



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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BOUND VOLUMES of the Official Report (each with a comprehensive Index) are issued periodically during the Session. There is no fixed subscription rate, but prices will be quoted on each publication.

*Published by the Office of Chamber Reporting
Parliament House, Osu, Accra.*

*Designed and Printed by the Publishing Department
Parliament House, Osu, Accra*

THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Tuesday, 11th February, 2025

The House met at 11.53 a.m.

[MR FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER IN
THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the communication from His Excellency, the President, would be taken by the Speaker himself. Let me proceed to the item numbered 6 on today's Order Paper—Correction of *Votes and Proceedings and the Official Report*.

Hon Members, correction of *Votes and Proceedings*.

Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, thank you very much for catching your eye. Your admiration for the Constitution of Ghana, very respectfully, is something that we all take pride in; and for that reason, I wish to bring to your attention, a potential constitutional infraction. And this is Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution. Very respectfully, Mr Speaker, if I may take the liberty to read:

“A quorum of Parliament, apart from the person presiding, shall be one-third of all the members of Parliament.”

Mr Speaker, very respectfully, this is a substantive position of the Constitution which requires that we do not proceed with Government Business unless we have the requisite quorum. Indeed, by our own Standing Orders, Order 64, we are also guided to ensure that we do not proceed unless we have quorum.

Mr Speaker, a critical look at the number in this House shows that we are less than 40; far below the number. At the last Sitting, you adjourned proceedings to today, at 10 o'clock. It is almost 12 noon and the House does not have the requisite number. Notwithstanding the 185 or so Members of the Majority, we still do not have a quorum. We in the Minority are ready to do Government Business—[*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, considering your love for the Constitution, and your knowledge of it, and the fact that same lies in your bosom, I am only holding your leg and urging you to pay fidelity to the provisions of the Constitution which requires that without the requisite quorum, we cannot proceed. I humbly pray that you take this into serious consideration. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, are you on your feet? Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Mr Mahama Ayariga: Mr Speaker, you are aware that the Speaker of Parliament has a Breakfast Prayer Meeting at which many of our Colleagues are in attendance. The Speaker has advertised it, and I am aware that a lot of

Members are aware and are at the programme, but I encourage compliance with the provisions of our Constitution.

If the Hon Member still wishes to press on his question of quorum, in spite of the Speaker's programme, we can do according to the Standing Orders, which is to take the step of ringing the bell. Except to say that the bell has been dysfunctional for close to a year now, unfortunately. Last week, when you asked that the bell be rung, it was only rung around the Chamber block; but Members of Parliament (MPs) are not seated around the Chamber block. Some are actually seated in their offices. So, if you direct that the bell be rung, then you must direct that the person ringing the bell rings on all the floors up to the 11th floor, until the electronic bell which is connected to every MP's office is fixed. So that effectively, the MPs would be aware that the bell has been rung.

I have no objection if he wants to press on the question of quorum; and I have no issue with us having the bell rung, but you must extend and direct the Clerks-at-the-Table to ring the bell on every floor. Since last week, I have been on them. I called an emergency meeting of the Clerk to Parliament and his staff, and I insisted that they fix the bell by yesterday, Monday. As at this morning, I checked on them and they had not yet fixed the electronic bell.

So, anytime you ask that the bell be rung, the MPs do not get notice in their offices that we are calling for quorum. That is how come we do not get them in

the Chamber in order for us to meet the quorum requirements. So, I have no problem. If the Hon Member for Manhyia South insists that we press on the provisions of Standing Order 64, let us go ahead and take the next step.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, Hon Minority Chief Whip, I recognise you?

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with respect to the Leader of the House—I sense his frustration and he spoke to it. Unfortunately, I am not aware of the difficulty we run through as a House because of the challenges associated with the bell; and I find that as a very fundamental challenge. The issue of the bell should have been resolved long ago. This brings us back to the matter I have been raising. Issues such as this should have been dealt with already if we had, for instance, our House Committee in place; they could have followed up and made sure that these matters are dealt with. I am not too sure the reasons cited by the Leader would stop us from proceeding, because this is, as he knows, a constitutional requirement, and I least expected this matter to be raised.

Mr Speaker, we have shown readiness to work. We were there at conclave, and as soon as the Table Office gave us heads up that the First Deputy Speaker was there, I stopped whatever I was doing. I was there, together with my Deputy.

12.03 p.m.

We waited for a while for the Majority Chief Whip to be called, but he was nowhere to be found. Subsequently, the Leader came.

Mr Speaker, also, on Friday, you gave prior notice of a Sitting time, and the *Votes and Proceedings* rightly captured that Sitting was adjourned to Tuesday, 11th February, 2025, at 10 a.m. Prior notification was given. The concerns about the bell can be resolved, but today, it cannot be cited as a reason.

Mr Speaker, humbly, I speak to corroborate what my Colleague said. Let the process begin, and the Majority should mobilise its Members. We have come; we have tried. They should bring their 187—The Hon Leader should try and bring—And I see my Colleague walking in elegantly. He should bring his numbers. It was not for nothing that the people of this country gave them 187, and they cannot marshal half of 187!

Mr Speaker, ordinarily, we would have liked to withdraw this matter, but since it is a constitutional matter—Mr Speaker, you are a renowned and a very respected lawyer; I think we should respect the provision of the Constitution, and then they should have a Caucus meeting—Now they can see what I was going through when we were on the other Side—My Friend should have a Caucus meeting and talk to his people that they have to come and do Government Business.

Mr Speaker, we are in your hands; let the process begin. The absence of the bell should not be an excuse. We can see the respected Majority Leader; we can see his frustration, but on this occasion, we are unable to yield to his request. The difficulty associated with the bell cannot be cited as an excuse. Mr Speaker, shall we proceed with the process.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, first and foremost, it is not easy to get me frustrated—[Laughter]—So I am not frustrated. I just feel that we should indulge the Speaker's religious ceremony. As we speak, about 110 Members of Parliament (MPs) are seated there, and I was hoping that the Minority Members who are not there would have been here. It is not as if, as our Side is not here, their Side is here either, but I agree with him that we should all be here. There is not much Government Business. I think we are basically looking at taking Statements and facilitating the fresh MPs to find their feet in making Statements and contributing to debates. If we really had serious Government Business to conduct, I can assure Hon Members that every single Member on my Side would be sitting right behind me to conduct Government Business, but as Hon Members know, we do not have any specific Government Business today to conduct. So, we are just going through the normal Business of the routine of Statements and comments on Statements.

Mr Speaker, the impression that the Minority Chief Whip seeks to convey to Ghanaians that we are not serious about Government Business—There is no Government Business here. There is no Bill before us; there is no loan agreement before us; there is no Budget before us; there is nothing before us. So, there is no Government Business before us. They should not create the impression that there is Government Business and the MPs on this Side are not available to conduct Government Business. Let me assure the Minority Side that when Government Business comes before this House, they would see that Members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) would be here in their numbers to conduct Government Business; they would soon see Members from the Majority Side here. When they leave the Speaker's Breakfast Meeting, they would be here in the Chamber, and we would conduct Business. I thank them very much for standing down the issue of quorum that they have raised, and we can continue.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Deputy Minority Whip?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, thank you.

I do not know whether it is the case that the Majority Leader is saying he asked his Members not to be in the Chamber because they have no Business to do. Also, it must not be captured that the person who made the application has withdrawn it; that is not accurate. He did not; it should not be in our records that he has withdrawn that. Maybe, the

Majority Leader and the Leader of Government Business did not hear him well, but the Minority Chief Whip did not raise the quorum issue. In procedure, if the person who raised the quorum issue is the one who ought to withdraw it, then so must be done. But the Majority Leader must not create the impression that there is nothing to do. We are telling Ghanaians that we are seated here wasting their time, and that we have nothing to do—Is that what the Majority Leader and the Leader of Government Business is saying?

Mr Speaker, Ghanaians gave them the 183 MPs for a reason. We are here, and they cannot even marshal 91, which is about one-third of 275 so far declared. I do not think it is a good thing to do. So, it is not true that the quorum issue under Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution has been withdrawn. This is a constitutional matter; one cannot use meetings outside Parliament and other committee meetings as—We have been able to close down Committee meetings in order to have quorum in the Chamber. So, if it is the case that there are 110 Members somewhere, they are not in the Chamber, and we need the numbers in the Chamber to commence Business.

Mr Speaker, I invite you as a lawyer with 22 years at the Bar, to respect and enforce the Constitution.

I thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Point of correction, I am now 23 years at the Bar—[*Hear! Hear!*]

Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I thought that the Minority Chief Whip, in the concluding part of his statement, did indicate to you, Mr Speaker, that you could continue Business according to what we have on the Order Paper. I assumed that he was speaking on behalf of his Backbench who had raised the issue of quorum and have obviously stood down the matter. So, I am surprised that my Friend who has always pretended to be my Friend—*[Interruption]*—He is my junior Brother; it is worse. He always pretends to be my Friend and yet, he is the one causing the trouble. When his Chief Whip had said that we should continue according to the business of the day, then he got up and said that he did not think the issue of quorum had been stood down. The issue of quorum has been stood down.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minority Leader?

Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, the Majority Leader is trying to filibuster. I was in the lift with some Members of the Majority Side and they were in a hurry because they were being whipped into the Chamber by their Chief Whip. So, for the first time, he is all over the place and he has now seen how hard it is to do Government Business. He is delaying to fill the Chamber.

Mr Speaker, he made a certain point. He says there is no Government Business so there is no need to whip his Side. He said that whenever there is Government

Business, we would see their numbers in the Chamber. Let me remind him, when we were taking the first batch of ministerial nominees' approval, their number was not up to 100, and they needed our Side to add to their numbers. For the second batch, they were not even up to 91; we counted. On all four occasions, they needed the mighty Minority to make them pass their Ministers —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, you are introducing an adjective, when they also start, there would be a problem, so it is Minority and Majority.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, on this occasion, they can start. They can call themselves super Majority.

12.13 p.m.

Mr Speaker, so if you look at all these empty seats in this Chamber now, the so-called super Majority is not even up to 50. Mr Speaker, rule on the application now; this House must stand adjourned. The application has not been withdrawn; rule on it so that next time they would know how to whip their Members in.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Majority Leader?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, he is using that as the tactics—so now he can also filibuster?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, I do not know whether this is filibustering.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, you have to rule on this matter now; this House must stand adjourned— you cannot do anything about it, do not encourage him -

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, but when the Hon Leader is on his feet, I cannot ignore him just like I cannot ignore you as a Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Not against the Constitution.

Very well, Mr Speaker. You would be quoted for what you have just said, very profound; when the Leaders are on their feet, you cannot ignore them. Very well, we have heard you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, it is factually inaccurate for the Minority Leader to say that during the consideration and approval of the ministerial nominees, this House did not have a quorum, but for the participation of Members of the Minority.

Mr Speaker, is he saying that Members of the Minority are not part of this House? Or that they have no obligation to constitute the quorum of this House? So, on what basis do they take monthly salary? What were they elected to do? To come and sit outside the Chamber of this House? They were elected to equally sit in this Chamber the same way the people on this Side are supposed to sit in the Chamber; so when

they sit here, they perform their public duties.

Mr Speaker, if I start citing Members of the Minority for not being in the Chamber, we would not end. Look at them, at all times, they do not even have one-fourth of their number in the Chamber. Is it a deliberate ploy?

Mr Speaker, that is not the issue. As we speak, they are not even up to 18. Ghanaians gave them 88 and they are using only 18; in the next election, we would reduce it further — *[Laughter]* — they were given 88 and they are using 18. It means that they need only 18 in the Chamber, so we would let the electorate know that with even 88, they are not using it efficiently so they should perhaps reduce the number further and make it 18.

Mr Speaker, I am not against the application of Order 64, but as you can see, we have the numbers, and Mr Speaker, if you read— *[Interruption]* — they are the one insisting on quorum and they want to make Statements.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, fortified by Order 64, marginal note, quorum in Parliament, Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution, I stand on Order 64(4) to direct that the bell be rung.

Hon Members, let us proceed to look at the *Votes and Proceedings and the Official Report*.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND THE OFFICIAL REPORT

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us proceed to look at the *Votes and Proceedings* of 7th February, 2025.

Page 1...7— Yes Mr Baffour Nana Awuah Agyei?

Mr Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, in the spirit of cooperation, and in the national interest, and in our quest to assist the Majority to do Government Business, I wish to withdraw my application on quorum.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Page 8? Yes, Hon Minority Chief Whip?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, I thought my Hon Colleague, Mr Baffour Nana Awuah Agyei who had come under Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 64 raising quorum concerns has withdrawn that. Mr Speaker, just to bring it to your notice so that you acknowledge that on this day, the Minority decided to have mercy on the Majority. [*Uproar*] We decided to have mercy on them and accordingly, the quorum — under the Constitution, we have decided to withdraw the quorum concerns that were raised a while ago and this is being done in the spirit of cooperation.

Mr Speaker, I see my respected Leader, and not to put the Whip under undue pressure, I see him running around making calls. We want to have mercy on

him and also to display that it is out of patriotism; the love for our country, that is why we are withdrawing this. And it cannot be the case that the Majority Leader would say that we have no Government Business, that is untenable. He should go and find Government Business and bring it to this House for it to be prosecuted. That is an important point and I hope they take —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip, I am reliably informed that the number in the Chamber now is 97.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, let the record reflect that indeed, we withdrew the quorum matter before they got the quorate number — [*Uproar*]— The record should reflect same, yes, we did.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: May the record reflect that at the time the issue relating to quorum was being withdrawn, the number in the Chamber was 97.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with the greatest of respect to you, would you be kind enough to furnish us with the time we got this number? Because about five minutes ago, we withdrew our call on quorum, so we had withdrawn the call on quorum before they got the number. That is a fact. We have shown cooperation; we are helping them to do Government Business, and yet they do not have Government Business.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I recognise Alhaji Suhuyini Sayibu Alhassan.

Alhaji Suhuyini Sayibu Alhassan:

Mr Speaker, thank you for the indication that at the time that the application was made to withdraw the earlier call, the number in the Chamber was over 90.

Mr Speaker, I just want to use this opportunity to caution ourselves as we employ these tools that are allowed within our operations as Members of Parliament. This caution has become important because it does not only interrupt the work in the Chamber, but also, interrupts Committee work.

Mr Speaker, myself and other Colleagues have just been called out of Committee meetings to come to the Chamber to be counted. As we speak, we have guests from State institutions who are waiting for us.

12.23 p.m.

What we were doing there is part of Parliament's Business, and it is unfortunate that we have had to make these guests wait for us, so that we can come here to show our face. That also interrupts Parliament's Business in some way.

Mr Speaker, I do not begrudge the Minority for imitating, in some cases, what may have happened to them when they were in Government, but they should do so responsibly like the Minority at the time without unnecessarily embarrassing all of us. As we speak, the leaders of those state agencies would think that Parliament is not a serious place. They have had to wait all morning, just so that Members

could come into the Chamber to be counted for Business to be conducted.

Mr Speaker, my caution is that we should employ these tools very judiciously.

Mr Boamah —*rose*—

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu —*rose*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, are you on a point of order?

Alhaji Alhassan: Mr Speaker, my caution is that we should employ these tools judiciously and use them in a way that we would not be ridiculing ourselves and also, by extension, be ridiculed by the public.

Thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon First Deputy Minority Whip?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I am very surprised at the angle at which the Member for Tamale North is going. He has used some words in this regard that is unparliamentary. When he says “unnecessarily” when constitutional matters are raised—At the time you were invited to look at the quorum in the Chamber, we were all aware that we did not satisfy Article 102 of the Constitution. Is it the case that the Hon Member said that, by averting our mind to Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution,—we did not have 91 or more to commence Government Business—was unnecessary?

If he was at a Committee meeting, he was not the only Member of the Committee; the Minority Chief Whip is also a Member of the Committee that he talked about. So, even if there is a Committee meeting, it should be suspended. If we need numbers in the Chamber, every Committee meeting have to be suspended for Members to come in here to get quorum to commence Business. But it should never be the case; and it must not be on our record that he being engaged somewhere is more important than what we do in the Chamber; then what would be the essence of us being in the Chamber? I think that my nephew is completely out of order; he is warming up to be a Deputy Minister for Roads and Highways, and he has to be guided. He is a senior, and he should not mislead us into believing that if one is at a Committee, he or she is not needed in here. This is a constitutional matter, and if the Constitution is triggered in anywhere that you are, you would have to respect and obey what the Constitution says.

I thank you, Mr Speaker—[*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, there is a point that needs to be made and I think that the Hon Member for Tamale North—And what he has said about how we use the question of quorum is very important. Leadership is aware that, in this House, when we first come and are at the point of saying our Prayers, and *Votes and Proceedings*, we hardly ever

raise the question of quorum at that stage. The Business of the day has not yet started; it is when we come to the point where Mr Speaker says, “At the commence of Public Business...”—We have not even commenced Public Business; we were just at the point of saying prayers and correcting our *Votes and Proceedings*—It is at that stage that, consistently, the Hon Member has been raising the issue on quorum.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Members were given orientation, so they should take their orientation seriously—[*Laughter*]—When we get to Public Business and he sees that there is no quorum, then he can raise the question of quorum. If we are going to raise quorum when we are about pray, we are going to raise quorum when we are about to correct our *Votes and proceedings*—I have heard the Deputy Minority Whip say that we need quorum to pray; how could we need quorum to pray or correct our *Votes and Proceedings*? We need quorum at commence of Public Business, and that has been the practice in this House.

Mr Speaker, let me add that we should not turn this whole idea of quorum as a political weapon. Consistently, that Side of the House has never been up to one-third of its number since we started proceedings. They have never been up to one-third of their number. As we speak, they are just 21; and like I said earlier, Ghanaians gave them 88 seats and consistently, they have utilised about 21. Next election, we would give them only 21—[*Laughter*]—Because they have demonstrated that that is what they need to do Business in

this House, but I think that we have a quorum to do Business, and even though we have not reach Public Business—*[Interruption]*—The Hon Member withdrew his application on quorum earlier, so what would he litigate?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us look at Article 102 of the 1992 Constitution; it says:

“A quorum of Parliament, apart from the person presiding, shall be one-third of all the Members of Parliament”

Hon Members, let me also take you to look at Order 64(3):

“A Member may draw the attention of the person presiding, at any time during a sitting, that Members present in the House constitute less than one-third of the number of all Members of Parliament.”

These are the relevant constitutional provision as well as our own Standing Orders.

Hon Members, I asked that the bell be rung for 10 minutes and within the 10 minutes, I was informed that we have 97 and consequently, the application on quorum was withdrawn. Can we make progress?

Page 8—

Hon Members, let us have the *Votes and Proceedings* adopted and then we can make progress.

Hon Minority Leader?

Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, on page 7, after the presentation of Business Statement, the issue of the previous day's *Votes and Proceedings* was corrected that the decision was a recission; that must reflect in the *Votes and Proceedings*. But they skipped that to page 8, where there is point 6, recognition of a school. So, I want that to reflect. In respect of our four Colleagues, there was a recission. That correction was done.

Mr Speaker, having done that, I want to claim the attention of Colleagues on this important matter. Our Colleague, Alhaji Suhuyini Sayibu Alhassan, in his submission earlier, had used two phrases, that the Minority must not be seen to be acting “irresponsibly”, and he also said quorum was used “unnecessarily”.

Mr Speaker, we can take it as he saying so on a lighter note. But I would want to remind my Colleagues opposite me that there are a number of times they have become sensitive to phrases, and I would not ask him to withdraw. But I want this day, the 11th of February, 2025, to be remembered.

12.33 p.m.

He used the phrase “irresponsible Minority”, we do not have a problem, and Mr Speaker did not also ask him to withdraw. It has been captured in the *Hansard*.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, I did not hear the phrase “irresponsible Minority” —

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, he said so. You can call for the *Hansard*. He did, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: “Irresponsible Minority”?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, he did and I challenge it. He did say that, check the records. Mr Speaker, call for the records now and let them check it. I would not lie. Sometimes when we raise the issue, it is as if we are saying things from our heads; he used those two phrases; you can check it now. I wrote it down, but I am saying that we absorb some of these jokes. Our Side absorbs some of these strong words, but if they were to come from this Side to the other Side, one would have heard them say “Hey, who are you calling irresponsible?” They should be responsible. So I am reminding him —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, let me find out from Mr Alhassan —

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: If he says he did not use it, let us call for the records now and play it for him.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Mr Alhassan, did you use the phrase “irresponsible Minority”?

Alhaji Alhassan: Mr Speaker, I remember using three words. I described the use as unnecessary, I encouraged that

it should be used responsibly and I also said it should be used judiciously.

Mr Speaker, if the Minority Leader decides to look at the opposite of “responsible”, that is not my choice; that is his interpretation. Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order! In the unlikely and far-flung event that the phrase “irresponsible Minority” was used, I direct that it should be expunged from the records.

Hon Members, page 8 — Yes, Hon Majority Chief Whip?

Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, the item numbered 7 on page 8, the Table captured that the point raised by the First Deputy Minority Whip was in respect of quorum to transact Business. But if I recall, the issue you raised was in respect of commencement quorum, because you dealt with the matter after I had presented the Business Statement, answered questions, and same got adopted. So, if the Table can correct that; it was about commencement quorum. I recall that very well.

Mr Speaker, just for your guidance. We were all over the news, over the weekend, that Friday’s adjournment was as a result of the fact that we did not have a quorum to transact Business. But Mr Speaker, if you compare that information with the record of the *Votes and Proceedings* that we are correcting now, we had as many as 192 Members of Parliament present on Friday.

Mr Speaker, if you would recall, I made a point in the course of the submission that even the Ad hoc Committee was sitting, and that other Members were at Committee meetings, and that if we could be given the opportunity to get Members to attend to Business on the Floor,— but that did not happen. So, being a house of records, tomorrow, the record for Friday would show that instead of the news out there that we adjourned because we did not have the numbers, we actually had 192 Members present. This is just for you to guide the House and I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Table, take note. Yes, Hon Deputy Minority Whip?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I just want to assist my Colleague, the Minority Whip, that he cannot assume that because we had about 192 marked present on the *Votes and Proceedings*, that was the number present.

Mr Speaker, you cited Order 64(3), and the Order is clear that the issue of quorum can be raised at any time. When you were adjourning, you said the Table Office had counted and we were 71. You made that announcement and for that matter, adjourned the House. So it must not be in the records that— because his assumption was that we had 192 marked present but you had directed the Table to count and we were 71 at the time we were adjourning. So we adjourned because we did not have the numbers. We adjourned because their super-183 vanished, and they were just about 30

and that is what is on our record; it was your direction and that is exactly what you said.

Mr Speaker, he needs to be guided. I would also like to advise him that he has just been a Majority Whip for about three weeks, so when I am talking — I am his senior in Leadership. Sit down, let me finish. I have been his Leader for four years now, and he has had three weeks so he should be able to learn and be guided on the procedure we use but he cannot assume that —*[Interruption]* — Mr Speaker, we have not even approved it.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order!

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, we have not approved it and for that matter, he cannot even refer to it because it has not been adopted. The *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday has not been adopted; he is a lawyer and should know better. It has not been adopted and for that matter, he cannot conclude on that.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Deputy Majority Whip, are you on a point of order?

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, first of all —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Deputy Majority Whip, you are on your feet.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, first of all, my brother, Alhaji Habib Iddrisu, failed to listen to me carefully in my prayer to you. My prayer to you was to

seek your guidance in respect of the two records because this is also a matter of record of the House, that on Friday, 192 Members of Parliament attended upon the House. Now, he makes the point that at the time he raised the issue of quorum, we were 71. Yes, but my prayer at the time was that there were two Committee sittings and Members were attending those Committees so we were praying for those Members to be permitted to attend.

Mr Speaker, so carefully, he should have listened to me pray you that we needed a guide on this matter. Secondly, I am senior to him in this House, so with all due respect — No, I am senior to him in this House, and we extend courtesy to each other; do not do this again. Please, with all due respect, we are brothers and I respect him so much, so he should reciprocate that.

Mr Speaker, thank you and let us do Business for today.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, 7th February, 2025 as corrected is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, we have the *Official Report* of Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025 for correction — [*Pause*]

Hon Members, any corrections? Prof Kingsley Nyarko, are you on your feet?

12.43 p.m.

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Yes, Mr Speaker, at column 71, the second paragraph reads:

“Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, please, like you said, ...”

Based upon the context, and in my reading, “Members” should be “Member” because it is referring to an individual. So, it should be, “Hon Member, please, like you said, I am not saying you should retract anything...”.

Then, when we go to column 78, the last but four lines of the third paragraph, and if you would permit me, I would read that portion:

“... when I had the privilege of being the Minister for Lands and Natural Resource—”

This is a minor correction; there should an “s” after “Resource”, making it “Resources.”

Mr Speaker, my last observation is at column 82, under the contribution of Rev John Ntim Fordjour. The last word on the first paragraph should be “fore” and not “fall” because it reads:

“... Mr Francis Asenso-Boakye and Mr Anthony Mmieh, respectively for bringing this matter to the ‘fall’”.

So, it should be “fore” and not “fall”.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, Rev Ntim Fordjour?

Rev John Ntim Fordjour: Mr Speaker, at column 83, the last three lines of paragraph 2 reads, "...regime or transition and number...". All that follow after "transitions" should go and the correct rendition should be, "...regime or transitions and higher numbers of post-election violence took place."

So, the whole sentence would read, "...it is unfortunate that anybody would want to attempt to equalise under which regime or transition recorded higher numbers of post-election violence."

Now, at the same column 83, paragraph 3, the last word on line 6, "outdate", should be "outdid", so it will be "... outdid the other". Again, at the same column 83, paragraph 4, the last but three lines, should read, "... of the political affiliation of"; "of" should replace "and". So, it should be "affiliation of the lives lost" and not "affiliation and the lives lost".

Mr Speaker, lastly, at column 85, the last word of the first paragraph, "commission of enquiry", should start with an "i" and not "e", so it should be "commission of inquiry".

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Any further corrections?

Hon Members, the *Official Report* of Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025, as corrected, is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, we would take Statements; I recognise the Minority Leader.

STATEMENT

Request for Urgent Support to Contain Cholera Outbreak in the Effutu Municipality

Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin (NPP — Effutu): I thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate this treasured space to make this urgent Statement regarding the outbreak of cholera in the Effutu Municipality.

I have already, in a letter dated, today, with reference MIL/005 conveyed the sentiments of the Effutu Municipal Health Directorate to the Minister for Health calling for an urgent attention on this matter.

Mr Speaker, it has been reported that 412 cases of outbreak of cholera in Efutu Municipality has taken three lives. Currently, we have the affected people in the Winneba Municipal Hospital, the Winneba Health Centre, and the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) Clinic. The facilities there are very stressed, and most of these cases are coming from the shores of Winneba, I mean the *inshore naa*.

Currently, according to the Municipal Health Director, they need operational expenses including funds for fuel, sanitation efforts, procurement of urgent supplies, essential medical supplies and treatment kits, as well as other logistical support for education and public awareness.

The Municipal Assembly has no funds to support their programme to help educate, and help our people who are suffering in various health facilities.

Mr Speaker, on my part as a Member of Parliament, I have made available a pick-up truck to enable the health directorate to continue with its education, and I have supported them with some funds for their activities. Mr Speaker, this is not enough. The central Government must immediately intervene to save lives; the people are suffering. We also need additional supporting staff to be deployed to Winneba. The Minister for Health must direct other health professionals to support the directorate to enable them to contain this unfortunate outbreak.

Mr Speaker, without more, I would want to rest my case, and call on the Minister for Health that within a week, he should come to this House to brief this House on efforts made thus far.

I thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I will proceed to take contributions from Hon Members.

Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan (NDC — Cape Coast South): Mr Speaker, I thank you very much, and I thank the Hon Minority Leader for making this important Statement, which is not only affecting Effutu, but actually, the whole of the Central Region, at the moment. I know that a lot of effort is being made—*[Interruption]*—It is cholera we are talking about, which is

obviously affecting the people of Central Region.

Mr Speaker, some of the issues actually have to do with sanitation, which not only the Minister for Health, but also, I expect that the Minister who is responsible for sanitation now, would also move in there and find out exactly what is going on. I know the doctors are working around the clock, but as cholera is, it is usually ahead of their attempt to curb it.

I am very happy that my Hon Brother has made this Statement, which is seriously affecting the Central Region. Last week, we talked about meningitis here, and I know a lot is being done about that. But now, the Central Region is actually suffering from this cholera outbreak, and I hope that all the institutions in the health sector move down there to make sure that the issue is actually brought under control.

I thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah (NPP — Okaikwei Central): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to make these brief comments on the Statement ably made by the Minority Leader.

12.53 p.m.

Mr Speaker, this is a serious public health issue; a very serious one as such. In 2014, cholera took the lives of more than 200 of our citizens. So, if this issue is cropping up again, then we require of

the Minister for Health to appear before the House to brief the good people of this country on the steps that he is taking to curb the rise of this disease.

Mr Speaker, secondly, Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM) is also on the increase and is claiming some lives. I believe that it is very important for the Minister for Health to appear before the House before the end of this week to brief and update Ghanaians on the steps being taken by Government on this very important matter.

I thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Some Hon Members —*rose*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member for Daffiama/Bussie/Issa, Dr Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare?

Dr Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare (NDC — Daffiama/Bussie/Issa): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement on cholera outbreak ably made by the Minority Leader.

Mr Speaker, it is absolutely unacceptable for any district, community and in fact, any country to record a case of cholera. Even one case of cholera is considered an epidemic because of its importance and severity. If we recall, this cholera outbreak started around the Ada area somewhere in October 2024, and the inability of us as a country and our health

system to contain one case, can lead to the spread of that one case to other parts of the country. This is the reason today, the outbreak is serious in Effutu. The outbreak is not just at Effutu; records show that about more than a half of the districts in Central Region have been recording cholera cases.

Mr Speaker, we have to do something. Our health system must be able to respond to this outbreak and contain the disease. It has the potential to spread to all the regions in this country.

Mr Speaker, the professor who taught my colleagues and me microbiology, said, “a case of cholera simply means that you have eaten somebody's faeces” and that is a summary of it. It means a person has eaten somebody's faecal matter either through the water that they drink or the food they eat. They have just eaten somebody's faecal matter. That is why I started by saying it is unacceptable, because one does not only measure the economic status or how developed a country is by economic indicators. These epidemic outbreaks such as cholera and typhoid, all go to measure whether indeed we are a developed country or we are beginning to develop.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I support the maker of the Statement that the Ministry of Health must come to educate us, or show us how well they are fighting this outbreak of cholera and other epidemics.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Some Hon Members —rose—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I call on the Hon Minority Chief Whip.

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh) (MP): Mr Speaker, I want to commend my Leader for the show of leadership to the people of Effutu and for the prompt response. However, just a few observations.

First of all, if we recall, last week, Dr Sandaare raised a matter on Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM). I also recollect that when the Majority Chief Whip presented the Business Statement, I nudged him on the outbreak of cholera—unverified reports had it that it is spreading within about five regions. So, I drew his attention to it.

Mr Speaker, earlier, per your wisdom, you gave some consequential directives that the Ghana Health Service (GHS) should attend upon the House. I am told that they were billed to appear tomorrow. May I humbly suggest to you or request of you, if you may, vary your earlier orders so that instead of the GHS appearing—because as at that time, we had to fall on GHS because the Minister for Health had not been sworn in. Now, the Minister has been sworn in, and the proper thing to do is to get him to appear before the House; it has to be as soon as possible. Tomorrow would not be out of place.

I also heard that the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs could also be added since the index of sanitation concerns are also in there and cannot be glossed over. It has to be as soon as possible.

I could not have agreed more with Dr Sandaare when he said that it is totally unacceptable in this time and age. Some time back, the concern had been the availability of vaccines; I think now it is not the case. But if it is, we need to hear from the sector Minister and then this House can position itself in terms of action lines, going forward. But it is a sad story. At this time and age, this should not be happening to our country.

Mr Speaker, I hope you would accede to my call that Mr Akandoh could be programmed for tomorrow, or we could notify him today, and then the next day, he could appear duly to speak to this concern.

Mr Speaker, it is sad that at this time and age, cholera is claiming lives and CSM, as I am told, has already claimed 14 lives as at last week. Let me commend the GHS though. We are told there is a distribution of free vaccines and the people there as we do know—I think is good that people there are not made to pay for the vaccines, because there is a high level of poverty there. If it could be sustained, it would go a long way to curb the menace.

Mr Speaker, I thank you and I commend our Leader for the show of leadership. Particularly, we need the Minister for Health on this matter.

Some Hon Members —rose—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member for Awutu Senya West, Mrs Gizella Akusika Tetteh-Agbotui?

Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui (NDC — Awutu Senya West): Mr Speaker, thank you. I also commend the maker of the brief Statement, Osahen Afenyo-Makin, for this.

Mr Speaker, somewhere last year, in November 2024, my Constituency, Awutu Senya West, also had a cholera outbreak. Now, one thing I observed was the rapid response of the district health system. They quickly formed a platform called Cholera Rapid Response Team and put me on it as well, as a Member of Parliament (MP). So, I watched it every day. They had Zoom meetings and PowerPoint presentations to see the traceability and others. I was also privy to that and it kept me informed. I also likewise told my communicators that when they visit the community radio stations or information centres, they should tell the people that there is cholera outbreak. When I was campaigning too, I used to tell them about the outbreak of cholera whenever I was done talking. Sometimes people have to be reminded, else, they may not take it that seriously. I just tell them to try and eat hot food, and that is the simplest solution to this. I have somebody in Winneba now, a friend, who called me and said, “Madam, I am in the hospital.” Then I asked him what the issue was because sometimes, we refer cases from Awutu Senya West to Winneba. He said he had cholera. The first question I asked him was how come,

and what he ate? He said, “I had a millet drink”, and that brought to mind the issue of food safety.

So, much as I support what Dr Sandaare said, there are a lot of food vendors— we all have them. I would plead with my Colleagues to let us also be proactive and let us educate the food vendors. It could be the water they use to make their food.

1.03 p.m.

It could be the environment or even just something small that they have been doing routinely, but this time, they got caught.

My plea is that Hon Colleagues over here should use their community radios and information centres. We lost three of t my constituents, a child and two adults, which was unfortunate. But at least, I would commend the district health team and the director for taking some steps, and kept me involved and informed. So, I also added my weight to it. I had to give them fuel and a few other things that they needed. So, I would plead with every one here, especially those of us from the Central Region where this cholera epidemic is happening — it can actually be anywhere at all because of the mode of transmission. My plea to Hon Members is to get to community radios and information centres and tell our citizens what is happening.

Even if the Hon Ministers come here to give a run-down of what exactly they are doing, we also have to see in our backyards and help our district health

directorates to get certain things sorted. It may be some logistics, which we can help with or otherwise. Time is of essence, because people's lives are at stake here.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I proceed to give the floor to Hajia Laadi Ayamba

Hajia Laadi Ayii Ayamba (NDC — Pusiga): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. The Minority should not worry; it would come to their Side. **[Some Hon Members: Bye bye!]** Mr Speaker, I rise to contribute to the Statement ably made by the Hon Minority Leader.

Mr Speaker, the issue of cholera has always come to our attention, but there are so many questions and activities that need to be undertaken. There is the need for education, especially in the various communities. Those who would have to undertake this education are the health persons. How would they get there? They need a lot of support. Just as my Colleague, Mrs Tetteh- Agbotui has just mentioned, sometimes, it is not their fault that they do not go to the communities. Means of transport is the first thing, then when there is a means of transport, there is a lack of fuel. We need to give them that support.

We also need to look at the budget of the Ministry of Health so that at least, the contingency would be in such a way that they would be able to come out and support the health sector to handle issues that come up without any questioning. In

the villages, someone would say, it is said that, it is a matter of eating fecal matter, and would say that "How would I do that, am I a fool?". No, there are so many things that lead to it: insects, flies, and many people who do not even think of washing their hands properly before they go and touch food.

I was so sad somewhere last week when a woman in the Upper West Region was being interviewed. She had lost two of her children in just a matter of two or three hours, and her other child was lying there and one would see that that was a young woman. She had no way of even going to the hospital. According to her narration, it was a problem to even get money to go to the hospital. The intervention of the health directors who quickly went to her aid at the hospital was helpful.

However, we as a nation need to continue to give education on the water that is being used for the planting of vegetables like lettuce and others. I watched another documentary where fecal and chemical-filled water was used to water plants. Now, we ask for salad and most of these, especially lettuce, is not treated. The salad is not properly washed, but we do not see that there is a problem because we think we are eating the right thing since we need vegetables. But what it would have gone through to come to that very restaurant, and to our tables, is what we do not know. We need to educate our people.

I would also plead with us all that we should not think that since it is in the Central Region, it cannot get to the

Upper East Region. Our surroundings, the cleaning of our environment, when we use the washrooms and for that matter, let me just say the toilets, and we get back —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, conclude.

Hajia Ayamba: Mr Speaker, let us teach the children how to wash their hands themselves. For them, when they go to the toilet and there is nobody around, they may even begin eating food without washing their hands, and it leads to a lot. Mr Speaker, I really appreciate the maker of the Statement and I hope that we are able to curtail this menace and that it should not escalate to other communities and regions.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, in view of the fact that we have four other Statements, can we bring contributions to this particular Statement to an end? Leadership?

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I agree with you. Let me wind up on this by saying that indeed, the cholera outbreak began last year. In October, five regions were announced to have suffered this: Western, Central, Greater Accra and the rest. Between 9th and 29th December, over 35 persons had died and over 4,800 cases had been reported. So, it is important that I join my Hon Minority Chief Whip in saying that, in getting the Hon Minister for Health to address the House on meningitis and other matters, he should also prepare to

address the House on the cholera outbreak, and the steps the Ministry has been taking to deal with the matter since last year. This is so that the outbreaks, which has entered this year, can be curtailed. With these words, I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I direct the Hon Minister for Health to appear before the House within one week to brief the House on all the health issues raised on the Floor.

Mr Dafeamekpor: I just contacted the Hon Minister and he is on the field monitoring the situation, so he would be here on the 18th if the House would —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I have taken all those things into consideration in asking that he should appear before us within one week.

Mr Dafeamekpor: We are guided, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we have students from some educational institutions visiting the House.

[Students of All Nations University, New Juaben South were acknowledged]

[Students of Kwame Danso Technical School, Sene West were acknowledged]

1.13 p.m.

Hon Members, on behalf of the House, and on my own behalf, I wish our dear students a fruitful visit to the House.

Hon Members, we have admitted a Statement in the name of Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah, MP for Dadekotopon Constituency, on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. Ms Rita Naa Odoley, you have the floor.

STATEMENT

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah (NDC — Dadekotopon): Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science; a day that highlights the need for gender equality in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Last year, in this august House, I highlighted the critical role of women in STEM and the persistent barriers hindering their full participation. Today, I reaffirm our commitment to breaking these barriers and empowering women and girls in Science.

Ghana has made notable strides in promoting gender inclusivity in Science. We celebrate outstanding women such as our very own, Dr Grace Ayensu-Danquah, Member of Parliament (MP) for Essikadu-Ketan, who has made remarkable contributions to medicine and public health. As a double board-certified surgeon, with expertise in trauma and reconstructive surgery, she has dedicated her career to saving lives both in Ghana and abroad. She is the

founder of Healing Hands International which provides free medical care to underserved communities. Additionally, she has made history as a parliamentarian, and continues to advocate for improved healthcare policies.

Mr Speaker, we also recognise Dr Ama Serwah Nerquaye-Tetteh, an educationist and policy leader whose advocacy has strengthened STEM education policies in Ghana. As a deputy Director-General at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), she has influenced national education reforms and promoted STEM opportunities for young girls. Her work with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and various educational institutions has been vital in ensuring gender inclusivity in Science and Technology.

Additionally, we celebrate our popular Maths and Science Quiz mistress, Professor Elsie Effah Kaufmann, a leader in engineering education at the University of Ghana, and many other distinguished female scientists who continue to inspire future generations. However, despite these remarkable achievements, women remain significantly underrepresented in STEM. According to the 2024 Ghana Statistical Service Report, women constitute only 24 per cent of professionals in STEM-related fields, with even lower participation in engineering and Computer Sciences. The gap is wider in rural areas, where cultural and financial barriers prevent young girls from accessing quality science education.

Mr Speaker, we cannot afford to leave half of our population behind in this rapidly advancing technological era. I, therefore, call on the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation to enhance policies that support STEM education for girls. The Government's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Schools Initiative is a commendable step, but we must ensure these efforts reach underserved communities.

Mr Speaker, fostering an interest in Science begins at an early age. Research shows that girls are just as capable as boys in Mathematics and Science, yet societal stereotypes and a lack of female role models discourage them from pursuing careers in these fields. I urge the Ghana Education Service (GES) to integrate mentorship programmes into the curriculum, connecting young girls with accomplished women scientists who can inspire and guide them.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, the private sector and academic institutions must actively support women-led research and innovation. Science and technology drive economic growth, and Ghana cannot reach its full potential if we continue to sideline the talents of half our population. I encourage the establishment of more effective research grants and incubator programmes, specifically for female scientists and entrepreneurs.

Mr Speaker, let us reaffirm our collective commitment to empowering women and girls in Science, ensuring

that they are not just participants but leaders in shaping Ghana's scientific and technological future. A nation that invests in its women invest in progress, and Ghana must lead by example.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for the opportunity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I will take contribution from the Deputy Minority Leader.

Deputy Minority Leader (Ms Patricia Appiagyei): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, today is the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, and I would like to wish everyone in the science field a happy anniversary. It is the 10th Anniversary celebration of Women and Girls in Science.

Mr Speaker, Ghana has made notable strides in Science, and I would like to thank the maker of this Statement for taking notice of such commendable actions that have been made by a number of our women who are already in Science. I must say that, in Ghana, inclusion of girls and women in Science education remains significantly very low, but it is important that we make certain efforts and take certain strides to ensure that the challenges that ranges from gender stereotyping, lack of role models, cultural perceptions, financial constraints, and limited mentorship opportunities are made away with.

Mr Speaker, many young girls, particularly in the rural areas, still face systematic barriers, preventing them from pursuing STEM education. The underrepresentation is a critical challenge that must be addressed if we are to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year's theme is a call to action; a commitment to do something unscathing to unearth the potential of every girl and woman who aspires to contribute towards the world of Science.

Mr Speaker, you would agree with me that the way we speak about Science, it is a way of living. And it is important to break down the barriers of cultural stereotypes, economic constraints, and systemic barriers and bias that limit female participation in STEM fields.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the GES, must introduce and implement STEM friendly curriculum at the primary and the secondary level.

1.23 p.m.

According to the Ghana Education Service, early exposure is critical in sparking interest and building competencies in Science among girls and women in our country.

Mr Speaker, the Government must expand scholarship opportunities specifically, for girls pursuing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related courses at both secondary and tertiary levels. A dedicated STEM scholarship can help alleviate the

financial barriers that many young women face. Also, in collaboration with the private sector, industries must be encouraged to show interest in mentorship programmes, internship and research gains that support the generation of female scientists.

We need to collaborate and promote the achievements of Ghanaian women in science initiatives. Highlighted role models can inspire and provide tangible proofs that success in STEM is achievable.

Mr Speaker, there is something that we need to take cognisance of; we know that there have been — the maker of Statement has mentioned about three distinguished individuals who have contributed successfully in the Science space. I would also love to add my voice in celebrating women like the Vice Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Prof Rita Akosua Dickson, for the role she plays when they are admitting students into the science courses. She takes particular interest to ensure that girls, especially those from the vulnerable areas like the villages who have shown clear intelligence, whether they are able to financially support their education, she makes sure that she takes them in and ensures that they are well-equipped with computers. She also gives them some level of scholarships to ensure that they would be able to pursue the Science courses very well.

I would also like to mention one Prof Ibok Oduro. She is one of the people who has been the first Dean of the General

Sciences Department, and she has shown interest in instituting a programme which is total technology for girls initiative; equipping young women with essential skills in coding, robotics and digital literacy. These are the women that we need in our society to ensure that they can adequately promote the needs of children.

I can also name one, Dr Peggy Oti-Boateng, who is the Director of Science in Africa for UNESCO, and the current Director of African Academy of Sciences who has been instrumental in narrowing the gender gap in STEM through initiatives like Girls in Science Empowerment Initiative.

These are the people that we need to celebrate. We also need more role models because if we do not identify these role models and showcase them appropriately, there would be no interest developed by our young girls and women to ensure that we incorporate science into our way of living and whatever we do. I believe that if we are able to do it, this year, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary, each and everyone here should sit down and imagine a world where we have scientists in every aspect of our economy and how science situate in our way of doing things.

I would like to commend the maker of the Statement and add my voice that we should all imagine if we have women in all aspects of our discipline, embarking on the approach of adopting science in whatever we do, we would be able to make great strides in our economic development.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I would give the floor to Mr Twumasi Ampofo.

Mr Kwame Twumasi Ampofo (NDC — Sene West): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and I would also commend the maker of the Statement.

Mr Speaker, science and technology drives the world therefore, it is important for us to appreciate and support our lecturers or those in science. Science and technology are practical therefore, our women need to be encouraged.

Mr Speaker, if we are able to encourage them and they are able to do more, when they complete school, they do not struggle to get jobs. Because, nowadays, the world is all about science and technology. Mr Speaker, we know our science and technology cannot be done away with. These days, everything is moving with technology therefore we are encouraging our women or ladies to be involved. We need to advise and give them the hope so that they can be in there. A lot of ladies are afraid of science but these days, science is moving the world. We should also help our lecturers; we should give them the necessary support, equip them and give them whatever it takes so that they can do more research. They should be given more money for research for them to also compete with the world so that they can

do more in science and technology to help our ladies.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to say much but if you go to KNUST, there are a lot of science programmes. Even now we have a lot of polytechnics or technical universities rolling out science programmes and most of the students come out without struggling for jobs. Therefore, I think it is important for us to support science and technology.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I thank you very much for the support. I would welcome my students from Kwame Danso. I have learnt that two of them are sick and they are in the clinic so I am going to take care of them.

Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I wish them speedy recovery.

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (NPP — Offinso North): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and let me commend the maker of the Statement regarding the International Day for Women and Girls in Science. The theme as stated was, “Unpacking STEM careers; her voice in science”.

Mr Speaker, in this country, it looks like we have more women than men.

1:33 p.m.

But many a time, we tend to have more men in jobs than women after the adolescent age. STEM is like a product that one is selling. How one packages

and sells it is how it can be bought, and I believe many a time, our women tend to look at more female-dominated careers when they leave primary education. As such, it informs the kind of programme they tend to offer.

Mr Speaker, there has to be some consequential measures that we should take as a country. Other than that, it would remain an annual event and we would make Statements, and we would come back 10 years later to the same story.

Mr Speaker, as a country, I believe we have a STEM policy. How can we make this policy more biased so that the parity that we have been able to achieve in our second cycle education can be achieved in the STEM careers? This is because every nation would do well and be very competitive depending on the number of people they have in STEM education, especially at the tertiary level.

Mr Speaker, if we also want to talk about good Technical, Vocational and Skill Training (TVET) education, that means we need a very grounded system in our STEM education because a good STEM person can be a good TVET person.

Mr Speaker, I believe that we should not just make this Statement, but we should require the Ministry of Education to give us some measures or strategic direction that can help us to look at some numbers and objectives. This is so that 10 years from now, when we are sitting in this Chamber, we can review and go back to see how much we have been able

to improve on our STEM education as far as women and girls are concerned. How attractive are we making STEM education to our girls while they are young? How are we making STEM education attractive to our girls while they are in second cycle education?

Many a time, we tend to have more girls in Arts-biased or non-science programmes. What informs it? It is because the basis is not grounded enough and they say they are not attracted to Mathematics and maybe, the languages? If we can make it attractive and ensure that they are all doing well at the primary level, when they get to the second cycle institutions, their willingness to opt for STEM education would be something that would be easy.

Mr Speaker, as we commend the maker of the Statement, we should not just make these Statements, but as a country, we need to have some direction and a level we want to achieve or where we want to get to as far as parity is concerned when it comes to STEM education. In fact, when a woman is in STEM education, their perfection is such that it cannot be matched by most men. This is a very critical thing that we have to take note of.

Many a time, we do not pay attention to those within the small towns, which we call “the villages”, and that is where a lot of girls also come from. So, they do not get the foundation, and it becomes very difficult for them to compete when they get to the second cycle level. Please, let us take a relook and pay some more attention to those in the small towns, so

that we can prepare them to be very competitive at the second cycle level.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Dr Mark Kurt Nawaane (NDC — Nabdam): Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science is set aside to encourage more girls and women to study Science and take up jobs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The gender equality that we are talking about is not only limited to the political area; it is also taken in the area of Science.

Mr Speaker, the theme for this particular year is “Accelerate Action”. In other words, we have found out that the women have been left behind. If we take developed countries, like where I studied, Russia, when it comes to medicine, it is a course for women. If one is in a class of 10 students, there are about seven or eight of them being women and only two being males. In Ghana, I believe the system is also becoming like that, where there are a lot of girls now being admitted for the medical courses.

As I speak, my two daughters are studying medicine in University of Ghana Medical School (UGMC) and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology School of Medical Sciences. But when it comes to

engineering, that is where the problem still is in Ghana; most women do not pick up the engineering courses. So, we should take steps to ensure that as parents, we encourage our women to pick up those courses. When they even finish and are employed, I understand that there is some form of discrimination as they progress up the ladder. Either the pay is not equal or when it comes to appointing something like—In mining, for example, there are women who are mine captains and probably, ship bosses, but when it comes to appointing them as underground managers, they do not appoint them. This is where we should be—As a nation, we should try and correct it.

Mr Speaker, in Ghana, the contribution of women in science, like other contributors have already mentioned, is not small. When I was doing my housemanship, we had one Professor Afua Adwo Jectey Hesse, a Paediatric Surgeon, who was doing marvelously well. That was about 30 years ago, and she was already a professor and a paediatric surgeon. What men can do, probably women can do it better. If we take going to space, Valentina Tereshkova of Russia is also a cosmonaut; that is somebody who has joined the men to also go to space. She studied Mathematics, Physics, *et cetera*, like the men, to qualify to go to space, like any other person.

We need to encourage our women because they form about 51 per cent of the population. Unless we pull them along or unless we carry them along, we would only be developing less than half or less than 50 per cent of our workforce.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I recognise Prof Grace Ayensu-Danquah.

Prof Grace Ayensu-Danquah (NDC — Essikadu-Ketan): Mr Speaker, I thank you, and I thank my Sister, the Hon Member for Dadekotopon, for the commendation. Thank you to the rest of the contributors as well. I tend to agree with most of the statements that have been made.

Mr Speaker, for those of us who are women in science and technology, it is an arduous, tedious, and very long journey that we have to go through.

1.43 p.m.

As a surgeon specialist, I have gone through maybe 17 years of post-graduate education just to be a surgeon specialist, and it is very difficult for girls, especially when it comes to cultural norms and the things that girls are expected to do. It makes science very difficult for us. So, I would go on a different angle and talk about mentorship.

Mr Speaker, I think that on a personal note, all the women in this room must take exceptional interest in young girls who want to go into science. Oftentimes, women do not see other women as mentors, and so we should really make an effort to do that. In my Constituency, because I find myself as one of the few women in my field, I try to even go and teach in the schools. I go to primary schools and teach Science. Maybe it is just basic biology. Sometimes, I go to the Secondary Schools and I give speeches. Sometimes, it depends—I have a girl

group, and I have monthly meetings with them just to encourage them to stay in science. Because of our cultural norms, it gets very difficult, and oftentimes girls need other girls to support them. We also need men whom I call “He-for-Shes” who would support the women and encourage our young girls to get into science. It is a difficult field; it is not easy, and oftentimes, when one looks at the traditional ways that girls are expected to live, it makes it very difficult.

Mr Speaker, I commend again, the maker of the Statement, and I am also humbled and appreciative that she brought my name up as one of the women in science. I also would like to reassure the House and my constituents that I would continue to be an example for women, and not just for women in science, but basically women in education. I would continue to champion that cause within the Constituency.

Mr Speaker, thank you again.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hajia Laadi Ayamba?

Hajia Laadi Ayii Ayamba (NDC — Pusiga): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement ably made by my Colleague, Ms Sowah.

Mr Speaker, the issue of Science, Technology and Mathematics is something that has been long overdue. We have been discussing these issues day in, day out for long years. It is quite difficult. Many a time, when one goes

back to the schools, they would realise that stereotyping is one of the issues that discourage the girl child. On this, I would say we need to involve the Science teachers as much as we can. Just as my Colleague, Prof Ayensu-Danquah, has just stated, we need to involve them and also support them so that they would pull along the girl child. It is good that we catch them young.

Mr Speaker, in the good old days, when I was in the classroom, we had something like science corners. In the classroom, a corner was created with so many items there to teach simple things that are needed at that particular level by the teacher, and children took interest. When one catches them young, they definitely would go along with them. There is also one issue that we should not forget. Sometimes, it is the funding because some items are bought. If the school does not have them, when the little they have is done with, they are unable to do a lot of practical work. So, we need to support the schools so that they would get the materials that are needed.

Mr Speaker, the girl child is always ready to learn, especially when the encouragement is there. When I talk of encouragement, I mean support. Also, if the teachers are able to help them understand that they are more or less equal with their colleague boys, it would go a long way to help. We may think it is that easy, but because we have not caught many of them young, they get halfway, then they stop. I was very enthused on 20th February, 2024, when I saw on television, a whole crew of only

women who flew PassionAir from Tamale to Accra. The flight was OP 178. I was so happy that I remained glued to the television even after they had ended talking about it. I was wowed. I knew for sure that if passengers had been told that it was only women who were going to fly the aircraft from Accra to Tamale and an option had been given, I would not be surprised that some people would have declined. But they did it; hurray to them! They did very well. The captain was Captain Eva Gichuru. Later in the day, that same evening, they had another flight from Accra to Kumasi at about 6.44 p.m. If we give the same opportunity to both boys and girls, and understand that both girls and boys have the same learning ability, I think that—As we have always said, we do not intend to take everything away from the men, but we would strive to the extent of doing better than the men.

Mr Speaker, just as has been said, I would encourage us MPs to also take it upon ourselves to check in on our schools. Where the girl child is doing well, we should encourage and support them, and also talk with the teachers, especially now that we have special teachers; in those days, it was general subjects, but now, we have specific teachers for Science and Mathematics. We can talk with them, support them and give them the necessary encouragement, and I think it would go a long way to help us.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I give the Floor to the Minority Chief Whip, then we would have come to the end of this Statement.

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh (NPP — Nsawam/Adoagyiri): Mr Speaker, I am grateful to you for recognising me. Let me commend our Colleague, MP for Dadekotopon, who nudged this House by bringing subject matter to the House floor.

Mr Speaker, I would say just a few words and probably take it from where my Colleague ended on the role of teachers—now they are called facilitators—and their role in this whole advocacy and the scheme of things in terms of girl child education in science. Mr Speaker, I am all for it. I think it is a good advocacy. However, we also need to tread with a bit of caution.

1.53 p.m.

Where a lady or a girl is strongly averted to a particular subject area, it must not be the case that necessarily that girl should be pushed in the area of science because our children are gifted in diverse ways, and so is the Creator himself who gives gifts in diverse ways. So, there are people who would be gifted in the area of science—do not get me wrong, I am not saying we should not encourage them in the area of science—but it must not be mandatory that all girls must necessarily be pushed onto that tangent. Where the talents and gifts are different, we must appreciate it as such and so is the Creator himself.

Mr Speaker, there has been a policy on T-VET, and governments that have come and gone have blazed the trail in this direction. There has also been a policy in the area of STEM and girl child education in the area of science. The question and challenge have always been the oxygen to prosecute this. So, we would call on the Ministry that if it is something that finds favour with them, the necessary support—and this House has the mandate; Our Committee on Education can require the Ministry to take this as a variable in their scheme of things. After all, we now have free SHS which has come to stay, and we should be able to get the necessary support from the Ministry for science education. It should be one of our flagship educational projects as a country.

Mr Speaker, the teaching of science has always been a challenge in our schools because we do not relate. The Americans are where they are because of hands-on education. We often tend to allow these concepts to be seen as some abstract concept so when my Hon Colleague was mentioning the role of teachers, I was touched and felt it is an area we must pay attention to. There should be a conscious, dedicated effort to direct the effort of our teachers and facilitators. We must teach our kids via hands on. Chemistry, chemical reactions, and physics concepts must be demystified. It is our way of life. In preparing okro soup, there is chemistry there, the pepper we put in reacts with the tomatoes and the oil—that is how we should relate, and they must come to appreciate that science is nothing but our way of life. Once they are able to

appreciate it, then they can get creative to be able to come up with initiatives.

Mr Speaker, for me, that is the way out because science without the ability to resolve our problems is nothing. If we teach them all the science theories and they imbibe all the theories and cannot resolve our daily life problems with these science principles, then we are not making progress as a country. For me, that is the crust of it and if we can focus on hands-on education for our girls to appreciate—because there is a lot of science in the kitchen. They do not need to go far, the examples are in the kitchen; the examples can be demonstrated practically in the kitchen and when they do that, they can better appreciate the concept of science education.

Mr Speaker, our goal should be towards ensuring that when the science concepts are taught and demystified, it should lead to problem solving, it should be able to solve problems in our lives otherwise, we would not make progress as a country.

I want to commend the maker of the Statement and I think that going forward, probably, Mr Speaker, I would not invite you to make any consequential directives. When the Committee on Education is finally formed, this is a matter they have to take up in their daily deliberations especially in the area of getting facilitators to teach this science concept with a hands-on approach and in a manner that solves our daily lives. I think if we are able to do this, then we would be making meaningful efforts towards solving our problems.

Joe James Kwegyir Aggrey has said it that when you educate a woman, you educate an entire nation. That is not a lost on us, but the necessary funding which would serve as the oxygen to prosecute this business must not be denied of this challenge.

Mr Speaker, I thank you and I commend the maker of the Statement. I am grateful.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. I intend to direct that the Statement be referred to the Minister for Education for the necessary action.

There is another Statement on the 38th Ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union starting from 15th to 16th February, 2025, by Ms Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah.

STATEMENT

The 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union

Ms Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah (NDC — Salaga South): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make this Statement in relation to the upcoming Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union.

Mr Speaker, The Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the African Union (AU) will gather for the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union on 15th -16th February 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This annual gathering of the leaders of the AU is preceded by the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) meetings and the Executive Council meeting.

Mr Speaker, this year's Assembly is significant for Ghana, because the AU Assembly through its Decision 884 of 2024 designated the theme of the Year for 2024 as "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations." Assembly Decision 884 was to implement the outcome of the Accra Reparations Conference of November 2023, which was co-organised by the African Union Commission and the Government of Ghana. The outcome document of the Accra Reparations Conference is the Accra Proclamation on Reparations.

Mr Speaker, at the 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 17th to 18th February, 2024, the Assembly adopted the decision of delegates who participated in the Accra Reparations Conference, from 14th to 17th November, 2023 in Accra, Ghana and expressed their appreciation to the Government of Ghana and the African Union for co-organising and conducting the conference. They acknowledged the invaluable statements of Heads of States of the AU and the support and contribution provided by the Union to the conference. They recognised that the Accra Reparations Conference, which was convened with a shared commitment to addressing historical injustices and injurious crimes committed against Africans and the people of African descent, through transatlantic enslavement, colonisation and apartheid, and to address the inequities present in the international economic and political orders, as a demonstration of the African Union's commitment to advancing the

cause of reparatory justice and healing for Africans and for all people of African descent.

Mr Speaker, the Accra Reparations Conference was therefore in fulfilment of the Decision 884 taken in February 2023 at the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Government of the African Union, endorsing the Government of Ghana's proposal to co-organise with relevant stakeholders and host an International Conference towards "Building a United Front to Advance the Cause of Justice and the Payment of Reparations to Africans." The Accra Proclamation on Reparations had proposed the establishment of certain mechanisms for the institutionalisation of the reparation agenda in Africa. The mechanisms include:

1. The President of Ghana was appointed by the Assembly as the Champion on Reparations.
2. Committee of Experts on Reparations, to develop an African Common Position on Reparations.
3. Reference Group of Legal Experts to work in close coordination with the African Union, led by the Commission and including the judicial and quasi-judicial organs of the Union.
4. Global Reparations Fund based in Africa, to work in collaboration with the African Union, to advance

the campaign of the African Union on reparations; and

5. Transcontinental Partnership Framework embracing the AU, CARICOM and the African Diaspora in Latin America, North America, Europe and UK, and elsewhere in the world, to build a strong common front among them in pursuit of reparations and reparatory justice at the global level.

His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama in his capacity as Champion for the Theme of the Year 2025 on Reparations will therefore be presenting a report to the Assembly of the Union after the official launch of the theme of the year.

This year's AU Assembly will also, inter alia, appoint the new Chairperson of the AU Commission and the new Deputy Chairperson, as well as confirm the elections of the new six in-coming Commissioners.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to make this Statement in anticipation of a grand meeting of the Union.

2.03 p.m.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you, and the floor is now opened.

Yes, Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi?

Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah (NPP — Ofoase Ayirebi): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Statement that was just delivered to this House, and as African leaders gather for the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, we send to them our best wishes to take the right decisions that would support the continent.

Mr Speaker, however, specific to the matters of reparations, if the world, particularly the West, is interested or is minded to pay reparations for participation in the ills associated with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, so be it, and I do not think anybody can quarrel with that. But I think from an African perspective, the subject needs some further examination. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was not end-to-end executed by people of western descent only. Africans participated in it. In fact, if one goes to the Elmina Castle, he or she would find recognitions of the participation of Africans in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. One would also find from our history how we indulged in inter-tribal slavery even before the white man came here. So, if today, we are looking to have a conversation about reparations as the way to cure the injustices, it raises questions about whether we would also consider paying inter-tribal reparations.

Mr Speaker, more to the point, the justice that is being sought, in my honest view, needs to be directed towards other areas than reparations. For example, the African Union has been talking about setting up strong African financial

institutions to mobilise resources to help the advancement of Africa. My view is that it is a more practical and near-immediate way to mobilise resources to help advance the African course as against the subject of reparations.

Mr Speaker, we have also just spent a lot of time and resources pushing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), setting up its office here in Ghana. There has been a lot of talk about it but very little trade on going. If African leaders are looking at ways of deepening justice for the African people, I think that is another area which is practical and real, and it can be facilitated, instead of expecting a group of western countries to write cheques for us for their participation in an exercise that we ourselves were doing, and we participated in as Africans.

Mr Speaker, finally, there is also the need for more south-south trade to empower Africans. A lot of young people in Africa are looking for opportunity for African leaders to open up borders for trade and employment across Africa. If African leaders would spend time to talk about reparations from the West for their participation in slave trade, I think it would be good for them to include, in this conversation, how they can fast-track efforts to open up our borders and south-south trade. These, in my view, are more realistic ways to get justice for today's generation of Africans as against what appears to be a nice theoretical conversation of reparations from the West.

Mr Speaker, we were doing this evil act among ourselves. We participated in it because the white man did not go into

the villages to pick Africans and put them on the boat. Africans participated in picking black people up and selling them to the white man, so we have a responsibility on our own to take immediate practical steps as we have mouthed in times past, to provide justice for our own people. So, as the African leaders gather to discuss reparations, I believe that these are things they should consider as part of that exercise.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Philip Fiifi Buckman (NDC — Kwesimintsim): Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, respectfully, I would want to continue from where my Brother left off, especially when he said that that “nice theoretical conversation” should be put aside. We should ensure that we put up practical reasons or means of uplifting ourselves, as Africans, than coming together always and talking about reparation. What are we, African leaders, doing to ourselves as a people? For me, I believe that Africa is endowed with the natural and human resources that can be harnessed for the betterment of its people rather than always having conversations about reparations. Who are we going to take the money from?

Mr Speaker, I believe that, in this time and age, we still have the natural resources all across Africa. We still have

the human resources that if our leaders put up and have the political will, would better the lots of us, as Africans; we would be able to do it, and we would be able to lift ourselves from that quagmire of poverty.

Mr Speaker, just now we were lamenting. The Minority Leader brought up a Statement about cholera in his place, and one of us raised the issue about meningitis. These are some of the things we should look at solving, and I was happy when the Minority Chief Whip said that it is unpardonable. Our people are dying from poverty, so our leaders must sit up, and our leaders must look at harnessing our natural resources for our betterment. So, for me, yes, it is good. They may decide to talk about it, but, back home, we have our resources: gold, manganese, *et cetera*. For example, looking at our country, we export raw materials. What do our people need? What we need is work, so I would add my voice to the maker of the Statement—Yes, we appreciate them, and we appreciate whatever they are doing, but we would also want to plead with them that they should look back home. They should not just think about reparations; we have the resources here. We can put them together for our betterment.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

I will give the floor to the Hon Member for Madina.

Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (NDC — Madina): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Hon Member for Salaga South, Ms Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah, for such a very important reminder of reparation and to also contribute to say that, as African leaders gather to look at this discussion, they need to be reminded that what Africans need today is not a reparation in the form of handout.

2.13 p.m.

It is not a reparation in the form that could be described as a charity model where Africa is treated as an object of scorn or an object of pity where world leaders would now be looking at Africa as if we are at their beck and call.

Mr Speaker, Africa has a population of over 1.5 billion people. We are so youthful when it comes to our population. I dare say that there are several research materials that show that any corporation which is not based on economics does not yield any outcome. Mr Speaker, you can look at the Organisation of African Union which metamorphosed into AU and all the attempts made at the regional levels with the “spaghetti” approach of integration that we have on the continent.

Mr Speaker, when you look at what is happening, it is the reason we are not advanced. Remember that we have the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, and the Abuja Treaty; all these treaties and plans of

action were based on how we could use economics to transform Africa and it is because of that that today, we have the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA). Not until Africa wakes up; if our leaders do not wake up to come together at the table, as far as this African Continental Free Trade Agreement is concerned, we are not going anywhere.

Mr Speaker, if you look at how the coal and steel factories corporation began in Europe, it was only a small trade area between France and Germany, and today, it is what we call the European Union. So if Africa can move from trade integration, removing our barriers, tariff and non-tariff barriers, liberalising our markets, having a common market, having a common monetary union and eventually having an economic union, there is no way we would come out of this quagmire.

Mr Speaker, I want to use this platform to draw the attention of the African leaders, as they gather to deliberate our reparation. The reparation we need today is emancipation from mental slavery — [*Hon Member sang*] — This is what we need, this is the only way we can come out of our quagmire.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to contribute — [*Hear! Hear!*] —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah?

Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah (NPP — Okaikwei Central): Mr Sosu is *irie* — [*Laughter*]. Mr Speaker, let me add my

voice to the Statement ably made by my Colleague from Salaga South.

Mr Speaker, our Colleagues have drawn our attention to how poorly we have traded among ourselves in Africa. African global trade share is just three per cent which is very low and poor to the extent that we would want to increase investment in Africa and create more job opportunities.

Mr Speaker, I would want our leaders to reconsider the theme for this year's AU Summit if they can. Looking at the issues around the world lately, President Trump has signed a lot of Executive Orders; some affecting African nationals and I believe that this is the time for African leaders to go to Addis Ababa to consider the implications of what President Trump has done with regard to the nationals of Africa, not to be talking about reparations. We have been talking about reparations for many years and we have achieved nothing. I believe that we are not going to achieve anything.

There are issues in Congo DRC, between Rwanda and South Africa; soldiers are being killed here and there. Those are issues that bother the Africans today. Nigeria is the biggest economy in Africa and they are seeking to join the BRICS like South Africa did. We have countries in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) leaving to form other unions outside ECOWAS; those are matters that affect us and must agitate the thinking and thoughts of African leaders should they meet in Addis Ababa — I do not know when they are meeting.

Mr Speaker, I believe that there are very important issues other than talking about reparations. The Global Reparation Fund was to have been set up last year and I do not think that we even have a dollar in that account, yet, we are going to be sitting in Addis Ababa with delegations upon delegations from about 55 countries in Africa to read speeches with no effect on the people on the continent. That is why the youth of Africa are constantly losing interest in our politics and democracy and will fall for anything.

Today, I read online a BBC story that there are some Ghanaians even fighting alongside the jihadists or whatever in the Sahelian areas across countries in the north; Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Ghanaians participated in activities of those people who cut people's limbs and arms—not Boko Haram—in Europe. Mr Speaker, I believe there are very critical issues that should agitate the minds of these 21st-century African leaders such as trade, we talked about a common payment platform and a common airline. Our transportation system is very bad. If you want to travel from here to Guinea or Sierra Leone, you would have to go to three other countries. Those are the things that we have to be talking about. Our road networks are not linked properly, so how can we talk about trade and be part of global trade?

Mr Speaker, I believe that we should reconsider this theme for the AU Summit in Addis Ababa if it is not too late and talk about those critical matters that would spur up our economic growth and ensure that Africa becomes a leading light in the world.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. I recognise Mr James Agalga.

Mr James Agalga (NDC — Builsa North): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to commend the maker of the Statement which simply calls for reparation in view of certain disturbing historical occurrences such as the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Mr Speaker, the fundamental question is whether or not it is justifiable for Africans to be asking for reparation at this point in our history. I heard one of our Colleagues, Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, argue in relation to this Statement that in the course of the conduct of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Africans participated. That is a historical fact, but is that enough justification for us to say it is not proper for us to be talking about reparation.

Mr Speaker, I think we need to set the record straight. The narrative that Africans participated in the conduct of the slave trade for which reason we should not be talking about reparation, is the Western narrative. The facts are very clear that those Africans who participated in the conduct of the slave trade were induced. In fact, historical accounts have it that following the advent of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the face of warfare in Africa changed for the worse; wars became very brutal because we had been induced into thinking that some humans were less human than others. So some ethnic groups could afford to capture their own kind and sell them into slavery.

2.23 p.m.

I think we should be guided by the works of Walter Rodney who wrote a book entitled, “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa”. I would recommend that masterpiece to all of us. If we read Walter Rodney, we would come to terms with the fact that our under development was induced by imperial Europe. They started with the slave trade, and when they had no use for slaves again because machines had now been invented, they switched to the mode of colonialism.

Today, colonialism has taken another form. Dr Kwame Nkrumah described it as “neo-colonialism”. So, let us not talk about collaboration on the part of some Africans because even when the holocaust was committed, there were some Jewish groups that collaborated with Adolf Hitler and his ilk.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, I would like to commend the maker of the Statement and to indicate clearly, in very strong terms, that we have sufficient justification to demand for the payment of reparation.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Mrs Gizella Tetteh-Agbotui, and I would come to Leadership after.

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I am trying to get the formular you are using. It appears to me that you take two from their Side and one from

our Side. It is becoming consistent; I am just seeking your kind guidance. With respect, I know you are very experienced in these matters. Is it the case that you are using a certain ratio that Members are not aware of? If you could carry us along.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip, sometimes, I look at the number of people on their feet and I try to balance the equation.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Thank you for being definite that it is not the ratio as I thought, but it is rather Members catching your attention. We would try and catch your attention then.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Mrs Gizella Tetteh, you have the floor.

Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui (NDC — Awutu-Senya West): Mr Speaker, I have learnt to manage my expectations when it comes to the discussions on restitutions, reparations, and restorations. Let me give a little example. In my little Constituency—Well, not a little constituency—In my constituency of Awutu Senya West, I have a fort called Fort Good Hope, which was built by the Dutch. One day, I decided to pay a visit to the Dutch Embassy to have a discussion with the Ambassador, and I said to him that I have a fort in my Constituency and I want to see what collaboration could be done with the fort in terms of tourism.

I had also read an article on Reuters that said that the Dutch Prime Minister at the time, Mark Rutte, had apologised for

the Dutch involvement in slavery, so I thought that was a good time to open up and have a discussion on my little fort sitting at Senya Bereku. The Prime Minister had also indicated that they are not interested in reparations, but they would set up a €200 million education fund in lieu of that. I thought I could tap into that education fund for my community of Senya Bereku because Fort Good Hope stands there as a relic up till today. I was disappointed when he said that actually, it was meant more for the colonies. So, I said, there was an origin and a destination. The destination is the colonies, but the origin is the African coast.

In the Central Region, there are over 17 or more fortes and castles and the evidence is there even towards Ahanta, the cruel story of Badu Bonsu II, and others. So, there is a long history of the Dutch involvement along our coasts. I am just using this as an example because it is a practical example for me. I just realised that if I could tap into the education fund, that €200 million could do something. Could there be some technology transfer, can I have a school built in my community by the Dutch, but I realised the discussion was not going to go far. At that point, I decided to advise myself.

Much as I thank the maker of this Statement, I personally managed my expectations, and I think that as Africans, we must also go in with expectation management because somebody may not be on the same metre band as we are and think in the same terms of what sort of reparations.

I do not think that we want handouts, but I am sure that some economic cooperation, and technology transfers would do, access to education funds that were set up—This is just the Dutch example that I have given you; there may be others along the way that have also done some kind of interventions, but I think that it should be more along those lines.

The reality is that as we sit in this House, that we all represent a constituency, the ripple effect of that would be felt in a constituency like mine, where I have a relic built by the Dutch reminding me of their presence every day. I think that that discussion should link with tourism and others and make sure that, at least, the people who are affected by the slave trade—I wonder whether there would ever be closure, but at least, there should be some discussions along those lines. We are not there to beg, but I am sure that, at least, some cooperation or technology transfer as I said or something more practical, pragmatic and beneficial to us, as a people, is something that we would not mind tapping into. I would like to translate all this into a benefit to my constituency, and I am sure all of us, who have such relics in our constituencies, may want to do the same.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Minority Leadership?

Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib (NPP — Weija Gbawe): Mr Speaker, I commend the maker of this Statement. I have different views with reference to reparation in Africa and it has to do with

the fact that—A friend once told me that if a ship were brought to the Tema Port and people were asked whether or not they would want to travel to America and that they would be charged before travelling to America, Mr Speaker, you and I know that a lot of people would jump onto the ship and travel to America.

Mr Speaker, the issues about reparation, whether or not we mean to deal with them, is a matter for us to think through carefully. What does reparatory justice for Africa entail? Does it entail we looking at a range of initiatives and how we intend to deal with these initiatives? Are we looking at historically acknowledging that we were once under the colonial spell and are we willing to be compensated for those? Does it also entail we looking for financial reparation: some amount of money would be paid as compensation to Africans that have to go through whatever reparations we went through?

Does it also entail land restitutions? Those lands which were taken from us. Are we willing to accept those lands, take them, and walk away? Are we all thinking about this policy issues or reforms, including now departing from issues of social inequalities and discriminations? There are a host of issues we are dealing with as Africans.

I think that I take a cue from my friend, Mr Francis-Xavier Sosu, are we willing to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery? Are we willing to depart from the fact that we would not sit at one place applying for visa when we know that the sun is scorching and there is no

proper arrangement for people who are applying and paying so much to travel to another country? Are we willing to depart from that?

Within our same Africa, are we not getting the kind of discrimination we see every now and then, that even when one goes to a place like Morocco or Algeria, they do not see themselves as Africans? Are we also willing to deal with the real issues of, for example, saying that, from today, whatever we are due as Africans, we would treat ourselves as Africans. Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah made the call that when one is even travelling within Africa and in cases where one is supposed to procure some visas before one can get to his or her destinations, even in Africa.

2.33 p.m.

Even as regards the issue of transportation within African, one can best understand that sometimes when one is travelling to Ivory Coast and how one can land in Ivory Coast. What is happening to the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) within the shortest possible time? I think that as Africans, we must rise up to the occasion. We should stop doing just the theories and rhetorics and rise up to the call. Maybe that is also an occasion to say that Dr Kwame Nkrumah did one of the best things by pushing for Africanisation. But are we still willing to do it the way we want?

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

The indication is that I recognise the Hon Minority Chief Whip, Mr Frank Annoh-Dompkeh.

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Annoh-Dompkeh): Mr Speaker, I am exceedingly grateful for your indulgence.

This is not to sound repetitive, I think Colleagues have put matters in context. Not according to any order, I listened to the Deputy Minority Whip, Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib, then Mr Francis-Xavier Sosu, my good Friend and Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah, and one thing comes to mind. Reparation, obviously, is not a beautiful thing to go for. It is not a low-hanging fruit that we can go for as a continent. Clearly, it casts some doubts in terms of shadow on us as an independent, God-given people. It is not something we should be proud of. Reparation is out of the question. Probably, we should forcefully go out there and make a call for the removal of trade tariffs and trade barriers. That would set the stage for equal exchanges in terms of trade between Africa and the other parts of the world.

Mr Speaker, it is strange that Africans are eager to trade with Europe in the face of the yawning gap. We have the Mediterranean Sea creating a problem for us, a yawning gap. Yet, we feel more comfortable to trade with our brothers in Europe while we can trade better with one another as Africans. We have been talking about the AU and the continent coming together, way ahead of the EU. Before the Europeans started talking about their Union, the EU, Africans had started talking about the

unity of Africa and AU long ago. What happened? Today, the EU is much stronger in terms of geopolitics and it is doing better in terms of seeking welfare, staging advocacy for trade, development and changing the paradigm of development of Europe. They are way ahead of us.

Mr Speaker, I dare say that even before the Marshall Plan, Africans were on the path of progress and unity. After Europe was zeroed down by Adolf Hitler, Americans and others came together to put out the Marshall Plan. Africans were already talking about unity. Our torchbearers have always been talking about this. It is sad we are where we are and today, reparations have become a subject matter of discussion. With the greatest respect to our Colleague, reparations should be pushed to the back burner; it cannot be. We cannot be satisfied with reparation. What we need is equal exchange in terms of trade.

Today, one can recall all the economic interventions in Africa; Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD), the Economic Recovery Programme and others. All these interventions have not helped ultimately. So, our torchbearers could not have been far from right when they said that Africans must take our destiny in our hands. I could not have agreed more with Mr Boamah when he said we are going there to talk about theories again. Here, I think individual African countries must rise up. In our context, we can send a message through our Minister for Foreign Affairs to send

a strong message to the AU. If this is how we are going to be talking and swimming at the surf of the ocean, we are not helping the continent.

Let me also conclude that we cannot talk about too many things at the same time. No, it cannot be. We should have a defined line of action. Ten years from now, what is Africa seeking to achieve? Everybody is consistently talking about trade, transport and movement. Yes, they are all important. But can we, as a continent classify and say that in the next 10 years, this is the priority? Ten years from now, Africa should have been able to achieve this and that and move ahead? We cannot mix everything up and say that we want to develop. That would be a problem. But the matter on reparation should not be a subject matter of consideration at all.

I equally agree with Mr James Agalga who spoke in context with what Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah said. If one looks at the role that people like John Mensah Sarbah and other icons of Africa played when colonial martyrs had wanted to take over our lands, they are things that we have to be proud of. So, a number of our icons have also stood toe-to-toe to the Europeans. It is entirely not true that Africans largely contributed in the Atlantic slave trade and facilitated the sale of our people to the Europeans. No, there were people, as history has recorded, who stood tall. One can name the Sagrenti War and the likes and all the people who stood tall to defend Africans and our forefathers. When we are recounting the history, we must do so properly.

Mr Speaker, it is a day we have to celebrate, but reparation should be out of context. At this stage and at this time in our life, we cannot continuously be talking about reparation.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, let me speak on this US\$100 million call that Africans have always been making to the European world and the developed world, in the context of the fact that these developed countries pollute more and should, therefore, send Africans some US\$100 billion. This has remained a mirage. It is not happening. Year in, year out, at the Conference of the Parties (COP), we make that strong advocacy, it only falls on deaf ears and we come home and lament. It cannot be a litany of lamentation without results. Let us go out there, take our destiny into our hands and demand for fair trade.

There is something we call EurepGAP standard, which is limiting Africans from penetrating the European world. These are the calls we should make and I think if we are able to do this out of patriotism, we would be able to make a difference.

Ten years from now, let us come and tick the boxes; which were the ones that we are able to achieve and which are the ones that are outstanding? Then, we can make meaningful progress towards the true emancipation of the continent.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for recognising me.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Deputy Majority Leader, you have the floor.

Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan (NDC—Cape Coast South): Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

First of all, I also want to wish the African leaders well on the 38th Ordinary Session that is just about to happen. The issue of reparation is one that divides opinions, but I am of a strong view that it is not a subject that we Africans or black people should just sweep under the carpet. Yes, there are so many things that we have to do for ourselves. We have said that we do only about three per cent of trade among one another, that is intra-trade in Africa, and we need to do more. We need to do business with one another more than we do with others elsewhere. There are a lot of things. We are sitting on minerals that are still being exploited from us and there are so many things that we have to do. But that does not mean that we should forget about the subject of reparation.

Mr Speaker, injustice has not got a lifespan; it is like justice. When we talk about reparation, we always talk about money. Reparation is not only about money. There are other forms of assistance that we can get for what they have done to us. That does not necessarily mean that they have to hand over money to us. The Hon Minority Chief Whip talked about getting an equal trade. How do we get an equal trade? We can use reparation to get that equal trade. We have got to establish that wrong things were done and that somebody needs to compensate the other for such. Then we can sit down and look at the exact form of compensation that we

need. Should that be a reduction of tariffs? Should it be other things that we take into the EU or to the Americans that need to be looked at?

We had an agreement with the Americans, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Agreement, which was signed 20 years ago. We have signed it again, I think on two occasions, and I think the last one is about to expire. But we have not taken advantage of it. These are some of the things we should be looking at. Even if we get a reparation, what sort of advantage as Africans are we going to take to make sure that benefits us? We should not just have in our minds that any time we talk about reparation, we are asking for somebody to bring us money. We can do that in negotiating many different agreements, preferably in the area of trade, to make sure that Africa actually gets benefit. We talk about Africans participating in the slave trade, yes, when one comes to Cape Coast, one would see castles and others where this trade actually took place. Yes, one can establish that Africans took part. But as Mr Agalga said, they were induced to take part.

2.43 p.m.

History tells us that wars in Africa went up as a result of slave trade because it became a lucrative business to fight one's neighbour, capture them and sell them to somebody else to take them to the Americas just to make money. We were just used as middle people to help the Europeans do this slave trade or to cause this harm to us. Who benefitted

from it? Which billionaires does anyone know who made so much money from slave trade in Africa? Europe and America are littered with old money that trace their sources to the slave trade and somebody needs to compensate the other for wrongdoing.

Mr Speaker, you would realise that a lot of artworks that were stolen from Africa are coming back. Quite recently, we got some for the Ashantis. How did we get that? Because we made a case that those arts should be returned to Africa because it belongs to us and they were stolen. If we had not made the case, those artworks would still be sitting in Europe. So, we should not just sit back and say that we were victims of what happened to us? No! Something went wrong that has not been addressed and it is still a fundamental thing for we black people, wherever we may find ourselves, whether in Europe, America or even here in Africa, something needs to happen.

Let us get it into our minds that when we talk about reparation, we are not only talking about payment of money by one person to the other. It can be done in so many other ways that would be beneficial. We are borrowing money at astronomical rates from the western world; we have appetite for borrowing money. Some of these rates that we are being charged are not actually reasonable but we do not seem to have the choice. These are some of the areas that we can actually negotiate so that some of these interest rates for borrowing, if we have to, are actually reduced as part of the reparation payment but not necessarily sitting down for some

country to dole us cash. I thank the maker of the Statement for a good job done.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: That brings us to the end of this Statement. Hon Members, I have another Statement in the name of Dr Stephen Amoah, dealing with certain fundamental economic anomalies in Ghana.

Dr Amoah, you have the floor. Order!

STATEMENT

Dealing with Fundamental Economic Anomalies in Ghana

Dr Stephen Amoah (NPP — Nhyiaeso): Mr Speaker, I am extremely thankful to you and your noble outfit for according me this prestigious opportunity to make this important statement in this august House.

Mr Speaker, I am making this statement on certain fundamental financial economic anomalies in Ghana which need to be rectified. One of such policies is the management of our monetary policy with respect to the periodical adjustments of Ghana's policy rate.

Monetary policy is simply about decisions made by central banks such as the Bank of Ghana (BoG) makes on the money supply and interest rates. Normally, policy rates are determined to optimise the amount of money in circulation. The strategic technique of adopting inflationary targeted monetary policy in Ghana has not really yielded the expected results. It has rather been a strategic drift.

Mr Speaker, policy rate increased from 12.92 per cent in 2011 to 25 per cent in 2016 with their respective inflationary rates increasing from 8.73 per cent to 17.51 per cent. Policy rate decreased from 22.5 per cent in 2017 to 16.00 per cent in 2019 with their corresponding inflationary rates of 12.39 per cent to 7.17 per cent. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth reduced from 13.90 per cent to 3.4 per cent in the same period. Between 2021 and 2023, GDP reduced from 5.10 per cent to 2.90 per cent.

Mr Speaker, policy rates in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 were 14.75 per cent, 14.00 per cent, 20.22 per cent, and 29.50 per cent and inflationary rates were 9.94 per cent, 9.96 per cent, 31.49 per cent and 40.28 per cent respectively. In inflationary targeted monetary policy, the policy rate is increased to reduce inflation so that the economy can be stabilised. The above trend illustrates the opposite. Increases in the policy rates rather increases inflation most of the time. It means that it is not just the magnitude of the inflation that determines how the monetary policy should be adjusted but rather, the cause of it.

Mr Speaker, this policy anomaly must be checked by the relevant stakeholders to stop its dysfunctional contribution to our unstable economic performance. It erodes the purchasing power of Ghanaians. It increases the cost of doing business and lowers standard of living. It is only when inflation increases as a result of demand pull, that is when people are buying and selling and there

is a high circulation of money on the market, that one can adjust the policy rate upwards and vice versa.

Typically, Ghana's inflation is induced by cost push that is from the supplier's side. Interest rate has been a very strong element in the aggregate cost of doing business, as most investors in Ghana rely on debt financing, I mean loans. Cost push inflation does not profoundly induce economic growth. In the trends analysed above, the corresponding GDP growths were not rather following the expected trends.

Mr Speaker, my maiden statement during the 8th Parliament also unravelled another important anomaly. That was the pricing of treasury bills, that is, government securities or risk free as categorised in investment or risk return principles, and the comparable risky assets on the market. It is making Ghana's market or economy deviate from the global standard. In fact, all the traditional models for computing the returns from investing in risky assets are not effectively applicable in Ghana. It defeats the fundamental principle of risk-return policy in investment. Examples are the Capital Assets Pricing Model (CAPM) and the Arbitrage Pricing Theorem (APT). It is introducing the element of arbitrariness in the decision-making processes of capital assets' pricing in Ghana. Some schools of thoughts have it that it is as a result of governments' high demand for funds.

We are dealing with a dysfunctional policy decision and its adverse impact on our economy. All these comments are

welcome as they may assist in dealing with the inimical policy. It is indeed, dysfunctional to the performance of the republic of Ghana. It calls for a policy shift as well as regulatory reforms by the relevant stakeholders.

2.53 p.m.

Mr Speaker, being hungry does not necessitate intake of pathogenic materials or toxins, or even poison. These anomalies contribute not only to the high cost of doing business but also high exchange rates, low productivity, high unemployment, and banks' risk exposure. Ghanaian companies cannot produce to meet aggregate demand and, accordingly, resort to importation. Ghana's economy can be accordingly described as a double-digit interest rate economy, and it is basically, among other factors, caused by these financial economic anomalies. There are other policies that we need to critically look at. For instance, absolute free market economy: a country in which we have a weak entrepreneurial ecosystem and profiteering culture.

Mr Speaker, we should begin a conversation as to whether we need a mixed market economy to provide specific price caps for monopoly, oligopoly, or even cartels. For controlled market economies, I will not advise for a capitalistic economy to be exercised. However, I would like to propose that a committee is set up by the Finance Committee, Committee on Economy and Development, and Budget Committee to engage the Bank of Ghana and, possibly, the Finance Ministry on these important

policies. We need to remedy these fundamental anomalies to enable us to build a resilient economy for the purposes of attaining the needed long-term economic growth and stability. Without that, our quest for economic independence, national import substitution, strong and stable currency, and high employment rate would never be realised.

Mr Speaker, I would like to end with a plea. Please, I pray that some of these critical issues be accorded the needed attention and action.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, once again, but in anticipation.

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

May I start by taking contribution from the Hon Member for Bolgatanga Central, Mr Isaac Adongo.

Mr Isaac Amoah (NDC — Bolgatanga Central): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I would like to commend the maker of the Statement, who has consistently contributed to improving the economic management principles of our country, particularly monetary policy and capital asset pricing. I recall he made a Statement earlier where he questioned the basis for banks that were taking cheaper deposits, basically giving loans at a higher rate than government, which is seen as a risk-free investor, which obviously did not make sense, given that the banks carry

risk that government does not. But his own Government ended up proving him wrong when the Government became riskier than the banks and began to do Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP) and restructuring its debts, which had basically defeated the common known principle that when one gives loans to government, it is risk-free. So, we are still learning and, over time, I am sure we will find a solution to some of them. But I agree in most part with his Statement.

Mr Speaker, as a matter of fact, Ghana has been operating an inflationary targeting framework, which is part of the process to anchor inflation expectations. So, when inflation is very high in our country and the monetary policy authorities assess that it is as a result of increased demand caused by excess liquidity in the economy, what they tend to do is to adjust the exchange rate to recall most of that excess liquidity back into our financial system. But it is also to give a signal to the community as to the direction that we want inflation to go, and we know that when people expect inflation to be tamed, chances are that inflation will follow suit.

But in the absence of adjusting the policy rate, chances are that people would begin to see inflation not being targeted and, as a result, the expectation would be that inflation will continue to grow. And our inflation targeting framework is premised on a combination of inflation targeting and managing inflation expectation and, at the moment, we have not found a better way of doing it.

Mr Speaker, I agree that monetary policy may not be adequate in dealing with the myriad of problems that have confronted us in our country, particularly when we know that even though hardcore inflation or headline inflation may be seen to be trending downwards when we increase the policy rate, if we look at the core measures of inflation, we would find that not all of it can be addressed by policy rate. So, for instance, food inflation—How does one use policy rate as a major tool for addressing what is essentially a misallocation of resources from the fiscal side? So, when a government is not putting money into agriculture or when the government is not investing money to grow industries so that we can produce either to substitute for domestic consumption or to reduce the cost of production of food, no amount of policy rate would be able to tackle that. So, I agree that there must be complementary fiscal action that makes sure that, in the medium term, we are able to address a key part of our inflation, which is the food inflation. Of course, there are other factors that are necessarily not food inflation, like energy or fuel, and we would need to find a way to address that.

Mr Speaker, where I have a problem is that monetary policy itself tends to forget that its actions, in terms of using policy rate, has an impact on the general ability of the economy to grow food and to produce for us. Because, like he said, the cost of borrowing itself is being exacerbated by policy rate increases. Today, we do not do base rate, but we do what we call the Bank of Ghana reference rate, and the Bank of Ghana

reference rate is calculated as a weighted average between the policy rate and the treasury bill rate.

Mr Speaker, so, it means that any time treasury bill rates go up or policy rate go up, automatically the reference rates that define the base at which businessmen and individuals must borrow would automatically go up. And if one borrows at a higher rate, it is obvious that one's cost of production would go up, and the cost of producing food will be high, and the cost of producing industrial products will be high. So, we need to find a way to deal with this transmission from policy rate to the base rate or the reference rate at which businesses and individuals have to borrow.

Mr Speaker, if we are not able to tackle this, then any time we attempt to solve the problem of inflation, we would also deal with the base of the problem itself, which is production, because the cost of production would go up. And once the cost of production goes up, one expects the businessmen to want to recoup all that cost in addition to margins that are placed on the product that are produced. So, in that case, one would see policy rate becomes dysfunctional as my colleague calls it. Those of us who attended Zamse Senior High Technical School (Zamstech) would not call it /dis'fʌŋ(k)ʃən(ə)l/ as the Hon Member mentioned; we call it /diss'fʌŋ(k)ʃən(ə)l/. But the Achimota people are here; *Se mo nkɔ sukuu a, na monam Achimota ne Odorgonno*. Listen to the Hon Member—[Laughter]—So, it confirms exactly the fear that he has that policy

rate has the tendency to limit the proper production of goods and services, and therefore, leading to additional round of inflation and others.

Mr Speaker, we also know that the monetary policy is not only targeting inflation but general price development: interest rates, exchange rates, and inflation. Now, each of them depend on the other. Once we are not able to deal with exchange rate and we begin to get higher exchange rate volatility, it would feed into the price of goods and services and inflation. Now, in an attempt to address this problem, the Bank of Ghana then goes to touch interest rates, and then it comes back in a spiral because that policy rate being used to tackle inflation would lead to a higher cost of production. So, we need to find a model that really understands the dynamics and the structure of our economy.

Mr Speaker, he brings in a very interesting conversation as to what type of economy we should run, whether we should run a market economy or we should find a hybrid. I do not think that we have the answers; this requires a lot of conversation and analysis on our economy.

3.03 p.m.

But, generally, I believe that the model that we have set up ourselves itself leads to inefficient utilisation and allocation of resources and we begin to find ourselves in just cycles of the same problem. So, a government of the day finds relief, would begin to trumpet an

achievement and with just one event, we are back to square one, then, we are criticising each other once again; we need to find a way to get out of that.

I want to thank the maker of the Statement and to thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to comment on the Statement.

Thank you very much.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr Isaac Adongo.

Hon Member, yes, you have the floor.

Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (NPP — Kwabre East): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I would like to also commend the maker of the Statement and also accede to the fact that our policy rates tend to have a positive relationship with our inflation as the statistics and the data that he acceded to and also let us know that we have almost all the time targeted the opposite. We have almost all the time targeted an inverse relationship but we do not get that.

Mr Speaker, as we speak, Ghana's policy rate is around 27 per cent and the corresponding interest rates are between 29.7 and 35 per cent depending on the bank that one is dealing with and the risk factor that the bank would determine for them. The two-year average, as we speak now, has been around 29.9 per cent and a five-year interest rate average is around 22.3 per cent.

Mr Speaker, we need to understand as a country what really constitutes or what really accounts for our inflation and as they have already said whether it is cost push or demand. Is it the demand that is causing our inflation or is it the cost that is causing our inflation? We need to understand these dynamics. Otherwise, whatever policy rate that we decide to bring might not yield the results that we have intended to have.

Mr Speaker, one thing that we need to understand is that when businesses are finding capital might be from a number of sources; either from equity, debts, a combination of both or other sources. We need to understand that in Ghana most businesses and entrepreneurs do their financing or their capital mostly from debt and this is causing a lot of issues for us. For example, as the Mr Adongo said, if the interest rate is a combination of the policy rates and also other factors, then it means that as we have said if the policy rate goes up —

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

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Member, you may continue.

Mr Onyina-Acheampong: Mr Speaker, thank you. As we said, it means that if the policy rate goes up then automatically, we are also looking at a higher interest rate. Now I am just wondering how when the interest rate goes up, my investor or the entrepreneur in Kwabre East who produces sachet water, *Ahinanang* sachet water, would be able to borrow at that rate and be able to

get enough margins on the interest to be able to get enough profit to turn his business around.

The next factor that one has to do is to try to turn his or her business around. Mr Speaker, the business environment in Ghana does not really support turning businesses around quicker because the average cycle for a business is around 30 to 45 days and people do not usually buy on cash. So how would a businessman borrow at a higher cost and turn his business around to be able to produce more? This is quite a tough task and challenge for businessmen and business people in Ghana. This high cost of borrowing is not sustainable. Per the analysis and the statistics that we are seeing, if there is a high possibility that this is being caused by a higher policy rate, then we need to come back to the table and have a thorough discussion of these things. Otherwise, we risk putting our businesses and our businessmen out of business.

Mr Speaker, to put this into context, United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA)—UK now has a policy rate of around 4.75 per cent. Mr Speaker, since 1972, the highest policy rate in the UK is around 20.1 per cent. Since 1972, the average has been around 5.79 per cent and one would see that it also corresponds with their inflation rate. US also has a similar policy rate.

Mr Speaker, how can we compete with these foreign markets if they have a lower policy rate leading to a corresponding lower interest rate, which is also cushioning their businesses and

making their prices lower as compared to us in Ghana? It is very important that we look at this factor and also make sure that our place, or Ghana, is not a dumping site. Look at the businesses or look at the products that come from China. They are very cheap, less costly, competing with our local manufacturers and they are taking our businesses out of the market.

Mr Speaker, the maker of this Statement has made a very profound Statement and because this has become a very thought-provoking Statement, we need to address it and we need to come back to the table and find out, as I said, what is really causing inflation so that we know which policy or which instrument we would use to target inflation. Whatever the case is, this is thought-provoking and it needs constant jaw-jawing around the table and it is about time we did that in order to save our businesses in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, thank you. I would once again like to commend the maker of the Statement.

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Member.

Mr Joseph Kwame Kumah (NDC — Kintampo North): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to have a bite on my Colleague, Mr Stephen Amoah's Statement on this.

Mr Speaker, he made a Statement on certain fundamental financial economic anomalies in Ghana which needs to be rectified. His emphasis was on the issue of policy rates that keep going up one government after another, and yet we are not finding our feet as far as the economy is concerned.

Mr Speaker, we do not need to go far in analysing policy rate issues when we know that our economy is more demand-driven, which outpaces the issue of supply.

Mr Speaker, inflation basically is the continuous rise in the prices of goods and services without a corresponding increase in production. So when demand outweighs supply, the issue of demand-pull inflation arises because the total demand, or what we call aggregate demand, tends to outweigh aggregate supply. When we lump all the demands in the system together, from the individual to the whole economy, as against the total supply from suppliers, from individual supply to the aggregate supply, and the demand outweighs, then definitely demand-pull inflation tends to come in. And no amount of policy rates by any government or Bank of Ghana Governor can outweigh this thing. The fundamental issue is how do we produce more in excess? When we have excess supply, we feed individual homes and we are able to feed our industries with the excess.

3.13 p.m.

The industries overproduce and then the issue of dollar automatically comes down; we do not need a magician or mathematical analysis. Anything we do in the nation is about less supply, less production.

Mr Speaker, may I take you back? When President Obama visited Ghana, it was simple. What he told us was that we should let our systems work. If we over

produce at the rural areas—Is it irrigation that we cannot have? We have a lot of river bodies across Ghana. Water flows into the sea 24/7 freely.

Can we go into irrigation along the river bodies and distant kilometres away from rivers, so that we have enough production of whatever food we need? Can we take to excess production to feed our poultry industries to reduce the bringing in of, excuse me to say, carcasses from other countries? The rice fields are in abundance.

Mr Speaker, in Kintampo North alone, the rice fields we have can feed the country. We can go into the Volta Region to know the rice that they produce, as well as the North East Region, and the Mankarigu, Yagaba-Kubori areas. My former Minister for Youth and Sports' place, where most of the MPs are farmers. If we concentrate—But here is the case that those who produced rice last year in abundance did not have markets.

Rice production was in abundance in this nation last year; yet, they did not have market. Tamale, Mankarigu, Yagaba-Kubori, Volta Region, there was no market for us. We are undoing our own economy. No amount of explanation should we continue to have. The maker of the Statement was the Deputy Finance Minister—When rice was not bought in this country from local consumers.

Mr Speaker, I would like my Brother to get back to that economy, the basis of economics in Ghana. Production should

outweigh demand so that we get our figures right; if not, no magician, no BoG magician can have anything of that sort in this country. Mr Speaker, I thank him for the analysis. We would continue to analyse economies if we do not go to practical economies.

If we do not practicalise it on the field—And produce more tractors like the 24-hour economy His Excellency John Dramani Mahama wants to build, we need to supply more tractors to the farmers. Let them have tractors at the right time to farm the groundnuts, the rice, the yams, and the soya beans. When we overproduce and export the excess, we will not be analysing any BoG rate.
[Laughter]

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.
[Hear! Hear!]

The Speaker: Yes, Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with greatest respect, I tried to catch your attention. I was enjoying my good Friend until he decided to go on a frolic of his own and I had wanted to draw his attention to Order 93(5), that this is a subject matter which has been raised by our Hon Colleague and the approach should be more of a sense of patriotism. He should not try to raise any debate. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker, I did not catch your eye and this has gone into the *Hansard*.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful.

The Speaker: Sorry, what has gone into the *Hansard*?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I thought he was talking about production, looking at market sources and all that. Then he directed attention to the maker of the Statement, that he was the Deputy Minister for Finance, but, of course, the role of the Deputy Minister for Finance is defined. It is not about markets or provision of markets. I thought he was raising a debate but, Mr Speaker, I can leave this matter for another day.

Dr Amoah — *rose* —

The Speaker: Yes, once you were mentioned, you have a right of rebuttal.

Dr Amoah: Mr Speaker, I think I have to bring this clarity out. As regards the Statement I made, it is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance to make those amends. It is rather a monetary policy, which falls within the functional jurisdiction of BoG, so I want to correct my Brother. It has nothing to do with the market price of rice. Just for that clarity.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Speaker: I thought you already spoke. Not you?

Mr Fokuo: No, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: All right; since you are a step ahead of your Colleagues, I think you have a chance.

Mr Tweneboa Kodua Fokuo (NPP — Manso Nkanta) Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I really appreciate it.

Mr Speaker, I would like to comment briefly on the Statement made by the Hon Member for Nhyiaeso. It is true that at times, certain policy expectations of policymakers do not happen as expected and the case in question, as raised by the maker of the Statement, is the Monetary Policy Committee's rates.

Mr Speaker, the intentions of the policy rate, mostly, is to determine or give direction as to where inflation should be, that is if the inflation is high, the plan is to raise monetary policy rates so that there will be more appetite or the appetite of investors will go up and liquidity will be mopped to invest in securities. But then, normally, one does not get this expectation and we should not forget that our market is not efficient, mature, and dynamic.

Mr Speaker, one side which we need to look at is the fact that our country, Ghana, is still largely import dependent and as the Monetary Policy Committee is doing its best to mop up liquidity in order to control inflation, we will have strong demand for hard currencies. People are putting their monies in dollars, euro, and other hard currencies and in so doing, weakening our cedi. So, it goes round and comes back to hit us, as we are weakening our local currency by investing in other currencies.

So, Mr Speaker, one way to address this issue of anomaly is to look inward into how we push to depend on our own produce and the things that we need locally. One of them that was championed and has been championed well, which I recommend we continue, is

the One District One Factory (1D1F), which was put across by our ex-President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. This program alone could change the scene and allow these policy measures get their desired results.

Mr Speaker, another point that was put across by my Hon Friend is the issue of Government securities normally having higher yields than those issued by private entities. Mr Speaker, this is not the expectation of many because as it is said, we expect Government securities to be risk-free, but we know around the world, it is not always the case. We have had some corporate institutions that have never reneged on their obligations, whereas the opposite is what we have seen in other jurisdictions.

So, yes, the theory is strong, and I do align with my Hon Friend; however, these anomalies happen because of these challenges of some sovereigns not meeting their obligations. Whereas some corporate bodies meet their obligations, have better ratings, and, of course, have their yields being lower as expected.

3.23p.m.

Mr speaker, not to repeat what my other Colleagues have put across, I support the Hon Member's submission and what I would add is, we need to do more; we need to domesticate more, and produce more locally to support our currency to avoid this put through from foreign currencies that we invest so much in and in other words, bringing inflation through the backdoor to our economy.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much.

The Speaker: Yes, please?

Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (NDC — Madina): Thank you very much, Rt Hon Speaker. I rise to make brief contributions towards “Dealing with the Fundamental Economic Anomalies in Ghana”, the Statement ably made by our Colleague, Dr Stephen Amoah.

Mr Speaker, generally, I agree with the Statement that he has made because if one looks at the economic history of Ghana, I do not think that there has been any success or anytime that we have recorded success in using monetary policies to deal with inflation. It has always been the opposite and I agree largely with my Colleagues that have argued that there is the need for us to increase production. In fact, economics beyond the textbooks and beyond all the big jargons is a very simple thing. We are having issues of scarcity so we need to prioritise our expenditure and look at our national priorities in terms of skills.

Mr Speaker, as has been argued before in this Chamber, indeed, if one is importing more than one is producing, definitely, there is going to be problems with inflation. If we talk about import substitution, what are we talking about? We are simply talking about one generating sufficient local industries that produce things that are being imported. Once one can do that, it reduces the pressure on the foreign currency, which makes it easier for one to deal with inflation and that is why I agree perfectly with the maker of the Statement.

Mr Speaker, particularly when one looks at the third paragraph of the Statement, on the first page, the maker pointed out some statistics and with your permission, this is what it says,

“Policy rate increased from 12.92 per cent in 2011 to 25 per cent in 2016 with their respective inflationary rate increasing from 8.73 per cent to 17.51 per cent.”

Mr Speaker, the committee of the Bank of Ghana brings these policies as a way of targeting inflation. It means that, irrespective of how grandeur the policy rate or the monetary policy is, it has never achieved its goal. Indeed, when one looks at the same statistics that he gave us from 2021 to 2023, the relationship is the same. So, let us accept the fact that monetary policies have not achieved the ultimate goal of dealing with inflation and that we must go back to the root which is production, production, production. We need to invest more into industries, create the local economy, make sure we reduce the rice importation, reduce the chicken importation, and invest through the 24-Hour Economy. We need to produce more chicken, more rice, and more agro-products that would substitute for these things that we always import.

Mr Speaker, I believe that this anomaly in our economy would definitely be addressed.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to this Statement, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes?

Dr Tiah Abdul-Kabiru Mahama (NPP — Walewale): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and I also want to join my Colleagues to thank the maker of this Statement for bringing to the fore this important issue of how monetary policy is not performing its expected role of reducing inflation within the broader perspective or within the broader policy of inflation anchoring or inflation targeting.

Mr Speaker, Ghana has the inflation target of 8 per cent plus or minus 2 per cent within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme. In other words, we are expected to do 8 per cent inflation rate and one of the tools the Central Bank uses to achieve this is the policy rate. The policy rate is expected to achieve its objective only when the fiscal angle of the whole economic mechanism is put into play. If there is no coherence, if there is inconsistency, if there is no hegemony between the fiscal policy and the monetary policy, one does not expect the monetary policy to achieve its objective.

Mr Speaker, if for instance, the objective of monetary policy is to mop up excess liquidity in the system, and in this regard, the dominant borrower in the economy is the Central Government, irrespective of how much we hike interest rate, the Central Government would still have to go and borrow in order to finance salaries, wages, compensations and other debt services. Therefore, because there is this continuous cycle of Government having

to borrow in order to satisfy certain key expenditure handles, irrespective of the Central Bank's hike in the interest rate, one would still find Government coming in to borrow until we are able to address this problem. We can address that by gravitating towards a system where we can have a relatively optimal revenue to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) level in line with other best practices. If the revenue coming in matches the expenditure, we would be able to mitigate this particular anaemic fiscal policy we have been experiencing.

Mr Speaker, we would also need to note that inflation is a stubborn cat and it does not listen to the language of the monetary policy makers. I agree totally with the other contributors that, it would take the fiscal policy, that is the real sector, the production of goods and services and the concept of Say's law that implies that supply creates its own demand.

In other words, when we put much effort into the production, we would be able to draft down prices of goods and services to contain the rate of inflation.

Mr Speaker, the stability of our currency also determines inflation. This is the component we refer to as imported inflation. Imported inflation in the sense that, we can do all the things right; we can increase the policy rate; money in circulation could be reduced; demand push inflation would probably be tamed, but if the basket of goods and services we consume in this country is imported, foreign exchanges losses alone is going to increase prices of goods and services.

So, Mr Speaker, we would have to do something about the stability of our currency in order to address this anomaly highlighted by our Colleague.

Mr speaker, the anomaly is present but we need to also ask why the United States of America (USA) federal reserve is having a negative correlation between the federal reserve rate and inflation. This is because whenever inflation is galloping and the USA federal reserve has the policy rate, one would find a corresponding decline in the prices of goods and services, but in our case, as presented by the maker and the data thereof, we do not see that. Probably we would need to ask this relevant question and have some of the answers proffered.

Mr Speaker, across the board, quantitative easing and quantitative tightening have been measures classical economists or classical micro-economic theorists use. These important tools are important for the management of economy.

3.33 p.m.

Economic management would have to be done with the combination of these tools, quantitative easing which is in other words reducing the policy rate and quantitative tightening which is hiking the policy rate. We have been using this but it has not generated effective returns in terms of the relevant economic indicators. We would have to look at how we manage this tool appropriately to address the issue of inflation.

Mr Speaker, we are not working in introspection and I would conclude by saying that whereas we lament that the

policy rate is not giving us the required returns which is the reduction in inflation. We must also ask the question, but for the policy rate, what would have happened to the economy? This is where I think that the call for engagement between the Central Bank and the relevant Committees of Parliament would come in handy because the counterfactual is not known. If the Central Bank did not hike the policy rate, we would not know what would have happened. This would take genuine intensive and collaborative effort between the Central Bank, the Government and Parliament which has oversight to bring to force. I would support the proposal and the call to the Speaker that we have an engagement between the Finance Committee with the Central Bank to look at this whole issue of the policy failure with over six decades of implementation following the free-market economy system we have subscribed to.

Mr Speaker, I thank the maker for this great Statement and I would also join the multitude in urging you to take this matter seriously because the success of President John Dramani Mahama's Government is going to be determined by the exchange rate and how down or low interest rates are. If the monetary policy is failing them and the fiscal policy is not also doing well, we would come to this Chamber and lament about how the Government was not able to achieve some of the grandeur promises they made to the good people of Ghana.

The Speaker: Yes, Deputy Majority Leader?

Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan (NDC — Cape Coast South): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

First of all, I would thank the maker of the Statement for what I think is extremely important and begins to open up a serious debate on this relationship between policy rate and inflation.

Mr Speaker, I think one of the fundamental problems that we have faced in this country is making our policy rate work—I have already started, do you want me to stop? Mr Speaker, we have failed fundamentally because we have not been able to understand the type of inflation and I mean the managers of the economy have not really understood the kind of inflation that we have been dealing with, especially in the last five years.

Mr Speaker, inflation comes in many ways and the old textbook methodology of dealing with inflation has changed in the modern day of modern economics. Inflation, traditionally and originally, used to be demand-driven and that is why this arrangement between interest rate and inflation of policy rate was actually put in place because one can then use the money supply which is basically what interest rate is, to take money out of the system or put it in depending on the heat that the economy is generating as a result of inflation. But when the inflation is coming from different places other than the traditional demand inflation, which is what happened to us during the COVID-19 pandemic, then it is difficult to use monetary policy to address that problem because we have supply chain disruption

with inflation coming from the supply side, the demand side and also the exchange rate.

What the Central Bank did in 2020, which in my opinion was a mistake, was to try and resolve inflation by trying to deal with the demand and supply side and not allowing the Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for the supply side because the supply side was fiscal, but left the space for the Central Bank to do that. The Central Bank ended up pumping money to address a problem that had nothing to do with them. It was a bad prescription given to a sickness they had no idea of and that is what caused us the problem that we are in.

Historically, we have had a problem with interest rates or policy rates not exactly being proportional to the traditional arrangement in textbooks. Normally, interest rate should be proportional to inflation, therefore, whichever direction inflation moves is where interest rate would also move to be able to address it—But when one has a situation where inflation is really becoming exponential but policy rate is not dealing with it, then the problem is more than the demand side. We have a serious challenge side problem.

Mr Speaker, Dr Amoah mentioned the United States system. When one has the Treasury addressing inflation, they do their bit. Inflation can go up no matter how the Treasury or the Federal Reserve is doing. This is because the Federal Reserve is doing its bit and the Treasury is also doing its bit. In the last five years in Ghana, the Central Bank got it

completely wrong in doing monetary policy and fiscal policy all in monetary policy. That is why we ended up with so much money being spent by the Central Bank. How would they end up in debt? It is unimaginable that the Central Bank which is the bank of last resort is actually losing money and has no one to bail it out because they were using money to solve the problem that should have been done by the fiscal side. That is why we got into this mess and this conversation is a serious one which we need to look at.

Mr Speaker, is inflation targeting still a thing to do? In my opinion, it is no! Because one cannot target inflation with monetary policy any longer. We would have to look where the inflation is coming from and use all the tools available; the fiscal and monetary policy. Also, one has to look at how to deal with inflation when it comes from their exchange rate because the exchange rate has inflation. If the currency is depreciating it means that the component of inflation in the exchange rate would also be going up and that would feed—If one is using monetary policy to try and address those problems, one would always get it wrong so it is about we sitting down and rethink—Our Central Bank needs to rethink about how they use monetary policy to try and address inflation and I must commend the maker of the Statement for bringing something that I believe in the next few years would begin to change economics the way we think about it here in Ghana because it has moved from the old economics to a modern day economics which the managers do not seem to have grasped the fundamentals of it.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I would end here. Thank you.

3.43 p.m.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, the direction I was getting from the Deputy Leader was that it was coming to leadership but if it is your pleasure that you would still allow Members to speak, I would leave that to you. Because I was about to remind you that—

The Speaker: What is the pleasure of the House?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, the pleasure of the House is that—I would yield my space to the former Minister for Finance to speak, but I was reminding the Hon Majority Leader that they should not take their Majority for granted. They are in the Majority, and the practice has been that, some of these things, the Majority speaks last, so I was signaling him that we would speak, and the Majority would speak last. But he was not listening. They are in the Majority, so they should not take it for granted.

Mr Speaker, may I seek your leave for the former Minister for Finance to speak instead.

The Speaker: All right, there is no problem.

Dr Mohammed Amin Adam (NPP — Karaga): Mr Speaker, the Statement in respect of inflation targeting is a very important Statement because inflation targeting has become debatable throughout the world as a vehicle for containing

inflation. Other countries have other modules; for example, we used to have the currency peg which was a system by which a country peg its currency to the currency of a low inflation country, but the problem with that was that the problems or solutions in one's country are tied to the country whose currency you have pegged yours against.

Mr Speaker, so many countries run away from the currency peg module. Others would tie it to growth, but we decided to do inflation targeting which is defining an inflation path by using interest rate to drag inflation towards that path to the desired inflation target. It is not only used in Ghana. Many other countries, including some of the advanced countries, are using inflation targeting, and it has worked for us so far. There have been problems, but it has worked well for us so far.

Mr Speaker, this is not to say that there are no problems associated with inflation targeting. For example, its focus on inflation is at the expense of other economic variables such as growth and employment. If one wants to use rates to drive down inflation, one may face some rigidities, and one is structural rigidity. When rates are higher, they do not incentivise production because the private sector that makes production is crowded out, and when rates are lower, it intends to drive inflation down. It also does not incentivise production because of the structural rigidities in our economy. Because of our structural rigidities, our economy does not really respond to policy change, and that is the problem one would find with inflation targeting, whether it is bringing about rate increases or rate decreases.

Mr Speaker, the other issue with inflation targeting is its limited flexibility in response to shocks. We have experienced a number of shocks, and, with this, I associated with the Deputy Majority Leader. Whether it is supply chain shocks or financial crisis, inflation targeting has a limited capacity to respond to those shocks because of its focus on inflation, and this is why central banks will normally respond. So, this is why I disagree with him. Central banks would respond when inflation targeting is not achieving its desired objective because of the shocks associated with the economy. These shocks are mostly shocks that are external to the economy, so if our Central Bank responded by putting more money into the market, I do not see anything wrong with that.

Mr Speaker, so, our Central Bank acted responsibly because the Budget is so tight, and where the Budget is tight and the country is facing a crisis, there is no reason the Central Bank should not respond. Whether they responded in excess of what they should have done or not is something we can discuss, but, as far as the response by the Central Bank is concerned, it acted responsibly as a Central Bank, so I do not see any problem with that.

Mr Speaker, this is where exchange rates affect our inflation. When we had crisis globally, such as the Russia-Ukraine war which caused logistical constraint globally, inflation rose significantly across the world to the extent that median inflation in the advanced countries went over 7.5 per

cent. When advanced countries are recording 7.5 per cent median inflation, countries that normally would record one per cent or less than one percent recording 7.5 median inflation, then I wonder why anybody would have problems with the levels of inflation. Ghana recorded it during that crisis because, through the exchange rate, we suffered with our inflation increasing.

Mr Speaker, the reason was also that, because of inflation increasing globally, the advanced countries and their central banks did that. They raised rates and, by raising rates, their financial instruments became more attractive, so investors investing in Ghana and other open economies drew their investment to take advantage of the profits in the advanced countries. That led to our exchange rate suffering; the cedi suffered because of scarcity of foreign exchange as a result of the withdrawal from our market. In that case, which body has responsibility for exchange rate management? Again, it is the Bank of Ghana, which is the Central Bank. So, the response by the Central Bank, in my view, was very responsible, and we should commend them for coming to the support of our Government and our country to ensure that the effect was not as pronounced as it would have been.

Mr Speaker, what we need to do if inflation targeting has to play its role is for us to promote policy coordination between the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance. Monetary policy and fiscal policy coordination is so critical for us. I do not see that coordination. The Central Bank is

independent; the Government does not dictate to the Central Bank. Yet the policies of the Central Bank, if they are not coordinated with the policies of the Ministry of Finance or the Government, the economy suffers eventually, and players in the economy: consumers, suppliers would all suffer as a result.

Mr Speaker, let me give an example. There have been times the Ministry of Finance went to the market for treasury bills (T-Bills), and we got uncovered options and shortfalls, but, at the same time, the Bank of Ghana, through the Bank of Ghana Bills, is getting oversubscribed. So, Bank of Ghana will go to the market because they want to take out excess liquidity, yet the Ministry of Finance that wants money to finance the Budget goes to the market, and we encounter uncovered options. So, why would the two bodies be on the market looking for the same money which we need to finance our Budget? So, because of the lack monetary policy and fiscal policy coordination, the Budget suffers, yet inflation is not being addressed, so what we call second round effects become the order of the day, which we need to be addressing.

Mr Speaker, inflation targeting is not a bad model, but it has problems that we can address. Before we get to addressing these problems entirely, what we need is a policy coordination between monetary policy and fiscal policy.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Member?

Dr Othneil Ekow Kwainoe (NDC — Ekumfi): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, clearly the maker of the Statement has demonstrated how monetary policy has not necessarily been very effective in its objective of dealing with inflation. I would like to highlight that if one looks at the basket of goods and services for the determination of inflation, we have health, education, food, tourism, and all sorts in the basket. Now, if one looks at all these in the basket, they are weighted, and food remains a very huge component of the determination of inflation.

3.53 p.m.

Therefore, I think it would make a lot of impact if we commit resources, especially, to looking at dealing with the element of food cost because of its potential impact on inflation. Because if one looks at the other elements within this basket, all the economic factors, interest rates and exchange rates to some extent play a role on how it impacts them. But I am more concerned about the food impact because it carries a lot of weight.

Therefore, as a country, if we put a lot of resources in there to ensure that food is in abundance, production is going on well and we are reducing our dependence on imported goods, clearly, on the face of it, we are likely to make an impact straight away, while we are able to deal with issues of collaboration between the fiscal and monetary space. So that they are able to work in tandem and get the desired results out of it.

Mr Speaker, my simple submission is that we need to really take a closer look at the food component of the inflation basket and be able to deal with it. Just like what President John Dramani Mahama says about creating farm banks and putting enough investment into agriculture so that we can make the desired impact as far as inflation is concerned.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

The Speaker: If I have to give somebody the opportunity—You have somebody behind you who has been standing for a long time. I think it would be fair for me to do so. Yes, let us listen to you.

Mr Frederick Addy (NPP — Suaman): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by my senior Colleague, Dr Stephen Amoah.

Mr Speaker, I would act in accordance with Order 93(5). The economic policy anomaly has an adverse effect on the cost of doing business in Ghana. In addition, it affects production which is critical to meet aggregate demand. It also affects employment opportunities and industrial performance.

I would like to add my voice to the proposal that, stakeholder bodies come together to help correct the basic but important anomaly.

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

The Speaker: Do you want to have the last bite?

Mr Eric Edem Agbana: Yes, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: All right, go on.

Mr Eric Edem Agbana (NDC — Ketu North): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to this very important Statement made by my former boss at the Microfinance and Loan Centre (MASLOC) and senior Colleague, Dr Stephen Amoah.

Mr Speaker, for all of us who have had the opportunity to sit in Economic Policy class, it is trite knowledge that the structure of Ghana's economy is not balanced. It makes it very difficult for any economic policy to be successful, especially ones that are aimed at reducing inflation and there are several reasons that account for this. From the Statement read, it is clear that monetary policy has failed to lead to a reduction of downward inflation because of the structure of our economy.

One of the reasons is that monetary policy basically has a delayed impact. In economies that are well-structured, monetary policy takes between six to 12 months to have a direct impact on the economy. But when one looks at the structure of our economy, where there is high deficit, high borrowing and fiscal indiscipline by the Central Government, it is difficult to control inflation.

But how can we solve this problem? Mr Speaker, there are a number of ways that, as a developing country, we can approach this issue and ensure that we resolve the challenges with the structure of our economy. I am happy that the Government in only a couple of days ago announced that there would be a National Economic Forum to assess the structure of Ghana's economy and determine how to change this structure to ensure that development comes to us at a lesser cost and for us to achieve lesser inflation rates than it is now.

Mr Speaker, one of the things that we have to focus on is for us to improve on import substitution. As we speak today, a look at our economy, where we import about US\$1.5 billion worth of rice annually when we have the capacity to produce enough rice to feed this country—When one imports over US\$850 million worth of tomatoes from neighbouring Burkina Faso, there is no way their monetary policy rate can lead to reducing their inflation. We have to look at local production and how to boost production here in the country to address that challenge.

Number two, is the issue of the cedi's depreciation. In the past, we have seen governments issue directives, asking government institutions and the private sector, encouraging them to ensure that we have cedi denominations in terms of fee payments and all of that. Today, when one visits a lot of public institutions, even in our educational sector, prices of goods and services are priced in dollars. When that happens and many people are demanding for dollars,

cedi depreciation would continue to increase and that would not help us to achieve the inflation that we are looking for.

Mr Speaker, I am happy that in contributing to this Statement, there seems to be a general consensus on both sides of the House, that there is a need for us to address the structural challenges that confront our economy. I believe that it must begin with improving on our agricultural production, especially with staple foods and items that we import on a daily basis as rice, tomatoes and others.

Mr Speaker, when you come to my constituency, Ketu North, we used to be the foremost municipal or district in terms of rice production. But as we speak today, because successive governments have failed to invest in even maintaining the Weta Irrigation Scheme, we have lost over 200 hectares of rice farmlands to climate change and also the fact that the canals have not been distilled and farmers have lost their farmlands. Any serious government that is purposed to reduce inflation and address the structural challenges with our economy must look at how to boost agricultural production in our country.

I respectfully submit that when the Committees of Parliament are formed, the Committee on Food Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs should take a critical look at how we can ensure that production is increased, irrigation is improved and areas where drought has affected the production of agricultural produce over the last couple of years, all these challenges can be addressed.

I look forward to a day where we can produce enough to feed this country. I so submit. [*Hear! Hear!*]

4.03 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon Members, after having listened to all of you, I think the proper thing is to go by the proposal of the maker of the Statement and to direct the Committee on Economy and Development and the Budget Committee to engage the Bank of Ghana (BoG) and the Ministry of Finance on how we can find a solution to this problem together.

It is also important for us, as a House, to equip ourselves with this information, so that the proposed economic dialogue could provide an opportunity for us, as an institution, to make input. I realised this House is well endowed with economists. Listening to all of you is like listening to fresh students that have been unleashed into the country. Even though you are saying the same thing using different words, it depends on which level you got to in your educational ladder—[*Laughter*—I enjoyed the exchanges even though you call them comments; it was just like a classroom.

I direct that these Committees should engage the Bank of Ghana then together, we try to find a way out of the quagmire; it is important for our economy. But, I would also advice Members to lead the crusade of trying to stop the import dependency. Many of you are living lifestyles that are non-Ghanaian; therefore, you are encouraging the young ones to move in that direction. This is because you are telling them that, that is

better than our indigenous system, our identity, even our dress codes and the language we speak as Ghanaians. Some of you try to speak some English that is unknown to Ghana. Yes, these are all causes of inflation—[*Laughter*—because you are encouraging Ghanaians to rather look out of Ghana and depend on what is being produced by other countries.

Very soon, we will be employing Ghanaians who would be translating your big words into the local dialect to educate our people, so that they know that our language is even richer than that of the tribe called Angles. Do you know that England is from the two words, “Angles Land”? Angles was a tribe from Germany that fought its way to the Londoners and conquered them, they and the Barbarians. These are history that you have to learn. So, England is Angles Land. This is free tuition; you are not paying me—[*Laughter*]

Let us try to be ourselves; it is important. I love one of our elders who used to preach about eating what you grow and growing what you eat. Yes; you did not vote for him. If we had domesticated our economy, some of these challenges would have been things of the past, but since you know how to eat perfumed rice more than the local rice then, you would have to pay for it. How can rice be perfumed? [*Laughter*] And that is what you love more than the local paddy which is more nutritious, but you would eat perfumed rice.

Your kids are now eating noodles, or what do they call it? Do they not know *banku*, *akple*, or *tuo zaafi* which I eat

every evening? I do not eat any other thing apart from *tuo zaafi* in the evening. “Face the wall” was a special food in the University of Ghana, Legon. It was only those who had, that could go to the Bush Canteen to “face the wall”. Those who were the *mɔborɔwas* would have to go to the canteen to try to learn the corner theory; if not, you would not get food to eat, but now, you are eating perfumed rice.

We have one more Statement and that stands in the name of Mr Bright Asamoah Brefo, the Member of Parliament for Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai. Are you ready?

Mr Brefo: Mr Speaker, I am most grateful to you for this opportunity—

Mr K. N. Osei — *rose* —

The Speaker: Hon Member, just a minute. I saw Mr K. N. Osei on his feet, so I wanted to recognise him because maybe he has some objection or some comments.

Mr Kennedy Osei Nyarko: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, I am coming under Order 93(1) to seek the leave of the House and your permission to raise a matter of urgent nature which the House has to take into action. With your leave, if you would permit me, I would go ahead and raise the matter.

The Speaker: Well, let us take this Statement. If you say it is of urgent nature maybe, after this Statement, you can make it, or will it be too late? Yes, so

let us listen to the Hon Member for Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai.

STATEMENT

Delay in Releasing WASSCE Results

Mr Bright Asamoah Brefo (NDC — Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai): Mr Speaker, I stand on Order 67(f)(f) and Order 93(1) of the Standing Orders to make a Statement on the delay in releasing West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results.

Mr Speaker, before I proceed to make my Statement, I wish to give a brief background to what occasioned the delay. The West African Examinations Council (WAEC), as a regional examination body that conducts various exams in five English speaking West African countries, in a press release dated, 9th December, 2024, disclosed that delays in the release of funds from the Ministry of Education was affecting the timely completion of post-examination processes for the 2024 WASSCE—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh — *rose* —

The Speaker: Hon Member, just a minute. Yes, Minority Chief Whip, what is it?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with respect Order 93(8)—Ordinarily, I would not do this; it is a new Standing Order and all of us should help in the enforcement of it. Order 93(8), Mr Speaker, with your permission says, “The Clerk shall make available to Members, copies of admitted Statements”.

Clearly, we do not have copies of our Colleague's Statement. We have interest in it, and I want to humbly suggest that going forward, when the Speaker admits a Statement, it is made available to the Table and copies be made available to Hon Members.

4.13 p.m.

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Member, you may continue.

Mr Brefo: Mr Speaker, WAEC further revealed that although the marking of essay and practical components were completed on November 20, 2024, the scanning of objective test cards had been stalled due to the breakdown of scanners. This delay was attributed to the lack of funds needed for repairs and other operational activities.

Mr Speaker, having highlighted on what occasioned the delay in the release of the WASSCE results, WAEC, on 30th December, 2024, released the provisional results of the 2024 WASSCE, with some 781 results being withheld, as a result of some alleged irregularities and examination malpractices. WAEC confirmed that, it was going to release the withheld results by February 28th, after investigations into the alleged malpractices have been finalised.

Mr Speaker, parents and affected students were invited by the WAEC, to answer questions on the withheld WASSCE results on January 30th, 2025. Mr Speaker, students from the Western North Region, of which my Constituency

happened to be part, and had their results withheld, were asked to go to Sekondi, which is a different regional capital, with their parents. This decision by WAEC, for students and parents to move from one region to another, put so much stress and financial burden on them. This could have been done in their home regional capital, Sefwi Wiawso, where WAEC has a regional office.

Mr Speaker, on reaching Sekondi, affected students were instructed to enter a certain room, for questioning and writing of statements, without their parents, guardian or legal representation. This directive did not go down well with many parents, and led to an altercation between some parents of the affected students, and officials of WAEC. This led to the unfortunate death of Mr Joseph Agyemang, popularly known as Papa Bruno, an official of WAEC. May his soul rest in peace, and my condolences to his family.

Mr Speaker, is it rather not fair for students to be held responsible for the negligence of WAEC, in executing its duty of ensuring examinations are conducted in a fair and transparent manner, through its invigilators and examination officers on the day of the examination.

Mr Speaker, in a country where students are provided with past questions and answers as a study guide, would it not be obvious that students would have the same answers or similar answers where similar questions are put before them? In light of the foregoing, it is my candid view that it is unfair for WAEC to

flag 319 schools for alleged collusion detected by examiners during script marking. The actions of WAEC led some affected candidates to mount a legal challenge in the High Court, which resulted in a ruling in their favour, and the High Court ordered WAEC to release the withheld results.

Mr Speaker, as I make this statement, I believe universities have closed admissions, and both parents of the affected students are in a state of confusion, with anxiety concerning what the future holds for their children. I am pleading with the Government, Ministry of Education, and WAEC, to look into the issue holistically, and resolve it as soon as possible, to prevent any miscarriage of justice.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah — *rose* —

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Offinso North, are you up?

Dr Asamoah: Yes, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: You may go ahead.

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (NPP — Offinso North): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement.

As the just outgone Director-General for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), I had the opportunity to supervise the examination of over 46,000 learners in this country for the TVET sector. Mr Speaker,

examination is not a way to punish students; but it is an opportunity to verify students' competence and to encourage learning within the school environment. Many a time, what happens is that either facilitators or in other words, teachers, are not teaching, or learners are not learning. As such, within the TVET sector, we devise a means of encouraging learning, and I believe it will be continued. That is randomisation and serialisation; this, we believe, is curbing examination malpractices. But Mr Speaker, nobody likes examinations; even PhD students do not like to take it. So, examination malpractices would not be out of the system, but we can find a way to reduce it so that we improve on competence, as the learners are the ones that end up becoming practitioners.

Mr Speaker, it is quite unfortunate a lot of issues came out of the Statement. One had to do with delay in releasing examination results, and the other had to do with methodology or approach of conducting examinations. The last one had to do with examination malpractices, where some students need to be interviewed or heard.

Mr Speaker, every single year, one would realise that examination bodies do not release final results; but they would always release what we call "provisional results". This is because one would anticipate that definitely, there could be some malpractices which one would want to improve on. As such, every student is allowed to come and explain themselves, either to deny or otherwise. So, in terms of having to bring students to answer some charges that have been

levelled against them, it is something that is done across the world. But I believe, maybe, if WAEC has the logistics, at least it can be done either on the regional level or at a district level. At the district level, it might be a little bit difficult looking at our infrastructure, but at least, at the regional level, it would be something that could be encouraged; so that we can curb the issue of the man who passed on, and the learners who had to travel a long way to one centre to be interrogated.

Mr Speaker, the world is changing. We are moving into the fifth industrial revolution, and in our quest to either randomise or serialise examinations, to bring down malpractices, I believe we may have to introduce digitisation into our examinations. This is because if one looks at other countries that have more students than we do in Ghana, they have introduced systems that are able to assess their learners to make sure that they learn, and not cheat. So, what we encourage WAEC to do, is to move from the normal analogue system, and digitise our examinations.

4.23 p.m.

Mr Speaker, in that case, learners would be tailored to specific examination that would be individualised so we can reduce examination malpractices.

Mr Speaker, one other difficulty that we tend to have is the release of funds and examination is not a one-day activity. It's a process that starts and goes on with setting up examination questions, making sure these questions are validated, organising the examinations—And even

after the examinations, we get the Chief Examiners to look at the results before they are even released. It's a whole lot of processes that requires a lot of infrastructure, capacity and resources. I believe that if we have WAEC and the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) organise examinations for our second-cycle students in this country, this august House can make available through the Ministry of Education enough resources to organise these exams very well such that no student or learner would be disadvantaged. We can also put in measures that can encourage learning and facilitation so that our learners would be confident enough to be assessed and they would not find themselves colluding with other learners.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Member.

Mr Peter Kwasi Nortsu-Kotoe (NDC — Akatsi North): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by my Colleague.

Mr Speaker, it is true that this year's release of results for the 2024 WASSCE delayed because of the delay also in the release of funds to WAEC to conduct the marking and collation of the results on time and that was a big challenge last year. The Minority Chief Whip was then the Majority Chief Whip—How we had to work together to make sure that money was even released for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)

so that it did not delay and we did the same for the WASSCE. At the time money was released to them, the examination was at hand and they needed a lot of logistics. Their equipment had broken down. So, they were finding it very difficult to meet the targeted day of release of the results.

Mr Speaker, examination malpractices have been the biggest challenge facing WAEC apart from funding. If one looks at the statistics, it has been on the increase. In 2018, the increase was 0.9 per cent. In 2023, it was 10.1 per cent. So, over the years, we are witnessing rampant increase in examination malpractices and there are a number of factors to this.

One of them is the league of schools after the release of WASSCE results. Schools are graded and they are given an order of merit so every school struggles to be in the first 10 or so on the league table. Because of that, school authorities also condone examination malpractices. If one visits schools during the WAEC examinations, one would realise that school authorities look on while students cheat in the examination. There are centres in this country where WAEC officials are even prevented from supervising or visiting examination centres and those schools had to be blacklisted by WAEC because there was no way they could go and supervise or see what was happening. The issue is more about morals. Because if we allow students to cheat in examinations, those of us who are to bring up these young ones are encouraging them to do so, WAEC would be in a very bad situation

to carry out any measures that they want to carry out.

Another challenge they have is also about the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service (GES) carrying out measures that would deter both students and teachers from collaborating in examination malpractices. At times, they are only admonished, cautioned or suspended for some time and then they go back to work and it is business as usual. I think it is important that we ask the Ministry of Education to make sure that stringent measures are put in place to prevent students and teachers from conducting themselves in examination malpractices. The sanctions are not deterrent enough, so it is still giving encouragement and room to candidates to cheat in examination. WAEC has no power to prosecute those who are found or arrested during examination malpractices. They have to hand over the case to the police, it takes a long time for prosecution to take place, they are fined meagre sums of money, which they readily pay and go away scot-free. These are some of the challenges and it is important that we take WAEC's predicament seriously and see how best we can do for them.

Because of lack of funding, they are not able to go into digitalisation of their printing processes. During the last examination, they had a challenge with their equipment so everything broke down. If they had not been given money at a point in time, they would not have been able to even release the results. They need to be supported so that they can digitalise the system to ensure that

whatever they need to do must receive the support of everybody.

Mr Speaker, we sympathise with the affected students and I am sure with my contact with WAEC, they would be able to release the remaining results within the shortest possible time. But what we also need to do as parents and leaders of the society, is to talk to our students to stick to their books. They should not expect leakages at the time of examination or what they call *apor* during the examination. It is important.

Mr Speaker, there is one thing we also need to do. We have to take a second look at assessing our students. Do we need to just go by the old method where at the end of three or four years, they sit down, write examination for three or four hours and they are awarded certificates? I think we need to take a second look at that also. There are different forms of assessment that I think we can adopt. If the percentage that would be required as written examination is reduced drastically, that desire to cheat in examination to make sure that, they get very good marks to make an A or a B, I think we would move away from that.

Mr Speaker, we sympathise with the students, but I can assure you that WAEC is doing everything possible to get the remaining results released as quickly as possible. This is because of lack of logistics and resources. Also, my information is that busing the candidates to the regional centres was even a very big challenge for WAEC because of lack of money. But I can assure the House that this year, things would change.

4.33 p.m.

As we speak, Government is indebted to WAEC to the tune of GH¢64 million; because of that, WAEC has not been able to pay some of the examiners, examination checkers and all those things. They are still owing them, and it is owing mechanics who work on their equipment, but we are sure that, going forward, things will be better than it had been.

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

The Speaker: Hon Members, could we end this one here and then move on to other matters? More Members want to contribute. What is the pleasure of the House? One from each Side?

Hon Leaders?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Yes, Speaker, one apiece.

The Speaker: Well, decide which one and then you also decide which one of you.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, on our Side, the Hon Member for Bosome Freho, Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh will speak and, on the other Side, I can suggest to him who should speak—

The Speaker: Are you in charge of that one too—[*Laughter*]

Yes, Hon Member, you can start.

Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh (NPP — Bosome Freho): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I think it is important that we acknowledge the maker of the Statement and commend him for bringing such an important issue to the floor of Parliament to be discussed.

Mr Speaker, many a time, we look at the decisions or measures that have been taken by the WAEC, which I agree; it is important. But we cannot deal with this matter without critically looking at the issues that are confronting WAEC, Ghana, students and all of them. We critically have—And I would suggest, after this deliberation on this matter, in an era where it is easy for committees to be formed, the President should form a committee to, as a matter of fact, look into this matter because it is very pertinent.

Mr Speaker, one of the major issues that we need to look at is a certain foreknowledge that the students and the teachers seem to get ahead of the examination. There is a certain attitude: when one gets to the examination centre, it is not just students who are cheating, but supervisors are aiding students to perpetuate that act. It is also important because, sometimes, one would find proprietors, headmasters, and teachers of various institutions trying to make ways and means for their students. Why are these things going on? It is going on because there is a certain social status and social impression about the grades the school would come out with. It is important because they are looking at

that as a source of getting students into their schools.

Mr Speaker, we cannot deal with this matter without looking at GES, and WAEC and its internal control mechanisms. There are times that some of these questions come from the internal systems of WAEC. Yes, we agree; they might have challenges of funding, but I do not think challenges of funding must necessarily be a way or a means to give students a leeway to have their way at the examination centres.

Mr Speaker, I am pleading and I am asking that beyond the Statement and comments, a measure, a committee, or a team must be put in place, so that—Every year when students go to write the examination and come back, it is either examination provisional results are held, or results of students have been cancelled.

Mr Speaker, we need to find a lasting solution to this matter, and we cannot do that without engaging the stakeholders. Precisely, WAEC, GES and other stakeholders that matter. One of my Hon Colleagues made a comment that WAEC does not even have the mandate or the powers to even do an investigation and prosecution. We need to revisit this issue, whether there should be an Act for them, a law that would embolden and strengthen them, so that some of these measures can be worked on.

Mr Speaker, I will commend the maker of the Statement, but the students are still waiting for their results. Schools have reopened, and others are moving

forward. Before you know, the delay of their results would affect their progress in school. Let us not just end the Statement here; let us move forward and set up a committee, so that these matters will be looked into and a lasting solution would be found to deal with and address this matter.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I would like to thank you for the opportunity given me.

The Speaker: Yes, Dormaa Central?

Mr John Kwame Adu Jack (NDC — Dormaa Central): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity given to me.

Mr Speaker, I am a teacher, so, sometimes, issues of examination malpractice is serious, and we need to tackle it from all angles. In the university, when one meets students and look at their output, the only thing we could do is to find out what actually happened before they got to the university. Checking from the background, I know that although from time immemorial exam malpractice has been a problem, lately, it is becoming too astronomical, and we need to find out what actually is happening.

Mr Speaker, one of the things that we need to look at is the Free Senior High School (SHS) programme. Because when we decided to ask some of these headmasters from various schools, what we got from them was that no student fails. I do not know if because of the Free SHS every student has been budgeted to complete within four years, so how much

to be spent on each student goes along with that student up to the three years, so nobody fails in the examination, and they move through. That is one of the major problems why, at the end of the day, students who are even not good are in the third year, and they need to write examination. At all costs, the parent wants the child or the student to pass, and the student himself or herself wants to pass.

Mr Speaker, so what happens? They now go to any tangent to be able to pass. So, I am of the opinion that if we want to curb this, we need to look at that programme very well, so that we sit up and do what we used to do when we were all in school. If a student fails in any examination from first year, he or she would not progress to the next point. If we are able to do that, I think that we would be able to curb or, at least reduce, what we are experiencing now. Other than that, we would be talking, but would not be able to get the actual input that brings that kind of output.

Mr Speaker, if one looks at it again, students have written examination and it is assumed or it is said that they have copied so the results of their examination are withheld, the point is that were they supervised during the examinations? If there was actual supervision, who were the culprits? If they had copied, it means that those who were asked to supervise that exams are also culprits. Have we done anything about this?

Mr Speaker, so if we are not able to bring stringent punishment to these people who also have been given monies

to supervise these examinations, it would definitely continue because nobody would want their child or ward to fail in an examination, and they will go to any length to do it.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity given me. [*Hear! Hear!*]

The Speaker: Hon Members, I just want to say that I do not think that people should fear examination. There was a statement that nobody likes examination. I do not know why people do not like examination. Well, they simply make you better.

4.43p.m.

Why do you not want to be better? If you fear examination, it is just because of the fear of failure. The first thing you do is to eschew fear. Why should you be afraid of doing something? Because that is the way of learning to make you better. So why should you be afraid to learn to be better? It is the way we define failure. We make it look bad but failure is just a first attempt in learning and you continue to learn. It means that we have to look at our issue of teaching and learning.

What we are still applying is the old school; it is out of order; it is archaic. We have to change the system. Why do you have to cause students to gather in one classroom, pack them so close to each other, give them questions to answer, and they will not glance and copy? Why do we continue to do that? Why can we not change? Do we need to continue to write exams the way we do? The man who discovered the electric bulb, what level

did he drop out of the formal education? Primary six, but he studied from his mother in the house and at the end of the day he had over 2000 patents. That is part of education.

We just need to change. Why do we have to grade schools? Public schools—There should be standardisation; they should be the same. Why do we enrich others and impoverish others, and grade them A to F, and give them the same paper to go and write? It is a failure; the Government, the system—And we have to change it. You never had enough funds anywhere. You can never in life have enough funds to do everything you want to do. It is prioritisation and so please we do not need the Executive to be setting up Committees. It is part of our duty as Parliament. We should go into this issue and try to lead in finding solution to it.

The Free Senior High School policy was a major policy decision. That has been what the framers of our Constitution hoped for and that was the vision, and so the former regime had to bite the bullet. The only thing they did wrong was not bringing it to Parliament for Parliament to debate and approve, finetune, and serialise it for implementation. That was an error.

Even when we did the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), it was brought to Parliament. Parliament debated it, approved it, and it was phased out. This time I think the bullets blew the jaws and this is part of the effect of that decision. But it is a decision that we have to continue; we

cannot run away from it. You just have to find the money and implement it. It is good but that is part of the challenges we have to face. But what is life about? It is about challenges and we have to support in finding solution to it. I will advise, because we have not set up the Committees yet, that the main players in the education system, when you find yourselves into the Committee, let us take up this matter seriously because it is not only an organisation for Ghana, it is for the whole West Africa. We need to reform the WAEC, we need to reform teaching and learning, and we need to make education more attractive.

The teacher must be taken care of. Do not use their numbers to say that they are too many. When we were kids, we all wanted to grow up to be teachers because they were the best in the society. Now you do not want it. It means we have failed the people, so please, let us take up this matter seriously and not only keep on making Statements. Every year, every

Meeting, there is a Statement on education and Statement on WAEC and yet we are not moving forward. I recall, just the last Meeting, we had a Statement on WAEC on the same issue, so please let us move away from just talking to walking the talk.

I thank all those who have made Statements and particularly the opportunity for the first-timers to break the ice.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE PRESIDENT

Nomination of a Minister and Deputy Ministers for Parliamentary Approval

I have Communication from His Excellency the President John Dramani Mahama. It came while I was away and it had to do with the nomination of a Minister and Deputy Ministers.



REPUBLIC OF GHANA



Jubilee House

The President
5th February, 2025

Rt. Hon. Speaker,

NOMINATION OF A MINISTER AND DEPUTY MINISTERS FOR PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL

In accordance with Articles 78(1) and 79(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, I submit through you, to Parliament for your prior approval the names of persons, attached hereto, I intend to appoint as a Minister and Deputy Ministers, after consultation with their relevant Ministers of State.

The nominees' credentials and records of service demonstrate their competences to support the government's agenda and serve the people of Ghana effectively.

Attached are their Curriculum Vitae and supporting documents for vetting. I trust that Parliament will expedite the approval process in accordance with constitutional requirements.

Accept, Mr. Speaker, the assurances of my highest consideration.

JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA

**RT. HON. SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT OF GHANA
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
ACCRA**

(2) Clerk/Usher
B. U. to be read
to the House
9/2/25

cc:

The Vice President
Jubilee House
Accra

The Chief of Staff
Jubilee House
Accra

The Secretary to Cabinet
Cabinet Office
Jubilee House
Accra

MINISTER

	REGION	NAME
1	Minister of State, Public Sector Reform	Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba

DEPUTY MINISTERS

	MINISTRY	NAME
1.	Ministry of Finance	Thomas Nyarko Ampem
2.	Ministry of the Interior	Ebenezer Okletey Terlabi
3.	Ministry of Defence	Ernest Brogya Genfi
4.	Ministry of Education	Clement Abas Apaak
5.	Ministry of Energy & Green Transition	Richard Gyan-Mensah
6.	Ministry of Roads & Highways	Alhassan Sayibu Suhuyini
7.	Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General	Justice Srem-Sai
8.	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources	Yusif Sulemana
9.	Ministry of Local Government, Chieftancy and Religious Affairs	Rita Naa Odoley Sowah
10.	Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources	Gizella Tettey-Agbotui
11.	Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts	Yussif Issaka Jajah
12.	Ministry of Food and Agriculture	John Kofi Setor Dumelo
13.	Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industry	Sampson Ahi

4.53 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon Members, this is referred to the Appointments Committee for consideration and Report to the House.

With this and with your kind indulgence, I would proceed to adjourn the House, but before I do that there is one other communication, dated 10th February, 2025, to the House through me.

Absence from Ghana*Jubilee House*

Rt. Hon. Speaker,

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

*The President*10th February, 2025**ABSENCE FROM GHANA**

In accordance with Article 59 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, I write to formally notify you of my intention to travel outside the country on Wednesday, 12th February, 2025 to attend the 61st edition of the Munich Security Conference (MSC), scheduled to be held from 14th -16th February, 2025 in Munich, Germany.

Additionally, I will participate in 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union from 16th -17th February, 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I will return to Ghana on Tuesday, 18th February, 2025.

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

JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA

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

cc: The Vice President
Jubilee House
Accra

The Chief of Staff
Jubilee House
Accra

(2) Clerk/Usher
B.U. to be read
to the House.
10/2/25

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Kennedy Nyarko Osei: Mr Speaker, early on, I sought your leave to—

The Speaker: Yes—

Mr K. N. Osei: So, I am just reminding you, because I heard you saying—

The Speaker: Hon Members, it is true. Sorry, it almost eluded me, and I thank you for drawing my attention. He says he has an urgent matter he wants to draw the attention of the House to; could we give him a listening ear? Please, you can go on.

Mr K. N. Osei: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I have in my hands a press release dated, 7th February, 2025 which was issued by the Ministry of Roads and Highways. The subject is “Suspension of the Implementation of the National Roads Authority Act 2024 (Act 1118)”.

Mr Speaker, this is an Act which was passed by this House in July 2024. Article 93(2) makes it clear that the authority and legislative powers is vested in the hands of this House. It is an illegal attempt by the Ministry to suspend an Act which had been passed by Parliament without any recourse to the House. If the Ministry has any issue with the Act, the best remedy or procedure is to come to the House and ensure that the proper thing is done, but for them to

unilaterally issue a press statement to suspend this very important Act of Parliament, which Members of this House burnt the midnight oil to pass, just for the Ministry to turn away, I am surprised. The Minister for Roads and Highways, Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza, who happened to be my Ranking Member is here. I am surprised that under his supervision, he would allow such an illegality to happen.

Mr Speaker, this, if not checked, would undermine the authority and legislative powers of this House. I am only drawing the attention of the House, so that our Colleague, who is also a Member, would do the right thing, so that we do not set a bad precedence where in the future, any Minister could just wake up and say that they have suspended a law. That is why I am bringing this matter to your attention and the attention of the House, so that the proper thing is done. [*Hear! Hear!*]

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister?

Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza: Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity and I want to thank my good Friend, Mr Kennedy Osei Nyarko, for bringing this to the attention of the House.

Mr Speaker, indeed, if I look around the room, I have worked on that Bill more than anyone in this room to pass it, including himself. The fact is that the Bill has been passed and assented to. Its implementation has generated significant unrest among the entities under the Ministry: Departments of Feeder roads, Urban roads and Ghana Highway Authority.

I had the opportunity to meet at a durbar with all the agencies, and the conclusion is that we suspend the implementation and carry out further consultation with them with respect—For instance, they raised an issue about who becomes the head of National Roads Authority (NRA). Currently, the director of Department of Urban Roads is now the acting Chief Director. He still holds on to the position because he has not handed over to anyone as the substantive Director. At the same time, they are complaining that it should be clear as to whether only one entity can have the leadership of NRA, that is whether Department of Urban Roads or Feeder Roads. So, we are saying that we would suspend the implementation for now and carry out this, and it is a popular decision.

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that my good Friend is speaking this way. The fact is laws are passed by this House, but its implementation is the responsibility of the entity that sponsored it. As we speak, road toll is still a law in our books, but its implementation has been suspended. It has just been a month that we have done this, and I did not say that we are replicating what they have done, but there is no ill motive with this. It is basically to make it work better for the people who the law has been made for. So, I appreciate him raising the issue, but, maybe, he would realise that, in a few weeks, I would engage the Committee of Roads and Transport in Parliament if it is properly formed and brief them as to what is going on.

So, nobody is saying that the Act is no longer in effect; we are saying that its implementation, currently, has been

suspended to deal with the difficulties of the entities. That is what it is. Nobody is usurping the powers of Parliament to pass laws, no, that is not what is happening, but the implementation has hit a snag and, because it is about people, we need to ensure that it is done in such a way that there will be peace between the agencies under the Ministry. That is all it is about. Thank you for the opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

5.03 p.m.

The Speaker: Yes?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I know my Colleague, the Minister for Roads and Highways well, and we have worked closely. I know how passionate he is when it comes to Parliament and I heard him; I took time to listen to him attentively. First of all, it is fundamental, and not for nothing that laws are made by this House, an arm of government. The laws are made to be respected and to be enforced and this is not far-fetched, it is so fundamental. This is a case of doing the right thing with the wrong approach and I also consider in times past, similar mistakes have been perpetuated. It does not mean we should repeat same. The question is, what precedence would we be setting if we allow this to pass? It is important we appreciate the separation of powers. As an arm of government, the Legislature has its powers, the Executive have their power and so does the Judiciary. No, Colleagues, listen to me. What kind of legal jurisprudence would we be establishing if we say that this House passes laws and then the Executive would decide whether to

implement or not to implement? Mr Kwame Agbodza knows better. In the case of confronting a genuine challenge, is Mr Agbodza a Member of this House? That is why the framers of the Constitution said that two-thirds of appointments would come from this House. So that as a Member of this House, the Hon Minister should have come to this House and even though the Committees are not formed, the Speaker, who is always amenable to these matters, would have helped us navigate our way. So, on this occasion, respectfully I think that Mr Agbodza has erred; in the face of the law, he has erred. Let us find a beautiful way to navigate and also not to set a very bad precedent so that in future nobody gets up—No Member of the Executive gets up and says that they have suspended a law based on their whims and caprices.

Mr Speaker, I think our Colleague should admit that it was an excessive decision. He should have resorted to this House and the Leadership and out of the Speaker's wisdom, we would have guided him on the way forward. So, the challenges he cited are good, they are well-placed but it is a wrong approach and we cannot take this House for granted. We cannot pass laws and the laws would be at one's whims and caprices. That would not be accepted and that is not acceptable.

Mr Francis-Xavier Sosu: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

It is not for nothing that in our Constitution we have separation of powers. Indeed, where someone has a

complaint about how a particular power has been exercised, there are appropriate fora where these matters are raised. What is the complaint about? The complaint is about the use of Executive power, particularly with respect to practical challenges that we, in this House may not be privy to. If the Hon Minister has challenges of dealing with or implementing a law, the Minister would have to show leadership. I mean when one goes to court, there are several laws that we have passed in this House. For example, begging is a crime in this House. How many people have been arrested on the street because they are begging? So, I am saying that yes, it is one thing having the law and it is another thing implementing the law and the Hon Minister is the one seized with the jurisdiction of implementation. If the Hon Minister in the exercise of that jurisdiction is having a challenge, any individual affected by the decision of the Minister can resort to court to find out whether the Hon Minister properly exercised his jurisdiction or discretion. That is why in Article 296 discusses the regulation of discretionary powers. Again, in Article 24 of the Constitution where one can actually go to court if one feels he or she is affected, then the Minister will have the opportunity to go and explain himself. But if one comes to court and raises it as a matter of public interest—

Mr Speaker, I believe that the Minister has given an appropriate explanation. I am sure that at the appropriate time where it is necessary that the law must be amended, the appropriate proposals should be made

and it will be brought back to this House. But the Minister is at the forefront of implementation and when he has challenges, he has a right to show leadership.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Speaker: This is not a Statement. Are we to subject it to a debate? It is a comment and I am surprised you are now subjecting this to a debate. It is a very simple matter.

Hon Members, because I want to adjourn. I totally, totally agree with the maker of the comment. He has drawn our attention to an urgent matter. The urgent matter is that we passed a law. The Ministry has come out with a statement saying it is suspending the implementation of the law. Now, luckily for us, the Minister is available. The Minister has not challenged that. He is explaining why the Ministry is being forced to suspend the implementation of the law. The only thing that the maker of the Statement says is that if you have that kind of challenge, come back to Parliament. We had a similar one with the road tolls, as the Minister drew our attention to. We called on the then Minister. It is the same Ministry and it was ignored.

Mr Speaker it is a precedent that should not be followed because at that time, those on my right were to my left and it was raised by them and we said the then Minister was wrong. Today, those on my left are on my right. The same thing has happened. It is only that the road toll was being implemented and

they suspended the implementation of the road toll. It caused a lot of problems. You know about the petitions that came from the workers there and all those things. They even started talking about financial loss to the State. This one is a new law that is being implemented. You have met challenges. I do not even understand why the publication. Because if you got the challenges and the challenges have to deal with the law, the only place that can amend the law or revise the law or upgrade it is Parliament. It is Parliament, not any other place. So, it is an issue that I would refer to the Minister to go and handle and let us know. If there is any problem with the law, it has to come back to Parliament and it is only Parliament that has the authority to revise, amend or nullify the law and pass a different law. That is the proper thing. We do not need to debate this.

So, I will thank the maker of the Statement and then please urge the Ministry with the Minister present to go back and do the proper thing.

I am aware of the challenge. I even recall mentioning to the Minister the allegations that I heard about this matter. But I did not know they have met and even taken the step of bringing it up to the public notice that we have proceeded to suspend the implementation of the law.

5.13 p.m.

As stated by the Minority Chief Whip, the proper thing should have been to approach authorities for us to discuss

a way forward in handling this matter. Please, let us all focus on the national interest, strengthening our democracy and the institution of Parliament, to be able to hold whoever is in power accountable to the people. It is very important. With this I would proceed to adjourn the House.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with respect, before you adjourn the House, just to bring to the notice of my respected Deputy Majority Leader that if it pleases the House—

Mr Speaker, originally that has been your directive that we sit at 2 p.m. So that we adjourn to two o'clock and then in the early hours of tomorrow from 10 a.m. to about 1 p.m. the Committee of Selection can meet to bring finality to the composition of the Committees, which is always becoming an issue.

Mr Speaker, I am imploring my Colleagues, if they would accede to the application, so that we adjourn to tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Mr Ricketts-Hagan: Mr Speaker, I think my Hon Friend is right. We can do that in the morning and then if, you know—we are basically in your hands. Two o'clock would be appropriate.

Thank you.

The Speaker: What about 12 p.m. instead of 2 p.m.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, it is fine. Once we can have time to have the meeting as the Committee of Selection, it is fine by me.

The Speaker: Yes, apart from that one, we are also looking at the Leadership getting that Committee to advise me on who to appoint to the Parliamentary Service Board. We need to inaugurate the Board. We also need to activate the Friendship Associations. Members have to join Parliamentary Friendship Associations. We have invitations from many parliaments all over the world for our Members to visit them or for them to receive Members who come in from those parliaments. Yet we do not have those associations in place. Please, kindly work on these matters as quickly as possible for them to put this in place. We have a lot of new Members who want to experience this other area of our legislation. [*Hear! Hear!*] So, work on them. Time is of essence.

Before the end of the month, we are also expecting the Message on the State of the Nation Address. Then, by the early weeks of March, we have the Budget. We need to have these Committees in place. We need to hold orientation, particularly as we have so many new Members. These are all in the hands of the Leaders. As the Chair of the Committee of Selection, I am waiting to do all this, to inaugurate the structures and then we can move on as a House.

I would advise that to really get the participation of Members and also the public—We need public participation in whatever we do. My proposal has always been that we start Sitting at 2 p.m.; Members have opposed it. But this proposal was made from the first Parliament of the Fourth Republic. That has been the proposal because of good reason. But at that time, it came from the

wrong person. So, the Members opposed it because the person who proposed it was a very active legal practitioner and they said he wanted that time to always go to court. So, they would not support him to do that; it was rejected. But as we moved along, experience has shown that yes, Members have a lot of things to do, particularly now that Members have a lot of pressure from their constituents. They have to attend to them almost every morning. They have to run to emergencies, go around and look for jobs, visas and so many things. Members have to do so many things.

So, in the morning, it is always crowded. Then there is traffic. The fuel that Members are given is not sufficient so they have to look for more money to buy more fuel. That is a tall order for Members to be present here and be doing all those things. Then you have the Committee sittings. You cannot sit, get tired and go back and do Committee work. So, you try to sit in the morning to do Committee work, the House ends up empty and the public cries and attack Members. Yet, they are calling Members to many activities. They want Members to be at those activities and also be present in Parliament. You know, it is impossible.

So why not agree for us to sit in the afternoon and sit even up to 8 p.m.? Then we can get the public participating at the gallery and see senior citizens relaxing and watching Members on their televisions, because we are broadcasting live. It would assist me to manage you—*[Laughter]* Because your paramount chiefs would also be watching you. Your in-laws and your children would be

watching you. When you start misbehaving and you go home, then your son would ask you, “Daddy, why did you do that on the Floor?” *[Laughter]* We need the feedback.

Please it is not every Parliament that sits from 10 a.m. Many Parliaments now have moved to the evening so that they can get other people to participate. Particularly this lawmaking, where you need the public servants to appear before the Committees to lead them with technical inputs for us to pass quality laws. So, when you go to implement them, you would not have the same technical people now having challenges with the implementation of the law. By the time that you would be meeting, they are caught up at the Ministries as well as the Ministers.

Even with the Attorney General, they have serious challenges in appearing before our Committees to support us because of the time of Sitting. So, if we decide to sit it in the evening, we would get all these coming to participate and I think that would improve the quality of our products. But that is left to the House. It is not for the Speaker to decide. That is a decision left to the House and I would always leave it to Members to decide.

With this, I would proceed to adjourn the Sitting to tomorrow as agreed at 12 noon. The House is so adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was adjourned at 5.20 p.m. till 12th February, 2025 at 12 noon.

Editor's Note

This *Official Report* was corrected by the House on 20th February, 2025, as follows:

Column 56, paragraph 1, line 2

“stereotypes are” was corrected to

“stereotyping is”