana Health Service (GHS), and that allows for all specialists to be attached to a Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds, health centres, and polyclinics. This policy must be strengthened, but Onuado says that it would drive through with specialists to take care of the people, drive back, go and sleep, while the other policy is we are attaching specialists to the area, and they want to compete Agenda 111 with this? I stand confused with this resetting. Mr Speaker, this is not the best for this country, and must not come on.

2.52 p.m.

Mr Speaker, may I go to primary health care?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Doctor, your time is almost up.

Dr Afriye: Okay, in their Manifesto, they said free primary health care. What is free primary health care? National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) is already financing and taking things for free, so if it is free, it should be uncapped. If you uncap it, just like in the NPP Manifesto it is for free; free consultation. We stated we would uncap and make sure nobody pays any premium. Those in the informal sector will not pay. That is free, so if they are saying free, what does it mean? People are doing co-payment. If they want to eradicate co-payment, then provide the full funds of uncapped funds to them and there will be no co-payment and that is free. Otherwise, are they providing free meals at the Outpatient Department (OPD)? Are they providing transportation at OPD? What is free? There is no—It is tautology. Already the NHIA is looking at erasing financial barrier. They are also saying free, what is the meaning of this?

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. We would come back during the Budget debate on principles. Thank you so much. [*Hear! Hear!!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: We would give you more time. Thank you.

Hon Members, let us now turn to Hon Rita Naa Odoley Sowah. Hon Member, you have 10 minutes.

Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the Message of the State of the Nation delivered by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama. Mr Speaker, before I continue, permit me to quote from page 5, paragraph 6 of the Message of the State of the Nation. His Excellency said:

“...inspired by the Almighty God and propelled by the massive mandate given him by the good people of Ghana...”.

He made a statement that the NDC Administration fixed *dumsor* before we left power in 2016 and he made a purposeful, bold declaration again that he, John Dramani Mahama, will fix the economic crisis confronting our country and reset it on the path of growth and prosperity.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama on delivering the Address was very truthful to Ghanaians on the state of the economy and did not come here to lament but came to promise us that he will fix the nation and the Ghanaians who voted for him would be happy again and he will reset Ghana.

Mr Speaker, on gender inclusivity, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama is committed to working with women and he demonstrated it in appointing Her Excellency Prof Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang as the first female Vice

President of the Republic of Ghana. He made reference to the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 and that he was committed to working with us. He admitted truthfully that so far, his government has appointed 23.8 per cent of women but he is committed to ensure that he will get to the 30 per cent mark so that we will get more women to work in his Administration. Mr Speaker, what do we see here? When we come to the Chamber of Parliament, we have 41 women, 32 women from the NDC Side and only nine from the NPP Side. This shows clearly that the NDC Administration led by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama is more committed to working with women and I am a testament of his deeds.

Mr Speaker, on the gender inclusivity Act, he also spoke of the fact that when you come to local governance, we have only a few women who are bold enough to contest for the MMDCE positions and that is not good enough. So, the NDC Administration is going to work closely with the Gender Ministry to ensure that we encourage more women into local governance to help them climb up.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of women again, he promised the good people of Ghana, especially the women, to establish the Women Development Bank. This is a promise he made during campaign and during the Message on the State of the Nation, His Excellency is committed to ensuring that he is going to support women. Most of the time, accessing loans for women is very difficult but the women's bank is coming with loans for women to support our

businesses and I think it is a place where all women around the country should applaud His Excellency John Dramani Mahama. It is so refreshing for most women to hear that we have a female Vice President and the President is working with her and working with us women to ensure that women are where we are supposed to be.

Mr Speaker, I want to talk on education. His Excellency has made it clear that the NDC Administration is not going to cancel the free SHS as our opponents are talking about but he is going to make it better. As we sit in the Chamber, Members of Parliament will attest to the fact that we say that Senior High School (SHS) is free in quotes but when school reopens for the SHS students, most parents come to Members of Parliament for support and I believe that with His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, with the reforms that he is going to bring about in the educational sector, will ensure that Members of Parliament will have some freedom when school reopens because most of the time we have to buy mattresses, buckets, provisions and all other things to support parents for their wards to go to school. I do not blame the parents, they do not have it, that is why they come to us.

Mr Speaker, on health, Agenda 111, His Excellency made us aware that, none of the hospitals have been completed under the Agenda 111. Though La General Hospital is not an Agenda 111, what did we see in the 8th Parliament? They started it and up till now, it is running at a tortoise space. So, he is committed to bringing healthcare to the

doorsteps of the people and I believe His Excellency John Dramani Mahama and the NDC Administration will ensure that these health facilities will be completed. Because when you are sick and you go to hospital, they do not ask you which political party you belong to or which region you come from but all you need is proper healthcare and the NDC Administration is committed to bringing proper healthcare to the doorsteps of the people.

Mr Speaker, on the 24-hour Economy, it is a policy by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama that is coming to change the fortunes and gains of the people of the Republic of Ghana and this is a policy that we have to support, that is we are going to run three shifts and to ensure that those who do not have jobs to do will get jobs to do. Security will be taken care of, transportation will be taken care of, where we would need the *Ayalolo* buses that were abandoned by our opponents, the NPP administration when they were in government—The *Ayalolo* buses are there and I believe it is going to support the 24-hour Economy to make sure that Ghana will come back to life, more people will get jobs to do and I believe you and I are going to enjoy the gains of the 24-hour economy. Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Message on the State of the Nation by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, a truthful Message on the State of the Nation he gave us indeed. Thank you, His Excellency. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much for not allowing me to even prompt you. Thank you so much.

Let us now turn to Hon Mavis Nkansah-Boadu.

Mrs Mavis Nkansah-Boadu: Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to the Message on the State of the Nation. Let me also add my voice to the other Colleagues in thanking the President for coming to the House to give the Message on the State of the Nation as mandated by Article 67 of the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, I am very happy that Hon Suhuyini agrees with the Minority that the President did not deliver on the Message on the State of the Nation. [*Uproar*] He did. Mr Speaker, he did say it. We can check the *Hansard*, he did say that. [*Uproar*] Mr Speaker, it is rightly so because all the President did was to lament when he attended upon the House [*Uproar*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I have already laid down the rules. Please, let us allow the debate to flow. So far, so good. We have done well, at least, so I do not want to entertain it. Even the Leader wanted to come by way of—but I did not allow it. Please, so, Hon Member, continue.

3.02 p.m.

Mrs Nkansah-Boadu: Thank you, Mr Speaker, once again. So, as I said, the President only lamented. When the President attended upon the House, he

painted a very gloomy picture of the erstwhile administration as if nothing good had been achieved under the eight years of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's presidency, which is entirely false.

Mr Speaker, we all know very well that there are several indicators of seeing how robust or weak an economy is. When the President attended on this House, he only focused on inflation rates, which he mentioned was at 23 per cent when he became President. Mr Speaker, what he failed to also mention was that 12 month prior to that, the inflation rate was at 54 per cent. In a record time of 12 months, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo was able to reduce it from 54 per cent to 23 per cent, which is very commendable. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, the President went ahead to say that the economy that was handed to him was criminally handled; I beg to differ. It is very unfortunate and unfair. This was an economy that grew at a rate of 6.3 per cent and that was post-COVID and after the Russian-Ukraine war.

Mr Speaker, I would like to draw the House—Mr Speaker, whenever the President came home, he failed to mention the effects of COVID-19, but in international engagement, he mentioned that COVID-19 had ruined the entire world and being.

Mr Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of this House back to 2016, when the mandate was given to His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-

Addo. Mr Speaker, we took over an economy with a growth rate of 3.4 per cent. Mr Speaker, if this economy was criminally handled with a growth rate of 6.3 per cent, which surpassed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) prediction of 4 per cent, I would say that then His Excellency John Dramani Mahama criminally handled our economy as well. Mr Speaker, that economy was on life support. Actually, it was dead and needed a miracle to resuscitate it, and that is exactly what His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo did. He performed miracles to resuscitate our economy.

Mr Speaker, the economy that was criminally handled was able to restore teacher training allowances and nursing training allowances that collapsed under His Excellency John Dramani Mahama.

Mr Speaker, in the same vein, we were able to revive the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), which His Excellency John Dramani Mahama scrapped.

Mr Speaker, we were able to fix the *dumsor* and keep our lights on for eight consecutive years.

Mr Speaker, in the same vein, we introduced Free SHS, when His Excellency John Dramani Mahama said it was going to take 20 years to get that done—[*Interruption*—He did. To say that that economy was criminally handled is unfair and very misleading.

During the electioneering period, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama

campaigned on the back of unemployment, especially among our youths. Mr Speaker, what did we see? One of the first instructions His Excellency gave was for his Chief of Staff to terminate all appointments that were done—*[Interruption]*. Mr Speaker, he asked his Chief of Staff to terminate all appointments that were done after 7th December, 2024. We all know very well that appointments do not start and end in a day. Some take weeks, and some take months, so he knows very well that most of these appointments started somewhere in June, July and August. So, to say that they have come into power and are terminating appointments when they came to power on the back of unemployment is very unfair.

Mr Speaker, I want to find out from the President, do we have second-class citizens in this nation? Because that is exactly how he is treating these young people. Mr Speaker, this has also opened a floodgate. If it was wrong then, it is wrong now, and I will not support it in any way. Mr Speaker, this has opened a floodgate for individuals to settle scores. As we speak, I have over 20 termination letters lined on my desk for my constituents: some from the NHIS and some from the Ghana Education Service (GES).

The sad aspect of this is that some of these appointment letters were given as far back as October and November. How is that fair to the young people in this nation, Mr Speaker? We ask the President to rescind his decision and do the right thing. I have just recently seen a communique from GES stating that

they have rescinded their decision. The question I want to ask is that, did it have to take the minority to make noise in order for our children to be employed? This is very unfair, and we cannot continue like this as a nation.

Mr Speaker, I have with me here a load-shedding document, and this dates back to 1st to 14th October—*[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, when the President attended on this House, he told us that he fixed *dumsor* before he exited. This goes to refute what he said. I think what the President is trying to do is prepare us for the hardship ahead. If he is having problems keeping our lights on, I would call on the President to reach out to his predecessor and ask him how he was able to keep our lights on for eight years.

The President, during his electioneering period, gave a promise to the women of this nation. Mr Speaker, he gave a promise to our women. When we were working on the Affirmative Action Bill, which is now an Act, he gave us the assurance that we had his full support, and he supported women. What did we see when the mandate was given to him?

Mr Speaker, in the last Administration led by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, we had five out of 19 women in Cabinet, which represented 26 per cent. As it stands now, we have only two women in Cabinet. Has Mr President changed his mind on supporting women?

Mr Speaker, when I look on my Side, I see that I have 31 beautiful, eloquent, knowledgeable women. I know that when the President was in opposition, he was a firm believer in reshuffling. We beg him, whenever he decides to do a reshuffle, he should consider our women on this Side, because they are capable of doing the right thing. [*Uproar*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mrs Nkansah-Boadu: In conclusion, I was never going to vote for the NDC, but I was quite excited when the President mentioned the 24-Hour Economy. I thought that this was going to thrive on the back of the private sector. When the President came to this House—During the electioneering period, we had a different explanation of what the 24-Hour Economy meant. I hope that he coming to this Chamber gave him the opportunity to explain to Ghanaians what exactly the 24-Hour Economy meant.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mrs Nkansah-Boadu: Mr Speaker, unfortunately, he failed to do this. He has only limited the 24-Hour Economy to the passport office through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration.

Mr Speaker, I want to state on record that we started the three and two shifts and cleared the backlog of 70,000. So, the 24-Hour Economy that he is talking

about, he should focus on the private sector and incentivize the private sector.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mrs Nkansah-Boadu: Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, as I said, I would not entertain any interjections. That is why I did not even allow the Minister to—So, Minister, I am going to consider you as one of the debaters, so that I will give you 10 minutes, if you like it that way. Other than that—

Minister for Energy (Mr John Abdulai Jinapor): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I just seek your guidance as Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, my guidance—

Mr J. A. Jinapor: A factual statement—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: No, hold on, Mr John Abdulai Jinapor. I am saying I can give you the platform as one of the debaters. I will give you 10 minutes. Other than that, I would not give you that, yes.

Mr J. A. Jinapor: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, this is my third term as a Member of Parliament in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, everybody in this Chamber can have his or her own

opinion. As for opinions, we cannot agree that we should have the same opinion but Mr Speaker, as for facts, facts are sacrosanct and I mean sacrosanct.

Mr Speaker, secondly, one cannot concoct, contrive, manufacture their own facts and foist it on the people of Ghana or Members of Parliament. Mr Speaker, a factual inaccuracy, which I take as a fallacy—

3.12 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: John, the way Minority Leader is looking at you—

Mr J. A. Jinapor: He is impressed—*[Laughter]*—I used to debate him here when he was an ordinary Member. Today, he has been elevated as a Minority Leader, and I give him that respect as Minority Leader.

Minority Leader, I salute you.

May I proceed.

Mr Speaker, in proceeding with alacrity, let me state on authority that there is no load shedding going on now—*[Hear! Hear!]*—That is a statement of facts; it is true that we inherited an anaemic, emaciated, run-down, near-collapse energy sector. It is true, no doubt about that. It is true that when we took over, the power sector was hugely challenged. It is true that when we took over, the power system was unstable. But by dint of hard work, under the able leadership of H. E. John

Dramani Mahama, I wish to state that not only are we producing enough for the country, we are exporting 300 megawatts to our neighbouring countries. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, it is true that today, in the energy sector, there is a ballooning debt of GHC80 billion—**[Some Hon Members: Ei!]**—They inherited a debt of GHC9 billion. They collected GHC45 billion of Energy Sector Levy Act (ESLA) levies. Despite collecting GHC45 billion, they have handed over a debt of more than GHC80 billion to this Administration.

Mr Speaker, we are in Ghana. The norm here is that we speak in Ghanaian cedis. If they want me to deal with the dollars, I will deal with it. But Mr Speaker, let me state that what President Mahama did here was to present a true Message on the State of the Nation. The economy of Ghana was challenged. Mr President—*[Laughter]*—Mr Speaker, receive it. When I describe you as Mr President, Mr Speaker, receive it. Who knows? In the next 40 years, you could be the President of Ghana—*[Laughter]*—Mr Speaker, εβεγγιε—*[Laughter]*

Mr Speaker, we are doing whatever we can to hold the system. Today, there was a Cabinet meeting, and I can tell you that, under the able leadership of the Minister for Finance, Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, we will turn around this economy, put it on a path of growth, create jobs, improve industrialisation, and restore macroeconomic stability. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, it is not for anything that we had an overwhelming Majority, and if we look at this Chamber, for the first time, our Side of the House, we start right from here and we move all the way and go beyond that Side. Now, look at that Side; that is the Minority Side. Mr Speaker, that should tell you that the people of Ghana were fed up with the former Administration. What I like, and my Sister rightly said that, is that, President Mahama should consider their Side when it comes to appointments. They should not worry. In an all-inclusive Government, they can apply. All they have to do is to defect and join us, and they would be considered for an appointment. So, it is not a problem at all.

But Mr Speaker, we can only achieve this objective and feat if we work together. Despite our differences, President Mahama has made it clear that he will be a President who represents all shapes. So, I will encourage the Minority Side that it is not just enough to criticise; sometimes, they should also proffer some suggestions like we used to do. Mr Speaker, I used to sit right there where my good friend, Hon Tampuli, sits. And you will recall that during debates, not only did we criticise, we proffered sound alternatives that can help this country.

On that score, Mr Speaker, I want to state that, on Tuesday, when the Budget Statement is presented, we shall marshal all our forces and debate that Side toe for toe, head-to-head, eyeball to eyeball. And I tell you, that debate is going to be a ramble in the jungle.

Mr Speaker, on that note, let me thank you for giving me this opportunity to address this House. You will continue to be the good friend that I know, and may God bless you. I thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

It is now the turn of Hon Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth—

Hon Member, what is it?

Mr Nyindam: Mr Speaker, the Minister was allowed to say certain things or ascribe things to the Hon Member which are not true.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Matthew Nyindam, you are out of order.

Mr Nyindam: Mr Speaker, he said things which were not accurate. This is a house of record, so we should not allow it to go.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Nyindam, you are out of order. Hon Acheampong, please, respectfully—

Let me come to the Hon Member for Okere.

Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth (NPP — Okere): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity to also join in commenting on the Motion to congratulate His Excellency for exercising his constitutional mandate.

Mr Speaker, I have been very observant, and I have gone through the documents of His Excellency. One of the

key things that this campaign was on, was job creation and youth employment. There were two major policies of His Excellency: one in agribusiness was given, Nkoko Nketenketete. The other was to give apprenticeship training.

Mr Speaker, I have gone through very well, and I was surprised to see that the President said he was going to give 10,000 youth apprenticeship training. Initially when I heard it, I thought that it was supposed to be an error. But going into the documents, Mr Speaker, 10,000 youth would be in apprenticeship. If we divide it by 276, we are looking at an average of just 36 people. Mr Speaker, is the President saying that this apprenticeship programme that he trumpeted so much that gave hope to the young people in this country and that he was going to set them up and give them fees and all that, only 10,000 of the youth out of the 2 million youth who are unemployed is what the President seeks to do?

Mr Speaker, the President also talked about Nkoko Nketenketete which is giving a lot of hope, and he trumpeted it so much. My Hon Colleague, Mr Obeng, sought to make some calculations in terms of the volume of the birds, but the President said it is going to benefit 55,000 households. Mr Speaker, I will not even add the growth rate of 3.6. The 2021 population census indicates that Ghana has 8.3 million households, and the President says that this flagship programme, Nkoko Nketenketete, is only going to benefit just 55,000 households? It is even less than 1 per cent. That is about 0.6 per cent of the households. Is

this the hope that the President was assuring us?

This is surprising to me because Mr Speaker, the young people of this country want jobs. Those who have even been enrolled are being revoked and being sacked. And the one that he is promising is just 1 per cent of households; it is 55,000 households out of the 8.3 million households in this country that will benefit from this Nkoko Nketenketete project.

Mr Speaker, he also talked about bringing Information Communication Technology (ICT) to even the early childhood education, and that only 300 classrooms are going to benefit.

3.22 p.m.

Mr Speaker, we have 276 constituencies. If we take one classroom per constituency, 300, and is this the hope that the President was promising us?

Mr Speaker, during Mr President's campaign, I have said that—I am a very young man and very optimistic that the things that we tell our people are the things that we should be committed in doing. The President assured that he was going to give a lot of jobs to our people and in fact, indicated that all those people who have been recruited, he would not sack them. Under the 24-Hour Economy, he was going to add two more. We are hitting here because the young people of this country want jobs. In the President's own statement, he indicated that for him, and I want to quote him:

“Mr Speaker, as a social democrat, I am reasonably committed to eradicating all forms of discrimination in our society. Our vision is to foster fairness and cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone can engage fully and equally in social, economic, and political life.”

Mr Speaker, is it the case that we do not walk our talk? We say actions speak louder than words. He cannot assure the whole nation and the young people of this country that he is going to be impartial, that he is not going to discriminate; yet, sit there unconcerned while his Chief of Staff issues a blanket termination appointment. We are hitting here because *dez ehia otomfo no, ehɔ na ɔbo*. The young people want jobs and we are sitting and watching unconcerned. This situation is something that we must all speak about again.

Mr Speaker, in 2019, when His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo sought to make the election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Executives (MMDCEs)—I think that we all have to act as role models, and the standards and the principles that we stand for must not be for political expediency. In opposition, we say something else and when we come to power, we know the truth.

I was a District Chief Executive (DCE). Our medium-term development plans of this nation hinges on district assemblies. The enforcement of most of our sanitation laws, our special planning

laws, and a lot of the development agenda of the state hinges on the district assemblies. But we all agree that because it is a non-elective position, so many forces and the Constitution grants the fact that the President can fire at will.

So, we have had instances where mayors of Accra were trying to clean the system, but based on political pressure had to cool down. We saw the example of Madina, and all these things. So, when a group of political leadership indicate that this thing is good for us to do and so let us come on board, we have a political group that will, because of political expediency, go. I think that for me, listening to the Message on the State of the Nation addressing some of these double standards that we have seen—

With regard to digital economy, we saw His Excellency in the campaign train indicate that and I want to quote him, referring to the American phrase, “it’s the economy, stupid!” He said these things.

Mr Speaker, but I have gone through his statement, and about 15 paragraphs talked about digitisation and technology. Look at this nation. The young people of this country are benefiting from their own set-up business because of the infrastructure in digital investment that we have done. In 2016, we had Uber coming on board. The same year, we had Yango coming. Yango could not survive because the digital infrastructure was not improved.

We saw under His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, aided ably

by Dr Alhaji Mahamudu Bawumia, invest in Property Naming Addressing System, Streets Naming Addressing System, Rural Telephony, and improving the digital space. Today, young women and young men are trading in the digital space and the shared economy. They sit in their homes and do not need to open a container or shop, but they are training and making some ends meet because of the investment that we made in the digital space.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency also indicated that he wanted to look at our sports. Yes, we are all seeing that our sports sector is something that is not encouraging. The President indicated that he was going to look at the review of the Sports Act, which is all right, but he, again, added that he was going to introduce a new School Sports Authority.

Mr Speaker, since the President came, it has been one committee or the other, and one of the challenges that we are having in this country is that when we have a challenge, then we want to introduce new things. I have been in the sports fraternity for over 30 years now. In 2016, we passed the Sports Act under their Government, and one of the core functions from the National Sports Council before we moved it to the National Sports Authority, was to look at, organise and assist financially; participation of Ghanaian sportsmen, both professionals and amateur.

Again, we are looking at encouraging and undertaking research on all sports-related matters. We have a National

Sports Authority which has regional divisions and districts, and even in the school setup, we have Physical Education (PE) masters in each of these schools who come together to organise and train these sports people. Why do they not rather resource them, and mobilise them well, so that—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Addo-Kenneth: Mr Speaker, in conclusion, there has been talk about the Agenda 111. My district was a beneficiary of a new hospital. The whole policy was to give hospitals in districts that lack hospitals and to improve quality healthcare. Our hospital has been commissioned. As of last year, the Medical Superintendent has been posted. As I speak, 25 nurses have been posted, which is the Okere District Hospital. The hospital administration is in place. Directive from the Ministry of Sports and Recreation is telling them not to start operating, just to fulfill a propaganda agenda. Why? The hospital in Okere is ready, there are 25 nurses who have been posted. The hospital administration is there.

So, in conclusion, I just want to make sure that this is done. I thank you, Mr Speaker. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Well noted; thank you so much. Hon Members, it is now the turn of—This time, it is not a question of catching my eye. It is a question of what your leadership has presented to me. So, it is

now the turn of Mr Thomas Walano Tsekpo.

Mr Thomas Worlanyo Tsekpo (NDC — Hohoe): Mr Speaker, as you rightly said, my Leadership made me catch your eye on your desk; thank you very much, and let me join my Colleagues in thanking His Excellency President John Dramani-Mahama for coming to the House to deliver the Message on the State of the Nation. The best in 8 years. That gave hope to the youth on the streets of Ghana. I am particularly happy about the job creation message the President delivered.

Mr Speaker, unemployment has been a headache of our nation for some time now. As at now, as the President said, two million Ghanaian youth are unemployed. It means the previous Government left us two million Ghanaian youth who are unemployed. Every year, from the Statistical Service, we have more than 100,000 youth that add up to the unemployment basket.

Over the years, the previous Government have created millions of jobs on paper. Millions of jobs on paper that we have never seen materialise. What they know to do best, is to change names of employment instruments that have been created by NDC. One, the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, (NEIP), which was established by NDC, the name was just changed to NIEP by the previous Government. Youth Employment Agency (YEA) was started by NDC and the name was just changed.

3.32 p.m.

Nation Builders Corps (NABCO), the most interesting thing about NABCO was that in 2016, after NPP took over the realm of affairs, YEA had a model called Youth in Paid Internship. This particular programme is supposed to be a buffer for youth or National Service Personnel who have just graduated from service. We give them employment for a number of years, so that they can use that opportunity to look for a job. In 2016, when NPP took over power, we had 10,000— because I worked with YEA— we had 10,000 youth that were prepared for Youth in Paid Internship.

A letter came from the Office of the Vice President—Those who are singing the song of this government terminating appointments of the youth should listen. A letter came from the Office of the Vice President to Youth Employment Authority (YEA) for all those youths who were employed to be withdrawn and I can prove it. At the time, the current General Secretary of the NPP was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of YEA. You can find out from him. They terminated appointments of over 10,000 youths who were employed. And what they did was to create Nation Builders Corp (NABCO) but because they were not the originators of the idea, today NABCO has collapsed. A lot of the youth worked for months but they did not pay them and they intentionally collapsed NABCO. This was what they did.

President John Mahama said he did not come here to lament. But you can see

that the lamentation is from the other Side of the House. They have been in opposition for two months and they are lamenting more than anyone in this world. They are giving out brilliant ideas, why did they not implement those ideas two months ago?

Mr Speaker, President John Mahama came and gave hope to the youth. He made it clear to us that the Youth in Apprenticeship Programme is going to help the youth. It was in our Manifesto and I was surprised that my fellow youth stood up. This is just the first Message on the State of the Nation. The Budget is coming. Yes, it was in our Manifesto that in the first year, we are going to train 10,000 people. But it does not mean that for the four years, we are going to train 10,000 youth. Aside this, he said he is going to train one million youth in Coding.

They spoke about ICT but we established the Accra Digital Center before Dr Bawumia became a Vice President. Today, they are touting achievements in ICT sector. Who laid the foundation? And they cannot mention one thing that they did to lay the foundation for this digitalisation that they have been talking about.

Mr Speaker, we also spoke about the *okada* business. You can see that in almost all constituencies, the *okada* business has come to stay. These two million youth whom you left unemployed, have sat down and talked about how to create businesses for themselves. President Mahama said, we are going to formalise that system so that

they can also benefit from—
[*Interruption*]—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, please address me.

Mr Tsekpo: Mr Speaker, President Mahama said, we are going to formalise the *okada* business and because of that the CEO of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA), was recently in Rwanda to learn about how Rwanda did theirs. That is a leader!

Mr Speaker, that is not the only one. We spoke about *Nkokɔ Nketenketɛ*. Yes, Youth in Poultry, Youth in Agribusiness; this was what the late former President Rawlings started. That is exactly what we are going to bring on board.

Mr Speaker, President Mahama came here to give hope to the people of Ghana and the ordinary Ghanaian on the street. He also gave hope to the women, because the Women's Bank is also coming to assist not only the NDC women but also our friends on the other Side. It is a national project that will benefit all so their constituents are supposed to applaud him, instead of standing up every day as if they were coached that President Mahama came here to lament. President Mahama did not come here to lament. He came here to give us hope; hope that will affect everybody in this country.

Mr Speaker, on this note, I would like to thank you for this opportunity. And to let the youth of this country know that the hope they voted for has arrived. The jobs are coming, the businesses are

coming, monies are coming for their businesses and that everybody will do well under this particular Government.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much.

Hon Members, before I take—Is Hon Mustafa Ussif here?

Some Hon Members: No?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, before I take the next person, kindly indulge me to acknowledge Akim Asafo RC Basic School at the Public Gallery. They are being led by Samuel Kodwo Kumi; I guess Samuel is a teacher and the school is located at Abuakwa South Constituency. Is the Hon Member, around? [**Some Hon Members:** No] I saw so him this morning.

Hon Members, they are our children who have come all the way from Akim Asafo to witness what we do here. I think they are witnessing and monitoring what is going on and we urge them to study hard so that tomorrow they will come and take over from us.

I wish you well, study hard and monitor what is going on and enjoy Parliament. This is the Centerpiece of Democracy. You are welcome once again. I believe that even though the Hon Member is not currently present, his Hon Colleagues will take care of you.

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, respectfully, Hon Mustapha Ussif had to go into another meeting, the Committee on Selection so we are asking Hon Alhassan

Tampuli—[**Some Hon Members:** No! No!!]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, is it the case that you can decide on “No” by yourselves? I do not think so.

I was going to ask whether it is the case that he has not debated yet.

You have not? Then let us hear you.

3.42 p.m.

Mr Tampuli Alhassan Sulemana: Thank you Mr Speaker.

I rise to contribute to the Message on the State of the Nation and to thank His Excellency the President for performing his constitutional duty under Article 67 to give the state of the nation.

When the President entered this Chamber and started speaking, I saw one thing, that the President had opened another religious book, the book of lamentations chapter 183 verse four. Mr Speaker, there is a parable of three envelopes from an exiting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to the succeeding CEO.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You see, the Rev Minister is saying lamentation?

Mr A.T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, the book of lamentations, one has to google it and one will find it, chapter 183 verse four.

Mr Speaker, the parable says that the CEO, when he is leaving office, prepares three envelopes for his successor. He says that after a month when there is pressure on the new CEO, he should open the first envelope and then he will find that it says, “Blame your predecessor.” When there is pressure on him the following month, he should open the second envelope and the second envelope says that, “Reorganise”. In other words, transfer and sack people and all of that. Mr Speaker, the third envelope says that, “Prepare three envelopes.” In less than two months, we think that the President is already preparing his three envelopes because he has exhausted the two envelopes already.

He has blamed his predecessor and has also done reorganisation. Mr Speaker, unfortunately the reorganisation was not to his Government but was to children and youth of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, even more painful is the fact that I saw some people with disability who were affected by these revocations of the appointments and I just felt that this is what we call, no mercy for the cripple. Terminator 1 is terminating everybody including the people with disability. Mr Speaker, when they issued out the omnibus letter, they did not even make any exemption for lactating mothers, pregnant women, people with disabilities and for people who are coming from poor and needy backgrounds. They just said, “Collect everybody out.”

Mr Speaker, in the education sector alone, we were being told by the Ghana

Education Service (GES) for instance that they are short of teachers everywhere across the country, especially in the rural areas. GES has terminated their appointment, point-blank. How do we fill the classrooms? Now there has been a retreat and they are saying that now these people should bring their appointment letters, National Service Scheme (NSS) certificates, and licence certificates. Mr Speaker, that is an afterthought. The pressure that came from this House is what necessitated that beating of retreats, and we will continue to give them pressure to do the right thing.

Mr Speaker, I will classify the message as very uninspiring, dreary, unstimulating, dry, boring and downright underwhelming. Comparing the Message on the State of the Nation to what had been done previously by H. E. former President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, both in substance and in form, it caught one’s attention from the beginning all the way to the end.

When Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo spoke in 2017, and Mr Speaker, let me take you to *Official Report* for 21st February, 2017, column 1532. With your indulgence I read;

“Mr Speaker, certain incidents occurred during the transition period that are matters of concern to me, and should be to every Ghanaian...”

Mr Speaker, it continued and ended that;

“I condemn all such conducts, and I call on all political parties, especially the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress, to ensure that that is the last time such undignified acts occur during periods of transition.”

Mr Speaker, now this is a leader who has empathy; a leader who felt that he had to unite this nation; a leader who felt that wrong is wrong and right is right. Not a single line was spared by His Excellency to deal with this nauseating situation.

Mr Speaker, I am a very good example of some of these acts. Two or three weeks ago, they took my car from the workshop and labelled it an assembly vehicle. It took me to call the Northern Regional Minister to tell him to find out from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) who owns that vehicle. When some of these things happen, we do not talk because we are doing politics, but because when the tables turn, they might take another person's car. And by the special grace of God, *Inshallah*, by 7th January, 2029, we shall be sitting on the right side of the Speaker.

Listening to the President's message, there is a saying that a surgeon was going to perform a surgery, when he came out of the theatre and everybody asked him, “Mr Surgeon, how did it go?” His response was that the surgery was successful but the patient died. That is what they are telling us.

That takes me straight to the issue of *dumsor*. Mr Speaker, it is only under the NDC, from 2011 to 2016, thereabout, that *Wikipedia* found a new word and added it to their vocabulary. The word is *dumsor*.

Mr Speaker, we inherited a net debt of US\$2.4 billion as of December, 2016. But that was not all. Specifically, government paid US\$520million energy sector debt in 2018 and in 2019, we paid US\$604 million. In 2020, we paid US\$1 billion. Ultimately, Mr Speaker, by the year 2023, we had paid US\$12.5 billion and this was for power that we did not need but were paying for due to capacity charges. We need just about 3,500 megawatts. The Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) alone signed 43 power purchase agreements and they were still in the process of signing 23 more when we took over.

Mr Speaker, these were power that we did not need but we were paying for.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, thank you.

Mr A.T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, let me land. In 2015, if it can be recalled, in this country, we were queuing at the filling station to buy fuel. Mr Speaker, we can go and check the records. I was Chief Executive of the National Petroleum Authority so when I talk, they must listen. I am speaking with authority and all the integrity available to me.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you

Mr A.T. Sulemana: In 2015, we were queuing to buy fuel in this country. Throughout the eight years, nobody queued anymore to buy fuel in this country.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Tampuli, your time is up. We are so grateful.

Let me go to Mr Eric Edem Agbana.

Mr Eric Edem Agbana (NDC — Ketu North): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion before the House which is to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic for complying with Article 67 of the 1992 Constitution by delivering to this House, the Message of the State of the Nation. Let me also acknowledge His Excellency the President, for giving us a true picture of the state as he met it.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, the President was expected to give us an update and a true picture of the economy as he met it and he did just that. I am surprised that our Friends from the Minority today are all claiming that the President only lamented and did not give a true Message on the State of the Nation.

3.52 p.m.

They are sending an invitation to His Excellency the President that if one is a medical doctor who performs a meticulous diagnosis on a patient and one reports the accurate findings of one's diagnosis, it means one is lamenting. The

economy that President Mahama inherited and the economy that the NPP left behind is actually the picture that President Mahama painted. And for some of us, we even believe that President Mahama was too modest in telling the people of Ghana the actual state of the economy that he inherited.

Mr Speaker, let us move into the issues of the economy. Mr Speaker, this same economy that the NPP members and Members of the Minority want us to believe was a good economy, the former President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, indeed admitted that he was leaving behind a difficult economy. He said that in August 2023 when he said he knew he was leaving behind a difficult economy, but he expected a new leader to take us out of the challenges. If there was no challenge, why did the then President make such statement?

Again, we were in this country, Mr Speaker, when 98 conscious, courageous Members of the then Majority—And it is interesting that the 98th number at the time is far bigger than the current number that they have before this Chamber. Those 98 Members of the then Majority took to the media, wrote a petition, asked that the Minister for Finance at the time be sacked, and the argument they made at the time was that the Minister for Finance had mismanaged the economy and that the economic situation at the time was not too good, for which reason they were demanding his dismissal.

So, it is surprising, and I am flabbergasted that, today, this same Minority would stand here to speak and

defend the records of the economy that they wanted the Minister for Finance sacked for. Mr Speaker, it is important for us to understand that when one is analysing the economy, it is not rocket science. There are some basic things, basic facts, basic data available to everybody. But one of the key issues when it comes to the strength of the economy is the issue of how the growth rate really translates to the quality of life of the ordinary Ghanaian.

Mr Speaker, before the 2024 elections, the World Bank, in its reports, which spoke about inflation, stated that 850,000 Ghanaians were pushed into the poverty line because of high inflation. That is the kind of economy that they left behind. That over 850,000 people were pushed below the poverty line, and are they telling us that they left behind a strong economy? Please, the fact is there, the data is there, and it speaks for itself.

Mr Speaker, again, unemployment or the employment rate is a key indicator of economic growth. President Mahama left behind an unemployment rate of 8 per cent, but before the 2024 elections, President Akufo-Addo left behind a 14.7 per cent unemployment rate. How dare they say that they left behind a better economy? Again, according to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), close to 2 million Ghanaian youth were left in the Not Education, Employment or Training (NEET) bracket. They left 2 million Ghanaian youth in that bracket, and that is why on 7th December, 2024, they voted them out.

Mr Speaker, President Mahama did not only give us the picture of the economy that he inherited, but he was also so generous to the good people of Ghana by giving us a comprehensive plan for addressing the challenges as he met them. Mr Speaker, President Mahama outlined a number of policy initiatives, but I want to begin with what I call his bold plans for proper governance.

Mr Speaker, for the last eight years under the NPP Government, we saw the bastardisation of state institutions. Even independent state institutions were bastardised with partisanship. Even the very respected institutions were bastardised by the NPP: be it security *et cetera*. According to a survey, 7 out of 10 Ghanaians even lost confidence in the Judiciary. That is the kind of country that they left behind. But President Mahama announced comprehensive plans to address the challenges. He started—And they are talking about institutions, even the Electoral Commission—

Mr Speaker, We were in this country when their Government, led by former President Akufo-Addo, appointed a card-bearing communicator of the NPP as one of the Commissioners of the Electoral Commission. They mismanaged this country, and we all saw the kind of legacies that they have left. If, in two months, they are already lamenting and crying all over the place, they have a long way to go. Because this is just two months of over 16 years in opposition, and they are already feeling uncomfortable about the situation. They should prepare for more because they are

going to remain in opposition for a long time

Mr Speaker, the plans that President Mahama announced for rescuing this country and bringing us out of the deep hole that the NPP plunged us into include his programme to ensure that we have one million coders. With a One Million Coders Programme, President Mahama and the National Democratic Congress (NDC), have decided that we would recruit and train one million young people across this country and equip them with digital skills in app development and all these other skills.

Mr Speaker, we all know that we are in the era of digital economy, and with a digital economy, and with the one million coders that would be recruited and trained by President Mahama, it would help us solve the problem of unemployment and also help us to expand the economy. The second is President Mahama's decision to ensure that 55,000 households benefit from the policy that they mock so much.

But Mr Speaker, it is interesting that from the very minute President Mahama finished his presentation, NPP Minority kept telling us that all they saw in the document was lamentation upon lamentation. Then all of a sudden, contrary to the song that they have been singing, one of their Members rose to his feet and decided to criticise the quantity or the magnitude of the policies that have been announced. Why? One side says that they only had lamentation, and another side says that they had policy propositions, but the numbers that have

been targeted are not enough. This speaks to the contradiction and the double standard of the Minority as we speak on this issue.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, it is important for us to recognise that, at the heart of all these policies on energy, agriculture, economy and what have you, is leadership. President Mahama and the NDC have decided that, as a party, we would run a very lean Government. President Mahama has decided that we must put to proper use the resources of this nation. I can assure Ghanaians that we would not see a Government that would spend over GHC58 billion on a useless National Cathedral project—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you—

Mr Agbana: We would not see a Government that would invest in projects that would not inure to the benefit of the Ghanaian people. But we have a Government that would invest in the productive sectors and give jobs to the young people of this country.

Mr Speaker, I thank you. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Let me now turn to Hon Asafo-Adjei Ayeh. That is the last round of contributors—Already five people have debated—No

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, respectfully, we know Leaders would

conclude the debate today, and the same Leaders are at the Committee of Selection meeting. We cannot wait till they come, so we can continue with the debate. As soon as they enter, then we end the debate for the two Leaders to wind up. We have more than even a set of 10 people who want to contribute.

So, let us use this time to allow Members to clear their throat. When the Leaders come, we would allow them to wind up. So, they should produce as many as possible. We have about additional 15 people here.

4.02 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Acheampong, the beauty of the game is to lay your truths bare to everybody. At the pre-Sitting meeting, we agreed on five from each Side, then the Leaders will conclude. Later on, the Minority pushed that we should make it six from each Side. So, it is the six from each Side that we have adopted. Then after the six each, the Leaders will conclude.

Now, we have had five contributions from each Side, and that is why I said that we are taking the last round of contributions. Only that probably after the five from each Side, I would give the Independent Member some five minutes to also talk—[Uproar]—That is my own discretion.

Mr Acheampong : Mr Speaker, you are right. We agreed on six from each Side, but as I said, even after the six each, plus that of the Independent Member, we do not have any other activity than to

wait for the Committee of Selection to present their Report. So, in that space, we can do, at least—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: No, we would be looking up to the Leadership. They have 30 minutes each.

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, I am in charge.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You are in charge.

Mr Acheampong: That is why I am pleading with you to allow us to add, at least, four from each Side.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Four from each Side?

Mr Acheampong: Yes; by that time, the Committee may have finished its work, present their Report, and the Leaders can also wind up. This is because we cannot suspend the House. If we do, Members will scatter and we would not even get them to approve the Committees that we have been talking about since three weeks ago. So, let us keep Members here and give them opportunity to debate, while we wait for the Committee's Report to enable Members participate in that debate.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Shaib —*rose*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Jerry Ahmed Shaib? Hon Shaib, I would come to you, but let me listen to Hon Sampson Ahi.

Mr Sampson Ahi (NDC — Bodi):
Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I think you are doing very well and when the Second Deputy Majority Whip was making the application, I saw you nodding to his request, which means, you are going to agree that we should provide additional four from each Side to also contribute. I can see that Hon Jerry Ahmed Shaib is ready with his troops. We are ready. We have more than enough Members and we can produce 10 additional Members to speak—*[Hear! Hear!]*—Where are their people? If they are ready, let us agree to additional five from each Side.

Mr Speaker, kindly agree to this harmless request, so that many Members can contribute to this special and important Message on the State of the Nation delivered by His Excellency the President of the Republic. Mr Speaker, please, I know you to be a kind person. I know that you would want to encourage many Members to clear their throats and this is the opportunity for new Members to clear their throats. So, allow Members to clear their throats by agreeing to an additional five from each Side, so that many Members can contribute to this important Statement.

Mr Speaker, by nodding to the request, I want to thank you for agreeing to our request, and I will say God bless you for agreeing to us.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, let me listen to Hon Jerry Ahmed Shaib.

Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib): Mr Speaker, I thought that Hon Ahi was going to talk about the fact that they have quality materials and their concentration was on quality and not quantity.

Mr Ahi —rose—

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, we have quality materials—*[Interruption]*—Please, resume your seat. Hon Ahi, quality material is not unparliamentary. You are looking at quantity; we are looking at quality. I stand here—*[Interruption]*—It can be up to you—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Order! Order!

Hon Members, please, this is harmless; we do not need to splithairs on this.

Mr Agbana —rose—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Eric Agbana, please, resume your seat.

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, at Conclave this morning, we agreed to do six from each Side. I do not even know why they are talking about numbers, because if anything at all, I have been talking to my people not to raise issues of quorum.

Mr Speaker, if we are minded to do Business, we are ready to do so. Mr Speaker, the agreement this morning was to do six from each Side and we are minded to do so.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me call Hon Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh?

Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh (NPP — Bosome Freho): Mr Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to also contribute to the Message on the State of the Nation that was given to this House by the President of the Republic.

Mr Speaker, like we all know, Article 67 is clear that it must be a Message on the State of the Nation, not a state of manifesto address. What the President sought to do was to rehash his manifesto commitments and give us his manifesto promises, and not to give us the Message on the State of the Nation. The times that he tried or sought to do so, were full of propaganda and many of them have been exposed here by some of the speakers.

Mr Speaker, I want to look at a few issues with the foreign affairs, but because my Brothers spoke about the youth, I quickly want to go there briefly before I come to foreign affairs. We are not surprised. The President we have is no new factor. The President we have is not a new indicator in the scheme of governance in Ghana; we know him. So, they mentioned schemes and programmes that he had created or has given an indication to create in his manifesto.

Mr Speaker, we have not forgotten that he promised Ghanaians—Not long ago, we had youth who were into pothole patching and they spent millions of our cedis to patch potholes; that never

happened. Mr Speaker, we had youth who rode bicycles in this country. We had youth who were into filmmaking and we never saw any movie they produced. Mr Speaker, we had youth who were into tree planting. Until now, we cannot find one single tree that was planted by those youth.

Mr Speaker, we had youth who were told that they were doing beads and now, even in Krobo, one cannot find those youth doing beads there. So, we are not surprised; we are not worried. We are only cautioning the President and cautioning Ghanaians that for the President to come here and rehash another set of promises to the youth—We are only cautioning that even the time that he had the opportunity to come back again to seek the mandate of the people, we saw what the tree planting landed us into. Mr Speaker, we saw what the Asongtaba Project landed us into. We saw what the beads making project landed us into. We saw what the *nkonfem* landed us into.

So, Mr Speaker, it is important that we caution them that President John Dramani Mahama is the *dada no a* we know, *dada no a* we have seen, and the *dada no a* we have lived with.

Mr Speaker, for about four consecutive times, the President was in this House as he then was, promising Ghanaians that he will fix *dumsor*. He gave significant dates to the matter that on this date, I will fix *dumsor*. Mr Speaker, the date came and he never fixed *dumsor*.

4.12 p.m.

He continued promising until he was tired of promising and came to tell us in this House that he would never promise again after promising. So, if the President today is telling us that he will fix the economy like he fixed *dumsor*, some of us are scared because he never fixed that economy but continued promising us. Mr Speaker, my Colleagues mentioned it, that if one is promising jobs, when the individual comes, the first thing he or she should do is to instruct the Chief of Staff to terminate appointments. In the NDC Manifesto, they promised no academic fees; they promised 1 million coders; they promised the *Adwumawura* Programme what will it profit a President who promises one million coders and sacking one million youth from their workplace? What will it profit a President promising *Adwumawura* Programme and sacking the same *Adwumawura* that his predecessor has created? What will it profit a President who is assuring Ghanaian youth and students of no tuition payment? I do not know whether it is going to be just like the Hope City Project that was only in the illusions and the minds of NDC. When it comes to John Mahama and job creation, we know for four good years, there was no employment in the public sector. Teachers that had finished school sat home for over four years; they were not employed. Nurses sat home for over four years; they were not employed. All government sectors were not employed. So, if today the same *dadanoaa* comes here and promises us that he is going to create jobs, some of us, we are scared

and we are worried and we want to tell them that it is not about their promises. [Uproar]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Ayeh, please descend for landing.

Mr Ayeh: Mr Speaker, I take your guidance. The President again promised here and gave assurance that passport application will be nationwide. I have documents of records of the Committee on Foreign Affairs here with me. Passport application is nationwide already. And even passport application is digital. The problem with passport application has always been the printing. And the NPP set the stage and tone for printing and clearing of all those backlogs. So, if you promise us that the passport application is going to be 24 hours, are you telling me that I should tell my electoral area coordinator in *Appiahkrom* or *Appiahtsirem* that he should move from *Appiahkrom* to Kumasi at 2 a.m. to apply for passport? Let the President not heighten the hope of Ghanaians that there is going to be a certain job creation at the passport office so that they would do 24 hours and then the youth will be expectant of jobs. Because when the backlog is cleared, there is nothing to do because passport application now is digital.

Mr Speaker, we must now be concerned as Ghanaians about the diplomatic posturing of our President. If you notice on the inauguration day, President Traore of Burkina Faso even got a lot of hailing than the President who was going to be sworn in. [Uproar] It is clear and important that Ghana is a

democratic country and we must not be seen as condoning *coup d'états* and that is important so we must tell the President.

Mr Speaker, with this opportunity, I thank you, I am grateful. [*Hear! Hear!!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me now take Hon Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah?

I am left with one here, one there. Then I will give my own to—

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I beg you. Let us talk before you make a commitment.

Mr Second Deputy Spekaer: It is now the turn of Hon Zuwera Ibrahimah. Hon, you have 10 minutes.

Ms Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion on the Floor. On Thursday 27th February, 2025, His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama responded to a constitutional edit, Article 67 of the Constitution, that requests him at the beginning of each session of Parliament—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, I am not doing things by my own way. I was just handed this list, 6:6. That is what I am doing and I am taking the last round. Yes, Hon, please continue.

Ms Ibrahimah: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and “before a dissolution of Parliament, deliver to Parliament a

message on the state of the nation”. Mr Speaker, the operative words in Article 67 are “message” and “state”. We would do a bit of semantics here and look at what the word message mean? The Oxford dictionary tells us that message means verbal, written or recorded communication. State, what does the dictionary say? It says the particular condition that someone or something is in at a specific time. At a specific time, my emphasis.

Mr Speaker, I have listened to my Colleagues on the other Side and they have tried vainly to suggest that His Excellency President John Mahama came to Parliament to lament. I do not see where the word lamentation sits in the definition of state. His Excellency the President came to this House to tell us the state of this nation when he took power on 7th January, 2025. The state of the nation is what the President came to tell us. He did not lament, he told us what he inherited and indeed the same Constitution, Article 67, enjoins the outgoing President to present the state of the nation to this Parliament before leaving office and His Excellency came here on 3rd January and presented his state of the economy before he left.

Mr Speaker, President Mahama did not indulge in lamentation and in any case, if President Mahama lamented, I would choose lamentation any day over lies and policy deception. [*Hear! Hear!*] I hold in my hand the Message of the State of the Nation delivered to this august House on Tuesday 9th March, 2021 by President Akufo-Addo and on

page 26 of this address and with your leave, I shall read paragraph 4:

“While that of Yeji, Makango and Agodeke is 46 per cent complete. In total, seven landing ports have been constructed in this country”.

4.22 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I sat in the Chamber and I wondered whether I was indeed the Member of Parliament for Salaga South Constituency where Makango is situated. I had not seen any port being constructed in Makango. I made a call to Salaga and I asked my boys to go to Makango and find out whether there is any port construction going on, and there was zero.

Mr Speaker, that amounted to policy deception and I would choose lamentation any day over policy deception. Mr Speaker, I filed a question to the Minister for Transport to ask why they captured in the Message on the State of the Nation, that the Makango port was 46 per cent complete.

The Minister came to the House and gave his response, but the Minister did one thing and I respect him for that. When I challenged his response, he sent a team from the Ministry of Transport to Makango and there was nothing. Mr Speaker, this is policy deception and so if we lament, we are telling Ghanaians what the situation is.

Mr Speaker, with your leave, I want my Colleagues on the other Side to know

that they labour in vain, and I will urge them to go and read a news report on *Modern Ghana*, Friday, 7th March, 2025. The report simply credits Prof Stephen Adei, a staunch and senior member of the New Patriotic Party, and this is what Prof Stephen Adei had to say; *[Interruption]*— “President Mahama is the first after Nkrumah to do very well in his first 100 days in power.”

I urge my colleagues to go and read this report.

Mr Speaker, we are Members of Parliament, and I do not want to believe that there is any Member of Parliament in this Chamber who does not know what 24 hours mean. I do not know. I do not think there is anyone here who does not know what economy means. So, when his Excellency President John Dramani Mahama says he is introducing the 24-Hour Economy, I urge them to just join the two words and the meaning would be clear. Everybody knows what 24-Hour Economy means.

Mr Speaker, I said earlier that I would rather lament than lie. President Akufo-Addo, in this House on 3rd January, 2025, told this august House that the Free SHS policy had benefited 5.1 million students. Mr Speaker, information by Eduwatch, and the Ministry of Education says that it is only 3.4 million who have benefited. President Mahama will not indulge in telling lies. So, where we stand, Mr Speaker, it is 3.4 million

students who have benefited from the Free SHS.

Another lie, Mr Speaker, that we will not indulge in, is Agenda 111. When the President comes here—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, hold on. Who is lying? Is it President Mahama or who?

Ms Ibrahimah: President Akufo-Addo—[*Laughter*] He is a liar. Former President Akufo-Addo. He lied to this House.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Ibrahimah, please he is a former President. Please, use another word instead of lie.

Ms Ibrahimah: Falsehood, he engaged in falsehood.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon, are you listening to me?

Ms Ibrahimah: Yes, I am listening to you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Please, I am saying use another word instead of lie.

Ms Ibrahimah: Falsehood. He peddled falsehood and the falsehood was that three of the Agenda 111 hospitals had been completed. Even my Colleague here, when he debated, only mentioned one, which is not in use. That is exactly what President Mahama said here.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Your time is up anyway.

Ms Ibrahimah: He said only one has been completed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Your time is up anyway.

Ms Ibrahimah: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, today we have taken six-six; no Side has taken seven. Please, I am here. Let me mention the names to you.

The Minority Side started with Hon Nyarko Osei. After Hon Nyarko Osei, Hon Ayew Afriyie; after Hon Ayew Afriyie, Hon Mavis Nkansah-Boadu. Then we came to Hon Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth. Then we came to— Instead of Hon Ussif Mustapha who was not around, Hon Tampuli Sulemana took that opportunity. Then, finally, Hon Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh took the floor. So, we had six.

Then from the Majority Side, we started with Hon Alhassan Suhuyini. We came to Hon Rita Naa Odoley Sowah. Then we came to Hon Thomas Worlanyo Tsekpo. We then came to Hon Eric Edem Agbana. Then in between, we had Hon John Jinapor. Then lastly, we have had Hon Zuwera Ibrahimah.

So, we have had six—

Who? Who is Hon Vondee? Anyway, at that time I had not taken over. At that time, I was not presiding, but when I came, these are the list—

Hon Members, what I am saying is, when I came, this is the list I have worked with, six-six. So, if there was somebody earlier, then please pardon me.

So, it is now the turn of Leadership. We will start with Minority Leader. Leadership, they are taking, is it 30 minutes? Hon Members, Leaders can take 30 minutes each. Hon Members, I am even told it is 40 minutes each. That is the agreement the House established. So Hon Minority Leader, the floor is yours.

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to add my voice to the debates on the Floor.

It is a privilege to have this opportunity to close the debate for my Side, the mighty Minority. Mr Speaker, the President was here to perform a constitutional function as provided for under Article 67 of the Constitution.

He failed to acknowledge the work that had been done in eight years.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, please indulge me to allow the First Deputy Speaker to take the seat.

4.31 p.m. — [MR FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

Hon Minority Leader, please continue.

4.32 p.m.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, the President failed to acknowledge the work done by the previous Administration in the past eight years. When he came to the House, all we heard him say was lamentation upon lamentation. But this was not new; this is how we have known the President to be. In 2013, he was in this House to deliver to us a Message on the State of the Nation. Even when he was part of the very Government he had succeeded, and just for the avoidance of doubt, between 2009 and 2012, he was a Vice President.

When Prof Mills left, he succeeded him, yet when he won the 2012 elections and came into this House, he came here to lament about the state of the economy, forgetting that he was part of the Government for the four years preceding his new Administration. Then in 2016, when he, again, came here to address this House, he repeated the same lamentation, blaming everybody, except himself.

Mr Speaker, in 2016, when we had the financial sector crisis, the President came to address this House to apportion blame. He said the Bank of Ghana had failed in its supervisory functions. If one is the Chief Executive of the land, one is in charge of appointing the Governor of the Central Bank. One is responsible for appointing the members of the board of the Central Bank. When people were losing their investments, all he came to Parliament to say was that it was the Bank of Ghana that has failed. That was how come President John Dramani

Mahama could not solve the banking sector crisis in 2015/2016. Those who lost their investments through DKM Investment Limited, God Is Love, and all other microfinance companies, were left to steam in their own steel.

Mr Speaker, the President was here in 2016 to tell us that if those people had chosen to go to microfinance firms and have lost their investments, the Government was not going to take responsibility. The NDC Members of this House should go and refer to the Message on the State of the Nation of 2016, they will find it there. That is how bad it was. That the President was in charge of the economy but blamed others for the failures of the economy. So, we were not surprised that he came here and continued with his usual lamentation upon lamentation.

And today, the Member of Parliament for Salaga South, a respected Member of this House, continues to say that, indeed, they are right in lamenting. This is not new; it is their posture. That is their attitude towards governance: to lament. But what the President failed to do was to acknowledge that the *dumsor* legacy was resolved when Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo took office. What the President failed to tell Ghanaians was that the banking sector crisis, which he blamed Bank of Ghana for, was resolved by the Akufo-Addo Government. What the President failed to tell Ghanaians was that, in spite of all the crisis, NPP managed to introduce the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy and sustained it for eight years. [*Hear! Hear!*]

In fact, the President could not single out any policy initiative that had been introduced by the NPP and implemented successfully. He was even in a hurry to claim credit for a Budget he came to meet, which Budget is enabling him to manage the economy. Since he came, Mr Speaker, the very taxes that he used—He said Ghanaians were suffering from the payment of e-Levy and other taxes. These are the revenues that they are using to celebrate the Independence Day. The revenues from these taxes are the ones that the Government is using to fuel its cars. In fact, all expenses that are being made in this Administration are as a result of revenues from the very taxes he is complaining about.

He does not have a Budget yet, yet he failed to acknowledge the intervention by Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. Mr Speaker, I have said time without number that Ghanaians should just give the umbrella a time. The true colours of the umbrella will be seen in due time. Even today, they promised us 60 Ministers, so they are showing less, more divide. Only a day before yesterday, Hon Samuel Abdulai Jinapor had a cause to remind them that, in introducing less Ministers, he is appointing more staffers. Today, there is a Minister of State for Government Communications, yet there are six communication specialists all advising him. Who does this? So, he tries to confuse people with his so-called few Ministers, and he is even so indecisive.

He says he is appointing 60 Ministers. Parliament has given him the space to form his Government on time. It is left with four Deputy Ministers; even that, he

is struggling, and he comes here to complain. He has four more Deputy Ministers to appoint. The President has failed to comply with the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024. In this Chamber, he has announced his Cabinet. There is the person who says he is doing reset; what is he resetting?

When Hajia Ayamba Laadi is here and has not been given an appointment? When Hon Helen Ntosu is here, and has not been given any appointments? When Hon Pokuah Sawyer is in this Chamber and then the Okaikwei North MP is here and has not been considered because the law says he should do a minimum of 30 per cent, yet he is doing 10 per cent? Creating the impression that they do not have the women; meanwhile, the women are here in this Chamber? How do you appoint only 10 per cent of women into Cabinet?

Mr Speaker, the President has failed this nation.

4.42 p.m.

How can the President overlook Dr Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings? How can the President ignore such a competent material? We are talking about 30 per cent women in government; even if we add the other Deputy Ministers to the Cabinet, he still does not even cross 20 per cent. So, he says one thing and does another. Yet this is the same President who, today, is criticising a predecessor who faced a major economic hit yet ensured that the ship of state sailed smoothly.

Mr Speaker, let me remind the President about something. When President Mills of blessed memory came into office, with the President as the Chairman of the Economic Management Team, they promised the fisherfolks, my people, along the coast from the Western Region to Volta Region, a landing beach site. They went for a China Development Bank (CDB) facility somewhere in 2014. They later came to do what we call capping; they failed to construct a single landing beach facility. Nana Akuffo-Addo came into office; listening and responding to the cry of the fisher folks, the landing beach projects were initiated. A facility was brought to Parliament, Parliament approved it and, today, the following communities have received a facelift at their various *Nshornaa*.

Mr Speaker, if we go to Dixcove, Moore, Manford, Winneba, Senya-Breku, Gomoa Fetteh, Teshie, Axim, Ekumfi Otuam, and Abandze, including our own Gbese area, you will see the landing beach. NDC failed to construct a single landing beach project. Is Jamestown not seeing a landing beach? Is Elmina not seeing a landing beach? We have constructed, and we have ensured that all facilities are there to support the fisherfolks. This is the record we leave Ghanaians.

The NDC promised landing beaches, but not a single one of them was constructed. Today, they claim a so-called, *Nkokɔ Nketenketete*. A man will be judged by his conduct. Yesterday, Mr President had an opportunity to help the poor farmers in the north. Those who needed tractors were disappointed, and

those who were going into the guinea fowl rearing—They said they were introducing *nkonfem*. What happened to that *nkonfem*? And today, they come and tell us that they are introducing *Nkoko Nketenkete*. Time will expose them.

Mr Speaker, Mr President was here to lament on the state of our agriculture. We want the President to tell us about his own record. Public service is about your record. What record did he leave us on the 7th January, 2017 when he was leaving office after eight years of the NDC Administration? Nothing! Today, the President comes to tell us that the cocoa sector failed. He forgot that the highest production levels were achieved during the NPP Administration: over 1 million tonnes. That was the highest ever to be achieved in the history of the country, yet he comes here to lament. What we want to tell him is that governance is a continuum. He should pick it up from where we left off, and fix it if he thinks it is broken.

Mr Speaker, we do not need lamentation. Today, the NDC has forgotten that it came into office with its own manifesto. What is all this about committees here and there? It is not for purposes of consultation; they are only doing this to disown their own initiatives because they are not sure of their initiatives. When Akufo-Addo came into office, the first thing he did was a Free Senior High School (FSHS). He implemented it without any delay. What are they waiting for? This so-called 24-Hour Economy has been defined variously by many people. Some of their

people have not even read it, so they do not know.

Mr Speaker, they say 24-Hour Economy; what is 24-Hour Economy?

Before the President came into this House, he was aware that his own party youth had besieged the party headquarters, asking for jobs and demanding for jobs. So far, they are failing. What they are rather doing is to worsen the plight of the ordinary Ghanaian youth. What is the gain in terminating appointment of innocent Ghanaians who have been employed into various state institutions. Today, all we hear is “sack them, sack them, sack them.” Today, the President who, in 2017, said that we are all Ghanaians has forgotten that that was the posture he took. Today, he is being more partisan than being a Ghanaian. So, we hear his members saying that they will replace them with their party people.

Mr Speaker, what the President has forgotten is that he took an Oath to do right to all manner of persons, and every Ghanaian has his rights provided for under the Constitution. The right to work, which comes under economic rights, are far right, and if the Government, indeed, believes in creating opportunity for all, the least it could have done was to create a space for new recruitment, rather than look into the eyes of parents who paid school fees and, by the grace of God, their children have got jobs and tell them that he is sacking your son to come and sit at home, and that he does not care what happens to them.

This is the same President who claims MahamaCares. What does he care about what? Is it the National Health Insurance Scheme that the NDC nearly collapsed and the NPP Administration that introduced it came to reactivate and made it better? They want to introduce some subsidiary policy on it and say it is MahamaCares, forgetting about what has been done. Did Kufuor say that “KufuorCares” when he introduced the National Health Insurance Scheme? The School Feeding Programme is a major social intervention that was introduced by Kufuor, and, today, if they come and say they want to sustain it, they create the impression as if it is their policy. Can the NDC name a single social intervention programme it has introduced and implemented successfully? We are tired of the promises, the double standards, the lamentations and the hypocrisy. The President should walk the talk and do the do and stop all the lamentations.

4.52 p.m.

Clearly, for the eight years of the NPP, the records have it that even when it came to support for students to study abroad, the NPP was not discriminatory. Today, it is on record that the Deputy Attorney-General nominee, who has just been approved, had his scholarship to go and study PhD in the UK, the government was a government for all Ghanaians. The man was loud on the street criticising the NPP, but the NPP did not deny him the opportunity for higher education. His fees were paid by the State; accommodation paid; living expenses paid for four years. That is

what the State did. So, it was not a period of discrimination.

Mr Speaker, the Government was boasting that it had paid some coupons that mature. From which money? Has this government introduced any tax policy? So why the mischief? Why the deceit? These were moneys that they had come to meet, so they should not deceive Ghanaians.

Mr Speaker, on the Youth Employment Policy, it was during the former President Kufuor’s era that it was given life and an enactment came before this House to establish the Agency and when the Agency came into being, many of our youth on the streets gained employment.

The NDC came into office for eight years but there was nothing for the youth to look up to. They could not sustain it. The former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo came into office and introduced additional policies to create space for a lot of our youth. The records are there. They have now come in. The very infrastructure that they came to meet is what they are relying on. Nothing new yet they condemn the Akufo-Addo Administration.

They claim that after elections, one does not need to make appointments. May I remind the President—May I remind our Hon Colleague Felix Kwakye Ofosu, who in 2016 was all over saying that a government’s term ends the day it hands over to a new government. Therefore, they were right in appointing a Commission on Human Right and

Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) boss. They were right in appointing an Auditor General; they were right in appointing a National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) chairperson. Have they forgotten the inconsistencies of their own principles will continue to haunt them?

Mr Speaker, we in the NPP believe that in the minimum, we laid a solid foundation amidst all the economic turbulence and we handed over a nation that is peaceful, with its borders secured to the John Dramani Mahama Administration. It is for them to hold on to these and make it even better. So far, Mr Speaker, it is clear that they have nothing useful to add. All we hear these days is political persecution in the guise of political accountability. Is that what we voted them for?

When the President was here, he reduced the Message on the State of the Nation into going into gallery, saying that some people are running away from the jurisdiction and saying all manner of things. That is not what we expected of him. But in the coming days, we shall see how transparent this NDC Administration is going to be. We shall see how accountable this NDC Administration is going to be.

Already, we hear that they have started their own internal fight. It is up to them. Even with the Appointments they are making so far is like “*wei fa baako na menso me mfa baako.*” They are already rendering the President a lame duck. It is obvious the way the appointment is going; we can see one has to align before

one is considered. It is obvious. Upon all the prominent talents in this Chamber, because they have no godfather, they are not being considered.

Not a single one of the Independent Members of Parliament who aligned with the NDC Majority, has been considered. *Bone ben?* This is a true family and friends’ government. One must be a friend to somebody before his or her name will go. Why? Are they not all NDC Members?

Mr Speaker, the President says that he has so many MPs he does not know what to do with them. It is the reason so many of them are also not entering this chamber because he has rendered them redundant. There is huge frustration. And he could not come into this Chamber to assure Parliament that the Hon Members of the Majority Side—We are not talking about us; their Side. He could not assure even the Majority Side of constructive engagement for the purposes of governance. Many of them are desperate and they do not know where they are going. You ask if they are going to be on a board, they do not know. Are they going to be made Deputy Ministers, they do not know.

Mr Speaker, how should the MPs go and account to their people? This government offers no hope to its own members. If a Member of Parliament who is part of a 24-hour Economy does not know when resources will come for the constituents, what about the ordinary member of the community, what about the foot soldiers? This is the state of

hopelessness. *Ghanafoɔ ato aba anu ɔmo ho.*

Mr Speaker, I can only assure Ghanaians that truly, for all we did in terms of social intervention programs, for which they can attest to, they should be assured that 2028 is not far away from today. The ravaging clouds shall not long be victorious. They shall not long possess the sky. A day of hope is on its way and a better government—A government that understood their plights will come again and resolve their challenges.

Mr Speaker, without more, I rest my case.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: It is now the turn of the Hon Majority Leader.

5.02 p.m.

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, hope is returning to Ghana. This afternoon, I came across a social media post. What did I read? Prof Stephen Adei, who I recall was very critical of H. E. President John Dramani Mahama, today, says that less than 100 days in office, President Mahama is the best President since Kwame Nkrumah's time. [*Hear! Hear!*] So, hope is coming. Ghana is being reset again. The people can see that a good leader is on board, and he will manage and steer the ship of the affairs of the state very well.

Mr Speaker, I sat through and listened to my Colleagues on the opposite Side, I heard just two things. That, the address of the President just constitutes a book of

lamentations. The second thing that I heard them say is that we should compare the figures of 2016 and 2024. In essence, those are the two things that I heard.

The day the President delivered the message, I said something, and I am sure many people missed it. I said, and I want to repeat, that when one leaves his kraal in the care of the hyena, and he travels and comes back, he should not be surprised if all the carcasses are missing. When that happens, the person would have nothing to do but to lament. The NDC handed over Ghana to the NPP for eight years. Eight years down the line, when we came back, what did we see? A country broken on all fronts.

Mr Speaker, the President gave us the statistics, but even before the President came here and gave us the statistics, these statistics were known to ordinary Ghanaians before the elections. My Friends on opposite Side have forgotten that they were warned about these statistics and the implications of these statistics on their electoral fortunes before elections.

So let me repeat what the Afro-Barometer report before elections said about their government. Seventy-seven per cent of Ghanaians said that corruption had increased significantly in 2024. This was Afro-Barometer, not H. E. John Mahama. Indeed, Mr Speaker, analysts put it that we were losing close to US\$3billion to corruption even though we had gone to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout that was equally US\$3billion. So, all we

needed was not to go to the IMF, but to fix corruption, and that is what Ghanaians voted for in December, 2024.

Mr Speaker, even before elections, 71.7 per cent of Ghanaians believed that the former President and his officials were corrupt in 2024. This is not H.E. John Mahama speaking, it is in the Afro-Barometer report in 2024. Eighty-seven per cent of Ghanaians thought the country was headed in the wrong direction in 2024. Was it H.E. John Mahama speaking? These were ordinary Ghanaians speaking. And they said at that time that they were also against the e-Levy.

In 2017, Afro-Barometer revealed that only 20 per cent of Ghanaians considered emigrating from Ghana. However, in 2024, 44 per cent of Ghanaians considered leaving Ghana. We were all in this country and we witnessed long queues. If one drove around any embassy in Ghana, one saw long queues of young Ghanaians, highly talented and educated, who were doing everything they could to leave their country.

Mr Speaker, in 2022, 68.6 per cent of Ghanaians rated the country's economic condition as very bad. 50 per cent of Ghanaians were unemployed despite actively searching for work. This was as far back as 2022, and it worsened in 2024. And indeed, 48 per cent of Ghanaians were beginning to doubt democracy. They believed that democracy was not working for them. Mr Speaker, these are the statistics even before H. E. John Dramani Mahama

came here to brief us on the state of the nation.

Mr Speaker, let us get to the economy. In 2016, when H. E. John Dramani Mahama was leaving office, US\$1 was to GHC4. In 2024, US\$1 was to GHC15. Some days it even went beyond that. The Cedi had depreciated by over 250 per cent. Mr Speaker, these are the statistics. Why would H. E. President John Dramani Mahama not lament?

If one reads biblical history and understands what the Book of Lamentations is, one would understand the need to lament. The Book of Lamentations is a collection of poems lamenting over the destruction of Jerusalem; that is what the Book of Lamentations is.

So, when H. E. John Dramani Mahama hands over the country to the Minority and in eight years he comes and sees a near total collapse of the Ghanaian state, definitely, he has a right to lament. And we will lament because the Cedi, the cocoa sector, State Transit Corporation (STC) and other state institutions have collapsed. We will lament because the banking sector, Electricity Company of Ghana Ltd (ECG), and almost every institution has collapsed. Every single state institution is registering a negative growth and is highly indebted. When one meets a country in such a condition, why would the person not lament? Would it not be right to lament? So, there is every basis for us to lament.

Mr Speaker, I heard Colleagues on the opposite Side talk about the size of

Government. Let us get back to the statistics. At one point, the NPP Government had over 126 Ministers and it came down to 86. Mr Speaker, we are talking about presidential staffers. I recall the reports that came to this House on presidential staffers. In 2021, the presidential staffers were 934; the report came to this House. So far, H. E. John Dramani Mahama has appointed only 30 presidential staffers and advisors.

Let just go down memory lane and recall the budget allocations to the Office of Government Machinery.

5.12 p.m.

In 2017, the Office of Government Machinery took GH¢1.5 billion; in 2018, GH¢1.4 billion; in 2019, GH¢2.8 billion; in 2020, GH¢2.9 billion; in 2021, GH¢2.2 billion; in 2022, GH¢2.7 billion and last year, 2024, GH¢1.8 billion. That is their track record when it comes to appointments and to Government expenditure itself. That is how frightening the figures look, but John Dramani Mahama has assured Ghanaians that fiscal prudence is going to guide him. The resources of Ghanaians would be put to better use and he has started demonstrating it. He has given us a lean Government and has given us a lean number of presidential staffers, and just yesterday, he gave us a lean celebration of the Independence Anniversary. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, let me say that the debate about the size of Government is not simple political rhetoric. It is essential for us to debate it further beyond the

political class, because cutting the number of the political class would save cost. But it goes beyond that; we need to overhaul the entire Civil Service, Public Service and the entire institutions of governance. There are many institutions that are just duplicating the functions of others, and the taxpayer is called upon to pay for that. We recruit many people that do nothing, and indeed, we clog the Public Services and institutions with so many workers that when they struggle to find work to do, we just create additional layers of bureaucracy that make it impossible for the private sector to function. So, the debate, in terms of the size of Government, must be broader than just the question of how many Ministers of State and presidential staffers we have. It must go beyond that, to the issue of decentralisation.

In the age of communication technology revolutions and improvements in transportation infrastructure, we must rethink how we decentralise. We must rethink what services the Government should render, and what services are better left for the private sector to render. In education, health, and even in services that are considered as normal governmental services, in many jurisdictions, the private sector is taking up these services, rendering them at cheaper cost and being more efficient in delivering those services. These are the things that John Dramani Mahama is asking us to rethink, and this is a new direction that he is leading this country into.

That was why he said that we could have used the US\$400 million to at least

deliver 22 functioning hospitals of the Agenda 111. But all is not lost; the rest of the hospitals, instead of waiting for the Government to find US\$1.7 billion to complete and furnish them, we are going to consider inviting the private sector to take some of them and complete them. We are going to consider franchising to the private sector or civil society organisations or faith-based organisations. Our faith-based organisations have displayed competence in the area of delivering health services. How about they taking care of these hospitals?

Even in education, I was a Deputy Minister for Education, and I saw how even, in rural areas and poor communities, one will find poor parents sacrificing to send their children to the private primary school in the community and leave the free government primary school in the community because they wanted their children to be given a very good start. Parents are already voting with their feet, opting for private services rather than state services. So, this country must engage in a dispassionate debate about how we can balance what services should be rendered by Government and what services should be rendered by the private sector. And John Dramani Mahama has promised to lead the way.

Mr Speaker, the President has lamented over the state of infrastructure. We have a US\$37 billion infrastructure deficit per annum. If this country is going to catch up with its competitors, do well and create jobs, we need to fill that gap. That is why I say President John

Dramani Mahama brings hope, because he has promised a big push in infrastructure by committing to invest US\$10 billion in infrastructure. Mr Speaker, that kind of investment would transform our infrastructure and make our nation competitive. Mr Speaker, we are facing major challenges in the energy sector. Every single morning in this Chamber, there is a lineup of Members of Parliament (MPs) asking the Minister for Roads and Highways for roads. A lineup of MPs asking the Minister for Works, Housing and Water Resources about infrastructure in their constituencies and requesting for water systems in their constituencies. All these are infrastructure gaps that must be filled, and this President has promised to give the sector a big push.

Mr Speaker, the speech was not just about lamentations. The speech outlined a bold, ambitious programme to transform this country. In the agricultural sector, where we import over US\$2 billion of food annually, in a country that is well endowed with arable land of all different vegetation, in a country that has a significant endowment of water and water bodies, in a country where when one even mistakenly drops a grain and comes back in a month's time, the grain itself would germinate without any effort, in this country, we manage on an annual basis to import food of over US\$2 billion, yet, I ask where all the money for Planting for Food and Jobs go. Where did all the money for free fertiliser go? And today, we are still importing over US\$2 billion of food into our country? In a country with significant youth unemployment, ready and willing to till

the lands and save the US\$2 billion and distribute it among themselves. Farmers ready and willing to till the soil and save us from the imports of US\$2 billion and share that money among themselves, yet in this country, we import US\$2 billion worth of food. So, President Mahama did not just lament, but he presented to this House a bold initiative, an agriculture for economic transformation agenda, which is going to transform the agricultural sector, create jobs for the youth, produce our own food, cut down on imports, save us from foreign exchange demands that would depreciate the cedi and then increase the rate of the dollar. So, it was not just lamentations.

Mr Speaker, they may call it Nkoko Nketenkete or whatever, but Ghana, with all its potentials, still imports hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of poultry into our country. We have not yet been able to fix that, and he says he would fix it, using a grassroots approach where families are going to be encouraged to get involved in the production of poultry.

5.22 p.m.

How is that lamentation? And for the youth, the AgriNext Programme will give 30,000 youth an opportunity to get involved in agriculture. We will make agriculture fashionable. We will support them and give them jobs. Many leave this country to Europe and America only to end up on farms. That is why we are going to make agriculture attractive, exciting and, excuse me to say, “sexy”, so that young people can participate. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, to do this, there is going to be a massive investment in irrigation, and the President also promised farmer service centres in every agricultural district. He gave us a programme to unlock Ghana's blue economy, subsidise premix fuel supply, stop illegal fishing in our waters and support Ghanaians to fish and construct the infrastructure for fishermen.

Mr Speaker, this is what His Excellency the President presented to us. It was not just lamentations. It was an account of how bad our country has become and then his programme for lifting us from where we are and sending us to the promised land, and I believe he will go there—*[Hear! Hear!]*—Professor Stephen Adei has already seen it, and he has already proclaimed that the saviour, the redeemer, the messiah has come back, and that Ghana will work again; he will reset Ghana, and he will rescue the cedi and arrest the dollar, unlike those who attempted to arrest the dollar and we could not find the dollar.

Mr Speaker, the President gave us a clear programme in the transportation and infrastructure sector, where he made commitments to invest in the railway, and he committed to legalise *okada*. I am told that the Minister for Transport went to Rwanda to study the work of *okada*. When he arrived, over 300 *okada* riders were waiting to receive him at Kotoka International Airport—*[Hear! Hear!]*—This is because the redeemer, John Dramani Mahama, has come.

Mr Speaker, more importantly—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us have some order.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, more importantly, where it matters most is a change in our leadership paradigm. That is where it matters most. This country's problem is leadership, and that is where President John Dramani Mahama has promised a major paradigm shift, a government that will be inclusive, promote dialogue and consensus building.

Mr Speaker, even before the Budget Statement is brought to this House, he has subjected the national economy to some national dialogue, so that consensus can be built around the things that we need to do to transform this country to and do it together. That is why, even before the Budget Statement came here, he called a National Economic Dialogue, and the secretariat of the National Economic Dialogue issued a communique. In that communique, there is a clear direction that we should take as a country.

I use this opportunity and this platform to urge our Friends on the opposite Side not to boycott such dialogues but to participate because they will participate in paying taxes, and they will participate in benefiting from the taxes. So, it is important to participate in the discussions around how this economy should be managed and how we can work together to pull ourselves out of the doldrums to which we find ourselves.

Mr Speaker, the major paradigm shift in governance is what is needed. I believe that, in the last 100 days, even people like Professor Stephen Adei have noticed a significant paradigm shift in governance in this country. No one was as critical of John Dramani Mahama as the professor, but, in 100 days, he says that no one apart from Dr Kwame Nkrumah surpasses the record and performance of John Dramani Mahama in the last 100 days. [*Hear! Hear!*].

Mr Speaker, that is why I am confident that the promise the President made here in this House of a paradigm shift in governance in this country will be implemented. He will hold all his appointees accountable to high standards of good governance, accountability and respect for the public purse.

Mr Speaker, the burden then shifts to us who are here in Parliament, and I want to draw your attention to the communique that was issued after the National Economic Dialogue. In that communique, they singled out Parliament as the institution that must build its capacity to supervise the state-owned institutions. I can assure you that, today, the Committees will be set up.

Mr Speaker, all said and done, I want to conclude on this note: that the countries that have been able to pull themselves out of the kind of crisis that we find ourselves have not just done that through fine national policies and programmes. One key element that has been present in the rescuing of these nations has been the role of national mobilisation. We need a total national

mobilisation where we find ourselves. We need to mobilise all available human resources, and we need to mobilise all skills, expertise, and every labour that is available. This is what we need to do, and we need to rally every financial resource to be able to develop our infrastructure, industrialise, and implement social programs that would make the lives of our people better.

Mr Speaker, we need to build consensus, and we need to invite the private sector and build public-private partnerships to be able to achieve that. And there are examples that we can look up to; South Korea mobilised themselves, and, today, they are an economy giant. Singapore, similarly, mobilised themselves, and, today, they are a giant economy. Even China, the great leap forward of China, was founded on national mobilisation.

So, Mr Speaker, we need to build consensus; we need to work together, and we need to mobilise every resource to be able to pull ourselves out of the condition that we find our economy today. I extend an invitation to our Friends not to boycott the effort, not to run away from the effort and not to impede the effort.

Mr Speaker, I have not covered all the areas. We have not even looked at the environment and what happened to the environment. We have not even discussed *galamsey*, but, Mr Speaker, I call on Colleagues on the other Side to join us in the coming days when the Budget Statement is presented, so that we can start resetting Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I am confident that the message that His Excellency the President provided to Ghanaians adequately reflects exactly what the condition of Ghana is today.

5.32 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I am confident that given where we find ourselves, it is perfectly legitimate to lament.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Majority Leader by the time given me is left with six minutes to be 40 minutes.

5:33 p.m. — [THE SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

The Speaker: Yes, Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, in closing, I want to commend His Excellency the President for coming to this House to give us an accurate reportage on the state of our country. Mr Speaker, it is obvious from the statistics that indeed our country is broken in many fronts. Our country is suffering. Our institutions are collapsing. Our finances are suffering. But there is hope. There is hope because H. E. John Dramani Mahama has returned to the Flagstaff House. And he will fix it. He promised us that he will fix it. He will reset the country. He will make it function again. We will prosper and we will share the prosperity equitably. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. [*Hear! Hear!!*]

The Speaker: Hon Members, at the conclusion of the debate, I will put the question.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

I shall, in accordance with Standing Order 72(4), formally convey the decision of the House to His Excellency, the President and the decision of the House is to thank him for coming before

us to deliver the Message on the State of the Nation.

We will proceed to one item we agreed upon to do, and that is to look at the composition of our committees. Before I do that, I just received a communication from his Excellency the President.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE PRESIDENT

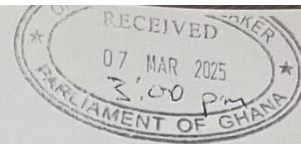
Minister Responsible for National Security

Mr Speaker: Hon Members, there is a communication from the President dated today, 7th March, 2025.



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Jubilee House

The President
7th March, 2025

Mr. Speaker,

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

Pursuant to section 24 of the Securities and Intelligence Act, 2020 (Act 1030), I convey to the House that I have assigned ministerial responsibility for National Security to the Minister of the Interior, Hon. Mohammed-Mubarak Muntaka.

Accordingly, the Minister will oversee matters relating to national security in addition to his existing responsibilities, ensuring seamless coordination between the Interior Ministry and National Security agencies.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA

**THE RT. HON. SPEAKER
OFFICE OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
ACCRA**

(2) Clerk/usher

B.U. to be read
to the House

8/3/25

cc: Vice President
Jubilee House
Accra

Chief of Staff
Jubilee House
Accra

[Pause]

Hon Members, I think this matter has been outstanding for some time, so I believe we can go straight to item numbered 19 at page 6 of the Order Paper, which is the motion that this honourable House adopt the second Report. Is it the second Report of the Committee of Selection? It is the first Report?

Mr Ayariga: Yes, it is the first Report.

The Speaker: It cannot be.

[Interruption]

Mr Ayariga: All right.

The Speaker: We did the first, which was the first three committees, Business Committee, the Committee of Selection itself and the Appointments Committee, so this is the second Report and I am informed that it has been laid already. That is why I said we should go straight to the item numbered 19, where the motion is to be moved. Sorry? It has not been laid?

[Interruption]

My advisors are not the Leaders, it is the Clerks-at-the-Table.

Yes, Majority Leader, you can guide but you do not advice.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, let us just lay it.

The Speaker: Because the Clerks at the table says it has not been laid, so please let us take it.

PAPER

By the Chairman of the Committee —

Second Report of the Committee of Selection on the Composition of other Standing and Select Committees

The Speaker: Hon Members, that is item numbered 10(b). Item numbered 10(b) has accordingly been laid and is for distribution to all Members of Parliament. In that case, we will have to take item numbered 18 which deals with the procedural motion.

Yes, Majority Leader?

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the motion given, the motion for the adoption of the Second Report of the Committee of Selection on the Composition of other Standing and Select Committees may be *moved* today.

The Speaker: Any seconder?

Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib): Mr Speaker, I duly second.

The Speaker: Hon Members, Motion moved and seconded and it is for consideration of the House.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

Resolved accordingly.

The Speaker: So we move to the item numbered 19, which deals with the substantive motion. I chair the Committee and I have mandated and authorised the Majority Leader to move the motion for and on my behalf.

MOTIONS

Second Report of the Committee of Selection on the Composition of other

Standing and Select Committees

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this honourable House adopts the Second Report of the Committee of Selection on the Composition of other Standing and Select Committees.

5.42 p.m.

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga) on behalf of the Chairman of the Committee: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, authorisation having been given, I move that this House adopts the second Report of the Committee of Selection on the

composition of Standing and Select Committees.

Mr Speaker, I so move.

The Speaker: Yes, any seconder?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion and seconding it, I have a very simple prayer to make to all my Colleagues that in this Chamber, no Committee is better than the other. A Committee is as better as one makes it look so. I shall invite Hon Members to one instance of Hon Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa.

Mr Speaker, Hon Ablakwa assumed the Chair of the Government Assurances Committee. Prior to that, Government Assurances Committee was generally seen as a Siberian Committee, with no work to be done. I was impressed as Leader of Government Business, the way Mr Ablakwa took upon himself the responsibility of making that Committee very active and attractive. No doubt that in this Ninth Parliament, many people were even yearning for that Committee. But I can even add a second, that many years ago, it took the industry of some great legislators to make the Public Accounts Committee a prominent Committee, an active one and an attractive one, and now, Members would want to go to Public Accounts Committee. It is all because of how previous Members made that Committee very prominent.

So, Colleagues, I have been a first termmer before; I have been a second termmer; and I have been a third termmer.

Perhaps in the third term, I was in Leadership, but I know, and I will not pretend about it, the anxiety with which Members of Parliament receive Reports like this. Everybody is as anxious. Where was I placed? Then sometimes Leadership would have to receive some bashing. Hon Members ask why we put them in a particular Committee and not another? But wherever Hon Members are placed, especially Hon Members who are going to be Leaders on Committees: Ranking Members, Deputy Ranking Members, Chairpersons, and Vice Chairpersons, they should sit together, look at their scope, and promise themselves that that they will deliver and I am sure, very soon, people will be rushing for that Committee.

So, Hon Colleagues, on seconding this, this is my piece of advice for all of us.

Mr Speaker, most humbly, I so second. Thank you.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon Members, any more contribution? It is a Committee that is chaired by the Speaker.

I chaired the Committee, and together with Leadership, we go through to ensure that all shades of opinion are considered and factored into the composition of the Committees. It is not an easy task, and that is why it took some time to get it together.

Hon Members, focus on the Committees, because we budget for each

and every Committee, and the budget is usually initially proposed by the technical and Leadership of the Committee. Because this is the First Session and the Leadership of the Committee is now being appointed, to use a term in our Standing Orders, you might not have been part of the proposal of the budgets of your Committees but at the level of the Board, where you are represented by your Leaders, we take the work plan of each Committee into consideration in deciding how much to allocate to the Committee for the year.

So next year, if you are really focused on showing some prospects, you may have your Committee getting more allocation. But if you are not able to utilise what we allocate to you this year, you are likely to have a reduction because it shows the type of Leadership and Membership you have at the Committee.

The composition of the Committees, as you know, is governed by the Constitution and the nature and character of the functions and duties are similar so when I hear people talk about one Committee being dry, another being wet, one being juicy, and another being bony, I just do not understand it. I served in most of those Committees, and I did not find any Committee juicy or bony or rocky or dry or wet. No. You make the Committee what it is, and so, we have made the balances because we have only 41, or is it 40 and a half women Members of Parliament. Then we have just 88 of our Colleagues in the Minority and 183 Members of the Majority. We also have four Independent Candidates. We have

to balance all these in composing the Committees and so there was a serious challenge, but at the end of the day, we managed to do what we are presenting to the House.

So, I just want to support the plea that the Minority Leader has made; please accept it. In fact, I thought it was a referral to rather Hon Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzrah who was the Chair of the Assurances Committee who transformed that Committee, not Mr Ablakwa. It was Emmanuel Bedzrah who transformed it, and it became, by your term or terminology, attractive. So, it can be done at any Committee. It is just that some Committees oversee some Ministries but I can tell you, it depends on who is the Minister there, and Hon Members must learn how to work with your Ministers at the Committee level but at our level, we do all we can to make sure that you have the necessary tools and resources to work. We are talking about good governance now, and we are talking about resetting the country, and that reset is not at only one place. It is not at the Executive. It must also happen in Parliament. So, we are going to do a lot of changes to reset Parliament and to make sure that we hold the Executive to do what they promised to do.

We want value for money, and you are the people to oversee that. So please, this is a giant step forward. As we anticipate the presentation of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy on Tuesday, I will immediately after that refer to the various aspects to the Committees, and Hon Members have to start working seriously next week. We do not have

much time, because by 27th or 28th March, 2025, the Budget Statement and Economic Policy should have been passed by the House, so that we can go for the Easter recess.

So please, Members, get your loins ready and be prepared to put all you have now. That is why we did the orientation and the rest.

5.52 p.m.

I know you are well prepared for it, and I trust we will do a good job. So, with this, I thank all of you for accepting, and now, I put the Question.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: Yes, please?

Mr Nyindam: Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

I know the Motion has been moved and passed. I know how sensitive it is for us to be requesting for the Reports before this exercise. Now that it has been moved and then adopted, can we have copies? Because if we had asked for copies, I know it would be difficult for Leadership to provide, but now that it has gone, can we have the reports?

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon Member, I am sorry; I am not aware that copies have not been distributed. I signed the Report, and the Clerk to the Committee left me to make copies available to Members. So, I am not aware Members have not

been given copies. But you should have raised it. If you had raised it, I would not have put the Question. You are a former Leader, and you know these things. So, please—

Hon Members, just a minute, where is the Clerk to the Committee? Yes,

Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I think it will be resolved if we can take an adjournment.

The Speaker: Yes, Deputy Minority Whip?

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, I assure my Colleagues that they will get their copies. They do not have any reason to be worried. Whatever we have here—

The Speaker: Hon Members, to be frank with you, it is a surprise to me because both Leaders were at the final meeting; the Hon Minority Leader was personally present, and Hon Majority Leader was present. There were a few Members from the Minority Side because their Chief Whip had travelled, but the former Minister for Youth and Sports, Ussif, I did ask him and he confirmed the authority in which he was there.

Hon Member, can you confirm this?

Mr Mustapha Ussif: Mr Speaker, yes, I can confirm that I had the blessings from my Leadership that the Committee meeting should be held, and what has been done is something that this Side

endorsed 100 per cent. I have been informed, so thank you.

The Speaker: Yes, Leader, just a minute. Let me listen to him.

Mr K. N. Osei: Mr Speaker, ordinarily I would not have commented on this matter, but there is this kind of apprehension that they have not seen the Report. We are not saying that there will be some kind of fishy deals in a way. If they have not seen it and tomorrow, it is a different thing altogether, what happens? As for Mr Speaker, he has done the right thing. We are demanding from the Leadership; they should let them bring us a copy now. We are demanding it; we want copies before we leave here. Even if it is one copy on this Side, we will appreciate it, and we will accept it.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is not suggesting that he is a fisherman, because this is the Speaker's Committee, and when we finished, all of us at the Committee meeting, copies were taken away from us, including myself as Leader and my Colleague as the Minority Leader. And the only copy that was left was given to the Speaker to go and sign.

So, what I mean is that it is not possible for anybody to change it. So, the Speaker will have it published as part of our reports for the *Votes and Proceedings* of today's activities. That is how it is done. So, none of us can change it. The Speaker is here. Every copy was taken away, except his copy.

The Speaker: Hon Members, please, we should not usually try to trivialise or joke with serious matters. But this matter is a very critical aspect of Leadership. Trust is very important. If one is a Leader and their followers do not trust them, they will never achieve much. It is very important, because of that, we have taken time—In fact, we have been meeting, but any time after a meeting, I get some dissenting views and some concerns being expressed. So, we kept on working with the Leadership. And today, we had the final meeting and both Leaders were present, and we did extensive work there.

So, after that, the decision was for all the drafts to be taken away from all the Members, except what was agreed, which was left with me and my Clerk. So, I asked the Clerk to go and compile it and bring it, which he did. In fact, Members did not even know there is a Committee known as the Winnowing Committee. We added that there, but it is part of the Standing Orders, so it was properly done.

But if you had drawn my attention from the time the Motion was moved that copies had not yet been distributed, I would have waited for copies to be distributed for you to go through. If you have had concerns to express, it would have been received and worked on because the Leaders need your trust to be able to lead you effectively well. So, please, I have just sent for copies to be brought, and they will be given to you. As you go through them, if you have concerns, pass them on to the Committee. As we go along, we can look

at those concerns and improve upon them.

There is nothing wrong with it. It is always work in motion. We can do it. But that trust is very important. *[pause]*

6.02 p.m.

Alhaji Yusif Sulemana: I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for the advice and also say that our Colleagues should take this advice seriously.

We have full trust in our Leadership, and we believe that what has been approved, nothing, absolutely nothing, will be changed from that document. So, if they do not trust their Leadership, please, that should be their concern—*[Uproar]*—They should not speak as though we on this Side will share that with them. We have so much trust in our Leadership and so, nobody should suggest that there is somebody somewhere who can change something or there is a system somewhere that can change something.

This House is a very serious House and we should not think about some of these issues. This House is a house of records and whatever that has taken place here will remain in the records forever. So, they should learn from that.

Mr Speaker thank you.

The Speaker: I do not know what you are now debating. I can allow the conversation, but it is now not a debate,

because the Question has been put and it has been adopted. But you want to converse, so I can allow that.

Let me listen to your Leader first before I come to you.

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

My Friend on the other Side just intimated the issue of trust. We raised the issue of procedure and not trust. We have more than an overwhelming trust in our Leadership. Please, let me make that point. So, we will not come and raise issues of trust. We do not distrust anyone. What we sought to put across was the issue of procedure. The moment the Rt Hon Speaker indicated his acceptance of the matter, we are good to go. So, please, let us make this point very clear.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Yes, please.

Mr Alhassan Tampuli Sulemana: Mr Speaker, this apprehension and, indeed, what looks like a tense moment here in this Chamber is nothing but empathy from our Side to some of our Colleagues on the other Side. This is because, indeed, when we see some of them as Chairpersons of various Committees then we know they have lost the battle. They are no longer going to be Deputy Ministers.

Mr Speaker, we are doing this on their behalf. We want to be sure that those who are going to be made Deputy

Ministers will emerge so. I can see Hon Jasaw and the rest of them. So, we are doing this on their behalf. So, please, help us to help you.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Clement Apaak?

Dr Clement Abas Apaak: Mr Speaker, I do not believe anyone on this Side has courted the sympathies of our Colleagues on the other Side; *di wo fie asem*.

Having said so, Mr Speaker, let me emphasise again that as a Member of the Committee of Selection, I have been a witness to the processes and, indeed, I made a recommendation that all the copies that were given to us should be returned to the Clerk. And, Mr Speaker knowing fully well the nature of the classroom, duly instructed the Clerk to take every single draft copy. So, there should not be any fear that people who deserve to be on the Committees for which they have been assigned would be there. So, no fears. And, please, we do not need your sympathies.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful.

Mr Nyindam —*rose*—

The Speaker: Thank you so much. All right, that is the last person.

Mr Matthew Nyindam: Mr Speaker, thank you very much because I think that I brought this matter up and it is not about trust, to be honest. We sincerely

trust the Speaker because this is the Speaker's Committee and we trust the Leadership; both the Majority and the Minority Leadership. But the issue is that we have adopted a Report and if we leave here and, unfortunately, we are asked which Committee we belong to and we who adopted the Report do not even know the Committee we belong to, that would be unfair. That is why I requested for that Report, so that, at least, by the time we leave here, it is fair for Members who are here to know that we belong to this Committee. It has nothing to do with trust issues.

So, Mr Speaker, thank you for indulging me.

The Speaker: Thank you so much.

Yes, actually, the procedure should have been followed properly, but, as I said, the law will say that you sat on your rights. The time you should have raised the issue, you did not. After we put the Question and adopted the Report, then you drew our attention that there was no Report before you. So, what were you voting for? So, you acquiesced. But trying to bring back some suspicion and maybe some of you are not too sure whether you will be put where you want. Definitely, it is not that you will get what you want. It is looking at the composition of the House and what we want to achieve in each Committee.

And so, even though I did not veto any of the proposals from the Members, I thought that they did a good job because they looked at, in spite of the paucity of the numbers of our women, they tried to

make sure that we had some women in every Committee. We did not want to overload them too and deny the gentlemen, so it is well crafted. But as we go along, maybe some more names will come for some new appointments. There may be some shifts, then we can improve upon it.

My luck is that many of these gentlemen were my students. They were all following me; I did not know they were having different colours. But with their experience, they can tell you that some offices are better than Ministerial offices, so I understand. I did not experience that but here I am as the Speaker—No, it is a reference, not an attack.

Hon Members, may we now move on to the last—I think the last item is for us to call it a day. Is that the case, Leadership?

Mr Ricketts-Hagan: Yes, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: In that sense, I proceed to put the Question or have you done the five hours? If you have done the five hours, I will proceed to adjourn. Have you done the five hours?

Mr Shaib: Mr Speaker, that is so. So, we are in your hands.

The Speaker: Yes?

Mr Ricketts-Hagan: Mr Speaker, I was just confirming that we have done the five hours, so we are in your hands.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon Members, I proceed to adjourn the House to Tuesday at 10—Is it 10 or 9 am? Table, are we to come earlier than that because of the presentation of the Budget Statement? 10 am? I proceed to adjourn the House to Tuesday at 10 in the forenoon.

Hon Members, the House is accordingly adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was adjourned at 6:12 p.m. till Tuesday, 11th March, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Editor's Note

This *Official Report* was corrected by the House on 20th March, 2025, as follows:

- a) The numbering from column 248 onwards was corrected.
- b) Column 16, paragraph 3, line 11 “Junga” was corrected to “Janga”
- c) “Akomadan” was corrected to “Akumadan” in column 17 and 18, paragraph 3, lines 9 and 7 respectively.