



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

CONTENTS

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND THE OFFICIAL REPORT— [Col. 4]

STATEMENTS—

- (i) Illegal Opioids on the Ghanaian Market— [Col. 28]
- (ii) Mainstreaming Public Private Partnerships in the Provision of Public Infrastructure and Services— [Col. 56]
- (iii) Recent Killings by the Police and Private Security Detail Stationed at Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, Kenyasi— [Col. 86]
- (iv) The Unlawful Ministerial Interference in the Enforcement Act of the National Communication Authority (NCA)— [Col. 107]
- (v) Commemorative Statement on the 59th Anniversary of the Overthrow of Dr Kwame Nkrumah— [Col. 132]

ADJOURNMENT— [Col. 160]

Correction of errors of substance may be made only on the floor of the House with the permission of the Speaker. However, correction of typographical or grammatical errors which Members suggest for the Bound Volumes which will be compiled at the end of the Meeting may be clearly marked in the Daily Report, and the copy containing the corrections submitted at the Editor's Office, Parliament House, not later than four clear days after the publication of the Daily Report.

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, 25th February, 2025

The House met at 10.40 a.m.

[MR SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER
IN THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, today being the first day of the week, we will turn to the item numbered 2, Roll Call.

Clerks-at-the-Table, please lead us through the roll call.

Mr Dominic Nitiwul — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, that is the established protocol that, on the first day of the week, we announce a roll call. We can skip it on the other days but the first day of the week—So, former Minister for Defence, with the greatest respect, indulge me.

Clerks-at-the-Table, please let us hear the roll call.

Mr Dominic Nitiwul: But Mr Speaker, I have not said anything yet.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I thought that was where you were coming to.

All right, let me hear you.

Mr Nitiwul: I understand. In this Meeting, this is the first day that we are doing this. Is that right?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, it is part of our Standing Orders.

Mr Nitiwul: We have not done it for the last three weeks.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, so, today we are starting.

Mr Nitiwul: I was thinking that, after the Message on the State of the Nation, then we can begin to do that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Dominic Nitiwul, with the greatest respect, once I have announced it, I will go ahead.

So, Clerks-at-the-Table, please, let us do that.

Mr Nitiwul: All right

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

[ROLL CALL — *commenced*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon First Deputy Minority Whip, I will listen to you, but let her finish.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, like you rightly said, it is part of our Order Paper, but it is very clear; you could just let us write our names. On the Majority Side, out of 183 Members, they

are just 19, so would they announce how many they are here, so—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon First Deputy Minority Whip?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: They are 19 Members here, so when you do the roll call to call 275 names—They are just 19 Members here.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member?

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, just write their names and mark it because they are not many; they are 19.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon First Deputy Minority Whip, that is the reason I ask for the roll call to be done.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, for us to go through it and mention the names of 275 Members while there are just 19 out of that on the other Side—So, just write their names and mark it; that should be all right.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Yes, Hon Richard Acheampong?

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

Mr Speaker, our rules are very clear that the name would be mentioned and the Member would rise up from his seat—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: That is all.

Mr Acheampong: So that he would be recognised. Where from this writing of names? Look behind the Hon First Deputy Minority Whip.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Clerks-at-the-Table, please, continue.

[ROLL CALL — *ended*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Table.

Hon Members, let us now turn to the item numbered 3, which is the recitation of the National Pledge.

[THE NATIONAL PLEDGE]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we would turn to the item numbered 6, *Correction of Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND THE OFFICIAL REPORT

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: We will start with the *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, 21st February, 2025.

Page 1...7—

Yes, Hon Member for Lambussie?

Prof Titus Kofi Beyuo: Mr Speaker, I was absent with permission, so I would want that captured.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Table, check if, indeed, he was absent with permission; then, we change the records.

Prof Beyuo: Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member? Which constituency are you from?

Mr Ntebe Ayo William: Tatale-Sanguli.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, let us hear you.

Mr William: I was present, but they marked my name as being absent.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Were you present? Did you mark the register?

Mr William: Yes, I did.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Did you? Table, please, take note of that.

Page 8...9—

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, on page 9, the item numbered 9(iv), “The Hon Member for Nadwoli/Kaleo...”, “Nadowli” was misspelt. It should be N-a-d-o-w-l-i, but it has been spelt “N-a-d-w-o-l-i”, so we need to correct that one.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon Kingsley Nyarko. You see I am thanking you; you are very diligent when it comes to that. Thank you once again. Table, kindly take note of that.

Page 10—

Hon Members, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, 21st February, 2025, as corrected is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, we have the 13th February, 2025 edition of the *Official Report*.

Yes, Hon Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama?

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama: Mr Speaker, unfortunately, I do not have either the soft copy or hard copy of the *Official Report*. Still on the same matter, I think that the—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Still on?

Dr Mahama: On the absence of that Report or the inability of the Clerks-at-the-Table to give us that Report. We do not have it uploaded neither do we have the hardcopy. But there is this general issue around that whole ecosystem of delivery of reports. Mr Speaker, *Official Reports* are voluminous in nature such that when we are only served with it when we come to the House, we are not able to even go through it and submit our corrections thereof. I would suggest that Members be given at least 24 hours to Sitting to go through.

Let me acknowledge that sometimes, they give it to us by e-mail, but most of the time, we do not receive these *Official Reports*; we only come to the House to have a copy before us. Sometimes, we

are not even given a copy. Mr Speaker, on this occasion, we do not even have that Report to start with.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Prof Nyarko?

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, with respect, I have a copy from the Table. Probably, we need to get sufficient copies. I came this morning and went to sign my name—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Your pigeon hole?

Prof Nyarko: They gave me the *Official Report, Votes and Proceedings*, and the Order Paper at the table. Maybe they are not enough. What the Clerks-at-the-Table can do is to ensure that we have sufficient copies for Members to look at. As he said, we used to get them via our e-mails, but at times, we do not even get them, so we need to make sure that—These are important documents that we read, not to effect changes or make corrections, but to understand what transpired during that Sitting.

11.10 a.m.

So, they are relevant documents that we need to help us to update our knowledge on some of the issues that are raised.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Member for Bole Bamboi.

Alhaji Yusif Sulemana: Mr Speaker, let me add my voice to the concerns raised by my two Colleagues on the other Side. Indeed, this is a very important document, so, if I make a Statement that is captured in this document, it is only appropriate that I have a second look at it before it goes into the records permanently. So, it is important to always get this document early enough to peruse it and if there are issues for us to look out for, we correct them. I do not know whether the trend is changing. When we first came in the 8th Parliament, for instance, in the 7th Parliament, they would always leave these documents in our pigeon holes. But he is just telling me that today he has to sign here before he receives it. Let us know, is it the case that going forward, we have to always come and sign here before we take it, or would it be sent to our pigeon holes? This is very important.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, let me corroborate the observations Colleagues have spoken to, except to add that generally, the decision is in compliance with environmental concerns to reduce the volume of printouts and that is generally accepted. And it is the reason the Parliament of Ghana has spent a lot of money to get this outfit. But the excuses are becoming one too many. We are told they are configuring the system. The system

would have to take some time before they respond. I think it has been some time now. I do not know if this would come under the Table Office; they may have to take this up. The printing of the *Official Report* just comes in to support the materials that have already been uploaded. So just a few copies are printed to complement that. It is the case that we are not even receiving the emails as we should. I am sure there is a problem with the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Department.

Mr Speaker, you may have to direct that certain actions are taken for us to avoid, as Hon Yusif Sulemana—Is today his vetting? Tomorrow is his vetting. We wish him well. But he should get prepared and be ready.

Mr Speaker, the ICT Department should be up and doing. Probably they have a concern. They cannot come here and talk about their challenges. So a directive from you would be in place for us to avoid—But certainly we must change the regime where loads of paper reports are printed out. We have to move ahead. It is the reason we spent over millions of euros to get this thing set up.

Mr Speaker, I think it is the ICT department. I suspect they have some challenges and a directive from you would not be out of place. But the observations are apt and they are spot on.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Yes. Is it on the same issue?

Dr Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare:

Yes, just a small issue. Adding on to what the Leader said, I think one of the challenges also has to do with the seating arrangement. Because if that is not done, the ICT department, I believe, would have a fundamental challenge in configuring the personal computers (PCs) for us because it has to be the Hon Member specifically sitting on his or her seat. That has not yet been done. So that could be one of the challenges which also has to be looked at.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Lastly, Hon Member for Mpraeso?

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, I think part of the challenge is—I love the idea of having these systems in the Chamber. But if one refers to past documents that have been uploaded, they would not be able to get them here. I remember last week, I was telling the ICT Department officers that I like how Ghana's Parliament is embracing e-governance, e-Parliament, and all of that. Probably, maybe it is about time that every Member of Parliament is given a folder, an online folder, so that all these documents that are given to us are placed in the online folders so that we can easily refer to them. Because they send via e-mails, sometimes one is unable to even download the documents. And if one wants to go back and make reference to same, it becomes a challenge.

But I know that if we are all to sign on to, let us say, Microsoft or they give us,

let us say, a Google Cloud, every Member of Parliament is given a Google space, we can easily go back to all these folders and refer to previous documents that have been uploaded. That said, I like the novelty—The e-mails that come from a certain Maxwell, sometimes come in very handy, but they need to do more. We have the *Official Report* of the 11th and the 12th in our e-mails. The 13th, we have not yet got them. And I think that it is important that we up our game in that regard. Maybe, Parliament needs to look at giving each MP a cloud system, a platform where one can easily go and refer to official documents and everything that comes from Parliament. I think that would help a lot.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, could we move on? Is it the same issue?

Supt Rtd Peter Lanchene Toobu: Mr Speaker, thank you so much.

Mr Speaker, as we discussed, it is appropriate for Leadership to meet officers of the ICT department and get an update. If we are talking about e-Parliament, I am sure that all of us could possibly have access to an e-library, so that uploading old documents would not be a problem. And if they could create a local area network that we can have access to many of the documents that we would be looking for, instead of probably even uploading them per each PC. So let us have a briefing from the ICT Directorate as to what is happening,

what the future is, and probably Leadership can update us on the way forward.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Nyarko Osei? It is all right.

Hon Members, I think your concerns are well noted. I believe now it is loaded into the system, so we could check. But like the first observer, Dr Kabiru Mahama said, it needs to be given to Members well ahead of time, so that we can peruse it and at least address our concerns, if any. So I think the Table officers have taken notice of it.

Like we said, we are configuring the entire system, so still, give us some time. As the Minority Chief Whip has said, the “Give us some time” is becoming too much, but still, give us some time. We would get there.

Hon Members, I am told that the 13th February, 2025, edition of the *Official Report* is now loaded into the system. So if we can peruse it, other than that, we can hold on to it, and probably tomorrow, bring it back to Hon Members. Is that the position of Members? Can we hold on to this, so that tomorrow we address it?

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Ahmed Ibrahim: Mr Speaker, you know we started far—But I like the concerns. This Parliament is yet to go on an orientation course and I think these are issues Members would be taken through during the orientation. Mr

Speaker, it is a process. We are not there yet, but I believe all the concerns together, if there had been an orientation course for Members, some of these issues might have been solved. But this is one of the fastest moving Parliaments. In less than two months, we have done a lot. We should appreciate that, and let us proceed and make progress.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Bimbilla?

Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul: Mr Speaker, I think I would go by your suggestion that we hold on because this has just been uploaded and the other one has come. In the last Parliament, they used to give us some of these Reports a day before using official emails.

11.20 a.m.

Because if they just upload it and do not give a hard copy to the person, what simply happens is that the person would not be able to—Unless he comes in an hour before to peruse and get to know. I remember the former Majority Chief Whip used to send us *Votes and Proceedings*, as well as *Hansards* a day before, so we go through to know exactly what is there or not, so that thing we have said—Because this is the *Official Report*, and they capture exactly what has been said. It is not whether it is correct or not, but it is exactly what the person said. It may be wrong, but the fact is that it has to be captured. They are like minutes that capture what was said on that day.

Mr Speaker, so, if this has just been uploaded and Hon Members have not had the opportunity and are raising concerns, then maybe, we would flag it, so we go through tomorrow, and if 14th February, 2025 was a Sitting day, then we can push that to the next day. So, I support your position, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon Members. Yes, Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, not to belabour the point, I agree with my senior Colleague, but I just feel we should not let this matter slide just like that.

Mr Speaker, it re-occurs oftentimes, and I think there should be a responsibility dispense. I believe the Government Whip—And I see my two Whips here—The Government Whip should work on this and report to the House; if it is the case that the ICT Department has some challenges, it should be communicated to us. We have always—Since the start of this Parliament, the encouragement has been coming from the ICT Department that it is work in progress, and that they are working on the system. This work on the system under the 24-Hour Economy is becoming something; it is not impressive.

Mr Speaker, I want to employ your directives. We are operating under a 24-Hour Economy. So, Mr Speaker, I employ your directive that the Government Whip be given the responsibility to liaise with the ICT

Department; on Friday, he should give us a briefing on what the challenge is. The House needs to know.

Mr Speaker, this is not a matter we can just laugh about and brush away—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, I think I have a contrary view to what you are saying. This is a matter of Leadership and not only Government Whips. Leadership should work that out with the IT officers—No, you are pushing it to only the Majority Whips. I think Leadership, as a whole, should take up this matter with the ICT Department, so we resolve it once and for all.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I promise on my honour; I would do my part, except that sometimes, the Government Side—Mr Speaker, you can cite the composition of Committees; the last time he was here, he displayed two fat files that they were done with the Committees. It has been two weeks; are they still composing their Committees?

So, Mr Speaker, it is not that we do not want to work; the Government Side needs to come forth and show Leadership. Hon Acheampong and Hon Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe must show leadership. The excuses are becoming too much under the 24-Hour Economy.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: With regard to the composition of the Committees, they promised today, and I am sure—Let me yield to—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, just before you proceed, the promises have always been coming. Last week, they promised, and two weeks ago, they promised.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, let me yield it to the First Deputy Majority Whip.

Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, all these concerns would be addressed. This is a young Parliament; we are just seven weeks old, and the ICT Department is doing their best, though we would collaborate with them to make sure things are done properly.

Mr Speaker, what I think is that we have to get this information a day before or early morning before we get in, and if they can even connect the machines in our offices to get the information to read through before we get into—We would address these issues. I do not think we should encourage the printing of papers again. So we would meet with the ICT Department to see if they have some challenges, so that we could address it, and everyone would be fine in this House. The 24-Hour Economy has come to stay, and it would soon take shape; after the Budget Statement, we would see the wonders, so do not worry about the 24-Hour Economy. It has come to stay, and it would work.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, can we move on?

Mr Acheampong: With the Committee issues—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: No, let me finish—

Yes, Hon Member for Asante Akim Central, let me hear you first.

Mr Kwame Anyimadu-Antwi: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I wanted to speak on this, but because you directed that we move on, I sat down.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, please—

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, if you remember, last week, I gave the promise that today, our Side would get our names in order, but I am pleading with my Colleague Whip to give us the list for the Committee on Chieftaincy, Culture and Religious Affairs. We do not have their list, so they should submit, so that we would conclude everything this week. The Committee of Selection would meet, so that we go through all the processes to get the Committees in place, so—
[Interruption]—When?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, my Colleague, Hon Acheampong, should be informed that, three days ago, we submitted our list on the Committee on Chieftaincy, Culture and Religious Affairs. That has been done, so now, the ball is in their court because they have been lagging behind. For one month, Mr

Speaker, they have been lagging behind, and I see their problem.

Mr Speaker, do you know their problem? The former Majority Chief Whip could not communicate properly with the new Majority Chief Whip.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Do not tell us their problem.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: That was the problem.

Mr Speaker, so, we have submitted our list, and let the record reflects same that our list is complete, and we have submitted it. He should take notice.

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, if they have submitted their list, then we are good to go, so the Committee of Selection would schedule a meeting, and we would just produce the Report. That is all. We do not need to fight anymore; since they have produced the list, we are good to go.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well

On that note—Yes, Hon Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs?

Mr A. Ibrahim: Mr Speaker, I have listened to the Leadership on both Sides, but I just want to bring the attention of Leadership to a very important thing.

Mr Speaker, I heard composition of Committees and seating arrangements. I have been in Leadership for 12 years, but when my Friends on the other Side were

on this Side, they rushed and committed so many mistakes. I am urging this current Leadership on the Government bench not to commit similar mistakes. They are pushing them.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minister—

Mr A. Ibrahim: Mr Speaker, the Majority Leadership should not allow the Minority to push them. The Government bench waits for Cabinet composition and approval of Ministers; then they move to the composition of Committees before they know the proper seating arrangements because the Chairman of the Finance Committee sits directly behind the Leadership, and the Chairpersons of the Committees on Subsidiary Legislation, and Constitutional and Legal Affairs sit directly behind—

Mr Speaker, so if we do not know who the Cabinet Ministers are, how do we create seating arrangements?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, these are conventions—

Mr A. Ibrahim: So, Mr Speaker, these are matters that the Minority Leadership should not push—Hon Assibey was the Chairman of the Finance Committee; he was sitting on the fourth lane. These are things we must avoid. They are critical issues, so the Minority Side should do not push them to create mistakes.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Yes, First Deputy Minority Whip?

11.30 a.m.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I think the Minister responsible for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs is misleading the House.

Mr Speaker, it is not the case that we have to get Cabinet Ministers in place before Committees and seating arrangements are done. Mr Speaker, per our Standing Orders, even for vetting of the said Cabinet Ministers, the Committee needs to be in place so that subject matter Committee Chairs can be vetted. It is also not true if he says that we committed a lot of mistakes when we were on this Side. It is never true. Even though with his experience, the new Standing Order—Previous Standing Orders in the Eighth Parliament did not have anything we called “the Backbenchers”. These Backbenchers have come to define as to who becomes a Backbencher. If one is a Minister, he or she is a senior—But in the Eighth Parliament, we did not have that, so it is never the case that he should suggest the seating arrangements. He is a former Leader—12 years a Minister. Many a time, he is seated over there as a Backbencher. Where he is seated, that is not his seat, and the seating arrangement is not even done so he cannot even sit here because we have seniors. Aside Ministers and Deputy Ministers, Hon Collins Dauda is one of the most senior Members, and Hon Nitiwul and others are sixth timers coming. That is where they are seated. Hon Haruna Iddrisu—That is where he is seated, but he as a

former Leader should just sit behind the Leadership. His people could not constitute the Committees.

At the moment, the hopes of the 140 who are not Ministers or Deputy Ministers are on the Committees. They are disappointed because they do not know where they are even going. They have not been appointed as Ministers, they have not been appointed as Deputy Ministers, and they do not know the Committees they belong to — *[Uproar]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: We are talking about this and they are saying—This is the only hope they have, so they should tell their Frontbench to constitute the Committees so that when they become Committee Chairs or Ranking Members, they would know what to do. They have missed out. Out of the 60 Ministers to be appointed, only 40 of them have been considered. So, 140 of them are not Ministers or Deputy Ministers—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: They should tell their Frontbench to constitute the Committees so that they can also know where they belong.

Mr Second Deputy speaker: Hon Members, we bring a closure to this particular discussion. We are flagging this particular *Official Report*; we will take it tomorrow. We are flagging the

13th February, 2025 edition of the *Official Report*, and we will take it tomorrow.

Hon Members, indulge me to acknowledge our children from Apra SDA Basic School. They are in the Public Gallery. They are being led by Mr Emmanuel Acheampong who is a teacher and the school is located at Gomoa East Constituency. Do we have the Member of Parliament here? Where is he?

Mr A. Ibrahim: Mr Speaker, he is a Deputy Minister-designate for Energy and Green Transition. He is preparing for vetting.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Please, I have not asked anybody to respond to it. I just wanted to find out whether the Member of Parliament is here, so our children from Gomoa East, you are witnessing what is going on here. I hope it will inspire you to study hard, so go back and study hard so that tomorrow, when your fathers and mothers here are no more here, you would come and take over. We wish you well and I believe the Member of Parliament whom I have noted is the Deputy Minister- designate for Energy and Green Transition will take care of you. So, you are welcome. You may take your seats.

[Students from Apra SDA Basic School were acknowledged]

Hon Members, let us now turn to Statements. Today, we are going to have five Statements. One is from the Minister for Health. I am just mentioning their

names so that everybody will prepare. There would be one Statement each from the Member of Parliament for Mpraeso, the Member of Parliament for Asutifi North, the Member of Parliament for Ofoase Ayirebi, and the last from the Member of Parliament for Ho Central. I have just decided to mention the Constituencies so that they can prepare.

We will take the first one from the Minister for Health.

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh —
rose—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, if you may indulge me, before we take the item numbered 8, there is item number 7, and Mr Speaker, we are scheduled to receive the Minister for Energy and Green Transition, and the Minister for Finance. The Minister for Finance was scheduled to answer Urgent Answers but he has submitted an official letter to the effect that he is unable to attend upon the House. Fair enough. The Minister for Energy and Green Transition was scheduled for two Businesses. The first one was to answer Questions and the second one was to brief the House on a matter that the Speaker directed to the Minister. The Minister simply wrote to Parliament and said that he regrets that he cannot attend upon the House. Mr Speaker, that is not the practice of this House. If for any reason, a Minister cannot attend upon the House, it is incumbent on the Minister to give a tangible reason. None of this has been performed by the Minister, and that is not acceptable.

Mr Speaker, beyond that, my good friend the Minister for Health who has been busy these days because of cholera, meningitis and other matters, has been running errands and I commend him for that. Mr Speaker, as at when we met at Conclave, his matter did not come up. We are not aware he is coming to make a Statement on the floor of the House. Mr Speaker, it cannot be the case that the Minister will just walk into the Chamber and present Statements. That is not right. He is a Member of Parliament—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, that one is at my discretion.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, will you indulge me. The copies of that Statement—Order 93(8) says—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: A Statement admitted could be transmitted by the Clerk. However, if a Minister of State is coming to make a Statement on policy or any matter, we in Leadership at least at Conclave should be aware—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, you are right but I just want to explain.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: So, if I am right, then he should do the proper thing.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What is the proper thing?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Let him do the proper thing.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What is that?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: He needs to do the proper thing.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, what is the proper thing?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: He is my Friend. He should at least inform Leadership. He should inform us. Mr Akandoh, do not take it lightly. It is not personal. Members need to know what you are coming to speak to. We are not aware.

Mr Speaker, I implore you to ask Leadership. I see Hon Cudjoe on her feet. We need to know the whereabouts of the Minister for Energy and Green Transition and also know the whereabouts of the Ministers for Defence and the Interior. The Minister for Defence and the Minister for the Interior were supposed to be here to apprise us on matters happening at Walewale and its environs on the curfew. She should brief us about it. We are not aware.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip, with regard to the Statement of the Minister for Health, it came straightaway from the Speaker, and it is an emergency issue. So without discussing it even at the Plenary, the Speaker directed that we take it as a matter of urgency.

11.40 a.m.

With regard to the Minister for Energy, I am told he has sent a letter and given the Minority a copy.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, this is about reputation, and I guard my reputation. Yes, we were given copies of the Statement, but you did not listen to me. What I said was that a reason was not assigned for his absence and the practice has been that if a Minister cannot come, the House needs to know why the Minister cannot attend upon the House. That is basically what I am referring to. The Minister for Finance gave a reason that he was going for a budget hearing; that is how it is done.

Mr Speaker, it is not acceptable, and Leadership would have to tell us something. Besides that, the Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Defence were programmed to come and apprise us at Close Sitting; they are not here. They are not taking the House seriously. They must take the House seriously; this is the Parliament of Ghana.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, it is all right.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: This is the Parliament of Ghana, and they cannot take us for granted.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Leader, let us hear you.

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, thank you very much. The first part of his question has been answered by you, that admissibility is in the hands of the Speaker, and since you have admitted the Statement by the Minister for Health, I do not see the reason my Colleague would be raising all these issues.

Mr Speaker, in respect of the Minister for Energy and Green Transition, he showed respect, wrote to the House and copied the Minority Side. So I do not see the reason for raising this issue again. The Minister has shown respect and written to them saying he cannot attend Parliament and they are asking for further—It is fair to ask for further clarification, but he has shown respect, so I think we can move forward and give him another opportunity to come and brief the House. They have a copy of the letter, so at least, let us make progress.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minister for Health—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: The Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Defence—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, I have not called you.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: No, this is not right. The Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Defence were also scheduled to be here.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, you have to respect the Chair.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: I respect the Chair.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So I have not called you.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: The Minister for the Interior spoke to—

Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, he should not forget that he is no longer the Government Chief Whip.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Comfort Doyoe, I have not called you, please. The one I called to the Floor is the Minister for Health. Hon Akandoh, you have the floor now.

STATEMENT

Illegal Opioids on the Ghanaian Market

Minister for Health (Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh): I am most grateful, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to address the House on an urgent global public concern that I inherited.

Mr Speaker, the increasing infiltration of illicit opioids into our country is indeed a matter of grave public health and national security concern. Thank you for the opportunity to share an insight into the key issues related to the growing threat that illegal opioids pose to the health and safety of our people, especially the youth.

Mr Speaker, opioids serve a critical role in modern medicine, providing relief from pain. However, their misuse has led to devastating addiction crises worldwide, and Ghana is no exception. In West Africa, unregulated painkillers flood local markets often smuggled

through weak border controls and distributed by criminal networks.

Mr Speaker, Ghana's Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has confirmed that ongoing market surveillance has uncovered unregistered Tramadol brands (Trafanol, Tarapamol, Tramaking) entering the country through unapproved routes. In Ghana, Tramadol abuse has already caused significant social and health problems, particularly among young people. High doses of Tramadol, often far exceeding what is legally allowed for medical use, have been found in circulation, leading to severe addiction, mental health issues and even deaths.

What is most alarming, Mr Speaker, is that this crisis has now evolved beyond Tramadol. The Ministry of Health and the FDA have taken note of the recent BBC Africa Eye investigative report released four days ago exposing the alleged exportation of unapproved drugs containing Tapentadol, a powerful opioid, and Carisoprodol as key active ingredients. These drugs, produced by the Indian pharmaceutical firm, Aveo Pharmaceuticals, and distributed through Westfin International, have reportedly entered West African markets, including Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Ghana.

It is worth noting that, Mr Speaker, Tafradol and other Tapentadol-Carisoprodol combinations have never been registered for use in Ghana, and no import permits have been issued for them. The investigation has raised serious concerns about regulatory oversight and border enforcement. We

should ask ourselves the following questions: how have these unregistered opioids found their way into our markets? Who is responsible? And what measures must we take to ensure this does not happen again?

Response to the Rising Opioid Crisis:

Mr Speaker, prior to the recent exposé, the Ministry of Health and its regulatory agencies had already taken steps to mitigate the risks associated with opioid misuse by doing the following:

Reclassification of Tramadol as a control drug: Recognising the widespread abuse of Tramadol, regulations were introduced to limit its sale, manufacture, and distribution. Tramadol sale is restricted to prescription use only. Similarly, we banned the manufacture and sale of codeine-containing cough syrups.

Seizure and interception of unauthorised opioids: Several shipments of unregistered opioids were intercepted at our borders over recent years, preventing their entry into the market.

Market Surveillance and Regulatory Enforcement: Regular inspections of pharmacies and over-the-counter (OTC) medicine sellers were conducted, leading to the removal of unauthorised opioid products.

Prosecution of Offenders: Currently, six Over-The-Counter Medicine Sellers (OTCMS) in the Ahafo Region are being prosecuted for the illegal sale and

distribution of tramadol and other opioids.

In addition to the above actions, Mr Speaker, in recent years, we have had major seizures and disposal of illicit opioids. Please permit me to highlight a few:

December 18, 2023, a container declared for transit to Niger was found to contain; 181 cartons of Royal 225mg (Tapentadol + Carisoprodol); 51 cartons of Timaking 120mg (Tapentadol + Carisoprodol); 90 cartons of Tafradol 120mg. These were seized and disposed of following a court order on January 16, 2025, with destruction completed on February 21, 2025.

On May 2024, a joint enforcement team intercepted 376 cartons of Tramadol Hydrochloride 225mg (Tramaking 225mg) concealed among laboratory coveralls. A court order in October 2024 authorised their destruction. Despite these efforts, Mr Speaker, it is clear that these actions have not been sufficient to prevent illicit opioids from entering the country through illegal channels.

11.50 a.m.

Mr Speaker, I will now highlight some of the actions that the health sector has

taken in response to the crisis, especially in the past few days following the BBC Africa Eye Investigation.

Immediate actions taken after the BBC Africa Eye exposé

Mr Speaker, following the revelations of the BBC Africa Eye findings on Aveo Pharmaceuticals and Westfin International's involvement in illegal opioid distribution, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the regulatory and security agencies, took immediate and decisive action.

The FDA has directed Samos Pharma to immediately cease using these companies as exporters of registered products to Ghana. Additionally, the FDA has suspended the processing of Masters Pharmaceutical Limited's application, which uses Aveo Pharmaceuticals as a contract manufacturer.

Tighter border inspections and enforcement: A joint task force, involving the FDA, the Narcotics Control Commission (NACOC), Customs, and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) have intensified checks at major entry points to prevent further unauthorised imports leading to the destruction of large consignments of Tafrodol and similar drugs.

Increased monitoring of over-the-counter (OTC) drug sales: Inspections have been intensified, unauthorised opioids seized, and legal action taken against offenders.

Public awareness and consumer protection measures: A national education campaign has been launched to warn the public about the dangers of illicit opioid use and encourage responsible medication practices.

Next Steps: Strengthening regulatory oversight and enforcement

Mr Speaker, while these immediate actions have helped to contain the situation, more needs to be done to permanently shut down the supply of illicit opioids into Ghana. We have noted the following challenges that impede effective response which require urgent attention:

- i. Unmanned borders allow for the illegal movement of opioids into Ghana;
- ii. Limited inspection capacity for transit goods destined for other countries enables unregistered drugs to leak into the Ghanaian market;
- iii. Intelligence-sharing mechanisms between the FDA, Customs, and NACOC needed to improve enforcement outcomes are sub-optimal.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Health, will therefore collaborate with the relevant bodies on the following initiatives: strengthening market surveillance and compliance monitoring; strengthening import controls and licensing; enhancing law enforcement and inter-agency collaboration, and strengthening international cooperation.

Need for inter-agency response

Mr Speaker, it is important to note the critical need for an inter-agency response to this crisis. The FDA works closely with multiple Government and security agencies to enhance enforcement, intelligence sharing, and regulatory compliance

Inter-Agency enforcement and raids: The FDA carries out joint enforcement actions with the Ghana Police Service, Pharmacy Council Ghana, Narcotics Control Commission (NACOC), National Security, Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), Port Health Authority, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Local Government Authorities. These teams conduct raids, market surveillance, and manage disposal of confiscated drugs to remove illicit opioids from circulation.

Border and import control collaboration: GRA (Customs Division) and NACOC assist the FDA in monitoring entry points and intercepting illicit shipments of opioid. These joint operations at porous borders have resulted in major drug seizures.

A United Front Against Opioid Abuse

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the opioid crisis is not just a health issue, but a national emergency. The Ministry of Health has acted swiftly in response to these findings, but more work remains. More importantly, I would like to emphasise that we need a coordinated and sustained response from all relevant sectors and the public.

Together, we must close the loopholes, tighten the rules, and hold those responsible for the crises accountable. Ghana must not become a safe haven for illicit opioids, and must not become a hub for opioid abuse and trafficking.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Let me start with the Hon Member of Parliament for Korle Klottey, Dr Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings.

Dr Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings (NDC — Korle Klottey): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by the Minister for Health.

Mr Speaker, Ghana is well-known to be a hub and transit point for illicit drugs, but this particular phenomenon that we are witnessing is quite shocking. As a matter of fact, in my constituency, we have the Nii Amugi Cluster of Schools where people who are addicted to drugs have actually invaded the premises and harassed the children and teachers. In the last three weeks, one of the security personnel in the school was attacked by a gang of drug addicts and is now at the 37 Military Hospital in a coma.

Mr Speaker, the ramifications of this illicit drug inflow into Ghana goes

beyond the large scale, but it is affecting people's lives, the security in our schools, and the security of the lives of ordinary citizens. The law enforcement agencies, responsible for this need to be strengthened.

We had, up until a few weeks ago, a collaboration between the United States Government, specifically the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and the Government of Ghana (GoG) in helping to combat some of these trans-national crime and illicit drug use. Since the suspension of this, I believe that may have contributed to what we are seeing. We need to re-engage some of these international agencies, strengthen our capacity to monitor what goes on at our borders, and ensure that when we actually track down these criminals, the prosecution and effective implementation of our regulations is actually done in order to be a disincentive for those who wish to use Ghana as a transit point. Our youth are really increasingly becoming a target of all of this.

Mr Speaker, this is a national security issue because it affects our country in so many ways. It is affecting so many sectors and would probably require a whole multi-dimensional approach in order to effectively deal with this issue. This is a matter that is affecting a lot of communities. My constituency has a high level of addiction; it has a lot of young people who are addicted to drugs. Unfortunately, this is an issue that has been swept under the rug for too long, and it is my prayer that, given the exposé

that has happened and the global embarrassment that we see now, we would take this issue of addiction and mental health and how we address the way drugs are used in this country very seriously.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Let me start with my Senior, the Member for Asante Akim Central.

Mr Kwame Anyimadu-Antwi (NPP — Asante Akim Central): Mr Speaker, thank you, and may I congratulate the Minister for Health for the Statement he has made to the country in drawing our attention.

Mr Speaker, pardon my ignorance, but it looks like this opium is becoming a serious matter in the country. I heard the Minister talk about the fact that some arrests were made, they were taken to court, and the court gave an order that the substance be destroyed. I, however, did not hear whether the destruction was effected. Another serious matter is when something that is not good for the country is directed to be destroyed; yet, it finds its way back into the country.

So, from the Minister's Statement, one would realise that the law enforcement agencies are already working, but I would want to draw the Minister's attention that Customs Division of the GRA controls the borders. I did not also hear the Minister talk about the Narcotics

Control Board, which we have in the country—*[Interruption]*—

12 noon

I did not hear; that is what I said. So, I would want the Minister to work very hard, so that these two institutions would collaborate. Because when they are found in the country, it is very difficult to control. The police may not be able to track them all. But when they are coming towards the borders, they have to know. I have not seen one before but I believe that some officials of the Customs Service may not even know what kind of substance we are talking about, unless they are trained.

The Minister for Health must make a conscious effort so that there would be collaboration between the Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) and the Customs Excise Division, to make sure that this menace is brought to a halt.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Let me go to Professor Titus Kofi Beyuo.

Professor Titus Kofi Beyuo (NDC — Lambussie): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I want to commend the Minister for Health and the Ministry for the swift action and also the agencies under the Ministry of Health for handling what appears to be a national public health crisis.

Mr Speaker, opioids are good servants but bad masters. They are drugs used to manage moderate to very severe pain and are, therefore, very useful in the health system. However, if unregulated, they can be very devastating. These drugs when consumed, work on the brain and bring what we call euphoria, which is what they would call in layman's term the "high".

Therefore, they also exhibit something called pharmacologic tolerance, which is that with subsequent consumption, one needs to take higher doses to have the same effect. The youth who engage in these drugs easily get addicted and have to take higher doses to get the same effect they had before. These drugs are causing a lot of damage to our youth. The issue raised by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Eye investigation, in my view, smacks of deliberate poisoning. Because these drugs were not made for any medical purpose. They have never been used anywhere and the combination is a terrible combination of a potent Maxol-MR, a relaxant and a very addictive opioid. When you take these two combined in one formulation, it is unacceptable.

I want to commend the Ministry of Health for what they are doing. For us as a people, our biggest concern is that addiction would have a serious drain on us. Addictions are better prevented than managed. As a country, public rehabilitation centres are not more than three. We have very few rehabilitation centres and the outcomes of rehabilitation, especially of drug addiction are also not very promising.

For every 10 patients who go to rehabilitation, just three to five may successfully get out of it. Relapse is very high. So, for those who get hooked on it, getting out becomes a serious challenge.

I would want to commend the Ministry of Health, but ask that serious intersectoral collaboration is needed. This is as a result of pure regulatory failure. This House has passed several laws, including the Narcotics Control Commission Act, 2020 (Act 1019), the Food and Drugs (FDA) Act, 1996 (Act 523) and all these empower state agencies as the Ghana Police Service, Pharmacy Council among others. But what is happening is that it looks like almost all these agencies have failed us in one way or the other.

I would urge the Minister that as they are going through the administrative processes, we should also ensure that the criminal processes are followed. Because if one brings an unregistered drug into the country, it is a crime and those who commit that crime must be punished.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me listen to—

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Would you not even wait for me to mention your name? Anyway, let us hear you.

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (NPP — Mpraeso): Mr Speaker, I want to commend the Minister for bringing to the attention of the entire country this national canker.

Indeed, the opioid intake in our country is a worrying trend. Now what the youth do is that they do not only take the tramadol, but mix tramadol with energy drinks, which contributes to their “highness”. Virtually, at every assembly of young people that one sees in this country, one would realise that practice is going on. In my Constituency, sometimes, I find out from the young people how they are able to get tramadol. They tell me that now there are ghettos that sell tramadol like the likes of “weed” as we call them, are sold in ghettos, *et cetera*. People have tramadol in their bags and at all times when they need it, they apply it. This is a challenge.

I remember when I was involved in an accident and admitted at the Ridge Hospital—The intake of opioids was quite regulated. But one could easily get it. Doctors could prescribe it for a person. At a point, even me, I was nearly getting used to it. Every time the pain comes, one would ring bells, calling on their doctors to, as it were, prescribe the medicine for them.

Mr Speaker, last year, when I travelled to Germany for another medical procedure, I realised that, before opioid is prescribed for anyone, one needs to see a pain doctor. When the pain doctor prescribes for the individual, one would take the prescription to a pharmacy and would not get the medicine on the

counter of the pharmacy. So, what they do is that one has to submit their prescription to the pharmacy and is given a period of six hours to come back for their medicine. Then we asked why they did that? What we found out was that such serious drugs are not found in the pharmacies. They are regulated and controlled somewhere. So, if one’s prescription is brought, they would now send it to those centres and it gets delivered to the person. So, when that is done, then the entire ecosystem of opioids is regulated. But in our system, that is not what is happening. Every pharmacy that you go to, when one mention that one wants to purchase tramadol and pethidine, one would get it.

Mr Speaker, with all these drugs that make one “high” when one goes to our pharmacies and present to them a prescription—Such prescriptions, we do not even know the hospitals that are prescribing them and whether they are from qualified doctors or people sat in their homes and just used some coreldraw or some papers to prescribe them, we do not even know. So, we and the Hon Minister for Health ought to look at it very well. How we control such drugs in the system is very important. For me, I think we need to start punishing pharmacies that easily release these drugs to our young people. It is destroying our youth and I think it is important that we find a way of having a stricter control in the release of such drugs.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, let me come to Hon Member for Kintampo South, Ms Felicia Adjei.

Ms Felicia Adjei (NDC — Kintampo South): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by the Hon Minister for Health.

Mr Speaker, in the Seventh Parliament, I made a Statement on tramadol. I do not know how tramadol got into the system. I remember one time while on my campaign tour, I met one gentleman, who looked like he was almost dead. In fact, when I saw him, I thought the guy had passed out. So, I was told that, “Hon Member, he is fine and he would be all right.” I said that is all right. But at least I asked to take him to the hospital. They said that I should leave him alone and that he would be fine.

Mr Speaker, true to their words, when I came back in about five hours’ time, I saw the guy seated and eating. Then I asked what had happened to him at the time. They said it was as a result of his intake of tramadol which they refer to as “tramol” in the villages. Those boys who go around our communities with bicycles and even others with motorbikes—They sell all kinds of medicine. They can give one medicine for anything. Yes, they can give one medicine for even vaginal infection.

Mr Speaker, the last time I went to the United States of America (USA), I think it was around Spring, and I always have

allergies within that period—There is this medicine called Keractine D.

12.10 p.m.

Then I realised that if I bought one pack, I would have to come back to the pharmacy. So, I decided to buy two packs instead. But I was told that I could not do that and even I had to show them my identification card (ID). There are certain communities here in Ghana where Tramadol is sold over the counter; meanwhile, it is a prescribed medication. I was sick and was given Doreta; then I asked my doctor why he gave me that medication because I had been sleeping all day. That was when I realised that Doreta had Tramadol inside.

Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for Health. Honestly, it is about time we took charge and control over this Tramadol because it is destroying the youth. Just recently, I found out that Tramadol has about 250 milligrams. Mr Speaker, I know people who take this medicine; it is really destroying our youth. I heard that when anybody who is a farmer takes one, it can help them to weed about one acre. The person might be 30 years, but when you see him, it is like he is 60 years. Tramadol is destroying our boys, especially the youth.

I am glad that the Minister is here, and he made the Statement himself. In fact, we believe and trust in the Minister, and that is why he is here. Mr Speaker, this is long overdue.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity, and we thank the Minister for Health too.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Fred Asamoah, you are a pharmacist, right? Are you a pharmacist?

Dr Asamoah: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: All right

Let us hear you.

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (NPP — Offinso North): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and let us thank the maker of the Statement, the Hon Minister for Health.

Mr Speaker, each one of us will experience a certain type of pain, one way or the other, in our lives, so the need for a pain medication is critical. All of us would one day need a muscle relaxer, so the need for us to have muscle relaxers in the system is also critical. But, with what we are seeing in Ghana, this opioid crisis is about to hit us to the level that it can be likened to the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Mr Speaker, the brand name of Tapentadol is Nucynta, and it was first approved in the USA in 2008 and 2011 and has been in existence. They call it Schedule II drug because the level of addiction is even higher than Tramadol. It has been in existence, and they have been using it. So, if one looks at the Carisoprodol which is the muscle relaxer, it is one of the oldest drugs that has generic on it and has been used all this while.

The issue here is that, firstly, this Statement should have even been done in collaboration with the Minister for the Interior because it is not only the issue of the Minister for Health, but it involves export and import. That is the first issue. If we can regulate the Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) and our ports, then we would be able to find what is coming in and what is going out. This active ingredient could even come into the country as a raw material before it can be used to produce the drug. So, I believe that this Statement should have had the Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Health give us a joint strategy as to how they are going to curb this menace.

Mr Speaker, after that, we would come to what we call the local manufacturing industry. The local pharmaceutical industry is supposed to be strengthened and given enough resources, so that we can start producing these drugs within our country; then we can properly regulate it. If we are not allowing—Because they are generics; these drugs are not the original brands of the drug coming from India. Sometimes, we have countries like the USA, Europe and others coming up with these new drugs, and we tend to produce the generics.

This country has enough experts whose capacity we can build and also build the local pharmaceutical industry with enough resources, so that we can produce it here. In that case, we can have proper supervision. When we produce it here, then the issue of internal regulation becomes something FDA, the Pharmacy Council and the Medical and Dental

Council—This is because it is not only the dispenser, but we can have the pharmacy dispensing basics based on the prescription. But we have medical doctors who also tend to write these prescription drugs for people for improper use.

So, Mr Speaker, this is something that we have to refer to a Committee to have a further engagement on how we, as a country, would not go further—Because if Tramadol can cause this defect to our country, Nucynta would make it worse. So, it is critical that we have a joint Statement or direction coming from both the Minister for Health and the Minister for the Interior, and we would look at what other countries that have dealt with this opioid crisis over the years have done. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, and I believe we can do a good job.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Members, let me take the last contribution because we cannot go on and on. Let me take the last one. Are you all yielding to Dr Mark Kurt Nawaane? Let me hear you.

Dr Mark Kurt Nawaane (NDC — Nabdam): Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity, and I want to thank the Minister for Health for acting promptly to bring this Statement to Parliament. We were discussing it on our platform to ensure that we have such a Statement on the floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, today's discussion is not new as such. Over the years, there have been drugs that have come into the system to destroy our youth, medical staff, *et cetera*. There was a time when we had Pethidine, a drug that when a person gives himself or herself as an injection, even though it is a painkiller, it would also give the person the symptoms that I would soon be mentioning. After that, so many other drugs have come to pass like Toradol, and now it has come to the turn of Tramadol.

Those out there have realised that they have carried out a lot of education on Tramadol, so they now want to change it. They are bringing in new drugs that we do not know of. Everybody now knows about Tramadol because of the good education that we have carried out even though it is still being used and abused. They are bringing in new drugs like Tapentadol, Carisoprodol, *et cetera*. These appear to be new, but their effects are the same; they would cause a person depression, drowsiness, respiratory depression, that is difficulty in breathing, coma and, possibly, the person can even die. Let me stress the “die” for people to know that, today, we are talking about drugs that can kill them by just taking them. Yes, they are medicines that have been approved in some countries and, probably, might be subjected to the same process here in Ghana, but they are medicines that need to be controlled and need a person to prescribe and dispense it. They should not be sold openly. Now, they are finding their way into the country in quantities beyond what medical care needs.

I want to appeal to the FDA to look at this problem holistically in approving any drug that will come into the society. Sometimes, they are coming to do the same thing, but we already have a drug that is providing that service.

12.20 p.m.

What is the need to bring in some new drugs? We should have statistics. We should know the amount of such drugs that are prescribed yearly for people, and know that if we bring in, for example, a thousand tablets of Tramadol, that is enough for the patients in Ghana here. We should not just allow people to import any quantity, because it is Tramadol and it is used at the hospitals, they should just bring in any quantity that they want. No, that should not be the case. We should have data, and out of the data, we should restrict the importation of such drugs.

Thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, Leadership.

Hon Annoh-Dompreh.

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, let me commend my Friend for the Statement. We want to be seeing more of this from the Ministers. Earlier, he was in the House to make a Statement on cholera and meningitis, and I know he has been very busy lately. I think professionals have spoken. I have heard Dr Nawaane

speak. We have all spoken. One thing that is clear is that we have to step up our monitoring. Our monitoring mechanisms have to be stepped up, and not limited to this drug alone.

There are other similar concerns, and so we should be able to pick these signals well ahead of time. Mr Speaker, for me, that is the crux of the matter, and if we are able to do that, we would be able to have good control.

We want to encourage our Minister. I know he is passionate and very dedicated to duty. They have to push forward and make sure we step up our monitoring mechanisms. I could not have agreed more with my senior Colleague when he mentioned our borders. What we can do is to step up our borders, and also create awareness for citizens who are manning our borders to know what we are talking about.

What are these drugs or category of drugs, so that they can even identify them when they see them. If they are not carried along—So we want to, I know the Budget is now coming, but this is an emergency matter. Mr Speaker, we have to implore the Exchequer, who is also one of our own, Dr Ato Forson, and we would have to release some liquidity. I see my Minister is distressed; the Hon Akandoh is distressed. He needs liquidity. He must be given some liquidity. We are charging on him; I would say it. We are charging on him to do more; to carry all the stakeholders along. He needs the liquidity.

Mr Speaker, the Exchequer must be directed. If you would bear with me, I would plead your consequential directives. The Exchequer should be directed to release some funding. I know the previous Government left some good funding. He should be given some funding for him to hit the ground running. Mr Speaker, this is a serious matter, and I hope that the Minister for Health would be strengthened enough in all force, so that he would be strong enough to hit the ground running to ensure that we bring the situation under control.

But I must commend him, and he should forgive me. I was not trying to prevent him from presenting his Statement. It was on some other matters. He knows I would never do that to him. Mr Speaker, I thank you, and I think that we have to support him and give him all the needed support to be able to do what he has to do.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Majority Leadership?

Second Deputy Majority Whip (Mr Richard Acheampong): Mr Speaker, we would give the opportunity to Dr Sandaare.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: All right.

Dr Sandaare?

Dr Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare (NDC — Daffiama/Bussie/Issa): Mr Speaker, thank you very much and thank you, Leader, for the opportunity. Mr Speaker, a lot has been said. I also commend the Minister for Health for the very quick response in terms of coming to the House to let us know and to let Ghanaians know about this issue of public health crisis that really needs urgent concern.

Mr Speaker, what we are discussing is the tip of the iceberg. There is a lot happening out there that has not yet come to our attention. Thanks to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that has revealed this menace.

Mr Speaker, we are dealing with drugs or substances that people, especially our youth, take to feel “high”. Mr Speaker, why do they want to feel “high”, and why do they need a substance to feel “high”? Mr Speaker, that arises due to unemployment, and that is one of the issues that we have to tackle. So, the issue has to be tackled using a multidisciplinary approach. Some youth take it to feel “high” to do what they want; either to commit crimes—Mr Speaker, some take these drugs to feel “high” to have good sex. And some ladies feel good. They feel “high” on the road. Some people could meet another person on the road and shoot him; they do not just do it ordinarily. They do it because they feel “high”.

Mr Speaker, once again, I thank the Hon Minister and say that, like the Minority Chief Whip has said, we need to invest in pharmacovigilance. It is not

today that this menace has been happening, but we could not pick it up. Meaning that we need to invest and support our regulatory bodies to have adequate funding to be able to do what the law mandates them to do. That is where the problem is and I know that the Minister for Health is up to the task. When he was the Ranking Member for Health, he was pushing for adequate funding for the FDA and other bodies. So, I know His Excellency the President and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Government would work hard to strengthen FDA and other bodies to deliver.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much.

Hon Members, I think the Committees are not in place now and it is good that the Hon Minister himself came to make this Statement. Once he has sat in, listened to the comments of Members, the issues that have been raised and the advice he has been given, I think he would take everything on board and see how best to address this issue.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, if you may indulge me. I was suggesting earlier, if it finds favour with you, that this is an emergency situation and it is important we do not allow this to get out of hand. The man needs some support. Yes, the Budget Statement is coming next week. Mr Speaker, look at his body language. He has been struggling over the years. So, if we may direct the Exchequer to release some support for

him, especially on the account of stepping up on education.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, I share your view, but I think the Minister himself is here.

12.30 p.m.

This would be the Exchequer's first distribution of the public purse, so this time, let us allow the Exchequer do what is needful. I believe the Ministry of Health, as one of the important ministries, would be given what is needed. I believe so.

Yes, Hon Member for Abetifi?

Dr Bryan Acheampong (NPP — Abetifi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We have a public health emergency. Government is a continuous process and I do not think government has come to an end. It is an urgent process; we have funds in the contingency fund that can be allocated to the Minister today to start working on this very important national emergency. We do not have to wait for—Mr Speaker, if the Budget Statement is read on 10th March, 2025, we would have to pass appropriation and the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) would have to be loaded, so we are talking about the start of spending around the end of April. This is a national emergency that the Minister must act on now. So, Mr Speaker, with your direction, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Finance can look for some funds.

Mr Speaker, you remember that when United States Agency for International Development (USAID) cut funding to some health programmes in this country, His Excellency the President directed that the Minister for Finance must look for some over US\$100 million to be given to the Ministry of Health to bridge the gap in order to fund those health programmes as denied by the USAID. So, government as a continuous organisation, for the lack of a better word, must find money for the Minister for Health to address this issue now.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I believe the Minister himself did not—The power is more than yours. So, are you happy with your Colleagues? Tell us. Are you happy that your Colleagues are fighting for more resources for you?

Mr Akandoh: Mr Speaker, they are fighting for Ghana and for everybody. This is an emergency situation and I know we have a lot of constraints. It did not start today but since we have been exposed to the whole world, we must be seen to be taking some actions so that everyone would take us seriously. So, I am entirely in your hands.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Leadership, do you want to say something?

Mr Richard Acheampong: Mr Speaker, the Minister is a Cabinet

Minister so I think he is better placed to have a good discussion with the Minister for Finance, so that in the interim, they can put some numbers together to deal with the situation. Everything is under control. If a Member made the Statement, it would have been a different ball game altogether, but he is a Cabinet Minister, so liaising with the Exchequer would never be a problem.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Second Deputy Majority Whip, I agree with you; he is a Cabinet Minister and should be able to share the issue with his Colleague, the Minister for Finance.

Very well, Hon Leader, I have heard you.

So, Hon Members, we have four Statements. This is the way we are going to take the Statements: The first would be read by Hon Kojo Oppong Nkrumah; the second, Hon Ebenezer Kwaku Addo; the third would be read by Hon Davis Ansah Opoku; and the last would be read by Hon Richmond Kofi Edem Kpotosu. This is the way we would go so that Members would know how—So Hon Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, Member for Ofoase Ayirebi Constituency. You may read your Statement now.

STATEMENTS

Mainstreaming Public Private Partnerships in the Provision of Public Infrastructure and Services

Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah (NPP - Ofoase Ayirebi): Mr Speaker, Ghana in the last decade has faced a critical

infrastructure and public service deficit, heightened by fiscal constraints, rising debt levels, and limited access to international capital markets. The demand for road investments, energy, healthcare, water, and education far exceeds the Government's financial capacity to deliver at any point in time.

Traditional financing mechanisms such as domestic revenue, foreign loans, and donor grants have become increasingly difficult to mobilise. To contain the situation, most administrations resort to cutting government expenditure. This also has the risk of cutting growth and limiting job creation.

Globally many governments are growing a deepened interest in the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a viable alternative route to bridge the infrastructure and public service finance gap.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in this context refers to a contractual arrangement where the private sector assumes significant financing and project management risk and responsibility for delivering public infrastructure or services over a medium to long-term period.

Ghana's PPP journey began in the early 2000s. Until recently, there was no comprehensive legal framework governing these partnerships. In 2011, the government introduced the National PPP Policy to guide the structuring and implementation of projects. In the year 2020, Parliament passed and the

President assented to (Act 1039), which provides a structured legal framework for PPPs, outlining project selection, risk-sharing mechanisms, and oversight responsibilities.

It is fair to say that the PPP ecosystem is still in its nascent phases in Ghana. Nonetheless a limited number of projects have been developed within this ecosystem. These include parts of the Tema Motorway expansion project, the Boankra inland port project, among others.

By leveraging private sector capital, technical expertise, and innovation, PPPs can deliver essential projects more efficiently while reducing the financial burden on the government. PPPs have the added advantage of strengthening the private sector as it provides long term business opportunities.

Mr Speaker, we observe however, that the development of further PPPs is facing some challenges. I want to highlight a few and make some recommendations.

First, there is the low level of awareness and preference for PPPs within both the private and public sectors. Most private and public institutions prefer outright contracts between the government and the private sector where the private sector delivers, and the government is obliged to pay. As a result, project promoters hardly prefer PPP models. Public institutions will also rather turn down a promoter because of limited funds than structure a proposed project as a PPP project. The low

appetite for PPP projects must urgently be turned around if PPP projects are to be mainstreamed.

Second, there is limited capacity for structuring, modelling and negotiating PPP transactions. Even where there exists an appetite for a PPP structure, there is limited capacity in modelling and negotiating PPP structures within the private sector, public sector and consulting communities. There needs to be a broader scope of experts across fields who possess the capacity to structure a negative PPP.

Third, regulatory and bureaucratic bottlenecks inherent in the current PPP Act, slow down the process of negotiating and executing a PPP transaction. Anecdotal evidence suggests in some cases that it takes close to a year to even put one project together. It is imperative to simplify the processes for cutting a PPP transaction.

Fourth, the very nature of PPP projects apportions part of the financing and project management risks to the private sector partners. This high level of risk coupled with macro-economic risks of high inflation and exchange rate depreciation, often makes PPP projects extra risky for private players. It is important to explore ways to de-risk projects through instruments such as guarantees, among others.

Recommendations

Mr Speaker, there is the need to urgently mainstream PPP projects in delivering public infrastructure and

services. To unlock the full potential of PPPs, I urge Government to consider the following key reforms:

Improving the level of awareness and acceptability of PPPs: It is important for increased public and stakeholder engagement to mainstream PPPs in infrastructure and service delivery.

Improving specialised PPP capacity: Government needs to deepen investment in specialised training for government officials in PPP negotiation, risk assessment, and financial structuring. Consulting groups such as law firms, accounting firms and project management firms should also deepen capacity enhancement of specialists on PPP modelling and transaction structuring.

De-risking investments and ensuring bankability: Introduce credit enhancement mechanisms, such as government-backed guarantees, to attract investors. The Ministry of Works and Housing's lands for district houses initiative is an example of developing housing projects.

The PPP Act itself, though new, may require some immediate amendments to some sections and enforcement of others. For example, facilitating instruments such as the Project Development Facility provided in Section 77 of the PPP Act has to be made robust to reduce some of the bottlenecks in project implementation. The regulations to the PPP Act need to be passed to fill grey areas and simplify implementation of the Act. The Act also needs amendment to provide for direct negotiations as an equally weighted option to competitive bidding.

Finally, Government needs to package a pipeline of bankable PPPs on infrastructure and public services and regularly embark on roadshows to attract potential PPP Partners. This will fast-track the roll out of PPP projects.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, PPPs present a strategic solution to Ghana's infrastructure challenges, offering a pathway to sustainable development without overburdening public finances. I urge Government to pay attention to the PPP option and mainstream it in delivering infrastructure and services for the benefit of the Ghanaian people.

Thank you for the opportunity, Mr Speaker.

12.40 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon Members, since we have four Statements, we will take two from each Side, then we will come to Leadership. I hope you will bear with me. Minister, can you hold on and listen to others, so that you can be the last person.

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Emmanuel Drah (NDC — Upper West Akim): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for indulging me to make a comment on the Statement. First of all, I would want to commend the maker of the Statement, Hon Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, former Minister for Works and Housing.

Mr Speaker, I have picked a lot of importance from the Statement made as

far as PPP to enhance public infrastructural development is concerned. If it is properly done and properly monitored, it will attract a lot of investors into the country. But, Mr Speaker, I want to draw your attention to one important issue on Public-Private Partnership.

In 2017, there were some investors in Ghana to partner with the Government for the construction of public toilet facilities in the whole of Ghana, all regions. That company, named Ghana First Company Limited, went into an agreement with several contractors, not less than 500 contractors in Ghana, upon sighting a document from the then Ministry of Local Government through the MMDCEs that this project be sited in all the districts and municipal assemblies across Ghana.

Mr Speaker, it will surprise you to know that, as we speak, that project has been abandoned. A lot of contractors, from the information I gathered, suggested that some even died out of frustration because they borrowed money, huge sums of money, to finance or pre-finance the project to a certain degree of completion. Engineering assessments indicated that they have financed the project to a tune of 65 per cent awaiting payment. Several follow-ups were made and committees were formed, but to no avail. This will not make the industry attractive. If we want to attract investors into the country to partner with the Government, then when we are doing it, it should be done properly.

I will urge the current Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy, and Religious Affairs to make a follow-up on this because wherever one drives through—Mr Speaker, I am sure you have come across some of these projects in the bush, 24-seater water closets are just left like that and money has gone into it. As at the time they were doing the estimate, one particular or a single unit of this facility was over GH¢600,000. This is about seven years now, and if it has to be properly revalued, we are looking at not less than GH¢1 million per unit, and thousands of these facilities have just been left in the bush; nothing is being done about it.

So, Mr Speaker, I would want to thank the maker of the Statement again, and to also thank you for indulging me to make a contribution to this particular important matter.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Yes, let me give the opportunity to the Hon Member for Manso Nkwanta.

Mr Tweneboa Kodua Fokuo (NPP — Manso Nkwanta): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I take this opportunity to also thank the maker of the Statement, the Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi.

Mr Speaker, indeed, PPP is the way forward to financing the big needful projects that we need to give us the comfort that we deserve as a people. The country cannot shy away from the fact that we cannot or we do not have all the needed resources to finance the big projects that we need and PPP is the way.

Given that we have the necessary funds; it is not prudent to put all these funds into just a few big projects because the risk is just too much. So, it is proper and prudent to always de-risk.

Mr Speaker, at this point in time, I believe as a country, we all agree that having a railway line from, let us say, the coastline all the way to our northern border is something good to have. But ask yourself, can we really finance such a project, a railway line from the coastline to the northern border? This is going to cost us so much, but does it mean we should shy away from it and not have it in our lifetime? This is where a scheme like PPP comes to play. A PPP can help us to have such a big project done and done in time.

Mr Speaker, but the caution here is that we need to be detailed in our agreements with concessionaires when we are getting into PPP agreements. This is because what happens is that most of the times, these detailed documents are brought in by the concessionaires. They will sit with their analysts, do all the work, the modelling, the big cash flow works, and everything, and then bring it to the table. We might have limited capacity or limited time to even negotiate, so by the time one realises, they have signed to something that they did not really go through the feasibility well. So, one might sign on to this big idea of having a railway line traversing the entire country; only to realise later on that, for instance the fare that has to be paid by the indigenes will be so much that people cannot even afford to travel on such beautiful railway lines.

So, my caution is that we should always be detailed at the initial stages. Right from the onset, we should be knowledgeable about it or consult specialists to really understand it and to know what we are signing onto because the primary interest of concessionaires is to get their money out as quickly as possible. They might tell us this project will pay for itself within 20 years, but really, if we go into it, we would realise that for our people to be able to afford, maybe it should be like 30 years. So, we should be involved right from the onset and get expert advice before we sign onto anything.

But, Mr Speaker, I strongly believe and I am aligned with the maker of the Statement that PPP is the way forward. Countries across the world have benefited from PPP. Even the USA with its GDP of about US\$29 trillion still benefits from PPP. So, there are countries around the world for us to learn from and get the experience to avoid the pitfalls that can rather negate these beautiful ideas.

So, I support the maker of the Statement and I congratulate you. Thank you.

12.50 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much. Let me go to the Hon Member for Bole Bamboi?

Alhaji Yusif Sulemana (NDC — Bole Bamboi): Mr Speaker, let me thank my Brother for the very important Statement he made this morning. I would

not say much except to add that he lamented the fact that there is some lack of patronage. This is rightly so because it seems we do not appreciate the various strategies and models that we are supposed to use to roll out PPPs. For instance, in a situation where the Government has made a promise to construct a particular road; that road can be economically viable but in terms of finances, it may not be financially viable. For such projects, there is a model where we can come in with what we call the viability gap funding. When we use viability gap funding in this particular approach, we are able to reduce the period we are going to use in repaying the facility and making it more economical for the people to be able to pay. These are the strategies that we should be using.

Unfortunately, like he said, because there is no education going on, we are unable to make use of these strategies. In so many jurisdictions, it has become very clear that we cannot rely on only the Government to undertake such strategic projects and that is why I think that this Statement is very important. I think that we should not just contribute to the Statement and let go; we should have a second look at this Statement and where it needs some inter-ministerial collaboration to educate, first and foremost, our contractors, financial institutions and even the Government, it can go a long way to help us. Financial institutions and contractors should be able to talk together and come up with models that would be appropriate for us to make good use of PPP in our development efforts.

I want to thank the Hon Member once again for bringing this issue up.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon Asenso-Boakye?

Hon Members, I am being selective because of the subject matter.

Mr Francis Asenso-Boakye (NPP — Bantama): Mr Speaker, I want to thank the maker of the Statement for his very insightful thoughts on mainstreaming PPP for public infrastructure financing. Because of the finance background of the maker of the Statement, and his one-year term at the Ministry of Works and Housing makes him well placed to provide that kind of insight.

Mr Speaker, as the others have said, this is very timely because as a country, we cannot rely on budgetary allocation to meet our infrastructure gap. And I believe that is the reason my respected Colleague came up with this very important Statement.

Mr Speaker, as a former Minister for Roads and Highways and also Works and Housing, I have experienced first-hand challenges associated with financing for public infrastructure and I believe my Colleague who is yet to speak, the current Minister for Roads and Highways who then in opposition had been the foremost spokesperson on infrastructure, would agree with me that there are serious challenges when it comes to financing of public infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, thankfully, the maker of the Statement made very important

suggestions as to what we can do to address this problem but there are two critical ones I would want to dwell on: The first one is strengthening the project preparation and bankability.

Mr Speaker, one of the biggest obstacles to the implementation of the PPP project is the lack of well-packaged, well-prepared bankable projects that are attractive to investors and it is so because normally, there is what I would call weak feasibility studies, unclear risk allocation as well as financial uncertainty. That is why I want to join the maker of the Statement in calling for the strengthening of the project development facility. Once this is strengthened, we will be able to provide some funds for early funding and technical assistance so that we can have well-packaged projects that would be attractive to investors.

The other aspect is also addressing the bureaucratic delays and regulatory uncertainties. These projects that we have—I have experienced a number of occasions where projects have been delayed at the Procurement Authority level all because of the bureaucratic nature of our procurement processes. That is why I want to call for the review of the PPP Act to streamline processes and introduce clear timelines for approvals.

Mr Speaker, once this is done, we will be able to fast-track the processes leading to the adoption and implementation of PPP projects. Additionally, I would like to support the proposal by the maker of the Statement to allow for direct negotiations in cases

where competitive bidding is impractical. As long as there is the principle of value for money and transparency, sometimes we do not necessarily have to go into competitive bidding.

Mr Speaker, the PPP projects are not just an option but it is imperative if we want to address the infrastructure gap that we face in our country. On this note, I want to once again commend the maker of the Statement and I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I would now take the Minister for Roads and Highways.

Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza (NDC — Adaklu): Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important Statement made by our Colleague, the former Minister for Works and Housing. I also acknowledge the very important points made by my Colleagues who contributed earlier.

Mr Speaker, indeed, I agree with him that we need to take a second look at the Act 1039. He made very important points that I believe would be the way forward. At this moment, Act 1039 appears to be very distant from some policymakers or decision-makers regarding Public-Private Partnership projects. So I agree with him entirely when he says that we need to build a capacity of these individuals who take part in the formulation of these projects.

Mr Speaker, I also agree with my Colleague who talked about the need to

build the capacities of even the people who put the contract together. Sometimes when I read some of the contracts we put together between us and others, it is as if we are specialists in designing contracts against ourselves; because the contracts are so bad against us that we ask ourselves if Ghanaians were involved in the formulation of these contracts. So I think there is a need to build the capacities of this. However, a critical point was also made by the former Minister for Roads and Highways. Many of the projects we attempted to put on PPP lacked the necessary project preparation before we entered into those agreements making it difficult to even enforce.

1.00 p.m.

Mr Speaker, as we speak, none of the two projects mentioned by my very good Friend, the former Minister for Works and Housing, is actually a PPP project in any real sense. One, Boankra Integrated Logistics Terminal is not PPP. That project is entirely funded by the Ghana Government through Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA). On paper, this House approved a PPP agreement, but guess what: the developer never had the capacity to raise any fund. The question is, did this House carry out proper due diligence or did the Ministry which actually entered into this agreement do that? So, as we speak, whatever we see at Boankra today is 100 per cent Government funded through GPHA, so it is not a PPP. Maybe, it is time that the current Minister for Transport came back to the House to be bold and just review the agreement and

say that we still want to go ahead with the Boankra Integrated Logistics Terminal, but it is not a PPP.

Mr Speaker, second, the Accra-Tema Motorway is not a PPP. Also, this House approved a PPP agreement, but all the money that has been paid for the Tema-Motorway is from Government of Ghana (GoG). So, there is no private person involved in the Accra-Tema Motorway as of now. So, we do not have any record of implementing any successful PPP under this current regime, and I believe that, while we want, for instance, the Tema-Motorway to be completed, if GoG is the one funding it, what is the point pretending it is a PPP?

Mr Speaker, it means, so far, that the Act 1039 is still just a law in the books; we have not been able to actually have it. On daily basis, I get a minimum of six to 10 individuals and companies come to my office to enter into a PPP to do this road or the other. Everybody comes to say he or she knows somebody in China or Turkey who can fund project up to 10 billion. If one, we ask them of how they fund it, they say they would bring the money. If we ask of how we would pay them, then they begin to scratch their head simply because the issue is not about the law. The issue is about the economy of this country. Even for one to build a road, from here to Kumasi which is 250 kilometres, maybe, it would be US\$2.5 billion; there is no shortage of money to be able to do this, but how does the person recoup his money? One cannot expect somebody to put in US\$2.5 billion and get paid in 150 years' time.

Mr Speaker, the economy of the country determines the kind of PPP one can achieve. USA can get into a PPP successfully because the economy can support it. At the moment, it is not very feasible for us to enter into PPP and deal with the major infrastructure projects that is why the point made by the former Minister for Roads and Highways is very critical. If we prepare the project very well, we would get to know whether it is bankable because, out of those details, it would work out quite clearly, but if we just rush and say we want to do, let us say, Boankra without the processes being fully explored, what we have is a situation where the House actually takes a decision that we enter into a PPP and, at the end of the day, we keep funding it.

Mr Speaker, this is a very critical situation because, today, I cannot advise Government or I will not even have the opportunity to advise Government to do any PPP on road project because I need to back it with something. One of the ways I believe we can do this is the reintroduction of the toll. Why the reintroduction of the toll? We should be able to have a tolling regime that is fair, and that the accruals are safe. A situation where tolls are collected and then one gets to the toll booth after queuing for 45 minutes, and the person at the toll booth says the machine is broken down and he attempts to give him or her a receipt that he tears with the hand. Sometimes, there is not even any receipt and the person is paying GHC1.

Mr Speaker, that cannot accrue to a fund that the Government can leverage on to embark on a PPP on road project. I

will be coming to the House with a full disclosure on exactly how we want to implement the toll and make it an open-competitive bidding, so the best possible solution is achieved, at least on the sector of the Road Ministry. So, I think this is a very important Statement made by our Colleague, Mr Oppong Nkrumah, and we should take it seriously and work on it.

But just to make the clarification that, for now, the two projects he cited as examples—Accra-Tema Motorway, in effect, is not a PPP project because it is only paid for by Government, and Boankra Integrated Logistics Terminal is also fully funded by GPHA on behalf of Government, so no private sector player has showed up with a dollar, and that is very worrying for the law that we have passed.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, I thought—Anyway, I am giving one more—Let me go to Dr Mahama. You would not speak more than five minutes. Then I would give it to Deputy Minister-designate for Works and Housing.

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (NPP — Walewale): Mr Speaker thank you very much. I also want to join in commending the maker of the Statement, the respected Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi, Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah.

Mr Speaker, the issue on the table and before this House has more to do with development financing than, if you like, project planning and implementation. I say this because when one looks at development financing, basically, one of the ways Government finance developments is through debt financing, and debt financing go either in the form of monetary debt financing or infrastructure debt financing. PPP is one of the means through which we fund development by way of infrastructure debt financing.

Mr Speaker, the issue of PPP and its importance has been highlighted by the maker of the Statement. The Hon Member has specified some of the myths, and inherent challenges in the implementation or in the adoption of PPP arrangements in development financing and awareness creation, but we realised that, almost every single sector of the economy: transportation, housing, if we like, education, we can really leverage on Public-Private Partnership to ensure development. The former Vice President, Alhaji Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, came out with an initiative that we were hoping that we could implement should the Ghanaian people had given us the opportunity, especially in the area of education. Why would it have to take Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) to go into the construction of hostels? It does not make economic sense where Government will have to take major infrastructure development like the building of hostels and we have to rely on limited funding from GETFund to support educational facilities.

Mr Speaker, PPP is one of the viable means to ensuring that government is able to bridge the development gap in the area of infrastructure. The importance of infrastructure is well established. We will enhance economic development through the provision of infrastructure. But I want to highlight one important thing that the maker of the Statement has stated. How do we make sure that PPP works? That is the focus, and I think that we should, as a House, agree that PPP is a viable tool to bridging infrastructure deficit or infrastructure gap, but how do we ensure that it works? I think that apart from the law, the Act that was passed by this House, we should look at the projects submitted by the Minister for Finance to this House in the Budget. Which of them can we offload to PPP, and if the House so decide that, in the interest of limited budgetary allocation, let us offload ABCD projects to PPP, then, clearly, every Member of the House will have known that ABCD projects are offloaded to be implemented not through the mainstream Government funding but through PPP.

Mr Speaker, there is one thing we do not know. The benefit of PPP to the private investor is even far more than the classical contracting regime where you will do your project and they will pay you and you go. The importance of PPP is such that it enhances investment longevity. In other words, one can draw revenue over 10 to 50 years, but in the case of the classical contracting, one embarks on the project, executes it, takes the money and goes. Value for money and returns on investment is not even—

It does not make investment sense to do that.

1.10 p.m.

A private person would rather be more interested in partaking in PPP than in the classical contracting regime where one embarks on a project, they pay him, he takes his moneys and go. It is very important we do that.

Mr Speaker, lastly, I would want to also suggest that apart from the budgetary offloading of projects, we could include in every brochure produced by every Ministry, Agency, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), opportunities for PPP. So, that if I go to the Ministry of the Interior and I see ABCD in the brochure somewhere, I would be able to tell that when I call this investor, they would be able to participate with Government in providing ABCD.

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

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Now let us hear the Deputy Minister-designate for Works, Housing and Water Resources.

Mrs Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui (NDC — Awutu Senya West): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the maker of the Statement who has just come out from a space where he knows that PPPs would work

or would have worked very well for him there.

Mr Speaker, one thing I have observed about the PPPs is capacity-building. Now, there are a lot of consultants who are in the private sector. I would suggest that the Ghana Institute of Engineering, Project Management professionals, Ghana Institute of Surveyors, and Ghana Institute of Architects undergo this kind of capacity-building for PPPs. It is very important because sometimes, if one looks at the consultancy space, there is a huge percentage of them in the private sector. But in the public sector, they have the benefit of training in PPPs in IP3 and other institutions that the private sector may not have because of sponsorship and all that.

I would suggest that they should just try and build local capacity. There are people over here in the public sector who have those skills, which can be transferable to the private sector. Because the strength of a PPP is very important that the parties are very good in negotiation. So, that is where legal skills also come to play. I cannot underscore or underestimate the value of skills in being able to build up in these areas. For example, in the water sector, perhaps maybe somebody has some funding and wants to build a water system, naturally they would like that it must be paid for somehow. One builds it, operates it and transfers it. But during that period, one wants to be sure that they would be able to get their returns plus profitability, which should be able to maintain the plants. Some of these will also relate to tariff-building and all that

and I think that it is a skill on its own. But it is very important that we build the capacity.

Mr Speaker, in Malaysia or so, the Office of the President has a PPP office literally attached to it and that shows the importance of PPPs and the value that the government attaches to it. In the USA, like a Colleague said, majority of the roads that have been tolled are often under PPPs. One cannot have a certain quantum of infrastructure without having a certain segment of them under the PPPs regime.

Moving forward, for our Government, as we intend to reset, we also intend to look at some of these arrangements, but in a more practical and pragmatic way. But it is very important to build the capacity of institutions, and personnel who would be negotiating, executing, managing and facilitating. At the end of the day, because one would want to transfer a project completed, still well-maintained with a certain lifespan after it has been completed and used. It is very important that those skills, from beginning to end, are learned appropriately in this country.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much,

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Let me now come to the Leadership.

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, let me start on a note of congratulating our Colleague for setting up a very important conversation. It is my prayer that we would push this matter to its logical conclusion.

Mr Speaker, many Members who have spoken to this matter have tried to put matters in context, especially the Minister for Road and Highways who spoke to it, citing very good examples. The former Minister for Roads and Highways also did the same. From where I sit, I may be wrong, but I get this impression that political parties and governments are formed on certain ideologies; centre-right, centre left. More often than not, we tend to be guided overly by these concepts that form political parties who eventually take over the reign of governance of a country.

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) is known to be a capitalist party. The former President John Agyekum Kufuor took over the reign of this government. He is on record to have implemented social policies. Arguably, one of the best social policies implemented happened in the time of former President Kufuor. Then one looks at our Colleagues in the NDC, who are also credited as socialists. Hence, if one looks at the policies that they implement, more often than not, may not necessarily reflect their beliefs. Political parties are beginning to shift away from their main fulcrum of concept that formed these parties.

The PPP, more often than not, are known to be a concept that capitalist States normally buy into and it has been the trend. Now, with the changes and the vagaries of geopolitics as is happening now, even the socialists themselves are beginning to turn to that concept. I think we need to change our mindset. There is a fundamental need for a mindset

change. Yes, unless we do that, this whole concept of PPP, would still be new to us. We talked about it nicely, passed the Act, and thought that we have arrived. The discussions are held, then it goes to the Ministry for Finance, then unto the shelves and gets dusty there. People are afraid. The fear is still there. There is a lot of fear associated with it.

I think that our Colleague has set the tone. It is something we need as a Parliament. We need to upgrade further, probably get a Committee to work on the fine details. Why are we unable to enforce the Act that we passed? Why is finance more often than not—In both administrations, we are all guilty—They drag their feet. The Ministers who are very much aware—When we speak to them one-on-one on concepts of PPP, they are very much aware about it. They love it. When it comes to implementation, then they drag their feet. Why is that so? For me, that is a mystery. Until we resolve that, we would not be able to make the headway that we all need. Of course, we all know government cannot fund all projects by itself. We need a partnership from the public. This is unknown and we speak about it as theories.

How do we demystify this theory and get people to understand that, indeed, this is the approach?

My respected Minister for Roads and Highways, whom I know is very much into such matters is not too comfortable. As he said, with the projects that were mentioned, out there, they are known as a PPP projects. But indeed, when he got

to the Ministry, he realised it was something that had to be funded by the Government. So, what is it? Whom are we deceiving? In one breath, we brandish PPP, and in another breath, we come lagging. I want to go away from the theory. Let us get practical. This is a matter—I thought that this should have come from their Side. But well, this is a House and once it is coming from our Side, it is the Parliament of Ghana and that is fine.

1.20 p.m.

We want to see a certain road map and that road map, Mr Speaker, must be a departure from what we are known for and used to. The PPP theories, where do they end? They do not go anywhere. I hope we would be able to redefine our approach in terms of the prosecution of the concept of PPP. Thankfully, we are very good—Hon Gizella Tetteh-Agbotui, I know, is very good; that is one of her areas. She has been a consultant to GETFund for a long time. I have been chasing a few payments for her. She is good in that area. My good Friend, the Hon Minister for Roads and Highways, is also very good.

Mr Speaker, if we wish to come to some logical conclusion on this matter, some work has to be done, and if we can continue and get the Committee to do a thorough work on this PPP concept, I think we would be able to make headway. Fact be told, Mr Speaker, we do not need to reinvent the wheel. There are other jurisdictions like Indonesia for instance—As at independence, Ghana's per capita income was the same as

Indonesia. Indonesia is doing so well on the concept of PPP. I am told India is equally doing so well. So, we may have to pick up some lessons from this and appropriate it into our unique circumstance as a country then we can get the role clear and prosecute the matter. Let me commend Hon Kojo Oppong Nkrumah; he is a proud easterner—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is that where you are going?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I am only commending my fellow easterner for bringing up such an important matter and also setting up an important discussion. Mr Speaker, let us not wish this matter away; let us continue with it. The discussion should go on and I am sure that we would come to some logical conclusion and define a workable path.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Majority Leadership?

Second Deputy Majority Whip (Mr Richard Acheampong): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. Let me thank the maker of the Statement, Hon Kojo Oppong Nkrumah. He was a Member of the Finance Committee when we passed the PPP Act, 2020 (Act 1039). He played an instrumental role in passing that Bill into an Act. So, coming back to inform the House that there are some defects in the law, so, he is seeking the consent of all Members so that we can do

some amendments to make the law work, is in order.

Mr Speaker, every investor wants to maximise his profit. I remember we met with the Ministry of Finance and they walked us through the processes. We could see about 25 projects identified, but they would come the next day to tell us that the project is not bankable. How can a person recoup his or her investment if he or she puts, let us say, US\$1 billion into this road project or infrastructure? So, he is looking back maybe, 10 or 25 years to get back his money.

Another leg is that he or she would come back to the state for state guarantee. It becomes a contingent liability on the state, a failure to make due the repayment. These are some of the issues we need to address. If we do proper assessment and we get to know that a contractor does not have the capacity to execute the project, by public education, a person can put two or three contractors together to form a consortium so that they can execute the project. Like the example the Minister for Roads and Highways just gave, on paper, we have entered into an agreement that this project is a PPP-funded project, but in reality, the person does not have the capacity to raise the resource. The state would end up raising the scarce resources to commence the project and sometimes, to complete the project. So, why do they invite someone who does not have the capacity in the first place? Who did the project appraisal? Who did the assessment? And who executed that contract? When we walk on the street, we see that a project is a PPP

arrangement for 25 years, the investor would recoup his investment, but at the end of the day, he does not have the capacity to undertake the project and the burden would still come to the state.

Mr Speaker, there are some projects located in some areas of the country but no investor would also venture into those areas. Let us get it right and get the projects in order so that we allow the private investors to venture into these areas, so that the state would also take up other low hanging projects. This is so that the people would benefit and would give the private sector the needed education. We would create an enabling environment for them so that they can also venture into those areas for the good of all of us.

Let me again thank the maker of the Statement and I am looking forward to him coming either by a Private Member's Bill to amend the Act, or the state would take over. We would work on it in whichever way we think would help us because we understand the law and we passed it. So, we can easily do the amendment to fit our current situation. This is so that the private sector would also take advantage of it for the good of all of us.

Thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I think we all agree that this Statement is an important one, going forward, as a nation—So, I am happy that almost all the relevant ministries have commented on it. The Minister for Roads and

Highways has commented; the Deputy Minister-designate for Works and Housing has also commented; and other Members who are well placed have also commented. The Deputy Minister-designate for Lands and Natural Resources has also commented on it. So, we hope that this particular Statement would lead us somewhere.

So, Hon Member for Asutifi North, Hon Ebenezer Kwaku Addo, are you in the Chamber? Yes, take the floor.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, if you may, I am happy you agreed with Colleagues on the importance of the Statement. Mr Speaker, I want to pray you, as the Parliament of the Republic, probably, we should also initiate something on our own. As to how we go about it, Mr Speaker, I would be guided by your wisdom. Mr Speaker, I heard you say you hope, yes, you can hope but can we set something in motion?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip, we have an Act and per the Statement, the Act needs to be revisited. So, once the Act is there, I think the Minister for Works and Housing, the Deputy Minister-Designate for Works and Housing, and the Minister for Roads and Highways are here, so, they can initiate it at the Cabinet level. Once the Act is there, I would not encourage that a Private Member's Bill is taken to look into it. So, once the relevant Ministers are here, please take note of it and see how best we can quickly address the loopholes so that the Act can be meaningful to all of us.
1.30 p.m.

On that note, I would invite the Member for Asutifi North to take the floor and read his Statement.

STATEMENT

Recent Killings by the Police and Private Security Detail Stationed at Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, Kenyasi

Mr Ebenezer Kwaku Addo (NDC — Asutifi North): Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to present this Statement on the above subject matter, that is, the recent killings by the police and private security detail stationed at Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, Ahafo Kenyasi.

Mr Speaker, residents of Asutifi North have, over the past three years, experienced brutal attacks in the hands of security personnel stationed at Newmont Ghana Gold Limited. Some of these attacks have resulted in major injuries and deaths of affected victims. I am, therefore, making this Statement and I pray that Mr Speaker would direct the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to appear before the House and provide same with updates on the various incidents so far.

Mr Speaker, on 14th November, 2022, the police security detail stationed to protect the concession of the mining company pursued three young men on a tricycle and opened fire on them, leading to the death of one, and in the process, injuring the others. The IGP sent a delegation to Kenyasi for investigations

to be conducted, however, the outcome of the said investigation is yet to be known.

Mr Speaker, on 25th August, 2024, the police and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited security operatives chased a 25-year-old young man spotted in their concession, leading to the young man falling into a dam created by Newmont and dying as a result. In fact, it took my effort to ensure the family of the deceased obtained the body of their relative for a befitting burial just this January, 2025.

Mr Speaker, on 8th January, 2025, the police and Newmont security detail chased some group of young men, apprehended three of them, and opened fire on them, killing them instantly. The IGP went there and indicated that thorough investigation would be conducted into the incident. However, results of the investigation is yet to be known. Just this Sunday, 23rd February, 2025, the private security detail at Newmont chased and apprehended a young man, stabbed him, and took him to a private hospital, but the young man was pronounced dead upon arrival.

Mr Speaker, my engagement with the District Security Council and information from the District Police Commander of Asutifi North show that the police detail at the Newmont site are directly deployed from the Police Headquarters in Accra, and are part of the Counter-Terrorism Unit. These deployments from Accra do not report to the District Police Commander and

therefore, carry out instructions from the headquarters.

Mr Speaker, my experience in the operations of Newmont Ahafo Mines makes me appreciate the level of tolerance and sense of responsibility that the company has towards its mining communities. They do not compromise on safety and expect each life to be protected in their course of operations. Drivers are even advised to drive with caution and not cause harm to even animals. So why is the police and private security of Newmont killing innocent young men who go out in search of food for their families? The reason has always been that these young men encroached the concession of Newmont illegally. Mr Speaker, should gold be more valued than the lives of our youth?

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I pray that you refer this matter to an appropriate Committee and direct that the IGP comes to this House to brief us on why deployments to the Newmont site is directly made from Accra and are not subject to the orders of the District Police Command in the District they operate within. And equally, update the House on the various investigations he has undertaken for the necessary actions to be taken.

Before I end, Mr Speaker, I want to extend my condolences to the family of all the deceased young men in the Asutifi North Constituency who have been affected by these brutalities.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for indulging me.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon Members, we are going to take two contributions from each Side with this one too.

Hon Member for Bimbilla?

Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul (NPP — Bimbilla): Mr Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, I do not intend to comment, but I intend to make a plea to you that since the Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Defence would be coming to this House to brief us on the Bawku issue, you should add this matter to it. If you open up this matter for comment, without us knowing exactly what happened that these young men died, this House may not like the outcome of what people would say.

So, I would say that if it is possible, and if it meets your good intention, let us add this very matter that happened at Newmont to the briefing that the Minister for the Interior would be coming to brief this House on. That is what I would say. Otherwise, the things that may come out, maybe it is too early in the day for us to say some of the things that we want to say.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Yes, Hon Minister for Education?

Minister for Education (Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I commend Hon Ebenezer Kwaku Addo for bringing the

matter affecting his constituents to the floor of Parliament. That is how it should be. He is exercising his mandate in a representative capacity as an elected Member of Parliament for Asutifi North, on a matter of concern to him.

Mr Speaker, as rightly advised by Hon Nitiwul, Member of Parliament for Bimbilla, ministerial responsibility and accountability rests with the Hon Minister for the Interior. But probably, what he should add is to state that the Minister for the Interior should be accompanied by the Inspector General of Police, which is natural. In any case, when the Minister is coming, he probably would come with him.

Mr Speaker, even though you are not opening this up for debate, just to caution the Ghana Police Service— Mr Speaker, you yourself, are a good lawyer, when the Constitution says “uphold the dignity of men” and it uses the word “inviolable”, it is not for the police to shoot as and when they please, no. Even shooting is regulated by law, regulated by conduct, and regulated by practice. This trigger-happy portion of them who get trigger-happy—Mr Speaker, Parliament must support him in expressing concerns about the way they treat suspects. The Constitution says, uphold their dignity. When they get somebody, they start slapping; that is not dignity. That is not honour of dignity. Even the way they treat *trotro* drivers, that is not what the Constitution expects them to do.

Mr Speaker, yes, this matter, maybe even as Hon Nitiwul observed, you may want this to go to the Committee of the

Whole because mining, particularly in that community, means a lot for them in terms of opportunities, employment, among others. There may be more to it.

But Mr Speaker, significant to his submission is that why is deployment done from Accra—Regional Police Command, District Police Command? What has happened to the hierarchy of the police command system? That is part of his concern.

Mr Speaker, let me commend him, but when we have the opportunity as a House, we must recommend compensation be paid to the families of the innocent lives that were lost.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Members, I think the Hon Member for Tano North is also within that enclave, and I believe he is also in one way or the other—Are you also part of the enclave?

Hon Gideon Boako, you may also contribute, but please be guided because we have already been advised not to even open up. So, please, I am just giving you the opportunity to comment, but do not lead us astray.

Dr Gideon Boako (NPP — Tano North): Mr Speaker, I thank you for recognising that the Hon Member who made the Statement shares certain commonalities with me in terms of developments in our constituencies, what pertains with regard to Newmont operations, the activities of miners, and

people who are seeking to unlawfully attack some of these companies.

Mr Speaker, in that view, my comment is more fortified by the poetic version of the post-1946 post-war confessional prose by the German Lutheran, Martin Niemöller, which serves more or less as a precautionary reminder of the dangers of inaction in the face of injustice.

1.40 p.m.

Mr Speaker the German Lutheran said and I quote;

“First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a communist.

Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out, ...

Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me.”

Mr Speaker, the Statement made by the Hon Member is so important because within the Ahafo region, and I have senior Brothers here; Hon Collins Dauda and Hon Eric Opoku are our seniors. This small Region of six constituencies and six municipal and district assemblies is more or less becoming characterised by a lot of security threats, and Newmont currently has operated in the Ahafo South area which falls within the constituency of the Hon Member; and they are in my Constituency, Ahafo North.

Mr Speaker, it is so shocking that within the short period that Newmont has been in the Tano North Constituency, we have begun to see the influx of so many people coming into the Constituency with the aim to mine and not work with Newmont, but carve their own mining operations outside what is legitimately allowed, and these have posed a lot of security threats. Recently, a gentleman was seen on *TikTok* issuing threats to Newmont and trying to more or less indicate that if they are not allowed to enter certain concessions, they are going to take the law into their own hands.

Mr Speaker, I wish to put on record here that there are a lot of intense security threats in the Region and it is important that we call on the IGP and the Minister for the Interior to come to this House to speak to the issues. I would be so glad if indeed, I can go back to the constituency knowing very well that there is no threat to mining sites, and there is no threat of security on the people in the Tano North Constituency.

Mr Speaker, with that said, I think I will wait to see the time that your good Leadership will allow the Minister for the Interior and the IGP to come to this House to speak to the security threats that are around the mining operations in the entire Ahafo Region, particularly, the Tano North Constituency.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Peter Lanchene Toobu? Please hold on, Hon Collins Dauda, you are the senior most in

the Chamber, so once you get up, I have to give you the reverence.

Alhaji Collins Dauda (NDC — Asutifi South): Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to add my voice to the comments made so far, regarding the Statement made by Hon Ebenezer Kwaku Addo.

Mr Speaker, I also appreciate the point made by Hon Nitiwul, that this matter be referred to the Minister for the Interior, so it would be part of the envelope that he would be bringing to this House. But Mr Speaker, the Minister for the Interior and the IGP, will address this House mainly on matters relating to security. But I am looking at another dimension of the matter, and that dimension has to do with the relationship between the mining company and the people in the catchment area where they mine.

Mr Speaker, before any mining company is granted a mining licence, a public forum is organised to explain how the mining company intends to mine in the area, and some promises and commitments are made during such meetings. In the Ahafo area, there was the commitment to provide jobs and improve the welfare of the people of Ahafo when the mine is established. Even though the mining company continues to mine since the day it was granted a licence to operate in the area, I am not sure that the people in the catchment area are all happy about the activities of the mining company. The maker of the Statement, Hon Ebenezer Kwaku Addo, indicated in the Statement that if one is a driver of Newmont Ahafo

and on his way, and he comes across a snail or a snake, he dares not run over the snake or the snail.

One is required as a driver to wait until the snail crosses, or one picks the snail, puts it into the bush before one crosses. I do not see why this same thing that is offered to the animal cannot be offered to a human being. That is why I have a problem. But I guess when the Minister for the Interior appears, we would get a second opportunity to look at it. I will entreat the mining company that as much as we appreciate what they do for us in terms of social responsibility, I wish to state that the people of Ahafo will not appreciate them. If they will give us funds to construct school buildings, courthouses, police stations, but would ask the security forces to open guns on us and kill the people of Ahafo, we will not be happy.

They can do anything for us; we will not appreciate them if they continue to do what they are doing or what they have been doing.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first incident that has happened there. Several incidents have happened, and I wish to indicate that as soon as such an incident happens—with this recent one, the victims involved were from Acherensua, which is a community in my Constituency. When we were organising the burial for the victims, I was told or contacted by the Chief Director of the Ahafo Region that the company wanted to fund the funeral of the victims. They employ security people who open arms on innocent citizens, they die, and they

turn around to tell opinion leaders that they want to fund or take the bills of their burial?

Clearly, that was an insult, but as I said, we will wait until when the Minister for the Interior comes. But to end with a caution that Newmont must improve upon the relationship they have with the people of Ahafo, particularly the catchment area. I wish to further emphasise that the people of Ahafo will never be happy with them. They can provide everything in terms of infrastructure for us, but if they continue to ask their security people to do what they are doing, taking the lives of our people, they should rather stop building the roads, the schools and stop providing the social amenities they provide for the people.

1.50 p.m.

We cherish the lives of our people more than what they do in terms of the social responsibility they provide for us.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, Hon Peter Lanchene Toobu, I called you earlier, so let me take you; then, I will come to Leadership.

Supt Rtd Peter Lanchene Toobu (NDC — Wa West): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to make some few contributions to the Statement ably delivered by my younger Brother, the MP for Asutifi North, Hon Ebenezer Kweku Addo. Let me, first of

all, convey my condolences to the bereaved families. Losing one life is one too many when it has to do with mining.

Mr Speaker, this is not just purely a security issue, this is an issue that has to do with mining that has gone bad and creating issues of insecurity. As much as I agree with my elder Brother who just spoke, and as much as I also agree with Hon Haruna Iddrisu, and Hon Nitiwul, it is important for us to put the Minister for the Interior, and the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Hon Armah-Kofi Buah, to come together to brief this House. Because if the mining rules are right, and the regulation between the mines and the community is right, I am sure that this mistrust will not come up, and these insecurities will not be felt.

Mr Speaker, as a matter of education, we all need to understand that when one finds somebody holding a gun, that gun has rules and regulations. That gun is not supposed to be used to hunt human beings. At any point in time one presses the trigger, there must be justifications. If one is a police officer, one can only be justified in pressing the trigger if their own life or the lives of other people are at stake, and any other thing that one thinks of doing has been done and is not possible, and the only thing one can do as a last resort is to press that trigger. This is because if one presses the trigger and the bullet goes out and somebody dies, it does not matter what happens later. That life that is lost is forever.

Mr Speaker, at any point in time that a security officer is supposed to use force, there are four principles: He or she must

first of all think about proportionality; is that force he would use proportional to the level of resistance he or she is receiving? He or she needs to answer the second question of legality. Will he or she be covered by any law if he or she uses this extreme force? Why will he or she use a sledge hammer to kill a fly?

Mr Speaker, any officer in uniform, whether private or official, should ask himself or herself the third question. Can he or she account for the force that he or she is using? Will he or she be right in accounting for it or will he or she pay a price for it? And the last point is, is it necessary at all for him or her to shoot? Is it necessary at all for him or her to slap somebody? Is it necessary at all for him or her to use a truncheon? Is it necessary?

Mr Speaker, all these are basic questions that are used in training people before they are allowed to carry a weapon. Mr Speaker, one uses a weapon to recapture an armed criminal who is escaping from justice. If one finds a fugitive who is not a threat to their own life, one does not have to shoot. But we cannot blame anybody about whatever happened in Asutifi North until the Minister for the Interior comes to brief this House. I am very particular about getting a brief information from the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources. If they can both come together, that would be fine.

Mr Speaker, probably, there is a relationship between the Newmont Ghana Gold Limited and the communities that we have to re-establish, so that when there is peace from that angle, we will

not find somebody carrying a weapon and shooting. Why would we deploy people from Accra to take charge of a mine far away from Accra and combine and control is not controlled? What is the relationship between the forces on the ground and the command on the ground? We need to understand that and all these things, probably, when the Minister for the Interior appears before this House and gives a detailed briefing, we will be able to appreciate that.

Mr Speaker, it is important for us to take note that—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Supt Rtd Toobu: I want to conclude.

Mr Speaker, we cannot speak so much openly on matters of this nature, and I thank my Brother, the former Hon Defence Minister, for giving that caveat. We agree that when it is in-House, we can speak much about it, but what is important is that Ghanaians lives matter and we must stop killing Ghanaians. We also have to protect our mines and protect businesses, so that together, we can build a very beautiful Ghana as we plan to reset the nation.

I am grateful.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Leadership?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Speaker, let me show solidarity, and sympathise with my Colleague who presented the Statement.

Mr Speaker, earlier, Hon Haruna Iddrisu had referenced the Constitution: Article 15 on the protection of life; 16, on liberties; Article 12, on fundamental rights. Mr Speaker, even to arrest or to detain or restrict citizens, the Constitution defines clearly how these matters should be dealt with, and our Colleagues spoke to the reoccurrence of these incidents. I recall, last week there about, a similar matter was raised and the Majority Leader walked in; Apparently, he had not been briefed on your earlier referral, inviting the Minister for Defence and the Minister for the Interior to come to a Closed Sitting.

Mr Speaker, this is not a matter we should belabour, and I would humbly suggest that we probably offload same matter on the earlier directives you gave. So that we kill, as it were, two birds with a stone, except to say that, as of today, the Majority Chief Whip has still not been able to give us directives or some directions as to when the Minister for Defence and Minister for the Interior will come meet us at Closed Sitting because—

Mr Speaker, if you recall, that was your directive. So, we need to show solidarity with our Colleagues, the Hon Boako and our Colleague who spoke and they are only doing their constitutional mandates as representatives of the people. They are raising these matters to the attention of duty bearers to ensure we bring some sanity into these constituencies. We have to act as soon as possible because, Mr Speaker, the possibility of it degenerating is high, especially where people who are

perceived as culprits are working about in a very close society; they walking about showing off without the authority or the law catching up with them has the potential of inciting others to resort to other violent exchanges which may not be too good for our country.

Ghana is a peaceful country. We had a peaceful election; we have a Government in place. When these things happen, there are incidents of people taking advantage. These things will happen, and it may not be coming from people from the Government side. Bad individuals and bad people could take advantage of the situation and make Government look bad. I want to join earlier speakers—And, Mr Speaker, we will go by also your earlier directives that we have a Closed Sitting; this is a security-sensitive matter. It cannot be opened at Plenary; then we can have a Closed Sitting and get some briefing and see the way out.

Mr speaker, I thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Majority Leadership?

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want to join Colleagues who appreciate the fact that many of these matters are sensitive matters, so I will be very cautious in commenting about these matters and say that, in the mining situation, we need to have the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) step up in terms of their work because, before any mining license or concession is given or any development of a mine is approved, a very extensive consultation is undertaken in the communities.

Mr Speaker, communities are educated and the buy-in of the communities must be obtained even before certain approvals are given for development to take place, so when those are not done or they are done but they are not done properly or that the genuine consent of the communities are not obtained, one will end up with these situations where some members of the community will resist. They will oppose, and sometimes, the way that they go about it could end up being violent.

Also, it is important that we pay attention to the local content policies of Government.

2.00 p.m.

The local content policies aim at involving the communities and Ghanaians as part of the implementation of the mining project. They acquire an interest because they are the subcontractors, and when they are the subcontractors, it creates an opening for their fellow countrymen to also participate. So, one would have a mine and generally, almost every subcontractor is a Ghanaian; most senior level operatives are Ghanaians and it enables some level of local ownership of the mine. But when we do not implement the local content policies well—And I do not mean the local

content where the mining activity is in the Western Region and we go and bring some other contractor and even though he might be Ghanaian, he has no connection with the local community and the workers that he might bring also has nothing to do with the local community. Then locals become aliens in their territory where a major economic opportunity is taking place that should be empowering them and not disempowering them.

Mr Speaker, if we push and ensure the implementation of the local content policies that this Parliament has enacted that seek to involve communities in the implementation of major mining activities, we might see greater ownership of mines by our local people and I think when they own it, they would not fight it as a project.

Mr Speaker, lastly, when we go to a district where there is a big mining operation such as Newmont, AngloGold Ashanti and Goldfields, *et cetera*, outside the borders of the mines, we would see absolute chaos and an absolute lack of organisation; no law and order or planning. One would cross the gate of the mine and enter into the mining community and it is a paradise with beautiful golf courses, finely constructed houses with roads probably paved. They are living in a paradise and just across the road the indigenes and locals are living in absolute squalor.

Mr Speaker, it naturally breeds envy and hatred among the young people. A few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to have a conversation with the CEOs of one of the big mines and I was asking

them how they manage to go to sleep soundly when they live in such paradise and just across the street their fellow countrymen are living in such absolute squalor. Yet, within the mine, they have the resources to help them develop the basic infrastructure in their communities where they can allow their equipment outside to fix the roads, to ensure they have the basic infrastructure where the young people would have playgrounds. They could just use the equipment to clear the fields and erect poles to provide some lighting. Why do they think that such people would not hate them so intensely that when there is an opportunity, they would physically attack them?

Mr Speaker, mining companies when they go there must own the communities because many of them are destined to be there for decades; there are some mines that would be there for 20 to 40 years. So, they should take the community immediately around the mines as part of their community and share their resources with them and see whether they would have such hatred for the mining companies to the point that they would start attacking them. Even when others who migrate from far away come and pose a threat to the mines, the indigenes would collaborate with the mining companies to defend the mine because the mine is their asset and their livelihood depends on it. Let us look at the issues of peace and security from that angle and not simply a question of police and military participation.

Mr Speaker, the towns and villages around mines tend to be the most

expensive because their lands are taken away, agriculture declines and food naturally becomes expensive because there is an influx of people who are attracted to the mine; there is an immediate population increase and that increases the cost of living. Rent becomes expensive, food becomes expensive, and all services become expensive. This brings a certain toll on the lives of the indigenes of the place. Let us begin to look at how when a mine is sited, the mining company would invest in major commercial and agricultural enterprises not far away from the mines because their presence there attracts the population. The communities need food and sustainably, they need to produce the food close by so once the mining companies are investing in all the heavy equipment to do mining, they should invest in large-scale commercial farms not far away to produce food for the people they have attracted in order to maintain the cost of food and livelihood in the community.

Mr Speaker, I have commenced discussion with some of the leaders of the mining companies for us to have some conference around these ideas and themes to see how communities around mines can share the resources that are in the mines. Within the mines, there are finance officers who know how to go to the international financial market to raise hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in the mines. Yet, the assemblies that are there do not even have the capacity to raise municipal bonds and they need those municipal bonds to fix toilets, schools and water systems in the community.

Mr Speaker, we have mining companies that would go and buy Articulated Dump Truck (ADT); the most sophisticated and biggest mining equipment and yet, just a few bulldozers to fix the roads in the district are not there. All these resources are in the mines. How would we as a Government build on these resources for the development of the towns and communities immediately surrounding the mines? If we did that, things would not escalate to the point where there would be a question of shooting and killing.

So, I would agree with our Colleagues that the Ministers should come and brief us but because these are sensitive matters, the briefings would be at the Committee of the Whole. We should commit to keeping the information within us and not use it in our politics in the communities in a way that would undermine the effort to ensure law and order. Because nobody would know where one would be anywhere in the country. One can think that it is Bibiani. On a day that there would be an outbreak of conflict, one may have gone to Bibiani to attend a schoolmate's funeral and get caught up in the violence. Security anywhere in the world is security that is meant for all of us so we must all collectively support the Ministers to do their work and ensure that there is law and order.

On that note, Mr Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, our comments have been

measured and as the recommendation has come across, we would add this to the Minister for the Interior's—We are not certain as to when he is actually coming to the House.

Leader of the House, at least, ferry this one as well to him so that he can come to the House by Friday to brief us on the Walewale issue and this one as well. As we said, when he comes, we will have a Close Sitting with him. I so direct that the Leader would relay it to the Minister for the Interior— In fact, someone was also discussing the issue with mining, therefore, we should add up the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, but for that one I would urge that we would file a Question to the Minister to answer.

2.10 p.m.

This one is security matters and we want to bill the Minister for the Interior specifically, to come and handle that. I so direct.

It is now the turn for Mr Davis Ansah Opoku to give his Statement.

STATEMENT

The Unlawful Ministerial Interference in the Enforcement Act of the National Communications Authority (NCA)

Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (NPP — Mpraeso): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to bring to the attention of this House, the unlawful Ministerial

interference in the enforcement actions of the National Communication Authority.

I rise today with deep concern regarding the recent directive issued by the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology, and Innovations in a media advisory dated 18th February, 2025. This directive unlawfully instructs the National Communications Authority (NCA) to take enforcement action against certain broadcasting stations allegedly operating without valid authorisations. Such action represents an unacceptable overreach of Executive authority, undermining institutional independence, press freedom, and rule of law.

Mr Speaker, the Minister does not possess the legal authority to direct the NCA's regulatory or enforcement actions. Section 3(1) of the National Communications Authority Act, 2008 (Act 769) states:

“Except as otherwise provided in this Act, the Authority shall not be subject to direction or control of any person or authority in performing its functions.”

Similarly, the Electronic Communications Act, 2008 (Act 775) reinforces independence. Mr Speaker, I specifically refer this House to Section 2(4) which states that, broadcasting services require frequency authorisations by the NCA. Section 9(1) talks about spectrum usage requiring NCA authorisations. Section 58(1) states that, the NCA controls, plans, administers, and licenses the radio frequencies spectrum for telecommunication.

The Minister's directive to close certain broadcasting stations directly contravenes these provisions. If allowed to remain in effect, it could set a dangerous precedent for interference in independent institutions, potentially extending beyond the NCA.

Mr Speaker, the Minister's role is confined to policy direction, not enforcement. Section 97(1) of Act 775 states:

"The Minister may, on the advice of the Authority by legislative instrument, make Regulations generally to give effect to the provisions of this Act."

Section 41 of Act 775 similarly limits the Minister's powers to policy directives, not operational decisions. The directive issued in the media advisory oversteps legal boundaries and constitutes Executive overreach. Due process was ignored. Even if the affected stations encounter licensing issues, the law specifies a procedure for addressing such matters. Section 9 of Act 775 requires formal notification of the alleged breach. It also requires a reasonable time frame which must be provided for rectification and the same Act says that the station must be allowed to appeal before enforcement action must be taken. Section 13 of Act 775 further stipulates that the frequency authorisations may be revoked following due process. There is no evidence that these legal procedures were observed prior to the Minister's directive. If enforcement action proceeds without adherence to due process, this directive would constitute an abuse of Executive

power and direct threat to fair regulatory practices.

Mr Speaker, press freedom is also under threat. This directive is not merely regulatory overreach—it constitutes an assault on press freedom. Article 21(1)(a) of the 1992 Constitution assures freedom of expression, including media freedom. Government-directed shut-downs without due process convey a chilling message to journalists and media organisations that their operations are subject to political approval. A free press is vital for democratic accountability, and this unconstitutional interference must not be tolerated.

Mr Speaker, this House must act swiftly to prevent any further abuse of power. I have submitted a Half-Hour Motion summoning the Minister to appear before Parliament to explain this unlawful directive. Furthermore, I urge Parliament to: One, summon the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology, and Innovation to clarify his unlawful directive to the NCA. Two, instruct the NCA to suspend all enforcement actions related to the Minister's directive until due process is confirmed. Three, charge the Committees on Information and Communications and, Constitutional and Legal Affairs with investigating whether the Minister acted unilaterally or under political influence.

Mr Speaker, this represents a test of our commitment to democracy. This issue transcends partisan politics and centres on the safeguarding of democracy. We must act decisively to

uphold the rule of law and prevent any further Executive overreach. Ghana's democracy is at stake.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to bring this matter to your attention.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Hon Members, we are going to have two comments from each Side but before then, please indulge me for five minutes suspension.

2:16 p.m. — *Sitting suspended.*

2:20 p.m. — *Sitting resumed.*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much for your indulgence. Yes, Hon Member for Tema Central?

Mr Charles Forson (NPP — Tema Central): Mr Speaker, thank you, and I must commend the maker of the Statement.

Mr Speaker, it is imperative to demystify the mantra of “push and pull” once there is a change in government. Governance is a continuous process. We must also be made aware that communication technology is the key to developing every nation. The synergic effect of what technology brings in must not be downplayed. We just heard Apple has injected over half a trillion into the economy of the USA, and by that reducing unemployment by 20,000. Yet, our Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations has found it

necessary to rather shut down radio stations, instead of coming up with a framework as to how communication would help the nation, Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I humbly submit. Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Is there nobody from the Majority Side? Yes, Hon Alhassan Tampuli Sulemana?

Mr Alhassan Tampuli Sulemana (NPP — Gushegu): Mr Speaker, I thank you very much. I would like to contribute to the Statement ably delivered by my very good Friend, Mr Davis Ansah Opoku, Member of Parliament for the people of Mpraeso, on the unlawful ministerial interference in the enforcement actions of the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations and the NCA.

Mr Speaker, the maker of the Statement makes reference to the Act that established the NCA. Like many Acts, there is a place for ministerial authority and supervision. Now, what those Acts do, including this particular Act of the NCA, is to give powers to the Minister to make policy directives and interventions to enhance the work of the NCA. No room is created for the Minister to interfere in operational matters as far as the NCA Act is concerned. What we are seeing today, is an overzealous Minister who has moved beyond the policy direction by the Minister and the Ministry and is now

dabbling in palpable frivolities. The Minister has decided to move beyond the policy directions to now direct that directors of the NCA proceed on leave. Mr Speaker, he is also requesting for the *curriculum vitae* (CVs) of directors and staff of the NCA.

Now, if Ministers go beyond the policy directives and indulge the staff, then the NCA has to pack bag and baggage and go and sit at the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations, so that the Minister would run the Ministry, NCA, Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC), National Information Technology Agency (NITA), and all the other agencies. This is not properly situated within the meaning of what we call constitutionalism; government according to predetermined rules. The rules are there. The Minister has set his own rules and is running amok.

The Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations must be called to order and immediately so. This is a Minister who, when he was on the Minority Side of the aisle and some radio stations were directed to be closed down by the NCA and not the Minister—The Minister, who was then the Deputy Ranking Member for the Committee on Communications—I was a Member of the Committee on Communications when we summoned the Minister and requested him to direct NCA. All manner of things took place in this House, in this hallowed Chamber and at the Committee level, as well as the press conferences that the Minister held.

How can that same person transmogrify himself from a defender now to the adversary?

Mr Speaker, did we reset to do things worse than they happened before? What was the essence of reset? We said we should research in order to do things right. Now, where does the Minister derive his powers to ask the radio stations to be closed down, when the powers that he has under the NCA Act does not come anywhere close to what he is doing? What the Minister is doing is to probably, later on, request that every promotion that would take place at NCA be brought to him first to authorise. Even salaries of staff would have to be sent to the Minister for him to pay.

Mr Speaker, it looks like we have an Idi Amin in the making. This House will not watch for an Idi Amin to emerge at the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations. We are sending a signal to the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations to relax. The exuberance is getting too much—

Mr Ayariga — *rose* —

Some Hon Members: Ooh Leader!

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hold on. Yes, Majority Leader, let us hear you?

Mr Mahama Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I like Idi Amin; he is a nice guy—*[Laughter]*—But where Idi Amin is painted as a dictator and then a Minister of state is likened him, it becomes an

inappropriate referral to the Minister. So, I beg the Hon Member, he can make his point without alleging that an Idi Amin is emerging at the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations. I am just happy that he admitted that this is not the first time a radio station has been shut down and that even when the New Patriotic Party (NPP) was in office, radio stations were being shut down. But, please, do not refer to the Minister as Idi Amin.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member?

Mr A. T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, the Leader of the House is the one who is putting words in my mouth; I never mentioned a dictator. I said Idi Amin probably because I am making reference to their body size—*[Laughter]*—So, there could be similarities between the two of them. I have not said he is a dictator.

Mr Speaker—

Dr M. M. Ibrahim — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, hold on again. Yes, Hon Minister for Environment, Science and Technology?

Dr Murtala Muhammed Ibrahim (NDC — Tamale Central): Mr Speaker, thank you.

I think that he ought to apologise to our Colleague who is not here. To body shame him is completely unacceptable. How would he take it if we said he is as

short as Nana Akufo-Addo? — *[Laughter]*—No. How would he feel? — *[Uproar]*—No. You see, someone just rose. That is the reason he should not body shame him, and I think that he should do the needful—*[Interruption]*—Well, he is not here— **[An Hon Member: Apologise]**—I will. Hold on. If he feels offended because I described him to be as short as Nana Akufo-Addo, I sincerely apologise and withdraw. So, would he do the needful? I expect him to do the needful—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Murtala Mohammed Ibrahim?

Dr Ibrahim: Thank you, Mr Speaker—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Please, hold on. Hon Ibrahim, please, get up and take off that reference.

Dr Ibrahim: I have withdrawn, and he asked me whether I would do the needful and I said that if he feels offended, I withdraw entirely. So, I expect him to do same.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Hon Tampuli, please, just do away with the body shaming bit. I do not think—It will be offensive

Mr A. T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, very often, we find some matters that are presented to the public in what we would describe as “sheep in wolf’s skin”.

2.30 p.m.

Mr Speaker, in this particular case, the actions of the Minister come in as a wolf, as it is—[*Uproar*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members?

Mr A. T. Sulemana: It is an act that is an affront to the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, why? Hon Member for Kwesimintsim, why? What is that?

Mr A. T. Sulemana: It is an action that contaminates. Mr Speaker, what the Minister did—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon A. T. Sulemana, are you listening to me? Please withdraw that statement.

Mr A. T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, I concede. [**Some Hon Members:** Withdraw]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, why?

Mr A. T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, I offer my concession.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Hon Member, why? I have asked him to withdraw that statement. Hon A. T. Sulemana, please withdraw that statement effectively.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, we did not hear the word “withdraw”. [**Some Hon Members:** Eheh!] He has used some strange word called “concession” but we do not know anything about concession. He has been asked to withdraw so, he will withdraw.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Hon A. T. Sulemana, please withdraw. Let us have—

Mr A.T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, the Hon Majority Leader, sometime in 2007 —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I am asking you to withdraw, please.

Mr A. T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, I will do the needful. I just want to lay a foundation. Allow! Mr Speaker, sometime in 2007 the Hon Majority Leader was brought to the Law School—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Please! Please!

Mr A. T. Sulemana: By his good friend, Prof Raymond Atuguba to teach me. Incidentally, he taught me law-making process that day so, even if I would not withdraw it, but for the fact that he has intervened, I would withdraw because of him not because of the other Hon Members on that Side.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: He has withdrawn.

Mr A. T. Sulemana: Mr Speaker, the action of the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology

and Innovations, if allowed to stand, is going to set a bad precedent. One day, when the tables turn, which would happen in 2028, they are likely to face the wrath of another Minister from outside who is likely to do the same thing. So, this act, Mr Speaker, violates and contaminates the Constitutions, the NCA Act and other extent laws of the republic of Ghana and I endorse the recommendations that have been made by the Member of Parliament for Mpraeso.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker. Yes, Hon Prof Ayensu-Danquah?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, what is it?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I think this is not fair. The Hon Member for Kwesimintsim gets up and shouts. Mr Speaker, our Side tries to comport ourselves. I think some caution should be given and the Majority Leader should also talk to his people. When somebody from our Side gets up to speak, they get up and shout. It is not right. That was the reason I got up to catch your attention. The Majority Leader should speak to his Side. When somebody from our Side is speaking, they cannot get up and shout. A typical example is my respected colleague from Kwesimintsim. He has done it on two occasions today. That is not parliamentary.

I respect him so he should not do that. Mr Speaker, take particular attention to

that. Hon A. T. Sulemana was asked to withdraw and he has withdrawn. The Hon Member for Kwesimintsim should not just get up and shout. It is not right.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Professor Ayensu-Danquah, please take the floor.

Prof Grace Ayensu-Danquah (NDC — Essikadu-Ketan): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to make this statement. Mr Speaker, the issue being discussed is body shaming and I think that the Hon Member must withdraw and apologise to the Hon Minister.

Mr Speaker, as women, we go through body shaming a lot and it is a big gender issue that needs to be addressed. If the Hon Minister had an issue with the Hon Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation, I truly believe that he could have addressed it without talking about his body habitus.

People have mental health issues precisely from body shaming. And I truly believe that he needs to apologise and withdraw. Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Prof Ayensu-Danquah, that issue—all right. If you have concluded, that is fine. Let me give it to the Hon Member for Manhyia South.

Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah (NPP — Manhyia South): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity for my voice to count on this occasion. I commend my brother for bringing this matter very respectfully to the attention

of Parliament. Mr Speaker, when a Minister of State whose business, among others, should be creating jobs for the people of this country, is giving directives that is not only going to let Ghanaians lose jobs, but government lose revenue through taxation, then Mr Speaker, the Minister is committing an economic sabotage. He is committing an economic sabotage that businesses set up by Ghanaians to undertake communication business, he is saying, should be closed down.

It is important that we look at the fact that the Minister, when he was sworn into office in less than a month, is yet to create any job for the people of this country apart from jobs that he is revoking. Mr Speaker, we should take serious interest in this matter, especially because the infraction is against an Act which was passed by this House. The Minister is usurping an Act, very respectfully, that this House vested power in the National Communications Authority. The Minister is usurping it. Mr Speaker, on all fronts, the Minister's action is against the interest of this country and is worthy of interrogation by this House.

Mr Speaker, the attention of this House has been drawn to the fact that the Minister's power, under the National Communications Authority, is only limited to policy, very respectfully. It is not for nothing that, in creating the institution of NCA, we deliberately limited it that way. Mr Speaker, it was also because we are mindful of Article 23 and 296 of the Constitution. Mr Speaker,

this action is bad and should not be encouraged. We risk setting a bad precedent that the Minister is instructing that businesses be closed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well, let me listen to the Leader of the House.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, of all those who have spoken, I have not heard anybody read the official communication of the Minister closing any particular radio station.

Mr Second Deputy Leader: Leader, I will come to you so that—

Mr Ayariga: No, it is important. When a person misinforms and misleads the House, I do not have to wait until it is my turn to correct the records. None of them has laid in this House the communication directing the suspension of operations of these radio stations. That is the Minister's statement. What does the statement say, Mr Speaker?

2.40 p.m.

The Statement says that the directive to shut down the station is issued in accordance with section 13(1)(e) of the Electronic Communications Act, which empowers the National Communications Authority to suspend or revoke frequency authorisations in the interest of national security, public order, or the public interest. So, who suspended it? Who revoked it? It is the National Communications Authority (NCA), and that was done based on a report of the Regional Security Council (REGSEC)—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Leader, respectfully, I would not like to cut you short, but, please, I would give you the opportunity as Leaders to conclude.

So let me—Hon Member for Manhyia South, if you can conclude—

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, it is even worse; the elucidation given on this matter by the distinguished Majority Leader even makes this matter worse. Because, Mr Speaker, there is an admission that that power belongs to the NCA. Nevertheless, there is a directive compelling the NCA to take a certain path.

Mr Speaker, when we all know that the power of the Minister as regards the NCA is limited to policy. It is without a doubt that that is not the policy or are we saying that the policy going forward would be to shut down radio stations? Are we saying that the policy going forward would be for the Minister to be directing NCA to shut down radio stations? Is that going to be their policy? They should let us know.

Mr Speaker, in concluding—*[Interruption]*—In bringing my submission to an end, most of these things are happening because there are still no Committees in place. If there were to be a Committee in place that would have an oversight responsibility over the National Communications Authority—It appears that the delay in constituting Committees in this House is to enable the Majority and the ruling Government to evade accountability.

Mr Speaker, left to me alone, my position would be that even the vetting processes should be halted until Committees, very respectfully, are constituted. It appears that the delay in constituting Committees is enabling, facilitating, and giving the Majority and the ruling Government the energy to commit illegalities, just as the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations is doing.

Mr Speaker, very respectfully, it is very critical that this matter is interrogated and the illegality resolved, especially since it concerns the breach of a law that this House has passed.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I would come to Leadership. Let me start with the Minority Leader then—Or do you want to start, Minority Chief Whip?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, I think, as a House, we need to interrogate this matter properly. The Hon Davis Ansah Opoku has brought a very important subject matter. We all know the essence of checks and balances and what Article 23 of the 1992 Constitution talks about: the need for administrative bodies to respect laws in our country.

Mr Speaker, I thought that the Minister, in his early days, would focus on the promise and the manifesto of the NDC. Definitely, the Ministry for

Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations should be looking at the cost of data. Certainly, they should be looking at mobile network connectivity. Certainly, they should be looking at their digital economy and innovation, e-governance services. These are the narratives that should be engaging his attention.

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that, out of the blue, the closure of radio stations has become a matter of importance to the Minister. It is quite unfortunate. What are we seeking to do? The maker of the Statement is basically bringing the matter to the fore for us to engage these matters. If, indeed, he is within the law, of course, then let us speak to the fact. As far as we understand and the fact before us, we think the Minister has gone in excess of his powers. That is all we are saying. He is gone beyond the excess of his powers.

Mr Speaker, if you would contain me, let me just read portions of the release. It is captioned, “Enforcement action against unauthorised broadcasting operations.”

“...among others, the Hon Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovation has directed the acting Director-General of the National Communication Authority...”

In what capacity is he directing the NCA?

“...to take immediate enforcement action against the following entities for operating without valid...”

Mr Speaker, the relevant word there is “directing”. As to whether the Minister has those powers, that is what we are seeking to interrogate. We are an arm of government and, interestingly, the Minister is a Member of this House. Earlier speakers have referenced his comment when similar actions were taken in times past and the position he took. And his position now smacks of hypocrisy because this is the crux of the matter. The Minister must come to this House; he was approved by this House; he was given the mandate by this House, and he must report to this House. We need to hear from him as to where he is getting those powers to direct the NCA to take such draconian actions.

As a House, we must come together and invite the Minister to appear and come and do a proper representation before the House and for us to interrogate these actions. We are building a democracy, and it is important we learn from incidents that have happened before. And I hear people say that, during our time, we closed down *Radio Gold*. These are baseless defence. I hear people say we closed down radio stations, and you closed down *Radio Gold*. Even if it is the case, must we repeat the mistakes? We must not do that. We must move ahead as a nation. In the context of their resetting—They said they were going to reset Ghana and Ghanaians have given them the mandate.

Mr Speaker, without adding more, I think that the Minister should focus on what can change the narrative: e-governance, reduction of cost of data, building network connectivity.

Ghanaians are so worried about network connectivity, and this is what should be attracting his attention. I think we would employ your consequential directives that, as soon as possible, the Hon Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovation should be programmed.

Mr Speaker, it should not go beyond Friday. He must come before this House, tell us the reasoning behind his action and show this House where he is drawing his powers by directing the NCA to take such illegal actions against certain entities. Without adding more, I think anybody who wants to comment—And earlier, the Majority Leader tried to catch your attention, but he was reading something else. He should quote. This is a copy, and I am ready to tender this. I want to tender it. He should quote from the release from the Minister, and then we could make a proper debate on this subject matter.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I want to table this. The Majority Leader should have a copy. I want to table it, and let it be a reference.

2.50 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me give the floor to the Majority Leader to also comment on the Statement but

before the Majority Leader takes the floor, let me acknowledge in the Public Gallery, some visitors from the United States, Air War College Students — *[Hear! Hear!]*—

As I said, they are from the United States of America and I believe they are in the country to study some issues relating to Ghana. You are welcome to Ghana and you are welcome to the Chamber of the Legislature. We are in the process of making Statements which would enhance our governance. Once again, you are welcome.

[Students of Air War College were acknowledged.]

Yes, Hon Majority Leader, you may take the floor now.

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think this is a very simple matter and I am surprised that the very valuable time of this House is spent discussing a matter that is so simple and straightforward.

Mr Speaker, this is the basis of the Statement and the comments that have been made so far. I ask for your kind permission to read it and I am happy that we have people who understand English listening.

Mr Speaker, listen carefully. It says;

“The Hon Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations has directed the Acting Director General of the National

Communications Authority (NCA) to take immediate enforcement action against the following entities for operating without valid frequency authorisations.”

Mr Speaker, what I hear from the other Side is not that it is the case that they had license, they are also not denying that they operated without frequency authorisation. I have not heard them deny the whole day that they operated without appropriate frequency authorisation.

Mr Speaker, I remember that one of the oaths we swore in this House is to uphold and enforce the laws of this country. Even if the Minister had not directed, I expected you as Hon Members of Parliament to direct any officer who is supervising radio stations that are operating without frequency authorisation. We, as patriotic citizens, as lawmakers, have made a law that to operate a radio station, there must be frequency authorisation. We made the law and somebody is operating a radio station without frequency authorisation and the Minister dutifully directs that the law should be enforced. He comes to this House to say that we should not close early and have lunch because of that matter.

Mr Speaker, they are asking how did the Minister know. They do not know that on this Side, we appointed people who are so competent that nothing would pass by them —[*Hear! Hear!*]—

Mr Speaker, the Minister is so competent that they did not think he

would know that those stations were operating without frequency authorisations and when the Minister gets to know within 10 days of sitting in that office, they are surprised. They are mesmerised. We have the men and the women who are capable of doing the job. Within 10 days, they got to know and he is enforcing the law so I do not understand why there are complaining. The Minister is simply directing that they enforce the law. What do you expect the Minister to do? Please, I am surprised that the Minister would be made the subject of castigation, of unnecessary attacks, trying to question his competence when all he is saying in this communication is that the Director General should enforce the law because these stations are operating without frequency authorisation.

Mr Speaker, how is that an offence? Why is that a matter for which the Minister should be summoned to this House to come and answer? Are they trying to intimidate ministers and prevent them from doing their jobs? Is that what they are trying to do? The Minister would shut down the stations today, tomorrow he would shut them down, the day after tomorrow he would shut them down and if they want, they should go for authorisation—[*Hear! Hear!*]—He would shut them down. They should go for frequency authorisation. If they have valid frequency authorisation, no one would shut them down. Why did the Minister not shut down *Joy FM*? Why did he not shut down *Citi FM*? Why did he not shut down all the other stations that are operating in town today? Because they

have valid frequency authorisations. If he had come to this House to say that a station has valid frequency authorisation and has been shut down, then they have a case.

Mr Speaker, I think there is no basis for inviting the Minister to come to this House. He has done no wrong and as the Statement indicates, they had no frequency authorisation so they were operating illegally and it is the duty of the Minister to enforce the law and he has done that.

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

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, please we agreed to take two from each Side and the Leaders have spoken. I do not see why we should go back to Members.

So, we would take the last Statement and after that, we have a Closed Sitting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs who has come to discuss some issues with us.

So, we would take the last Statement from Mr Richmond Kofi Edem Kpotosu. Is he in the House? Yes, Hon Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, if you may, the Statement delivered by Hon Davis Opoku Ansah, we had invited you—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: No, I am not yielding to that. Let us put a Question to him to come and answer

some of the irregularities that you think may have occurred. So, let us come by way of Question please.

So, Hon Edem Kpotosu—That is the last Statement for the day even though I think it should have been read yesterday.

STATEMENT

Commemorative Statement on the 59th Anniversary of the Overthrow of Dr Kwame Nkrumah

Mr Richmond Kofi Edem Kpotosu (NDC — Ho Central): Mr Speaker, thank you for indulging me. I rise today on behalf of Ghanaians to solemnly acknowledge a dark and shameful moment in our nation's history; The 59th anniversary of the overthrow of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah on 24th February, 1966.

This day marks not just the removal of Ghana's first President but a deliberate and orchestrated attack on the sovereignty, vision and progress of our country.

3.00 p.m.

Dr Kwame Nkrumah was not just a Ghanaian leader; he was an African visionary, and a global statesman, and a relentless advocate, for the independence and sovereignty of the African continent, from the yoke of colonialism.

His leadership saw Ghana take its place as the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain independence, inspiring a wave of liberation movements across the

continent. His vision for economic independence, the creation of state industries, and the dream of a United States of Africa, threatened powerful global interests, leading to external interference in our affairs.

Mr Speaker, today we recall with clarity, the role of foreign forces particularly, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the United States of America as contained in the famous book *The Great Deception* in orchestrating the *coup* that toppled Dr Nkrumah's Government. Declassified documents and history confirmed what many suspected all along that his removal was not merely an internal matter but a well calculated act of imperial subversion. This betrayal was not just against Dr Nkrumah, but against the aspirations of all Ghanaians and Africans.

The consequences of that *coup* were and are dire. It derailed Ghana's industrial and infrastructural progress, reversed our trajectory towards economic self-reliance and left us vulnerable to cycles of instability and dependency.

To this day, we continue to grapple with the remnant of that intervention in our economic structures, governance and national psyching.

Mr Speaker, as we reflect on this anniversary, let us do so with renewed determination and as representatives of the people, we owe it a duty to lead our people to reclaim the Dr Nkrumah project. Let this serve as a lesson on the need for vigilance, unity and

commitment to Ghana's sovereignty. We must learn from history and guard against external and internal forces that seek to divide us and derail our national aspirations.

Dr Nkrumah's dream of a prosperous self-reliant Ghana and a united Africa remains relevant today. It is our duty, as representatives of the people to champion policies that reflect his ideals of economic independence, Pan-African unity, and social justice. We must invest in industrialisation, protect our national resources, and prioritise the well-being of our people above all else.

On this day, let us recommit ourselves to Ghana's progress, drawing inspiration from Osagyefo's unwavering dedication to the African cause. Though he was overthrown, his vision remains unshaken and it is upon us to ensure that his legacy lives on.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I will like to request that through a Motion from this House and consistent with popular demands from the Ghanaian people, that each of the 16 Regions should have monuments, preferably libraries named after Dr Kwame Nkrumah as and when funds are available.

May we always remember, and may we always strive, to build the Ghana that Nkrumah dreamed of.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I will take two comments from each Side, as usual. Let me begin from this Side, and I will come here. Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko (NPP — Effia): Thank you very much Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by my Hon Friend on the other Side.

Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, we all know, played an important role in the independence of this country and so, any day that we ought to celebrate the legacy of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, ordinarily is very fine and we all support. But on this day, the Statement read is in relation to the overthrow of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah. We all understand from history, right from 1947, when Dr Nkrumah came to Ghana, or the then Gold Coast, to support the independence struggle, his contribution to the independence struggle, which later culminated into his ascension as the President of Ghana. So, from the time that Dr Nkrumah became President, ordinarily the Constitution, the 1960 Constitution of Ghana, gave His Excellency Dr Kwame Nkrumah a mandate to rule for a four-year term. However, certain actions of the Government at the time, including trying to pass or make Ghana a one-party state, were some of the concerns that led people in that time to object and fight against those decisions of His Excellency Dr Kwame Nkrumah.

For me, it is important that we learn lessons from history. When we move forward or we fast forward to our current 1992 Constitution and its dispensation, we can clearly see that the lessons of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah—We as a political class or elite in this country ought to be careful, because our actions

and inactions have the tendency to call on others who have problems with the politics that we do to also take certain actions that can affect the democracy that we all look forward to. So, in as much as it is very sad to see an overthrow of a constitutionally elected government, it is very important that in our dispensation, we protect the democracy with the actions that we take as a government.

Some of these actions include protecting the fundamental human rights of our citizenry. Issues we just discussed such as press freedom and broadcasting freedom are all avenues that allow the Ghanaian populace to be able to vent or air their views in this country, and so any attempt to curtail some of these things have the tendency of obstructing or bringing people who have hotheads to take certain decisions against our democracy.

So, on this day, I want to join hands with my Colleague in commending him for reminding this Chamber of the overthrow of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, but I believe that we all in this Parliament have to protect the democracy that we have established under the Fourth Constitutional Republic of this country.

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

Minister for Environment, Science and Technology (Dr Murtala Mohammed Ibrahim): Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this Statement ably made by our Colleague. The Statement is a reminder of criminality in our body

politics. It is a reminder of a criminal and unjustifiable overthrow of a democratically elected President of the Republic of Ghana. People can never be absolutely satisfied by any leader. People were not satisfied by certain decisions of the immediate past Government, and of course, even with this Government, people may not be satisfied with certain decisions taken, but that is not a licence to torpedo, and truncate the democratic processes.

What is grievous about the criminal overthrow of Dr Nkrumah is the fact that people allowed people outside this country to influence that and there are ample evidences conclusively stating without any doubt that the overthrow of Dr Nkrumah was not planned in Ghana. It was planned by the people who felt we needed to still come to them, bowl in hand, so that they can dictate to us how this country is governed. Dr Nkrumah said he would not do that. It is shocking that there have been subtle attempts to justify the criminal act perpetrated by certain people in this country by using certain policy interventions of Nkrumah. Show me one single thing Nkrumah did without passing through the due process of law.

3.10 p.m.

Even the Preventive Detention Act (PDA), which, indeed, has been repudiated and condemned by many of our friends, cannot question the legality of that action. It was an action that was taken by the Parliament of Ghana. And it is amazing that this attempt to find justification for an illegality for me is

laughable, to say the least. Do not judge me by my height, judge me by the depth from which I began and you would understand the justification in taking certain actions Nkrumah took.

There were certain cities in this country that Nkrumah, as the sitting President, could not travel to. There was a woman in Kumasi whom they used a pestle to pound her private part, and do we know her crime? Her crime was that she was only a member of the Convention People's Party (CPP). Interestingly, people who are now condemning a one-party state, hailed another leader who had passed a one-party state. Félix Houphouët-Boigny was their hero; yet, they are condemning a one-party state. I think that the hypocrisy in our body politics ought to be avoided. Nkrumah is the founder, the only founder of the state, Ghana. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, I have heard people who have even argued that the Big Six—Perhaps they do not appreciate the day that the so-called Big Six came into being. It was after the 1948 riot when Ghanaian ex-servicemen, who fought a war that had nothing to do with them and promises were made to them by the so-called colonial masters, were making demands that a military leader of the British, called Major Emery, instructed those ex-servicemen to be gunned down. That occasioned a riot; at that time, Nkrumah was at Saltpond.

When people were rounded up and interrogated, they said they did not organise all the so-called fights and that it was Nkrumah who organised it. At the

time when the 1948 riot happened, Nkrumah was not even in attire. They said they never participated in the 1948 riot. Yet, they want us to call them “Big Six”. So, Mr Speaker, there is nothing like Big Six. There was only one, and that one is Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, it is important—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you. You had five minutes.

Dr Ibrahim: Let me conclude.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Conclude

Dr Ibrahim: Mr Speaker, what is hurtful for some of us who are in academia, and I speak as a political scientist, is that Nkrumah has gotten people to write an African encyclopedia. On the campus of a university where I have acquired three degrees, I shamefully want to state that that university brought all the writings of Nkrumah, including the African encyclopedia, which was virtually completed, to be burnt under the supervision of lecturers of that university. I feel ashamed that I had three degrees from that university.

The history of this country can never be rewritten. Nkrumah is the founder; he will remain the founder and, unfortunately, we have named state edifices after criminals who, indeed, participated in the overthrow of the first democratically elected government in this country. Nkrumah has no equal; he

will remain the founder; he will remain the hero, no matter the death— [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, to conclude, it is not for nothing that Nkrumah was voted as African of the Millennium among all the heroes in Africa; respect the name of Nkrumah. [*Hear! Hear!*]

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you. It appears when we mention Kwame Nkrumah, it is like—Yes, Hon Tampuli?

Mr Alhassan Tampuli Suleman (NPP — Gushegu): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise to contribute to the Statement made to commemorate the anniversary of the overthrow of the first Prime Minister, and first President of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, that overthrow, as well as subsequent overthrows, have brought blots on our nation, Ghana. It has been said and repeated, that the more things change, the more they remain the same. Things that happened after the overthrow of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, that we condemned, same things happened after the overthrow of Professor K. A. Busia, and more recently, the overthrow of the Hilla Limann Administration.

Mr Speaker, the flogging of women and putting things, excuse me to say, in their private parts continued after the 1981 overthrow of the Hilla Limann Administration. Very close by here, Makola women were stripped naked. Justice Park in Koforidua—Mr Speaker,

there is a litany of such examples across the country. The immediate speaker who made the commentary made reference to the fact that all the things that happened during the Kwame Nkrumah Administration were made pursuant to laws that were passed. Be that as it may, it is also true that every action that the nazi, Adolf Hitler, took was made pursuant to law. So, it is not about whether it is pursuant to law or absence of law. It is about the morality of the law.

Mr Speaker, when one makes reference to law, everything that we spoke about this morning is made pursuant to a certain law. Yes, indeed, we are not happy about military overthrows. There are excesses even in our democratic experiments, but it does not call for military interventions. We have had military interventions across the West African sub-region and one would have thought that in this day and age, military interventions would be things of the past. But we still have coupists taking the reins of power in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Gabon, and so on and so forth.

So, Mr Speaker, when we celebrate and commemorate days like this, it also reminds us that we must all roundly condemn coupists who are still in our midst even till date, and not give them room to operate. We do not have to give them the kind of recognition that we are giving them now, unless, of course, we are saying that what happened in 1966 is something that we are very proud of and happy about.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to make some short comments on the Statement.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: First-timers, let me remind you that tomorrow is the Backbenchers' Day, so rest for tomorrow. I would give you enough time to do whatever you want to do.

Let me invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs to comment.

Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa (NDC — North Tongu): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to this solemn Statement.

The 24th February, 1966 coup d'état was the first coup d'état recorded in Ghana, and, indeed, that is the coup that triggered a chain reaction of coups on the African continent. After the 24th February, 1966 coup, the jury returned that Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah is the best leader that this continent has ever seen, and, indeed, ranks very highly as one of the best leaders the whole world has ever known.

Mr Speaker, the maker of the Statement, my good Friend, the Hon MP for Ho, Hon Edem Kpotosu, has to be commended as a first-term Member of Parliament for commemorating this day. Indeed, I would like to encourage him to institutionalise this commemoration, so that every year we shall be reminded.

3.20 p.m.

All of us ought to remember that 24th February, 1966 is Ghana's day of shame. It marks the darkest hour in the history of our country. By 24th February, 1966, what Dr Kwame Nkrumah had achieved in education, energy and in infrastructure, indeed, the analysis has been done, that a lot of the first world countries today, they were nowhere near Ghana in 1966. By the time Kwame Nkrumah commissioned our harbours, many European countries did not have the kind of harbour we had. By the time he commissioned the Tema Motorway, many in cosmopolitan Europe were waiting to have a motorway of that nature. By the time the Akosombo Dam was commissioned, there were many countries in Europe, in the Americas, and in Africa, who had absolutely no idea, they could not even conceptualise the vision, the technology that went into creating the world's biggest man-made lake at the time. The Akosombo Dam was not created by Nkrumah to power just Ghana, but it was to create electricity for the sub-region and indeed, to industrialise and create jobs for our people. So, this is a man who—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Minister, conclude for us.

Mr Ablakwa: This is a man who was ahead of his peers, and he has been vindicated. When the international community was asked by the BBC at the beginning of the new millennium to vote for the man of the millennium, he competed with the likes of Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere, Sam Nujoma,

Fidel Castro, and yet Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah emerged as the African of the millennium.

Mr Speaker, on this day, we should be reminded that those who staged that coup d'état with their Western collaborators, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) declassified files, had settled this matter beyond doubt, that that was not only a local orchestration. They had international support from those who thought that if they allowed Kwame Nkrumah to continue the way he was going, indeed, when you read the *Ambassador* at that time, Mahoney, as I conclude, in his own words, said that the kind of enlightenment that Kwame Nkrumah was bringing to the continent and liberating the minds of the African people, will serve as a threat to the progress of their continent. And that is why they collaborated with fifth columnists to mastermind that coup d'etat. But history has taught us that one can overthrow a government, one can kill a man, but one cannot kill his vision, his ideals and his legacy. That is why even after his overthrow, he is the only man in global history who was asked to come and be president in another country. Can you imagine that? Overthrown in Ghana, but he became the co-president in Guinea and was given a state burial. Nkrumah never dies, the legacy of Kwame Nkrumah will live on forever and ever. Mr Speaker, I thank you very much. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Now Leadership. I said we would take two from each Side and we have done that. All right, let me give the opportunity to Prof Nyarko.

Prof Kingsley Nyarko (NPP — Kwadaso): Mr Speaker, I thank you for your kind indulgence, for allowing me to contribute to the Statement ably made by our Colleague on the other Side, in commemorating the death of Kwame Nkrumah. I think that we have to be very careful in this country. Nobody in this country, nor on this continent, can wish away the contributions of Kwame Nkrumah or better, his memory. He did contribute his quota to the advancement of this country. Somebody said that if a person could see far, he or she must thank those who helped them to see that far. Kwame Nkrumah rode on the back of individuals who saw that he could be an asset to the country. There were individuals who brought Kwame Nkrumah to the Gold Coast. When we are praising Kwame Nkrumah, what I do not want us to do as intellectuals and as Members of Parliament is that we do not have to belittle others in our quest to promote others. We must all applaud all those who helped to make this country what it is right now. Kwame Nkrumah played his roles, but others also played their roles. Let us not, through our politicking, undermine the efforts of others. That is wrong and that will not help advance our democracy. We must stop that. We must stop this division that we are bringing into our politics and our country. It is not right. We must stop that.

Mr Speaker, no individual is perfect. All our leaders did some good and there were some wrongs as well. But in all our doings, we are looking for the best that they did and that should occupy our minds when we are making submissions. I will never, regardless of the mistakes or

errors that Kwame Nkrumah made paint him black. I will never. Because he was a good man, and he did his best. The same thing applies to J. B. Danquah and the others. When someone boldly says that Kwame Nkrumah is the founder of this country, I will not contest the person on that but I will tell the person that there were a lot of people who helped this country to obtain independence.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you Prof Nyarko.

Prof Nyarko: There were founders who built this country. Let us praise all of them. Let us identify their unique strengths and let us stop the hypocrisy.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Prof Nyarko: And let us stop the political hatred. It will not help anybody. Dr Murtala, it will not help anybody. Respect those who also helped this country. Respect J. B. Danquah, respect Arko Adjei, respect Paa Grant. Respect all of them. I, Kingsley Nyarko, I respect all our founders.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Prof Nyarko!

Prof Nyarko: I respect J. J. Rawlings regardless of his wrongs. What is this? Let us build Ghana. Let us build one Ghana. We are one people. Let us be proud of Ghana. Mr Speaker, thank you. As I said earlier, you are a nice man and I like you so much. May God bless you and make you great.

Thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, if I become magnanimous to you, you should also do well to at least listen to me. Prof Nyarko, the time was closed for you, but at least I extended—

Yes, Hajia?

Ms Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah (NDC — Salaga South): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by my Colleague on this very important subject of the coup d'etat of 24th February, 1966.

Mr Speaker, many a Ghanaian have held the view that, 24th February, 1966—*[Interruption]*—It is your birthday? I will sing happy birthday to you when I am done. Remind me. Please remember that you have taken part of my time.

3.30 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I was born exactly the day Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown—**[Some Hon Members: Oh! Oh!]**

Ms Ibrahimah: That is very sad.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, let us hear you.

Ms Ibrahimah: Mr Speaker, that day was a very sad day for humanity. This is because Dr Kwame Nkrumah's vision and influence transcended the borders of this country and Africa, and it had impact on the Western world. But we woke up to that sad development. After 59 years,

we are still reeling under the dire effect of that unfortunate situation.

Mr Speaker, self-introspection is a form of healing. So, when I hear some of my Colleagues contributing and advocating that some other people have to be recognised, it means they are still living in the past. It is so sad that we have come 59 years after this development that set our country and continent back. We as a people owe it to ourselves to speak the truth to one another and to look at where we went wrong. That is the only way we can correct such. If we insist that we did right on the 24th February, 1966, then I am afraid to say that there is no light at the end of the tunnel for this country. I want to encourage all my Colleagues here that it is time for introspection. We do not have to look far.

Mr Speaker, on my way to Parliament this morning, I tuned into the *Citi FM* news, and the panel there was discussing this unfortunate day in our history. They made very serious observations that, at the time Dr Nkrumah was overthrown, most of the people he thought were his loyalists abandoned him. Some of them even joined the regime that had overthrown him, pledge their support and loyalty. I want to believe that even if those people are not alive today, their children and grandchildren are alive in this country, and they would appreciate the treachery of this group of people who worked with other civilisations to overthrow, so far, the best Government that this country has ever had.

Mr Speaker, on Sunday, I was celebrating my uncle's 85th birthday, and

Madam Peggy Donkor of Ghana Television (GTV) was there because my uncle, a retired colonel, was at Juba Villas with them. She made a very important point when we interacted. She said in the mid-80s, it was all right for her father, Col Donkor, and my uncle, Col Braimah, to bundle all the kids to Damongo Secondary School for their secondary education. What was the reason? The reason was that Osagyefo Dr Nkrumah had ensured that there was a certain quality of education across the board in the whole country, and that it did not matter where we attended school. We did not have a grade A, B and C schools. We all attended schools and received quality education. His Ghana Education Trust is akin to H. E. John Dramani Mahama's e-School projects that bring education to every community.

Mr Speaker, let me remind Ghanaians of one important virtue of Dr Nkrumah—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, do not abuse my magnanimity.

Ms Ibrahimah: When we went to secondary school, you heard the Hon Minority Leader, Afenyo-Markin, speak the Ga language to my Sister here at the vetting yesterday. He was surprised that she could speak the Ga language. At another time, he spoke Twi to Hon Haruna Iddrisu, and he was surprised that he could also speak Twi. This is because we went to school as a unit, as Ghanaians first, before—And this is all thanks to Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah.

Thank you for the opportunity, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I am marking all those—

Ms Ibrahimah: Mr Speaker, should I still sing happy birthday to you?

[Hon Members sang "Happy Birthday" to the Second Deputy Speaker]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Minority Chief Whip?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh) (MP): Mr Speaker, let me commend the maker of the Statement for bringing this matter to the fore and also reminding the House on such an important day in the history of our country.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first time such a Statement is being made in this House. In times past, I realised that it plays out—It becomes a competition on who loves Dr Nkrumah most and who owns him most. Attempts are made to create the impression that they love Dr Nkrumah most and we are against him. I think that is most unfortunate. I would not yield to their temptation to respond to who did what and who did not do what. For me, that is unnecessary. Dr Nkrumah is dead and gone. It is up to us to build on what he built, not to unnecessarily make references, casting aspersions and making some statements which are totally unnecessary—*[Interruption]*—Mr Speaker, would he also listen to us?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Murtala—You are not like an ordinary Member anymore. Now, consider yourself as a Minister, please.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, Dr Nkrumah's sense of Pan-Africanism is known and respected globally; what he stood for, we all know it. We love Dr Nkrumah, as they also do. Let me also say that Dr Nkrumah was brought into this country by a certain Mr George Paa Grant, and that is part of the history—*[Hear! Hear!]*—Often times, people have created the impression that it is we against them.

Two sets of people who were blazing the trail in terms of building and developing our history as a country. “Independence in the shortest possible time, and independence now”. How is it the case that it is only Dr Nkrumah who fought. It is not true. Let us depart from that argument. All of our torchbearers and icons contributed one way or the other. Of course, we salute Dr Nkrumah; he did so well, but there were other allies. When the history is being told, let us tell it in whole. Let us stop selecting and choosing. We pick and choose and say that Dr Nkrumah is the lone hero; it is not entirely true.

Mr Speaker, for instance, in recent, I know the Kwame Nkrumah Museum which had been abandoned for a very long time—The last resting place of a respected icon of this continent was abandoned. Go there now and look at it. Who did it? Under the former President Akufo-Addo's tenure, it has been refurbished and has become a very

important tourist centre. The main road leading to Nkroful, Dr Nkrumah's hometown, who built it? It was the same NPP Government. Colleagues, let us get it right. We all celebrate Dr Nkrumah, and we all love him. But let us not mix up the history.

Mr Speaker, the building of history and the development of this fact must go hand in hand. The building of industries—Dr Nkrumah built over 300 industries and factories—I do not need to tell them. The history is clear; I would not tell them that it was at whose instance that all those factories were sold like tomatoes. These “tomatoes” were sold.

Mr Speaker, we want to get the history right. Let us all appreciate that Dr Nkrumah has done what he did.

3.40 p.m.

So, if we had not sold these factories, now we will be building on these factories. Those on the Majority Side sold them; we sold them and now we want to play pious and say that we love Dr Nkrumah more than anybody. It is most unfortunate. Dr Nkrumah remains an icon of Africa and nobody can take that away, but I insist that there was a certain Paa Grant, a certain Mr J. B. Danquah, and a certain Mr Ako Adjei. All these people contributed to the development and emergence of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, the maker of the Statement also mentioned in passing, the need for us to build monuments for Dr Nkrumah. The best way we can remember Dr Nkrumah and celebrate

him, and not just Dr Nkrumah but also other icons of this continent and this country, is to instil what they stood for in our schools and educational centres.

The building of physical infrastructure and monuments is not enough; they will be destroyed over the passage of time. What did Dr Nkrumah stand for? Pan-Africanism—These are the things we should pay attention to, so that we can instil this into our school children, and get our younger generations to imbibe these lessons, and build a nation that we can all be proud of. It is important we celebrate Dr Nkrumah; however, we should not lose sight of the other icons like Paa Grant, Mr Ako Adjei; they all contributed to the building of modern Ghana now.

Mr Speaker, this should be the narrative. Anytime these Statements are made about icons, let us not let it degenerate to become partisan, for us to become we and them, the NPP and the NDC; this will not help us. When we speak like this, it will be more inclusive and it will help us in the development of our country. Mr Speaker, on this note, I thank you for the opportunity. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Majority Leadership?

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, I will yield to Hon Agalga.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Hon James Agalga, please, you have the floor.

Mr James Agalga (NDC — Builsa North): Mr Speaker, I want to thank the maker of the Statement for putting together such a wonderful piece in memory of the darkest moment in our history.

Mr Speaker, I have taken pains to conduct some research to try to establish why Dr Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown. Whether or not the factors which may have accounted for his overthrow are justified is another matter for a thorough debate. However, Mr Speaker, my findings show that Dr Kwame Nkrumah was accused of being a dictator, and that is why the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) then decided to collaborate with people in this country whose forebears, whose ancestors are the likes of Mr J. B. Danquah, Mr Obetsebi Lamprey, and the names go on and on.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Nitiwul, please, it is a comment and we do not have to—no, it will degenerate into—

Mr Agalga: Mr Speaker, I said I did some research. I do not know whether the former Minister for Defence wants to engage me on who the forebears of the people who collaborated with the CIA are. I am not sure he wants to engage me in a debate like that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me listen to Hon Nitiwul. He had already wanted to make a comment, so let me listen to his point of order.

Mr Nitiwul: I reserve those comments I wanted to make for a later

date, maybe next year. I just wanted the Hon Member to note that, if he does not have evidence that he can tender into this House, he should please move away from mentioning the names of people who were not directly involved in the 1966 coup d'état. We know the architects of the 1966 coup, we know their names. If he wants to mention their names, we do not have a problem, but if he decides to mention names of people who were not there, it is wrong. This is because he does not have any evidence, and he should withdraw that part of his statement.

If he mentions Major General Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka or General Akwasi Amankwaa Afrifa, if he mentions those people, nobody has a problem because we all know it. Just like if I want to mention 1981 or 1979 coup d'état, I will mention the names. The party our Colleagues on the other Side are contesting on, the party which they belong, removed Dr Hilla Liman. I will mention the names; I do not have a problem. They are beneficiaries of coup d'état. All of them are beneficiaries of coup d'état. I do not have a problem with that, but do not mention the name of any other person —[*Uproar*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Murtala Ibrahim, please.

Yes, Hon Agalga? But Hon Agalga, do you have evidence of the names you mentioned?

Mr Agalga: Mr Speaker, I mentioned Mr Obetsebi Lamptey, and he says I should furnish this house with evidence.

In fact, there is a reported judgement of the Court of Appeal. Do you know what? Interestingly, one of the justices who presided over the conviction of Mr Obetsebi Lamptey in absentia was Akufo-Addo's father.

The conviction was related to acts of terror, which subsequently resulted in the commission of further acts of terror, leading to the overthrow of Dr Nkrumah. So do not go there—[*Laughter*]—Further research indicates that Mr J. B. Danquah was certified as a collaborator of the CIA, and it is the CIA which eventually overthrew Dr Kwame Nkrumah, so he should not ask me to finish him with evidence. If he does, he opens a can of worms.

Mr Speaker, let me return to my contribution.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, contribute and conclude, please. You have taken a lot of time.

Mr Agalga: Mr Speaker, I was interjected by the other Side.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, Hon Agalga, go ahead.

Mr Agalga: Mr Speaker, Dr Kwame Nkrumah has been criticised wrongly as leading a dictatorial government, which made it practically impossible for Dr Kwame Nkrumah to be overthrown through the power of the thumb. However, Mr Speaker, the history is very clear. Starting from 1951, after Kwame Nkrumah broke away from the UGCC and founded the CPP. The CPP led by

Nkrumah routed the UGCC and its subsequent offshoots in successive elections.

Starting from 1951, they were routed. In 1954, 1957 and 1960 they were routed. Mr Speaker, they decided that it was time to say goodbye to elections and to engage in acts of terror with the hope that they could assassinate Nkrumah.

Mr Speaker, if you read Nkrumah's autobiography, *Dark Days in Ghana*, Nkrumah recounts how six attempts were made to assassinate him. One of them was staged at Kulungugu. On another occasion, a police officer named Constable Seth Ametewee fired at Nkrumah at close range. Mr Speaker, Dr Kwame Nkrumah personally, after he had been deserted by all his guards, personally wrestled Constable Ametewee to the floor and disarmed him. This is what Dr Kwame Nkrumah went through, and so when the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) was passed, it was a response to acts of terror.

3.50 p.m.

Mr Speaker, after 9/11, we all know what the United States did. So, when acts of terror have been unleashed on the people, one does not talk about protection of fundamental human rights. When those terrorists attempted to kill Nkrumah, did they care a hoot about Nkrumah's rights?

Mr Speaker, after 9/11, the United States Government, which is supposed to be the champion of democracy, adopted methods, some of which were very

stringent, including the introduction of waterboarding, detention camps in Afghanistan—Waterboarding was one of the methods they used.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the point I am trying to make is that Kwame Nkrumah was not a dictator; he was overthrown because his Pan-African project, his quest to have Africa united, was a threat to Western interests. And that is why they elected to collaborate with dishonourable people in our own country, some of whom are now claiming to be elevated to the level of Kwame Nkrumah. Dr Kwame Nkrumah, rest in peace. May the good Lord bless your soul. You worked so hard for this country and we shall forever cherish and remember you.

Amen.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, thank you.

We would bring Statement time to a close. Today we have listened to five Statements and I believe we have all contributed. As I said earlier, tomorrow is reserved for Backbenchers. It is the last Wednesday of the month. Tomorrow, the newcomers would have the field day of taking charge of almost everything in the Chamber. Prepare for tomorrow; the Chamber would be for you.

I am told the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs would like to engage Members relating to matters of Members' interest. Is it Closed Sitting?

On that note, I would suspend the House, then we come in—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I think originally the Minister for Foreign Affairs was programmed to brief the House on an important matter on Friday. Then, the Deputy Whip related to me that there is a subject matter related to concerns on the acquisition of diplomatic passport or so. It is an equally important matter and I would have loved to sit in.

Mr Speaker, look at the Chamber, if it pleases you that we should have it—I thought it was a very important matter and we should give prior notification to Members, then we can have a good number of us in the Chamber. This is my view, so if you are so strongly minded that we should have it today, there is no problem. But I thought that we should have given prior notification to Members and then we can have a good number of us in the Chamber. Then once and for all, the Minister can brief the House. But if we are so minded that we should still proceed, I would not have any objection. But ideally, we should have given prior notification.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

So, I am just here for your pleasure—The pleasure of the House.

Mr Acheampong: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, originally the Minister was programmed to brief the House on Friday. But we all know that Thursday is the Message on the State of the Nation,

and there would be a lot on Members. And that same Friday, we would be travelling outside Accra for a workshop. This is an information he is going to share with us. After that, we can pass on this information to other Members. I think by the 10 to 15 minutes; it would be done. So that we can share that same information with Colleagues who are not here. So, I think we can have it and then we would move on.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Hon Members, I am told we are going to have a Joint Caucus meeting. If it is a Joint Caucus, then it means we have to adjourn the House and have the Caucus meeting. I thought it was going to be a Closed Sitting. But if it is a Joint Caucus, then we would proceed to adjourn the House.

And the time—I am told last Friday I said five to four and people were describing me as an old timer—Old school. So now it is ten minutes to four. And per our Standing Orders, we have gone beyond the normal Sitting hours. So, you are obviously in my hands.

I would proceed to adjourn the House to tomorrow, 26th February, 2025 at 10.00 in the forenoon. The House stands adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was adjourned at 3.55 p.m. till Wednesday, 26th February, 2025 at 10.00 a.m.

Editor's Note

This *Official Report* was corrected by the House on 11th March, 2025, as follows:

- a) Column 79, paragraph 3, line 8
“Kufour” was corrected to
“Kufuor”
- b) Column 79, last paragraph, line 7,
“tend” was corrected to “turn”
- c) Column 75, paragraph 1, line 9,
“the” was inserted after “that”
- d) Column 75, paragraph 1, line 17,
“we” was inserted before
“should”
- e) Column 76, paragraph 3, line 3
and 4, “the maker of the
statement” was replaced with
“we”
- f) Column 76, paragraph 3, line 11,
“to” was inserted after “able”
- g) Column 76, paragraph 3, line 12,
“be” was inserted after “would”
- h) Column 144, paragraph 2, line 19,
“feed” was corrected to “fifth”