



## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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### OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE  
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

*The House met at 12.55 p.m.*

[MR FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER IN  
THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, in the absence of a communication from the President and a Formal Communication by the Speaker, can we vary and move to the item numbered 5 on today's Order Paper—Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND  
THE OFFICIAL REPORT**

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, correction of *Votes and Proceeding* of Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.

Page 1...9 —

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko and Prof Nyarko** — *rose* —

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Hon Member for Effia? Prof Nyarko, I would come to you; let me listen to the Hon Member for Effia first.

**Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, at page 7, the item numbered 5, under “RECOGNITION OF VISITORS”, reads:

“The Hon Second Deputy recognised in the House a delegation of Officers from the Department of Research Services of the Parliament of Uganda who were on a study visit to the Parliament of Ghana from Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 to Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025.”

Mr Speaker, I would wish that instead of repeating “February, 2025”, they could cancel the first “February, 2025” for it to now read, “Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> to Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025”

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** But, Hon Member, is what is there wrong?

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** No, it is not the proper way of—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** So, are you just making a suggestion?

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** Yes, the proper way—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Once what is here is not wrong, let us go by whatever is stated here.

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, it is not the right way of indicating dates.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** That is why I asked if it is wrong—

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** Yes, it is wrong—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** To state categorically “10<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 to Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025”?

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, yes, that is my position that the way it has been captured is wrong.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Well, I will ask the Table Office to take note, but I do not think it is wrong. *[Pause]*

Page 9—

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, at page 9, the item numbered 8, under “RULING FROM THE CHAIR”, I just want to seek your guidance on the last sentence which reads:

“...contents of their statements with Leadership from both sides of the House and the Chair for prior approval.”

Does the “Chair” here refer to the “Speaker” or the “person presiding”? My understanding is that when we are in the Chamber, we either refer to “Mr Speaker” or the “person presiding”, so I wanted clarification and guidance on the “Chair” as used.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Are you talking about the item numbered 9(i)?

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** No, I am talking about the item numbered 8, “RULING FROM THE CHAIR”, which reads:

“The Hon Second Deputy Speaker *ruled* that Hon Members who wish to make urgent statements pursuant to Order 93(1) of the Standing Orders must first share the contents of their statements with Leadership from both sides of the House and the Chair for prior approval.”

Mr Speaker, so, I was asking for guidance on the use of the word “Chair” and whether the use of “prior approval” is to the Speaker or the person presiding. This is because my understanding is that in the Chamber, it is either the person presiding or the Speaker—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Well, you are right. So, Table Office, take note; use “Speaker” instead of “Chair”.

Yes, Prof Kingsley Nyarko?

**Prof Kingsley Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, this is a minor observation on the item numbered 9, “STATEMENT”; the last but one line reads:

“...Minister for Finance, as a fugitive by the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP)...”.

If we look at Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959), it is stated as “the Special Prosecutor”. The definite article, “the”, is missing in there. I think it would be appropriate to include that to align with what the Act specifically captures.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. I think the phrase used by the Special Prosecutor is “fugitive of

justice". So, Table Office kindly take note.

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, with regard to the corrections I made to the item numbered 8 at page 9, if the heading could also be taken note of. So, instead of "RULING FROM THE CHAIR", the word "CHAIR", could be substituted with the "Speaker", because the Second Deputy Speaker was presiding at that time.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

Page 10—

1.05 p.m.

**Dr Eric Afful:** Mr Speaker, let us go back to page 9. I am not satisfied with the word "Chair" being changed to "the Speaker".

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, I think my Colleague was not listening to me. What I said was that yesterday, there was a ruling by the person presiding. When we are in the Chamber, it is not Committees where we say "Chairman". We have three Speakers: The Speaker, First Deputy Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker. In the absence of the Speaker, we still refer to the person presiding as Speaker but not Chair. So, I was seeking his guidance whether yesterday, the ruling was made by the Hon Second Deputy Speaker, who is a Speaker and not a Chairman.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Afful, our rules are clear. We have "the

Speaker" and we have "Mr Speaker" so, Chairperson could mean Caucus chairman or Committee chairman. To make that distinction, there is nothing wrong if we use the words 'the Speaker' or 'Mr Speaker'.

Page 10 ... 11? Yes, Hon Member?

**Mr Anthony Mmieh:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

This is just a minor correction on page 10. Right on top of the item numbered ii, I believe there is an omission before the word "issue". It should be "to the issue raised" and not "to issue raised" so, "the" is missing.

**Prof Nyarko** — *rose* —

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Member. Table, take note. Hon Kingsley Nyarko, I saw you on your feet.

**Prof Nyarko:** It is the same issue and that is being handled by the Clerks.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Very Well. Yes, Hon Member? Is it on page 10?

**Ing Surv Maxwell Kwame Lukutor:** Yes, page 10, the item numbered ii. The last statement under the item numbered ii reads, "her development objectives", I thought that it should be "her developmental objectives". I do not know whether it is being quoted verbatim based on what the maker of the Statement said, but if it is grammatical, it should be "her developmental objectives".

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, do you mean to say that “development objectives” is grammatically wrong?

**Ing Surv Lukutor:** I just feel like the better—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Well, I would leave that to the Table. Page 11?

Hon Members, the *Votes and Proceedings* of the 16<sup>th</sup> Sitting, dated Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 as corrected, is adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, we have the *Official Report* of 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2025. The floor is yours for corrections. Hon Members, any correction? Yes, Hon Prof Kinglsey Nyarko.

**Prof Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, this is a minor correction in the last paragraph of column 2, reading from line 5. And I read:

“But my brother knows that today is Friday and he also knows that as we speak there are two Committees meeting. The Ad-hoc Committee and some other Committees are meeting.”

My view is that, if it says that two Committees are meeting and there is an Ad-Hoc Committee, then it could be “another Committee” and not “some other Committees are meeting”. It would make it more than the two Committees stated earlier unless that is what was said verbatim.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Table, take note. Yes, Hon Frank Afriyie?

**Mr Frank Afriyie:** Mr Speaker, with your leave, let me invite you to column 2, paragraph 5. “**Minority Chief Whip (Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor):** Mr Speaker, I thank you the for the opportunity...”, There has been an insertion of “the” and that should be corrected there.

Mr Speaker, again, can we go to column 9, paragraph 1, under Motion, line 6? In the word “Ministers” there is the omission of “I”. Can that be corrected?

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Table, take note. Hon Members, any further corrections. —[Pause]—

Hon Members, the *Official Report* of Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, as corrected, is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, the item numbered 6, Statements. I have before me a Statement by Hon Muhammed Braimah Bawah, Member of Parliament (MP) for Ejura Sekyeredumase Constituency on the destruction of the Ejura Police Station by rampaging youth on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2025.

Hon Member, you have the floor.

**Alhaji Bawah Muhammad Braimah:** Thank you, Mr Speaker—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, resume your seat. Minority Chief Whip?

**Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, indulge me. I am aware of a number of Statements you have admitted. Because of the communication you gave out when we met at Conclave, that you have to adjourn because of a particular reason, would you be kind enough to inform the House on the number of Statements we have? So that Hon Members can apprise themselves accordingly. Because I am aware that we have two on our Side.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Yes. Hon Members, if you stick to the contribution of five minutes, and we limit the number of people who are to contribute to the Statement, then we can take three or four Statements. So, Leadership must guide me as to the number of contributions on each Statement. So, I would be seeking your guidance when it comes to contributions.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, I am sorry. This is just for you to mention the ones that have been admitted, then I am sure that as we progress, along the line, we can confer and determine the number of contributions that should be entertained. I am aware of two on our Side.

1.15 p.m.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, the second Statement is by Hon Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh and it is on World Radio Day. The other Statement stands in the name of Hon Matthew Nyindam, on the devastating bush fire in the Kpandai District in the Northern Region. Hon Members, if time allows us,

we may also take a Statement in the name of Hon Michael Baafi Okyere, Hon Member of Parliament for New Juaben South, on Strengthening Ghana's Industrial Sector and trade for sustainable economic growth.

Thank you very much.

Minority Whip?

Deputy Majority Leader?

**Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan):** Mr Speaker, thank you. Mr Speaker, I think you read out four different Statements so — we would do three on each Side.

Mr Speaker, I think three on each Side. You have directed that we should do five minutes so that we would be able to take more of the Statements. So I think three to start off with.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Does the three include Leadership?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, yes.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** I am accordingly guided.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, let me support the Deputy Majority Leader for his suggestion. He said three on each Side and we would go by the five minutes.

Mr Speaker, I am wondering — I do not know if there has been any changes on the Frontbench of the Majority. I can

see my friend Hon Richard Acheampong happily seated at the back and then we have — is he staging a *coup*? And he is seated in the chair of the Majority Chief Whip —

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minority Chief Whip, you are right.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, we are just curious, the House needs to know.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Deputy Majority Whip, please take your seat.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** He should take his seat.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Eric Afful.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, this is serious. On our Side, we know that seat is for the Chief Whip, and the Chief Whip is a very senior Member of this House. Is it a case that he is staging a *coup*?

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Eric Afful, please take your seat. Let us make progress.

**Mr Eric Afful:** Mr Speaker, I am going back to my seat—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** You are directed to take your seat without comment.

Hon Eric Afful, you are directed accordingly.

Yes, Deputy Majority Leader?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, may I remind ourselves that seats have not been properly allocated in the Chamber yet, so if you direct him to go to his seat. —

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Bawah Braimah, you have the floor.

**Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe:** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. Mr Speaker, bullying is allowed —

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Doyoe, I have given the floor to Hon Braimah.

## STATEMENT

### Destruction of Ejura Police Station by Rampaging Youth on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2025

**Alhaji Bawah Muhammad Braimah (NDC — Ejura Sekyeredumase):** Mr Speaker, I wish to express my deepest condolences to the family of the late Misbawu Shaibu. I also take this opportunity to appeal to the youth of Ejura to remain calm and allow due process to take its course. While I strongly condemn the violent destruction of the Ejura Police Station, I urge all stakeholders to address this matter with the seriousness it deserves, to prevent such unfortunate incidents in the future.

Mr Speaker, the ravaging of the Ejura Police Station through fire by rampaging youth, following the death of Misbawu Shaibu in police custody is deeply



regrettable. I appeal to the youth of Ejura to exercise restraint and avoid actions that jeopardise community resources. The destroyed property does not belong to the Ghana Police Service personnel, but to the people of Ejura. The Ejura Police Station, built before Ghana's independence, has served the community for decades, providing vital law enforcement services. It is therefore unfortunate that the events of 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2025, led to its total destruction.

Mr Speaker, this tragic incident could have been avoided with better handling by the police. The late Misbawu Shaibu, a young man in his twenties, was alleged to have bought a stolen phone. On the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2025, the police invited him to the station via a phone call. He complied, arriving on his motorbike with the alleged stolen phone. After interrogation, he was taken into custody. Despite his plea to return home and report back the next day, which included an offer to leave behind his motorbike and phone, his request was denied. He reportedly told the police he was unwell, having just returned from Amantin market.

Mr Speaker, while in custody, Misbawu Shaibu complained of abdominal pain and began vomiting. When his condition worsened, the police took him to the Ejura Government Hospital, where he passed away. Without informing his family, the police moved his body to Mampong, in the early hours of 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2025. When the family arrived at the police station that morning to visit him, they were informed of his death. This news

understandably infuriated them, and word spread that Misbawu had died in custody due to police brutality.

Mr Speaker, the youth, angered by the news, began gathering at the police station. Sensing danger, the police evacuated inmates, documents, and firearms to the divisional headquarters. At approximately 7:00 a.m., I received a call from the municipal crime officer about the escalating situation. Though I was in Accra, I immediately contacted the Assemblyman for the Kotokoli line Electoral Area, who was at the scene, and urged him to appeal to the youth for calm. I also advised the police to call for reinforcement. The Divisional Commander assured me that reinforcements were on their way from Mampong and Nsuta.

Mr Speaker, despite these efforts, the situation deteriorated. After 30 minutes, I received several calls about the growing unrest at the station. I contacted the Ashanti North Regional Police Commander and the commander of the army detachment, Lt. Effah, requesting immediate intervention. Unfortunately, the promised reinforcements never arrived, and the police station was set ablaze by the rampaging youth.

Later, Mr Speaker, the Municipal Crime Officer called me to request that the Assemblyman inform the family to meet them at the police barrier for the release of Misbawu's body. I implored on them not to release the body amid the disturbances and appealed to the Divisional and Regional Commanders to prioritise an autopsy before handing over the body. Despite my plea, the body was

released without an autopsy. However, I later coordinated with the police and medical superintendent to ensure an autopsy was performed by a pathologist from Kumasi.

1.25 p.m.

This step was crucial to establish the cause of death and address public concerns.

Mr Speaker, the sequence of events clearly demonstrates that if the police had acted professionally and proactively, this tragic incident and the destruction of the police station could have been averted. The evacuation of inmates and sensitive materials shows that the police anticipated the potential for violence but failed to implement adequate preventive measures.

Mr Speaker, I urgently appeal to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to investigate the circumstances leading to this unfortunate incident, and hold those responsible accountable. Furthermore, I call on the Minister for the Interior to prioritise rebuilding the Ejura Police Station and increasing the number of police personnel in the municipality to enhance effective policing.

Mr Speaker, I remain committed to supporting efforts to restore peace and strengthen law enforcement in our community. May the soul of Misbawu Shaibu rest in peace.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Hon Members, any contributions?

Yes, Hon Frank Afriyie?

**Mr Frank Afriyie (NDC — Afadjato South):** Mr Speaker, let me thank you so much, and with your leave, congratulate the maker of the Statement. I also wish to convey sincere condolences to the bereaved families. Indeed, this should be a trying moment, and we stand in absolute solidarity with them.

Mr Speaker, listening to the maker of the Statement, I was almost frozen into speechlessness. Indeed, a healthy and law-abiding young man has been invited by the police and as a law-abiding citizen, he complied and followed up. It is shocking to learn how such a healthy man would go the place but never came back; it is something that can agitate our youth anywhere: right from Navrongo to Paga, Afadjato to Adaklu, or anywhere at all.

Mr Speaker, however, it also shows that, increasingly, we are becoming a society of violence. The action or reaction of the youth cannot, in any form or shade, be validated. Using violent confrontation as a tool to the extent of burning down a police station should be condemned with all the force that we can marshal. It is intolerable; it is reprehensible, and it is inexcusable. We cannot tolerate that, and we must, as a matter of time, move in quickly to engage our youth to apply the best tools in their toolbox even when the situation is dire.

Mr Speaker, most importantly—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, conclude.

**Mr Afriyie:** Mr Speaker, this Statement shows that our response time and approach is defective on occasions like this. The young man complained of stomach ache, so what happened to our first aid system? If there was any first aid system, would he have passed on? I believe not. Again, from the Statement, we are told the police actually envisaged the reaction of the youth and in the face of all that, they could not call for reinforcement. These are very legitimate issues that I think we must consider going forward.

Mr Speaker, once again, our hearts are with the family in this trying moment.

I thank you for the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Any further contribution?

Yes, Hon Sanja Nanja?

**Mr Sanja Nanja (NDC — Atebubu/Amantin):** Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement ably made by the Hon Member for Ejura Sekyeredumase.

Mr Speaker, of late, the vandalism associated with the youth of this country is becoming something very serious and

alarming. With every provocation, government properties are attacked and vandalised. On this very day, the 11<sup>th</sup> January, a similar thing happened in my own constituency. What was it? It was because armed robbers killed a 75-year-old driver, and the drivers and some youth decided to demonstrate against the police with the perception that the police is not doing as expected of them since armed robbery has become very rampant along the Kumasi-Ejura-Atebubu Road.

Mr Speaker, in the case of Atebubu, the only two pickups for patrols were vandalised, and the police were now left unable to go for patrol. I think a serious look must be taken, and normally, the youth involved in this would have to be punished, but what do we realise? In most cases, when it happens this way, no proper investigation is done, no arrest is effected. If something is not done and it goes this way, I am afraid, we are sitting on a time bomb. This is because any government property, with little provocation, would be under attack: schools, police stations, among others. The same youth are calling for infrastructure development; meanwhile, the same youth destroy the little we have.

Mr Speaker, so, I would call on the police to investigate this issue thoroughly.

With this, Mr Speaker, I thank you.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Yes, Hon John Ntim Fordjour?

**Rev John Ntim Fordjour (NPP — Assin South):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I rise to commend the maker of the Statement, Hon Muhammad Bawah Braimah, Member of Parliament (MP) for Ejura Sekyeredumase for bringing to the fore, the violence that took place in Ejura Sekyeredumase in relation to the attack on the police station. And to commend the Member of Parliament for his role played in calming the situation so far, and also join him and my other Colleagues in signaling our condolences to the families of the deceased.

Mr Speaker, the growing state of acts of violence in this country, particularly within the span of a month or two, is quite worrying and deserves every condemnation there is. Much as many have condemned the alleged mishandling of the deceased by the police, it is also equally condemnable any acts of violence meted out on the police station that led to its destruction, which now requires the same modest resources of the state to be deployed in rebuilding.

1.35 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I always say a society is a reflection of what leaders advocate for, and we as a political class, have a cue to take particularly when we almost see it becoming all right that known or unknown military personnel must raid a private residence of a former Minister. When Electoral Commission must be attacked for the conduct of their legitimate constitutional duty, when —

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Ntim Fordjour, make sure you operate within Order 93(5).

**Rev Fordjour:** Mr Speaker, I am guided by Order 93. So, it is important that all these acts—They dovetail into violence which undermine the peace that this country enjoys. Consistently for the past four to five years, the Global Peace Index and many organisations have ranked Ghana as the most peaceful country in Africa; even globally as one of the most peaceful in the top five. The recent one ranked Ghana as second most peaceful in the world even ahead of Australia and Canada. It is important that we all do our parts to consolidate this sterling credential so we do not undermine the peace and security we all enjoy.

It is important that devoid of politicisation, we show leadership in rallying the rest of our society with us in condemning acts of violence regardless who conducted it. And even when suspects in the case of the deceased, Mr Shaibu—even when a suspect is alleged to have conducted a wrong doing or a crime, they deserve the right to be heard; they deserve the right for fair trial; they do not need to be condemned. In the handling of prosecution, their dignity ought to be upheld. So, all these are lessons we need to take and apply in consistency with this principle wherever certain offences are suspected. With these few words, I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. I proceed to Hon Sukparu.

**Mr Mohammed Adams Sukparu (NDC — Sissala West):** Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement ably made by my Colleague, Hon Member for Ejura Sekyeredumase. Mr Speaker, this particular issue is very important for us as leaders in this country.

Mr Speaker, victims dying in police custody has become something that has been happening in the past few years. I recall on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2023, a woman who was a stroke patient died in police custody. And sometimes, one asks oneself the kind of investigations the police are conducting that they would have to keep somebody in their custody for more than 48 hours as the law requires.

We are all aware of the Supreme Court's ruling in the past, that says that all offences are now bailable. And that before anyone can detain anybody for more than 48 hours for investigations as a police officer, they need to go to court for permission if they are not done with the investigation. So that the person can either be kept in police custody or prison custody while the investigation continues. But with this, Mr Speaker, I think in as much as I condemn the actions of the youth, I think the police also are supposed to be blamed.

If seriousness is attached to matters like this, especially when it has to do with petty theft issues, the police must attach seriousness to the investigation and make sure that these matters are investigated within the laws that are stated. But when you have a victim kept

in custody for more than 48 hours, all in the name of investigation, if something happens to the person, certainly, the youths or the relatives would react.

Mr Speaker, I would want to use this opportunity to call on the Police and all the security agencies to attach seriousness and make sure that when there is a case before them to investigate, they do it within the laws.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, I thank you once again for the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Members. We live in a country governed by law. We are not living in a country in a natural state of war. Hon Members, nobody is above the law, so we should allow the law to operate. We cannot continue to be taking the law into our own hands. Police are to protect lives and properties. We need to realise that Ghanaians and the Police are supposed to live conterminously. I will therefore urge the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to ensure that this matter is investigated thoroughly and anybody found culpable be made to face the full rigours of the law.

Hon Members, let me add my voice in thanking the maker of the Statement —[Pause]—

Hon Members, yesterday, there was a Statement made by Hon First Deputy Minority Whip. It generated so much debate and in the course of the debate, the Hon Majority Leader promised to verify some issues and bring them to the fore. I am reliably informed that he is

ready to inform the House. After that, I will give the floor to the Minority Leader, and no one else is entitled to contribute to the issue. I will therefore give the floor to the Majority Leader, but Hon Members, we must be circumspect and operate within Standing Order 93(5). Hon Majority Leader, you have the floor.

1.45 p.m.

## STATEMENT

### **Update on the Joint Police and Military Entry into Ken Ofori-Atta's Residence**

**Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga):** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. As you rightly indicated, yesterday, the First Deputy Minority Whip sought leave of the Speaker and the indulgence of the House to raise a matter that he thought was of urgent public importance. Specifically, he raised two issues: one pertaining to some press conference of the Special Prosecutor at the Office of the Special Prosecutor, and the other drew attention to a joint police and military entry into the private residence of the former Minister for Finance, Hon Ken Ofori-Atta.

Mr Speaker, the Statement drew a lot of debate, following some commentary, and I promised this House that I would carry out some investigations to try and appreciate the circumstances surrounding the joint police and military entry into the private residence of the former Minister for Finance.

In making this Statement today, let me indicate that as a country and as a

Parliament, we have a Constitution to uphold. That Constitution has embedded in it, fundamental human rights, including the right to one's privacy and the right to the integrity of one's property. His Excellency, President John Dramani Mahama, remains committed to ensuring that the rights and liberties of every individual are respected.

Mr Speaker, secondly, I make this Statement on the basis of the commitment of His Excellency John Dramani Mahama to reset this country, which means that everybody must act in compliance with the law and the mandate of institutions. So, I have called the relevant stakeholders in the matter to find out exactly what happened. It is true that the private residence of the former Minister for Finance was entered into by operatives of the military and the police, led by somebody we believe works at the National Security Coordinator's office. His name is Mr Jakpa.

Mr Speaker, we have investigated the matter. We want to say and assure our fellow countrymen and Colleagues in this House that, we have received assurances from the Office of the National Security Coordinator, that it was not intended that that should happen, and that that occurrence is most regrettable and unfortunate, and he wants to give this House, his word and assurance that a thing like that should never happen again.

Mr Speaker, I have also spoken with the Minister for Defence, and the Minister for the Interior, who has spoken with the IGP, and all of them have given

their assurances to this House that a thing like that would not happen again. So, let me indicate to my Colleagues on the other Side that this Side of the House remains committed to ensuring that this country is reset. That its institutions function properly; that its officials act in accordance with the law, and that the rights and liberties of every citizen are upheld and protected under the regime of His Excellency John Dramani Mahama.

Mr Speaker, I extend my apologies to the former Minister for Finance, and I believe that this should suffice.

I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.  
[Hear! Hear!]

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Majority Leader. I will now invite the Hon Minority Leader for his comment.

**Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin):** Mr Speaker, the man, Mahama Ayariga, is making his name in the politics of our country. He is exemplary and must be commended.

Mr Speaker, I have not slept on this matter. He was taken to the south and I was taken to the north gate to ensure that this matter was resolved. What he has done today reminds me of what the Attorney-General did in 2015. In 2015, as a practitioner, I was all over the place, and I recall some outliners had urged upon him that I was making so much money from practice, so he should get me prosecuted on some tax offences. But after the state had raided my office, he stood his grounds. He did not tell me, but

someone said that the Deputy Attorney-General said no way, they should not invade my law firm again. And till date, he is the only person I have a picture with in my office to celebrate that moment where he felt that an opponent should not be a target, and we maintained a good friendship ever since.

Mr Speaker, indeed, all that he has done demonstrates sincerity. We are a political class; that is the path we have chosen. We are not to cover crime, but we must protect each other for the good of democracy. Mr Speaker, Ghanaians have told us something, that when they are fed up with one, they are fed up. In the 2000 elections, after Kufuor won, some of us, as student leaders, thought that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) would never come into office again because it was so devastating. But within eight years, Ghanaians were already fed up with the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Administration and they got the nod. Fast forward to 2016, when we had 169 seats, we thought it was all over for NDC, and in less than four years, the seats reduced to 137; we had to eat a humble pie.

As I always quote, the French man said, *c'est la vie*, this is life. Mr Speaker, indeed, today, I am leading a mighty few—[Laughter]—and Hon Ayariga, in the ECOWAS Parliament, is known as a sincere partner when it comes to resolving conflict, and he has demonstrated it here.

So, my respected Leader, I want to assure you that our Side would engage you constructively. Let us do the politics

in a very decent way. Let us respect each other; let us use words that are complementary, and hold those who are at the lowest ebb, up, and bring them up. If somebody makes a mistake, we can go to the person and say they could do it better.

1.55 p.m.

If somebody does it well, compliment them; let us celebrate each other. In the end, our principle would remain. I am a member of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), proudly so; another Hon Member is a member of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), proudly so. Do not let us use this platform to denigrate even our leaders. Sometimes, the little said about the way we go after our leaders, the better. We use unprintable words. And let me caution all of us, the 2024 elections, check the percentage turn out. In the Central Region, we did not go beyond 60 per cent. In the Volta Region, it was around the same figures; it was the same in the Ashanti, Upper East and Upper West Regions. In the mighty Greater Accra where all the politics are done, find out the percentage turn out. What it means is that a percentage of our population is getting fed up with the political class because of our conduct.

Mr Speaker, some few days ago, I was scolded about why was I apologising. I said, "When one needs to correct the wrong, one should swallow his or her ego." At least, that was what I have been taught. It does not matter, and if the whole Majority Leader, on behalf of Government, is apologising to an

individual, we must celebrate him. I would want to encourage our state institutions, especially those public servants who try to prove something to the new political master when they see a change of government. I have been working with them so I know. Some of them are changing the *Whatsapp* statuses and their display pictures (DP); we see it all. They should be careful. At least today, the Majority Leader has made it clear that they cannot act in the name of the Government and go scot-free. If there is anything against any past government official, due process must be followed and I am sure all of us would have peace.

My respected Colleague, extend to His Excellency, the President of the Republic, the assurances of the Minority that with this, we would also accord him every courtesy due him as President of the Republic. We would corporate and oppose, when we have to oppose; after all, our duty is to oppose the Majority Side. We can work together as a people to represent our people, and for our people to learn from us and to teach us, to train us, and to help us to advance this democracy.

Mr Speaker, I want to conclude by saying that I had an extensive engagement with Mr Ken Ofori-Atta this morning. He is traumatised by the labelling of this adjective to his person, but he still knows that his God is with him. He is undergoing some medical procedure. In fact, I had an early morning engagement with the Chief of Staff who confirmed that indeed, Mr Ken Ofori-Atta wrote to him and he is in receipt of the letter. He was very sincere in telling



me that. So, within reasonable time, I am sure he would come. I would also engage the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) constructively, and assure him and his office that if there was any miscommunication, I as a leader of my Side, is assuring him that the man would make himself available. He left the country with permission, and if there is anything that has to be investigated, he would make himself available. It is not easy to serve one's country, and I am sure all shall be well for the good of us all.

Mr Speaker, I thank you so much for this opportunity and once again, I thank the Majority Leader.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, let me use the opportunity to thank both the Majority and Minority Leaders for setting an exemplary life. Hon Members, this is the way we are supposed to go. My prayer is that we would live by the promises given us and would conduct the proceedings of the House with decorum and decency. I thank you.

I would then call on Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh, Member of Parliament for Bosome Freho Constituency to present his Statement.

## **STATEMENT**

### **World Radio Day**

**Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh (NPP — Bosome Freho):** Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you and the good people of

Bosome Freho for allowing me to represent them. Today, 13<sup>th</sup> February, happens to be the World Radio Day, and I am reading this Statement on the floor of Parliament to commemorate this special day.

Mr Speaker, Hon Members of Parliament, I am honoured to stand before the House today in commemoration of the World Radio Day. The World Radio Day, observed annually on February 13, was proclaimed in 2011, by the Member States of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012, as an International Day. This global celebration recognises the transformative power of radio in promoting peace, tolerance, and understanding in today's world. Globally, radio has been a cornerstone of communication for over a century, providing a platform for information dissemination, education, and entertainment. In Ghana, radiobroadcasting dates back to 31<sup>st</sup> July 1935, with the establishment of Radio ZOY, the first state broadcast station with a primary mandate of playing liaison between the Crown and the Colony. But over time, radio served a wider and a more significant role. By the 1940s, it had earned the accolade of being regarded as “theatre of the minds” because of the music, drama and news broadcasts it offered. Since then, radio has played a vital role in shaping our nation's history, from the struggle for independence, to being a mouthpiece for coup plotters and finally, becoming the voice of the people, which it is, to the present day.

Mr Speaker, our radio stations becoming a beacon of democracy of today, has however not been without a tussle. Prior to 2001, it was a criminal offence for a person to publish a defamatory or libelous statement about an identifiable person in the country. I am proud to state that on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2001, championed by the former President Nana Addo Dankwah Akufo-Addo, who was the then Attorney-General of the Republic, Ghana's Parliament unanimously voted to change the Criminal Code (Repeal of the Criminal and Seditious Laws - Amendment Bill) Act 2001) — a law by which many journalists had previously been jailed for doing their job. Now libel cases are handled in the civil court, and the remedy for same is damages among other civil remedies.

I cannot address my submissions to your honorable self and the House, without referring to the significant contributions journalists on radio have made to our country. Aside being a focal point for the dissemination of information, they have provided a platform for citizens to engage in discussions, hold leaders accountable, and access critical information, which forms a critical aspect of a democratic nation like Ghana. Radio, I reiterate has become an indispensable tool for democratic participation, especially at the local level. However, despite these contributions, there are challenges that we must acknowledge. Some journalists on radio have been known to perpetuate hate speech, propaganda, and deliberately misinforming the public on critical matters. These practices have the potential to incite violence, undermine

national cohesion, and erode trust in our democratic institutions. The growing cases of politically owned and affiliated radio stations, and more often than not, unfortunately, biased reportage and conveyance of information, erode the gains made by radio throughout the life of the country, as was stated earlier. To address these concerns, I urge radio stations to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, accuracy, and fairness in their reportage. As we celebrate World Radio Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to promoting a free, independent, and responsible media. Let us work together to ensure that radio continues to serve as a powerful tool for building a more informed, tolerant, and peaceful society.

Mr Speaker, to conclude, I must say that the radio's perpetuity in the face of the mass influx of social Media channels and platforms is a testament to the United Nation and UNESCO's commitment to set a day aside to celebrate radio.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the space granted.

2.05 p.m.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. I would give the floor to the Hon Minister for Education.

**Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu (NDC — Tamale South):** Mr Speaker, let me thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made in honour of the World Radio Day, and to commend the maker of the Statement for bringing this matter to the fore.

It affords us an opportunity as Parliament—As guardians of human rights, what has been the role of the Parliament of Ghana in safeguarding the right to freedom of expression? At least today, Ghana can celebrate; we are comparable even to the United States of America (USA). The number of frequency modulation (FM) stations in Ghana today exceeds 300. The number of television stations also exceed 200. It means, this country has given room to the ventilation of ideas. I agree with him when he says Criminal Libel Law. Yes, the Law has been repealed, but we have Ahmed Hussein Suale and others who were murdered in the course of service. That is heavier, and that is what we all must commit—that tolerance.

Mr Speaker, that is why I am paraphrasing his words. The theme for today is “peace, tolerance, and understanding.” If there is tolerance, you would not have journalists being murdered. If there is tolerance, you would not have journalists being invited by the Crime Investigative Department (CID) of the Ghana Police Service for comments that they have made. If there is tolerance, even Members of Parliament (MPs) would not be at each other's throats. So, tolerance in its true sense—

Mr Speaker, I have always said that Hon Asenso-Boakye's right to speak, ends at my right not to listen. He has a right to speak, so if he speaks, I also choose not to listen. But with respect, I should recognise that he has a right to speak. What is lacking in Ghana is a broadcasting bill—I, with the Majority

Leader, Mr Mahama Ayariga were still here. Far back a decade ago, when he was the Minister for Information, I forwarded to him a draft legislation to regulate broadcasting generally in Ghana. The parameters must be drawn.

Mr Speaker, take Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) for instance—Are they a state broadcaster? Are they a public broadcaster? We do not know—rural radio stations. Today, social media has become a toxic source of misinformation and people enjoy it. They enjoy some of the things we trade, running down reputation and integrity without due cause.

Today, we must celebrate World Radio Day. But I believe that it is about time—I am sure President John Dramani Mahama's new Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations should give it some attention. We need a broadcasting bill that defines who a state or public broadcaster is? GBC must be situated to be like British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). How is it financed? Then, we should have private broadcasters, like we do. The likes of Multimedia Group are doing very well today.

Then, on rural community radios—In some communities, what they enjoy is that—that is their opportunity. Even if the chief has an announcement, at least the radio station would be able to tell the community that the chief says that they should wear a mask because there is the threat of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It serves their purpose.

Mr Speaker, I commend him for bringing this matter to the fore. Then “peace”. The words—My mother used to say that “your tongue is like a bullet, when it fires out the word, you cannot arrest it again.” Even if you look at domestic conflicts, what husbands tell wives and otherwise—You say it and in a second, you regret, because your word becomes your bullet.

Mr Speaker, my mother used to advise me that I should maintain golden silence on matters, in the sense that you cannot interpret silence. Nobody can interpret silence. So, if you want peace, learn to be silent. If somebody is saying something you disagree with, keep silent. Maintain golden silence. We are talking about the political class. We run down each other every other day. There is no election tomorrow, and until the next four years, — but we are still talking as if we are politicking, and campaigning as if there is conduction of elections tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, let me commend the maker of the Statement and let him know that Ghana has made enormous progress. When you say you are commending only the former President, Nana Akufo-Addo, you must thank the former President Jerry John Rawlings who promulgated the 1993 Constitution. It is in there that those rights are guaranteed. What you call a “market women Constitution” is the Constitution that has given us those rights. It guarantees freedom of expression. Radio and television stations give us the platform to ventilate those expressions.

Mr Speaker, what I am guided by in his Statement is that we all should be measured in what we say and be tolerant in what we do. Let us keep the unity and peace of our country even as we practise our democracy.

I commend the maker of the Statement and assure him that Ghana can celebrate like the USA, European Union (EU) or the United Kingdom (UK), that freedom of expression is guaranteed in our country and this is democracy. Every Ghanaian— “ka bi ma me nka bi”, you say what you want. But, sometimes, when somebody makes a comment, the CID of the Ghana Police Service, invites them to come to their office to explain, and that they are under arrest. All that are threats to the fundamental human rights and freedom of expression. Article 167 of the Constitution guarantees the independence of the media.

Mr Speaker, I conclude with this, the National Media Commission (NMC) and the National Communications Authority (NCA) are a turf war—because who controls radio communication? Who allocates frequencies? It is not for nothing that in the Legislation, we said that the NMC must sit on the Board of the NCA. Because somebody provides the licence and somebody monitors the performance. This Parliament, we do not allocate good money for the NMC. Mr George Sarpong has always been crying during every budget hearing and even during election. When he needed money to monitor who is saying what or doing what—we do not provide adequate funding.

Finally, political interference. When the Constitution says “independence of the media”, intolerance—Let us respect it.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

I would give the floor to Prof Kingsley Nyarko.

**Prof Kingsley Nyarko (NPP — Kwadaso):** Mr Speaker, I am grateful to you for the opportunity to add my voice to the Statement ably made by our Colleague, the Member of Parliament for Bosome Freho.

Mr Speaker, this is a very important Statement because it is at the core and centre of our democracy. Radio and other media outlets help us to shape our democracy and our societies, and to build our communities.

2.15 p.m.

Radio provides us the opportunity to deepen our knowledge because the information that we receive from listening to the radio help us to live our lives better.

Mr Speaker, but we must also be very careful how we use radio; otherwise, this medium that helps us to live better and build our societies in a meaningful and efficient way, can also be used to our disadvantage, by creating anarchy and confusion in our society.

Mr Speaker, the issue of radio also brings about the menace of disinformation and misinformation. These twin words have devastating effects on societies and individuals when we spread disinformation and believe that the statements, comments and write-ups that we make are untrue, yet we propagate them. Others are also going to use it and spread this same information, that is misinformation, and it can undermine our integrity and our credibility and can also lead to destabilising our society. We do not need that. We need information that builds and strengthens us.

Democracy can only thrive when we are dealing with information that is conducive to our well-being. People deliberately spread information that they know is false, but because of political capital, they revel in them because of the advantage that they are going to get. But they forget about its negative implications or consequences on us, as a society.

Mr Speaker, this country can burn and be destroyed if we do not control our radio stations and our media outlets effectively. We have taken so many years to build our democracy. Three decades of democracy on our continent is something we must revere. We have been to be able to do it, so why should we allow a few individuals to sit behind a console, on TV studio, and create anarchy and confusion in this country? We must stop it; that is why I support the idea of the Broadcasting Bill. There should be clear guidelines and regulations as to how—Even though freedom of speech is enshrined in our Constitution, it must come with

responsibility and reasonableness in our communication, whether in speech or in writing. That is how we can build a very strong democracy.

Enough of the hate speeches. They do not build, but they destroy. If, through our speeches and words, this country is reduced to flames and ashes, where would we be? Where are we going to find solace? There are some people who do not even care, but some of us care because we believe that we have only one country, and that country is Ghana. It behoves all of us to ensure that we safeguard the tenets of our democracy and the future of our country through proper democratic practices. We can build our fortunes and build our fortunes well.

Mr Speaker, on that score, I want to pat the back of the maker of the Statement that we should ponder and reflect on this. As political players, in whatever we do, we must think about the country, and whatever we do, we must think about posterity. Let us be measured in what we say. We must be tolerant to each other's perspectives; after all, somebody said that if we all think alike, it means somebody else is not thinking, and that is wrong. There will be diversity of opinions and of views; we must respect everybody's opinion. If a person has a contrary opinion, he or she can express it, but it must be devoid of insult, insinuation, vulgar languages and speeches that can kill the soul of that individual.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for indulging me, and I would be forever grateful to you for your indulgence.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon Member.

I will give the floor to Hon Dzifa Gomashie.

**Ms Abba Dzifa Gomashie (NDC — Ketu South):** Thank you very much, and I join my colleagues to applaud the maker of the Statement. It is timely and it is useful.

Mr Speaker, when I sought to contest the parliamentary seat, a young fellow asked on radio if I did not know that my late husband would pass away, and I left him to campaign. This was said on radio, and I heard it with my own ears, and I thought whether that child was asking me to curse him or bless him.

The opportunity that we have with radio, like a two-edged sword, can build or destroy. It is for that reason that I stand this morning to comment on the Statement that has been made and to urge our young people that, indeed, one would reap what he sows, whether it is on radio, television, written on a *Facebook* page, on social media, or anywhere. They must remember that what they are saying today and doing today will not go away. It will be waiting for them as they grow.

Mr Speaker, I wonder how we, the politically exposed and the vulnerable in society, are planning to protect ourselves from the abuse of radio, television, and social media. I say this because in this era where we have artificial intelligence, our voices stand the risk of being used for what we have not said. It can be used to twist what we have said, and it is a bit

scary. There has to be a way in which we sanitise the system and in that score, I want to join the former Minority Leader and Hon Minister for Education when he calls for the Broadcast Bill. If we do not work on it as fast as we can, we stand the risk of being the victims.

Mr Speaker, moving on, I would also like to say that it is not in every community that we have radio reaching the people who vote for us. I hope that the Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations would read about this or hear about it and promote the smaller community radios that do broadcasting in our rural areas. I am a Member of Parliament for a rural area, and I see the use and the benefits for those who have invested their small money in these tube-like metal things that carry messages very far into the community, so that they can be abreast of what we discuss here and also benefit from what radio can do.

When I was growing up, I interned at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) under the late Carl Agyeman-Bannerman, and one of the songs that was played during that time would be *Radio Gets Results*. Indeed, if radio gets results, what kinds of things are we saying on radio today to get the results that we want? Radio gives us opportunity to educate, inform, and entertain, but we have reduced what is positive, and are using the radio that should get results into doing things that malign, vilify and just tarnish the image of people who have worked hard for our country.

This Statement is in the right direction, and I celebrate the maker of the Statement and all who have contributed to it, and I thank you for the opportunity, Mr Speaker.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

I give the floor to Hon Matthew Nyindam.

2.25 p.m.

**Mr Matthew Nyindam (NPP — Kpandai):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity to add my voice to the Statement.

Mr Speaker, I think as a nation, we all agree that radio or media in general is playing a very critical role in our lives. Without them, this country would be in darkness. So, the role of radio cannot be underestimated. But Mr Speaker, we must also try as much as possible to ask ourselves that today, the kinds of things that we hear, the content, is that what we are celebrating? Obviously not.

Mr Speaker, today if a person has a radio station or even a TV station and the host or the one handling that particular programme is not very good at insulting, very few people would listen to him. Mr Speaker, that is not the kind of celebration we are calling for. Mr Speaker, if we are not lucky, very soon, the good ones among them would also start giving us the content that all of us would not be happy with.

Mr Speaker, if they pick a person today, they would insult the person from morning to evening. The next day they would drop it and bring another personality. If it is NDC that they are insulting today, we think that they are doing very well. The next day when they are done with NDC, they come back to NPP. That is not the kind of radio we encourage.

Mr Speaker, I therefore want to say we agree. Like the Minister for Education said, we have more than 300 radio stations in this country, and it is a very good idea, but the content that they give us sometimes is problematic.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. I would give the floor to Dr Clement Apaak.

**Dr Clement Abas Apaak (NDC — Builsa South):** Mr Speaker, I am most grateful.

Mr Speaker, let me commend the maker of the Statement for drawing our collective attention to both the benefits of radio as well as the dangers associated with radio. Mr Speaker, I comment on this topic both as a practitioner and as somebody who has managed a radio station before. Many may not be aware, but I belong to the first generation of the University of Ghana students who volunteered for our now legendary radio station known as Radio Universe. In my travels abroad, I continued to pursue radio. Studying for my PhD at Simon

Fraser University, I volunteered to produce and host a very popular programme known as African Connection. On my return to Ghana and upon taking up my teaching appointment at the University of Ghana, I was appointed as the manager of Radio Universe.

Mr Speaker, radio is a very powerful tool. When rightly used, it benefits society. When wrongly used, it can set society ablaze. I believe many of us in this Chamber have read about or can remember the Rwandan genocide. Almost every commentator or the witnesses, some of the surviving victims, attest to the fact that that genocide was promoted and executed through the use of radio.

Mr Speaker, in our own homeland, it is worrisome, but the truth ought to be stated, that some radio stations are notorious for being extreme in the nature of their programmes, as well as the type of panelists that are deployed. I would not want to mention names. Mr Speaker, but more importantly, we cannot speak about radio without talking about how poorly practitioners and journalists are treated. Remuneration is nothing to write home about. Many of them do not even earn the basic minimum required to live a decent life. This then makes them vulnerable to payolas and political influencers to do their bidding for pittance. So, as we discuss radio and we talk about the positives and hope to highlight the positives, we cannot forget to advocate that practitioners and owners of media houses do the needful by giving them sustenance, so that they can be independent and report genuinely and



honestly what is important to society and continue to keep us glued together by giving us positive perspectives. On this note, I again commend the maker of the Statement.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Member.

**Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (NPP — Mpraeso):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to add my voice to this wonderful Statement ably made by my Colleague, Hon Asafo-Adjei.

Mr Speaker, indeed, radio is the heartbeat of our democracy, and that is why on this very day, we must reflect on the fundamental role that it plays in our society.

Mr Speaker, radio helps in promoting access to information. It helps in the freedom of expression and our democratic governance. That is why if you look at the theme for this year, it underscores the importance of free, independent, and diverse media landscape.

Mr Speaker, I have always maintained that if you look at the number of radio stations that we currently have in our country, I mean, just like Hon Haruna Iddrisu said, we have over 300 radio stations. It has created a valve where Ghanaians who feel peeved and have worries about the political class, could have a medium to express themselves.

Mr Speaker, this has contributed immensely to the political stability that we are witnessing in Ghana. Mr Speaker, yesterday, Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations and the media advisory said that they have authorised the National Communications Authority (NCA) to furnish the Minister's office with a list of all frequency authorisations issued or renewed in the last 60 days. Mr Speaker, clearly, it's important for us to draw the attention of the Hon Minister that it needs to be measured in its approach. Mr Speaker, the independence of the National Communications Authority cannot be underestimated. We ought to be careful as a country. I really do not see why a Minister would issue a statement that frequencies issued in the last 60 days should come under audit. I really do not understand. He did not give further directives, but I am just cautioning the young Minister to be very careful.

Mr Speaker, NCA's issuance of spectrum allocations is governed by an Act that was enacted in this very House, the Electronics Communications Act 2008 (Act 775). Mr Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of the Hon Minister to Section 13 — Section 9 of the Act that talks about the independence of the NCA, which says that the NCA shall not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority except as provided by law.

2.35 p.m.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations cannot unilaterally dictate

operations and regulatory decisions. Clearly, the young Minister must be mindful of the path he is taking. We were in this country when licences of radio stations were revoked; we saw what really transpired; the brouhaha and the noise that erupted in our country. We do not want to get to that part.

Ghana is advancing in democracy; Ghana is developing, and it is important that it be measured. We are looking and monitoring, and I think it is important that as a Member of Parliament, I draw his attention to the path he has taken. Protecting radio frequencies in this country is protecting our democracy. Let us not use National Communications Authority (NCA), that needs to be independent, to score political points.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I commend the maker of this Statement, and I pray that we issue more licences and get to the stage where even the fee that people pay for radio licences is reduced minimally, so that every constituency in this country could have one radio station. [*Hear! Hear!*] At least, one constituency, one radio station, which would help in the dissemination of information to our good people.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for this great opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

Leadership?

**Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib):** Mr Speaker, the maker of the Statement is someone I

highly commend for making such an important Statement.

Mr Speaker, unless I am not too clear, but I know that the theme for this World Radio Day 2025 is “Radio and Climate Change”; that is the theme I have. Mr Speaker, it goes to buttress the point that radio is a very powerful tool. We need radio for dissemination of information, education, and entertainment. There have been several good works done by radio presenters, but we have really not paid attention to these people.

Mr Speaker, one that comes to mind readily is the departed soul who is resting with the Lord, Mr Komla Dumor. He made us understand that radio can bring in a lot of good stuff. We can acknowledge that these were things we can celebrate in shaping our society. Anytime one heard Komla Dumor on radio in the morning, one could understand that this is a man who was educating, informing, and entertaining at the same time. It is not for nothing that today, we have the World Radio Day themed as, “Radio and Climate Change”. Climate change is a problem we are dealing with, and one of the major ways to get climate change properly appreciated is through radio, education and information.

Mr Speaker, with all of this said, I also want us to believe that—With your permission, Article 164 reads:

“The provisions of articles 162 and 163 of this Constitution are subject to laws that are reasonably required in the interest of national security,

public order, public morality and for the purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons”

Mr Speaker, what radio does is to ensure that there is public order and public safety. Radio is not meant for causing troubles, but it is rather meant for educating, entertaining and informing people. When there is miscommunication and misinformation, what we see and have seen in some countries is as a result of how we actually use radio and how we did not use it well.

Mr Speaker, we still use radio for public morality purposes. People are educated on moral, religious, traditional, cultural issues, and all of these are done for the purposes of upholding what we have been trained to be.

Mr Speaker, what is also key is to protect the reputation of people, and that is where propaganda comes in. When we do not have the facts, wherewithal, and when we do not know what we are about say, we should not say it. Say it when we are sure; say it when we know it; say it when we have the true facts. One should not just use the radio as a platform to damage the reputation of others because he or she has the opportunity to do so.

Mr Speaker, with this, I also want to commend all radio presenters worldwide and in Ghana, especially the professional ones, and emphasis is on the “professional” ones. This is because there are some who have turned themselves into, with all due respect to them, *buga buga* presenters, and all they

say is what they believe in, just to damage people. Mr Speaker, we hope and pray that people would use radio for the purposes for which they have been set up.

I thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for granting me this opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Majority Leadership?

**Second Deputy Majority Whip (Mr Richard Acheampong):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I would also like to add my voice to commend the maker of the Statement.

Mr Speaker, the theme for this year is, “Radio and Climate Change”, so we need to also focus attention on what we use radio to propagate because we have a lot of issues in respect of climate change, global warming and all that. The point is, if one has a radio station, throughout the week, from Monday to Sunday, all they do is politics. And people have become so attached to these stations that even when the radio stations want to run advertisements or play musical interludes, the listeners switch to another station to listen to political shows where people are being attacked and leaders are being denigrated.

Mr Speaker, radio has come to stay; we need to also encourage them to expand because they are the fourth estate of the realm, but the point is, are they licensed to do what they are doing now? The kind of political interferences we also give to these stations—I have a story to tell.

Mr Speaker, I applied for a licence myself, and I was told that I am a politically exposed person, and that I would use the radio to run propaganda for the National Democratic Congress (NDC), so they would never issue the licence to me. For the past eight years, our Colleagues on the Side—*[Interruption]*—I went through all the processes and paid the fees, but I was not issued the licence to operate the radio station. I did not state NDC on the application or I did not tell them that I would use the station to propagate for NDC, but they looked at my face and political orientation and denied me the licence. If we try to do same, we would see them crying foul and they would say that past wrongs can never be justified in today's time. So there must be a paradigm shift. —**[Some Hon Members: Yes!]**—All right, it is yes today because they denied me the licence.

2.45 p.m.

Mr Speaker, we need to talk about the environment. Look at the devastating state that we find ourselves in, in terms of *galamsey* activities. Is the media focusing on it? But let me pay tribute to Erastus Asare Donkor; I think he is in Kumasi. He has done so well in terms of the fight against *galamsey*. It got to a point where he needed to run for his life because his personal life was under attack, and he has brought a lot of issues to the fore for people to discuss. It is by the effort of some media houses that we are now seeing some clean water bodies around us. The rest can also join so that at least, this kind of—Yesterday, we talked about Trump cutting off aid to

African countries, and we were crying that there would be a budget gap of US\$150,000,000. If we are able to do things right, we would not need the US\$150,000,000 President Trump is denying us.

Mr Speaker, let us encourage the media, but they must be responsive. They must bring to the fore issues affecting communities, and issues affecting humanity, so that at least, their presence would be felt by all of us. It is not about doing politics 24/7. It is not about trying to pick an individual, and attacking them from morning till evening. Somebody is behind it; there are always sponsors. They go after certain people in order to get opportunities. The media dependence is there; the Constitution is clear. They should live up to their mandate and deliver. We as politicians would do everything to remain relevant, but the media should be there to check us.

When one knows the cameras are on him or her, it would shape whatever he or she says and does. So, our actions and inactions would be shaped by the media landscape. So, we encourage them to do more. We need to invest in what they do. Sometimes when they come to cover programmes, by the end of the day what do we give them? Some media houses are paid GHC300.00, GHC400.00 or GHC500.00. How do we expect them to do quality work for us? How do we expect them to cover whatever we say?

In terms of remuneration, we need to find a way of dealing with it. Though they are private entities, we have the

minimum wage. Why should we pay somebody GH¢400.00 or GH¢500.00? I have not mentioned the station so it is not like I am disclosing somebody's salary, but that is the reality.

Mr Speaker, we need to do more to encourage our brothers and sisters in that sector so that they can help us save our society and our community.

I thank you very much of the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

We move to the next Statement in the name of Hon Matthew Nyindam, Member of Parliament for Kpandai.

## STATEMENT

### **The Devastating Bush Fires in the Kpandai District of Northern Ghana**

**Mr Matthew Nyindam (NPP — Kpandai):** Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make this Statement on the devastating bush fire incident in the Kpandai Constituency.

Today, I stand here with a deep sense of urgency and profound sorrow to bring to the attention of this honourable House, a devastating fire incident that has severely impacted five communities - Bladjai, Bola, Kabonwule, Kitare, Nkanchina and Nanjiro - within my esteemed Kpandai Constituency.

This tragic event has led to the widespread destruction of agricultural

produce, particularly yam (both tubers and sets) and cereals, plunging numerous hardworking farmers into distress and posing a significant threat to livelihoods and food security in the region.

Mr Speaker, farming is not merely an occupation for the people of my Constituency; it is a way of life, a vital source of sustenance, and a cornerstone of our local economy. The devastating fire, which erupted occurred between 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, spread rapidly, consuming farms and barns. In a matter of hours, months of relentless effort, sacrifice, and investment were reduced to ashes.

In my capacity as the representative of the people, I contacted National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) to expedite their investigations to establish the cause of the fire and bring to book, if it was deliberately orchestrated by any individual— However, preliminary reports indicate that the fire was largely caused by bushfires.

A thorough understanding of the underlying factors will be crucial in formulating and implementing decisive preventive measures.

Mr Speaker, as I address this honourable House, it is estimated that over 200 farmers have been severely affected by this devastating catastrophe.

Furthermore, preliminary assessments indicate that more than 30 barns containing over 198,900 yams (tubers and sets) and 100 bags of cereals have

been completely destroyed. When translated into financial terms, this loss amounts to hundreds of thousands of Ghana cedis, underscoring the extensive damage and economic hardship inflicted by this unfortunate bushfire.

Mr Speaker, the magnitude of this catastrophe cannot be overstated. It is not merely the loss of crops and food supplies that we mourn, but the destruction of livelihoods, aspirations, and financial stability for hundreds of families. Many of these farmers had secured loans to finance their cultivation, anticipating a harvest that would sustain them in the months ahead. Now, they are burdened with crippling debts and no means of recovery.

Furthermore, the yam sets intended for the next planting season have been completely destroyed, jeopardising future agricultural cycles. Local markets, which depend on these farm produce for trade and sustenance, are already experiencing severe disruptions. If urgent and decisive action is not taken, the economic repercussions will escalate, deepening the hardship faced by my constituents and threatening the broader food security of our region.

Mr Speaker, it is also worth mentioning that the food shortage resulting from this disaster will extend beyond my constituency. Many regions rely on the yams produced in Kpandai, which is widely recognised for its yam production. This loss, coming in the wake of the adverse effects of last year's drought, will have a cascading impact

across the supply food chain, potentially driving up the prices of yam and cereals and exacerbating economic hardship for a broader segment of the population.

Mr Speaker, this crisis demands immediate and decisive intervention. In light of the severe impact on lives, livelihoods, and food security, I make the following urgent appeals:

- i. **Emergency Relief and Humanitarian Aid:** I call upon the Government, NADMO, our development partners and other humanitarian organisations to act swiftly in providing immediate relief to the affected farmers. This should include essential food supplies and financial assistance to support affected households in regaining stability.
- ii. **Establishment of an Agricultural Disaster Fund:** I take this opportunity to appeal to the Government to establish an Agricultural Disaster Fund — a dedicated financial mechanism designed to provide timely and targeted support to farmers affected by natural disasters, such as the devastating fires that has impacted the five communities in the Kpandai Constituency. This fund would serve as a critical safety net, enabling affected farmers to recover, rebuild their livelihoods, and ensure the sustainability of agricultural production in disaster-prone areas.

iii. **Enhanced Fire Prevention and Response Measures:** This incident underscores the urgent need for strengthened fire prevention and response mechanisms in agricultural zones. I urge the Government to invest in early warning systems and enhance community education on fire safety and response strategies. Furthermore, agriculture and fire service agencies should engage farming communities regularly to provide guidance on fire prevention and management.

iv. **Compensation and Insurance for Farmers:** It is imperative that we establish a robust agricultural insurance scheme to protect farmers from unforeseen disasters of this nature. I urge the Government to develop a compensation framework that provides financial relief to affected farmers, thereby preventing economic collapse in agricultural communities when such disasters occur.

Mr Speaker, this heartbreaking incident is more than just a tragedy; it is a wake-up call for our nation. If we fail to take decisive action now, we risk subjecting thousands of citizens to prolonged hardship while further endangering our agricultural economy. We must confront this challenge with urgency and unwavering commitment, ensuring that our farmers — who dedicate their lives to feeding the nation — are not left without the support they desperately need.

As the elected representative of the people of Kpandai Constituency, I stand in unwavering solidarity with every farmer, every family, and every individual affected by this disaster. I assure them that I will continue to advocate for their cause until concrete solutions and meaningful relief are provided.

Mr Speaker, urgent action is needed to mitigate the effects of this disaster and ensure that affected farmers and their communities can recover and rebuild. I trust that this honourable House will give due consideration to these appeals and support measures that will safeguard the livelihoods of our hardworking farmers.

Let us, as leaders, policymakers, and a nation, unite to transform this moment of loss, into an opportunity for resilience and reform. The future of our farmers and our national food security depends on the actions we take today.

I thank you, Mr Speaker for this opportunity.

2.55 p.m.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, that is the Statement. Hon Joseph Kumah?

**Mr Joseph Kwame Kumah (NDC — Kintampo North):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you Hon Matthew Nyindam for the Statement.

Mr Speaker, the reoccurrence of fire is perennial; year in and year on, we have

been discussing these things without solutions. I remember my third week in the Eighth Parliament, when we used to sit at the pavilion, the Hon Member for Bole Bamboi made a Statement on the devastating nature of bushfires and their economic effect on our lives and farmers. The contribution that year was to engage the Fire Service, or agree on early burning as a nation, because no matter what we do, the bushfires would follow us.

Mr Speaker, I want to sympathise with the people of Kpandai. I know that for five communities to be razed down means a lot for the nation, as the maker of the Statement said. I know how hard-working they are; majority of the yams we see at the Konkomba market, Kintampo market and all over are from some of those places.

Mr Speaker, as a nation, if we do not take concrete steps to accept a particular policy and come together to accept early burning when the bushes are becoming yellowish—We do not wait till they become very dry so that the National Fire Service through the fire volunteer programme could monitor the burning gradually. As we speak, in Kintampo North, two houses and not less than five farms have been burnt. A family left their home for the Kintampo market at Kongo and by the time they returned—The fire started from far, got to their home and burnt everything down. The schoolchildren could not even get anything to change into. It is a perennial problem and should we continue to do Statements and sit down?

On my own what I have done is that annually, I use my Common Fund to buy a motorbike as part of the Farmer's Day award to the Fire Service to use for fire volunteers. I think that we all can emulate this—But they cannot succeed if we do not make it a policy and do a national dialogue on the early burning because no matter what we do the bushes would be burnt. If we leave them, we would have left petrol in the system. Let a driver or a passer-by smoke —

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, round up.

**Mr Kumah:** Mr Speaker, I plead that you give direction to this proposal to do a national dialogue on early burning. I am grateful.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. I would give the floor to the Hon Member for Akwatia.

**Mr Ernest Kumi (NPP — Akwatia):** Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. Let me also use this opportunity to sympathise with the people of Kpandai and also the maker of the Statement.

It is often said that fire is a bad master and a good servant. In the month of January up to now, we have experienced a lot of devastating fires across the country. We have experienced some in Kantamanto and we have seen other markets burning. What surprises me is that if not anything, we often know that in January, we experience the dry seasons and sometimes when we hear



such Statements what comes to mind is what makes people go burning bushes in January, when we are experiencing the dry seasons.

But be it as it may, I would not like to belabour this House with the economic effect of such disasters. And I would use this opportunity to pray for this House and also ask the disaster management bodies in this country to go in assistance of these farmers. Having said that in public safety management, there are certain things that we have control over and there are other things that we do not necessarily have control over. So instead of frequently asking the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) and other disaster management committees to often come to the aid of such disaster victims, I would rather ask that NADMO and such institutions go into research-based institutions, where they would know when and how these issues happen, and come to the rescue of the people.

As mentioned by previous speakers, these are perennial events which we keep experiencing. For instance, we have been experiencing perennial flooding in this nation and we have been seeing these disasters almost every year. It has even come to our attention that there was a year when a foreigner had to stake a lottery that he could bet that in that year, Accra was going to flood. With that being said, the flood-prone areas are known to us. What prevents NADMO from researching and knowing that this year, these areas are going to be flooded and put in place preventive measures so

that these perennial disasters do not happen? Because when they happen, we spend a lot of resources on putting things back where they are supposed to be.

In the same way, I would ask that NADMO and other disaster management bodies help educate people in such dry areas and also encourage them in such dry seasons, to not go into burning bushes or engage in activities that would lead to such fire rise.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and I pray that we go into the assistance of such victims.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. I will give the floor to Hon Mahama Shaibu.

**Mr Shaibu Mahama (NDC — Daboya/Mankarigu):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement ably made by my good friend from Kpandai. I think this Statement could not have been made at a better time. The dry or harmattan season is here with us again and it comes in its wake, with very devastating consequences. Indeed, it is a season that is natural and we ought to prepare for it. Every year, we come to lament over the effects of bushfires but, we still encounter this same problem.

3.05 p.m.

Mr Speaker, growing up in the '80s, this country experienced a very devastating dry season that swept across the entire Savannah Woodland and left in

its wake destruction of all farms. Indeed, there was a major drought and food shortage and the worst affected were secondary schools. I remember we scavenged and gleaned through nearby communities and farms just to get some corn to roast and chew as students. That is the effect of the harmattan and the dry season. We need to take a cue; we need to proffer solutions to it but that has to do with attitude. Attitude in the sense that farmers would normally set fire when they go to farm. Education to farmers is actually very critical. Indeed, the season is such that with the least touch, we have a widespread effect which cuts across the entire Northern Savannah Ecological Zone and that spans from Kintampo through to the Upper East and Upper West Regions.

Mr Speaker, we need to make pragmatic efforts in educating farmers and the youth. Cigarette smokers—I know the law is against it in public places, but at least people still have it. Anything that has to do with fire, preventing it is the best cure. For farmers who have lost their property, one can imagine a whole farming season, the farmer has put in a great deal of industry in coming out with his farm produce and one fine morning or evening, fire guts and takes everything off the farmer. It is a great Statement that he has made which should awaken our consciousness and we must make an effort to get civil society organisation, and other well-meaning institutions to intensify education on bush fires. Indeed, when we prevent it, we would stop this perennial

Statements that we make regarding bush fires.

Mr Speaker, let me thank the maker of the Statement one more time and pray and hope that we would come up with solutions to curb the menace. I thank you very much.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Yes, Mr Agyemang Prempeh?

**Mr Eric Nana Agyemang-Prempeh (NPP — Ahafo Ano North):** Mr Speaker, I rise to comment on the Statement by Mr Nyindam, especially on insurance for farmers who are victims of such disasters. The African Risk Capacity, which is an initiative of African Union (AU) on insurance for farmers involved in disasters was established. Ghana was the first West African country to apply and also do all customisations and was given a certificate of good standing.

Mr Speaker, as I speak now, Ghana has paid a premium of US\$1 million, and last year when there was a drought in the five northern regions, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance applied for some benefit for the farmers. So, I want to take this opportunity to appeal to the Government, through the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of the Interior to follow it up so that they can get some benefits for farmers who are involved in such disasters. Thank you very much.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Now Minority Leadership?

Yes, Hon Okyere Darko?

**Mr Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah (NPP — Takoradi):** Mr Speaker, we all thank the maker of the Statement for such a brilliant piece. First and foremost, we would like to tell him to send to his constituents that Ghana would definitely stand behind them for them to be able to recover. My biggest challenge is that every time we come to this Chamber about bush fires and flood, it seems it has become an annual ritual without any solutions to them.

In 1983 when the fires came, my grandmother's farm in Anwia Nkwanta completely got destroyed so the hardships were everywhere. I know that my former boss Mr Kofi Adda's rice farm got burnt. Recently, just after the elections, the rice farm of the Minister for Savannah also got burnt. So, it shows that there is something amiss about these fires that keep coming to our doorsteps. But unfortunately, when we sometimes advise Ghanaians, they get offended. Now that the fires are coming, we are all talking about insurances, government support and the rest but we also know that there are certain basic things that farmers can also do as buffers to make sure that the fires do not spread from one farm to the other. They would not do it and then it becomes a problem. And when people advise them, they become the target. How many times can we as a country continue to throw our money into the dustbin through bush fires or floods?

I remember one day, there was flood in my area and I had advised those who

were staying in flood-prone areas to always have a second plan. It became a major national topic. So, I believe that these things cannot continue to be an annual ritual that we would come to this House to only complain. We should prevent them in the first place and I believe that the education of our farmers is key. The socialisation of our farmers is also key. If we do not continue to make prevention a part of our attitude, this country would continue to wallow in poverty, especially in these areas because we all know that farming communities are one of the poverty-stricken areas in our country. This is because, first and foremost, the farm business itself is not generating the incomes we expect it to generate for them and if fires become another set of problems that is going to devastate or squander their produce, then naturally, we cannot eradicate poverty in our midst. So, I believe that, like all the speakers have said, prevention is key and our farmers as part of their practices, should ensure that they put in the measures to prevent the fires from coming in the first place, and two, from spreading. As for the Ghana National Fire Service, I tell you, if they are big farms, it is going to be difficult to quench it and now that we are in the dry season, God be our help but prevention is always better than cure.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to add my voice to the matter.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Majority Leadership?

**Mr Richard Acheampong:** The Hon Member, Mr Peter Toobu, would take the place of the Majority Leadership.

**Mr Peter Lanchene Toobu (NDC — Wa West):** Mr Speaker, let me thank you for the opportunity and let me thank the Leadership for yielding to me to make some remarks about this good Statement that was delivered by my Brother from Kpandai.

Mr Speaker, 1983 is still fresh in our minds. Forty-two years ago, the devastation that we suffered as a country, many farmers are yet to recover. I can say that if one goes to a place like the Afram Plains, the effect of the bush fires in 1983 has left an indelible mark to the point that cocoa farms that were destroyed at the time have never been able to be reconstructed again.

A decade later, in 1992, the Fourth Republic started. Thirty-two years down the line, we are still in the Chamber lamenting about the effect of bush fires. But we all know that there are best practices around the world and I can talk about a few of them within Ghana. If one goes to the Mole National Park, there is something we call, “control burning”. My Brother from Kintampo North talked about early burning. We call it “control burning” and it is normally done around November. When the grasses are not too dry, they are not too combustible but if one waits until January to February where the grasses are so dry and so combustible, when one finds fire burning, the capacity of any group of

people or the capacity of any national institution like the Ghana National Fire Service to fight that fire becomes limited.

3.15 p.m.

Mr Speaker, we all know climate change is a reality. The drought in 2024 tells us that going forward, we need to upgrade our game in understanding the impact of climate change *vis-à-vis* the fact that dry seasons will come early and the country would be drier than before. So, when we find bushfires destroying farms, it tells us that for over 42 years, we are either not learning or we know what to do, but are not willing to do it. and yet, we are repeatedly complaining about the impact of bushfires.

Mr Speaker, I know this is just a Statement which talks about the people of Kpandai, but in many parts of this country, particularly in northern Ghana, bushfires are destroying farms and properties. All we have to do as a country is to come together and talk about the national resilience in fighting disasters. It is not just bushfires; there are several disasters that befall this country and exposes our weakness.

Mr Speaker, the very good recommendations made by my Brother from Kpandai should be looked at. Let us come together as a country to bring in experts for us to craft a strategy to ensure that in 2026, when there are bushfires again, Ghana would be prepared as a country to meet the challenge and save our farmers, properties, and ourselves from national disgrace.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I am so grateful and I thank the maker of the Statement.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much.

Hon Members, the last Statement for the day is in the name of Hon Eric Edem Agbana. Before then, I would give the floor to Hon Emmanuel Bedzrah.

**Mr Emmanuel Bedzrah:** Mr Speaker, I come under Order 285(1), which says that:

“Each Committee to which a matter is referred shall report to the House before the end of each session of Parliament.”

Mr Speaker, on Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2025, the Speaker referred a matter to a Special Committee, where that Special Committee was to conduct a full-scale investigation into the event which occurred at the public hearing of the Appointments Committee on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> and Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2025.

The Committee was given 10 days to present its findings and Report, and the Committee requested for two additional days, which ended today. Mr Speaker, your Committee has not been able to finish its work; we need an additional one week. We want to request from the Speaker to give us an additional week, so that the Committee would conclude its work and present its Report to this House next Thursday.

With the leave of Mr Speaker, we plead that you give us an additional week.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, thank you. I am inclined to indulge you, but in order not to take the days in pieces, when do you think you can conclusively bring the Report?

**Mr Bedzrah:** Mr Speaker, the Report would be ready and presented to this House by next week Thursday.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, the time within which the Committee is supposed to present the Report is accordingly extended to next week Thursday. Thank you.

Hon Member for Ketu North, you have the floor.

## STATEMENT

### The Rent Regime and the Urgent Need for Reforms

**Mr Eric Edem Agbana (NDC — Ketu North):** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to make my maiden formal Statement since joining this House about a month ago.

Mr Speaker, I rise today to draw the attention of this august House to the dire state of Ghana's rent regime, a system that has become a major source of frustration and hardship for millions of

Ghanaians, particularly the youth, low-income earners, and vulnerable groups. The cost of rent in Ghana is alarmingly high, access to affordable housing is limited, and the regulatory framework governing rent payments is largely ineffective. These challenges demand urgent and bold interventions if we are to provide decent living conditions for our people.

Mr Speaker, it is not surprising that when I conducted a survey on a social media platform called X, formerly Twitter, the rent regime was identified by most respondents as their number one challenge in Ghana. It is, therefore, imperative that we act with urgency, discuss this challenge, and proffer sustainable solutions.

Mr Speaker, let me begin by highlighting the challenges associated with Ghana's rent regime. The first one is the exorbitant rent costs. In major cities, particularly Accra, Kumasi, Ho, Tema, and Takoradi, rent prices are skyrocketing beyond the reach of the ordinary Ghanaian. Some landlords unilaterally increase rent without justification, and tenants who cannot afford the new rates are evicted in an undignified manner. This places an unbearable financial burden on tenants.

Mr Speaker, Ghana faces a housing deficit of over 2 million units, with demand far exceeding supply. The lack of affordable housing forces many citizens into overcrowded and substandard living conditions.

Mr Speaker, there is also the weak enforcement of rent laws. While the law stipulates that landlords should not demand more than six months' rent in advance, enforcement is virtually nonexistent. It is common for landlords to demand two to three years rent in advance, in clear violation of the Rent Act, 1963 (Act 220). Many tenants are forced to comply with these arbitrary demands due to the power imbalances between landlords and tenants. It is crucial that we revisit the Rent Bill which was laid before Parliament in March, 2023. This should serve as a wake-up call to urgently address the rent crisis facing the people of Ghana. This is important because President Mahama also promised same in the run up to the 2024 general elections.

Mr Speaker, on unregulated and exploitative rental market, the absence of a clear rent control system has allowed landlords to charge arbitrary rates, revise rents without justification, and unfairly evict tenants.

Mr Speaker, some of the identified causes of the crises in the rent regime that we currently face are ineffective rent control systems, limited access to mortgage and housing finance, uncoordinated government housing policies, and high costs of building materials.

Mr Speaker, here are some recommendations and policy proposals for urgent action. There should be an immediate review and enforcement of the Rent Act, 1963 (ACT 220), as outlined under section 4.2.6 of the

NDC's Resetting Ghana 2024 Manifesto. The Government must review the Rent Act, 1963 (ACT 220) to introduce standardisation in residential housing and to enforce quality control in the built environment.

Mr Speaker, the Rent Control Department should be restructured into a Ghana Rent Authority that must be well-resourced and given the necessary support to ensure that the interests of both tenants and landlords are balanced.

Mr Speaker, a National Rent Assistance Scheme should be established. Again, this is one of the solutions outlined in the NDC's 2024 Manifesto, and it is important to hold the Government accountable for that. The state must support low-income earners by providing a rent advance loan scheme to enable them to afford decent housing without struggling to pay lump sums up front.

3.25 p.m.

Mr Speaker, imagine the plight of a young graduate from Penyi Tamekorpe, posted to the head office of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) in Accra for her national service. How can she raise, on the average, GH¢36,000 to pay a two-year rent advance for a single room that costs GH¢1,500 per month when her compulsory national service allowance is only GH¢715 per month?

Mr Speaker, there should also be a massive investment in affordable housing. The Government must collaborate with private developers to build affordable housing units across the country, particularly in urban centres

where rent is most expensive. This will significantly reduce the housing deficit. Mr Speaker, it is also important that a new rent pricing framework is introduced to prevent landlords from arbitrarily increasing rent.

Mr Speaker, there is a need for tax incentives for affordable housing. Developers who invest in affordable rental units should be granted tax incentives to encourage more housing projects. Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the current rent situation in Ghana is unsustainable. It is an issue of national urgency that demands immediate and bold interventions. The citizens of this country deserve to live in dignity. And as leaders, it is our responsibility to ensure that housing, a basic necessity, is accessible and affordable for all. I therefore humbly call on this honourable House to act now and protect the ordinary Ghanaian from the burden of excessive rent costs.

Mr Speaker, once again, I thank you for the opportunity to make this Statement.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon Member.

I will give the floor to the Hon former Minister for Roads and Highways.

**Mr Francis Asenso-Boakyie (NPP — Bantama):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to this important Statement. I want to commend my esteemed

Colleague for raising this issue of rent and its associated problems.

Mr Speaker, rent is an important area that, as a country, we must all focus on and make sure that we provide shelter, especially for low-income Ghanaians. Unfortunately, the Rent Act, 1963 (Act 220) which was passed about 60 years ago, has outlived its usefulness. In fact, as a result of urbanisation, population growth, and the huge housing deficit which my Colleague mentioned that is 2 million—In fact, it has moved down to 1.8 million but it is still huge. As a result, it has made the Rent Act, 1963 and its implementation difficult.

In fact, as a former Minister for Works and Housing, I have come to this House to answer a lot of questions on the Rent Act, 1963. Many of the issues that my Colleague raised have been answered in the proposal that I brought to Parliament. He mentioned that in March 2023, a review of the Rent Act, 1963 was brought to this august House. It has delayed unnecessarily and when it comes to revision of Acts and Legislation, it is the responsibility of Parliament, as was espoused by the Rt Hon Speaker, Mr Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin.

I understand that it is currently at the Ministry. We call on the Ministry to, as a matter of urgency, bring back the Rent Act so that Parliament, which is the body responsible for legislation—This is so that Parliament can do its job in shaping and bringing into place a new Rent Act that will address many of the issues that the Member raised.

In fact, he mentioned the need to change the Rent Act Department into an authority. The institutional aspect of the Bill is highly recognised in the Bill, and I expect that when it comes back, we will look at it thoroughly. The Member also made a proposal for the introduction of the Rental Assistance Advance Scheme. It will interest Hon Members to know that this is something that was started under the administration of Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and Dr Mahamudu Bawumia. It was launched and has been piloted in six regions. As we speak, I do not have the right figure available, but close to 3,000 people have benefited so far from the Rental Assistance Scheme.

During the vetting of the new Minister for Works, Housing and Water Resources, I had the opportunity to ask him what he is going to do to upscale it. He said that he is going to speak to private institutions to raise capital to support it. That is a good idea.

Once again, Mr Speaker, I want to commend my Colleague for bringing this issue up and add that it is a very important issue that Parliament must take particular interest in and get the Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources to bring back the Rent Bill so that Parliament can do justice to it. With these few words, Mr Speaker, I want to once again thank the maker of the Statement for this insightful contribution.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Sosu?

**Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (NDC — Madina):** Thank you very



much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to this timely Statement presented by our Brother, Hon Edem Agbana, on the challenges of rent in this country today.

Indeed, looking at paragraph 9 of the Statement, our Brother reiterated that unregulated and exploitative rental markets, the absence of clear rent control systems has allowed for arbitrariness in the regime. Now, the regime belongs to the strong, powerful and wealthy, to the detriment of the most vulnerable.

It is on this account that I sincerely support the call by one of the contributors that we need to take urgent steps to review our Rent Act. The current rent regime and then the rent relationship between landlords and tenants is so inequitable that even as Members of Parliament, one would agree with me that one of the biggest challenges in our offices today is rent support. Mr Speaker, if one comes to my office in Madina, for example, even this morning before I left the office, there were people in the office asking for rent support. Many people have been unlawfully evicted from their homes. So, the issue of rent is a very serious one.

Mr Speaker, I believe that we must slowly but surely move away from this regime where every time, a person needs an advance before they can have access to rent. We can have regimes where, as in other best practices, people could pay monthly or it is flexible for people to determine whether they can pay every two months or three months. But this is a regime where a person needs a rent

advance of one year or two years. Some of the rents are now in dollars and if a person does not have dollars, he or she cannot even get to rent in parts of the Greater Accra Region. So, it is a very serious one.

Mr Speaker, I want to remind the House of one of the major goals of our Constitution, which is enshrined in Article 37. Article 37 of our Constitution is titled “Social Objectives” and it says that, Mr Speaker, with your permission:

“The State shall endeavour to secure and protect a social order founded on the ideals and principles of freedom, equality, justice, probity and accountability as enshrined in Chapter 5 of this Constitution; and in particular, the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that every citizen has equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law.”

Mr Speaker, as we speak, if a person is in Ghana and is poor, they do not have equal opportunities when it comes to rent issues. If a person is in Ghana and just lost their job, they do not have any opportunity when it comes to rent.

So, Mr Speaker, I sincerely pray that you would order that this Statement be referred to an appropriate Committee so that Parliament will do a follow-up on this matter. This is to ensure that the Minister brings back the Rent Act into this House for us to amend same to secure equal opportunities for all, particularly the most vulnerable and the poor.

3.35 p.m.

**Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (NPP — Offinso North):** Mr Speaker, thank you and let us appreciate the maker of the Statement, Hon Eric Edem Agbana, Hon Member of Parliament for Ketu North.

Mr Speaker, if it had not been the intervention of the NPP Government, bringing in free secondary education, one of the major issues that Hon Members of Parliament were faced with were two; support for tuition and support for rent. I am happy to say that that of tuition had been taken away and one of the major problems we are facing now is rent support.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Asamoah, before the introduction of the free Senior High School, were students paying tuition fee at the secondary level?

**Dr Asamoah:** Mr Speaker, that support was being done—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** I always say that in contributing to Statements, you need to be guided by the Standing Order and we must be factual.

**Dr Asamoah:** Mr Speaker, I do not intend to generate a debate. But I want to—Please allow—I just want to express the fact that one of the major issues that we have to deal with is rent support from our constituents. It is not because they want to put that pressure on Hon Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, if we are to look at what the maker of the Statement spoke about

and the recommendation, that is GH¢1,500 averagely per a month to be paid by National Service Personnel that are likely to be paid GH¢700 does not align. Mr Speaker, in our quest and effort to solve this issue, I believe working on the Rent Act alone might not suffice. But in addition, we need to have measures that can help improve upon our credit system.

Mr Speaker, if property owners are supposed to give out their rooms for rent, they also want to be assured that they are going to get paid at the end of the month. So, in addition to supporting our system, it would be good that what the previous Government started to work on, which is the establishment of a good credit score system, so that property owners would be assured to give their rooms for rent. In order not to ask for people to pay two or three years in advance, so that they can be assured of their payment.

Mr Speaker, in addition to this, I believe that we may have to review how much we also do pay our National Service Personnel, who are also supporting our workload. If one looks at countries that are working on dual system, the National Service is a time that one has to learn to be part of the workforce. And it should not be punishment to them. One year is quite a long time, and if government can take steps to review how much we pay them—Because if they are to pay GH¢1,500 a month, that means they would be in arrears every month to be able to survive, not to talk about their transportation and feeding. So, whilst we are taking steps to look at rent issues, my

advice is that government should, as a matter of urgency, review how much we are paying National Service Personnel to support them as well.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Member.

**Mr Fred Kwesi Agbenyo (NDC — Guan):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to this particular Statement and I want to thank the maker of the Statement.

Mr Speaker, this issue has come up, I think, just about the right time. We all know the cost of rent in this country. And the housing deficit that we have in this country is such that when one travels to most of our communities, essential service providers like teachers and nurses are reluctant to accept posting to these communities, because when they get in there, to get a place to rent, so they could wake up in the morning and go to work, in itself is a problem. Apart from the cost in the cities, as the maker of the Statement has enumerated, in the villages, the houses are simply not available. So, somebody, for instance, is posted to a place like Likpe Bala in my constituency to go and teach, or to go and serve as a health practitioner, the fellow has to stay in Hohoe, pick a motor in the morning before he gets to work.

Mr Speaker, oftentimes, when we see them in the morning, they look like people coming from, maybe, a *galamsey* pit, as a result of the nature of their route. Therefore, we are building affordable

houses. The focus and concentration is always in the towns and the cities, and no attention is paid to the rural areas. What it would create eventually is that everybody would want to move to the cities and towns where they believe they can get proper accommodation and housing for their families. While we make efforts to provide affordable housing, it would be important that we pay some attention to the villages.

Mr Speaker, the next issue I want to raise has to do with the cost of the so-called affordable houses that we have built in Accra. Mr Speaker, go and find out today how much they are renting these same affordable houses. We have an institution like SSNIT that would use workers' money to build an apartment like the Adenta SSNIT Housing, then people who are well-placed in society would go and buy these houses from SSNIT, and then they would now go and rent it to the poor people who cannot raise money to buy it. I think that it is not a healthy practice that we use state resources to build houses that are supposed to go for individuals who do not have money, yet we sell it to the people who have money, and then now go and rent it to the ordinary people.

Mr Speaker, it is a practice that we need to check. One of the reasons why, Mr Speaker, I believe that houses are becoming very expensive in this country is the cost of building materials. Mr Speaker, today a ton of iron rod is not a joke. I have always been citing an example that my grandfather who gave birth to my father, I did not see him but he built a house in my village, without

any iron rod, without any cement, they just used clay. That house is still there till date. Is there a way we can develop technology that we can build houses that are cheap and affordable, and really affordable, that ordinary people can go in there and rent? It is something that we need to do—To invest in some technology, how we can modify this same clay that we have here, either into bricks, and use it to build our houses, and stop solely depending on these iron rods, cement, and the rest.

Mr Speaker, one other thing that is giving us a problem are these agents who contract these houses, and serve as middlemen. They collect some percentage of their money from the tenant. They collect a percentage from the one who is also renting the house. Meanwhile, these people do not pay any tax to the State. Can we come out with either a law that would say that if one has a house and one wants to rent the house, should be sent to the District Assembly? We have young people out there who would now determine or the assembly would determine how much the house must go for. So that the landlord who is taking their money from the tenant also pays some taxes to the State. Instead of these middlemen who only make money from both the tenant and the landlord, and do not contribute anything to the State.

Mr Speaker, I think that one of the reasons we are not able to enforce the law, the Rent Act, 1963 – Act 220 is the fact that the majority of the people who own these houses, who are renting out, themselves are beneficiaries. So, once

they implement the law strictly, they would not benefit. How many poor people are building houses in this country? It is the same rich people who are building the houses and the same people who are supposed to enforce the law, are the landlords. And so deliberately, everybody is glossing over it, that let the status quo remain. The young man comes out of the university, gets an appointment—Let us take SSNIT, and he is posted to Accra. Before he can start work, he has to go and take a loan to rent a house. Mr Speaker, by the time he finishes paying for the two years' rent, the rent is due again. He has to go and look for another money. So, from the word go, the person is in debt till he goes to pension. I do not think this is healthy.

3.45 p.m.

And I am not surprised, these days, every young person who gets any form of employment, the first thing they think about is how to get money to buy their own land and how to get money to start putting up their own house. We know that money injected into building is not money that we can easily get back. Meanwhile, they could have used that money to other sectors of investment that can give them some money.

Mr Speaker, I sincerely want to thank the maker of the Statement and call on this House to take some measures to make sure that rent becomes affordable, that we are able to provide houses especially in the rural community for the students of our country.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. Leadership?

Hon Members, I said Leadership because I want to take the Statement of Hon Michael Okyere Baafi. So, there would be one more Statement to be taken for the day.

**Second Deputy Minority Whip (Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib):** Very well, Mr Speaker, I want to cede my opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Please do. Hon Member, you have the floor.

**Ms Shirley Kyei (NPP — Atwima Nwabiagya South):** Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement well researched and ably made by my Colleague, Hon Edem Agbana.

Mr Speaker, I believe the high rent rates we see in this country is as a result of the high deficit in our housing units. As the maker of the Statement said, with over 2 million deficits in housing units, it is not surprising that we find a lot of young women and men who have moved to the bigger cities for greener pastures on the streets. Mr Speaker, these young men and women, mostly I am concerned about the women who are very innocent and vulnerable. Can you imagine those young women on the streets with men who are very active, men who sometimes come from the woods with smoke all over them, men who are seen at the blue kiosks, men who are on tramadol? I am worried about events of the night, Mr

Speaker. Our young ladies are vulnerable.

Mr Speaker, permit me to share an experience I had over the weekend. I had to visit some constituents of mine who have graciously enjoyed free SHS and are currently in Accra to pursue their first degree. [*Hear! Hear!*].

Mr Speaker, when I visited them in Madina, as many as six of them were in one room. Not only was this disheartening, but my fear was the fact that if these young students are left in this condition for a prolonged period of time, they would be exposed to all sorts of unhealthy conditions and it would also have an adverse impact on their studies. Mr Speaker, no student should be exposed to this dilapidated, unsanitary, unhealthy conditions. I had to step in and mitigate the situation by making sure that they are rehoused and put in pairs.

Mr Speaker, aside this, when people are lucky enough not to find themselves on the streets, you find that they are in informal settlements. These informal settlements lack basic amenities like sanitation, water and electricity. The rent situation is very dire and needs to be looked at. I therefore propose that we really look at our rent control mechanism.

Mr Speaker, the truth of the matter is affordable housing is simply not affordable. It is simply not affordable and most often than not, when these people have exhausted their two-year rent, they find themselves having to go back to an increase in the next rent

advance. These rent increments are not even proportional to any improvement in the housing conditions. It is really terrible and has to be addressed.

Mr Speaker, I would therefore conclude by proposing that we look at a district-based rent mechanism, whereby we would have all tenants and landlords present a rent agreement that would be scrutinised, approved and then deposited. This would ensure compliance and make the average Ghanaian who find themselves in the low-income brackets have access to good housing units. I will also propose that we move away—Well, I would not say move away from affordable housing, but we look at social housing schemes which will bridge this gap.

Mr Speaker, I would like to end by commending the maker of the Statement and say that every Ghanaian deserves decent affordable housing and we should ensure that as a House we look at this.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. [*Hear! Hear!*].

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, you said students from your constituency are six in one room. Are they boarders or day students?

**Ms Kyei:** Sorry, they are here for their first degree and are in various universities here in Accra.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

Yes, Deputy Majority Leader?

**Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan):** Mr Speaker, I would like to yield to Hon Gizella to conclude.

Hon Gizella Tetteh-Agbotui, you have the floor.

**Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui (NDC — Awutu Senya West):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. If there is any assurance, we can give this House and to Ghanaians, this is the time for us to give it. I thank the maker of the Statement and all those who have contributed. As the saying goes in Fante, *nyansa nyi nyimpa koro ne tirim*. To wit: it is not one person who has all the ideas. I always enjoy it when we are able to discuss some pertinent issues that affect every single person in this House.

Mr Speaker, the rental market has become a bit more sophisticated and a bit more varied. Sometimes when we discuss, we tend to limit it to housing but let us remember that there are also commercial rentals, which are shops and stores and others. It has generally been an issue and a problem and that even goes to affect the local businesses that go on in this country. Now, the market is becoming more sophisticated. As you know, even Airbnb is also part of the rental market. They would have maybe been in the category of hotels for people to sleep in hotels, but they choose to sleep in people's rented places.

Mr Speaker, so, I just want to give the assurance to this House and to Ghanaians in general that the Government of President John Dramani Mahama, as he

is resetting this country, he is resetting some of the programmes and policies that he has put in place and this rental issue will be dealt with comprehensively. There must be a balance also. Mr Speaker, some people consider these houses as an investment and they also feel that they must also get returns. So, there must be a fine balance between the supply and the demand for it.

Mr Speaker, my plea is that, together, for the supply side, for those who have the luxury of renting, we should also bear in mind that much as they are trying to recoup their investments, they are also providing a service and a social service at that. Especially, when one has issues with different groups like my Colleague just talked about students renting. The hostels are also sometimes a bit exploitative and yet there is not much that people are able to do.

So, I just need to give that assurance that we would see to these things. Myself and my minister—Even just yesterday we were discussing it. We intend to have a district housing scheme so that teachers and others who are posted to the rural areas would be able to at least have decent accommodation. Not only teachers but other government workers, nurses, *et cetera*, and even the general public.

Mr Speaker, we have to move on as a country, we must progress, and it is my prayer that we all support the reset agenda to make that happen.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Members. It is true that the Rent Act needs to be reviewed. The Bill was introduced but was not passed into law. I believe if the law is passed, reviewing the Rent Act, most of these problems would be resolved. The Deputy Minister-designate is here.

3.55 p.m.

I would urge upon the sector Minister to take a look at the Bill and give it the due consideration, so that we can really review the Rent Act and solve most of these problems.

Hon Members, let us take the last Statement which stands in the name of Mr Michael Okyere Baafi, Member of Parliament for New Juaben South, on Strengthening Ghana's Industrial Sector and Trade for Sustainable Economic Growth.

Hon Member, you have the floor.

## STATEMENT

### **Strengthening Ghana's Industrial Sector and Trade for Sustainable Economic Growth**

**Mr Michael Baafi Okyere (NPP — New Juaben South):** Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, I rise to make this Statement on strengthening Ghana's industrial sector and trade for sustainable economic growth. We stand at a pivotal moment, poised for economic transformation; yet, faced with significant challenges. This Statement

will evaluate Ghana's progress, identify obstacles, and propose concrete actions to strengthen our industrial sector and trade capabilities.

Mr Speaker, Ghana's industrial sector has demonstrated resilience, particularly amidst the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiatives such as the One District One Factory (1D1F) Policy, and the Ghana Automotive Development Policy (GADP) have shown promise in fostering industrial growth and diversification.

Indeed, for the first time in the history of Ghana, we have seven vehicle assembly plants manufacturing about 14 brands of vehicles, while the 1D1F Programme notwithstanding its challenges, has led to the establishment of new factories and expanded existing ones; thus, creating 169 companies in operation. These and other industrial initiatives have created jobs and stimulated local production in various sectors, especially agro-processing.

According to the World Bank, the industrial sector's contribution to Ghana's GDP increased significantly from approximately 24.3 per cent in 2016 to 33.0 per cent in 2023. This growth highlights success in job creation, especially in manufacturing and construction; export diversification and value addition. It is also worthy of note that Manufacturing Value Added (MVA) increased from US\$6 billion to US\$8.5 billion between 2016 and 2023.

Ghana has seen notable improvements in its trade performance between 2016

and 2024, driven by several factors, including policy reforms, enhanced export diversification, and increased investments in key sectors. Ghana's total trade volume has experienced substantial growth. For example, the total exports rose from approximately US\$13.5 billion in 2016 to an estimated US\$20 billion by 2023.

Imports also increased but at a slower rate, leading to an overall positive balance in trade in certain years, particularly due to rising commodity prices on the global market. Cocoa, gold, and oil remain the cornerstones of Ghana's export economy. In addition to these traditional exports, Ghana has made considerable strides in diversifying its exports.

The trade in non-traditional exports, such as cashew nuts, shea butter, and fruits have seen growth. Non-traditional exports increased from about US\$2 billion in 2016 to US\$3 billion by 2023.

Between 2016 and 2024, Ghana's trade performance has evidently improved, showcasing significant growth in exports across several key sectors. Continued investment in infrastructure and a focus on diversifying trade routes and products will be critical for maintaining this positive trajectory in the future. The Government's strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing trade will be essential for further sustainable economic development.

Mr Speaker, despite these positive indicators, several critical challenges hinder Ghana's industrial and trade growth:



1. High Electricity Tariffs for Manufacturers: High energy costs increase production expenses, making Ghanaian goods less competitive in both domestic and international markets. Addressing this requires diversification of energy sources, investment in renewable energy infrastructure, and potentially targeted subsidies for energy-intensive industries.
2. Inadequate Infrastructure: Poor road networks, unreliable transportation, and limited access to reliable internet connectivity hinder efficient movement of goods and services.
3. Strategic investment in infrastructure development is vital for improving logistical efficiency and attracting foreign direct investments.
4. Access to capital: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), the backbone of many economies, often lack access to affordable credit. Government initiatives, such as loan guarantee schemes and support for microfinance institutions can mitigate this.
5. Technological innovation and skilled labour: A lack of technological advancement and a shortage of skilled labour limit productivity and competitiveness. Investment in education and training programs, coupled with

incentives for technological adoption, is paramount.

6. Export Diversification: Over-reliance on a few key exports renders Ghana vulnerable to price shocks. Value addition to raw materials, exploration of new markets, and strategic partnerships to access global value chains are crucial for diversification.

Mr Speaker, I propose these recommendations to help Government to be able to boost trade and the industrial sector. To enhance Ghana's industrial sector and trade, the following recommendations must be taken seriously:

1. Strengthen the 1D1F and Automotive Development Policies: A comprehensive evaluation of these policies is needed to identify successful strategies and areas requiring improvement. Targeted support for high-growth sectors, coupled with streamlined bureaucratic processes, will maximise their impact.
2. Improve Infrastructure: Invest in robust transportation networks, reliable power supply, and high-speed internet access to reduce operational costs and boost competitiveness.
3. Enhance access to finance: We have to expand access to credit for SMEs through government-backed loan schemes, microfinance

institutions, and innovative financial instruments.

4. Promote technological Innovation: There is the need for us to invest in education and training to build a skilled workforce and incentivise the adoption of technology in various industries.
5. Leverage the AfCFTA: Actively participate in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) market. AfCTA market has come to stay, whether we believe it or not; therefore, there is the need for us to take advantage of this block as a country. AfCTA is now the biggest customs union in the whole world; therefore, Ghana has to take serious advantage of this market to be able to boost intra-African trade and increase our export earnings.

Mr Speaker, to conclude, Ghana can build a more robust industrial sector, diversify its exports, and foster sustainable economic growth for the benefit of all Ghanaians. I urge this august House to take a serious interest in trade and industrial activities to help boost Ghana's intra-African trade systems and infrastructure to be able to earn more in the area of export to help build a better Ghana.

On this note, I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity

4.05 p.m.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Member. The floor is now open for comments. Yes, Hon Member?

**Ms Gloria Owusu (NPP — Trobu):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I rise to support the Statement made by my Colleague, Hon Michael Baafi Okyere.

Mr Speaker, a woman trader from Ghana faces a lot of challenges using the Aflao border for trade. From the Akatsi border to the Tetteh Quarshie roundabout, we have about 27 checkpoints on the road. This is an issue we need to address to ensure smooth trading at the border. Thank you.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Member?

**Mr Emmanuel Drah (NDC — Upper West Akim):** Mr Speaker, I want to commend the maker of the Statement.

My contribution has to do with the improvement in industrialisation. The last time, a Colleague made a statement that we do not need any magician to work at the Bank of Ghana to reduce the pressure on the dollar, but all we need to do is to increase productivity. If supply exceeds demand, the pressure on the dollar comes down.

Mr Speaker, it would surprise one to see a very big factory set up in my Constituency which is a one-hour drive from Accra. It is a jute sack factory which can produce over 600,000 bags of jute sacks but has been left for the past

eight years. What are we doing about it? If Ghana Cocoa Board can import sacks with millions of dollars from India and Bangladesh, why can we not revamp this factory to produce sacks for Ghana Cocoa Board?

Mr Speaker, I would urge the sector Minister to take it up and work on this factory. I am talking about Adeiso, which is not far from Accra. The investors are there and are waiting to hear from us. What can we do about this?

On this note, I want to thank the maker of the Statement and also urge the House to take the necessary action for the factory called the Kotoku factory at Adeiso to be revamped for the youth to get something to do.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for your indulgence.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Samuel Awuku.

**Mr Samuel Awuku (NPP — Akuapim North):** Mr Speaker, I rise to also support and commend the maker of the Statement in specific relation to our industrial sector and also how we can strengthen our trade sector.

Mr Speaker, the previous Colleague who just contributed to the Statement made by the Hon Member of Parliament (MP) for New Juaben South, made mention of another worrying trend where we can have a factory that produces things that we can use in our country but many a time, we see the Government

moving outside the shores of our country to get the same thing at an exorbitant price.

Mr Speaker, just less than 40 minutes from here is my Constituency where Tetteh Quarshie brought the cocoa pod from Fernando Po to plant that today, Ghana is also highly regarded as a major cocoa-producing country. Former President Kufuor started the chocolate processing factory and unfortunately, before former President Kufuor could end his tenure, the factory which was just about 70 to 75 per cent completed has up to today been left there. We see some of these factories coming up but we have the old and existing ones which we can expand to create jobs for our people but we turn a blind eye to it.

Mr Speaker, I believe that for us to strengthen our trade and industrial sector, there are some key things that must also come into play. One, the attitude of our people towards what we also produce and consume in Ghana becomes very critical. Many of the State-Owned Enterprises—And I share a personal experience as well. During the Christmas and Easter festivities, many State-Owned Enterprises would prefer to buy foreign rice for their staff than locally produced rice. All these things would have a rippling effect on even the currency of our country.

Once again, let me also dwell on the attitude of our people when I say it is critical in strengthening our industrial sector. Many Members of Parliament have similar experiences of access to micro-credit. We support our people

with this micro-credit and many Members of Parliament end up carrying the burden of paying the entire credit that they helped to secure, guarantee or support the constituents and people who may be in need. I believe that the foundation has been laid. Let me commend the previous Government for the 169 companies under the 1D1F and for expanding the old companies and also establishing new ones.

But I believe that these companies would eventually die off if we do not consume what they are producing or take advantage of what they are producing. Also, the taste for foreign goods is something that—I would not say that we can compel someone to consume what we produce in Ghana, but I think we should also make it much more attractive for these companies that are employing our people and developing our country to also have the benefits of seeing the things that they are producing on our shelves. In the past, we have had several of these beverages and after three to four months to a year, we do not find them on the shelves. I believe that the time has come and the urgency of the time also requires that—

Now all over the world, Mr Speaker, as I conclude, many countries are resorting to also looking inward in trying to raise revenue to support the growth of their industries. In conclusion, I would also like to appeal to you to use your good office to help the people in my Constituency with the Tetteh Quarshie Chocolate Factory which was started almost 20 years ago and today has been left in the bushes somewhere. If we can

have the Minister for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry or the Minister for Agriculture—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, proceed and conclude.

**Mr Awuku:** Mr Speaker, so that we can also have the people having the benefit of getting at least some employment opportunities. Thank you.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Prof Adam.

**Prof Hamza Adam (NDC — Kumbungu):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, that I have caught your eye this time around. Let me thank the maker of the Statement for making this very important contribution and bringing this subject matter to the floor.

Industrialisation is very important that we must embrace as a country. Indeed, that is supposed to be the future of the country because if we mention most of these developed countries, they have reached where they are because of industrialisation. We as a country are blessed with a lot of raw materials but we tend to export most of these raw materials to other countries, get them processed and we import them with a lot of hard currencies to be able to use as a country.

4.15 p.m.

Meanwhile, we have huge potential to establish these industries to take care of these things. Let me mention that the challenges we face as a country in

developing our industries has to do with technological know-how. We have a country where we have good brains but we do not consciously train our people with the requisite technological know-how to man our industry. The other challenge we have as a country is high cost of production. We have industries that are folding up because of high-cost production. I remember a case where there was this company producing sanitary pads. Because of high cost of production, they had to fold up in this country and they relocated to Egypt where they were producing at a relatively low cost. When they produce and bring the products into this country, they are able to sell it far lesser than the price they were selling in this country and still make profit. This means that the cost of production is a matter that we have to look at as a country. The high tariff being paid by these industries is something that we have to look at. We are transiting into renewable energy. That is what we have to look at as a country. Let us see how we can introduce this renewable energy resources in our industries and I am sure when that is done, it can help to bring down cost of production and also reduce the burden on these industries.

The other issue that we have to look at is the taxes. The taxes are so much on these industries. The cost of production is very high because we tax them so much that at the end of the day, they cannot break even and that is very worrying. One thing that we also have to look at is to try and see how we can look at introducing these industries in our rural communities. I know the previous Government tried to look at 1D1F but if

one looks at the way they tag some of these set ups as industries, I think some of them were not qualified; there were some which could be just somebody's poultry farm that they name as industry. So, we need to really look at—If we are industrialising our districts or establishing industries in the districts, then we really have to get serious and take serious measures to be able to establish this.

Mr Speaker, on my recommendations, I would urge us as a country to try and see how we can take advantage of the huge raw materials we have as a country and work towards introducing more industries. We have to also train more people with technological know-how to be able to manage these industries. Another way we can motivate people to let people stay and work in the industries is to be able to find a way of reducing cost of production and if we are able to do all these things, I believe strongly that, we as a country, can really take our industrialisation more seriously and get to establish more industries to be able to accommodate the teeming unemployment we have as a country.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Very well. I give the floor to Mr Samuel Abdullai Jinapor.

**Mr Samuel Abdullai Jinapor (NPP — Damongo):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement ably made by

Mr Michael Okyere Baafi, Member of Parliament (MP) for New Juaben South.

Mr Speaker, we are on a very important subject which is the Industrial Sector and Trade for Sustainable Economic Growth. I think that the Hon MP should be commended for bringing this very topical matter and I should say a very timely subject and I am sure this House has been following the trade war between the United States of America (USA), China, Mexico, Canada and the European Union and the retaliatory slapping of import duties and tariffs on their respective imports and this is why the whole area and sector of trade in our country, both domestic and international trade is absolutely important.

Mr Speaker, I believe that when one takes a cursory look at the Statement made by Hon Member and the contributions made, I think the question of trade facilitation and trade promotion is absolutely important. The issue to do with infrastructure such as our ports, how competitive the Tema and the Takoradi Ports are, as opposed to Lome Ports and all of that. I think it is absolutely important that we pay attention to that. The Boankra Inland Port, which was began by the Akuffo-Addo Government and which is almost complete, to what extent are we going to complete it, to what extent are we going to operationalise it and to what extent are we going to use it as a tool or vehicle for trade facilitation and promotion.

Mr Speaker, when one goes to Debre in the Savannah Region of Ghana, there is another inland port which has been

envisioned by the Akuffo-Addo Administration which means that we are going to have goods transported from Tema Port, Debre and Debre becoming the hub for transportation of goods from Savannah Region to Burkina Faso to Mali, to Niger to Chad. To what extent are we going—The new Minister for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry and the new Government is going to complete these projects and use it as an anchor for trade facilitation and promotion.

Mr Speaker, another area of significance is the area of AfCFTA, as you know, Ghana is the headquarters for the AfCFTA and it has the mandate to promote intra-African trade and bring about a regional market for Africa and Ghana is hosting this secretariat and is leading the effort at ensuring that we have African integration when it comes to trade in Africa. I believe that Ghana should take advantage of this effort by the AU to build a continental market. The statistics is that, intra-African trade is 7 per cent of all the trade that happen within Africa and when one takes the European Union, intra-European Union trade is above 70 per cent and the benefits that would accrue as a nation. If for example, we are able to export our salt to places like Nigeria, where as we speak today, imports their salt far away from Brazil—And these are the areas we need to pay particular attention to.

Mr Speaker, we also need to look at import substitution. This is absolutely important because if we are able to promote import substitution, and produce as much of our consumables here in Ghana, and consume made in

Ghana, that is the only way we can retain Ghanaian wealth within Ghana and that is how we can promote the private sector of Ghana. That is how we would not export our hard-earned foreign currency, and if I may, almost everything we consume in our country is mostly imported and import substitution is absolutely important and that is why the Akuffo-Addo Administration, again, brought about the One District, One Factory. I think it is particularly refreshing, that the new Government has also brought about agro-business as a component of the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as Industry, as a component of the Ministry of Trade. Agro-processing is key, particularly, in the farming enclaves of our country, Afram Plains, Northern Ghana and other parts of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I want to conclude by indicating that the Statement which has been made by the Hon Member of Parliament, calls for a lot more thorough examination because across the world, countries are now engaged in what is called, "Protectionism" which is that, countries want to protect their industries. They want to protect their private sector. They want to ensure that their countries only consume what they produce, at the same time, they want to export what they produce, the excess of what they produce, they want to export them, which are the two pillars of protectionism.

4.25 p.m.

I think it is about time that our country also begins to examine and interrogate how we can build a

protectionist economy in our country— A protectionist national economy where we produce here, we consume what we produce and whatever we have in excess, we are able to export. Beginning with the West African Region of Africa and the continental economy of Africa, to ensure that the Ghanaian economy grows so we can have the sustainable economic growth that the Hon Member of Parliament is calling for.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Leadership. Minority Chief Whip—

**Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh (NPP — Nsawam/Adoagyiri):** First of all, let me thank you for the admirable endurance shown today. If one counts the number of Statements you have admitted, it is not ordinary. I want to commend you for having endured all this while and to particularly commend my good Friend, the former Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry, for carrying the experience along.

Mr Speaker, let me try and veer off, not to repeat many of the good things that Colleagues have observed, just to narrow my contribution in this area. It is not debatable that we have to depart from what the first President of this country, Dr Kwame Nkrumah led, and get on to embrace a path where growth and industrial revolution would be private sector-led. That model has to sink and both Sides of the divide would have to come to the conclusion that it is only a private sector-led industrialisation that can change the fortunes and narrative.

Mr Speaker, the state leading industrialisation has failed and many of the industries that were built from independence had to be sold out to private entities. We can have another day to make that argument. But the point is that a private sector-led industrial growth is what can change the narrative and the story. For me, that should be the fulcrum of the discussion.

We have something in Chapter 6 of our Constitution called the Directive Principles of State Policy and successive governments have a moral mandate and responsibility to continue what the previous governments have started. If it is the case that the previous Government's policy of 1D1F—We may have our criticisms of its implementation and its inherent associated shortfalls. I have taken a cursory look at the NDC's manifesto on industrialisation. It is essentially not different from what the NPP stood for. Their manifesto says previous industrial moves started by the NPP administration—They are going to continue with that.

Mr Speaker, let us come to that stage—*[Interruption]*

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, address me.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I am addressing you.

Let us come to that stage of our development paradigm where we would say that—Let us jettison the shame if there is any and say that the NPP started 1D1F. It has built this number of

industries—So, we would have to continue with those ones. I am not here to tell them the number of industries we have built because I do not have the statistics. Probably, the former Minister can tell us. But I am making a point that one day they would also not be in government. One day they would be out. In fact, soon, they would be out—*[Uproar]*—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minority Chief Whip, please be guided accordingly.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, I would stay on course. So let us continue a culture of continuity and that is what I am speaking to. A culture of continuity is what we should look at.

Mr Speaker, Africa has the youngest population globally. We know the incidental effect of this on industrial growth and incidental effect of population on the growth of the economy and country. We are told Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to be the second fastest growing region globally after Asia. We are also told that now, unlike before when Nigeria was leading and seen as the biggest economy, South Africa arguably now has the biggest economy. There is something they are doing right in the area of manufacturing and mining. What is happening at Johannesburg?

We have a lot of gold deposits in our country. But we have allowed politicking and name calling and tagging to gain our country. What is it about Johannesburg that we cannot do? We can also do same



or even better. Our policy of the Free Zone Concept is now, for want of a better expression, not current. Now the experts are talking about economic zone. Not to look too far, Cote d'Ivoire is becoming more competitive. We keep relying on our past glory. Now, Cote d'Ivoire is becoming more competitive in terms of investment destination than Ghana. What are they doing right? They have consistently been reviewing their Policy. They have shifted with their policy on free zone to what they now call economic zone.

Mr Speaker, not to rehash the high point of my Colleague's Statement. I am simply saying that, please—And I saw my good friend, Hon Isaac Adongo walk in, I know he would be named very soon by His Excellency the President — *[Laughter]*. He would be named very soon. What we are saying is that, there should be no shame. Let us sustain the 1D1F Policy regardless that it was started by the erstwhile NPP Administration. This is what can change the fortunes. Elsewhere in South Africa, when government changes, one would see the previous government and the succeeding government exchanging notes. After all, what is it? It is about the welfare of our people.

I believe strongly that when it comes to industrialisation, we are better positioned. The interrelations about raw material usage, market sources and the fact that Sub-Saharan African countries are not trading with one another—These are basic matters that can be dealt with. But the problem is self-inflicted. Let us shift the paradigm and say that “enough

of the politicking.” As long as there is something done which we consider as productive and it is something we can continue as a succeeding government, we should lay claim to it, own it, and say that it is a state project; let us sustain it. I think if we begin to change our attitude as politicians and a political class, we would make a very good progress. We should not be too worried about the number of factories that the NPP built. After all, they built some. We built a number of them. Improve upon them and not shy away from the 1D1F; own it and see it as a state project then we can make the success that we are all desirous of seeing.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude by inviting you—Mr Speaker, I know you are very good at these consequential directives. A number of Statements have been made in this House, we move motions, we lament, and then we leave it there. Notwithstanding the fact that we have not formed or fully constituted our Committees, Mr Speaker, I know you are very wise in such matters and you can guide us on how to navigate. This is a very important Statement that we cannot just let go. Maybe, pending the formation of the Committee on Trade —It is also interesting to realise that His Excellency the President has decided to have the Ministry of Trade now re-couched as the Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industry. I commend His Excellency the President for that identity. But the effect

of it must reflect practically, not just in the name and identity.

Mr Speaker, I would invite you, if it finds favour with you, to make some appropriate consequential directives—

4.35 p.m.

I know that by next week, the Committees will be fully constituted. They should take a look at this Statement and see how we can draw on the crux of it, and relate it properly for the betterment of our country.

Mr Speaker, let me commend the maker of the Statement, and I thank you for your endurance for this number of Statements you have admitted. I want to commend you highly, Mr Speaker, for your endurance. I thank you for the opportunity.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. Deputy Majority Leader?

**Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan):** Mr Speaker, let me also thank the maker of the Statement, the former Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry for making this important Statement.

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt in anybody's mind in this country that Ghana wants to industrialise. We want to become a manufacturing economy; there is no doubt. The Majority wants to do it and the Minority wants to do same. Where we have always got it wrong is actually the implementation and all the

kind of names we give to the kind of industrialisation that we want. But the simple fact is that we want Ghana to become a manufacturing economy. We want to add value to all the resources that we are endowed with, so that we would be able to make the shelf value of these things longer and valuable; there is no question about that. Whether it is done through One District One Factory 1D1F or whichever means we want, Ghana must industrialise. That is the bottom line.

We are in a continent where we do not do much business with ourselves. Intra-trade is about 3 per cent, but we do business with the rest of the world. Even where we have created an AfCTA, we are not taking advantage of it. We have not put in any preparation that shows to anyone that Ghana wants to improve trade with its own neighbours. These are the things.

My Hon Brother talked about continuity. I am not quite sure whether we get to know about continuity when we go to opposition or when we are in government. This is because the Komenda Sugar Factory was handed over to the Minority eight years ago. They forget about continuity, but all of a sudden, they have remembered continuity. Ghana does not produce a grain, not even a grain of sugar. If one goes to Uganda, it has over 20 sugar factories. We do not produce a single grain of sugar in this country.

A previous government put up a Komenda Sugar Factory; then for eight years, the immediate past Government

had issues with it and bringing in people to take over the sugar factory. Eight years later, the factory is not working and Ghana still does not produce a grain of sugar. So, I am glad about continuity, and we will continue things that needs to be continued.

For me, 1D1F did not work, and that is not the argument here. We have the 24-Hour Economy, yes; they do not want to hear that, but for the next four years, they would hear about 24-Hour Economy—*[Hear! Hear!]* For the situation that we are in at the moment, we believe that is the way to go. We need to be able to produce more. We are not producing more in this country, so the 24-Hour Economy will enable us to triple what we are currently producing. It will enable us to get more people to work. Where one person works, in the future, it will be three people working. If the Minority does not want this, what do they really want?

We talk about unemployment, and it is through the roof at the moment. We need to get our people working. Young people do not have jobs to do and we need to create jobs for them, not just for the fun of it, but for us to be able to produce. The former Minister for Lands and Natural Resources talked about import substitution. What is import substitution? We need to be able to produce the things before we can substitute them.

We cannot just pass a law banning importation of things without having a replacement for what we are banning. That is what we have endured in the last

few years, where we have people who are promoting the ban of things we do not produce in this country. So, when we start producing those things, then we can actually start stopping certain things from coming into the country. But if we do not produce them and we ban them, we are actually going to increase prices.

The former Minister also talked about—What is it called? He tried to—What was he talking about? He talked about, basically, looking at what the Americans are doing by being a protectionist. Do we want to protect and export? What do we really want to do? He wants to protect our economy and not bring people in, but does he want to export to somebody else? It is import and export; we export what we are good at, and import what we are not good at. This is so that we would be able to bring things into this country, either as capital good or something, to produce them.

We are endowed with so many things in this country; yet, we do not do much to it. So, the 24-Hour Economy is about value addition. Agribusiness, which has been added to the Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industry, is basically about value addition, that we are adding value to the agricultural produce that we have in the agricultural sector; that is what agribusiness is. Add value to it before it is either exported or consumed, so that we would be able to improve the shelf life. We can add value to something that would rot in 10 days and keep it for years, and be able to increase the value when we export it.

So, this is an important Statement by the former Minister, but it looks as if we become a bit more knowledgeable about things when we get into opposition. When we are in government, we do not remember some of these things, but we do remember them when we get into opposition. I do believe that we will get our act together. We will work together on this for Ghana to be able to turn into a manufacturing economy. That is the only way we can survive as a country and take advantage of this AfCTA that we keep talking about.

Many a time, we sign agreements, but we do no preparation for those agreements and others take advantage of us, but we cannot take advantage of them. So, as we go along signing agreements, we also have to look at how those agreements will actually benefit us, as a country, and not sit down for somebody to take advantage of us and say that we have the AfCTA headquarters sitting in Accra. And so what? What benefit are we getting out of that? Those are the things we need to look at.

Mr Speaker, I would like to end here; this is going to be a very long conversation for many years to come.

I thank you.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. Hon Members, this is an important Statement. Consequentially, I will ask that the Statement be transmitted to the Minister responsible for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry for her perusal and necessary action.

Hon Members, the time for Statements has ended. Any indication from Leadership? Hon Deputy Majority Leader, any indication?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, it has been a long day and we would like to thank you for actually allowing the number of Statements that have been made today and the contributions that we have made on them. We are in your hands and we are tired.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, in line with Standing Order 56, it is only when we have done more than five hours that you can be in my hands. Once we are within the five hours, you cannot be in my hands. So, I advise that we move a motion for adjournment.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, that is why you are so admirable.

4.45 p.m.

The Speaker is so admirable. Yes, what he should have done was to move a Motion because of Order 55 (3). Ordinarily, we should be doing five hours, and we have done less than that, so you should be moving a Motion for adjournment.

Leader, take a cue and move a motion accordingly.

**Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan):** Mr Speaker, it has been a long day; I did not actually look at the time. But for the time that I have sat here, I thought we had done more than the required time. Mr Speaker, I would like to move that we bring proceedings to a close for today, and adjourn for tomorrow at 12 noon—

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** We would adjourn to tomorrow at 10 a.m.

Yes, the Motion has been moved for adjournment. Any seconder?

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** [*Inaudible*]—The Motion he moved. In fact, he said 10 a.m.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** Yes, 10 a.m.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, are you for 10 a.m.?

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** That is so.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** I second the Motion moved.

**Mr First Deputy Speaker:** The Motion has been moved and seconded. It is now for the consideration of the House.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

The House is accordingly adjourned to Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 at 10.00 in the forenoon.

## ADJOURNMENT

*The House was accordingly adjourned at 4.46 p.m. till Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025, at 10.00 a.m.*

## **Editor's Note**

This *Official Report* was corrected by the House on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, as follows:

- a) Column 22, last paragraph, line 2  
“First” was inserted after “Hon”
- b) Column 23, paragraph 3, line 4,  
“First” was inserted after “the”