



## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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### OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE  
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

*The House met at 2.20 p.m.*

[THE SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, we would move straight to item numbered 6 — Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS  
AND THE  
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I recall that we did not correct the *Votes and Proceedings* of Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025. So, I wanted us to start from that. Do you have copies?

**Mr Mahama Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, I can see the electronic versions of the *Votes and Proceedings* for Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2025. I think everybody's screen has a copy of the *Votes and Proceedings* for Friday.

**The Speaker:** I am sure the one for last week Thursday would also be on your screens. Maybe how to access it would be your challenge, but I agree that we could start with the *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2025.

Page 1...6

**Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth:** Mr Speaker, please I was present but my name was captured under Members who were absent, and that is item numbered 2, under 4 — Addo-Kenneth, Daniel Nana (Okere).

**The Speaker:** Table Office, kindly take note of that.

Page 7.

Yes, Hon Member?

**Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, item numbered 28 on page 7, my name has been captured under Members who were not present, but I duly sought leave of absence from my Whip. So, with your permission, I would like my name to reflect under Members who were absent with permission.

**The Speaker:** That is the item numbered 4 on page 6 — under that is the item numbered 20, which is the Hon Member for Nkawkaw.

Am I right?

**Mr Onyina-Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, 28.

**The Speaker:** 28?

**Mr Onyina-Acheampong:** Hon Member for Kwabre East.

**The Speaker:** Kwabre East — Onyina-Acheampong Akwasi Gyamfi.

**Mr Onyina-Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, yes.

**The Speaker:** According to you, you obtained permission from your Whip.

**Mr Onyina-Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, that is right.

**The Speaker:** Check your Standing Orders whether it is your Whip that should grant you permission to absent yourself.

**Mr Onyina-Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, with your kind permission, I duly filled out the leave of absence form and handed it over to my Whip as per the Standing Order 15.

**The Speaker:** I am saying that check your Standing Orders. We do not have evidence that you were granted permission to absent yourself so you did that at your own risk.

Page 7... 12

Yes, Hon Member?

**Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah:** Mr Speaker, page 12, the item numbered 3, further down, xii — In Attendance, Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah has been captured again on page 13. When you go to page 13, it has again been captured under xxxiv.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Member. There is a repetition there. Table Office kindly take note of that.

2.31 p.m.

Page 13...17—

**Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah:** Mr Speaker, please, at page 16, the item numbered lxxxiii, “Nana Kobina Nketsia” was rather typed as “Nkotiah”, and he is also the Omanhene of the “Essikadu” Traditional Area, not “Osikado”; so, if the Table could take note of that.

**The Speaker:** Hon Member, thank you so much. Table Office, kindly take note.

Page 17...19—

**Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, I just want to seek your clearance and guidance because at page 19, if you look at the item numbered 2, under “Attendance”, you will see the names of Hon Members listed, and under the item numbered 3, we have “In Attendance”. My name is captured under “In Attendance”, but I was there under Order 217(7) of our Standing Orders which says that a Member of the Leadership of the House is entitled to participate in the proceedings of the Committee during the consideration of nominees for appointment. So, are we attending or in attendance?

**The Speaker:** Did you quote Order 217?

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, Order 217(7), but I have been guided by my Leader, so I withdraw that.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Yes, please?

**Ms Patricia Appiagyei:** Mr Speaker, I would like to also place on record that I am a Member of the Appointments Committee and I was present on that day. My name did not appear in the list of Members who were in the Chamber neither did it appear in the list of Members who were at the Appointments Committee. So, I seek your guidance and I call on the Table to correct it.

**The Speaker:** Which page are you talking about? Page 19?

**Ms Appiagyei:** No, page 12 and 19.

**The Speaker:** Page 12 captures the names of the nominees and the Ministers-designate, and at page 19, under the item numbered 2, “Attendance”, your name is the item listed viii.

**Ms Appiagyei:** Mr Speaker, thank you; I am making reference to page 12, Members present.

**The Speaker:** You have taken us back to page 12. *[Pause]*

Table, kindly take note of that, at page 12, that is the meeting of the Appointments Committee held on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2025.

Yes, please?

**Dr Albert Tetteh Nyakotey:** Mr Speaker, please, can I take you back to

page 7, the item numbered 26; I was present, but I have been marked absent.

**The Speaker:** You are?

**Dr Nyakotey:** The item listed 26; I was present.

**The Speaker:** “Nyakotey, Albert Tetteh (Dr), (Yilo Krobo)”?

**Dr Nyakotey:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Table, kindly take note.

Page 20—

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, at page 19, the item numbered vii, under “In Attendance”, should read “Mrs Abena Osei-Asare”, not “Ms”.

**The Speaker:** Is she present? I want to be sure whether she writes “Ms” or “Mrs”?

**Mrs Abena Osei-Asare:** Mr Speaker, it has always been “Mrs”.

**The Speaker:** But you did not object to it, or it meant that you were not focused on it?

**Mrs Osei-Asare:** I guess so.

**The Speaker:** Table Office, kindly capture the correct rendition, the title is “Mrs”.

Page 21...22—

**Mr Samuel Nartey George:** Mr Speaker, page 22, the item numbered lxxviii, reads, “Mr Kojo Gyeke-Darko”,

Member, Elections Directorate, National Democratic Congress. His Kojo is spelt K-w-a-d-w-o, not K-o-j-o.

**The Speaker:** So, his is “Kwadwo”? Table, kindly take note of that.

Page 23...25—

**Mr John Darko:** Mr Speaker, at page 25, I remember that I was part of the Committee Sitting that day. I had the opportunity to even ask Mr Murtala Muhammed Ibrahim some questions, but I have realised my name did not appear. So, if the Table could correct that for me. My name is John Darko.

[Pause]

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, Table, kindly take note.

Page 26...28?

Hon Members, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2025, as corrected is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

**The Speaker:** I am sure you now have copies of the *Votes and Proceedings* of Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2025. It is a very short one.

2.41 p.m.

Page 1...3? Yes, please?

**Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Please, I cannot find it on the system and we do not also have the hard copy. That is the Thursday.

**The Speaker:** You cannot find your name?

**Mr Boamah-Nyarko:** No, we do not have the *Votes and Proceedings* of Thursday on the computer. It is not available for us to read.

[Pause]

**The Speaker:** Well, then we will leave that until the right time when Members have copies.

Hon Members, let us take the *Official Report* of Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2025. Any corrections?

[Pause]

[No correction was made to the *Official Report* of Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2025]

Hon Members, we will move to the item numbered 7 on the Order Paper which is Statement. I have an indication from the Leadership of the House that the Minority Leader will be making a Statement. I think this is the appropriate time for him to make the Statement before we move to your Statements. So please Minority Leader?

## STATEMENT

### Appeal to the Speaker to Rescind the Suspension of Four MPs

**Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin):** Mr Speaker, thank you for this treasured space to make this Statement before you and my Colleagues.

Mr Speaker, as captured in the *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 2025, paragraph 5 and page 7, you had cause to deliver a Formal Communication in which you outlined your displeasure on matters at the Appointments Committee on the evening of Thursday, the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 2025, and the morning of Friday, the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 2025.

Mr Speaker, indeed, your response to the event as a Leader and the head of this Assembly was timely, to assure the public that indeed, this House is ready to uphold democracy and to do what is right in the eyes of the public.

Mr Speaker, that notwithstanding, I had ferried to your Office, a Memo, dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, 2025, where I raised some procedural concerns regarding the outcome of your Communication.

Mr Speaker, to couch the matters that arose in proper perspective on the said day, Thursday, the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 2025, as per the practice, we had agreed to proceed to vet some four nominees; originally, we were supposed to do three. This four later changed to five. Around 10.00 p.m. of that evening, we had indications from our Colleagues in the Majority that they intend to continue the vetting for more nominees rather than what was agreed.

Mr Speaker, on the corridors of the vetting room were many people including nominees. Our understanding was that they had all been invited. Mr Speaker, there was no room for us to discuss the way forward which resulted

in our decision as the Minority to protest. Our intention was to have a peaceful protest to express our displeasure at the excesses of our Colleagues in the Majority. We acknowledged that in the process, the situation got out of hand, resulting in the outcome you commented upon. We hereby assure you that we shall, as the Minority, cooperate with you in upholding the integrity and the dignity of this House.

Mr Speaker, we also want to assure you that we will undertake a deeper consultation and commit to this with our Colleagues. Suffice to state that from day one that Mr President started ferrying his nominees to this House, we have given this Government our uttermost cooperation.

Mr Speaker, records would have it that this is the first time in the history of our democracy that the Minority has given the Government such a cooperation, to the extent that nominees are getting their confirmation in record time.

Mr Speaker, indeed, I am on record to have made an application to this House under Order 3. This has never happened by any Minority Leader in the history of our democracy. We believe in constructive criticism; we are not in any way, in, to disrupt Government Business; frustrate them or undermine them. Both parties have been in Government before and have been in opposition before. We know that it is not through disruption that we would win power come 2028. It is through active and constructive politicking.

Mr Speaker, we have become aware of the consequences of orders you have issued as a result of the Formal Communication you have given. But this is what we have to say, and I quote from Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. Mr Speaker, you remember the story of Shylock when he demanded his pound of flesh. A plea came from Portia who was the supposed Counsel for the debtor.

Mr Speaker, this is what he had to say and I rely on it to mount the next line of my submission that:

The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from  
heaven Upon the place beneath. It is  
twice blest; It blesseth him that gives and  
him that takes''

2.51 p.m.

Mr Speaker, we cannot take your power to discipline from you, but we believe that when this is tempered, with the assurance that the way forward would be better, you would be able to reinstate our Colleagues who temporarily have been denied access to this Chamber and the precinct of Parliament. Ours is not to undermine your authority; after all, it is the confidence we had in you that made us, by consensus, vote you into office, and we accept your authority.

Mr Speaker, we do not think that we should litigate this matter even on procedure. We are more interested in the outcome which was not a desired outcome. Today, I, on behalf of my Caucus, would want to assure the public

that such an action will not be seen in the public space again. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, I take full responsibility as the Leader on my Side for all actions that took place. I would, therefore, conclude by inviting you, Mr Speaker, in the circumstances and with the assurances given, to consider a rescission of the decision you communicated to the House, as well as all consequential matters thereto.

Mr Speaker, without more, I shall thank you for hearing me and resume my seat. Thank you very much. [*Hear! Hear!*]

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I believe this Statement may need your comments, and depending on how you would want it to be handled, I would prefer it is handled at the Leadership level and not beyond that. But this is your House, and not only my House. I am duty-bound to maintain law and order, so I will allow the Majority Leader to have a say in this matter.

**Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga):** Mr Speaker, the popular saying is that to err is human, to forgive is "speakerly"—[*Laughter*—Mr Speaker, as you can see, I have replaced "divine" with "speaker", and that elevates you to an almost godly stature.

Mr Speaker, my Colleague, the Minority Leader, has spoken; he has recounted the happenings of Thursday and Friday. It is a fact that the first time H. E. John Dramani Mahama nominated—[*Interruption*—The first time the first set of ministerial nominees were announced was on 9<sup>th</sup> January,



2025; today is 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, and we are not yet even one month into the Administration of H. E. John Dramani Mahama, but we have vetted and approved a number of ministers. Overall, we have vetted and by the close of today, we would have approved 42 ministerial nominees out of 60. The reason we are even at 42 is because since Friday, we have not yet received any additional nominations. In effect, we have finished vetting and hope to conclude the approval of 42 nominees to ministerial appointments.

Mr Speaker, as a matter of fact, all those who have been nominated to serve as the Cabinet of the Government have actually been vetted, and some approved by this House. This is a record performance that this House should be proud of—*[Hear! Hear!]*—And we have done so with the cooperation and support of our Colleagues on the Minority Side, in spite of the theatrics and drama—*[Hear! Hear!]*—If, in the process, there have been some incidents, they are regrettable.

Mr Speaker, I would support the appeal of my Colleague, the Minority Leader, that you temper justice with mercy. I agree that your decision to suspend some Colleagues was timely, and I believe that it has been understood by the generality of Ghanaians as a step that restored the image of this Parliament. So, I believe that your action has achieved its objectives; but as you can see, our Colleagues are remorseful and accept your decision in good faith. They are appealing to you to review and reconsider your decision on the suspension.

3.01 p.m.

Mr Speaker, it is not only Members of the Minority Side who were suspended; in fact, the Majority Chief Whip was also suspended. So, clearly, the conduct was on both Sides; and I also, on behalf of my Side, appeal to you to reconsider your decision and lift the suspensions, so that our Colleagues can join us while the other measures that are being put in place — so that in the long term, we can ensure the orderly conduct of Business in this House is achieved.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I am sure the first thing you would have realised is that I have restored the title “Honourable”. The day I read my Formal Communication to you, and proceeded to suspend the four Members, I never used the term “Honourable”. I have done so now because your Leaders actually came to me to plead that I temper justice with mercy. If any of you here is not remorseful, please be on your feet. *[Uproar]*

Hon Members, it is very important and I can tell you that I understand and appreciate what is happening. This House is often referred to as a House of Might and Majesty. Might, because it is a combination of the sovereignty of all the people in the country; Majesty, because the King or Queen is part of the House, and therefore, there can be no power higher than that of Parliament, and the person who represents Parliament is the Speaker. So, I sit here and exercise your powers and create an environment for you to be able to perform your function, and I go according to the rules. You can disagree with the Speaker; the rules and the laws

of Ghana permit you to do so, and detailed out the procedure on how to handle the disagreement. But the rules are very clear as to what they refer to as disorder or contempt of Parliament. And for me to preserve and uphold that might, majesty and dignity of the House, I should not shirk any responsibility in applying and enforcing the rules. And that was exactly what I did even though some of the Members are my personal friends whom I refer to as sons. So, please, you can ask your Leaders, when they approached me with this —

As a father, when your son commits an offence, you do not punish the son to the extent that you break his leg; that becomes a big problem for you the father. Nobody is perfect; we are all fallible. So, I listened to the apology and here, it was repeated by the Minority Leader for and on behalf of the Members of the Caucus, and supported by the Majority Leader. It is not only words. Before me, they demonstrated and assured me of their total support to me and the Deputy Speakers to ensure that we have an efficient and effective functioning Parliament in Ghana. So, I am satisfied with not only the Statement, but also, their conduct, and I would proceed to lift the suspension of the four Members of Parliament that I considered were involved in disorderly conduct which amounted to contempt. — *[Hear! Hear!]*— The rules are very clear; and I did refer to them and stated clearly that because we are in the transitional mood, we have not been able to put Committees in place including the Committee of Privileges and Immunities, and the Standing Orders grant me the power and authority to do what I did. The

jurisprudence is very clear that when contempt is committed *in facie curiae*, you do not proceed to set up another committee or court or whatever to investigate and submit a report. So, I referred to the one in Parliament.

3.10 p.m.

My very good Hon Member, you are at liberty even after this to proceed anywhere. I have no problem meeting you in court because that was where I was farming for many years before I became a Member of Parliament — *[Hear! Hear!]*— So, I have lifted the suspension order and I do so instantly and it takes effect immediately. — *[Hear! Hear!]* —

The Hon Members so affected are now permitted to enter the precinct of the House. I must say that they actually complied with the orders. The Standing Orders are clear and the precinct of Parliament is defined. We have the men and women to enforce the law, and they actually enforced the law. So, I want to commend the Members and the law enforcement agencies: the Marshals Department and the Police Service for their support.

Let me once again assure the House of my commitment to upholding the dignity of this House. All of you seated here, I am responsible for upholding your rights and protecting all of you, and those who have felt the brush with the law— Hon Member? —When it is before me, nobody can save you, but when it happens outside, you can run to me and I would save you. You can ask your Colleagues; a lot has come before

me, and I have always intervened to protect the Members, for both Sides, and to save them. You can ask all the state agencies involved. So, it is not restricted to any Side, but both Sides; all Members.

Those of you who do not know, it is the reason I am drawing your attention to it. When you get into any of those challenges and you draw the attention of the Office of the Speaker, the Speaker intervenes; and by law, you are protected. There is a procedure we use to do that. We are not above the law; not at all, but there is a procedure because it is not about you; you now represent a whole constituency; a large number of men, women, children, and elderly people. That is what you are made of now, not as individuals, and the rights of all those groups cannot be taken for granted. So, please, we do so without fear or favour.

But let me say that I have read some media reports where some Members of the House have referred to me as “headmaster”, treating Hon Members like students. I reject that assertion, but I can assure you that when there are students, there must be a headmaster—*[Laughter]*—*[Hear! Hear!]*—If you do not have a headmaster, you know what would happen in the school. The former Minister for Education is nodding—*[Laughter]*—

I would end by saying this, which is better captured in Latin: *cui multum datum*. It is very simple; to whom much is given, much is expected. You are not called “honourable” for nothing. They

expect so much from you, and do not forget that there is life after Parliament.

With this, I want to thank all of you for your attention, and I promise you the investigations would continue. The report would be brought to the House and the House would have an opportunity to take a decision. That is the procedure outlined by our rules, practice, and by the custom and convention of the House; that would be done. Hon Members, self-regulation is better than external regulation. So please, this matter should be handled by the Special Committee at the Committee level and they should report to us.

I have told the Leaders to make themselves available to the Committee and to state exactly what happened because we want nothing but facts, and nothing but the truth, so that we can apply the rules correctly. I urge the Committee not to make it a matter of public debate. What you know here is not known by the public. What you do here is also not known by the public; so when you rush to the public, one word can confuse the whole country, but that word would be understood differently in this House. We still have a lot of work to do with our partners outside this House. A matter of education and advocacy, and we would focus on it.

I thank you all and please, let us continue to work together as a family. Thank you so much. *[Pause]*

I have just been informed that the Leaders would want to say a word or two, so, once again, the Minority Leader can start.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, I convey the gratitude of the Minority Caucus on your final decision in these matters. We reiterate our continuous cooperation and believe that the gesture thus far shown by you and that of my respected senior Colleague and senior at the Bar who leads the House—We would make things better and that we would have a big stomach to accommodate one another, especially we sitting to your left, the Minority.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Majority Leader?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, today, I am taking lessons in humility. My Brother and Colleague, the Minority Leader is teaching me how to be humble—*[Laughter]*—

3.21 p.m.

Mr Speaker, we thank you very much for your magnanimity and considering our appeals and lifting the suspension on our Hon Colleagues. We want to assure you that we would be of good behaviour going forward, and your Appointments Committee, I believe, will function in a better atmosphere.

Mr Speaker, there are a few other things that I would bring to your attention. In the Minority Leader's Statement, he drew attention to the organisation of the security around where the Appointments Committee sits.

He also drew attention to the corridor; how Members of the Appointments Committee feel uncomfortable about the numbers that show up at the sitting of the Appointments Committee, how sometimes it can get congested, and the pressures exerted by the Hon Nominees.

Then also, a part of the challenge was the fact that on the Wednesday when they were supposed to sit, due to a decision to hear some contempt matters before them, they shifted a few more Nominees to the day after. So, there was a lot of pressure on the Thursday. That affected the crowd that showed up and the urge to try to vet as many Nominees as possible. Mr Speaker, these are all matters that I would take up with my Hon Colleague and the Chairman of the Appointments Committee. However, in the meantime, we thank you for your decision to set aside the suspension of our Hon Colleagues. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, let me also on your behalf thank our Hon Leaders for leading us to solve this problem. I was going to make a lengthy Statement on the other incident affecting the Clerk to the Committee. In view of what has happened, I would summarise it. I would not go through the whole hulk. I did indicate this to the Hon Leaders, and in fact, I read through it to them and I think that it is important that I draw the attention of Hon Members and particularly our partners, the public, to the salient points on what is expected of

all of us when dealing with staff. This is the law; it is in the Constitution, Acts and our Standing Orders.

## STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

### Attack of the Clerk to the Appointments Committee

**The Speaker:** Once again, I make this Statement to address the conduct of some Hon Members of the Appointments Committee at a recent Committee meeting and on various media spaces in the country. You would recall the incident that we just referred to, and what the Hon Majority Leader referred to as an application for bail, and how it is usually submitted by counsels before the court.

After my statement that day, my attention was drawn to this incident and as the Speaker of the House and Chairman of the Parliamentary Service Board, I strongly condemn that incident. The Clerk to the Appointments Committee is a public servant and should not be dragged into the failure of the Hon Members of the Committee to resolve their differences. This Clerk has worked with us for 19 good years, and she is one of the best clerks that we have had. *[Hear! Hear!]* Please, you can check from former Members of Parliament; she has been at that Committee for some time now, not just now.

As clearly stated in the Standing Orders of Parliament, a clerk to a Committee is the administrative head of the secretariat of the Committee and is the procedural and technical advisor to

the Chair and the Committee. By the provisions of Order 266 (3) of the Standing Orders of Parliament,

“A Committee to which a Bill or other business has been referred shall meet to consider the business on the day and the hour determined by the chairperson of the Committee with respect to that business.”

It is thus the duty of the Clerk to the Committee to transmit the notice of the meeting in accordance with the instructions of the Chair and the provisions of Order 270 (1) (b). Therefore, any displeasure by a Member on the date, hour or business for consideration at a Committee, ought to properly be directed at the Chair and not the Clerk to the Committee who is duty bound under the said Order to transmit notices and to organise the meeting.

The Standing Orders of the House are very clear; clerks to Committees do not convene meetings; Chairs of Committees do. A clerk to a Committee transmits notice of a meeting that has been called by a chair *suo motu* or acting on the request of 15 percent of Members of the Committee. I refer to the Orders 266 (3) and 270 (1) (b).

The Clerk thus works with the Chair, as the Clerk-to-Parliament works with the Speaker. The Clerk to a Committee is the principal advisor to the Committee, just as the Clerk-to-Parliament is the principal advisor to the Speaker. Even if the Clerk had erred, subjecting her to public ridicule and humiliation where she had no opportunity to respond was entirely inappropriate. Where an error is

alleged to have occurred, we must be civil and careful in drawing the attention of the appropriate authorities to it and not fall for the temptation of dragging the name of an officer into disrepute.

While I advise Hon Members to use only the laid down hierarchy and procedures to resolve any grievance that may arise in relation to an officer or a department of the Service, I also call on the Chairs of the Committees to, as a matter of urgency, ensure a strict adherence to the Standing Orders of Parliament and to maintain law and order at Committee meetings.

Hon Members, in spite of your numbers, you are not to oppress the Minority. — *[Pause]*

3.31 p.m.

I do not know how many of you are old enough to recollect the boxer called Sulley Shittu—*[Laughter]*—Are you old enough to recollect Sulley Shittu? He was a very brilliant and slippery boxer, but he was a featherweight – very light, nimble-footed, and he thought he was strong. One blow from a middleweight boxer flew him so far that he never woke up, and that was the end of his boxing—*[Laughter]*—I do not want anybody to commit suicide; so we would leave it at that. For me, I would continue to perform my role; do not worry at all.

Hon Members, I do this because the Parliamentary Service Act mandates me to do so. The Speaker is the person endowed with the ultimate responsibility for the administration, organisation and control of employees within the Service.

So it is my responsibility; and I would not shirk that responsibility. It is as a result of that I let the Parliamentary Service Board put structures and systems in place to assure all staff of the Parliamentary Service of a robust support in the discharge of their duties to Parliament and Members of Parliament. This is to ensure that we have a very efficient and effective Parliament that is responsive to the needs of the people we represent.

With this, I thank all of you for your attention. *[Hear! Hear!]*

We have other Statements to make—

Yes, Majority Leader?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, I would crave your indulgence to vary the order of Business, so that we can commence Public Business.

Mr Speaker, I would want us to take the Report of the Appointments Committee on the Ministerial Nominees of His Excellency, the President, but we would need to vary the order of Business to achieve that.

With your indulgence and that of the House, if we may vary the Order of Business—

**The Speaker:** Let me hear from your Colleague, Hon Minority Leader, first.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, this is a big surprise to me. A moment ago, the Chairman of the Committee and I engaged on the draft

Report which has been sent to me to have my input. I am not aware of any Report that the Chairman and I have agreed for same to be laid and distributed; we have not discussed that. The Chairman is here, and I do not know whether he has signed any Report. So, maybe, the respected Leader of the House may give us further information on his application.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Chairman of the Appointments Committee?

**Mr Bernard Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, the draft Report has been given to us since Friday. This morning, I reached out to the Minority Leader regarding his concerns about the Report, the concerns raised were that one of the Nominees promised to bring some documents, and the documents have since been delivered.

Mr Speaker, based on the delivery of the documents, I have proceeded to sign the Report in the absence of any other information from the Minority Leader, so I do not—

**The Speaker:** Did you make the documents available to the Minority Leader?

**Mr Ahiafor:** Yes

**The Speaker:** Does he have copies?

**Mr Ahiafor:** Yes

**The Speaker:** Minority Leader, is that the case?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker —

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, please—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, we can only make progress if we act in good faith. I shall repeat that my Side, with me as the Leader, would not obstruct Government Business — never. I have been in Government before, and I know how difficult it is to run a Government. I have been a Leader, and I know. But the only pathway to success is to act in good faith.

Mr Speaker, since the Chairman has spoken for the records and *Hansard*, let me respond to him appropriately to the best of my knowledge. Last night—And because of the happenings, the person who received the document signed. The draft Report got to my office, and it was signed. I called to invite the Clerk to the Committee—And I have my text messages as evidence. I invited her to come, so that together, we can sit and discuss the issue—[*Interruption*—Mr Speaker, may the Backbenchers and the young ones appreciate the spirit of the House this afternoon. It is Government Business; and if they think they can make noise, their Government Business would delay. While you await your nominations, make the noise for recognition. That is why they have not been nominated yet. Those who do not make noise have been nominated.

Mr Speaker, those who do not make noise have been nominated, so they should be there—

**The Speaker:** Hon Minority Leader, address me.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, yes, that is their role; to make noise. So, they should go ahead.

Mr Speaker, I invited the Clerk to come this morning, but unfortunately, I received a call from another officer that the Clerk was unable to come because she has to meet with you. So, another officer called Madam Akua Durowaa came. I know her in this House; she came with another gentleman, and we went through because I have records of all the documents that the Nominees had indicated that they would provide to us. So, we went through, and one Nominee had provided some of the documents; but the rest are yet to. We went through the records, and they took note that they would follow up. The other Nominee has not provided a single document that he promised to provide to us.

3.41 p.m.

So, I even suggested to them that in view of that, we can take those Nominees who do not have any issue at all. So that for those whose documentation we are awaiting, when those documents come, we deal with them. Just on the corridors, they assured me that they were chasing for those documents.

My respected Colleague engaged me and indicated that while we wait for those documents, we could proceed. I told him that I do not have any problem with the assurance that those documents would come, because these are Nominees who had spoken on record that

they were going to provide those documents. It has been days after the vetting. If they said they had the documents, why are they not bringing them?

Mr Speaker, for my respected Colleague, the Chairman of the Committee, to spring a surprise, — these are some of the frustrations we go through. I speak on my five points of fellowship; I am not acting in bad faith and in all truthfulness, I am not aware that the Report has been signed. We all know that before the Chairman signs, the Clerk to the Committee would sign. If indeed, the engagement with me this morning where we agreed that they were going to get those documents is any engagement to go by, then how would it be that the Clerk to the Committee and the Chairman would sign knowing that they brought me a draft Report? Mr Speaker, I would want to plead with my Hon Colleagues, let us spend more time to jaw-jaw — I would not frustrate you; it is your Government; you must form the Government. I can only constructively criticise you after you have formed your Government. I do not have any business holding you back; I want that to be on record, but Mr Speaker, the approach is not the best. If he still wants to proceed in spite of all I have said, I would not mind. Of the Nominees, we have only two issues. We are voting — we are taking you through a secret ballot on two Nominees and I have indicated to you, Mr Samuel Nartey George, and Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, all the others — can I finish?

Mr Speaker, by consensus, we do not have a problem with all the others.



However, those documents that they promised to bring to us must be available. That is the only condition, and I do not have any other problem.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Majority Leader?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, our Standing Orders are very clear. Order 285 deals with Reporting. The Chairperson or a member of the Committee is authorised to present the Report of the Committees to this House. There is a Report signed by the Chairperson of the Committee and we are seeking to have that laid so that we can take it today.

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the matters that are being discussed, and in fact and in truth, the Minority Leader has discussed those matters with me. He has indicated that he has no objection to the Report, except that during the vetting, two Nominees promised to present certain documents to the Committee and he has not seen those documents. Subsequently, he confirmed that one had brought some documents, and he has no problem with the one who has brought the documents; and that one of them has not brought the relevant documents that he requested for.

Mr Speaker, I had a response for him also. I told him that in my opinion, the document that he is asking for cannot stand between us and approving that Nominee. That document, in my opinion, cannot stand between us and approving the Nominee.

Mr Speaker, in any case, when the Committee met, at the close of the sitting

of the Committee, the Committee took a decision on all the Nominees. The Committee did not say that they were suspending decision on any particular Nominee pending that Nominee submitting any document— [*Hear! Hear!*] — And the decisions were taken before the full glare of Ghanaians on television. The media was present and they captured the moment when the decision was taken on each of the Nominees and no decision was conditional.

Mr Speaker, it is true that the Minority at that time, had left the sitting of the Committee, because in their opinion, they misunderstood your directives on Friday to mean that the Appointments Committee should cease to exist. Therefore, since you had decided that the Appointments Committee should cease to exist, they were not going to participate in an illegality; so they walked out. I tried to explain to them that I was in this Chamber when you communicated to this House, and you did not say that the Appointments Committee should cease to exist, and therefore, you were calling for an urgent meeting to reconstitute the Appointments Committee.

Mr Speaker, they persisted in their understanding of what you were purported to have done, and left the sitting of the Appointments Committee. The Committee continued to work and considered all Nominees, and at the end of the consideration of all the Nominees, the Committee decided to put the question on each of the Nominees before the cameras. We usually do that in camera but on this occasion, in order to

be very transparent and accountable, the Chairman of the Committee decided to put the question before the media and they captured the entire exercise. No Nominee had his or her approval subjected to the provision of any document.

So, if after they have left the Committee, and the Committee has already taken a decision to approve all of them by consensus, I would not accept if he says that he does not agree and that they must submit some documents — *[Hear! Hear!]*.

Mr Speaker, he can come to the Chamber to say whatever he wants, but I would stand my grounds and each of those Nominees would be approved by consensus in this Chamber — *[Hear! Hear!]*.

I communicated that to my Hon Brother on the other Side, so we agreed that he should come and say whatever he would say and I would also have my say — *[Hear! Hear!]*.

Mr Speaker, we are going to take the Report subject to you granting us leave to vary the Order of Business, and he can debate the Report, but the Report says that “the Committee approves them by consensus” — *[Hear! Hear!]* — So, no two Nominees would be taken out of the Report.

Mr Speaker, that is what I can say about the Report.

3.51 p.m.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I have been given a copy of the Report; the recommendation on two of them says,

“majority decision”, and the others are on “consensus”. That is the Report they gave me. In the case of two of them, the names he mentioned, the Report says, “the Committee recommends to the House by majority decision, the approval of the nomination...” and then the name follows. That is in connection with Mr Samuel Nartey George, and Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa; so those are by majority decision, but the others are on consensus. That is what we have. Do I have a wrong Report?

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, the Report under reference is the Tenth Report and it is on Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, Mr Murtala Muhammed Ibrahim, Mr Samuel Nartey George, Mr Kofi Iddie Adams, and Mr Joseph Bukari Nikpe.

Mr Speaker, in respect of the Tenth Report, which we have to lay, it has nothing to do with Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa. The Minority Leader said we should act in good faith. In this circumstance, whatever document we demanded from Mr Samuel Nartey George, some documents have been brought to us, and indeed, the Minority Leader has a copy of the document as well as the Report.

Mr Speaker, the confusion is that the Eleventh Report would cover Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa. In relation to Mr Ablakwa, some documents were outstanding, and the Committee would have to be furnished. So, the Minority Leader is confusing the Eleventh Report with the Tenth Report. Regarding the Tenth Report, he has a copy, and a copy of the document brought by Mr Samuel Nartey George. So that is completely

different from the Eleventh Report. The issues relating to the Tenth Report would not be the same as those relating to the Eleventh Report.

Mr Speaker, so, to say that we need to act in good faith, in relation to the Tenth Report, it is not fair to the Chairman of the Committee. The Tenth Report is what we are supposed to lay, and if we look at the Order Paper, it says “Presentation of the Tenth Report”, not the Eleventh Report.

**The Speaker:** Chair, I have been given a copy of the Tenth Report, January, 2025 APP/9/1/1/010. Now, read page 22, you will see the recommendation on Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, and read page 42, you will see the recommendation on Mr Samuel Nartey George. Have you seen that? What does it say?

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, I am not speaking in respect of the decision of the Committee or the recommendation of the Committee. I am speaking in reference to the fact that the Minority Leader said, acting in good faith; he has not seen a copy of the Report.

**The Speaker:** Yes, I have gone past that—

**Mr Ahiafor:** Then, I am saying that he is confusing the Tenth and the Eleventh Report—

**The Speaker:** Chair, I understand that point. I was addressing the issue the Majority Leader raised. The Majority Leader’s understanding is that they are all by consensus, and I am saying that the

Report I have is not by consensus; it is by majority decision. That is what is in the Report.

My attention was being drawn to another copy of the Tenth Report, and so, when he brought it, we had to compare notes and we saw that even with what he brought, at the same page 42, the recommendation is “majority decision”.

Now, at the last page, which is page 79, you have there, “the Committee, therefore, recommends to the House by consensus, the adoption of its Report and the approval of the nominations of”, and the number there is only five. But in that, you have number 3, where you have put there, Mr Samuel Nartey George as Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations, but in the body of the Report, it says majority decision. That is what I am drawing your attention to, and both are signed by the Clerk to the Committee and you, the First Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the Committee.

Yes, please?

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, the decision of the Committee, per the Report I am holding, the Minority has reached out to us that Mr Samuel Nartey George would be by a majority decision; the rest of the Nominees are by consensus.

**The Speaker:** Exactly what I said.

**Mr Ahiafor:** That is so, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Yes, but at the last page, when you talked about consensus,

you included the name of Mr Samuel Nartey Goerge, which meant that one too is by consensus.

Hon Members, are you following?

**Some Hon Members:** Yes

**The Speaker:** Do you have copies of the Report? That is the conflict in the Rep

Yes, please?

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, I would be able to do that correction in presenting the Report of the Committee.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I will allow the Chair of the Committee to present the Report and do the right thing as we always do by correcting the contradiction.

**Mr Ahiafor:** That is so.

**The Speaker:** Yes, let me listen to the Minority Leader, then I will come to you, Majority Leader.

Yes, please?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, limiting ourselves to even the Tenth Report, this is the very problem I have been raising from day one. When the Clerks to the Committee reached out to me this morning and we had a meeting on the draft, the understanding reached was that they would engage our respected Colleague, Mr Samuel Nartey Geroge, to bring the rest of the documents to enable us finalise the Report. That is the Tenth Report. Mr

Speaker, here is a situation that without reaching out to me again, we have our Clerk to the Committee co-signing the Report with the Chair.

4.01 p.m.

Mr Speaker, let the records reflect that per the practice of this House, leaders of Committees would always have to sign off before a Committee report is finalised and brought to this Chamber. It is only when one Side has given a firm indication of its intent that the issue of a Minority report would arise. Mr Speaker, this is not the case, and this is where I would want to reserve my comment on the actions of our secretariat in private; I would not speak about the actions of the secretariat anymore in public.

Mr Speaker, I am happy that the Clerk-to-Parliament is in this Chamber, and could hear us. What is happening is a bit of a challenge. I beg to say that until all the information that the nominee himself has committed to providing are provided; until all those documents are provided, we cannot finalise the Report. I have therefore, no hesitation at all in saying that for Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, Mr Murtala Muhammed Ibrahim, Mr Kofi Iddie Adams and Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari, we can take them because it is by consensus. We should not allow one person's issue to stand in the way of other Nominees we do not have a problem with.

Mr Speaker, in fact, let me publicly state this that if our respected Colleague brings the outstanding documents, and they are satisfactory, we have no

hesitation changing our position. We have done that in the case of Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, where we took a decision to take him through a vote. The issue that we had with him was resolved; the Majority Leader, my good self and the Chairman resolved it and upon resolution, we amended the records right here on the floor of the House. Nobody should create the impression that someone is in to frustrate another's political appointment, no!

Mr Speaker, the very things that our Colleagues demanded when they were in opposition are the very things that we are demanding from them. So they should take it easy and engage us more, rather than confronting us; the confrontation would not work. We have a four-year journey, and this is just the third week, so they should take it easy with us. It is not the intimidation and the social media attacks that would get me, Kwamena, to be cowed; it would not work; I have seen all this before. I want to do the work in a manner that they as Colleagues would know that I respect them. I would not disrespect any Nominee; after all, they are going to be our minister. But please, let the right thing be done in the interest of the nation.

Mr Speaker, that is all I demand.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, your Standing Orders are clear as to the preparation of reports of committees. It is Standing Order 283, and it says:

(1) Members of a Committee, including the Chairperson, may present reports for consideration of the Committee and the reports shall be

recorded in the minutes of proceedings of the Committee.

(2) The Chairperson shall propose for consideration, the reports in the order of receipt until one of the reports is accepted as a basis for discussion, beginning with the report of the Chairperson.

(3) The question to be proposed by the Chairperson on any report shall be *“That the report brought up by Honourable Member for ... be read a Second Time, paragraph by paragraph.”*

(4) When the question has been agreed to, a question shall not be proposed on any other report but portions of other reports may be offered as amendments to the report under consideration where they are relevant to the agreed report.

(5) On the conclusion of the consideration of the report, the chairperson shall put the question *“That this Report be the report from the Committee to the House.”*

At all Committees, this is the procedure you would go through; so, at the end of the day, the report is the report of the Committee.

Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, indeed, that Order governs the process of generating reports, but my Colleague on the other Side knows that we have never really complied with that mechanism. Indeed, it is new and we are yet to begin to warm up to that process.

Mr Speaker, I have heard my Colleague on the other Side and I just note that this Report has some inconsistencies. Because we have the main body of the Report on one of the Nominees saying that it is by majority decision, and in the concluding portion of the Report, indicating that it is by consensus. So there is a problem with the Report and I would ask for a short suspension of sitting for me to engage with my Colleague on the other Side so that we can correct the Reports, build consensus and come back to the House.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, there is an application before the House for us to take a suspension, for how long? 10 minutes? one hour?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, one hour.

**The Speaker:** You need a whole hour to discuss this simple —

**Mr Ayariga:** One hour is alright, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I proceed to suspend sitting — Minority Leader, you said your position is?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, the Leader of Government Business has made an application, who am I to oppose him? I am not opposed to his application. So Mr Speaker, grant the application as prayed.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, the sitting of the House is suspended for 30 minutes. — [*Hear! Hear!*] —

4.09 — *Sitting suspended.*

5.31 p.m. — *Sitting resumed*

[MR SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, while we wait for the Chairman of the Appointments Committee, today is World Cancer Day, so I have a couple of Statements relating to the day. I think the Hon Member for Offinso North wrote, but I can give the opportunity to the former Deputy Minister for Health to read the Statement while we wait for the Chairman of the Appointments Committee.

Hon Member for Nsuta/Kwaman Beposo, the floor is yours now.

## STATEMENTS

### World Cancer Day

**Ms Adelaide Ntim (NPP — Nsuta/Kwaman/Beposo):** Mr Speaker, I stand here to make this Statement on the occasion of World Cancer Day, observed annually, on 4<sup>th</sup> February, to raise awareness about cancer and evaluate Ghana's progress in tackling cancer and other pressing health challenges. This year's theme, "Closing the Care Gap," reflects Ghana's commitment to equitable and accessible health care for all citizens.

Mr Speaker, cancer remains a leading cause of death in Ghana, with diseases such as breast, cervical, prostate and colorectal cancers severely impacting families and communities. However, we

have made a significant stride in improving access to cancer treatment.

Mr Speaker, in June 2022, the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), expanded its benefit package to include treatment for four common childhood cancers: Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, Burkitt Lymphoma, Retinoblastoma, and Wilms Tumor. This decision has brought relief to many families by ensuring timely and affordable care for children battling with these cancers. Also, the inclusion of prostate cancer treatment in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) in December 2022, which commenced in 2023, is already positively impacting lives.

Mr Speaker, in addition to addressing cancer, the NHIA has taken bold steps to alleviate the burden of kidney disease. On 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2024, the NHIA launched a free dialysis programme that now benefits over 1,200 renal disease patients nationwide. This followed a successful six-month pilot programme, during which children under 18, and adults over 60 received up to eight free dialysis sessions monthly, while patients aged 19 to 59 had two subsidised sessions. The programme is funded through government allocations, development partners and corporate sponsorships, with an annual budget estimated between GH¢20 million to GH¢57 million. This initiative is a monumental step toward reducing the financial strain on affected families.

Mr Speaker, another noteworthy initiative is the Government's Agenda 111 Project, under President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. This transformational programme aimed at constructing district hospitals across the country, seeks to address healthcare disparities, especially in rural and underserved areas. Once completed, it will provide state-of-the-art facilities, including oncology services, diagnostic tools, and specialised care, thereby closing the care gap and promoting healthcare equity. I urge this Administration to prioritise completing this project, as it would have a lasting impact on the health and well-being of our citizens.

Mr Speaker, the Government has also implemented various programmes over the past eight years to support cancer patients, including National Strategy for Cancer Control, aiming to reduce cancer mortality by 30 per cent through prevention, early detection, improved treatment, and enhanced quality of life for patients; human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme, targeting girls aged 10 to 14 – this initiative has significantly reduced cervical cancer risk; Rebecca Foundation's Cancer Project, supporting breast and cervical cancer screening and early detection in rural areas.

Mr Speaker, additionally, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the NHIA, Ghana Health Service (GHS) and other stakeholders, has worked tirelessly to establish oncology centres, provide diagnostic equipment, and train specialists to improve access to quality care.

Mr Speaker, despite these efforts, challenges persist. Many rural communities still lack access to diagnostic and treatment services, and the cost of advanced care remains a barrier for many families. We must, therefore:

1. Increase investment in health infrastructure,
2. Strengthen public education on disease prevention, and
3. Expand Public-Private Partnerships to address these gaps.

Mr Speaker, on this World Cancer Day, I call on this House to support ongoing and future initiatives aimed at tackling critical health challenges like cancer and kidney diseases. Let us also commit to completing transformational projects like Agenda 111, which will establish a strong foundation for accessible and equitable healthcare for generations to come. Together, we can make significant strides in improving the health and well-being of all Ghanaians.

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

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, before I invite Members to comment on the Statement—Is the Chairman of the Appointments Committee around?

Majority Leader, I wish you could lay the Report before we invite Members to—I said if you could lay it before we invite Members to comment, so that after the comments, we take the Report itself.

Yes, First Deputy Speaker, you may lay the Report.

5.41 p.m.

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, we can lay the tenth Report.

## PAPERS

*By the Chairman of the Committee*

—

Tenth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers of State.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** The Report has been duly laid. They are to be duly distributed to Hon Members.

I would now invite Hon Members to contribute. Yes, Hon Member for Okaikwei North, let us hear you.

**Ms Theresa Lardi Awuni (NDC — Okaikwei North):** Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the Statement made by my Colleague.

I would like to commend the maker of the Statement and also thank her for taking time to research and elaborate on the awareness of cervical cancer and breast cancer. This year's theme which is "Empowering, Prevention and Early Detection" is very key. Not too long ago, I chaired a programme at the Achimota Hospital where a survivor of cervical cancer shared her ordeal. I think that it is important for every woman to always go



and get screened. It is not all right to just go for our normal check-up and then leave the important aspects such as cervical cancer and breast cancer out. A lot of people today are dying because they cannot afford the medication.

The survivor who shared her story said she sold her house to be able to stay alive to tell her story. Today, how many of our Ghanaian women out there can afford such expensive treatments? We urge our health directorates, hospitals, and our Health Minister to put in a lot to ensure that cases like cervical cancer and breast cancer are taken seriously because it is deadly and women are vulnerable.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Hon Member for Atwima Nwabiagya North, Mr Frank Yeboah let us hear you.

**Mr Frank Yeboah (NPP — Atwima Nwabiagya North):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I am Frank Yeboah, the Hon Member for Atwima Nwabiagya North.

I want to add my voice to the Statement ably made by my Colleague, the Hon Member for Nsuta/Kwaman Beposo. We all agree that cancer is one of the killer diseases in the country and in the world at large.

Mr Speaker, on the 23rd of December 2024, World Health Organization (WHO), released a report that sought to suggest that about 75 per cent of deaths globally are accounted for by non-communicable diseases, of

which cancer is one. So, if we look at it, cancer is one of the killer diseases.

In Ghana, the NHIS covers cervical cancer and breast cancer. Now, the NHIS also covers four main childhood cancers. But the unfortunate aspect is that it does not cover prostate cancer which is killing most men. Most men are suffering from prostate cancer, but unfortunately, we do not have any means of healthcare for that.

Mr Speaker, I urge the House to cause prostate cancer treatment to be included in the NHIS benefit package so that men would not die and the workforce of the economy of the country would not die.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, let me give the Floor to Hon Member for Korle Klottey.

**Dr Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings (NDC — Korle Klottey):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the Statement made by our Colleague.

Mr Speaker, it is true that cervical cancer is one of the most common in Ghana among women, and only 3.6 per cent of women in Ghana aged 18 to 69 have ever been screened, and 4.3 per cent of women aged 30 to 49, which is the highest risk group have ever been screened for cervical cancer. As a result of that, normally, this cancer presents quite late and does not have a good prognosis at that point.

Mr Speaker, in addition to the contributions made by other Hon Members, I would like to add certain things that women ought to look out for just as a means of providing extra information, because this serves as a platform. One of the things that serves as a red flag in a woman is when there are abnormal bleeding in between menstrual cycles, and also bleeding after sexual intercourse. Women should be aware of these two things and should be concerned about them when they do occur.

With regards to breast cancer, women should get to know their breasts very well and their husbands or partners should do the same. [*Hear! Hear!*] It is usually advisable that the best time to actually check the breasts is in the shower; when there is soap and water, it makes it easier for the hands to glide over the breasts, so that one can feel if there are any lumps or bumps in the breasts. It would be also very important to add that when you do check the breasts, you must also check your armpits, because the lymph nodes in the armpits are usually where there are drainages from the breasts as well.

Other important things to look out for in terms of abnormal changes in the breasts are when the nipples are inverted. So, if the nipples are not sticking out as usual, and they start to point the wrong way, that is another thing to look out for. Hon Minority Leader, please pay attention, this is important [*Laughter*].

In addition, one of the other things to look out for is what is called the *peau d'orange*, where the skin appears like an

orange peel, that also shows that there might be edema — yes, an orange peel. I think we are all familiar with the way an orange peel looks. These are just few pointers that we should look out for, simply to raise our awareness to what is not normal. If one is not breastfeeding, having any discharge from the nipple is also abnormal.

So, for the male Members of Parliament (MPs), they should pay attention when they are with their wives and significant others. The women should get to know their bodies so that when something changes, they are actually the first person to know. When they go and see their doctors, they should make it a point to bring their doctor's attention to all of these. Once a year, when they see their doctors, they should ask for a cervical screening or as well; they should just have their breasts checked.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, let me go to the Hon Member for Offinso North.

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

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, speak up.

**Dr Asamoah:** Mr Speaker, cancer has been with us since creation, and it keeps increasing, largely because of our lifestyle and the food that we eat. The Abuja Declaration requires that each

nation allocates at least 15 per cent of its national budget towards health, and we all know the cost of managing or treating cancer is very high. Many times, the medication that we get to use tends to cause more harm than good.

5.51 p.m.

So, as a nation, we may have to look at some issues and tackle them very well.

First is to look at the public awareness and the health surveillance system that we have in this country. We are all talking about screening and how we can recognise breast cancer early enough, but we all know that many women who tend to get breast cancer do get earlier diseases that normally will lead to breast cancer. That means that expanding screening systems in our country or all the other systems or parameters on the causes of cancer is critical.

Mr Speaker, it is important that we establish at least regional centres for treating cancer. We know that we have only one quaternary health treatment centre in the country, and it would be good if we could add one or two more quaternary centres, so that we can expand our screening and treatment centres in the country.

Mr Speaker, budget has always been an issue; thus, we do not have enough infrastructure to support cancer treatment, management, and prevention. In the first place, one would want to prevent cancer so that we do not have to spend so much money to treat it. But, in case it happens, which we know, the

number of people who would be infected or would have cancer would increase anyway. So, it is good that as a nation, we increase our budgetary allocation towards cancer management and treatment.

Also, I believe we have local medications or natural systems that we can use to manage or to help prevent it. It is important that as a country, we invest so much in research, not only in a few centres within the country, but also, a regional research centre that could help us support and identify treatment systems that can be used locally, which can bring the cost of managing cancer down.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, let me give the opportunity to the Hon Member for Krowor.

**Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey (NDC — Krowor):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by my able Colleague. I also want to thank her for bringing this to the fore. In addition to the many things that have been mentioned here, I would urge us all to pay critical attention to the general health and well-being of women in our various constituencies.

Treating cancer is very expensive. As legislators, as we go about our duties, it is important that we pay close attention to some of these issues, especially treatment of cancer and the rest. It is important that we allocate resources to not just policy issues, but to ensure that

we, more or less, go for public sensitisation and education. So that prevention will be the focus, and not just waiting for it to be cured.

Mr Speaker, sensitisation is critical because in our various constituencies, we have people who hold the belief that some of these things are religiously or spiritually orchestrated. And for that matter, instead of seeking medical attention, they go to camps and all that to be treated. Most often, by the time victims or people realise, it is late; and so, curing the cancers become extra expensive and most often fatal.

Mr Speaker, so, I will urge Colleagues in this House, to also allocate part of our health fund to ensure that we sensitise our constituents to do periodic checkups and examination through the free medical care. This is so that a lot of people will be sensitised and aware of the dangers of these cancers and seek early prevention.

Mr Speaker, on this note, I want to say thank you to my Colleague, once again, and to you for allowing me to add on to what has been said.

Thank you very much. [*Hear! Hear!*]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, I will give the last contribution to Dr Nawaane.

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

Mr Speaker, cancer is a worldwide problem and the statistics are very staggering. About 19.3 million new cases were reported in 2020 and 10 million cancer-related deaths were reported in that year. Experts are saying that by 2050, we should have cases up to 35 million. In Ghana, it is also about the same thing; it mirrors the world statistics. We have 27,385 new cases each year, averagely, and 17,944 deaths annually.

Mr Speaker, in my 32 years of medical practice, the issue with cancer in this country is that people report very late. They always go to some other sources and attribute it to the fact that it is either witchcraft or some other juju, and they report very late. Because of that, sometimes, a person does not even need any equipment to diagnose it; he or she would immediately know that it is cancer, like the breast cancer and cervical cancer that they have talked about. Without even any instruments, one would definitely just know that this is cancer.

As I talk now, there are a lot of cases in my constituency. Sometimes I find it difficult to take a decision on whether I can use my National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) to treat only one patient. Mr Speaker, we need to take certain bold steps and one of them is that anybody who is well-employed should, on a yearly basis, undergo medical checkup. It is important because that is the only way we can catch the cancer, shall I say, young, or we would catch the cancer early. If we do not do that, the cost of treatment, as we know, is US\$5,500 per case on the average; I am only speaking

of the average and that is about GH¢88,000. How many Ghanaians can afford a medical bill of GH¢88,000?

6.01 p.m.

We are doing our best; four childhood cancer services have been kept on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). But, if we want to put all these treatments on the NHIS, probably, we would not be able to contain the situation. So, we have the Mahama Care, which is supposed to handle the non-communicable diseases, of which cancer is one.

I hope that the Hon Minister for Health, my good Friend, Mr Akandoh, would take this up and ensure that the Mahama Care, which is going to be a special fund that would be used for non-communicable diseases, is established as quickly as possible to assist these kinds of patients.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

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

Hon Members, let me thank the Maker and all the contributors to the Statement. We will bring Statement time to a close.

I would therefore, invite you to come with me to page 3 in today's Order Paper.

**Mr Frank Annoh-Dompkeh** —  
*rose* —

**Mr Frank Annoh-Dompkeh:** Mr Speaker, we have a commemorative Statement that stands in the name of Dr Kingsley Agyemang.

Mr Speaker, because it is commemorative, I would want to make an application to you to accept it.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, this is commemorative —  
*[Interruption]*

**Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe** — *rose*  
—

**Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe:** Mr Speaker, we have Government Business to do so let us finish with the approval of the Nominees. Then we can do the Statements because we have about two or three of them. We would do them after Government Business. Mr Speaker, we are ready to take the Motion. *[Hear! Hear!]*

**Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, I just want to put across this important message and it goes to my respected available Leader. We are fine-tuning the Report. We would do the Government Business. We are not opposed. We would help them to do it. Let us finish this commemorative Statement. The Reports are not ready. I would always tell you the truth. The Reports are not ready yet.

Mr Speaker, let us do the Commemorative Statement. By the time we get done, the Report would be in. So, Mr Speaker, please admit it.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:**  
Please, let us accommodate it.

Dr Kingsley Agyemang, the floor is yours.

You may read the Statement now.

**Commemorative Statement on the  
60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of Dr  
Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye  
Danquah**

**Dr Kingsley Agyemang (NPP — Abuakwa South):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much. It is a profound privilege to stand before this esteemed House today to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the untimely passing of one of Ghana's foremost visionaries, Dr Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye Danquah, affectionately known as J.B. Danquah. —*[Interruption]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, let us give him the audience.

**Dr Agyemang:** Mr Speaker, thank you.

As we gather to reflect on his life and legacy, we honour a man whose contributions, have left an indelible mark on the foundation of our nation's political, intellectual, and cultural heritage.

My predecessor, Mr Samuel Atta Akyea, has, over the past 16 years, marked this auspicious day with glowing tributes, a tradition I intend to continue in honour of the man who once held a seat in this august House as a Member of Parliament for Akyem Abuakwa.

Upon his return home in 1927, J.B. Danquah plunged headlong into public life, embodying a spirit of relentless dedication to his country. In 1930, he established what is believed to be Ghana's first daily newspaper, the Times of West Africa, which he used as a platform to champion political and intellectual discourse until 1935.

That same year, he co-founded the Gold Coast Youth Conference, serving as a strong advocate for constitutional reform. In 1934, as Secretary of a delegation to the Colonial Office, he made bold representations against the Sedition Bill and advocated for an enhanced constitution for the Gold Coast.

Between 1930 and 1936, J.B. Danquah conducted extensive research on the history and traditions of the Gold Coast people. It was during this period that he traced the connection between the ancient Sudanese Empire of Ghana and the Gold Coast, providing the historical basis for the country's adoption of the name "Ghana" upon achieving independence on 6th March, 1957.

Tragically, on 4th February, 1965, Dr. Danquah passed away under harrowing circumstances at the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. His death remains a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by those who sought freedom, justice, and national dignity. His political philosophy called for a higher standard of political maturity, in which the opposition is seen not as the enemy, but as a vital contributor to the national discourse. This principle of

constructive engagement remains particularly pertinent today as we strive to elevate political dialogue to one of respect, reason, collaboration and mutual understanding.

Reflecting on Dr Danquah's teachings, we find rich lessons for today's politics and governance, especially in the wake of the 2024 elections. The early and gracious concession made by Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, former Vice President of the Republic, following the defeat of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), and the subsequent acknowledgement of this sportsmanship by President John Mahama in his inaugural speech offer a powerful example of the democratic maturity Dr Danquah championed. This remarkable act of statesmanship is a reminder that true leadership is not measured by victory alone, but by the ability to place the nation above personal or partisan interests. It challenges political leaders across the spectrum to rise above divisiveness and view each other not as adversaries, but as indispensable partners in the shared mission of building a stronger, more united Ghana.

Mr Speaker, in the pantheon of Ghana's founding fathers, Dr Danquah holds an indispensable and revered place. His intellectual brilliance and political foresight were pivotal in the shaping of modern Ghana. As a founding member of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and a principal architect of our independence movement, his contributions to the political and philosophical foundation of the nation remain fundamental to the

Ghana we know today. His life and work serve as an urgent call to the youth of this country to embrace his spirit of selfless service, rising to the challenge of building a stronger, united, and prosperous Ghana for generations to come.

Dr Danquah's influence extended far beyond his activism for independence. His intellectual output, particularly his writings on governance, political economy, and social progress, has had a lasting impact on the political thought of successive generations.

6.11 p.m.

As we delve deeper into Dr Danquah's unparalleled legacy, three of his foremost profound statements come to mind, each a window into his worldview, his philosophy, and his steadfast devotion to the ideals of freedom, humanity, and collective progress.

In the foreword to his seminal work, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, Dr Danquah posed a touching rhetorical question:

“Again, who is my neighbour? He whose goodness makes me good and who, rather than place me a little lower than man, would accord me the beneficence of the good Samaritan.”

This Statement encapsulates his deep understanding of the inter-connectedness of humanity. To him, the measure of a just society was its ability to inspire goodness in individuals, creating a ripple effect of mutual respect and moral elevation. It was not enough to merely

coexist; our collective actions, as neighbours, must uplift one another in profound and meaningful ways.

He further illuminated his ideals in another compelling assertion, I quote:

“It is much better to sacrifice the lust for egoistic hedonism as an end and work for the social good, for it is the highest good, the *summum bonum*, the richest end for each man and all of men.”

This was more than a call to selflessness; it was a philosophical challenge to place the common good above individual gratification. In Dr Danquah’s view, true fulfilment could only be found in service to society—a timeless principle that resonates today as a moral compass for leadership and governance.

Finally, we reflect on the historic moment at Saltpond in 1947, where the UGCC was inaugurated. Before the assembly of chiefs, lawyers, clergymen, traders, and thousands of citizens, Dr Danquah spoke words did not only moved the crowd to tears but also etched his vision into the annals of history. I quote:

“But there is one thing we brought with us from ancient Ghana. We brought with us our ancient freedom. Today, the safety of that freedom is threatened, has been threatened, has been continuously threatened for a hundred years, since the Bond of 1844, and the time has come for a decision.”

Even at a time when the land was known as the Gold Coast, Dr Danquah’s

foresight transcended the immediate struggles of his era. He invoked the name Ghana, linking the aspirations of independence to the enduring legacy of ancient freedom—a legacy that symbolised dignity, resilience, and self-determination.

These quotes demonstrate that Dr Danquah was not merely a thinker bound by his time; he was a global visionary whose words continue to challenge us to aspire to greatness, to build a nation rooted in justice, and to embrace the highest ideals of humanity. His ability to draw from history, philosophy, and human compassion sets him apart as a towering figure in the pantheon of our national heroes.

Mr Speaker, in closing, despite the constraints of time, it is impossible to overlook the powerful tributes and reflections on the life of Dr J. B. Danquah. While we could list the countless individuals who have spoken of his profound legacy, I am compelled to highlight just a few who have eloquently captured the essence of his contributions to our nation.

Professor Mike Oquaye, referencing the *Hansard* of the Legislative Assembly from the early 1950s, reminded us of Dr Danquah’s visionary leadership in pushing for the creation of a national committee to supervise Ghana’s energy future. Dr Danquah’s foresight in pushing for what would eventually become the Volta River Authority (VRA) was a proof of his commitment to ensuring the country’s development, even as Ghana now grapples with the power crisis he had sought to prevent.



President John Agyekum Kufuor stressed the need for all Ghanaians, not just those in the New Patriotic Party (NPP), to honour Dr Danquah for his foundational role in shaping the country we now call home. As President Kufuor himself put it, “J. B. Danquah belongs to Ghana; he irrefutably played a titanic role in the making of our nation that we are all part of today.”

These are but a few of the countless voices that have echoed Dr Danquah’s legacy. His indelible mark on our nation’s history, politics, and intellectual life continues to inspire us as we honour his memory today.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, Dr Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye Danquah’s legacy transcends the boundaries of time and political affiliation. He remains an enduring symbol of intellectual brilliance, political maturity, and firm perseverance to the ideals of justice, freedom, and unity. His life, marked by sacrifice, foresight, and a bottomless commitment to the welfare of this nation, continues to illumine the path towards a Ghana that is not only free but one that is founded upon the principles of democracy, respect for the rule of law, and the common good. As we honour his memory today, let us renew our collective pledge to uphold the values for which he stood, values that are as relevant today as they were in his time.

Mr Speaker, I extend my deepest gratitude to you and to this esteemed House for granting me the privilege to reflect on the life and contributions of such a distinguished son of Ghana.

I thank you Mr Speaker.

*[Hear! Hear!]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, I would take two comments.

Yes, Hon Member for Damongo?

**Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor (NPP — Damongo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement ably presented by the Hon Member for Abuakwa South Constituency on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of Dr Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye Danquah.

Mr Speaker, Dr Danquah, indeed, is an icon and what is happening here in this Chamber—This Parliament and what transpires here in this Parliament is exactly what Dr Danquah stood for, what he fought for, and what he died for.

Mr Speaker, at the birth of our country, there were two clear schools of thought, and I would refer this House to the profound and prophetic statement made by Dr Joseph Boakye Danquah on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1947 at Saltpond. This is where Dr Danquah made the point that Ghana should be governed on the basis of multi-party democracy: a democracy which is anchored on the rule of law, a democracy which would have a Parliament such as ours, a democracy which would have different shades of opinion as we have today.

Mr Speaker, Dr Danquah saw that as far back as 1947, and we are never to forget that there were very important

voices at time who disagreed with Dr Danquah. Indeed, at some stage in the evolution of our nationhood, particularly at the infant stages of our nationhood, there was no Parliament like this. Yes, there was a Parliament, but there was a Parliament occupied by only one shade of opinion.

6.21p.m.

Mr Speaker, the ingredients of today's Ghana and the characteristics of today's Ghana was the Ghana Dr Danquah prophetically advocated for even before our independence. It does not matter where you belong on the political divide; you cannot contest the fact that Dr Danquah stood for the major pillars of our democratic state as we have it today: rule of law, freedom of speech, multiparty democracy, equality before the law, property owning democracy.

Mr Speaker, that is the bedrock of today's democracy; that is the bedrock of Ghana's economy today. Property owning democracy—The farmer in my Constituency who farms and harvests, and he is free to sell, he is free to own property as he wishes, and spends the fruits of his labour as he pleases, Mr Speaker, that is what Dr Danquah stood for.

As it has been established today, even our friends from the other Side, I mean the Majority Side, the NDC Side, the social democrats, the socialists, today, are now owners of mansions and properties. That is property owning democracy—*[Hear! Hear!]*—That is what Dr Danquah stood for. Today, our friends from the other Side are defending

their properties, those that belong to their wives, their cousins, their friends, properties in Cantonments, properties in Labone, properties in Airport Hills, properties all over the place.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude by saying that what Dr Danquah did not subscribe to though is that we should have fairness even when we are building a liberal economy and Dr Danquah believed that even in a free liberal market economy, there are those who are underprivileged and that is where the State comes.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank the maker of this Statement that Dr Danquah continues to be a colossus in Ghanaian political history and he is indeed the doyen of Ghana politics.

I thank you very much Mr Speaker—*[Hear! Hear!]*

**Mr Murtala Mohammed Ibrahim**—*rose*—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** You just came in and you want to contribute.

**Mr M. M. Ibrahim:** Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this Statement briefly.

Mr Speaker, it is important for us to appreciate our historical antecedent as a State and when we are making Statement of this sort, we ought to be factual because the Standing Orders are very clear. One must not make a Statement that generates a debate so when one makes a Statement attributing to—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Mr Contributor—[Uproar]—

[Order! Order!]

**Mr M. M. Ibrahim:** Mr Speaker, I am a Member of Parliament—[Uproar]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, I am not going to say anything. He is going to speak. I just want to warn him that he is a nominee and today we are going to consider his application. Hon Member, let us hear you.

**Mr M. M. Ibrahim:** Mr Speaker, with all sincerity, I think it is a threat. I am a Member of Parliament. First and foremost, I am a Member of the Legislative arm and I have absolute responsibility and right like any other person before I became a Ministerial nominee.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member for Atiwa West, take your seat, I will come to you.

**Mr M. M. Ibrahim:** My statement is very simple. Yes, it is good to eulogise Dr J. B. Danquah. It is good to espouse some of the good things that he did and I would not stand here and say he never did anything good. But it is important to appreciate the fact that he betrayed his State—[Uproar]—In fact, Martin Meredith's book—[Uproar]—Before I walked into this Chamber —[Uproar]—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, please do not do that. Hon Members, do not put on your microphones when somebody is speaking, please.—[Uproar]—Mr Ibrahim, please conclude.

**Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza —**  
rose—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Minister, no. We have a lot of work to do.

**Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, I know you to be very fair. When my very good friend, Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor was speaking, he said many things that people here disagreed. Mr Speaker, I got up but you never gave me the opportunity. Nobody here put on the microphone. It is unbecoming for our Colleagues who are in the Minority to think that though they are in a small number, they can disrupt things anywhere they like—[Uproar]—It is becoming an attitude. Mr Speaker, we are taking notice, I urge them to listen to Mr Murtala Ibrahim and we would also listen to them.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Mr Minister—

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, their attitude—That they are not many but they would disrupt anything, we are taking notice.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Mr Minister, well noted. Yes, Mr Murtala Ibrahim, just continue.

**Mr M. M. Ibrahim:** Mr Speaker, this is a House of record, this is a House that we do not fight but our brains fight. It is a House of intellectualism; it is a House of intelligence. Espouse your point and I espouse my point. Leave that to the judgement of the people of this country. I am quoting Martin Meredith's

book *The State of Africa*. He describes Dr J. B. Danquah as one of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents who was paid to betray his country—*[Uproar]*—These are not my words. Mr Speaker, I have a copy of that book in my office—*[Uproar]*—he played no role in the building of Akosombo Dam. Do not attribute something to him—*[Uproar]*—And Mr Speaker, he also said that Dr J. B. Danquah died a horrible death under Busia. As a matter of fact, the National Liberation Council (NLC) constituted a committee to investigate the circumstance under which Dr J. B. Danquah died.

6.31 p.m.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, conclude—*[Uproar]*—

Order! Order!

Hon Members, take your seats. No, I am not taking any more. Mr Murtala! No. Hon Members, I would not continue with the comments.

*[Pause]*

Hon Members—Mr Murtala Ibrahim, if you would not listen to me, I would walk you out, so listen to me, please. I not taking any more contributions on this topic.

*[Uproar]*

Let me now come to Leadership. Yes, I said two from each Side and I have taken one from each Side; Leadership would make up the two. Yes, Minority Leader, you can decide to yield it to anyone.

*[Pause]*

Leader, let us hear you.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, under normal circumstance, a commemorative Statement is not to generate debates. I would want to remind the House that these are national heroes, some are on our Side and some are on their Side, so let us be mindful of how we react when it is our turn. Obviously, there will come a time when a Statement will be made in honour of the hard work of former Presidents Nkrumah, Limann, Jerry Rawlings, Professor Mills, and all. Let us focus on their contribution.

*[Uproar]*

**Dr Agyeman-Rawlings** — *rose* —

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, please, let us give him a hearing. I am not taking any point of Order. Leader, let us hear you.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, obviously, in such commemorative Statements, our focus should be on the contributions made by these national heroes, rather than using this as an opportunity to debate. I recall that in the Eighth Parliament, there was such an occasion and I was directed—I do not have a problem admitting where I am wrong; I cannot be perfect. I remember that my respected Colleague, Dr Zanetor—*[Interruption]*—Very well, it is good to be corrected; that is alright, Dr Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings. I got it right this time.

Mr Speaker, my Colleagues are telling me to say that she has been ignored by the Mahama Administration—[*Laughter*]—but I would not say that, I am not going to say that.

Mr Speaker, on that occasion, I was reminded by the Chair that days like that are not meant for looking at criticisms and all, so let us focus on the person's contribution to national development. So, I just want to remind Colleagues as such on this. If we want to waste time on adverse publications by people, none of us would have our peace in this room. As I sit here, I am sure many people are writing all kinds of articles, but there are good sides to me and there are good sides to Colleagues that would have to be discussed, and I believe that is what the Hon Member said.

Mr Speaker, the records have it that Dr J. B. Danquah was more than a politician. He was a legal luminary, a historian, a philosopher, and one of Ghana's foremost nationalists. The lead role he played in the formation of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), which is the first political party we know has to be emphasised. His advocacy and intellectual rigour helped shape the political consciousness that led to Ghana's independence; nothing can be taken away from him—[**An Hon Member:** Tweaa!]*—[Laughter]*

Mr Speaker—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Leader, hold on. Who said that

“Tweaa”?—[*Laughter*]—Leader, the person is afraid, so go on—[*Laughter*]

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, I know who said it; that is Mr Asiedu Nketia's son—[*Laughter*]—He said it.

Mr Speaker, Dr J. B. Danquah had an enduring contribution, which was founded on the research he made into the history of our country. He is credited with proposing the name Ghana for our nation, linking us to the proud heritage of the ancient Ghana Empire. He believed in an independent Ghana built on democratic principles, personal freedoms, and the rule of law. At the risk of being repetitive, these have been emphasised by the earlier speakers, including my respected Colleague, Mr Samuel Abu Jinapor.

These values that he espoused, Mr Speaker, continue to shape our governance today. Let me quote a profound statement which resonates with many students of politics:

“True democracy demands of men that they dare to be wise, liberty does not mean lawlessness. It means the observance of laws that uphold freedom. Freedom is not a gift to be handed down, but a right to be fought for”.

6.41 p.m.

Mr Speaker, indeed, freedom is a far right and we know what Martin Luther King stood for and those values he stood for and its contribution to the black liberation and redemption and that opportunity for all that his values created for America.

Mr Speaker, this great man's belief in democracy and freedom was so profound that he challenged Ghana's first post-

independence President in 1960 by contesting Dr Kwame Nkrumah. Just for emphasis, it was J. B. Danquah and his colleagues who actually contributed to bring Dr Kwame Nkrumah to Ghana to be the Secretary to the UGCC. Although he was unsuccessful in that election, his courage alone introduced the need for our country to have a multi-party democracy. We cannot have a one-party state. When someone has an idea for a country's governance, it does not take a day for it to come into fruition. With those values that he espoused; it took time. He himself did not live to celebrate these. To see— but over time, after the first coup, we went into a Second Republic; another coup, went to a Third Republic; another coup for over 11 years, and then we gave birth to the Fourth Republic. It is instructive that those who were involved in the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) regime were the very people who gave birth to the Fourth Republic, meaning that forces of democracy worked around the clock to ensure that they appreciated the need to have democracy and they submitted themselves to multi-party democracy. All these took foundation from the writings of Dr J.B. Danquah.

Mr Speaker, beyond politics, he was a prolific scholar whose research into our cultural heritage gave prominence to the name Ghana, as I have already said. However, unfortunately, in spite of all the sacrifices he made, political disagreements eventually led to his incarceration. As a young politician, when a time came for me to construct a roundabout in Efutu, I read a bit of the history, and I even discovered that for

many years, J. B. Danquah was the lawyer for the Efutu state. I also discovered that the Omanhene of Efutu, my great-granduncle, Nenyi Ghartey, had actually contributed to the independence of the country through his support to Kwame Nkrumah.

Mr Speaker, all those misunderstandings, the Kwame Nkrumah-J. B. Danquah political rifts, led to the Efutu lands becoming vested lands because after the 1950 Supreme Court of Gold Coast ruling, J. B. Danquah remained the lawyer for Efutu even when Nkrumah set up a commission of inquiry to look into the matter, even after the Supreme Court ruling, J.B. Danquah insisted being the lawyer for the Efutu state. And when the final findings gave the lands to Efutu, Nkrumah then said to avoid conflict, through the then Attorney General, Justice Ofori Atta, there was that enactment to say that the chiefs can sell their lands but with the consent of the states.

Mr Speaker, I am saying that looking at this history, by the grace of God, I was able to set up this reconciliation roundabout. If one goes to Winneba, one will see two gentlemen shaking hands. It is J. B. Danquah and Kwame Nkrumah. The import of this was to say no more to political intolerance because these were two friends and two national heroes, but because of political differences, one had to die a painful death in Nsawam prisons. So, symbolically, Efutu took up—[*Mr Second Deputy Speaker hits the gavel*].

Mr Speaker, unfortunately the noise is coming from those who are still

waiting for their appointments. — *[Laughter]*—Those who have been nominated are gently listening, and those behind, who are yet to be considered, are making noise. They do not want to learn. They are Backbenchers and newcomers; they are supposed to learn. This is history. We have mounted these statues, J.B. Danquah and Nkrumah, to symbolise true reconciliation. That no matter the disagreements with your political opponent, do not wish death for him and that is a true symbol of multi-party democracy. And what we did this morning, after our heated exchanges on Thursday and Friday, is what democracy represents. Find peace around the table. Do not go to the extreme. Let us manage our democracy.

Mr Speaker, J.B. Danquah has bequeathed to this nation true values that we shall forever cherish. Let us continue as a people to honour his memory through our conducts. Even if we have different political ideologies, we should remember him for the great works he did for our nation. This man preached press freedom and personal liberties. He set up newspapers. He was writing. He exposed the country to all these values that today we are celebrating and we are taking for granted. Hon Atta Akyea was the one who was doing this annual ritual. I am happy that Dr Kingsley Agyemang has taken over. It is time for him to also make his name in this hallowed Chamber. I wish Dr Agyemang many accomplishments in this Chamber. He has demonstrated his determination to take up a key role in this House and I wish him well even in this great enterprise of democracy.

Mr Speaker, without more, I shall yield. I can see the respected Majority Leader is more than anxious to have his bite; however superfluous it may be. — *[Laughter]*— Mr Speaker, this is a very respected senior Colleague. He has made his name at the ECOWAS Parliament and he has gone through the rudiments of politics to assume this black chair. I would always accord him that respect. That is why I said, however superfluous it may be, he must have a bite because we are celebrating a national hero.

Mr Speaker, I yield the space to him. Without more, thank you.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Hon Member?

**Mr Mahama Ayariga (NDC — Bawku Central):** Thank you Mr Speaker—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** But Leader, I think yours would be very brief— *[Laughter]*—He understands why I am saying that

6.51 p.m.

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, I think the first time I encountered J. B. Danquah, I was as a student of History at the Ordinary Level (O-Level). I also read History at the Advanced Level and in my first year at the University of Ghana. Throughout my readings of the history of Ghana, I encountered J. B. Danquah as one of the foremost in the struggle for the independence of Ghana. We all recall that, in the beginning, it was the UGCC that started the struggle as a political

party for the independence of Ghana and J. B. Danquah, who was one of the founding fathers, led the struggle for independence.

Mr Speaker, I also read that, along the line, they were joined by Dr Kwame Nkrumah who then, I believe, was an official initially of the UGCC. As a result of some disagreement between the two of them as to the direction of the struggle, J. B. Danquah and others opposed the style and the approach of Kwame Nkrumah, which led to Kwame Nkrumah parting company with J. B. Danquah and his team and formed his own party, the Convention People's Party (CPP). He had a more radical approach to the struggle for independence. From the moment he parted company and formed his CPP, the leaders of the UGCC became opposed to Dr Kwame Nkrumah: opposed to his methods and, ultimately, were opposed to the timing of independence. They were not opposed to independence, *per se*, but they were opposed to the timing of independence. Since time is everything, many have read into it that they were opposed to independence. That has been a matter of contention, and I think it is one of the issues that is causing some disagreement in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, when I got to the university, in my first year, I read law, and, again, I encountered J. B. Danquah because one of the famous constitutional law cases that one must read as a first-year university law student is the famous *RE: Akoto and Seven Others*. In my reading of the decision in *RE: Akoto and Seven Others*, I encountered J. B.

Danquah, the fighter for independence now the human rights activist, a fighter for the rule of law, a fighter for human rights. If you read *RE: Akoto and Seven Others*, and many, I believe, in this room do not remember the facts. Basically, CPP, led by Dr Kwame Nkrumah, had got Parliament to pass the Preventive Detention Act (PDA), which enabled them to arrest and detain people under certain circumstances. The Chief Linguist of the Asantehene, Mr Baffour Akoto, and seven others had been arrested under the PDA, and they applied for bail and the High Court refused, and then they appealed to the Supreme Court, and J.B. Danquah was their lawyer. J. B. Danquah argued that, under human rights law, there was no basis for a law like that which enabled individuals to be arbitrarily arrested and detained and be denied *habeas corpus*.

Mr Speaker, he also argued that the legislation itself was not right, and that Parliament did not have the power to enact a legislation which gave blanket cheque to the Executive to arrest and detain people under those circumstances. So, the case brought to the fore the issue of parliamentary supremacy. Is Parliament so supreme that Parliament can enact any legislation? And that was a central issue in the decision in *RE: Akoto and Seven Others*.

Mr Speaker, the court ruled that the Parliament at that time was not, in any way, inhibited, and they could pass a legislation like that even during peace times. *RE: Akoto and Seven Others* had argued that, in the jurisdictions where they had similar legislation, it was legislation passed during war time to



deal with the exigencies of war, so Ghana, which was enjoying peace, could not be cited as a country that provided an environment that necessitated a legislation like that. But the Supreme Court at that time overruled them and said Ghana could enact a legislation like that. So, there, I encountered J. B. Danquah as the jurist, as a fighter for individual liberty and freedom.

Subsequently, he was arrested and detained under the same PDA, allegedly based on some charge of conspiracy to undermine the regime of Dr Kwame Nkrumah. He was in detention, I think, from somewhere in 1964, and, ultimately, died in detention on the 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1965. Of course, his death sparked some furor across the country, and, subsequently, a commission of inquiry was set up to try and explain the circumstances surrounding his death.

Let us get to the more controversial issues about the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). When the Hon Member cited some allegations that he betrayed his country and worked for the CIA, it is, indeed, the case that some writers have claimed that J. B. Danquah received financing from the CIA. Indeed, it is claimed that, in the 2010 declassified information of the CIA, there is some indication there that he received financing from the CIA. Exactly what the financing is for is the subject matter of speculation. Others have speculated that it was a period when the United States of America (USA) was working against the Dr Kwame Nkrumah regime because he was considered to be a communist, and that they were pro-Soviet Union, so they suspect that they

financed J. B. Danquah for those reasons. But this is a matter that is not settled, so it is a subject of some claims that have been made.

Mr Speaker, the most important thing, today, is that we should learn to remember and recognise the efforts of those who came before us, and the good work that they did. I believe that, at the appropriate time, we would also make a Statement in this Chamber about the contribution of Dr Kwame Nkrumah. I am sure, at the right time, we would also make Statements about the contribution of such great heroes as former President Jerry John Rawlings. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, I would not be surprised if a Statement on H. E. former President Akufo-Addo attracts the longest period of comments in this Chamber. Let us learn to recognise the efforts of those who came before us. J. B. Danquah did a lot. There were disagreements along the way between him and Dr Nkrumah, but one cannot write the history of this country without recognising the efforts of J. B. Danquah. In law school, I then read about customary law and the contribution of J. B. Danquah in documenting the Ashanti or Akan customary law.

7.01 p.m.

He wrote extensively about Akan customary law, Akan tradition, the sociology of Akan communities, *et cetera*, and that has become a major resource for those who are studying Akan customary law and the society, history and traditions of Akan.

Mr Speaker, let me save time for the conduct of Government Business by

ending my contribution here. Thank you very much. [*Hear! Hear!*]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, thank you to all contributors and the maker of the Statement. It is now time for Government Business. Let us go to page 3, item numbered 13—Chairman of the Appointments Committee?

## MOTIONS

### Suspension of Standing Order 104 (1)

**Chairman of the Appointments Committee (Mr Bernard Ahiafor):** Mr Speaker,

I beg to *move*:

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

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, the Motion has been moved. Yes, Mr Shaib?

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

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

## Tenth Report of the Appointments Committee on the President's Ministerial Nomination

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

That this honourable House adopts the tenth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's nomination for appointment as Ministers of State.

### 1.0 Introduction

On the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of January, 2025, H.E. President John Dramani Mahama, per Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution, communicated to Parliament the nomination of the following persons for appointment as Ministers:

- i. Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo as Minister-designate, Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment;
- ii. Mr Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed as Minister-designate, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology;
- iii. Mr Samuel Nartey George as Minister-designate, Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations;
- iv. Mr Kofi Iddie Adams as Minister-designate, Ministry

of Sports and Recreation;  
and

- v. Mr Joseph Bukari Nikpe as Minister-designate, Ministry of Transport;

The Rt Hon Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 217, referred the Nominees to the Appointments Committee for consideration and report.

## **2.0 Reference Documents**

The Committee referred to the under-listed documents during the consideration of the Nominees:

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

## **3.0 Consideration of the Referrals**

According to Standing Order 217(10), the names of the Nominees were published in newspapers for the public's attention. The publication also requested memoranda from the public regarding the Nominees. The Committee subsequently sought and obtained Confidential Reports on the Nominees from the Ghana Police Service and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). The Committee also requested the Nominees submit Tax Status Reports from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

The Committee held a public hearing on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2025 to

consider the nominations. The Nominees subscribed to the Oath of a Witness before a Committee and answered questions from Hon Members. The Nominees were asked questions relating to their curriculum vitae, eligibility, competencies, issues of national concern, and those pertaining to the office to which they had been nominated.

The Committee, after its deliberations, reports on the Nominees as follows:

## **4.0 DR ABDUL-RASHID HASSAN PELPUO**

### **Minister-designate for Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment**

#### **4.1 Background**

Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo was born on May 5, 1964 in Wa, in the Upper West Region. He had his secondary education at Wa Secondary School, obtaining the General Certificate of Education – Ordinary Level in 1983 and the Advanced Level Certificate in 1986. He continued his studies at the University of Cape Coast, where he earned a Diploma in Economics and a Bachelor of Education in Psychology in 1994. He later proceeded to the University of Ghana, obtaining a Master of Arts in International Affairs in 1998 and a PhD in African Studies (Development Policy) in 2013.

At the beginning of his career, he held several leadership positions, including serving as President of the Democratic Youth League of Ghana from 1987 to 1990, the Northern

Students Union from 1991 to 1993, the Current Affairs Club at the University of Cape Coast from 1992 to 1994, and the Tertiary Education Institutions Network (TEIN) from 1992 to 1994.

Dr Pelpuo has worked in various capacities, including as Director of Administration and Finance in charge of Research and Policy Planning at the National Youth Council from 1999 to 2002. He also served as Director of the Youth Leadership Training Institute in the Upper West Region from 1994 to 1999, District Youth Coordinator at Wa District from 1988 to 1999, and Acting Regional Youth Coordinator in the Upper West Region from 1990 to 1994.

With over twenty years of experience in research planning, development programme design and implementation, local government capacity building, and youth development, he has been involved in policy formulation at the highest level in Ghana.

Dr Pelpuo has been a Member of Parliament for Wa Central and has served in various ministerial and parliamentary leadership roles. He was Minister of State at the Office of the President, and Minister for Youth and Sports from 2009 to 2010, Minister of State in Charge of Private Sector Development and Public-Private Partnership from 2013 to 2016, and a member of the Government's Economic Management Team. Within Parliament, he has served as Deputy Majority Leader from 2010 to 2012, Ranking Member on Government Assurances Committee from 2018 to 2020, Ranking Member on Lands and Forestry Committee from

2021 to 2023, and Deputy Ranking Member on Youth, Sports, and Culture Committee from 2006 to 2008.

Internationally, he has held positions including Chairman of the Ministers of Sports for West African Countries from 2009 to 2010, a member of the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa, from 2010 to 2012, President of the Africa Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development since 2022, and Envoy on Africa for the Global Climate Change Alliance.

He has published works, including *True Meaning of Life* (JereJude Publications) and *A Review of George Orwell's Animal Farm and Chinua Achebe's Man of the People*, which appeared in the *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics* (Vol. 6, No. 2, March 2018, pp. 34-57).

### **Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **4.2 Perspective on the 24-Hour Economy Policy**

The Committee enquired about the Nominee's opinion on the concept of the 24-Hour Economy proposed by the current Government. In response, the Nominee explained that the 24-Hour Economy is a policy initiative of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Administration and represents a commitment to ensure that Ghanaian workers are effectively engaged around the clock.

He elaborated that the Policy would introduce three work shifts within a 24-

hour period, with each shift lasting eight hours. This structure aims to optimise productivity and enhance economic output by ensuring that businesses, industries, and key sectors operate continuously.

The Nominee further stated that the Policy is designed to help reset the country's economy by increasing production, promoting self-sufficiency in essential goods and services, and stimulating economic growth. He emphasised that the initiative is intended to empower the working class by providing employment opportunities and ensuring that both public and private sector employees receive fair compensation for their labour.

He concluded by highlighting that many institutions and organisations across various industries stand to benefit from this Policy, as it fosters economic resilience, job creation, and enhanced national productivity.

### **4.3 Justification and Economic Impact of the 24-Hour Economy Policy**

The Nominee was asked to elaborate on what makes the 24-Hour Economy Policy special and how it could reset the economy, considering the current economic challenges and the fact that some sectors, such as breweries, already operate around the clock.

In response, the Nominee explained that the key distinction of the 24-Hour Economy Policy is that it would be a deliberate policy decision by the State rather than an optional choice by

businesses or workers. This Government-led initiative would provide targeted support to businesses that are not currently operating 24-hour shifts, enabling them to transition into round-the-clock operations.

He acknowledged that some organisations in the country already run 24-hour operations. However, the Policy aims to extend this model to more sectors and businesses, ensuring a broader economic transformation. The Nominee outlined key challenges faced by businesses that operate 24-hour shifts. Some of the challenges he stated include security concerns, operational capacity, and electricity costs. He assured the Committee that the Government is committed to addressing these challenges by:

- i. Enhancing security to protect businesses and workers operating at night;
- ii. Providing financial and logistical support to businesses to strengthen their operational capacity; and
- iii. Assisting businesses with electricity costs to ensure sustainable and affordable power supply for uninterrupted production.

The Nominee emphasised that the initiative is designed to boost production, create employment opportunities, and drive economic growth. By making the economy more work-based and production-focused, the Policy aims to restructure Ghana's economic framework in a way that maximises

output and enhances national development.

#### **4.4 Implementation and Scope of the 24-Hour Economy Policy**

The Nominee was asked whether the 24-Hour Economy Policy, if established, would be mandatory for businesses, considering that demand and supply dictate the need for extended work hours. The Committee sought clarification on how a policy could be developed to drive the initiative when there might not be sufficient demand for goods and services to justify continuous operations.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged the Committee's concern and agreed that demand plays a significant role in determining the viability of a 24-hour economy. However, he emphasised that the Government believes many organisations would benefit from the Policy but currently lack the capacity, support, and clear Government direction to transition into round-the-clock operations.

He explained that the Policy is primarily designed for businesses and organisations that have the potential to expand their operations but are constrained by financial, logistical, or infrastructural factors. The Government intends to provide the necessary support to such businesses to enable them to scale up their production, increase employment, and engage the youth in sustainable economic activities.

The Nominee further clarified that while certain State-owned enterprises

and public institutions may be required to operate within the 24-hour framework, participation for private sector organisations would remain voluntary. The Policy aims to create an enabling environment where businesses that see value in continuous operations can seamlessly integrate into the 24-hour model with Government's support.

#### **4.5 Extension of Maternity Leave**

The Nominee was asked about his stance on increasing the duration of maternity leave, considering concerns raised by women about the need for an extension. In response, he acknowledged that this is an important issue that requires serious consideration and national discussion.

He expressed his personal support for extending maternity leave, emphasising that such a policy would contribute positively to maternal and child health, workplace productivity, and overall well-being. He also referenced the recently passed Affirmative Action Law, highlighting that it provides a strong foundation for advancing gender-inclusive policies.

The Nominee further stated that he believes the proposal to extend maternity leave would receive broad support from the Ghanaian public. He assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would engage relevant stakeholders, including women's advocacy groups, labour unions, and policymakers to explore feasible ways to implement an extended maternity leave policy that balances the needs of working mothers

with the operational requirements of businesses and public institutions.

#### **4.6 Ensuring Safer Working Conditions for Indigenous Employees**

The Nominee was questioned on the measures he would implement to safeguard the rights of indigenous employees working for foreign entities, particularly in cases of harassment, underpayment, and other forms of maltreatments.

In response, he emphasised his strong interest in preventing human rights abuses in the workplace. He assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would prioritise enforcing employee rights to ensure that all workers operate within a safe and dignified environment, free from abuse.

He further reiterated his commitment to eliminating workplace maltreatment by strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing labour inspections, and promoting strict adherence to labour laws. The Nominee stressed that creating a better workplace environment for all employees is essential for national development. He mentioned that he would collaborate with relevant agencies to ensure compliance with labour standards.

#### **4.7 Support for the Establishment of the National Employment Trust Fund**

In addressing the Committee's reference to the NDC's Manifesto pledge to establish a National Employment

Trust Fund aimed at supporting the operationalisation of the 24-Hour Economy Policy, the Nominee expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative.

He conveyed his readiness and eagerness to assist His Excellency the President in realising this vision, emphasising the importance of the Trust Fund in creating employment opportunities and fostering economic growth.

The Nominee acknowledged that the Fund would be instrumental in providing financial support to various sectors, enabling them to adapt to the 24-hour economy model. He affirmed his commitment to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure the successful establishment and operationalisation of the National Employment Trust Fund, thereby contributing to the nation's economic transformation and enhancing job creation for Ghanaians.

#### **4.8 Policy Measures to Address Exploitative Overseas Job Recruitment**

The Nominee was asked about policies he would initiate to curb the growing issue of individuals being misled by fraudulent job advertisements promising lucrative opportunities abroad. Many unsuspecting job seekers have fallen victim to such schemes, losing significant sums of money, while others endure inhumane working conditions, including the confiscation of their passports under the guise of labour agreements.

In response, the Nominee referenced the Labour Law, 2003 (Act 651), affirming that child labour and exploitative labour practices are unacceptable. He emphasised that any policy addressing this issue would be developed in strict alignment with existing legal provisions and rigorously enforced.

Furthermore, the Nominee assured the Committee that perpetrators of such fraudulent recruitment schemes would face severe legal consequences. He underscored the need for stringent enforcement mechanisms to deter such activities and protect job seekers from exploitation.

#### **4.9 Addressing Labour Unrest through Labour Law Reforms**

The Nominee was asked to share his views on specific aspects of the Labour Law, 2003 (Act 651) that could be considered to address labour unrest and resolve agitations from Organised Labour.

In his response, the Nominee acknowledged that labour agitations are inevitable due to the dynamic nature of society. He explained that economic factors, such as the depreciation of the cedi and the perception that wages are not commensurate with labour input, often trigger such disputes.

He assured the Committee of his commitment to address these concerns as they arise. He emphasised the importance of maintaining open dialogue with Organised Labour to ensure that grievances are resolved in a

manner that upholds fairness and industrial harmony.

#### **4.10 Ensuring Effective Regulation of Pension Schemes by NPRA**

The Committee raised concerns regarding the role of the National Pensions Regulatory Authority (NPRA) in supervising all pension schemes, including the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). Reference was made to recent developments, particularly SSNIT's attempt to offload some of its assets, which suggested that the regulator may not have been exercising its oversight responsibilities fully.

In response, the Nominee affirmed that the NPRA is legally empowered to regulate all pension schemes in the country. He assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would conduct a thorough review to assess whether the NPRA is effectively executing its mandate. Should any gaps or inefficiencies be identified, he pledged to take necessary steps to strengthen the Authority and empower it to fully perform its regulatory role.

#### **4.11 Enhancing the National Service Scheme: Allowances and Job Content**

The Committee enquired about the Nominee's plans to improve the National Service Scheme (NSS) under the National Service Authority, particularly in terms of increasing allowances and enhancing job content for service personnel.



In response, the Nominee clarified that the National Service Scheme does not fall directly under the Ministry of Labour, Jobs, and Employment. However, he acknowledged his broader responsibility of ensuring that all Ghanaian workers, including national service personnel, operate under fair conditions as outlined in Article 24(1) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. This provision emphasises the need for safe, healthy, and equitable working conditions for all.

He further expressed his support for any initiative that aims at increasing the allowances of National Service Personnel. While he may not have direct oversight of the scheme, he assured the Committee of his commitment to advocate for better conditions for service personnel in alignment with his overarching mandate to protect and promote the welfare of workers in the country.

#### **4.12 Ensuring Fair and Equitable Wages in the Public Sector**

In response to a question on how the Nominee would ensure fair and equitable wages in the public sector despite concerns about low productivity, he acknowledged the significance of the issue and emphasised that addressing it would be a priority. He admitted that the current levels of output and expenditure in relation to production raise concerns, necessitating a comprehensive policy direction to enhance productivity. He further recognised the hard work of the Ghanaian workforce, stressing the importance of aligning remuneration

with output to ensure that payments reflect performance and efficiency.

On how he would personally contribute to making Ghanaian workers satisfied and motivated to work at an optimal level, the Nominee expressed his full confidence in the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC). He described the FWSC as a key institution capable of harmonising wage policies to ensure fairness and productivity in the public sector.

He assured the Committee of his commitment to collaborate closely with the FWSC to develop effective strategies to address wage disparities and improve productivity. In acknowledging the complexity of the issue in relation to the large number of workers and organisations involved, he emphasised the need for innovative thinking and policy adjustments. He pledged to work diligently with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that fair and equitable wages are maintained while optimising productivity within the public sector.

#### **4.13 Enhancing Private Sector Employment Opportunities**

In response to the question on how he would ensure that the private sector absorbs more workers, given the total number of employees within Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), the Nominee outlined a structured approach aimed at bridging the gap between job seekers and employment opportunities.

He disclosed that a system has been developed to record and track all job

vacancies across both the public and private sectors. This initiative, known as the Labour Market Information System, would serve as a central platform for collating and publishing job openings across different institutions. He emphasised that this system would facilitate direct engagement with the private sector, making it easier to identify and match available job opportunities with job seekers in Ghana.

Furthermore, the Nominee stated that he would actively encourage private sector participation in this system by ensuring that vacancies within their institutions are properly recorded and advertised. He believes this would create a harmonised job market, improving access to employment for job seekers and helping businesses fill critical positions with skilled individuals.

He also expressed his commitment to advocating for Government support to enhance private sector contributions to the economy. He proposed policies aimed at providing credit facilities to businesses, enabling them to invest and expand their operations, ultimately creating more job opportunities. He underscored that by supporting the private sector, the Government would not only boost employment but also generate revenue through taxes, contributing to national economic growth.

#### **4.14 Promoting Gender Balance in Employment**

When asked how he would address gender disparity within his outfit, where males constitute 65 per cent and females

35 per cent of the 5,647 employees, the Nominee reaffirmed the Government's commitment to achieving gender balance in the workforce.

He cited the Levelling Up Policy outlined in the Government's Manifesto, which is to promote equity in job creation and employment opportunities. This initiative aims to ensure that employment policies are inclusive, providing equal opportunities for both men and women, as well as for youth and adults.

The Nominee emphasised that the policy seeks to remove systemic barriers to female participation in the workforce, creating an enabling environment where women can have access to jobs and thrive in various professional roles. He expressed his commitment to implement deliberate strategies to close the gender gap by fostering recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities for women in the sector.

#### **4.15 Unification of Pension Schemes**

The Committee enquired whether the Nominee would consider unifying all pension schemes, including CAP 30, to ensure fairness and justice for all employees. He highlighted concerns that workers in sectors such as the Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health Service, Parliamentary Service, and Judicial Service contribute to their pensions but do not receive the same benefits as security service personnel, who do not contribute to pensions yet enjoy CAP 30 benefits.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged the injustice created by the existing system and stated that he would work towards the unification of all pension schemes. He emphasised the importance of finding a balanced approach that minimises controversy and ensures fairness across all sectors.

He expressed his preference for a unified framework that prevents individual institutions from negotiating pension benefits separately, thereby fostering a harmonised and equitable pension system for all Ghanaian workers.

#### **4.16 Review of the Single Spine Salary Structure and CLOGSAG's Demands**

The Committee sought the Nominee's views on the new salary structure demanded by the Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana (CLOGSAG) and whether the NDC Government would consider granting it. They also raised concerns over the agitations caused by low salaries, leading to some public service institutions, such as the Judicial Service of Ghana, Audit Service, and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), opting out of the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS).

In response, the Nominee acknowledged that the issue was a key area of concern and was currently under negotiation. He recognised the discontent among public sector workers regarding salary disparities and assured the Committee that the NDC Government is committed to addressing

the concerns of CLOGSAG and other affected institutions.

He emphasised the need for a broad consultation process involving the committee, labour unions, and relevant stakeholders to reach an amicable resolution. Additionally, he expressed openness to reviewing the Single Spine Salary Structure Scheme to ensure that it fairly compensates workers and maintains stability within the public sector.

#### **4.17 Consideration of Extending the Retirement Age in the Civil and Public Service**

The Committee enquired whether the Nominee would consider extending the retirement age in the civil service and public service.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged the ongoing discussions surrounding the possibility of increasing the retirement age from 60 years to 65 years, and, in some cases, up to 70 years. He noted that while there have been various arguments for and against the proposal, any decision regarding an extension should be harmonious and reflect national consensus.

He emphasised that the final decision on increasing the retirement age should be based on broad stakeholder engagements and should align with Ghana's socioeconomic realities, workforce sustainability, and the overall needs of the labour market. He added that the matter should be carefully reconsidered to determine whether the

country is ready for such a transition or if the current system should remain unchanged.

#### **4.18 Recruitment of Nurses and Doctors Under the 24-Hour Economy**

The Committee sought clarification from the Nominee on whether, under the proposed 24-Hour Economy Policy, all nurses and doctors awaiting posting would be recruited.

In response, the Nominee expressed his strong commitment to ensure that all qualified nurses and doctors are recruited and posted. He emphasised that both the Government bears the responsibility of creating jobs and providing employment opportunities for the youth, particularly in the health sector.

He reiterated that the health sector is a critical area that requires an adequate workforce to improve service delivery, especially in underserved communities. He assured the Committee that efforts would be made to engage all waiting nurses and doctors, ensuring they are absorbed into the system in line with the Government's employment agenda under the 24-hour economy framework.

#### **4.19 Addressing Child Labour in Fishing Communities**

The Committee enquired about the Nominee's strategy to address child labour, particularly in fishing communities, where children often

abandon their education to engage in fishing activities.

In response, the Nominee affirmed that child labour is illegal under Ghana's Labour Laws and reiterated his commitment to eradicating it. He emphasised that children must not be engaged in work meant for adults, and their right to education and childhood must be protected.

Further questioning sought to understand the root causes of child labour and the Nominee's practical approach to solving the issue. He acknowledged that the Labour Law, 2003 (Act 651) clearly supports the elimination of child labour in the workforce. He advocated for stricter enforcement of the law, including making child labour a criminal offense to ensure that perpetrators face punishment, thereby serving as a deterrent to others.

The Nominee pledged to prioritise child labour as a key issue within the Ministry. He assured the Committee that his leadership would focus on implementing policies that protect children, prevent their exploitation, and create a safer environment where they can pursue education and personal development instead of being forced into labour.

#### **4.20 Ensuring Compliance with the Minimum Wage**

The Committee enquired about the Nominee's plans to ensure that all employees receive at least the minimum wage, highlighting concerns about private security companies where

workers are often paid below the legally mandated rate.

In response, the Nominee reaffirmed the Government's stance that once the minimum wage is set, it applies universally to both public and private sector employees. He stressed that no employer is legally permitted to pay below the minimum wage, and any such violation constitutes a breach of the law.

The Nominee emphasised that employers who fail to comply would be held accountable, facing legal consequences for underpaying their workers. He underscored the need for strict enforcement of wage laws to protect Ghanaian workers from exploitation.

Additionally, he stated that workers and stakeholders must actively report cases where organisations fail to adhere to the law, ensuring that corrective actions are taken swiftly. He concluded by stating that if a company cannot afford to pay its workers the minimum wage, it raises serious concerns about its viability.

#### **4.21 Consideration for Public Sector Salary Increments in 2025**

The Committee enquired whether the Nominee would consider increasing the salaries of public sector workers in 2025, given the economic challenges faced by many employees.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged that public sector wages are a critical issue and currently under negotiation. He stated that salary

adjustments require extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders, including labour unions, Government agencies, and the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission.

He assured the Committee that once he assumes office, he would review ongoing discussions and assess the financial implications of any proposed salary increments. He emphasised that his priority would be to ensure fair and sustainable wages that align with economic realities while protecting the interests of Ghanaian workers.

The Nominee concluded by stating that he would provide a more definitive response once he gains deeper insights into the Ministry's financial position and ongoing wage negotiations.

#### **4.22 Addressing Agitations within Organised Labour**

The Committee enquired about the Nominee's perspective on the frequent agitations within Organised Labour and the measures he would consider in addressing them.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged that labour unrest is a natural occurrence in any dynamic society where economic, social, and political changes impact the workforce. He noted that it is not unusual for workers to demand better conditions, especially when circumstances evolve over time.

He assured the Committee of his commitment to engaging Organised Labour in continuous dialogue, stressing

that understanding the root causes of agitations is essential for developing long-term solutions. He emphasised that listening to workers' concerns, analysing trends, and proactively addressing grievances would form the foundation of his approach.

The Nominee concluded by stating that he would tackle labour-related issues as they arise, ensuring that negotiations remain fair and balanced, with the ultimate goal of maintaining industrial harmony and protecting workers' rights while ensuring productivity in the economy.

#### **4.23 Implementation of the Affirmative Action Act, 2024**

The Committee sought assurance from the Nominee on the effective implementation of the Affirmative Action Act, 2024, given its importance in promoting gender balance in employment and his critical role as Minister for Labour, Jobs, and Employment.

In response, the Nominee affirmed his commitment to equity, non-discrimination, and fair treatment in the labour sector. He emphasised that the Labour Law explicitly mandates the elimination of discrimination in employment, and he pledged to uphold these provisions to ensure fairness in the workplace.

The Nominee assured the Committee that he would work diligently to promote equity in employment opportunities, ensuring that gender representation in the workforce is improved in line with

the law. He further pledged to collaborate effectively with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection to guarantee the successful and widespread implementation of the Affirmative Action Act.

He concluded by reiterating that ensuring gender balance in employment is a priority and that he would leverage his position to advance policies and programmes that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all.

#### **4.24 Implementation of the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023-2027)**

The Committee enquired whether the Nominee was aware of the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023-2027) and sought to understand the strategies he would implement to ensure the achievement of its objectives.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged the existence of the Action Plan and noted that the Ministry already has a policy framework for addressing child labour. He emphasised that the plan aligns with the broader national strategy to combat child labour and protect children's rights.

The Nominee committed to a thorough review of the existing policy to assess its effectiveness and determine areas that require improvement. He assured the Committee those necessary adjustments would be made to strengthen the implementation process and ensure strict enforcement of child labour laws.

Furthermore, he stressed the importance of inter-agency collaboration, particularly with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organisations to effectively eliminate child labour in Ghana.

The Nominee concluded by reaffirming his dedication to implementing the Action Plan to its full extent, ensuring that children are protected, their rights are upheld, and they are given the opportunity to pursue education and a better future.

#### 4.25 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo** as Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment.

### 5.0 MR SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE

**Minister-Designate,  
Communications, Digital Technology  
and Innovations**

#### 5.1 Background

Mr Samuel Nartey George was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1985 in Somanya and hails from Ahwiam, Old Ningo in the Greater Accra Region. He is married with three children and is fluent in English, Ga, Dangme, and Twi.

The Nominee holds a Basic Education Certificate from Grace High School, Lagos (1993-1996) and furthered his secondary education at Command Day Secondary School,

Lagos (1996-2000). Additionally, he obtained an International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) from Corona School, Agbara (1999-2000).

Mr Samuel Nartey George pursued higher education at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Engineering (2001-2005). He later obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of London (2010-2014). He also holds a certificate in International & Managerial Skills Development (2007) and an Advanced Certificate in Organizational Communication (2011) from the Graduate School of Governance and Leadership. Furthermore, he completed an Executive Master's in Conflict, Peace & Security from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (2018-2020) and an Executive Master's in International Strategy & Diplomacy from the London School of Economics and Political Science (2021-2022).

Throughout his career, the Nominee has held several distinguished positions, demonstrating leadership and expertise across multiple fields. At KNUST, he served as a member of the Information Technology Committee at the College of Engineering and held key leadership roles within the University Hall Cadet, including Quarter-Master, Staff Sergeant, and Lieutenant.

From August 2007 to June 2008, he undertook his national service as an Information Technology Aide in the Office of the Vice President. He later

served as Assistant Director IIB at the Office of the Head of Civil Service (April 2011 – January 2013). Additionally, he was appointed as Lead Communicator for the Government Communication Team (April 2010 – December 2016) and worked as a Communication Specialist (October 2014 – December 2016).

The Nominee has also played a role in national policymaking as a Board Member of the National Information Technology Agency. Since January 2017, he has served as the Member of Parliament for the Ningo Prampram Constituency.

Mr Samuel Nartey George has participated in several international conferences, including the 2017 AFROSAI International Conference on Tackling Illicit Financial Flows; 2018 APNAC Biennial General Meeting; 2018 Council of Europe OCTOPUS Conference; 2019 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum; 2020 Cyber Security Study Tour of the UK; 2022 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa; 2023 Political Network for Values Transatlantic Summit; 2024 AI & Disinformation: Democracy in the Age of Deepfakes; and the 2024 Fourth Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Incheon.

His additional professional interests include New and Emerging Technologies, Counter-Terrorism Studies, International Conflict Resolution, Arms Proliferation, and

Global Warming and Carbon Footprint Monitoring. His extra-curricular activities focus on Cyber Security, Counter-Terrorism Trends, Artificial Intelligence (AI), FinTech, Data Protection, and Internet Governance.

Mr Samuel Nartey George has a strong interest in technology, national security, computers, cars, shooting, and football.

### **Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **5.2 Reducing the Cost of Voice Calls in Ghana**

In response to enquiries about high voice call costs in Ghana compared to other jurisdictions, the Nominee acknowledged that traditional voice calls are becoming less significant due to the increasing reliance on data-based communication services. He highlighted the need to contextualise pricing comparisons with more developed markets, particularly in Europe, where mature telecommunications infrastructure helps reduce operational costs for Mobile Network Operators (MNOs).

The Nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to working with stakeholders and regulators to explore regulatory interventions aimed at reducing the cost of voice calls and enhancing the overall affordability of communication services in Ghana.



### **5.3 Improving Network Accessibility and Mobile Subscription Costs**

Addressing concerns about network accessibility and mobile subscription costs, the Nominee emphasised that the primary issue with voice calls is not just cost but service quality. He acknowledged that significant policy interventions are needed at the Ministry level, working in collaboration with the National Communications Authority (NCA) as the regulator to enhance service delivery.

The Nominee highlighted the Government's role in facilitating an improved communication landscape and assured the Committee of his commitment to ensure additional spectrum availability for MNOs. He also pledged to raise Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure compliance with service quality standards. To enforce these standards, the Nominee committed to imposing penalties on MNOs that fail to meet the prescribed benchmarks, while supporting operators in their efforts to deliver high-quality services to consumers.

### **5.4 Cybersecurity Threats and Funding Cybersecurity Initiatives**

Addressing concerns regarding cybersecurity threats and funding mechanisms, the Minister-designate emphasised Ghana's preparedness to tackle cyber threats. He referenced the Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038) and

highlighted his instrumental role in incorporating a funding provision within the legislation.

The Nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to operationalising the Cybersecurity Fund as outlined in the Act. He indicated that efforts would be made to explore multiple funding sources, including Government allocations, grants, and private-sector donations from organisations such as the MasterCard Foundation. He stressed that establishing the Cybersecurity Fund would provide crucial financial support for beneficiaries and enhance Ghana's resilience against cyber threats.

### **5.5 Strategies for Building and Protecting Capacity in the Fintech Industry**

Responding to questions on strategies to build and protect capacity in the Fintech industry, as well as the disbursement of the US\$50 million fund earmarked for its support, the Minister-designate outlined the Government's broader target of mobilising a US\$300 million seed fund. This initiative aims to attract investments from both local and international investors to enhance the Fintech sector's growth and competitiveness.

The Nominee assured the Committee of plans to establish business advisory support services and regulatory sandboxes to facilitate the growth and sustainability of young start-ups. Additionally, he committed to redefining the regulatory framework for the Fintech industry by establishing an independent subsidiary under the Bank of Ghana.

This specialised entity would foster innovation and provide tailored support for advancements in Agri-Tech, Edu-Tech, and Insure-Tech, strengthening the overall Fintech ecosystem.

### **5.6 Institutional Placement of the Cyber Security Authority**

In response to a question on whether the Cyber Security Authority should be placed under the National Security apparatus or the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations, the Minister-designate emphasised that a holistic approach and international best practices, including models from India and Singapore, suggest that it would be more effective under the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations.

Addressing concerns about synergy between the two institutions, he highlighted that cybersecurity governance involves both protecting citizens from state overreach and combating malicious cyber threats. He outlined five key interfaces of cybersecurity: public policy, international relations and partnerships, industry collaboration, policy formulation, and security & intelligence. He noted that four of these are civilian-led, reinforcing the Ministry's role in overseeing cybersecurity governance, while only one aspect falls under security and intelligence. The Minister-designate stressed the importance of continuous collaboration between the Ministry and the National Security apparatus to ensure a cohesive, effective, and well-coordinated cybersecurity framework.

### **5.7 Synergy between the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations and National Security**

In response to questions on how to foster better synergy between the Ministry and the National Security Authority, the Minister-designate reiterated that cybersecurity governance inherently encompasses two critical dimensions: national security and communications. He emphasised that placing cybersecurity under National Security would lead to a more combat-oriented, military-driven approach, whereas a civilian-led governance model under the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations allows for a broader, policy-driven strategy that includes public protection, regulatory oversight, and industry collaboration.

To highlight the collaborative nature of cybersecurity, he referenced the establishment of the Joint Cybersecurity Council, which comprises Ministers for Defence, the Interior, and Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations. This council, he explained, ensures cross-ministerial coordination while maintaining civilian oversight. The Minister-designate concluded by reaffirming that given its broader mandate and multi-sectoral approach, cybersecurity governance is best situated under the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations, ensuring that it remains a national priority with robust inter-agency collaboration.

## **5.8 Addressing Impersonation and Cyber Fraud on Social Media**

In response to concerns regarding the persistent issue of impersonation of Members of Parliament (MPs) on social media platforms, particularly *Facebook*, and the fraudulent solicitation of money through mobile money transactions, the Minister-designate expressed his commitment to tackling the problem. He assured the Committee that measures would be introduced to verify MPs' official social media accounts, thereby helping to prevent impersonation and protect the public from online scams.

The Nominee also took the opportunity to caution the public, emphasising that no MP would directly message individuals online to offer jobs or request money. To combat rising cybercrime, he pledged to introduce KPIs to monitor and reduce online fraud. Acknowledging the growing challenges of internet fraud, mobile money scams, and cybercrime, the Nominee recognised the need to enhance the capacity of the Cybersecurity Authority. He assured the Committee that if confirmed, he would prioritise securing funding to ensure the successful implementation of cybersecurity policies from the previous administration, reinforcing Ghana's resilience against cyber threats.

## **5.9 Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) for National Development**

In response to enquiries about how Ghana could leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to drive development, the Nominee referenced the broader AI

vision set by the President. He cited global AI advancements, particularly mentioning China's DeepSeek and its influence on industries, and the Silicon Valley, as examples of how AI is transforming economies. He stressed the importance of positioning Ghana as a leader in AI technology within Africa, ensuring that the country benefits from the growing potential of AI-driven industries.

The Nominee pledged to review and refine Ghana's AI Policy, initially developed under the previous administration, to ensure its relevance in addressing both current and future challenges. He emphasised that the revised policy would focus on establishing Ghana as a central hub for AI, machine learning, cybersecurity, data analytics, and data processing on the African continent. By integrating AI technologies with big data initiatives, he envisioned creating a thriving innovation ecosystem, fostering technological advancements, and enhancing national development through AI-driven solutions.

## **5.10 Passage of the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill**

In response to enquiries regarding the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill (commonly referred to as the anti-LGBTQ+ Bill), the Nominee reaffirmed the strong commitment of both the President and his Party to the people of Ghana on this matter. He referenced the President's recent statement, which indicated that the Bill is effectively

"dead" and "expired", and noted that the President remains uncertain about the intentions of the Bill's sponsors. However, the Nominee emphasised that the importance of the Bill to national discourse remains, and as such, there is a strong belief that it will be reintroduced in the future, either as a Private Member's Bill or through Government sponsorship.

Addressing allegations that he had previously made statements suggesting the Chief Justice's involvement in supporting LGBTQ+ rights, the Nominee clarified that as an elder in his church, he holds his personal integrity in the highest regard. He stated that his opinion of the Chief Justice remains unchanged, reaffirming that he still stands by his previous comments regarding the matter.

### **5.11 Review of Educational Materials for Pupils**

When asked whether the Minister-designate would consider collaborating with the Minister for Education to review educational materials for pupils before distribution, the Nominee assured the Committee of his unwavering commitment to safeguarding the innocence of Ghanaian children. He emphasised that protecting the welfare of children is paramount and a top priority for the Government.

In this regard, the Nominee pledged to instruct the Cybersecurity Authority, specifically under its Child Online Protection Programme, to work closely with the Ministry of Education. He assured that this collaboration would ensure that school children are protected

from exposure to any materials that promote anti-Ghanaian values, including content found in e-learning books or digital educational modules introduced into the country.

### **5.12 Re-Registration of SIM Cards**

In response to previous remarks in which the Nominee described the SIM registration process as a form of fraud and called for a re-registration of SIM cards, the Nominee expressed his dissatisfaction with the actions of the previous Government. He emphasised that the time spent by Ghanaians waiting in long queues to register their SIM cards was a waste of productive hours. The Nominee assured the Committee that there would be a re-registration process, but this time, it would be streamlined to avoid the long queues and inefficiencies experienced previously.

The Nominee explained that the new re-registration process would be a collaborative effort involving the NCA, MNOs, and the National Identification Authority (NIA). As a result, Ghanaians would no longer be required to visit service providers in person, except in cases where an issue arises, necessitating a visit to the MNOs' office for clarification. The Nominee further guaranteed that no Ghanaian would lose their SIM card or funds during the re-registration process.

When asked about the potential cost of the re-registration to the taxpayer, the Nominee clarified that the expenses

would be covered by the MNOs, not by public funds.

### **5.13 Launch of 5G Network and Mobile Accessibility**

In response to questions regarding the launch of the 5G network by the previous NPP Government and its potential to improve mobile accessibility, particularly for rural areas, the Nominee outlined a comprehensive approach to the issue. He assured the Committee that before moving ahead with the rollout of 5G, efforts would be focused on addressing existing challenges with the 3G and 4G networks to ensure stability and efficiency in the current mobile infrastructure.

The Nominee emphasised that the 5G rollout would be implemented with the right skill sets in place to guarantee a seamless transition and optimal service delivery. Furthermore, he expressed a commitment to enhancing mobile accessibility across all regions, including rural areas, by improving network infrastructure and ensuring equitable coverage.

### **5.14 National and ECOWAS Roaming Policy**

When queried about his views on the national roaming policy of the ECOWAS, the Nominee expressed strong support for the policy, emphasising its importance for regional integration and connectivity.

He clarified that there are two distinct roaming policies: The ECOWAS Roaming Policy, which facilitates

roaming between Ghana and other ECOWAS member states; and the National Roaming Policy, which governs roaming among Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) within Ghana.

The Nominee noted that agreements have already been signed with three ECOWAS countries under the regional roaming policy. He further committed to enhancing both the ECOWAS and national roaming policies, ensuring improved service quality and seamless connectivity for consumers across the region.

### **5.15 Reconsideration of MTN Ghana's Significant Market Power (SMP) Status**

In response to whether he would reconsider the declaration of MTN Ghana as a Significant Market Power (SMP) under the Electronic Communications Act, 2008 (Act 775), the Nominee clarified that being designated as an SMP is not inherently detrimental, but rather depends on how it is utilised.

He explained that the SMP designation serves as a corrective tool rather than a punitive measure against investors such as MTN. The Nominee assured the Committee that his approach would focus on fostering a fair and competitive environment for all market players. He pledged to create an equitable space for all stakeholders, ensuring that customers have access to a broad range of options and benefit from improved services and choices.

### **5.16 Addressing High Taxes in the Communications Sector**

In response to concerns about the high number of taxes in the communications sector and the measures he intends to take, the Nominee acknowledged the significant fiscal challenges currently being addressed by the Minister for Finance, particularly in closing gaps in the national budget.

He agreed that the tax burden on MNOs is substantial, citing power tariffs as one of the primary contributing factors. The Nominee expressed his commitment to collaborating with the Minister for Energy to explore viable solutions to reduce these costs and alleviate the financial pressures on MNOs.

### **5.17 Combating Mobile Money Fraud**

In response to concerns regarding the increasing incidence of mobile money fraud, the Nominee outlined the Ministry's plan to address the challenge through the re-registration of SIM cards. He highlighted that this initiative would be carried out in collaboration with MNOs and other key stakeholders, aiming to sanitise the sector and ensure compliance with established KPIs for reducing mobile money fraud. The Nominee further urged the public to remain vigilant and cautious to safeguard themselves against such fraudulent activities.

### **5.18 Addressing Unethical Data Mining Practices**

In response to concerns about unethical data mining practices by certain companies and the steps he would take to address this issue, the Nominee emphasised the importance of strengthening the capacity of the Data Management Commission to safeguard citizens' data. He outlined that retooling and adequately resourcing the Commission would be critical in tackling the challenge of unethical data mining.

The Nominee further noted that the Ministry, in collaboration with the NCA and MNOs, would take decisive action to curtail the prevalence of unsolicited messages, which often stem from such practices. He assured the Committee that the directives issued by the President to the NCA on this matter would be fully adhered to, ensuring a robust approach to protecting citizens' personal information.

### **5.19 Emergency Preparedness for Telecommunications Disruptions**

In reference to the disruption of telecommunication services in 2024, which affected both Ghana and other African countries due to a severed underwater telecom cable, the Nominee was asked about the country's emergency plan and preparedness to address similar challenges impacting telecommunication and meteorological data.

The Nominee assured the Committee that the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), which is responsible for managing such crises, would be given the necessary support and attention to ensure its operations are fully optimised. He emphasised that the NEOC would be equipped to implement a national recovery plan to effectively address and

mitigate the impact of such disruptions should they occur in the future.

### **5.20 Review of Data Pricing and Quantity Provided by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)**

When asked about his opinion on the cost and quantity of data currently provided by MNOs in the country, the Nominee expressed the belief that citizens should receive more data for the value they pay. He emphasised his intention to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that Ghanaians obtain greater value from their data plans. This could involve either offering more data for the same price or reducing the cost for the current data allocation.

The Nominee assured the Committee that the Ministry is committed to evaluating and reviewing the cost components of data services. He highlighted plans to work closely with the Ministry of Finance to achieve a reduction in data prices by the end of the year, ensuring a more favourable pricing model for Ghanaians.

### **5.21 Plans to Improve Rural Telephony and Internet Accessibility**

In response to a question regarding plans to improve rural telephony across the country, the Nominee highlighted the President's commitment to ensuring universal access to electricity and the internet across Africa. In line with this vision, the Ministry, under the Nominee's leadership, would work towards extending internet access to all parts of the country, particularly in rural areas.

The Nominee further emphasised the role of the Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC), which he proposed to expand and restructure as the Digital Economy Investment Fund to serve as the foundational framework for rural telephony. He also stressed the importance of a digital switchover to facilitate access to a broader spectrum, which would be essential for enhancing telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas. To achieve this, the Nominee assured the Committee that the necessary equipment and resources would be acquired to support the rollout and expansion of digital services across rural communities.

### **5.22 Revitalisation of AT Telecommunications Company**

When asked about measures to revamp AT, a telecommunications company fully owned by the Government of Ghana, the Nominee acknowledged the challenges faced by the company, including its reliance on a 3G network and outdated equipment. He attributed AT's current state to mismanagement by the previous administration, which contributed to its operational inefficiencies and financial struggles.

Despite these challenges, the Nominee assured the Committee that a clear roadmap is being developed by the Government to revitalise AT. This plan seeks to address the company's significant debt, estimated at GH¢ 500 million, while ensuring its long-term sustainability. The roadmap will focus

on consolidating Government shares in AT, avoiding job losses, and positioning the company as a viable player within the telecommunications sector. Through these efforts, the Nominee expressed confidence that AT can overcome its current difficulties and contribute positively to the sector's growth.

### **5.23 Enhancing the Efficiency of Ghana Post Services**

In response to the importance of technology in enhancing the efficiency of national institutions, the Nominee was asked to outline his plans to improve the operational efficiency of Ghana Post Services. He revealed that prior to his vetting, he had engaged with the management of Ghana Post and challenged them to develop strategies to enhance the Service's operational effectiveness.

He emphasised that a key approach to improving efficiency would be leveraging the existing infrastructure of Information Communication Centres (ICCs) built across the country. By collaborating with these centres and utilising their advanced systems, the Nominee believes Ghana Post Services can expand its role beyond just a courier service. This collaboration will enable Ghana Post to provide more diverse and value-added services, ultimately enhancing its contribution to the country's economic development and improving customer satisfaction.

### **5.24 Measures to Curb Cybercrime Activities**

When asked about the measures he would implement to curb cybercrime activities, including cyber fraud, the Nominee acknowledged that the Cybersecurity Authority currently lacks the necessary resources to effectively carry out its mandate.

He informed the Committee that the Ministry is committed to continuing an ongoing project aimed at retooling and adequately resourcing the Cybersecurity Authority. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that the Authority is equipped to fulfill its mandate in securing the nation's digital space and addressing emerging cyber threats.

Through these efforts, the Ministry aims to enhance the Authority's capacity to safeguard the public from cybercrime, promoting a safer and more secure online environment for all Ghanaians.

### **5.25 Independence of the National Communications Authority (NCA)**

In response to a question regarding the independence of the NCA and whether it should be supported to gain full autonomy, the Nominee acknowledged that the legislation establishing and regulating the Authority, the National Communications Authority Act, is now over seventeen (17) years old. He emphasised that the Act is long overdue for review to align it with evolving global best practices.

The Nominee assured the Committee that during the review process, the issue of the NCA's autonomy would be thoroughly considered. He stressed that



any proposed changes would seek to enhance the effectiveness and independence of the Authority, ensuring that it operates in line with international standards while maintaining its ability to regulate and oversee the communications sector efficiently.

### **5.26 Commitment to Spectrum Allocation and Service Improvement**

In response to a question regarding his commitment to providing network operators in the communications sector with the necessary spectrum and resources to improve the quality of service—particularly for data, voice, and digital services—within his first 120 days in office, the Nominee highlighted the critical role of spectrum management. He emphasised that, given the finite nature of spectrum, its careful and strategic management is essential to maintaining the strength and balance of the sector.

The Nominee assured the Committee of his dedication to the effective management of spectrum resources. He pledged to ensure that the spectrum is allocated appropriately, thereby supporting the sustainability of businesses within the sector while simultaneously enhancing customer experience across the country.

### **5.27 Regulating Starlink's Operations to Protect Local Communication Companies**

When asked about plans to ensure that the full deployment of operations by Starlink, an international communication company, does not adversely affect local

communication companies, the Nominee clarified that his primary responsibility as Minister is to businesses domiciled within the country. He emphasised that international companies that do not contribute value to the local economy would not be entitled to benefits or special consideration from his office.

The Nominee further assured the Committee that any policy implemented by the Ministry would prioritise the protection of local investments, businesses, and jobs. He reiterated his commitment to fostering a sustainable and competitive telecommunications environment that benefits Ghanaian citizens and enterprises while ensuring that the presence of international players like Starlink does not undermine local industry growth.

### **5.28 Addressing Past Comments on Public Figures and National Issues**

In response to a question regarding the fairness of his past comments against the Chief Justice, the Nominee maintained that his remarks were made in good faith and were intended as constructive criticism, without any malice. He emphasised that his comments were aimed at fostering positive discourse and accountability within Ghana's governance system.

Regarding his previous statements urging his supporters to patrol land borders to safeguard them from suspected criminal activities, the Nominee clarified that his comments were made in the exercise of his constitutional right under Article 41(f) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. He explained that this provision obliges

every citizen to protect and preserve public property and to expose and combat the misuse of public funds, which guided his actions and public statements.

On the matter of his alleged comments about former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's involvement in illegal mining (*galamsey*) activities, the Nominee explained that his post was a result of his personal frustration as a concerned citizen regarding the actions of State agencies, such as the Minerals Commission, which were under the former President's purview. He clarified that his remarks were based on his views on the actions of these State institutions and not a personal attack on the former President.

The Nominee also reaffirmed his position on previous comments he made regarding the former Minister for Communications and Digitisation, Mrs Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, asserting that he stood by the language and content used in his statements about her.

Lastly, on his statement regarding the Supreme Court and former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, where he suggested the Court saw the former President as a "dummy god," the Nominee explained that his comment was directed at the Court's decision to delay its judgment on a matter until after the elections, despite having the power to deliver a ruling beforehand.

The Nominee concluded by reaffirming his stance and ownership of several other public comments he had made regarding public figures, standing

by the substance and intention behind his statements.

## 5.29 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **MAJORITY DECISION** the approval of the nomination of **MR SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE** as Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations.

## 6.0 MR IBRAHIM MURTALA MUHAMMED

### Minister-Designate for Environment, Science and Technology

## 6.1 Background

Mr Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed was born on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1974. He completed his secondary education at Ghana Secondary School, Tamale, in 1993, where he obtained the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) in General Arts. He later pursued a Teacher's Certificate 'A' at Tamale College of Education (TACE), formerly known as Tamale Training College (TATCO) in 1999.

The Nominee continued his education at the University of Ghana, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology in 2003. He furthered his studies at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), obtaining a Master of Science degree in Planning in 2008. In 2011, he acquired a Master of Arts degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD),

University of Ghana. He subsequently obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Mountcrest University College, Accra, in 2016. Mr Muhammed is currently pursuing a PhD in Political Science at the University of Ghana.

The Nominee has undertaken several training courses and workshops to enhance his expertise. These include the Training of Trainers Programme for Infant Sexual Behaviour at ISSER, Legon (2004); Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Role of the Youth, Khartoum, Sudan (2005); and The Renaissance of the Africa Youth and Development, Tripoli, Libya (2005). Other training programmes he participated in include Leadership for Change Workshop at the Pan-African Institute for Leadership and Governance Studies, Abuja, Nigeria (2007); Validation Workshop on African Youth, Democracy, and Development, Pretoria, South Africa (2007); and Pan-African Youth Summit on Democratic Development, University of Lagos, Nigeria (2008). Additionally, he attended a workshop on Labour Market and Job Creation, organised by the World Bank in May 2018.

Mr Muhammed has held several leadership roles in both governmental and parliamentary capacities. He served as Deputy National Coordinator for the National Youth Employment Programme from 2009 to 2012. He later held ministerial positions serving as Deputy Minister for Information and Media Relations from 2013 to 2014, and as Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry from 2014 to 2017. He was elected as Member of Parliament for

Nanton Constituency from 2013 to 2017, and later as Member of Parliament for Tamale Central Constituency from 2021 to date. He has served on various committees, including the Committees on Environment, Science and Technology, and Finance from 2013 to 2017; and the Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism, and Public Accounts Committee from 2021 to 2025.

Beyond politics, the Nominee has been actively involved in advocacy, volunteerism, and leadership roles. He served as Chairman of the Medium-Term Development Plan for the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) in 2008, and Chairman of the Executive Committee Meeting of the All-Africa Students Union (AASU) in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2007. He was also a General Assembly Member at the University of Ghana from 2002 to 2003.

Mr Muhammed has represented Ghana in various international conferences, including the International Conference on Fighting HIV/AIDS, Pretoria, South Africa (2006); UNESCO 34<sup>th</sup> NGO Conference on Education, Paris, France (2007); and Pan-African Youth Summit, Tripoli, Libya (2007). He has also delivered papers at different forums on topics such as *Strengthening Democracy in Africa: The Role of the Youth*; *Funding Tertiary Education in Ghana: The Partnership Between Government and Other Stakeholders*; and *Islam and Terrorism*.

The Nominee is fluent in English, Dagbani, Gonja, Hausa, and Twi. His areas of interest include research and

community mobilisation, while his hobbies are debating, writing, reading, research, and advocacy.

### **Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **6.2 Nominee's Position on the Bio-Safety Act and GMOs in Ghana**

The Nominee was asked whether he is familiar with the Biosafety Act of Ghana, 2011, to which he responded in the affirmative. Regarding his stance on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in Ghana as a matter of policy, he acknowledged the ongoing global debate on the subject. He noted that the continued consumption of GMOs is driven largely by food scarcity, particularly in many developing countries. However, he also recognised the contending view that calls for a ban on GMOs due to concerns about their potential effects on health and the economy.

The Nominee expressed confidence in the Biosafety Act and the National Biosafety Authority (NBA), emphasising that these institutions have the mandate and capacity to regulate and determine the processes through which certain GMOs can be introduced into the domestic market. He assured the Committee that the National Biosafety Authority, in collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, would be able to advise the Government on certifying which particular GMO products are safe and healthy for consumption in Ghana.

#### **6.3 Nominee's Understanding of Environmental Trends**

The Nominee was asked to share his understanding of environmental trends, to which he responded that the concept encompasses a wide range of issues. He explained that environmental trends refer to both direct and indirect challenges that impact the environment, as well as their consequences on human survival and natural ecosystems.

He further elaborated those human activities and natural occurrence play significant roles in shaping environmental conditions. He emphasised that protecting and sustaining the environment is crucial for ensuring a conducive habitat for survival. Conversely, failing to do so could lead to adverse consequences that threaten both human well-being and biodiversity.

#### **6.4 Ensuring Enforcement of Environmental Regulations in Cement Bagging**

The Committee raised concerns regarding the continued use of polypropylene bags by some Nigerian industries to package cement imported into Ghana, despite a ban by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Committee enquired whether the Nominee would enforce the ban to promote local industry, create jobs, and increase tax revenues for the Government.

In response, the Nominee assured the Committee that he would take all

necessary legal steps to ensure that businesses operate in full compliance with the law, regardless of who might be affected. He emphasised his commitment to engaging with key industry stakeholders, including business players and regulatory agencies in the environmental sector, to find a lasting solution to the issue.

Furthermore, he acknowledged that import regulations intersect with multiple ministries, including the Ministry of Trade, Agribusiness and Industry and its agencies. He assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would collaborate with these ministries and agencies to ensure that environmental regulations are strictly enforced while promoting sustainable industrial practices.

### **6.5 Impact of U.S. Withdrawal from the Climate Change Treaty**

The Nominee was questioned about the potential impact of the United States' withdrawal from the climate change treaty, to which Ghana is a signatory. He acknowledged that this development is concerning, given that the U.S. is the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases and has been a significant financial contributor to Ghana's environmental sustainability efforts.

Despite this challenge, the Nominee expressed optimism that Ghana's funding sources from the U.S. would not be entirely affected. He highlighted Ghana's longstanding diplomatic relationship with the United States, emphasising that through diplomatic engagements, Ghana could negotiate bilateral arrangements to ensure

continued financial support for environmental sustainability initiatives.

The Nominee further noted that if the U.S. Government maintains its withdrawal stance, Ghana must explore innovative financing mechanisms to compensate for the potential funding gap. He expressed hope that President Donald Trump might reconsider his decision, but stressed the need for proactive measures to sustain environmental programmes in the absence of U.S. support.

### **6.6 Ensuring Proper Solid Waste Disposal**

In response to a question on how he would ensure the proper disposal of solid waste, the Nominee referenced a previous initiative by a former Deputy Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, which introduced monthly environmental cleanliness exercises. He described this initiative as a novelty that should have been sustained, emphasising its importance in promoting cleanliness and waste management.

The Nominee stressed that environmental and solid waste disposal is not solely the responsibility of the State but also that of the citizenry. He noted that achieving effective waste management requires public sensitisation and education, ensuring that individuals actively participate in keeping their surroundings clean.

To enhance waste disposal practices, the Nominee advocated for inter-ministerial collaboration and the

implementation of a household waste segregation system. He proposed that the State should provide two separate waste bins—one for solid waste and the other for liquid waste—to encourage proper waste management at the household level. This, he believes, would significantly improve sanitation and contribute to a more sustainable waste disposal system in the country.

### **6.7 Facilitating the Adoption of Renewable Energy**

In response to a question on how he would facilitate the adoption of renewable energy in Ghana, the Nominee emphasised that the country has abundant solar energy resources that should be effectively harnessed. He suggested that a strategic starting point would be to encourage ministries and Government agencies to transition to solar energy, given the high capital investment required for large-scale adoption.

The Nominee highlighted the financial challenges faced by the Ministry of Finance in dealing with Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) over the indebtedness of some State institutions. He indicated that transitioning to renewable energy sources such as solar and tidal energy would help reduce the financial burden on the Government while promoting energy sustainability.

Additionally, he pointed out that tidal waves from the sea could be harnessed as a renewable energy source, offering another viable option for diversifying Ghana's energy mix. He further referenced the solar projects in Kaleo

and Lawra in the Upper West Region, which were intended to generate 10 per cent of the country's renewable energy needs but are currently operating at below 4 per cent capacity. The Nominee expressed his commitment to ensuring that these projects reach their full potential, contributing to the national energy supply and reducing reliance on non-renewable sources.

### **6.8 Position on Shutting Down Coal Plants and the Clean Energy Transition**

When asked whether Ghana should shut down its coal plants to align with the global clean energy movement, similar to Germany's decision, the Nominee expressed reservations about such an approach. He argued that Ghana's coal emissions are insignificant compared to major industrialised nations, and shutting down its coal plants could hinder economic growth rather than contribute meaningfully to global emission reductions.

The Nominee emphasised that industrialised nations, such as China, the United States, European countries, Russia, Brazil, and India, have benefited from unrestricted industrialisation over the years, allowing them to develop strong economies. He suggested that Ghana should focus on its industrialisation efforts rather than prematurely eliminating energy sources that could support economic expansion.

However, he acknowledged that while Ghana should prioritise industrial growth, it must also consider sustainable development strategies. He cautioned

that an abrupt shift from coal without viable alternatives could negatively impact industrial productivity and economic development. He reiterated that any transition must be gradual and well-planned, ensuring that clean energy adoption does not compromise economic progress.

## **6.9 Enhancing Ghana's Participation in Carbon Trading**

When asked about how he would enhance Ghana's ability to participate in carbon trading, the Nominee emphasised the financial benefits that carbon trading offers to the State. He acknowledged that carbon markets present an opportunity for Ghana to generate revenue while promoting environmentally sustainable practices.

To maximise Ghana's gains from carbon trading, he stressed the need to deepen existing relationships with international partners, climate financing institutions, and developed nations that are already engaged in carbon offset programmes. He further indicated that Ghana must proactively engage more countries and institutions to secure favourable agreements and expand its presence in global carbon markets.

## **6.10 Legacy as a Minister**

When asked about the legacy he hopes to leave as a Minister, the Nominee emphasised his commitment to being resource-oriented and ensuring discipline within the Ministry and its agencies. He stated that his goal is to instill a strong culture of accountability,

efficiency, and integrity in all operations under his purview.

He further stressed his determination to clamp down on corruption, ensuring that public resources are utilised effectively and transparently for the benefit of Ghanaians. He noted that corruption undermines environmental sustainability efforts, and as such, he would implement strict measures to prevent waste, enforce compliance with environmental regulations, and promote ethical conduct within the Ministry.

## **6.11 Recommendations from Nominee's Thesis**

When asked to share some of the key observations and recommendations from his thesis, the Nominee highlighted one of his significant recommendations—the election of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives. He noted that his research had long advocated for this policy even before the Constitutional Commission's review adopted a similar position.

## **6.12 Promotion of Natural Resource Use and Environmental Sustainability**

The Nominee addressed questions regarding the promotion and sustainable use of natural resources, including minerals, forests, and water bodies, if given the nod. He acknowledged that while there are challenges in balancing resource utilisation with environmental conservation, Ghana has existing laws aimed at preserving and sustaining the environment. He cited the Hazardous and Electronic Waste Control and

Management Act as a key regulatory framework to ensure responsible waste disposal and environmental protection.

He highlighted ongoing efforts such as e-waste recycling at Agbogbloshie and the reclamation of degraded lands as crucial steps in conserving natural resources. Additionally, he emphasised the role of agricultural smart technology in mitigating the environmental impact of farming methods. However, he stressed that achieving significant progress in environmental sustainability requires adequate funding for research institutions to support innovation in collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

On the issue of illegal mining (*galamsey*), the Nominee noted that combating *galamsey* is another major strategy for preserving Ghana's natural resources, as it directly affects water bodies, forests, and arable lands.

The Nominee also underscored the moral responsibility of protecting the environment, referencing Genesis 2:15 and Quran 2:30, where humanity is entrusted with the duty of stewardship over the earth. He proposed that religious leaders should incorporate environmental conservation messages into their sermons, as faith-based advocacy could be a powerful tool in changing public attitudes toward sustainable practices.

In response to a question on specific policies to address climate change and environmental sustainability, especially concerning women, the Nominee reaffirmed the importance of gender

inclusivity in environmental policies. He acknowledged the historic nomination of a female Vice President by His Excellency the President and emphasised that women play a critical role in climate action, agriculture, and resource management.

He assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would prioritise women's involvement in environmental decision-making and ensure that they take lead roles in programmes under the Ministry's jurisdiction.

### **6.13 Ensuring Responsible Waste Disposal at Abattoirs in Accra and Kumasi**

The Nominee was asked how he would ensure that abattoirs in Accra and Kumasi adhere to responsible waste disposal practices. He emphasised that self-discipline is essential in all spheres of life, including environmental management. He pointed out that laws and regulations exist to govern waste disposal practices, and it is imperative that abattoir operators comply with these standards to maintain public health and environmental safety.

The Nominee stated that he would engage key stakeholders within the sector to design a comprehensive roadmap aimed at improving waste management at abattoirs. He noted that technology-driven solutions could play a crucial role in addressing the existing challenges, and he would work towards leveraging modern waste treatment technologies to ensure sustainable waste disposal practices at abattoir sites.



## **6.14 Promoting Women's Participation in Science and STEM Education**

In response to a question on the involvement of women in science, the Nominee emphasised the importance of integrating STEM education at all levels of the educational curriculum. He noted that while girl-child enrolment at the lower primary level is often higher than boys, this trend reverses as they progress, especially in communities where sociocultural norms discourage female education.

The Nominee highlighted those deep-rooted societal beliefs hinder the advancement of girls in education, particularly in science-related fields. To bridge the gender gap in STEM subjects—such as mathematics, engineering, and technology—he stressed the need for targeted interventions that promote and support girls' participation in STEM.

He further pointed out that Ghana has an Affirmative Action Law, which, if properly enforced, would help increase female representation in STEM fields and create equal opportunities for girls to excel in scientific disciplines.

When asked whether he was aware of UNESCO's special project aimed at enhancing women's participation in science, the Nominee affirmed his awareness. He noted that UNESCO's initiatives extend beyond science to cultural education, further underscoring the need for a holistic approach to empowering women in education and professional fields.

## **6.16 Implementing Carbon Pricing to Raise Revenue**

The Nominee was asked about his strategy for ensuring that individuals and institutions pay for their carbon footprints as a means of raising revenue for the Ministry of Finance. In response, he emphasised the importance of stakeholder engagement, particularly with Parliament, which plays a critical role in enacting the necessary legislative frameworks to support such initiatives.

He further highlighted that achieving this goal would require collaboration among various agencies and ministries, ensuring that policies on carbon pricing, emissions reduction, and environmental accountability are effectively implemented. The Nominee underscored the need for institutional alignment to enforce measures that would not only generate revenue but also promote sustainable environmental practices across industries and sectors.

## **6.17 Ghana's Commitment to the Paris Agreement**

In response to a question on whether Ghana should continue honouring its commitments under the Paris Agreement despite the withdrawal of the United States of America, a major emitter of carbon emissions, the Nominee emphasised the importance of consulting stakeholders and technocrats to determine the best course of action.

Sharing his personal view, he suggested that Ghana should continue to uphold its obligations under the agreement, as global emissions will

persist regardless of the U.S.A decision. He further pointed out that some donor funding is contingent on Ghana's commitment to the agreement, and failure to comply could result in the loss of crucial financial support for environmental and climate-related initiatives.

### **6.18 Feasibility of Banning Plastic Bags in Ghana**

Addressing the issue of banning the importation and use of plastic bags while promoting the production of non-plastic reusable alternatives, the Minister-designate emphasised the need for a comprehensive feasibility study. He stated that such a study would assess the socioeconomic impact of an outright ban on citizens and evaluate the availability of cost-effective alternatives.

The Nominee cautioned against an immediate ban, citing potential adverse consequences. Instead, he advocated for supporting domestic businesses and investors to explore biodiversity-friendly options such as reusable containers and biodegradable packaging. He stressed that until Ghana can produce viable alternatives, he would not endorse a complete ban on plastics.

### **6.19 Waste Segregation as a Strategy for Waste Management**

When questioned about his views on waste segregation as a strategy for effective waste management, the Nominee highlighted that in other jurisdictions, segregation begins at home and within communities, unlike the

current situation in Ghana. He emphasised the need for proper education and sensitisation of domestic users on waste disposal before any large-scale State intervention.

The Nominee further noted the importance of providing designated dustbins for waste segregation once the necessary awareness has been created. He also suggested that private entities could play a significant role in supporting the initiative by investing in waste management infrastructure and promoting sustainable practices.

### **6.20 Measures to Combat Noise Pollution**

In response to a question on strategies to address noise pollution, the Nominee emphasised the need for strengthened collaboration among relevant Ministries to regulate excessive noise levels in communities. He highlighted the importance of engaging traditional and local government authorities to implement effective measures to curb the growing issue of noise pollution. The Nominee further pointed out that the current Environmental Protection Act lacks specific provisions on noise pollution. He, therefore, expressed the need for legislative amendments to incorporate noise pollution regulations into the new environmental laws to ensure stricter enforcement and improved management of the situation.

### **6.21 Major Environmental Challenges in Ghana**

When asked about the main environmental challenges facing Ghana, the Nominee cited illegal mining (*galamsey*) as a significant issue. He explained that *galamsey* has a far-reaching impact, as it leads to deforestation, the destruction of water bodies, the displacement of aquatic life, and the loss of livelihoods for many communities.

The Nominee emphasised that environmental protection is not only a legal and policy-driven responsibility but also a moral and religious obligation. He referenced teachings from the Bible, the Quran, and African traditional religions, all of which advocate for the preservation and sustainability of the natural environment.

## **6.22 Addressing Deforestation and Environmental Degradation**

The Nominee admitted that he did not have the exact percentage of Ghana's forest cover from 50 years ago but acknowledged that significant deforestation has occurred over the decades. He highlighted findings from a World Bank-financed project undertaken by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Ministry, which revealed alarming levels of environmental destruction. He noted that when the degradation of water bodies and forests was quantified, it amounted to approximately 10 per cent of Ghana's gross domestic product (GDP).

To address the issue, the Nominee expressed his commitment to conducting a national audit of environmental degradation to establish the full extent of

the destruction. He emphasised the need for data-driven decision-making and referenced the NDC's vision of "Every Man Per Tree." However, he suggested a more sustainable approach by advocating for "Every Child Should Plant a Tree and Nurture It," ensuring long-term environmental responsibility. He also criticised the previous Government's approach to the "Green Ghana Day" initiative, arguing that the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) should have taken charge of the programme. Additionally, he proposed working closely with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to reclaim degraded lands for productive use.

## **6.23 Utilising Science and Technology to Reduce Post-Harvest Losses**

The Nominee outlined his commitment to leveraging science and technology to minimise post-harvest losses in Ghana's agricultural sector. He emphasised the importance of increasing funding for key State institutions such as the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), and the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He stated that enhancing the financial capacity of these institutions would enable them to develop innovative solutions to protect the environment and improve agricultural productivity. He further assured that he would advocate for increased budgetary allocations to these agencies to strengthen their research and technological capabilities.

Additionally, the Nominee revealed that he had requested the heads of agencies under his Ministry to submit reports outlining the challenges that hinder their efficiency. He stressed that post-harvest losses are not solely an environmental issue but are also linked to infrastructure deficits, particularly poor road networks. He pointed out that many farmers struggle to transport their produce to market centres due to inaccessible roads, leading to significant waste. He, therefore, proposed a collaborative approach with the Ministry of Roads and Highways to improve road infrastructure, ensuring that agricultural produce reaches consumers efficiently and reducing losses in the supply chain.

#### **6.24 Bridging the Gap between MEST and the STEM Policy**

The Nominee emphasised the critical role of STEM education in driving innovation and industrialisation in Ghana. He underscored the need for close collaboration between the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology (MEST) and the Ministry of Education to integrate STEM education more effectively into the national curriculum at all levels. He asserted that equipping students with fundamental knowledge in science, mathematics, and technology is essential for fostering a culture of innovation and problem-solving in the country.

To further enhance STEM education and technological advancement, the Nominee proposed the development of a comprehensive policy aimed at building the capacity of young people, particularly in the area of digital technology. He expressed his intention to

work closely with the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technologies, and Innovations, which is focused on expanding internet accessibility through the provision of fiber optic cables nationwide. Additionally, he mentioned the importance of securing donor funding to support STEM initiatives, enhance technological literacy, and provide young Ghanaians with the tools needed to drive national development.

#### **6.25 Budgetary Allocation and Funding for Research Institutions**

During the vetting, concerns were raised about the inadequate budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, which has hindered agencies under the Ministry from operating at full capacity. The Minister-designate expressed deep concern over the low percentage of Ghana's GDP allocated to research, emphasising the need for increased investment in scientific and technological advancements.

To address funding constraints, the Nominee proposed an internal arrangement within the Ministry, where financially stable agencies could take on research projects on behalf of weaker agencies, allowing resources to be redistributed effectively. He strongly advocated for making a case to the President to increase the budgetary allocation for research institutions. Additionally, he stressed the importance of fostering collaboration between research institutions and the private sector. He noted that private sector

stakeholders need to recognise the value of research in driving their success, and such partnerships would enhance the financial sustainability of research institutions, enabling them to execute projects more effectively.

### **6.26 Capping of IGFs and Research Commercialisation**

Addressing concerns about the capping of internally-generated funds (IGF) by research agencies, the Minister-designate assured the Committee that he would leverage his personal relationship with the Minister for Finance to resolve the issue. He acknowledged that research institutions rely on these funds to undertake critical projects, therefore, restricting access to their IGF limits their capacity to contribute meaningfully to national development.

To address funding challenges, the Nominee expressed his commitment to engaging the private sector to foster interest in research and innovation. He emphasised the need for research commercialisation, where research outputs could be transformed into viable products and services to generate revenue for the agencies. By aligning research with industry needs, he believes that institutions under the Ministry can become more financially sustainable while making significant contributions to economic growth.

### **6.27 Commercialisation of Research Institutions**

In response to a question on the commercialisation of research institutions, the Nominee clarified that

the CSIR Act already provides for a commercial aspect to the work of CSIR. However, he emphasised that he was not advocating for the full commercialisation of research institutions but rather the commercialisation of their research outputs.

He assured the Committee that these institutions would continue to perform their core functions as State entities while simultaneously engaging in research activities that could generate revenue. This, he explained, would enhance their financial sustainability and improve their ability to execute their mandates. The Nominee also pointed out that some scientists and experts within the Ministry conduct private research using State facilities and resources without any financial benefit accruing to the State. He stated that while researchers could engage in private research, it should not be at the expense of the State, and there should be a mechanism in place to ensure that the State benefits when its resources are utilised.

### **6.28 Encroachment of Lands belonging to Research Institutions**

In response to a question regarding the encroachment of lands belonging to research institutions, the Nominee highlighted the critical issue affecting institutions such as the CSIR where land, originally measuring 81 acres, has now been reduced to 51 acres due to encroachment.

He assured the Committee that he would work closely with the Minister for

the Interior to develop strategies to protect and reclaim lands legally acquired for research institutions. He proposed the establishment of a fast-track court dedicated to handling environmental and land encroachment issues efficiently. The Nominee lamented that some agencies spend almost 50 per cent of their time on land litigation instead of focusing on their core research mandates. He committed to ensuring that institutions regain control over their lands to safeguard their long-term operations.

### **6.29 Addressing Delays in Climate Collaboration under the Paris Agreement**

The Nominee acknowledged that the Paris Agreement allows countries to collaborate in meeting their climate targets. In line with this, Ghana has entered into bilateral agreements with several countries, which are expected to generate millions of dollars in climate financing. However, he expressed concern over the slow progress of these agreements.

To address this challenge, the Nominee stated that he would investigate the reasons behind the delays and take necessary steps to expedite the process. He assured the Committee that he would engage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explore diplomatic solutions to ensure that Ghana benefits fully from these international agreements and receives the expected climate funding without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

### **6.30 Funding for the Ghana National Research Fund**

The Nominee addressed concerns regarding the Ghana National Research Fund, which was intended to receive GH¢50 million as seed money and 1 per cent of total national revenue. He acknowledged that the Fund had not received the necessary attention due to a long-standing conflict between Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education over its management.

He informed the Committee that the issue had finally been resolved, with the Fund being assigned to the Ministry of Education. The Nominee assured that he would collaborate closely with the Minister for Education to ensure that the funding aligns with the vision and policy direction of H. E. the President. His goal is to operationalise the Fund effectively and ensure that it serves its purpose of supporting research and innovation in Ghana.

### **6.31 Managing a Ministry with a Large Number of Technocrats**

When questioned about his approach to leading a Ministry with a large number of technocrats, the Minister-designate assured the Committee that he would grant them absolute freedom to operate, provided their work aligns with the vision and policy direction of President Mahama.

He emphasised that he trusts the expertise of the technocrats and intends to empower them to execute their responsibilities efficiently. He further revealed that he had already communicated this stance to the

professionals within the Ministry, assuring them of his commitment to fostering an environment where they can contribute meaningfully to national development.

### **6.32 Engaging Women in Plastic Waste Collection and Waste Management**

When questioned about engaging women in plastic waste collection as a means to earn income and improve solid waste management, the Minister-designate outlined his vision for a competitive and value-driven waste management system.

He emphasised his intention to de-monopolise waste management in Ghana, ensuring that multiple players, including women and other marginalised groups, can participate actively. He highlighted the importance of collaboration with local government authorities to facilitate this initiative, as it would not only enhance waste management efficiency but also create employment opportunities for Ghanaians.

### **6.33 Environmental Impact Assessment Permits and Their Abuse**

Addressing concerns about the granting and abuse of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) permits, the Minister-designate expressed concern over how discussions on this issue only arise when disasters occur. He emphasised that under the new EPA law, an EPA permit or certificate is now a mandatory precondition for any other permit.

The Nominee explained that while the new EPA law grants significant authority to the EPA, the Ministry maintains a supervisory role to ensure that these powers are exercised efficiently, transparently, and without bias. He highlighted that EIA permits are issued for a two-year period, allowing the Ministry to periodically assess compliance and determine whether renewals should be granted or denied.

Regarding revoking permits for non-compliance, the Minister-designate assured that all legal processes would be followed to ensure that permit holders adhere strictly to environmental regulations and standards.

### **6.33 Restore Ghana Initiative and the Fight Against Galamsey**

Expounding on the Restore Ghana Initiative outlined in the NDC Manifesto, the Minister-designate emphasised its core focus on land reclamation. He reiterated that illegal mining (*galamsey*) is at the heart of Ghana's environmental crisis, as it destroys water bodies, farmlands, and livelihoods.

The Nominee opined that the MEST should lead the fight against *galamsey* rather than the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, which he claimed has been accused of complicity in the menace. He stressed the need for a scientific and environmentally sustainable approach to reclaiming degraded lands and restoring ecosystems, ensuring that affected communities can rebuild their livelihoods.

### 6.34 Managing Electronic Waste and Public Safety

The Nominee was asked about his approach to addressing the growing threat of electronic waste (e-waste) in Ghana. He referenced the Hazardous and Electronic Waste Control Management Act, 2016 (Act 917), which provides a legal framework for managing e-waste. He expressed concern over the return of individuals to the e-waste recycling centre at Agbogbloshie after their relocation, questioning whether insufficient compensation had led to their return. He promised to investigate the matter to determine whether financial support was inadequate and, if necessary, review the amount provided.

The Nominee emphasised the health hazards associated with improper e-waste disposal, particularly the burning of waste. He assured the Committee of his commitment to engage stakeholders and explore funding opportunities to encourage the safe collection and recycling of electronic waste. Regarding the closure of an e-waste site near the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, he stated that he would consult with the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, the Greater Accra Regional Minister, and the Member of Parliament for the area to understand the situation before taking any action.

### 6.35 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed** as Minister for Environment, Science and Technology.

## 7.0 MR KOFI IDDIE ADAMS

### Minister-Designate for Sports and Recreation

#### 7.1 Background

Mr Kofi Iddie Adams was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1975 in Kumasi, Ashanti Region. He hails from Teteman Buem, a town in the Jasikan District of the Oti Region. He is married with three children and speaks Fante, Hausa, Ewe, and Lelemi. His hobbies include reading and storytelling, and he is an active member of a local reading club that organises reading sessions for pupils.

The Nominee began his education at Roman Catholic Primary and Junior Secondary School (JSS) in Teteman Buem, where he obtained his Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) certificate in September 1990. He proceeded to Bishop Herman College in Kpando, obtaining his Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) certificate in June 1993. Mr Kofi Adams earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Ghana, Legon, in September 1999, followed by a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary Education) from the University of Cape Coast in September 2003. In 2013, he obtained a Master of Science degree in Science Education from the University of Cape Coast.

The Nominee holds distinguished certifications in Youth Leadership and has several global affiliations. Throughout his career, he has



demonstrated strong leadership, teamwork, and collaboration skills, particularly within the National Democratic Congress (NDC). His tenure in Parliament has showcased his ability to multitask and engage with communities effectively, ensuring improvements in community engagement and event management.

Mr Adams possesses versatile skills in project management, problem-solving, and collaboration. He is recognised for his adaptability, proactive approach, and commitment to delivering effective solutions. His professional strengths include being dependable, responsible, calm under pressure, and an excellent communicator and organiser.

Mr Adams has amassed extensive career experience over the years. His political journey began as Constituency Youth Organiser for the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa Constituency of the NDC (July 1996 – June 1998). He had his National Service at Breman Asikuma Secondary School (October 1999 – July 2000) and later became Asikuma Odoben Brakwa Constituency Secretary for the NDC (July 1998 – August 2001).

From July 2000 to September 2001, he worked as a Science Resource Centre Coordinator at Breman Asikuma Secondary School and later as a Tutor at the same institution from September 2000 to September 2001. Mr Adams then advanced to become the Central Regional Youth Organiser of the NDC (November 2001 – June 2006).

His teaching career continued at Adisadel College in Cape Coast, where he served as a Tutor (September 2001 – June 2007), Head of the Biology Department (June 2004 – June 2007),

and Assistant Housemaster of Lemaire House (March 2005 – June 2007).

In politics, he was Deputy National Youth Organiser of the NDC (December 2005 – January 2010) and later served as Director of Public Affairs at the Office of former President Jerry John Rawlings (June 2007 – July 2010). He subsequently became Deputy General Secretary of the NDC (January 2010 – December 2014) and Special Aide/Spokesperson to former President Rawlings (July 2007 – March 2015).

He played a crucial role in national political campaigns, serving as National Campaign Coordinator for the NDC (April 2016 – December 2016). From 2014 to 2017, he was a Board Member of Bulk Oil Storage and Transportation (BOST) Company. He later became the National Organiser of the NDC (December 2014 – November 2018).

Currently, Mr Adams serves as the Member of Parliament for the Buem Constituency in the Oti Region, a position he has held since January 2021.

## **Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Response**

### **7.2 Strategies for Expanding Sporting Activities in the Country**

The Nominee acknowledged that sports development in Ghana has been heavily focused on football, often to the detriment of other sporting disciplines. He noted that this imbalance has limited the growth and support for other sports, despite the country's potential in multiple disciplines.

In response to how he would expand sporting activities, the Nominee highlighted the rationale behind the President's decision to decouple the Youth Ministry from the Sports Ministry. He explained that this move was designed to ensure that sports receive the necessary attention and investment required for its development.

The Nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to implementing all necessary modalities to ensure the realisation of this vision. He pledged to work towards fulfilling the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Manifesto promises regarding sports, ensuring equal development across various sporting disciplines and fostering greater participation and competitiveness in the sector.

### **7.3 Maintenance of Existing Sporting Facilities**

In response to concerns about the maintenance of sporting facilities constructed by the previous New Patriotic Party (NPP) Government, the Nominee emphasised that improving maintenance culture would be a key priority under his leadership. He assured the Committee that no facility would be allowed to deteriorate to the point where it risks being banned for use by international sporting bodies.

The Nominee further stated that Ghana's limited resources must be utilised efficiently, ensuring that existing facilities are well-maintained before constructing new ones. He reiterated his commitment to a sustainable approach, where sporting infrastructure is

preserved and enhanced for long-term use, thereby maximising the country's investment in sports development.

### **7.4 Enhancing Ghana's Performance in International Competitions**

Addressing concerns on how Ghana can secure more medals in international sporting events, the Nominee emphasised that diversifying investment beyond football to other sporting disciplines such as boxing, athletics, and other individual sports would be a top priority. He noted that while football remains popular, other sports hold great potential for success on the international stage.

Expressing disappointment over the Black Stars' failure to qualify for the upcoming Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), the Nominee stressed the need for long-term strategic planning to improve Ghana's performance in all sports.

To enhance athlete preparation for international competitions, the Nominee underscored the importance of grassroots sports development, particularly through inter-college competitions. He explained that rejuvenating school-based and community-level competitions would provide a structured pathway for identifying and nurturing young talents.

The Nominee further assured the Committee that investing in the potential of young athletes through structured training programmes, enhanced coaching, and international exposure

would position Ghana to achieve greater success on the global stage.

### **7.5 Funding and Financial Management in Sports Development**

In addressing the state of funding for sporting activities, the Nominee acknowledged that there is an outstanding debt that needs to be settled. He recognised that financial constraints have hindered the progress of various sporting disciplines and committed to implementing pragmatic measures to enhance financial sustainability in the sector.

The Nominee further pointed out that the National Sports Council (NSC), as an intermediary, has not been allowed to deal directly with the Ghana Football Association (GFA), particularly in matters related to funding for the Black Stars. He indicated that this situation has created inefficiencies in financial management and pledged to restore the original mandate of the NSC to ensure that it operates effectively within its framework.

To promote financial accountability and equity in sports funding, the Nominee committed to enhancing transparency in budget allocations for all sports federations. He assured the Committee that no sporting discipline would be sidelined and that funding allocations would be based on clear and equitable criteria to ensure that all sports receive the necessary financial support for development and participation in international competitions.

### **7.6 Support for Retired Footballers**

When asked about his plans for retired footballers, the Nominee stated that this policy is already captured in the NDC Manifesto and forms part of the broader strategy to improve the welfare of sportsmen and women in the country.

He emphasised that he intends to encourage active sportsmen to contribute to a pension scheme, ensuring that they have financial security after retirement. This initiative, he noted, would instill a culture of financial planning among professional athletes and safeguard their well-being beyond their active sporting years.

Additionally, the Nominee assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would implement other modalities to collect data on retired sports personalities to identify those in need of assistance. He stressed that Ghana must honour its sports heroes and heroines by giving them the necessary attention and support in recognition of their contributions to national pride and sports development.

### **7.6 Revitalising the Ghana Premier League**

When asked about his plans to make the Ghana Premier League more attractive, the Nominee acknowledged that the League faces numerous challenges, including a lack of trained technical staff to manage its affairs effectively.

To address this issue, he assured the Committee that he would work towards modernising the Winneba Sports College into a fully-fledged university. The aim of this transformation, he explained, is to train professionals who would be equipped to handle club management, coaching, and technical operations in the country's football ecosystem.

Additionally, the Nominee pledged to introduce allowances for sportsmen, particularly those in the local league, to curb brain drain. He noted that many talented Ghanaian footballers leave the country for war-torn nations due to low earnings from local clubs. By improving incentives and ensuring better career prospects within Ghana, he hopes to retain top talent and enhance the competitiveness of the Ghana Premier League.

## 7.7 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Kofi Iddie Adams** as Minister for Sports and Recreation.

## 8.0 MR JOSEPH BUKARI NIKPE

### Minister-Designate for Transport

## 8.1 Background

Mr Joseph Bukari Nikpe was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1969, and hails from Saboba in the Northern Region of Ghana.

He began his early education at Saboba L/A Primary School before proceeding to St. Joseph's Technical Institute in Saboba, where he obtained his Intermediate City and Guilds Craft Certificate (B/C) in 1991. He later

attended Tamale Polytechnic, earning an Advanced City and Guilds Craft Certificate (B/C) in 1995. In 2000, he obtained a Certificate in Education from the University of Education, Winneba, and further pursued a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in Technical Education from the same university in 2006. He later acquired a Master of Arts in Gender, Peace, and Security from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping and Training Centre, Ghana, in 2018.

Mr Nikpe began his professional career as a National Service Person at St. Joseph's Technical Institute from 1995 to 1996. He later worked as an Instructor at St. Joseph's Technical Institute from 1996 to 2005, imparting technical skills to students. Between 2006 and 2008, he served as a District Training Officer and Technical Coordinator with the Ghana Education Service (GES), contributing to education and skills development in the district.

His political career began with his election as Youth Organiser of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Saboba Constituency (1997–2001). He later became the Financial Secretary of the NDC in Saboba Constituency (2001–2005). His dedication to local governance led to his election as Assembly Member for Nalongni Electoral Area in Saboba District (2002–2006).

In 2005, he was elected Northern Regional Vice Chairman of the NDC, a position he held until 2008. His political influence extended beyond Ghana, as he served as a Member of the ECOWAS Parliament, where he advocated for

peace and solidarity among member States.

Mr Nikpe has been elected Member of Parliament for Saboba Constituency in the Northern Region of Ghana and continues to serve in this capacity to date.

### **Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **8.2 Ensuring Decency in Public Transport**

In response to a question regarding his plans for ensuring decency in Ghana's public transport system, the Nominee highlighted the pivotal role of transport owners and transport associations in facilitating the movement of people and goods across the country.

He stressed the importance of comprehensive and continuous education programmes for transport owners and operators. These programmes, he explained, would aim to enhance operational efficiency, improve safety standards, and elevate customer service within the sector.

The Nominee underscored that such educational initiatives would not only lead to more efficient transport services but also contribute to the overall growth and modernisation of the sector. By equipping transport operators with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to evolving regulations and customer expectations, Ghana's public transport system would see significant improvements in professionalism and service delivery.

#### **8.3 Passenger Service**

In response to a question on how to enhance customer experience in Ghana's airline industry, the Nominee emphasised the importance of collaboration between airline operators, State institutions, and air service providers. He noted that such partnerships are crucial for identifying customer needs and effectively addressing complaints to improve service delivery.

The Nominee called for the development and periodic review of policies and regulatory frameworks that would ensure airline operators prioritise passenger comfort, safety, and overall satisfaction. He stressed that maintaining high and consistent service quality across the industry is essential for improving the experience of passengers and positioning Ghana's airline sector competitively on both regional and global levels.

#### **8.4 Unifying Transport Groups for a Safer and More Peaceful Transport System**

When asked about his plans to unite the various transport groups across the country and create a safer and more peaceful transport system, the Nominee reaffirmed the crucial role of transport unions in ensuring the smooth movement of goods and people. He assured the Committee that if approved, he would actively collaborate with transport operators and unions to address pressing issues in the sector.

He emphasised the need for regular engagements with stakeholders, which would serve as a platform to discuss current challenges, anticipate potential issues, and develop solutions that benefit all parties. The Nominee highlighted that fostering a cooperative environment among transport unions and operators would help ensure safety, efficiency, and harmony within the transport sector.

### **8.5 Reducing Traffic Congestion and Enhancing Transportation Alternatives**

When asked about his strategies to reduce traffic congestion and mitigate its adverse effects on livelihoods and the economy, the Nominee expressed concern over Ghana's heavy reliance on road transport for the movement of goods and services. He lamented that other modes of transportation, such as rail, water, and air transport, have been significantly underutilised, resulting in excessive pressure on the country's road networks.

To ease congestion and improve traffic flow, the Nominee suggested expanding and modernising these underutilised transport systems to provide viable alternatives to road travel. He emphasised that diversifying the transportation sector would not only reduce road congestion but also enhance efficiency and economic productivity.

He assured the Committee that if approved, he would engage relevant stakeholders to attract private investment for the development of rail, water, and air transport infrastructure. This, he believes, would create a more balanced

and sustainable transport system in the country.

### **8.6 Improving Aircraft Quality and Reducing Airfares in Ghana**

In response to a question regarding the quality of aircraft and the high cost of airfares in Ghana, the Nominee expressed dissatisfaction with the poor condition of some aircraft operated by airlines in the country. He noted that many of these airlines use outdated and substandard aircraft, which compromises passenger comfort and safety.

He attributed the high cost of air travel to the significant operational expenses incurred by airlines in Ghana, which are then passed on to consumers in the form of high-ticket prices. The Nominee stressed the need for constant engagement with airline operators, air service providers, and other stakeholders in the aviation sector to identify and implement cost-reduction measures.

He pledged to collaborate with industry players to develop policies and initiatives aimed at lowering operational costs while ensuring that airline companies upgrade their fleet to meet international safety and quality standards. This, he believes, will result in affordable and improved air travel experiences for Ghanaians.

### **8.7 Introduction of Electric Vehicles into the Transport System**

When asked about his stance on continuing the previous Government's initiative to introduce electric vehicles

(EVs) into Ghana's public transport system, the Nominee assured the Committee that if approved, he would conduct a thorough assessment of the programme's feasibility and effectiveness.

He emphasised the importance of sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation, noting that the adoption of electric vehicles could help reduce carbon emissions, lower fuel dependency, and modernise Ghana's transport sector. However, he stated that a careful evaluation would be necessary to determine the suitability and practicality of integrating EVs into the existing public transport system.

### 8.8 Boankra Inland Port

The Nominee informed the Committee that the briefing he received from officials at the Ministry is that the project is about 75 per cent complete. However, he indicated that the project is likely to face severe operational challenges due to the absence of a rail link to the port for the transportation of cargo.

He assured the Committee that if given the opportunity, he will engage the private sector to raise the needed capital for the development and operation of a railway system to connect the port to Kumasi. This, he stated, would facilitate the movement of cargo and improve the efficiency of the port.

### 8.9 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of

the nomination of **Mr Joseph Bukari Nikpe** as Minister for Transport.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

In accordance with **Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution** and **Standing Order 217**, the Committee considered the nominations submitted by His Excellency the President.

After thorough deliberation, the Committee finds the Nominees competent, knowledgeable and well-suited for their respective ministerial roles.

The Committee, therefore, recommends to the House, by **CONSENSUS**, the adoption of its report and the approval of the nominations of:

- i. Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo as Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment;
- ii. Mr Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed as Minister for Environment, Science and Technology;
- iii. Mr Kofi Iddie Adams as Minister for Sports and Recreation; and
- iv. Mr Joseph Bukari Nikpe as Minister for Transport.

The Committee further recommends to the House by **MAJORITY DECISION** the approval of the nomination of:

- i. Mr Samuel Nartey George as Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations.

Respectfully submitted.

**Ranking Member of the Committee (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin):** Mr Speaker, first, let me thank the Hon Chairman for his industry in managing the affairs of the Committee thus far. Indeed, we worked together on the Committee's Report. We fully agree to the entire content of the Report and the conclusions thereto.

For all the other Nominees that we agreed to pass by consensus, truly, we did so in utmost good faith and in the national interest. I therefore, have no hesitation at all in seconding his Motion for this House to approve Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, Mr Murtala Mohammed Ibrahim, Mr Kofi Iddie Adams, and Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari. We believe that they qualify under Article 78 (1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217 of this House.

Mr Speaker, then on our respected Hon Colleague, Mr Samuel Nartey George, we also believe that he qualifies under Article 78 (1) of the 1992 Constitution to hold public office as a Minister of State. However, there were matters that the Minority Caucus felt that his inability to deal with at the vetting made it impossible for us, as a matter of principle, to support his nomination hence, the decision to go by majority on his nomination. In other words, we wash

our hands of his nomination and ask the Majority to carry their burden on their own shoulders.

Mr Speaker, one would ask, upon what do we mount our opposition to his nomination? The basis of our opposition can be found on page 30 to 31, in particular, paragraph 5.10. This paragraph starts from page 30 to 31. 7.11 p.m.

We have no objection to his opinion in the public space, after all, all of us have an opinion in the public space, but we had a problem with the language he used against the person of the Chief Justice of the Republic. We believe that his criticism, as he describes it as constructive, could have been measured in language use, especially since he himself is in public service.

Again, if we go to page 42 to 43, the Nominee, first on paragraph 5.29 on the same page 42, this is what the Report says: "The Nominee when asked if he will retract and apologise for his posts on social media, stated that he stands by those posts."

Mr Speaker, we believe that only few people in this country get the opportunity to become president of this nation. In governance, a president encounters a lot of challenges, some of which he may not even know. For the Nominee to insist that President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo benefited from the *galamsey* menace, we found that most unfortunate. In spite of our call on him to, at least, be measured in that language use—He could criticise Nana Akufo-Addo for not successfully ensuring that



his call on anti-*galamsey* helped the country; he could not say that the man benefited.

Mr Speaker, the Oxford Dictionary has a definition for a person benefiting. When we say somebody has benefited, what it means is that he has financially gained from the act. This we felt, that he being in public space—Today, he is going to assume that important office, Ministry of Communication Digital Technology and Innovations, and this Ministry has key international stakeholders.

People from all manner of places would walk to him in his office to transact government business. Should there be some failings, is he going to accept people criticising him using unprintable words? We felt that if our respected Colleague had found it necessary to say, at least, he retracts those words against the former President, we would have had no problem. But he insisted, and we felt that it was way below the belt and that is our first reason for opposing him.

Now to paragraph 5.30, you can find it from pages 42 to 81, and I read,

“The Nominee was asked to produce some documents to support claims he had made during the vetting. He was able to provide the following documents: academic certificates, travel documents, Airbnb receipts and accommodation receipts. The Nominee, however, has not been able to produce documents relating to the business of his spouse as well as his source of secondary income. The nominee has also not been able to submit

evidence of the source of payment of his fees abroad”.

Mr Speaker, these were issues that came up at the vetting. The Nominee had assured that he was going to provide us evidence of these documents. As the Report duly signed by the Chairman and the Clerk to the Committee have, and as the Report has, indeed, captured, these are documents that are yet to get to us.

Mr Speaker, we find it very unfortunate because this is the same Nominee who has been holding other public officers to high standards. And if he is demanding accountability from other public officers, then the rule is clear; he who comes to equity must do equity and he who comes to equity must also come with clean hands.

Mr Speaker, we are simply saying that on the basis of these, we maintain our position and, therefore, we will express our protest in a vote only against this Nominee and we do so without prejudice. We shall participate fully in the debates on this matter and our Members would take turns to make their comments on this matter. Then, at the point of voting, we shall proceed on the next direction.

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

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, please, the Motion has been moved and it has been seconded. In order to manage the House, I have been given the list. Let me start with Hon Minister

for Education, but, please, let us manage the time within five minutes.

**Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu (NDC — Tamale South):** Mr Speaker, let me thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion for the adoption of the Report of His Excellency President Mahama's Nomination for Appointment as Ministers of State.

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I would take the opportunity to implore the Leadership of the House, in particular, the Majority and Minority Leaders, to give utmost support and respect to the First Deputy Speaker as the man in charge of the Appointments Committee. At all times, he needs their support. I think it is important that we recognise that it is not for nothing that the Constitution allowed that we have two Deputy Speakers, and the First Deputy Speaker is responsible for matters relating to appointment.

7.21 p.m.

Mr Speaker, the second is, what does the Appointments Committee do? What are they to do? Propriety of vetting. Mr Speaker, again, to remind ourselves, elected Members of Parliament Walk to this House on the strength of Article 94 of the 1992 Constitution. Again, it is not for nothing that the Constitution says that to qualify to be a Minister of State, you must qualify to be elected as Member of Parliament, therefore, if you are an elected Member of Parliament, what in law can we do as an Appointments Committee?

Mr Speaker, this practice has endeared Ghana to many democracies. The public accountability of persons desiring or appointed by the President to lead in various sectors of the economy, who must have utmost public trust and public integrity.

Mr Speaker, in the cause of the vetting process, once upon a time, I heard the Hon Minority Leader say that President Mahama should apologise to Ghanaians and appoint more ministers.

Mr Speaker, may I with respect refer you to—You made a comment.

Mr Speaker, let me remind him that what President Mahama is doing in resetting Ghana's governance is to set benchmarks, which benchmarks will guide future Presidents of the Republic—*[Hear! Hear!]*—and it is not a benchmark for purpose of just the Ninth Parliament, no.

Mr Speaker, may I refer you to Article 76(1) of the 1992 Constitution and I quote; “There shall be a Cabinet which shall consist of the President, the Vice-President and not less than ten and not more than nineteen Ministers of State.”

So, Mr Speaker, Cabinet is properly constituted with just 21, the President plus the Vice-President, and 19 other Ministers. President John Dramani Mahama, in appointing 60 Ministers, will keep honour and faith with the Ghanaian people. What he expects is that in future, never again should a President want to rule this country and want to

appoint as many Ministers as 120, 100, 90, 80, no.

Mr Speaker, that is the governance legacy, his Excellency John Dramani Mahama wants to lead and probably even more, if he does, as he is taking full advantage of the extraordinary mandate he has, subjecting this country to a constitutional review—When we have the opportunity at constitutional review, then we will just, as a House, decide that this is what we want as a country. Learning from the John Dramani Mahama experience, and capping the number of Ministers, never to exceed 60—So those who think President Mahama will walk back on his pledge, will be disappointed. He would honour that and save the public purse, as he has promised.

Mr Speaker, what is the essence of a lean size of government or a small size of government? To make some savings for the Republic and that he would do.

Mr Speaker, now let me come to a few of the Nominees, and I start by referring you, Mr Speaker, to the Honourable Kofi Adams, Minister Designate for Sports. In those days, I was then National Youth Organiser of the NDC, I believe the years 2002 to 2005, that I had gone to Takoradi to do an NDC youth programme, and on my return at Adisadel College, he was then a teacher and deputy Constituency Organiser. As I sat through the programme, before I left, I was convinced that he was a worthy political material. I subsequently invited him to Accra. He came and worked with me as NDC Deputy National Youth Organiser, when I was Youth Organiser.

Then with Bede Anwataazumo Ziedeng and others at party headquarters.

Mr Speaker, he is a quiet deliverer. He has ownership of his strategies and speaks less. I believe that he would make President Mahama proud at the Ministry of Sports and Recreation but there is more work to do. We expect that at the University of Education, he will dedicate that stadium to support them.

Mr Speaker, our football is not in the best of shapes. Look at the events at Nsoatreman and Asante Kotoko. Officiating is at its poorest and our Premier League is not watched but Mr Speaker, football today is a major cash gainer, if you invest and invest properly in it.

Mr Speaker, I have seen, and may I refer you to page 15 of the Report, considering extending the retirement age in the civil and public service. Again, a matter of public debate maybe this is the opportunity to enrich the constitutional review process. Are we to decide, for instance, a few days ago I had a meeting with a section of university lecturers over retirement at ages 60, 65, medical doctors at ages 60, 65, mindful that there are other young people who have aspirations but can we as a country decide that we want to adjust the retirement age? Let us subject it to another public debate, and maybe it will inform the work of the Constitutional Review Committee.

Mr Speaker, I come to Mr Samuel Nartey George. I listened to the Minority Leader, and I see Majority decision. The political and Standing Order consequences of that decision is known

but, Mr Speaker, is he qualified to be a Minister of State or not? I am just asking.

Mr Speaker, he is also going to the important Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations. Ghana today is led by a dominant player in our communications space, MTN. What opportunities are there for Ghanaians in that particular industry? I believe when he gets there, he must open up those opportunities for more Ghanaian participation in that particular area.

Mr Speaker, to my neighbour, Mr Muhammed Ibrahim Murtala, who is going to the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology at a time that President Donald Trump of the United States, a major contributor to global emission problems, is pulling that out of the Paris Accord. I am sure he would be working closely with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, subject to this decision of this House, to see how Ghana contributes to benefiting from it.

Mr Speaker, finally, let me conclude. To the Whips. Our Whips must know that in this House, discipline rests on their shoulders. Therefore, if one behaves in a manner and conduct that is not acceptable to the Ghanaian people, one breaks down the governance of this House and put the Speaker in some imperil as we did. So, the Whips, be guided. They are not just Whips for their political party. Discipline is yours.

Mr Speaker, you visited the House of Commons. Even the Whip, the original Whip, is still in the office of the Whip of

the House of Commons. So, the Whips, should be the last at all times, at any time, to undermine the work of the House and they must ensure that their Members uphold party values, but they should be reminded at all times that they are patriotic citizens of Ghana. There are times that we must drink from the spring of patriotism, and this country must benefit from us as persons contributing to the public good.

So, Mr Speaker, let me commend my schoolmate at the Law school, who is now the proud Chairman of the Appointments Committee, Mr Bernard Ahiafor. He has managed his temperament so well—*[Hear! Hear!]*—There are times that sitting afar, one cannot take and swallow what he or she is compelled to swallow. We have been there before with Mr Osei-Owusu. Today, we will remember him and respect him, former Chairman of the Appointments Committee, he will turn and tell you that “Hon Minority Leader, your time is up. I am not tolerating any more questions from you”. To keep the sanity and stability of the House, we yielded. The recordings are there.

Mr Speaker, I want to commend the Chairman, and then to all of us as Members, if we behave in a manner which undermines the public trust, we are undermining the public faith and respect for our democracy.

Mr Speaker, to my good friend, Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari, I am sure I can also share his story. Now, Northern Regional Minister, Ali Adolf John, one day walked to me when Moses Mabengba Bukari was exiting from Parliament and

said he has a better candidate who can win Saboba. I asked him who, he said, Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari, then I said we should meet at the Electoral Commission's office in Tamale so that I would know who Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari is.

7.31p.m.

Mr Speaker, he is a calm gentleman and a very tolerant person, and I am sure, he would in performing as Minister for Transport. He should be reminded that we need a second phase for the Yakubu Tali International Airport in Tamale Airport—*[Laughter]*—And there are some promises in Cape Coast. We would take appropriate decisions on the Airport as a Government, and he knows that. Mr Bukari would be at the Ministry for Transport, and he is an elected Member for Saboba; when they said Minister for Transport—Minister for Road and Highways is here.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Mr Minister?

**Mr Haruna Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, I would conclude: I wish Mr Bukari well. *[Hear! Hear!]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, let me now give the floor to the Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi, Mr Kwadwo Oppong Nkrumah.

**Mr Kwadwo Oppong Nkrumah (NPP — Ofoase Ayirebi):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make some few remarks in support of the Motion that has been moved.

Mr Speaker, first, I am tempted to comment briefly on the remarks by the Minister for Education in celebration of the new threshold of 60 Ministers. I think, as commendable as it is, to the extent that we are making remarks that *Hansard* is capturing, we should add to it the fact that if the results of the election had been different, we would be celebrating 50 Ministers and not 60 — *[Hear! Hear!]*—The new threshold of 60 is worth celebrating, but, in the very new future, we would be celebrating 50 under an NPP Administration.

Mr Speaker, I think, however, on a more serious note, it is also important to correct the impression that the consolidation of some Ministries necessarily means a wholesome cut or savings of the public purse. For example, today, we do not have a Ministry of Information, but we have a Minister of State at the Office of the President responsible for Government Communication. The same salary that the Minister of Information was drawing is the same salary that he would be drawing. All the civil servants who were working at the Ministry of Information would continue to draw their salaries.

Mr Speaker, if one goes to the Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources, the fact that he or she no longer sees a Ministry of Water Resources separately does not mean that any civil servant who work there has been fired. They would continue to draw their salaries; in fact, all the budget for projects under Ministry for Water Resources has only now been consolidated with Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources.

Mr Speaker, the claim that we made sometimes that there has been a wholesome cut in expenditure is not exactly accurate, and I think that it is something that we should also turn our minds to.

Mr Speaker, very quickly, I want to make a few remarks—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, I would not take any interjection or a point of Order.

**Mr Nkrumah:** Mr Speaker, I want to make a few remarks very quickly on some of the specific portfolio, starting with the Minister-designate for Labour, Jobs and Employment, Dr Abdul-Rahid Hassan Pelpuo; he is a very respected Member of this House, and we congratulate him on his nomination. A couple of things that we who have just left Government would like to draw his attention to are that jobs are created mostly in the private sector than the public sector, so it would behoove on him to liaise with his colleagues in the economic sectors, so that they can create the enabling environment for the private sector to create the jobs. I say so because, already the Minister for Finance, our very good Brother, Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, who has just left the Chamber, has been announcing that he would create jobs, and the lesson that we have learnt which we would share with them is that it would be better attention is paid to assisting the economic sector Ministers, so that they create the environment that allows the private sector to create jobs.

Mr Speaker, additionally, one thing that, over the years, as a Republic we have failed in, is having an independent body that can put together statistics on jobs. In the USA, for example, they have the US Bureau of Labour Statistics that captures the data and publishes the report on a monthly basis. In the Kufuor Administration, we tried a job registration exercise; it did not succeed much. In the Mills Administration, I recall my Brother, Mr Ablakwa, the Deputy Minister for Information at the time announced the famous 1.6 million jobs and, later, the Minister for Employment was struggling to reconcile. In the Akufo-Addo Administration, we resorted to Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) data of about 2.6 million jobs, and it is a matter of public debate.

Mr Speaker, I am raising this because it is a lesson that, as a Republic, we must learn, and it would serve the new Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment well if he pays attention to something like creating an office of employment statistics or labour statistics in Ghana that can independently gather this data that the political, academic and economic classes can agree on. So, we wish him well.

Mr Speaker, the second person I would want to speak about is Mr Murtala Mohammed Ibrahim going to the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology. We had a big debate this afternoon about whether or not we can rely on what somebody has written as a matter of fact; it is a debate that is at large.

Mr speaker, now the fight against *galamsey*, as he also alluded to in his vetting, is something he has to exercise his mind to and, in collaborating with his colleagues, the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, and Minister for Defence, *et cetera*, they would be able to do a bit more in addition to what has been done already. It is a fight that successive Governments have battled. We all recall the videos of Prof Mills complaining about it, and we recall the videos of President Akufo-Addo committing to work at it. Today, that matter is still at large. So, if the Minister-designate goes there—Today, the cup is squarely on his head, and he has to collaborate with his colleagues to try and achieve some results in addition to what has been achieved in that area.

Mr Speaker, I want to speak about the Minister-designate for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations. A couple of things or, maybe, three things that we have learnt as people just exiting Government that he should pay attention to. First, is valued added services in the telecom space. A lot of work is being done on voice and data, but if one looks at the global economy, a lot of young work people are finding expression and wealth in value added services. Here in Ghana, the digital centre, *et cetera*, can do a lot more in that space. He should not just focus on the telecommunication companies, voice and data but value-added services and how to help young Ghanaians take advantage of that.

Adding to that is the case of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) centres in India, Singapore and some other parts of the world which are creating a lot of jobs

for young people through BPOs. It would serve Ghana well if the Minister pays attention to that area. Also the Fintech ecosystem requires a lot of support for the young Ghanaians. A lot of them previously would be doing what some may call *sakawa*, *et cetera*, but that shows that they have the skills, and if they are supported in the Fintech ecosystem, they can do some more, so it would serve Ghana well if he pays some attention to that.

Mr Speaker, there are two final points, then I would rest. The Minister for Sports and Recreation. It is the new Administration that has been talking about the 24-Hour Economy. In fact, the 24-Hour Economy, for some people, is becoming like Electronic Transfer Levy (e-Levy). When one ask about jobs, they say 24-Hour Economy, and when one ask about growth, they say 24-Hour Economy; when one ask about everything, they say 24-Hour Economy.

Mr Speaker, the 24-Hour Economy requires them to pay attention, for example, to the numerous AstroTurfs that have been built across the country. That is one viable way that night sports under those floodlights can function, so it is a good space that you should pay attention to so that, at least, their 24-Hour Economy would find expression in night sports, using the AstroTurfs that the Akufo-Addo and Bawumia Administration bequeath to them before we left office.

Mr Speaker, my very final point is to the Minister for Transport, Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari; he is a very fine gentleman. He is not just to look at the

Tamale Airport as the Mr Haruna Iddrisu spoke about but also to pay attention to electronic vehicles. One would recall that the immediate exited Administration piloted a role out of electronic vehicles in the public transport area as part of efforts of reducing the cost of transport. Today, the new President has interestingly named the energy ministry also as Minister for Green Transitions. It is an indication that there is a lot of interest to ensure that the green space is played in some more. It would help if the Minister, collaborating with the Minister for Energy and Green Transition, ensures that the policy of EVs is put to use as quickly as possible, in particular on the duties on electronic vehicles, so that people who want to go into electronic vehicles, particularly large occupancy electronic vehicles would find them cheaper, bring them in and help to reduce the cost of transportation.

With these few words Mr Speaker, would support the Motion that was moved by the Chairman of the Committee.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi, Mr Kwadwo Oppong Nkrumah.

Yes, let me now turn to Hon Member for Adaklu, Minister for Roads and Highways.

**Mr Agbodza:** Thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion moved by the Chairman of the Appointments Committee and seconded by our respected Colleague, the Minority Leader.

Mr speaker, indeed, I believe Dr Pelpuo has what it takes to drive the Government agenda of creating more job opportunities. He is a very experienced politician of a calm demeanor and can take the job and do it very well.

Mr Speaker, Minister-designate for Environment, Science and Technology is very passionate about the environment and has advocated, on many occasions, what we can do, and I know that he is somebody who has got a research background as well, so some of the things raised by my good friend, the Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi, I believe, the Minister-designate can handle them.

7.41 p.m.

Mr Speaker, with regard to Mr Samuel Nartey Geroqe, I respect the position taken by the Minority but just to say that their stance is a bit problematic. One of the reasons given for not supporting him is because he has failed to produce documents relating to the businesses of his spouse. Mr Speaker, Sam George is not the owner of his wife. If one's wife owns a business, one would need her permission to be able to give details of that business. So, this idea that when one is being vetted, he or she can be vetted on everything, including personal things—I am just saying that while it is him today, one day be prepared that some other questions



which have no relation to the portfolio can come up.

Mr Speaker, then there is the issue of secondary source of income. Really? Colleagues on the other Side are saying that if somebody were to ask them to determine how much they spend as Members of Parliament, they would be able to account for all of it and put it in a document—but that is their point. I think these points are too feeble to be used to say that they do not support the Motion, but they have their point.

Mr Speaker, with regard to Mr Kofi Iddie Adams, the new Hon Minister-designate for Sports and Recreation, I agree with Mr Oppong Nkrumah that we have seen the building of a number of AstroTurfs across the country. The record though is that many of them are not built to standard; some of them are failing already and many of them are in constituencies of Hon Members seated at the Left Side of the House at the moment. That is a fact, but he has made a very important point that we should ensure that we can put those to use even beyond when the sun is there. And I am sure Mr Kofi Iddie Adams has what it takes to be able to do that.

Mr Speaker, with regard to Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari, I have no doubt that he understands exactly what the job description is. One of the things he talked about is the Electric Vehicle (EV). But Mr Oppong Nkrumah, the truth is that, yes, the previous government said they have got an EV policy. And then on the day of the launching of the buses, we were told 100 EV buses were available. I checked that time and only 10 buses

were registered at DVLA. So, we do not have 100 EV buses, we have 10. But even those 10, you would be concerned that if that bus moves from Tema Station and gets stuck in traffic on the way, it may not be able to get to Tema and come back because we do not have the infrastructure to handle them yet. So, in the haste to deploy EVs, it comes with infrastructure; it is not merely having a policy. We do not have it—because you need to charge it, it does not use fuel. I agree with you.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I know my Colleague, the Minority Leader, always complains that when he is speaking, he is harassed. When Mr Oppong Nkrumah was speaking, I saw my Colleagues listen to him in silence. So please, can you indulge us?

Mr Speaker, our respected former Leader and Minister for Education raised an issue. The spectacle we saw at the Appointment Committee; I was there the last time. I am happy we have been able to resolve it. But Leader of the Minority, I saw you made certain points, including the fact that Mr Samuel George should retract certain statements and other things. I want to use this opportunity. I know that as Members of Parliament, we are not blind. We all know or have suspicions about who in the Parliamentary Service could belong to NDC or the NPP but we never put that kind of information outside. I know, and you know that there are Members of Parliament who have direct relations with people in the Parliamentary Service. But—The point I am making is the way by which the Minority Leader actually

dealt with the Clerk of the Appointment Committee.

Mr Speaker, no—[*Uproar*]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member—*Order! Order!*

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, I can tell my Colleagues that I just left my job as a Whip. Whenever I am speaking, somebody puts my microphone off. I can tell you; I can do that right now. But when they are speaking, I can make sure they are not—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister, please address me. I am told the issue about the clerk has been addressed by the Speaker. So, let us focus on the Nominee —

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, let me tell you why this issue has to be dealt with. I know the lady and her family; they are extremely traumatised—[*Uproar*—Mr Speaker after the Minority—Mr Speaker, allow me. All I am going to say is that give the opportunity to my very good friend, the respected Minority Leader, to openly apologise to the clerk. [**Some Hon Members:** No!]

Mr Speaker, repeatedly, when I speak, they put the microphone off. Mr Speaker, they should not tempt us to do the same thing that when they speak, they cannot be heard. And I can see a female Colleague on the other Side, whose name I do not want to mention, who has become an expert in that—[*Uproar*—

Mr Speaker, I am just saying that I know the lady and the family is traumatised. They feel that Parliament—and I am happy with the way Mr Speaker defended her. As I sit here, I say everybody in Parliament knows which staff is political, NDC or NPP, but we never use that against them. I can tell you the political colouration of the four people sitting here, but that is not my business. So, for the Minority Leader, a very respected Leader of this House, to actually lay into the Clerk to the Committee that way, I am saying that for us to look like people who actually care about women, he must actually apologise, personally, on the Floor. He can decide not to do it, but I am just saying that for the trauma the family of the clerk is going through, it would help if he made some statement here to calm them down, that it is not something personal.

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

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I just want to add to what Mr Haruna Iddrisu said. We have consistently disagreed vehemently in this House, and you being the chair. We speak, and then we leave it there. For the fact that for the first time since I entered this House in 2013, Colleagues got so infuriated to the extent of physically destroying tools that have been given to us to work with, should never happen again. I was sitting there and the consul in front of me —[*Uproar*—

7.51 p.m.

Mr Speaker, do you know why I need to talk about this? I have been invited by the Committee investigating—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister, please, I wish we hold on to this. Let us focus on the Nominees. I think we will revisit this particular issue, but let us focus on the Nominees and approve them. Some of them seated here, all that they are waiting for is to be approved, so, please, let us focus on the Nominees and approve them. Later, we can revisit the issue.

**Mr Agbodza:** Yes, Mr Speaker, let me conclude. I saw my respected Leader of the Minority Side suggest that he expected Mr Samuel Nartey George to retract some of the things he said about the Chief Justice and President Akufo-Addo. I honourably urge my Leader that the same principles by which he said that he will not support Mr Samuel Nartey George, I am encouraging him to use the same principles and apologise to the Clerk to the Committee, whom he lied about, and apologise to her.

Thank you very much.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Leader, will you—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, my respected friend and Colleague, who is now the Minister for Roads and Highways, in making his contribution, introduced an important matter, which arose in the course of our Committee hearings. What I am sure he is not aware of is that this matter has been discussed at a very high level in this House. We have had engagements, and I

am not a person who would have hesitation where I think I am wrong, and hide behind my ego to hurt another person.

I had assured the Speaker that based on the engagement, I was actually going to make a formal Statement here, in this House, in respect of all the matters. We are all human beings. I remember when we were kids, somebody would use their eye to provoke you, but when you hit, it is that which is seen. But we have moved past that.

Mr Speaker, without equivocation, I shall proceed in terms of what my Brother said—He and I have a long relationship; I do not mind he saying that publicly. It is for the good of all of us. Today, I am 46; tomorrow, I may be 50, and I will not be the same person. We grow, we learn, we mature. If Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza is saying that he knows the family and my outpour—*[Interruption]*—Please, it does not mean anything. We have been in this House for some time; I beg you.

If Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza holds a view that he knows the family and my reaction on the conduct of our Clerk to the Committee has resulted in some trauma to the family—He knows the family, I do not know the family, and the lady in question—Mr Speaker, let me unreservedly say—What is her name? I want to mention her name in full—*[Interruption]*—Please, I will do it. Let me unreservedly say to the Clerk to the Appointments Committee, Mrs Gifty Jiagge-Gobah, I am sorry—*[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, let me also say to her husband, she bears “Mrs”, her lovely husband, that my comment in respect of internal matter, if, as a husband, he is traumatised by this, I hereby unreservedly apologise to him as a husband. To the children, let me unreservedly say sorry; let me unreservedly say sorry to the extended family, those close and dear to her, who are affected by my outpour of disappointment in her conduct, and to all her colleagues in the Parliamentary Service, including Colleagues who felt that I could have managed the matter better, I am sorry, I again apologise unreservedly. I know that with all discussions held, we would be able to work better in spite of some reservations that we may have.

Mr Speaker, let me emphasise that even as we were resolving this matter, at least, I have had a better approach. This afternoon we met and I had the opportunity of looking at drafts while she made corrections, and relationship has been restored. She and I did not have bad blood. She knows the formal relationship I had with her in our work. Except that Mr Kwame Agbodza, I have been a Majority Leader before. I was in that Black Seat; you were here opposite. The standard she held in respect of dealings between the Majority and the Minority Leaders was what perhaps compelled my reaction because—[*Interruption*]—Please, Colleagues, a man must be heard.

She held us to such a high standard, and I felt that the same treatment could come from her while we are in Minority. That notwithstanding, I concede that there is always a better way to react to a situation and I will not allow ego to

direct me on what to do, especially when she is a woman. I unreservedly, one more time, withdraw this, and I would write a personal letter to her to keep for her records from the bottom of my heart.

Mr Speaker, I rest my case.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** It is now the turn of Rev Ntim Fordjour.

**Rev John Ntim Fordjour (NPP — Assin South):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity given me. I rise to support the Motion that has been moved and in so doing, to highly commend the respected Minority Leader, Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin, for the nobility, civility, and humility demonstrated, and the honour in seeing it fit to apologise unreservedly, and withdrawing any comments that may have been deemed offensive to the Clerk to the Appointments Committee.

Mr Speaker, it is instructive to note that this is not the first time the Hon Minority Leader has had to apologise in relation to the activities of the Appointments Committee and processes for Parliamentary approval. The other occasion was to apologise to a Nominee, who was before the Committee, who stated that he felt he, his family and chiefs were offended by some utterances of the Minority Leader. The Minority Leader unreservedly apologised and retracted. Today, he has demonstrated same.

But we must put on record that neither Osahen Alexander Afenyo-Markin, nor any Member of the Minority Side is on the Tenth Report of the

Appointments Committee pending approval of this House. It is Members of the Majority who are penned in this Report, pending our approval, whom the public out there is watching to demonstrate the highest standards of nobility, humility, and service.

My respected senior and Minister for Education had earlier quoted Article 78(1), that:

“Ministers of State shall be appointed by the President with the prior approval of Parliament from among members of Parliament or persons qualified to be elected as members of Parliament, except that the majority of Ministers of State shall be appointed from among members of Parliament.”

Mr Speaker, there is a reason the framers of the Constitution insisted that when the President appoints a Minister, he must obtain the prior approval of Parliament. It goes beyond the technical qualification and technical competence, but character, leadership, nobility, accountability, among others are the traits they look out for. I am looking at my Colleagues taking a cue from the nobility just demonstrated.

To the Nominee for the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment, Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo, a very respected member of this House, and I have had the opportunity to review one of his books that he authored: *The True Meaning of Life*—His temperament and his past record of public service gives me every assurance that he would have what it takes to work to maintain the calm labour front that we have seen over the

past years, and to ensure that he engages the multiplicity of stakeholders within the labour front to ensure that their demands are discussed and heard. And even when the expectations are not fully met, they receive the assurances that will help them work with their Government.

8.01 p.m.

On the 24-Hour Economy, the Nominee assured the House and the Committee that he would work with his Government to ensure that companies that are not already operating 24 hours are given specific support to ensure that they are able to employ three teams, three batches and three shifts for 24-Hour Economy to be fully operationalised. That is a commendable assurance, but we want to see that assurance given effect to in the first Budget that may be presented to this House. That would be the commitment that indeed there are concrete plans to incentivise the private sector to tap into President John Dramani Mahama's 24-Hour Economy. I wish him well.

On Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari, Minister-designate for Transport, I have every confidence that the Minister has what it takes, given his temperament and how we know him, to be able to engage the multiple stakeholders, particularly within our public transport front to ensure that it is unified. This is to ensure that they provide a safer, peaceful and more efficient public transport system for Ghanaians. He also assured the Committee that the general concern of the public relating to the poor state of aircrafts and the relatively high costs of airfares of airlines that are operating in

Ghana would be looked into. This is to ensure that we have value for money, we have improved air transport system and that outdated aircrafts are taken from our system.

On Mr Murtala Muhammed Ibrahim, the Minister-designate for Environment, Science and Technology—On the page numbered 49, the Nominee acknowledged the steps taken by the erstwhile NPP Government in making available abundant solar energy resources. He also assured that he would champion exploring an initiative where the government agencies and ministries would tap into these resources to ensure that we have efficient energy utilisation.

President Donald Trump signed an Executive Instrument that saw the United States of America (USA) withdrawing from the important Paris Agreement that Ghana is a signatory to. In reaction to this very important concern or development, the Nominee assured that he would do something about it. Beyond the rhetorics, it is important that the Nominee pays attention to exploring innovative financing mechanisms, because there would definitely be financing shortfalls to be able to finance the financing gaps within the climate change action that this country is committed to. I wish him well in his pursuits.

He concluded, as contained on the page numbered 51 of the Report that, as part of his legacies, he would ensure that he leaves a legacy of discipline at the Ministry and that all the agencies under his Ministry would also be called to discipline. To this, we are all urging that

he walks the talk, particularly when he cites discipline as a legacy he wants to leave at the Ministry.

Regarding Mr Samuel Nartey George, Minister-designate for the Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation—It is important that the Minister, if approved, prioritises the digital rural urban digital divide. The poor child in Assin Gynabodie deserves to have the same infrastructure to support his 21st century learning, to ensure that telecommunication infrastructure is provided in rural areas much as they are available in urban areas. That is one challenge that would be a feather in his cap if he looked at it. One of the commitments he cited was the challenge of cybercrime activities. We would urge him that, if approved, to pay attention to sanitising the cyberspace and curbing cybercrime activities to ensure that safe environment is maintained for online business, education, leisure and other very purposeful activities.

Last but not least, Mr Kofi Iddie Adams, Minister-designate, for Sports and Recreation. He has assured this House that, under his Leadership, he would ensure that Black Stars bring home trophies, medals and laurels. We would support him in that feat. Football is one sport that unites the whole country and tones down the tensions when politics raises it. Sports comes in to unite us. It is important that he pays attention to that sector and beyond that to expand the development of other sports.

On this note, I congratulate the Nominees and urge that for the purposes

of tomorrow, serving in the Executive or if one finds him or herself in backbench or in the Minority, their public utterances are important. Their public conduct today are as important as when they are nominated.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Mr Felix Ofosu Kwakye, let us hear you.

**Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu (NDC — Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese):** Mr Speaker, I would keep it brief.

Mr Speaker, my Colleague and Brother, the Hon Member for Ofoase-Ayirebi made a point in his submission that no significant savings can be made by cutting down the number of ministers. I beg to differ. The fact is that if at one point, there were 125 or 126 ministers, and today we have 60 ministers, it is a mathematical certainty that you would spend less in the maintenance of ministers than you did in the past. This is not disputable.

Mr Speaker, there used to be a Ministry of Information with a whole set up that had both political appointees, public servants and civil servants. Today, their functions have been taken over by an office called Minister in Charge of Government Communications under the Presidency. What that means is that today there would be 76 less employees working to disseminate Government information than before.

Mr Speaker, apart from the tangible financial savings, there is also symbolic value in doing what President Mahama

has done. What he has done has sent a signal to the people of Ghana that their resources which these days is in short supply, would not be spent on the creature comforts of more politicians who occupy offices with questionable functional necessity. In the past, one Ministry, which is a Transport Ministry, was carved out into three different ministries. Today, President Mahama has consolidated that Ministry and all the work that the three ministries did would be done by one ministry and significant savings would be made.

In addition to that, there would be greater efficiency. Having said that, while I respect the rights of our Colleagues on the other Side to oppose the nomination and indeed the approval of any Nominee, I must express dismay about the reasons assigned for opposing in particular the nomination of Mr Samuel “Dzata” George.

Mr Speaker, I would have thought that they would cite some constitutional, legal impediments or even moral tepidity as a reason his nomination cannot see the light of day. They rather say that Mr George has ran some commentary on the head of another state institution, the Judiciary. This raises the question as to when they became the mouthpiece of the Judiciary. As far as I know, the Chief Justice has adequate outlets to express disapproval or disagreements with anything that anybody says.

8.11 p.m.

We must respect the independence of state institutions and not take over their functions.

Mr Speaker, also, as Members of Parliament (MPs), whereas we are all here mostly on the ticket of political parties, we are, first and foremost, representatives of the people of Ghana; they have certain expectations of us. One of them is to engage in substantive work. The Appointments Committee is not the platform to settle political scores, especially when the same matters that have been discussed in the public domain have been lost by our Hon Colleagues on the other side.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member for Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese—

**Mr Ofosu:** Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect, I do not believe—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I just wanted you to be straightforward with it. Do not invite unnecessary—Just focus on the Hon Nominee. It is already 8 p.m.

**Mr Ofosu:** Mr Speaker, I am making the point—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, Order!

Hon Member, please—

**Mr Ofosu:** I am making the point that the reasons being advanced for opposing Mr George's nomination, in my candid view, are untenable. They do not constitute sufficient grounds for opposing the Hon Nominee.

Mr Speaker, finally, let me extol the virtues of one or two of the Nominees

who would be passed imminently. Let me start with the Mr Adams. I recall distinctly that, about two decades ago, when I was a bright-eyed member of the students' wing of the NDC and he served as a deputy National Youth Organiser of the NDC, he reposed confidence in me to nominate me to represent the NDC at a major event that was being held by colleagues on the other side, which was a major national conference in Kumasi. He showed that he had a keen eye for talent, and he is going to a Ministry where spotting talent is key to its survival.

Mr Speaker, as we speak, Ghana's sporting sector is in complete disarray. Only yesterday or the day before, a football fan who had gone to witness a football match did not go back home alive. He lost his life under tragic circumstances, compelling a halt of the Ghanaian league. These are challenges that, I believe, he has the capacity to resolve; therefore, I wish him well in the endeavour.

Mr Speaker, as for the Mr Sam George, I would argue that the fact that he is able to stand his ground and stick to his conviction is a proof that he has what it takes to manage a high portfolio of a Minister of State—[Hear! Hear!]  
—What we do not want are flip-floppers who, on the altar of political convenience, would abandon their convictions. With the greatest respect, we do not need wimps to become Ministers. We need men of conviction and courage, and Mr Sam George has demonstrated the same — [Hear! Hear!]  
—So, I will lend support to his approval.



If our opponents—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you—

**Mr Ofosu:** Mr Speaker, I am wrapping up.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, thank you so much.

Let me come to—

**Mr Ofosu:** Mr Speaker, if our Hon Colleagues want to claw back lost political capital, they would have to do so the hard way, which is convincing Ghanaians that they have a superior message. They cannot use the platform of their Appointments Committee to sanitise people whose conduct was in the full glare of the public.

Thank you very much.

*[Hear! Hear!]*

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

Yes, Hon Member for Damongo?

**Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor (NPP — Damongo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the debate on this Motion.

Mr Speaker, let me begin very straightforward with the Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo. When I had the privilege to serve as Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Dr Pelpuo was the Ranking Member of the Committee on Lands and Natural Resources. He is a perfect gentleman who is capable, and I

believe he will serve well at the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment. We would urge him to pay attention to the tripod of labour, Government and employment, so we can have a calm labour front for the business of Government and the state to move on smoothly.

Mr Speaker, on the Minister-designate for Sports, the Mr Kofi Adams, has been on the political front for a long time, and we all know him. He is an Hon Colleague, and I believe he is capable of reviving Ghanaian sports, particularly the Black Stars.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Transport, the Member of Parliament for Saboba, who is my in-law, in whom I am most pleased, is a fine gentleman and has demonstrated a lot of knowledge. I believe that he will bring his calm personality, wisdom and stature to bear at the Ministry of Transport.

Mr Speaker, whilst at it, let me correct the record of this House that the airport which was built in Tamale by H. E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo—*[Interruption]*—The airport built by H. E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo is called the Yakubu Tali International Airport, not the Tamale Airport.

Nana Akufo-Addo built the Yakubu Tali International Airport for Tamale, which is the first airport in northern Ghana. Of course, the first interchange, again, was built by Nana Akufo-Addo. I wish my in-law, Mr Bukari, would build the second phase. May I advise that he pays some attention to water

transportation, particularly on the Volta Lake, and also rail transportation.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member for Tamale Central, Mr Ibrahim, who has been nominated for the Ministry of Environment Science and Technology—I find it a bit strange that we have a Ministry of Environment, we now have a Minister of State responsible for Climate Change and Sustainability, and we have a Minister responsible for Energy and Green Transition. We all know, in Ghana, that matters relating to climate change falls within the four corners of the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology. Therefore, there will be the need for some streamlining, so that the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology would take its proper role as the lead Ministry when it comes to climate change.

Of course, when I was at the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, we dealt with nature-based climate action. In the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Food and Agriculture, there are issues of climate change, but the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology is the lead agency. Today that the United States of America (USA) has opted out of the climate environment, I believe that the Minister-designate would have a lot of work to do in championing climate change in Ghana and across.

Mr Speaker, while at it, let me just take the opportunity to give a little advice to my Hon senior Brother, Mr Ibrahim, and that advice is that the temperament required for opposition politics and opposition activism is fundamentally different from the temperament required as a Minister. I

would plead with him and crave his indulgence that he should watch his temperament and ensure that he goes to the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology with a calm temperament, so that he can administer the affairs of the Ministry correctly.

Let me now come to the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations. The approval or otherwise of Mr Sam Nartey George is a matter of intense controversy in this House, and the distinguished Hon Minority Leader has already spoken to it.

8.21 p.m.

If he gets the approval of this House, and the “if” is with emphasis, I posed a question to him about artificial intelligence and it would be great if he developed the area of artificial intelligence, particularly as we have this war between the United States and the Republic of China. I believe that Ghana should also leverage our knowledge in the artificial intelligence space.

Mr Speaker, again, with him as my younger brother and somebody I know quite well, I will first of all advise him that he should take a cue from the Minority Leader. Mr Speaker, when person errs, he should apologise. When a person is unfair to people, he should apologise. Strong men apologise; Strong women apologise; Wise men apologise. Mr Speaker, apology is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of strength and so when you are wrong and unfair to people, you apologise.

Mr Speaker, Mr Samuel Nartey George—I am not too sure that anybody can take away some of his strengths—He is articulate, eloquent, and exhibits knowledge in some areas. But I think he should also watch his temperament. There is a perception that he is needlessly aggressive, controversial, combatant, and if I may say, arrogant. We saw a bit of it at the vetting. I say it with all objectivity. I am not taking a swipe at him. When I had a privilege of being nominated as a Minister, I had a rare privilege of being nominated at the age of 37 and I took a lot of advice from senior Colleagues in this House. I took a lot of advice from Statesmen in the country and even all through my career as a Minister, I sought a lot of guidance and wisdom. Mr Speaker, in all humility and modesty, I would say that is how I survived the four years as Minister. And that is why whatever happens to my brother today, I think he should walk into the Ministry of Communication and Digitalisation— Some of his senior Colleagues who have had the experience as ministers would give him the same advice. He should go there and be calm. He should listen more than he talks. He should not exhibit over-exuberance and be dismissive. And when he errs either towards his Chief Director or civil servants or junior officers, just as the Minority Leader quite graciously and wisely did, he should just say sorry. It does not take anything away from him.

My brother and friend, Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu, talks about conviction. Yes, we all believe in the politics of conviction and not convenience. But when you err and are unfair to people, as I believe he was, you apologise.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude still on the matter of communication and say that what has happened to some of our Colleagues is just a question of standards. Let us all be careful. Maybe that advice goes to people like us on this Side of the divide, even more than it goes to them. Mr Speaker, they say when you live in a glass house, you do not throw stones. It is a wise saying. When you live in a glass house, you do not throw stones, so let us be careful when we are in opposition, about what we say and do and the standards we set. Today, my friend, the Mr Samuel George himself, who is popularly referred to as *Dzata*, Mr Speaker, the *Dzata*, the lion is now in the pocket of his wife, on his own admission. —[Uproar]

Mr Speaker, while at it—that is what the kind of politics we do in opposition can do to us. Mr Speaker, while at it, Mr Sam George, as an elder of the Perez Chapel, not a member, as an elder of the Perez Chapel, and as somebody who espouses his Christian values, he should also be mindful of what he watches when he is in Parliament. He should be mindful of that as well, especially when serious Business is being conducted in the House. —[Uproar]

Mr Speaker, today, it will appear that my brother would have some explanation.

[Uproar]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, Order! Order!

Majority Leader, would you want to speak? He is concluding so let us allow him —[Uproar]

Majority Leader?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor just indicated that when he took up the very serious office of Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, he did well in his opinion because he listened to good advice from seniors and from elders. Let me continue to advise, because I am still his senior, and an elder, that platforms like this should not be used to attack the persons of Colleagues. The Hon Nominee is our Colleague. He is a Member of this House. We may have our political disagreements, but we should not use the consideration of a Report about them to go personal against them. As for some of the things that you are referring to, I am not sure whether they are true or accurate. I have also seen a few things flying on social media. It is not verified, so please, kindly withdraw those ones and let us continue.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Minority Leader?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, whenever there is difficulty, call upon Leadership to assist you. Mr Speaker, I humbly plead with you to help us to assist you. We are debating on a matter. I have heard a very junior Member of this House who is now learning the rules of this House. When he had an opportunity, he attacked. — *[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, I was even signalling that you should stop our brother, Mr Felix Kwakye Ofori.

Mr Speaker, we have our views and we have expressed those views. We have done so with all respect. Mr Speaker, when the debate was ensuing, I received a text from one of us whom I so much respect, that four years or eight years is not far away. I was touched. We would do the politics and criticise them constructively, but they must also be careful the words they use.

8.31 p.m.

We are considering a Report, they are in Government, but they are not even mindful of the fact that we need to finish this Business for the President to swear them in, no problem —*[Uproar]*—Do not worry, go on.

Yes, to the Backbenchers who are not ready to learn, should go ahead. Their Leader spoke and we listened to him in silence. The least they could do is to show respect to their Leaders; I have what it takes to correct those at the Backbench. I would call out their names one by one and call them to order because I am their senior in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, I would plead with you that when Members are going out of Order, with the greatest respect, please, stop them and put them on the right path because he started it, and then when it gets to his turn, they do not want to be quiet to listen. Mr Speaker, we have done more than 30 Nominees, and we have expressed concern with only two. Even so, the horses have not bolted; yet, we can still keep them in the stable. *[Uproar]*—They do not get it, they cannot use shouts to have their way, that

would not happen; they must know—*[Uproar]*— Yes! They cannot use shouts, and they cannot use intimidation to have their way. I want them to know that it would not work. They cannot shout and attempt to intimidate us to have their way; it will not work in this Chamber! If they do not know, they should ask their seniors because they have been in the Minority before. We are more resilient to deal with issues. They should not take us for granted; we are a happy few.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:**  
Thank you, Leader.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, I want to address you, and they must listen. I would be heard and I would speak, so they should make their noise. It is getting to 9.00 p.m.; they have Government Business, so they should keep making their noise and shouting. We do not have Government Business, so they should keep shouting.

Mr Speaker, let us be guided, and if we say we are showing mutual respect, it must be real, not only by talk. When Leaders are on their feet, the least a Backbencher and a First-Timer could do is to remain quiet. They can heckle their Colleague backbenchers—*[Uproar]*

Mr Speaker, it is 8:36 p.m., if they are interested in what we call in Parliament “filibustering”, we would assist them to filibuster. If they want us to leave here at 1.00 a.m., the Backbenchers should continue with their misconduct. We do not have Government Business; they do, so they should continue with their misconduct. Until they keep quiet, I

would not make my point. They would keep quiet and listen to me. It is 8:39 p.m.; their President is waiting to swear in Ministers. Talk to them, Leader.

Mr Speaker, I want my Colleagues to know that we have two Reports and we are taking five contributions each. It is late, so they should allow the debate to flow. We also have a vote to take; we know how long a secret ballot can take, but all of these must be done. And if we are to manage the process, it would materially depend on their conduct—*[Uproar]*—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Order!

**Mr S. A. Jinapor** —*rose*—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, my respected Colleague, Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor, is on his feet. I would plead with my Colleagues opposite me to patiently listen to him to finish—*[Uproar]*—If they do not want to listen to him, I would continue to be at his aid and protect him—*[Interruption]*—Yes, I would go ahead; they have Government Business and they would see— Yes, they think they are in opposition; these are opposition behaviours. Be there.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members— Leader, thank you. Yes, Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, we are not done yet, please—*[Uproar]*—Mr Speaker, our Brother, Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor, must be heard. They should be calm and quiet to hear

him in silence. I rest my case. He would be heard and he must be heard.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, I have decided not to allow any interjection; that is why when you raised this issue—I just want us to flow so that we can finish early, so please—*[Uproar]*—Hon Members, it is not that I do not know what I am doing. Please, allow me to—Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor, just conclude and let us move on.

**Mr S. A. Jinapor:** Mr Speaker, thank you. I listened to the Majority leader, who is a senior in this House and a senior Brother that I take counsel from both in private and in public, and I have also listened to our very distinguished Minority Leader.

Mr Speaker, the Majority Leader has indicated that the subject matter for which reason I gave the advice is not verified. To that extent, I unreservedly withdraw and apologise to my Brother, Mr Samuel Nartey George—*[Hear! Hear!]*—There is no difficulty with that. But in so saying, I think it goes to reiterate the point I was making in my submission that fairness and justice is a basis of nobility, not weakness. Therefore, the gentlemanliness expressed and exhibited by the Minority leader and in all modesty, myself, goes to our friend the Nominee as well.

Mr Speaker, he unfairly attacked the Chief Justice and it has been captured in this Report, and he is being called upon to apologise, but he would not. He attacked the former President and he is

being called upon to apologise, but he would not—*[Uproar]*—

8.41p.m.

Mr Speaker, I want to conclude. Why are they afraid of a debate to the micro-minority? I want to conclude by saying that I wish my brother very well. I do not know what his fate would be, I see he is very pensive, he is very anxious, and little did I know that he can be subdued. Let me conclude by reiterating the advice. When one is in opposition, they should be careful of what they say; be careful the standards they set. This Government is less than one month old, yet the contradictions we are seeing, the inconsistencies and the rest—

Mr Speaker, I wish him well, but if he gets the opportunity and ends up at the Ministry of Communications, Digitalisation and Innovations, he should watch his temperament, it would do him a lot of good.

Thank you very much for the opportunity, Mr Speaker. —*[Hear! Hear!]*—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, at the conclusion of the debate, the question is —*[Uproar]*—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, the Report before you has two components —*[Interruption]*—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minority Leader, please allow me to do my job —*[Hear! Hear!]*— So, please allow me. I know what I am doing.

Hon Members, at the conclusion of the debate the question is all those in favour that Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo is approved as Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

Dr Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo has been approved as Minister for the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment.

All those in favour that Mr Murtala Mohammed Ibrahim is approved as Minister for Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

Hon Members, the Motion to approve Mr Murtala Mohammed Ibrahim is approved.

All those in favour that Mr Kofi Iddie Adams is approved as Minister for Ministry of Sports and Recreation.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

Mr Kofi Iddie Adams has been approved as Minister for Ministry of Sports and Recreation —[*Hear! Hear!*]—

All those in favour that Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari is approved as Minister for Ministry of Transport.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

Mr Joseph Nikpe Bukari has been approved as Minister for Ministry of Transport.

[*Uproar*]

Yes, Hon Minority Leader?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, as indicated in the Report of the Committee, the 88 Members—[*Interruption*—the 88 Members of the Minority reject the nomination of Mr Samuel Nartey George. We remain opposed to the decision for his nomination to be approved by this House by consensus. We rely on our earlier grounds of opposition without more. We therefore leave this matter entirely in the hands and on the heads of the Majority in this House. It is their cross to carry. We, the NPP Minority Caucus of 88—and let the record reflect that—have stepped down our opposition in view of the calls by respected Members of this House. We are therefore not going to pursue any longer the secret ballot, but rather to abstain. This is out of difference to Members of this House who have reached out in utmost respect, and we want to demonstrate that good faith for the record by saying that, in view of the representations made, we would rather opt to abstain from the vote so that it becomes your sole decision for *Hansard*.

8.51 p.m.

We are therefore opposed to it, and Mr Speaker, it is Majority. They should carry their own cross; we have washed our hands of them. This is all we have done, so they should take it.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, now that the Minority, as a group, has abstained, I will go ahead to put the Question. After putting the Question, I will also ask for those who are against and those who are abstaining, so that the records will capture as the Minority Leader—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, our work is to assist you, and I am on my feet led by precedence. Once I, as a Leader of our Side, in my submissions, have indicated that the entire 88 are abstaining, that—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, please, let us allow—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, we have had this before in this Chamber. We are abstaining the entire 88; let the records reflect as such, and we want *Hansard* to so capture that it is entirely the decision of the Majority. We had nothing to do with it. So, we are not part of this issue of back and forth. Put the Question to them; let them take it, and then you record it as the Majority took their decision. That is all.

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, I think it is clear that the Minority has no intention to participate in the vote. So, put the Question, and then let us vote. If, after we have voted, nobody objects and calls for a head count or anything of that sort, then the decision is taken. It is a majority decision; the Report already says that it is a majority decision, and whether the Minority are 28 or 88 in the Chamber—*[Interruption]*—I withdraw.

Mr Speaker, so just put the Question.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, for Mr Samuel Nartey George, as Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, I will put the Question.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, it is obvious that Mr Samuel Nartey George is, hereby, approved by the Majority of this House.

*[Some Members of the Majority chant Dzata o Dzata!]*

Yes, Chairman of the Committee?

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to, on behalf of the Nominees approved, extend our profound gratitude to the Appointments Committee and the House, particularly the Majority Side. I thank you very much for the opportunity.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, on behalf of the House, let me congratulate our Colleagues on their appointment. We believe they will make the House proud. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Yes, let me hear from you, Chairman of the Committee.

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, the 11<sup>th</sup> Report is ready to be laid.

## PAPER

*By the Chairman of the Committee—*

Eleventh Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nomination for Appointment as Ministers of State.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, respectfully, the Report has been laid.



## MOTION

### Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

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

That notwithstanding—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Chairman, I will give you the opportunity, but let me hear the Minority Leader.

9.01 p.m.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, it is sunset; we have done enough Government Business, and it is 9 p.m. Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza, once upon a time as a Minority Chief Whip, would not allow Government Business to be conducted at night, and he knows it.

Mr Speaker, the Report has just been circulated and I have checked. This Report was just put on the system. Members have not had the opportunity to read. We have often been accused of not doing proper diligence. We are supposed to read the Report—the Eleventh Report; all of a sudden, they have populated this Chamber—[*Laughter*—] with a lot of their Backbenchers, with one aim; to come and intimidate the mighty few. This, we will not allow. Democracy does not mean that they use their supposed super Majority to intimidate us. Mr Speaker, let us go and relax, come back tomorrow morning, read the Report and come and do the Government Business.

I will not support this idea of overloading Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, the health of the Members of Parliament must be of great concern to the Majority Leader. This Report cannot be taken today. There was no prior discussion on this particular Report. In the least, there must be a suspension of the House for us to go through the Report and if possible, come back. We cannot just be on our feet to take this Report.

The Chairman of the Committee cannot invite this House in terms of Order 104(1). The rules are not to be abused. He should sparingly invoke Order 104(1).

Mr Speaker, this morning, the Rt Hon Speaker promised the Minority that we would get his protection. That promise is applicable to you *mutatis mutandis*.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** But Leader —

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** It includes your own friend, Mr Akandoh.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, I know the previous Report included your own friend, Mr Samuel George—[*Laughter*—] Your own friend, Mr Samuel George and my former friend, Mr Samuel George. Mr Akandoh is my respected friend but I want to plead with him that he should allow us to come tomorrow. Mr Akandoh has no problem, but his Report has been contaminated—

[*Laughter*]. There are some poisoned fruits around his own edible fruits that makes it difficult for his fruit to be edible.

Mr Speaker, when a Leader is on his feet and his Whips are putting pressure on him, what can he do? —[*Laughter*] I rest my case.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Leader. Let us go on. He has conceded.

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, let us continue with the Business.

## MOTION

### Suspension of Order 104(1)

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

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

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes. Thank you very much. Hon Members, the Motion 2 on the Order Paper Addendum has been moved by the Chairman of the Appointments Committee.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Minority Leader?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** I beg to second the Motion. Mr Speaker, in seconding the Motion, let me make some few observations for the records.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Leader, this is Procedural.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Yes. Mr Speaker, I am saying that I am making some few observations.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I am saying this Motion is Procedural.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** I am aware. Is it not under Order 104(1)?

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

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Yes. Mr Speaker, for want of time, I will limit myself to just one observation. The Chairman of the Committee, in moving this House, failed to give us reasons for invoking Order 104(1). I will however second his Motion by giving him the opportunity to give stated reasons for inviting us under Order 104(1) when it comes to moving the Motion for the Report to be properly adopted.

Thank you.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Does it mean you have not seconded?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, it should be deemed seconded. With all the reluctance.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well. Chairman give us—

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, the Motion is moved and seconded. It is now for the consideration of the House.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** That is not within your purview. The seconder wants to know the reason for Order 104(1).

**Mr Ahiafor:** The reason for waiving the two days' notice that has to be given before the Report is taken is that vetting on the Nominees has been completed and the Report is ready to be taken.

Mr Speaker, we need to do this to enable the President to constitute his Cabinet on a record time. So Mr Speaker, once the vetting has been completed and the Report is ready, there is absolutely no necessity based on which the House will have to wait for two days before taking the Report. In that vein, I moved that we waive the period of the notice so that we can proceed to take the Substantive Motion for this House to take a decision on the Nominees. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, Leader, more or less, is it an application to the Chairman to waive that?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** I am opposed to the application. The gravamen of his application is to the effect that the President needs to constitute his Cabinet. The impression he is creating is that the President conveyed these Nominees to this House and we have delayed so any further delay would cause the President.

Mr Speaker, the President was bringing the names here *tot by tot*; he was coming here in bits. Even the adverts we put out, requesting for public memoranda, some were given two or three days.

9.11 p.m.

In fact, if one looks at the Report, the Majority Side took advantage of our decision to recuse ourselves as a result of the communication of the Rt Hon Speaker to railroad all their Nominees who were on the corridors—*[Laughter]*—Mr Speaker, I watched from my office. Within record time, I heard, “Congratulations, bye-bye! Congratulations, bye bye!”—*[Laughter]*—Within an hour, all these nine Nominees were taken.

It is only two Nominees who went through what I call, “proper vetting”, that is Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, and our respected Friend and Brother, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, who is to assume the Minister for Foreign Affairs portfolio. That is if we even complete—*[Laughter]*—Mr Speaker, he has called for a second vetting. Those his student days politics energy is still in him, so he

is even calling for a second vetting. They took advantage of that situation to push all nine Nominees through. Do they call this vetting? Then they come back to make an application that the President must constitute his Cabinet.

Mr Speaker, I am opposed to this application, and if Mr Speaker is not minded by the good arguments made and still wants to grant his application, which in my view is very lame, Mr Speaker, it is entirely in your hands.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. I have granted the waiver because I know the Minority Leader is desirous to have the waiver granted. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Hon Members, the Motion has been moved and it has been seconded.

*Question put and Motion agreed to*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Now, let us move to the Motion numbered 3 on the Order Paper *Addendum*.

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, because we learn every day, I want to place on record that once the Motion is moved and seconded. One cannot oppose it.

## MOTION

### Eleventh Report of the President's Ministerial Nominations

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

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

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I present the Eleventh Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nomination for Appointment as Ministers.

Mr Speaker, I would urge the *Hansard* to capture the entire 103-page Report as having been read while I proceed to read the conclusion of the Report of the Committee.

I humbly submit.

## 1.0 Introduction

On 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2025 H.E. President John Dramani Mahama, pursuant to Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution, communicated to Parliament the nomination of the following persons for appointment as Ministers:

- i. Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh as Minister-designate for Health;
- ii. Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa as Minister-designate for Foreign Affairs;
- iii. Mr Seidu Issifu as Minister of State-designate for Climate Change and Sustainability;

- iv. Mrs Charity Gardiner as Minister-designate for Ahafo Region;
- v. Mr Salisu Be-Awuribe Issifu as Minister-designate for Savannah Region;
- vi. Mr Wilbert Petty Brentum as Minister-designate for Western North Region;
- vii. Mr Joseph Nelson as Minister-designate for Western Region;
- viii. Mr Joseph Addae Akwaboa as Minister-designate for Bono Region;
- ix. Mr Francis Owusu Antwi as Minister-designate for Bono East Region;
- x. Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu as Minister of State-designate for Government Communications;
- xi. Mr Ekow Panyin Okyere Eduamoah as Minister-designate for Central Region; and
- xii. Mr Puozuing Charles Lwanga as Minister-designate for Upper West Region.

In accordance with Standing Order 217, the Rt Hon Speaker referred the Nominees to the Appointments Committee for consideration and report.

## 2.0 Reference Documents

During the consideration of the Nominees, the Committee referred to the following documents:

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

## 3.0 Consideration of the Referral

In accordance with Standing Order 217(10), the names of the Nominees were published in newspapers to bring them to the attention of the public. The publication also invited memoranda from the public regarding the Nominees.

Additionally, the Committee sought and obtained Confidential Reports on the Nominees from the Ghana Police Service and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). The Committee also requested that Nominees submit their Tax Status Reports from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

On Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2025 the Committee held a public hearing to consider the nominations. During the hearing, the Nominees subscribed to the Oath of a Witness before the Committee and responded to questions posed by Hon Members. These questions covered

their curriculum vitae (CVs), eligibility and competencies, issues of national concern, and matters relating to the specific offices for which they had been nominated.

Following its deliberations, the Committee presents its report on the Nominees as follows:

**MR KWABENA MINTAH  
AKANDOH**

**Minister-designate for Health**

**4.0 Background**

Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh was born on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1980 in Sefwi-Wiawso in the Western Region. He began his secondary education at Kumasi Anglican Senior High School before proceeding to the University of Cape Coast (UCC), where he obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Statistics between 1996 and 1999. From 2003 to 2007, he attended MountCrest University College, where he obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB). Further advancing his legal education, he enrolled at the University of Ghana, where he obtained a Master of Laws (LLM) in Natural Resources Law between 2023 and 2024.

Professionally, Mr Akandoh began his career as an officer at the Voluntary Department of the National Service Secretariat, Head Office, Accra. He also taught Mathematics at Juaboso Senior High School before transitioning into politics. His political journey started with his role as the Deputy Regional

Youth Organiser of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Western Region from 2005 to 2009. He later ascended to the position of Regional Youth Organiser from 2009 to 2013. In 2013, he successfully contested the parliamentary seat for Juaboso in the Western North Constituency, a position he has held to date. From 2015 to 2016, he served as Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, contributing significantly to policy development and implementation in Ghana's natural resource sector.

Apart from his political engagements, Mr Akandoh is an astute cocoa farmer, a venture he has pursued since 1998, and he currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of KAM Trading and Farms Limited, a position he has held since 2015. His dedication to capacity-building and professional development has seen him participate in numerous international seminars and training programmes. Some notable ones include the ILO International Training Centre - Academy on Social Security (2024), Galilee Management International Institution on Health Systems, Crises, and Project Management (2023), and Galilee Management International Institute on Health Systems Management (2019).

Additionally, he has attended several high-profile conferences, including the National Conferences of Directors, National Service Scheme in Kumasi (2010), the Ghana Youth Forum in London (2011), and multiple World Health Assemblies spanning from 2019 to 2024. In 2024, he also participated in

the Malaria Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon and the Ghana Doctors and Dentists Association UK (Annual Conference).

Mr Akandoh enjoys debating, playing table tennis, and listening to music in his leisure time.

### **Questions Asked of the Nominee And His Responses**

#### **5.0 Financial Stability and Timely Payments in the National Health Insurance Scheme**

When the Nominee was questioned about the financial balance of the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and whether timely payments to service providers would be ensured, he acknowledged that based on his briefing, there were outstanding arrears amounting to GH¢237 million. He assured the Committee that if approved, he would conduct a thorough review of the financial records of the NHIS to understand the existing challenges. He further pledged to take the necessary measures to ensure timely disbursement of payments to service providers, thereby improving service delivery and restoring confidence in the scheme.

#### **5.1 Provision of Healthcare for Non-Residents and NHIA Claim Payments**

When asked about the National Health Insurance Authority's (NHIA) provision for healthcare services for non-residents and concerns about support for facilities being reflected solely in claim payments, the Nominee assured the

Committee of his commitment to address these issues. He stated that if approved, he would thoroughly study the NHIA Act and work closely with the appropriate team to resolve any discrepancies. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of collaborating with relevant stakeholders to pass the necessary Legislative Instrument (L. I.) to streamline operations and ensure efficient and effective healthcare service delivery under the NHIA.

#### **5.2 Investigation into Ambulance Procurement and Maintenance Contracts**

The Nominee informed the Committee that if approved, he would investigate the procurement and maintenance of ambulances. From his briefing at the Ministry, he revealed that a company was awarded a contract to purchase 307 ambulances at a total cost of US\$41 million. Additionally, the same company signed a contract for the maintenance of these ambulances at a cost of US\$77 million over five years. He emphasised that this issue warrants a thorough investigation, and assured the Committee that he would take the necessary steps to examine the details and ensure accountability.

#### **5.3 Addressing Unemployment among Health Workers**

The Nominee acknowledged the alarming number of unemployed nurses and other health professionals despite the existence of several health facilities. He

emphasised the need to create employment opportunities for these professionals and assured the Committee of his commitment to explore sustainable solutions. He further stated that if approved, he would engage with other countries to facilitate the migration of health officers under structured agreements. This approach would not only provide job opportunities for Ghanaian health workers but also ensure a mutually beneficial arrangement for the country's healthcare sector.

#### **5.4 Ensuring Transparency in Private Sector Engagements**

The Nominee informed the Committee that the private sector plays a vital role in driving economic growth and supporting the healthcare sector. He emphasised that he is not in a position to terminate any existing contracts arbitrarily. However, he assured the Committee that whenever necessary, he would conduct thorough enquiries and reviews to ensure transparency, accountability, and value for money in all contractual agreements involving the health sector.

#### **5.5 Review of Drone Services for Healthcare Delivery**

The Nominee acknowledged that the drone service initiative is a fantastic idea, as it plays a crucial role in delivering essential medical supplies to remote and underserved areas of Ghana. He emphasised that the initiative has improved emergency response times and

access to critical healthcare resources. However, he assured the Committee that if approved, he would review the existing contract to assess its effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and explore ways to enhance efficiency in service delivery.

#### **Commitment to Free Primary Healthcare and the "Mahama Care Fund"**

The Nominee reaffirmed the National Democratic Congress (NDC)'s commitment to provide free primary healthcare to Ghanaians. He assured the Committee of his dedication to implement this policy and take concrete steps to make it a reality. He also referenced President Mahama's campaign promise of the "Mahama Care Fund," which is intended to support the treatment and payment for chronic diseases. The Nominee further emphasised the Party's determination to position Ghana as a pharmaceutical hub, which will boost the healthcare sector by enhancing local drug production and reducing dependency on imports. He assured the Committee that these initiatives will be fulfilled as promised.

#### **6.0 Recommendation**

The Committee unanimously recommends to the House, by **CONSENSUS**, the approval of the nomination of **MR MINTAH AKANDOH** as Minister for Health.



**MR SAMUEL OKUDZETO  
ABLAKWA**

**Minister-designate, Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs**

**7.0 Background**

Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa was born on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 1980 in Accra, and hails from Aveyime-Battor in the Volta Region. He is married to Nuhela Seidu, and together they have two children. He is a Christian.

The Nominee began his education at Association International School from 1987 to 1996, where he obtained his Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). He proceeded to Presbyterian Boys' Secondary School (PRESEC), Legon, from 1997 to 1999, where he earned his Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSCE). During his time at PRESEC, he served as the Trustee of the Greater Accra Regional Students' Representative Council, from 1998–1999, and as President of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) Club from 1998 to 1999. He also won the 1999 Greater Accra NCCE Regional Debate Competition. Additionally, he served as Vice President of the Scripture Union from 1998 to 1999.

In 2006, Mr Ablakwa earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, Philosophy, and Economics from the University of Ghana, Legon, where he was actively involved in student leadership. He served as the President of the National Union of

Ghana Students (NUGS) from 2005 to 2006. Prior to that, he was the Acting Press Secretary of the Students Representative Council (SRC) from 2003 to 2004 and the Editor-in-Chief of 'The Forum,' the official magazine of the SRC. He also held the position of Majority Leader of the University of Ghana Parliament House, and a member of the University's Disciplinary Committee from 2004 to 2005.

In 2014, Mr Ablakwa earned an Executive Certificate in Leadership from the Harvard Kennedy School of Governance, USA. In 2017, he obtained a Master of Arts in Communications, Media and Public Relations from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom. In 2018, he acquired an LLB from the University of London. Additionally, in 2019, he obtained a Master of Science (MSc) in Defence and International Politics from the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College. In September 2007, he undertook a short course, *Introduction to Basic Securities* at the Ghana Stock Exchange.

The Nominee's career began as Campus Manager at Carrera Computers (University of Ghana Branch) from August 2002 to September 2004. In 2006, he reviewed the 2005 United Nations World Youth Report at the UN Ghana Office, and from November 2006 and August 2007, he undertook his National Service at the Research Unit of the Office of Parliament.

From 2006 till present, he has been a member of the Committee for Joint Action. In 2008, he served on the NDC Communications Team for the 2008 campaign as well as the NDC Manifesto Working Group on Youth and Sports. He was also a member of the “Free Tsatsu Tsikata” for one year. From 2008 to April 2009, he was the Managing Director of Savvi Solutions Ltd., a media, PR, marketing, and advertising company. Further, he served as Acting Secretary of the NDC Transition Team in 2009, and Secretary of the Transition Task Force on Sanitation and Waste Management. He was later appointed Delegated Convener of the Government Communication Team from 2009 to 2012. He has also been the Chair of the NDC’s Volta Regional Communications Committee since 2016.

The Nominee began his ministerial career as Deputy Minister for Information from 2009 to 2013, followed by his appointment as Deputy Minister for Education (Tertiary) from 2013 to 2017. He later served as the Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee from 2017 to 2023 before assuming the role of Chairman of the Government Assurance Committee from 2023 to 2024. Since 2024, he has been the Chairman of the Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) Committee.

The Nominee is a current Member of Parliament, representing the North Tongu Constituency, a position he has held since 2013. The Nominee has participated in several high-profile international conferences, official delegations, and diplomatic

engagements, some of which are listed as follows: From 2017 to 2024, he was at the United Nations General Assembly. In 2024, he led a Parliamentary Delegation to Ukraine, and he was also a member of Former President Mahama’s delegation to the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, Russia. In 2023, he joined a delegation to the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium. In 2021, he was part of Rt Hon Speaker Bagbin’s delegation to the Nigerian House of Representatives in Abuja.

Also, he participated in the Parliamentarians for Global Action delegation to the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Netherlands Parliament in The Hague. In 2019, he undertook an official visit to the Serbian Parliament in Belgrade. In 2018, he embarked on a fact-finding mission in Valencia, Spain, to assess the plight of stranded Ghanaian illegal migrants.

Additionally, he was a key member of President Mills’ delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, USA, in 2010 and 2011. In 2006, he participated in a special invitation conference in Tripoli, Libya, sponsored by President Muammar Al Gaddafi, focusing on African and Arabic Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the proposed United States of Africa.

The Nominee is affiliated to the following in different capacities: Member, Ghana-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Association; Chairman, Ghana-Cuba Parliamentary Friendship

Association; American Council for Young Political Leaders (ACYPL); Old Vandals Association; African Leadership Network (ALN); Institute of Public Relations (IPR); Honorary Fellowship, African Youth Governance Convergence (AYGC); and Leader, Ghana's Membership of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA).

With regard to publications and projects, the Nominee, from December 2004 to February 2005, was a consultant for the KNUST SRC 10-year Strategic Plan. Since 2005 to present, he has authored numerous articles published in the Ghanaian and international media, including *A State of Coma (A manual of student activism)*, and *Ghana's Foreign Policy and Peace Operations Nexus*. The Nominee has received special recognition and awards including: Honorary Doctorate Degree, Amet University, India (2016); Most Impactful MP (2024); 100 Most Reputable Africans (2025); Special Award, University of Health and Allied Sciences (2022); Medal of Honour and Citation, Ghana Medical Association (2023); Citation of Appreciation, North Tongu District Health Directorate (2023); Special Award, Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association (2002); Best Minority MP Award by FAKS (2019); Top 10 Best Performed MPs Award (2014-2018) by Pan African Republic Honorary Awards; Honorary Fellowship, African Youth Governance Convergence (AYGC); Citation from the John Agyekum Kufuor Foundation (2018); Citations by Catholic Church, Volo Traditional Area, Gblornu and

Alabonu Traditional Areas, North Tongu; National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS); and the Ghana National Union of Polytechnic Students (GNUPS), Takoradi (2015).

In addition, he also received the TNG Corporate Excellence Awards in 2010, and in the same year, he received a special recognition from the Chiefs and People of the Mepe Traditional Council. Since 2010, he has been the Mmrantiehene of the Tepa Traditional Council. He was named the Outstanding Youth Leader in West Africa by the West Africa Student's Union (WASU) in Kaduna, Nigeria; Vandal of the Year Award by the Commonwealth Hall JCR; and a special alumnus award by the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS), all in 2009. In 2005, he received an award of recognition by the Volta Hall JCR of the University of Ghana.

Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa likes community interventions, reading, listening to music, and watching soccer.

### **Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **8.0 Engagement with Breakaway ECOWAS Countries**

When questioned about President John Mahama's welcoming stance towards the breakaway ECOWAS countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea, the Nominee acknowledged that while the current leaders of these nations had assumed power through military

takeovers, Ghana could not afford to isolate them. He emphasised that these countries remain crucial neighbours with whom Ghana shares deep historical, economic, and security ties. Furthermore, he highlighted that maintaining diplomatic engagements with them is essential for safeguarding Ghana's strategic interests, including regional stability, trade, and the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region.

### **8.1 Navigating Geopolitical Tensions and Ghana's Foreign Policy**

Regarding the Nominee's approach to geopolitical tensions, particularly the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts and their impact on Ghana, he indicated that he has received invitations from these countries despite his personal ideology and remains guided by national law. He referenced Ghana's Foreign Policy, originally presented to Parliament by Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, which is rooted in the principles of non-alignment and Pan-Africanism. These principles, established by Dr Nkrumah and his colleagues, sought to liberate and unite Africa while maintaining Ghana's neutrality in global conflicts.

The Nominee reiterated that Ghana's position remains "friends to all, enemies to none," to ensure that diplomatic ties are maintained across all nations. However, he emphasised that Ghana will not hesitate to call out injustices or unfair treatments when necessary to defend the country's national interests. He assured the Committee that if approved, he

would undergo national security briefings, carefully study global geopolitical considerations, and strategically build cultural and ideological ties to balance global forces while advocating for peaceful resolutions.

### **8.2 Ghana's International Environmental Policy**

When questioned about Ghana's international environmental policy, the Nominee affirmed that Ghana recognises the importance of environmental sustainability as a key pillar to achieve sustainable development. He stated that the country has ratified several international environmental conventions, including the Basel Convention, which regulates the transboundary movement of hazardous waste, the Paris Agreement (2016), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), both of which aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote climate adaptation.

While acknowledging that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not play a direct role in climate change policies, he assured the Committee that it would collaborate with relevant institutions, particularly the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Ministry of Environment, Science, and Technology, to ensure that Ghana meets its international obligations. He emphasised that despite Ghana's significant contributions to global environmental efforts, the country continues to face challenges that require

sustained international cooperation, national commitment, and local action to achieve long-term environmental sustainability.

### **8.3 Addressing the Welfare of Ghanaian Migrants in the UAE**

In response to concerns regarding the inhumane treatment of Ghanaian migrants, particularly females, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Nominee expressed deep concern and passion to resolve the issue. He acknowledged that many Ghanaians travel in search of better opportunities but often face exploitation and harsh conditions.

The Nominee emphasised that unemployment remains a major factor that drives irregular migration, citing Ghana Statistical Service data, which shows that unemployment has risen from 8.6 per cent in 2016 to 14.6 per cent currently. He stated that H.E. the President of Ghana has tasked him to address this issue, particularly in providing employment opportunities to reduce the need for risky migration.

To tackle the problem, the Nominee outlined plans to implement an Economic Diplomacy Agreement which focuses on:

1. Promoting safe and regular migration policies that benefit both the country and migrant workers;
2. Protecting the rights of Ghanaian migrant workers

through bilateral agreements; and

3. Addressing the root causes of migration by creating safe and legal job opportunities for the youth.

He assured the Committee that if approved, he would prioritise diplomatic engagements to establish agreements that ensure safer migration pathways while promoting domestic employment opportunities.

### **8.4 Nominee's Priority Areas**

When asked about his key priorities, the Nominee outlined a strategic approach to economic diplomacy aimed at job creation, foreign investment, and institutional reforms.

He emphasised his commitment to leverage economic diplomacy to create job opportunities for the youth in a regulated and structured manner. He also expressed a strong passion to reform the passport acquisition process, noting that bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies hinder service delivery. To address this, he proposed to:

4. Leverage technology to modernise passport acquisition, reducing human interface and minimising delays and corruption; and
5. Collaborate with the Minister of Communication, Technology, and Innovation to introduce a courier service that will deliver

passports directly to applicants, enhancing convenience and efficiency.

Additionally, the Nominee highlighted the need to reform the Foreign Service Institution by encouraging Ambassadors and diplomatic representatives to focus on economic trade and investment opportunities in their host countries. He stated that ambassadors should:

1. Actively pursue foreign direct investment (FDI) opportunities;
2. Foster trade partnerships to benefit Ghana's economy; and
3. Develop initiatives aimed at creating jobs and increasing revenue inflows into Ghana.

To ensure accountability and effectiveness, he proposed the introduction of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Ambassadors. These KPIs would serve as a benchmark for measuring performance, ensuring that economic trade and investment targets are met.

### **8.5 Balancing Ideological Inclinations with Foreign Policy**

When the Nominee was asked how he intends to merge his personal socialist ideological stance with Ghana's foreign policy of non-alignment as articulated in the NDC Manifesto, he provided historical context and reaffirmed Ghana's commitment to strategic neutrality in global affairs.

He stated that the NDC subscribes to a left- center political ideology, which aligns with progressive governance and social justice principles. However, he emphasised that this does not conflict with Ghana's longstanding non-alignment policy in international relations.

The Nominee cited Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah as an example, highlighting how Nkrumah, despite his Pan-Africanist and socialist beliefs, successfully engaged both the United States and Russia during the Cold War to secure support for Ghana's development. This historical precedent, he explained, demonstrates that ideological leanings should not hinder diplomatic pragmatism.

He stressed that under the NDC Administration, Ghana would remain a strategic force and a friend to all nations, to ensure a balanced international relation while safeguarding national interests. The Nominee reaffirmed that he would prioritise Ghana's economic, security, and diplomatic interests above ideological considerations, to ensure that the country remains globally competitive and well-positioned in international affairs.

### **8.6 Leadership in Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL)**

The Nominee expressed great pride in his role as Chairman of Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL), describing it as a sacrificial and patriotic duty aimed to safeguard Ghana's public assets. He

emphasised that the establishment of ORAL was a masterstroke initiative, which has already yielded significant results.

He disclosed that intelligence gathered by the ORAL team has successfully prevented the unlawful privatisation of twenty (20) government bungalows, which were occupied by staff across various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). He urged Ghanaians to rally behind ORAL, reinforcing its mandate to combat corruption and recover state-owned properties.

The Nominee further highlighted ORAL's international dimension, citing frameworks such as the ECOWAS Protocol, the African Union Charter, and the United Nations Charter, which all recognise corruption as a major impediment to Africa's development. He referenced a World Bank report which indicates that Africa loses over US\$88 billion annually to corruption, reinforcing the urgency of the initiative.

With regard to the next step of the initiative, he assured the Committee that findings from ORAL's investigations would be submitted to H.E. the President. This, he explained, would pave the way for further deliberations with the Attorney-General and Minister

for Justice, to ensure legal action and policy reforms where necessary.

### **8.7 Strengthening Ghana's Role in AfCFTA and Pan-African Integration**

The Nominee emphasised Ghana's strategic role in hosting the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), describing it as a significant milestone towards achieving the vision of a united Africa as outlined in Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU). He acknowledged that the successful bid for AfCFTA's headquarters in Ghana was the result of collaborative efforts by former Heads of State from Ghana's three major political parties—the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the New Patriotic Party (NPP), and the Convention People's Party (CPP). This unity, he stressed, was essential for boosting Ghana's economy and positioning the country as a key commercial hub on the African continent.

To further Ghana's economic and trade interests, the Nominee pledged to engage the Secretary-General of AfCFTA, Mr Wamkele Mene, to create more job opportunities for Ghanaians, attract skilled technocrats, and foster a sustainable business environment across Africa.

On the broader vision of Africa's economic and political unity, the Nominee cited the vision of Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, particularly as articulated in his 1963 book, *Africa Must Unite*. He stressed that African citizens and business leaders must work together to implement this vision, to foster economic self-reliance and reduce dependence on external forces. He further noted that discussions on African integration and economic empowerment were actively ongoing within the African Union (AU), with President Paul Kagame of Rwanda playing a leading role in championing the cause.

### **8.8 Ghana's Diplomatic Approach to Breakaway ECOWAS Countries**

In response to a question about whether Ghana's open-arm policy towards the three breakaway ECOWAS countries might disappoint its neighbours, the Nominee clarified that on the contrary, Ghana's neighbours would likely appreciate and commend the country's diplomatic stance. He explained that Ghana's position is guided by a commitment to regional stability, economic cooperation, and diplomatic engagement, all of which are central to maintaining peace and unity in the region.

The Nominee emphasised that the withdrawal of the three nations from ECOWAS carries significant regional and economic implications, which affect the collective security and integration agenda of the bloc. He further noted that Ghana's foreign policy is focused on

promoting dialogue and reconciliation to prevent the further fragmentation of the region. By fostering peaceful engagement, Ghana seeks to uphold ECOWAS's long-standing principles of unity, cooperation, and regional solidarity, which are vital for sustainable development across West Africa.

### **8.9 Ghana's Foreign Policy on Climate Change and Environmental Issues**

In response to a question regarding Ghana's foreign policy on climate change and environmental issues, the Nominee acknowledged the critical role climate change plays in shaping global sustainability, economic growth, and stability. He emphasised that while climate change has far-reaching consequences for Ghana and the world at large, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs primarily functions as a facilitator and coordinator in international engagements and diplomacy on environmental matters, rather than the lead policy-making body.

The Nominee clarified that substantive policy decisions and implementation strategies fall under the purview of the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, given their mandates and technical expertise. However, the Foreign Ministry would ensure that Ghana actively engages with international partners, adheres to global climate agreements, and effectively advocate for national interests in multilateral forums. He further assured



the Committee that Ghana's participation in international climate negotiations would remain strategic and forward-looking, securing resources and partnerships to strengthen the country's environmental resilience and sustainable development efforts.

### **8.10 Stance on the Russia-Ukraine War and Western Foreign Policy**

When asked about his perceived stance on the Russia-Ukraine war, particularly his criticisms of Ukraine and Western foreign policy, the Nominee defended his position, stating that his analysis was written with utmost objectivity. He emphasised that his views were based on facts and a balanced assessment of global affairs, as evidenced by the fact that he has since received invitations from various parties involved in global conflicts, including Russia, Ukraine, Israel, and Palestine.

The Nominee further asserted his commitment to neutrality and balance in international relations, explaining that Ghana's foreign policy should be rooted in fairness, justice, and adherence to international norms. He stressed that his approach would be one of diplomatic engagement rather than partisanship, ensuring that Ghana remains a friend to all but beholden to none. However, he made it clear that friendship does not preclude holding other nations accountable, and if any country were to act in a manner inconsistent with global peace, security, and justice, he would not hesitate to voice concerns and engage constructively to address them.

### **8.11 Enhancing Responsiveness of Ghana's Embassies and High Commissions**

When asked about his plans to make Ghana's Embassies and High Commissions more responsive to the needs of Ghanaians abroad, the Nominee acknowledged the dedication and hard work of Ghana's foreign-service staff. He noted that on several occasions, these officials have had to use their personal resources to assist distressed Ghanaians living overseas, a situation he described as unsustainable and in need of urgent redress.

To address this challenge, the Nominee announced his intention to establish a Consular Fund, which will be dedicated to provide financial support for Ghana's Missions to effectively assist citizens in need. He explained that this initiative will enhance the responsiveness of Ghana's Embassies and High Commissions, to ensure that they are better equipped to provide emergency assistance, legal support, and welfare services to Ghanaians abroad. The Nominee expressed confidence that this structured approach will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Ghana's diplomatic missions, reinforcing Ghana's commitment to the well-being of its citizens worldwide.

### **8.12 Ghana's Approach to Shifting Global Alliances**

In response to a question on Ghana's approach in light of shifting global alliances on the international stage, the Nominee emphasised the importance of

understanding the evolving global dynamics. He noted that the world has transitioned from a unipolar order, dominated by a single superpower, to a bipolar system, and is now characterised by multipolarity, where power is distributed among multiple influential states and blocs.

To illustrate this shift, the Nominee cited the growing influence of BRICS, noting that some Ghanaians are advocating for the country to join the bloc. He explained that this trend underscores the increasing recognition of alternative alliances beyond traditional Western-led institutions.

He further stressed the need for Africa to present a united front in global affairs, particularly in multilateral engagements. He highlighted that although Africa collectively holds the largest voting bloc in the United Nations, its impact remains minimal due to lack of cohesion among its member States. He argued that despite the continent's numerical strength, fragmentation and divergent national interests have hindered Africa's ability to assert itself as a formidable force in international diplomacy. The Nominee assured the Committee that he would advocate for greater African unity and strategic collaboration in global decision-making forums.

### **8.13 Addressing Border Security and Regional Instability**

In response to a question on the threat posed by the unrest in Burkina Faso,

particularly regarding the numerous unapproved routes along the borders and Ghana's potential collaboration with Burkinabe authorities, the Nominee affirmed that a comprehensive solution would be pursued. He emphasised that border security and regional stability remain paramount to the Government, given the potential risks associated with unregulated movements, including the infiltration of terrorists and the increasing influx of refugees.

The Nominee further stated that this issue is of great importance to President Mahama, as evidenced by his decision to appoint a special envoy to the Alliance of Sahel States, a move aimed to foster diplomatic engagement and strengthen Ghana's role in regional security efforts. He underscored that instability in Burkina Faso has direct implications for Ghana, necessitating a proactive approach in collaboration with neighboring countries and international partners.

He also acknowledged the broader implications of regional instability, particularly in relation to economic disruptions, security threats, and humanitarian concerns. The Nominee reiterated Ghana's commitment to foster peace and stability within the sub-region and expressed the country's desire to reintegrate the three breakaway ECOWAS countries into the bloc, to ensure that regional cooperation remains strong in the face of emerging security challenges.

### **8.14 Enhancing Access to Postgraduate Scholarships Abroad**

In response to a question on the Ministry's plans to support young Ghanaians pursuing postgraduate studies abroad, the Nominee highlighted his commitment to enhance transparency and accessibility in scholarship opportunities. He stated that as part of his vision, he intends to establish a dedicated online platform where all available scholarships will be published in a centralised and easily accessible manner. This, he noted, would ensure that deserving students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have equal access to information on funding opportunities.

The Nominee further emphasised that increasing awareness and access to a wide range of scholarship schemes would significantly ease the financial burden on state institutions such as the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), the Scholarship Secretariat, and the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC), allowing them to support a broader spectrum of students. Additionally, he proposed a review of the current passport fee structure, particularly for brilliant but needy students, suggesting the possibility of either subsidising or entirely exempting them from paying passport fees. This, he explained, would remove a critical financial barrier for students seeking international academic opportunities, thereby fostering greater educational mobility for young Ghanaians.

### **8.14 Vigilance and Oversight in Foreign Affairs**

Regarding his role in vigilance and oversight as a Nominee, the candidate emphasised that in all his parliamentary interventions, oversight duties, and due diligence as a Member of Parliament and Ranking Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee have been in the national interest. He highlighted his investigation into the proposed purchase of Ghana's Oslo Chancery, the country's diplomatic office in Norway. He explained that the former Foreign Affairs Minister, Hannah Tetteh, had initially informed Parliament that the property was to be purchased for US\$50 million. However, through his independent research, he discovered that the building had been acquired just months earlier for only US\$4 million. This, he noted, demonstrated his commitment to protect public funds and ensure accountability in government transactions.

### **8.15 Deportation of Ghanaians from the United States**

In response to a question about the possible deportation of Ghanaians by the Trump Administration, the Nominee informed the Committee that 156 Ghanaians currently face imminent deportation from the United States, and not over 6,000 as previously reported.

He assured the Committee that if approved, he would ensure that the Government remains committed to support the affected individuals. He stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would actively engage with U.S.

authorities to ensure that the deportation process respects the rights and dignity of those involved. Additionally, he confirmed that all necessary measures would be taken to assist the affected persons, including reintegration programmes and legal assistance where applicable.

### 8.16 Protection of Ghana's Diplomatic Assets

Addressing concerns about the sale and mismanagement of Ghana's diplomatic assets abroad, the Nominee assured the Committee that no diplomatic property would be sold during his tenure of office if approved.

He reaffirmed his commitment to protect State properties and emphasised that he would continue to champion the protection of Ghana's assets, just as he has done over the years. He firmly stated that he would not endorse the sale of any diplomatic property, ensuring that Ghana's Foreign Missions retain their properties for long-term national interest and diplomatic stability.

### 8.17 Requested Documents

The Nominee promised to furnish the Committee with the following documents upon request by the Hon Ranking Member with leave of the Chairman:

- i. Tenancy Agreement;
- ii. Letter to the Clerk to Parliament concerning the use of his car loan for

the procurement of a combined harvester;

- iii. Evidence of U.S. student visa details;
- iv. Details of SSNIT and tax deductions for work done at an Information Technology (I.T.) Company at Nkawkaw;
- v. Evidence of tax paid on contracts executed by SAVVI Company;
- vi. Evidence of payment of tax on his current Volta Klenam Company;
- vii. Evidence of secondary source of payment for his rent;
- viii. Document on the combined harvester; and
- ix. Document on the two saloon cars purchased with the 2017 car loan.

The Nominee has been able to furnish the Committee with documentation on only SAVVI and Volta Klenam Companies as at the time of finalising the report.

## 9.0 Recommendation

Prior to the votes, the Minority recused themselves. Nonetheless, the Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa** as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

**MR SEIDU ISSIFU****Minister Of State-designate,  
Climate Change and Sustainability****10.0 Background**

Mr Seidu Issifu was born on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1969 in Nalerigu in the North East Region of Ghana. He commenced his education at Naa Bongo Primary/Middle School in Nalerigu, where he completed his primary education from 1974 to 1980 and middle school education from 1980 to 1981. He then proceeded to Tamale Secondary School, where he obtained his GCE Ordinary Level (O-Level) between 1981 and 1986, followed by the GCE Advanced Level (A-Level) from 1986 to 1988.

In 1990, he enrolled at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), where he pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Sociology and obtained a Diploma in Education, completing both programmes in 1994. Additionally, he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management and a Certificate in Leadership, further strengthening his academic credentials.

Mr Issifu began his professional career in 1988 as a teacher at the Bolgatanga Girls Secondary School, where he taught for two years before proceeding to fulfil his compulsory national service at the same institution between 1994 and 1995. In 1996, he transitioned into the corporate sector as an Operations Manager with Unilever Key Distributor in Bolgatanga, a role he held until 1999. He later joined Unilever Ghana PLC, Kumasi, where he served as

Customer Service Manager from 1999 to 2004. Subsequently, he was transferred to Unilever Ghana PLC, Tema, where he assumed responsibility as Customer Service Manager in charge of projects from 2004 to 2005.

From 2005 to date, the Nominee has played a pivotal role in Bisvel Haulage Group of Companies, serving in various leadership capacities. He was appointed Board Chairman of the company in 2021, a position he continues to hold. In 2021, he successfully contested the Nalerigu-Gambaga Constituency parliamentary seat and has since served as a Member of Parliament (MP). Within Parliament, he has contributed to legislative work as a Member of the House Committee, a Member of the Committee on Subsidiary Legislation, and currently serves as the Deputy Ranking Member on the Committee on Trade, Industry, and Tourism.

Throughout his career, Mr Issifu has actively engaged in international conferences, workshops, and training programmes. Notable among these are his participation in the AfCFTA Seminar for Members of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism in June 2023, the UNCTAD Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in Zurich, Switzerland (January 2023), the 66<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in October 2023, where he participated in a workshop on *What Sustainable Trade and Economic Development Mean for Small Jurisdictions*, and the Iran-African

Economic Cooperation Conference in April 2024. His corporate training experience includes courses in Financial Prudence (Unilever Ghana Plc, July 2002), Introduction to Management (Unilever Ghana Plc, May 2001), and Business Communication (Unilever Ghana Plc, November 2000).

Mr Issifu has received notable awards and recognitions, including the National Achievers' Award (2015) from the National Youth for Peace and Development. He was also a three-time recipient of the Best National Sales Manager Award (2002, 2003, and 2004) at Unilever Ghana PLC.

The Nominee is a Muslim, married, and has four children. He is fluent in English and Mampruli and enjoys playing tennis as a recreational activity.

## **Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

### **11.0 Climate Change and the Role of the Ministry**

The Nominee was asked to brief the Committee on the crucial role of climate change and how his office would contribute to Ghana's development in this regard. He explained that his Ministry is committed to ensure a coordinated approach to tackle climate change by actively engaging Government ministries, agencies, stakeholders, and international partners. He emphasised the importance of adopting best initiatives and practices to effectively manage climate-related challenges in Ghana.

The Nominee further described his role as a coordinating point where all domestic and foreign initiatives of the Government converge for effective execution. He noted that climate change is a cross-cutting issue that requires collaboration between multiple sectors, including energy, agriculture, forestry, and water management. He stated that his Ministry therefore, seeks to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation measures into national development policies to ensure a sustainable and resilient economy. He assured the Committee of his commitment to foster innovative solutions and strategic partnerships to enhance Ghana's climate resilience.

### **11.1 Current Climate Changes in Ghana and its Effect**

The Nominee was asked to apprise the Committee on the current changes in Ghana's climate conditions and their impact on communities across the country. In response, he highlighted several pressing climate-related issues that require urgent attention. These include unpredictable rainfall patterns, perennial flooding, increased frequency and intensity of heatwaves, especially in urban areas, droughts, water scarcity, and agricultural losses.

The Nominee further elaborated that the effects of climate change in Ghana extend beyond environmental challenges, leading to loss of productivity, food insecurity, decreased livelihood opportunities, and malnutrition in certain regions. He emphasised that these challenges

threaten economic growth and socioeconomic stability, particularly for vulnerable populations such as farmers, fisherfolk, and low-income urban dwellers.

To address these concerns, he assured the Committee that his office would work assiduously to implement climate adaptation and mitigation strategies aimed at enhancing resilience and safeguarding livelihoods. He stressed the importance of collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including Government agencies, the private sector, and international development partners, to effectively combat climate change and its associated effects on Ghanaian communities.

### **11.2 Climate Change Initiatives and Strategic Interventions**

When asked about initiatives to address climate change in Ghana, the Nominee emphasised that a collective effort is required to implement climate-resilient initiatives that will safeguard vulnerable sectors of the economy. He highlighted that his office will work diligently in collaboration with key ministries, including the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of Energy, and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, to develop sustainable climate solutions.

The Nominee assured the Committee that with proper climate action, Ghana can achieve reduced economic losses, enhanced food security, improved water quality, increased job opportunities,

higher economic productivity, and better weather conditions. He reiterated that addressing climate change holistically and proactively would not only protect livelihoods but also promote long-term national development and resilience against future climate-related challenges.

### **12.0 Recommendation**

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Seidu Issifu** as Minister of State, Climate Change and Sustainability.

### **MRS CHARITY GARDINER**

**Minister-designate, Ahafo Region**

### **13.0 Background**

Mrs Charity Gardiner was born on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1987 in Kenyasi in the Ahafo Region of Ghana. She began her education at Asutifi Educational Complex and later attended Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School, where she completed her Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in 2004. She proceeded to Sekyedumase Senior Secondary School for her senior secondary education and completed in 2009.

Mrs Gardiner furthered her studies at the Central University College, Accra, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Administration, specialising in Human Resource Management, from 2010 to 2014. She later pursued a Master of Science degree in Management and Human Resource Strategy via distance

learning at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, from 2019 to 2021.

In terms of professional experience, the Nominee undertook her national service at Newmont Ghana Limited from 2014 to 2015, serving as a Human Resource Representative. Her responsibilities included data entry into SAP, induction of employees and visitors, coordination of employee loan forms and account openings, and employee record management. Since 2016, she has held the position of General Manager at Frimach Company Limited.

Mrs Gardiner has also been actively involved in politics. She served as a constituency executive member of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Asutifi North Constituency from 2018 to 2019, during which she planned and coordinated election campaigns, ensuring candidates had the necessary support to succeed. Additionally, she played a key role in implementing the party's policies within the Constituency.

In terms of leadership, she was elected Ahafo Regional Deputy Secretary of the NDC from 2019 to 2022. During this period, she enhanced communication and collaboration among regional departments, resulting in more efficient decision-making and service delivery. Since November 2022, she has served as the Ahafo Regional Women's Organiser of the NDC, where she has focused on strengthening grassroots

structures and community engagement. She also established the Charity Gardiner Foundation, which supports Junior High School pupils by providing sanitary pads and learning materials.

Mrs Gardiner has actively participated in numerous knowledge-sharing and capacity-building conferences. Notably, she attended the Women in Politics conference organised by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in 2021 and the Women Academy for Africa (WAFA) in 2024.

She is described as result-oriented, self-disciplined, hardworking, quick in decision-making, industrious, and sincere. Mrs Charity Gardiner is married with two children and enjoys reading as a hobby.

### **Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **14.0 Promoting Girl Child Education and Women Empowerment**

When asked about her plans to encourage girl child education, the Nominee expressed a deep passion for women's empowerment and outlined several key initiatives aimed at achieving this objective.

She emphasised her commitment to leverage the Women Development Bank Programme, as stipulated in the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Manifesto. This initiative aims to provide soft loans to women, enabling them to access



capital and expand their businesses. By fostering economic independence, this financial support will empower more women to invest in their education and that of their children.

The Nominee further highlighted her existing contributions through the Charity Gardiner Foundation, which actively supports youth and children in the Ahafo Region. Through this Foundation, she has sponsored education, provided learning materials, and mentorship programmes which aimed at encouraging young girls to stay in school.

Additionally, she stressed the importance of equipping women with essential business skills to complement financial support. The Nominee further stated that to achieve this, she intends to organise workshops and training sessions which focus on business management, record-keeping, and strategies for business growth. By implementing these measures, she aims to enhance the capacity of women and young girls to ensure that they have the necessary skills to thrive academically and economically.

#### **14.1 Commitment to Free Distribution of Sanitary Pads**

When asked whether she would continue the free distribution of sanitary pads, as initiated by His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama, the Nominee responded positively and acknowledged the critical role this initiative plays to promote young girls' health and education.

She emphasised that access to sanitary pads is a major challenge for many girls, particularly in rural communities, which often leads to absenteeism from school during menstrual periods. Recognising the impact on education and gender equality, she assured the Committee of her commitment to not only continue but also expand the initiative to reach more schools and underprivileged communities.

The Nominee further stated that through her Charity Gardiner Foundation, she has already been involved in supporting young girls with sanitary pads and learning materials. She pledged to work in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, to ensure sustainability and nationwide coverage of the initiative.

### **15.0 Recommendation**

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mrs Charity Gardiner** as Ahafo Regional Minister.

**MR SALISU BI-AWURIBE  
ISSIFU**

**Minister-designate, Savannah  
Region**

### **16.0 Background**

Mr Salisu Bi-Awuribe Issifu was born on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 1980 in Yapei, Savannah Region, Ghana. He began his secondary education at Tamale

Secondary School, where he completed in 1997. He proceeded to the Tamale College of Education where he obtained a Post-Secondary Teachers' Certificate 'A' in 2001.

In 2005, he earned a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Land Economy from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi. In 2014, he obtained a Bachelor of Law (LLB) from KNUST, followed by a Master of Laws (LLM) in Alternative Dispute Resolution from the University of Ghana, Faculty of Law in 2020. In June 2022, he attained his Professional Qualifying Certificate in Law (BL).

The Nominee undertook his mandatory national service at the Lands Commission Unit in Tamale, Northern Region, from 2005 to 2006. From 2005 to 2007, he taught Economics at the Northern School of Business. Subsequently, he was appointed Deputy Regional Lands Officer in the Northern Region (which now includes the Northern, Savannah, and North East Regions) from September 2007 to May 2009.

In May 2009, he was appointed District Chief Executive (DCE) for Central Gonja District Assembly in Buipe, a position he held until June 2013. His political career progressed when he became Deputy Regional Secretary of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Northern Region (now comprising the Northern, Savannah, and

North East Regions) from September 2014 to August 2018. He was later elected Regional Secretary of the NDC in the Northern Region, a position he retained when the Savannah Region was created in 2019, and he continues to serve in that capacity. Currently, he is a Law Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale. His interests include reading, teaching, researching, music, and football.

### **Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **17.0 Land Acquisition for Women in the Savannah Region**

In response to concerns regarding the difficulties women face in acquiring land for farming, the Nominee asserted that land acquisition is not a major issue for women in the Savannah Region. He emphasised that there is an abundant supply of land available for agricultural purposes in the area, suggesting that women have ample opportunities to access land for farming activities.

#### **17.1 Measures to Minimise Post-Harvest Losses**

When asked about his plans to support farmers to minimise post-harvest losses, the Nominee expressed his intention to collaborate with colleagues from other sectors to implement practical solutions aimed at enhancing the harvesting and transportation of produce from farms to market centres.

The Nominee further indicated that improvements in road accessibility and the availability of resources for farmers to acquire vehicles, such as tricycles and motor kings, would significantly facilitate the post-harvest process.

Additionally, he highlighted the challenges posed by the high cost of improved seeds, which are essential for achieving higher yields. However, he remained optimistic that farming will become more economically viable for Ghanaians once the Government's agricultural policies are fully implemented.

### **17.2 Promotion of Girl-Child Education and Parental Support**

When asked about his plans to promote girl-child education and encourage parental support given the rising drop-out rate of girls in school, the Nominee affirmed his commitment to provide substantial support for girl-child education in line with the NDC Government's policy to empower girls. He addressed the prevailing tendency among parents, particularly peasant farmers, to prioritise boys' education over girls', due to the belief that sons will provide for their parents in the future, while daughters may not. To counter this mindset, he emphasised the need for parental education on the importance of girls' education.

The Nominee further suggested the use of role models—successful women in leadership—to inspire communities and showcase the benefits of educating girls. He specifically cited Mrs Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah, the Member of Parliament for the Salaga South

Constituency in the Savannah Region, as an example of how investing in girls' education can yield positive societal outcomes.

### **17.3 Managing Conflicts Between District Chief Executives (DCEs) and Members of Parliament (MPs)**

In his response to conflicts that may arise between District Chief Executives (DCEs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) in his Region, the Nominee acknowledged that conflicts are a natural part of human behaviour. He emphasised the importance of identifying the root causes of these conflicts, which often stem from communication gaps between MPs and DCEs, as well as tensions created by their supporters.

The Nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to foster synergy between both parties, enabling effective collaboration in promoting development in the Region. Furthermore, he intends to leverage his background in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to address and resolve any disputes that may arise to ensure harmonious relationship between MPs and DCEs for the benefit of regional development.

### **17.4 Accelerating Development in the Newly Established Savannah Region**

When asked about accelerating development in the newly established Savannah Region, which is characterised by diverse cultures and a slow pace of

development, the Nominee acknowledged the unique challenges posed by the presence of over 21 indigenous ethnic groups.

He highlighted emerging issues such as land rights and paramountcy claims, stressing the need for appropriate measures to be implemented to address these concerns. The Nominee recognised that these factors, if not properly managed, could hinder development and social cohesion in the Region.

To improve the socioeconomic conditions of the region, he expressed his commitment to enhance educational development, human resource capacity, and governance structures. Given that the Region currently ranks last in these indicators, he emphasised the need for a collective effort among stakeholders to drive meaningful development and improve the livelihoods of the people.

### **17.5 Addressing Boundary Disputes in the Savannah Region**

In response to enquiries regarding boundary disputes among districts in the Savannah Region, the Nominee confirmed the existence of such conflicts, attributing them to the absence of clear boundary demarcations since the 1988 district creations. He explained that the establishment of the Savannah Region without precise delineation has led to land rights issues and jurisdictional confusion, with some communities mistakenly believing they are either outside the Savannah Region or incorrectly identifying themselves as part of it.

The Nominee cited Daboya as a specific example, where a predominantly Mampruli-speaking community resides on Gonja land. Some residents have expressed a desire not to associate with the North Gonja District, asserting that their settlement actually falls under the North East District.

To effectively address these challenges, the Nominee proposed engaging the Ghana Boundary Commission alongside the Survey and Mapping Division of the Lands Commission to accurately delineate district boundaries. Additionally, he recommended revisiting the strategies employed during the Land Administration Project (LAP 1 and 2) to establish clear customary boundaries, believing this would provide a long-lasting solution to the ongoing disputes.

### **17.6 Revenue Generation by District Assemblies in the Savannah Region**

In addressing the low revenue generation by district assemblies in the Savannah Region, the Nominee identified poor identification of revenue sources and the lack of accountability in revenue collection as key factors that hinder the ability of district assemblies to maximise their revenue potential.

The Nominee emphasised the need to improve the revenue collection process and ensure that all collected revenue are duly accounted for. He highlighted the importance of leveraging technology to streamline and enhance revenue collection efforts. Additionally, he

suggested that district assemblies should explore alternative revenue-generating strategies, such as investing in productive businesses. This approach, he explained, would enable the assemblies to generate dividends and reduce their dependence on levies and taxes, ultimately strengthening their financial sustainability.

## 18.0 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Salisu Bi-Awuribe Issifu** as Savannah Regional Minister.

**MR WILBERT PETTY BRENTUM**

**Minister-designate, Western North Region**

## 19.0 Background

Mr Wilbert Petty Brentum was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1968 in Enchi in the Western North Region of Ghana. He began his secondary education at Asankrangwa Secondary School, where he completed his O Level in 1985, before proceeding to Ghana Secondary School in Takoradi, where he obtained his A Level in 1987. For his tertiary education, the Nominee attended the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), earning a Bachelor's Degree in Mine Surveying in 1998. He later pursued further qualifications, including an Executive Certificate in CSR Management from McGill University, Canada (2013), a

Partial Qualification from the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), UK (2007–2008), and a Master's Degree in Mining Engineering from the University of Mines and Technology (2006–2009).

Mr Brentum has an extensive professional background spanning technical, academic, community relations, and managerial roles. His career began as a Technical Sales Representative for Ghana & Burkina Faso at Eagle Mapping Services Ltd, Canada, from 1998 to 1999. He later worked as a teacher at Juaboso Secondary School from 2002 to 2005 before transitioning into the mining sector. In 2009, he served as a Community Relations Officer and Mine Surveyor at Akasu Gold Project in Sefwi Juaboso. From 2010 to 2012, he worked as a District Officer at the Minerals Commission.

He then took up the role of Gold Programme Manager at Solidaridad West Africa from 2012 to 2015. Since 2015, he has worked as a Consultant in Sustainable Supply Chain Development for companies in the Gold Supply Chain industry.

Mr Brentum has been actively engaged in public service. In 2002, he was elected as an Assembly Member at the Juaboso/Bia District Assembly (JDA), where he served in multiple leadership roles. His positions included Chairman of the Technical Evaluation Team and the Works Sub-Committee, as well as a Member of the District Tender Board, Development Planning

Committee, District Statutory Planning Committee, Environmental Sub-Committee, Public Relations and Complaint Sub-Committee, and District Market Management Committee. Additionally, he served as Secretary of the Juaboso Water and Sanitation Development Board.

The Nominee has participated in numerous professional training programmes, workshops, and international conferences. His training includes Skills Building for Assembly Members (2002), Community Development and Organisation (2006), Safety Management (2006), Project Management using MS Project (2006), Implementation and Auditing the Cyanide Code (2009), and Introduction to Parliamentary Politics (2019).

He has also attended several seminars and workshops, including the JustGhana Annual Meeting in the UK (2015), Solidaridad Global Gold Meetings in Holland, Kenya, Uganda, Peru, and Chile (2012–2015), and the Minerals Commission Road Show for Artisanal Small-Scale Mining (ASM) (2010–2012). Additional workshops attended include those organised by the Pan-African Institute for Leadership and Governance Studies (2006), the Department of Town and Country Planning on Poverty Profiling/Mapping (2004), and the Institute of Local Government Studies on Contract Management and Community Mobilisation for Development (2003).

Furthermore, he participated in a workshop on Policy Guidelines for

Public- Private Partnerships at General Law Consult (2003), a conference at the Department of Feeder Roads (2003), a Forestry Commission Workshop on Natural Resource Management (2003), and a Training Programme for District Assembly Members at the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2002).

Mr Brentum has held several notable positions, including Western Regional Secretary of the Welfare Committee, Cocoa Services Division of COCOBOD (1990–1994) and Board Member of the Juaboso/Bia District Newsletter Editorial (2002–2006).

In his leisure time, he enjoys reading and playing music.

### **Questions Asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **20.0 Challenges of Mining in Forest Reserves and Proposed Solutions**

In his response to a question about the challenges of mining in forest reserves and the difficulty in effectively addressing these challenges, the Nominee acknowledged that Ghana has struggled to manage small-scale mining activities within protected forest areas. He attributed this failure largely to poor management practices, which have hindered the implementation of effective solutions. Despite these challenges, he emphasised the significant contribution of artisanal small-scale mining to Ghana's economy, noting that this sector accounts for approximately 30 per cent

of the country's gold production, making it a crucial component of national revenue and livelihoods.

The Nominee further suggested that one of the key reasons for the persistence of illegal mining in forest reserves is the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding small-scale mining. He proposed a collaborative approach that actively involves miners in discussions aimed at addressing the challenges posed by their activities. This engagement, he argued, would foster greater awareness and cooperation, ultimately leading to more sustainable mining practices. To tackle the issue effectively, the Nominee stressed the need for a tactical approach that focuses on formalising and legalising the operations of small-scale miners. He proposed for the reduction of the cost and complexity of legalising mining activities, making it easier for miners to obtain legal status and operate within the bounds of the law. He believes this measure would create a more structured and manageable industry, while simultaneously helping to curb environmental degradation caused by illegal mining.

In his acknowledgment of the existing challenges related to permit acquisition for small-scale miners, the Nominee pointed out that addressing the problem of illegal mining in forest reserves require a more organised and strategic response. He suggested that if given the opportunity, he would work closely with miners and community leaders to assess the extent of illegal mining in various areas. This

collaboration would enable targeted interventions that involve key stakeholders across Government and industry to develop a comprehensive roadmap aimed at minimising the harmful effects of illegal mining while promoting sustainable and responsible mining practices.

## **20.1 Responsibilities of a Regional Minister**

In response to a question about the responsibilities of a Regional Minister, the Nominee outlined the broad scope of duties entrusted to this role. He explained that a Regional Minister serves as a crucial link between the central Government and the region, facilitating effective communication and coordination to ensure that national policies and programmes are successfully implemented at the regional level.

The Nominee elaborated that one of the key responsibilities of a Regional Minister is administrative oversight. This includes monitoring development initiatives, ensuring the effective implementation of Government policies, and fostering collaboration among regional stakeholders. He emphasised that the Regional Minister plays a strategic role in coordinating the activities of district assemblies to ensure that their development plans are aligned with the broader national development agenda.

Furthermore, he highlighted security management as a critical responsibility of a Regional Minister. He stated that the

need to ensure peace, stability, and law enforcement within the Region is a priority, and he pledged to work closely with security agencies to maintain public safety. The Nominee assured the Committee that if approved, he would prioritise the establishment of an emergency response plan to proactively address potential crises, such as natural disasters, conflicts, and health emergencies. He emphasised that this would ensure the prompt deployment of interventions and resources to mitigate risks and safeguard the well-being of citizens.

## **20.2 Managing the Common Fund: Addressing DCE and MP Conflicts**

In addressing the Committee's enquiry about the persistent issue between District Chief Executives (DCEs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) regarding the management of the Common Fund, the Nominee acknowledged the complexities that surround this matter. He noted that MPs authorise the use of Funds but are not signatories to the accounts, which often leads to tensions between the DCEs and MPs. This, he explained, has been a long-standing issue across various regions, with both parties sometimes struggling to reach common ground on how the funds should be utilised for developmental projects. To address this challenge, the Nominee emphasised the importance of fostering collaboration between DCEs and MPs. He highlighted that effective communication, mutual respect, and transparency in decision-making would ensure smoother

administration and the efficient use of resources. The Nominee stressed that a well-defined framework for engagement between DCEs and MPs would be essential in minimising conflicts.

Furthermore, he assured the Committee that under his leadership, such issues would be mitigated in the Western North Region. He pledged to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among the key stakeholders to ensure harmonious working relationships. By implementing a structured approach to fund management and enhance accountability, he believes that unnecessary disputes over the Common Fund could be significantly reduced, thereby ensure that the Funds are directed toward impactful development projects that benefit the people of the Region.

## **21.0 Recommendation**

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Wilbert Petty Brentum** as the Minister for the Western North Region.

## **MR JOSEPH NELSON**

### **Minister-designate for Western Region**

## **22.0 Background**

Joseph Nelson was born on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1973 in Takoradi, Western Region, Ghana. He began his education at Abura RC Primary School and later



attended Top Ridge School in Takoradi from 1979 to 1987 for his basic education. He pursued his secondary education at Mfantshipim School in Cape Coast from 1987 to 1992, where he completed the GCE Ordinary Level, before proceeding to Tarkwa Senior High School from 1994 to 1996, where he obtained his GCE Advanced Level certificate.

The Nominee furthered his studies at the University of Northampton in the United Kingdom (UK), where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics with Management Science. He also pursued two Master of Science degrees, one in International Finance and Economic Policy (Modules) from the University of Glasgow, UK in 2006, and another in Microfinance from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, in 2020. Additionally, he undertook Monitoring and Evaluation training at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA).

Mr Nelson began his professional career as a Credit Officer at Ahantaman Rural Bank from September 1997 to December 2001. He later moved to the United Kingdom, where he worked as a Line Manager at the Royal Mail from July 2003 to September 2005. He also served as a Commercial Officer at Siemens Enterprise Communications Limited from November 2005 to May 2006 and later became a Business Advisor at HD Business Support Limited from November 2006 to December 2007. Upon returning to Ghana, the Nominee

served as Regional Director of the Youth Employment Agency (YEA) from 2009 to 2017. Since 2014, he has been the Western Regional Secretary of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), a role in which he continues to serve.

The Nominee is a skilled professional with expertise in economic policy analysis, planning, appraisal, and implementation of developmental projects. His hobbies include playing soccer, reading, and watching movies.

### **Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **23.0 Reducing the Incidence of Illegal Mining in the Western Region**

In response to concerns raised by the Committee regarding the growing menace of illegal mining (*galamsey*) in the Western Region, the Nominee acknowledged the devastating impact of the activity on the environment, water bodies, and human lives. He expressed his deep concern about the destruction *galamsey* has caused, particularly its contribution to deforestation, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity.

The Nominee welcomed the commitment of H.E. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic, to reset the mining sector, as reaffirmed by the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources. He assured the Committee of his unwavering dedication to support this initiative.

The Nominee pledged that if approved, he would collaborate closely with the sector minister to devise effective measures aimed at curbing illegal mining in the Region. His approach would focus on strengthening law enforcement efforts, promoting sustainable mining practices, and ensuring community engagement. He emphasised the need to balance environmental protection with responsible mining activities to safeguard water quality and promote sustainable livelihoods in the Western Region.

### **23.1 Addressing the Detrimental Effects of Illegal Small-Scale Mining (*Galamsey*)**

In his response to concerns regarding the destructive impact of illegal small-scale mining, commonly known as *Galamsey*, the Nominee acknowledged its severe environmental consequences. He noted that although small-scale mining is legally permitted for Ghanaians aged 18 years and above, regulatory challenges have allowed illegal mining to persist and thrive.

A significant barrier to effective regulation, he explained, is the distance between regulatory offices and mining sites. Many miners bypass legal procedures because of the inaccessibility of regulatory bodies, leading to widespread environmental degradation, deforestation, and water pollution.

The Nominee expressed his strong support for the Government's initiative to establish local regulatory offices in

every mining district. These offices would be easily accessible to miners to encourage compliance with regulations, promote responsible mining practices, and enhance safety standards. He emphasised that this initiative would also reduce mining-related casualties by ensuring better oversight and enforcement of safety measures.

The Nominee assured the Committee that if approved, he would commit himself to work closely with the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources to combat illegal mining, restore environmental integrity, and promote sustainable mining practices in the Western Region.

### **23.2 Stance on the "Shoot to Kill" Policy for Illegal Mining (*Galamsey*)**

When questioned about proposals to implement a "shoot to kill" policy as a means to curb the rampant illegal mining (*galamsey*) activities, the Nominee firmly opposed such an approach, emphasising that the challenges in the mining sector are fundamentally regulatory issues rather than security ones.

He reiterated his commitment to work closely with the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources to effectively reset the mining sector and address its challenges through regulation, oversight, and structured reforms. He maintained that with proper regulatory enforcement mechanisms in place, resorting to extreme measures such as a "shoot to

kill” policy would be unnecessary and counterproductive.

Furthermore, the Nominee assured the Committee that upon his approval as Regional Minister and Head of the Western Regional Coordinating Security Council (RESEC), he would ensure that there is no implementation of any such policy. He emphasised that addressing illegal mining should be a governance issue, not a militarised security operation. He pledged to use engagement, enforcement, and community-driven interventions to resolve the crisis.

### **23.3 Views on the Destruction of Former President Akufo-Addo’s Statue**

When asked about his stance on the destruction of the statue of former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, which was erected at the Effia Nkwanta roundabout in Sekondi-Takoradi, the Nominee acknowledged that the issue has sparked significant public discourse and controversy.

He recalled that, shortly after the statue was erected, one of the traditional leaders publicly claimed that its creation was a collective effort by the Chiefs to honour the former President. However, this assertion was later contradicted by another chief, creating uncertainty regarding the true sentiments of the local community on the statue’s installation and subsequent destruction.

Given the contradictory narratives, the Nominee expressed uncertainty

about the actual facts surrounding the statue. He assured the Committee that if the matter required further attention, he would be willing to investigate it further to understand the circumstances that led to the incident and any underlying tensions that may need to be addressed.

### **23.4 Legacy and Aspirations**

When asked about his desired legacy at the end of his tenure, the Nominee expressed a strong commitment to vigorously pursuing the vision of His Excellency the President to ensure that every promise made to the people of the Western Region is fulfilled. He emphasised that his greatest satisfaction would come from witnessing the successful realisation of these commitments, as this would be a testament to the Government’s dedication to development, progress, and improvement of the lives of the people in the Region.

The Nominee further stated that his happiest moment is to see tangible improvements in infrastructure, governance, and economic opportunities within the Western Region, which would ensure that his tenure leaves a lasting positive impact on the people he serves.

## **24.0 RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of

the nomination of **Mr Joseph Nelson** as Western Regional Minister.

**MR JOSEPH ADDAE AKWABOA**

**Minister-designate, Bono Region**

## **25.0 Background**

Mr Joseph Addae Akwaboa was born on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1982 in Wamfie in the Bono Region of Ghana. He is married with three children and identifies as a Christian. He is fluent in English and Bono Twi.

The Nominee commenced his education at Jinijini R/C Junior Secondary School, where he completed his Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in 1995. He continued his secondary education at Dormaa Secondary School, where he obtained his Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) in 2000. In 2004, he pursued a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Accountancy at Sunyani Polytechnic. He later advanced his studies at the University of Education, Winneba (Kumasi Campus) and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Administration (Accounting) in 2008 and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in 2013, respectively. In 2015, he was awarded a Barrister-at-Law (BL) certificate from the Ghana School of Law. Continuing his academic pursuits, he obtained a Master of Laws (LLM) in 2022 from KNUST. Since 2023, he has been pursuing a PhD in Law at KNUST.

Mr Akwaboa's professional career began with his national service at Tafo Government Hospital, East Akim, from 2004 to 2005. He then worked as Finance/Office Manager at Minkah Premo and Co. from 2006 to 2009. From 2019 to 2023, he served as a part-time law lecturer at Christian Service University College (Sunyani Campus). He has also been a lecturer at Greenfield Law Faculty, Sunyani, since 2002, and at Sunyani Technical University since 2015. In addition, he has been actively practicing as a lawyer at Otu-Essel, Tuah-Yeboah & Associates (Asempa Chambers) since 2015.

The Nominee has held multiple political and non-political positions. He has served as a Board Member for Dormaa Senior High School, Yamfo College of Health, and Drobo Community Bank. Additionally, he was the Regional Organizer and Regional Treasurer of the Ghana Bar Association for the Bono East and Ahafo Regions. Within the National Democratic Congress (NDC), he has occupied various roles, including Chairman of the Bono Regional Finance Committee, Chairman of the Bono Regional Fundraising Committee, and Treasurer of the Bono Regional Legal Committee.

As an active member of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA) and the Technical University Teachers Association of Ghana (TUTAG), the Nominee has participated in several professional engagements. Notably, he attended a conference on Plea Bargaining and Agreements, which was a collaborative justice sector initiative

between the United States, Ghana, and Kenya, held on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2019, in Sunyani.

For his contributions to society, the Nominee was honored by the Methodist Church Ghana, Sunyani Diocese, for donating a three-bedroom semi-detached house to the church for use as a manse, a commitment he has upheld since 2020.

His interests include reading and football.

### **Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **26.0 Measures to Ensure Completion of Sunyani Town Roads**

When asked about the measures he would implement to ensure the completion of the Sunyani Town roads, which had been abandoned by the previous Government, the Nominee expressed deep concern over the state of the project. He emphasised that the deteriorating condition of the roads was a matter of personal concern, as he frequently plies that route to his residence. Acknowledging the inconvenience and frustration it causes to residents and road users, he assured the Committee that, if approved, he would take immediate steps to address the situation.

The Nominee pledged to engage relevant road agencies to assess the

project's status, collaborate with the Ministry of Roads and Highways for necessary interventions, and review the construction contract to determine the cause of its abandonment.

#### **26.1 Measures to Support Cashew Farmers in the Bono Region**

In response to the measures he intends to implement to support cashew farmers in the Bono Region, the Nominee provided an overview of the Region's cashew production landscape. He noted that the Bono Region comprises 12 districts, eight of which are actively engaged in cashew cultivation. He expressed concern over the prevailing focus on cashew nuts, emphasising that the cashew apple remains largely underutilised and is often left to decay, despite its great economic potential. The Nominee highlighted that the underutilisation of cashew apples represents a missed opportunity for economic growth and value addition within the Region.

To address this challenge, the Nominee pledged to collaborate with investors to establish small-scale processing factories in the eight cashew-producing districts. These factories, according to the Nominee, would process cashew apples into products such as beverages and soup ingredients, thereby reducing post-harvest losses,

creating jobs, and boosting the local economy.

## **26.2 Core Duties of a Regional Minister**

On what he considered to be the core duties of a Regional Minister, the Nominee referenced Article 256 of the 1992 Constitution as the legal basis for the office. He explained that the Constitution assigns two primary responsibilities to a Regional Minister: to serve as the President's representative in the region; and to coordinate, harmonise, and supervise the activities of the various district assemblies and governmental agencies within the Region to ensure its development in line with national policies and priorities. He further elaborated that in practical terms, his fundamental responsibility would be to provide leadership in coordinating, harmonising, and overseeing the work of local government institutions. This would facilitate the efficient implementation of government policies and foster collaboration among stakeholders to promote sustainable development within the Region.

## **26.3 Addressing Chieftaincy Conflicts in the Bono Region**

With regard to the challenge of chieftaincy conflicts in the Bono Region, the Nominee acknowledged the complexity of the issue. He revealed that there are currently about 27 chieftaincy petitions pending before the Regional House of Chiefs. He explained that

under the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the resolution of chieftaincy disputes falls within the jurisdiction of the Regional House of Chiefs, the National House of Chiefs, and the Supreme Court (as the final arbiter). Given this constitutional framework, he emphasised that any direct involvement by a Regional Minister in such matters could lead to unnecessary complications and political difficulties.

The Nominee further stated that rather than interfering in these disputes, his approach would be to encourage the respective Houses of Chiefs to expedite the resolution of cases brought before them. He stressed that his primary focus would be on fostering a peaceful environment in the Region rather than engaging in matters beyond his constitutional mandate.

However, he acknowledged that where amicable settlement or mediation could serve as a viable alternative, such mechanisms would be explored to promote harmony among disputing factions.

## **27.0 Recommendation**

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Joseph Addae Akwaboa** as Bono Regional Minister.

**MR FRANCIS OWUSU ANTWI****Minister-designate, Bono East Region****28.0 Background**

Mr Francis Owusu Antwi was born on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1979 in Accra, Greater Accra Region, and hails from Trede in the Ashanti Region. He is a Christian, married, and has three children.

The Nominee began his primary education at Martyrs of Uganda Preparatory School, Kumasi, from 1982 to 1986, and then continued to Opoku Ware School from 1989 to 1994. Between 1990 and 1994, he also pursued his GCE 'O' Level at Atebubu Secondary School. He later proceeded to Kwadaso Agricultural College, where he obtained a Certificate in General Agriculture.

The Nominee earned a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Marketing from Valley View University. He further pursued and obtained a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Strategic Management from the same university.

From 2000 to 2001, the Nominee did his national service at the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenyasi. Following that, he assumed the role of Cashier at the Volta River Authority (VRA) in Atebubu from 2002 to 2004. His career in the banking sector began when he joined Yapra Rural Bank Limited, first as an Assistant Project Officer, then later as a Project Officer at Odotobri Rural Bank Limited.

Between 2009 and 2010, he was promoted to the role of Deputy Head of Credit at Yapra Rural Bank Limited. Through hard work and dedication, he rose through the ranks and is currently serving as the Head of Credit at Yapra Rural Bank Limited, a position he has held since June.

The Nominee enjoys sightseeing, listening to people, and educating others as part of his hobbies.

**Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses****29.1 Measures to Prevent Market Fires**

In his response on how to address the recurring issue of market fires, the Nominee indicated that he would ensure that all market centres in the Bono East Region are equipped with CCTV cameras to monitor activities and prevent such occurrences.

In addition, the Nominee stated that he would work closely with the Fire Service and the Police Service to ensure that consistent security and proactive measures are put in place. Furthermore, he mentioned that he would launch a comprehensive educational campaign to raise awareness about fire safety, emphasising the dangers of fire and teaching market women the necessary precautions to protect their businesses and assets.

## **29.2 Leveraging the Women's Development Bank to Support Market Women**

In his response to a question in support of market women, the Nominee stressed that the Women's Development Bank, as outlined in the NDC's Manifesto, is an invaluable tool to empower market women and ensure they thrive in their businesses.

To maximise its benefits, the Nominee explained that he would prioritise the training and capacity-building of women to enable them to effectively access credit facilities and manage their finances when given the nod. He added that this initiative would equip them with the necessary knowledge to enhance their profitability, grow their businesses, and contribute significantly to the Region's economic development.

## **29.3 Agricultural Mechanisation and Farmer Support**

The Nominee stated that agricultural mechanisation is a crucial element in modernising farming practices in the Region. He noted that through the establishment of district mechanisation centers, farmers will gain access to essential tools, machinery, and quality seeds. This support he stressed, will allow them to improve their yields and overall productivity.

Additionally, he pointed out that he would provide pruning services and other vital farming resources to ensure that farmers can access raw materials

even if they lack initial capital. The Nominee mentioned that farmers would then repay the support provided at the end of the season, creating a sustainable system that fosters growth within the agricultural sector.

## **29.4 Support for Women During Maize Harvesting Season**

The Nominee acknowledged that Atebubu is well known for its large-scale maize production and noted that women often struggle with surplus stock during bumper harvests. He outlined a value chain approach to address this challenge, ensuring that women can access credit to purchase and store maize when prices are low.

This strategy he explained, would allow women to sell their produce at higher prices during the rainy season when demand increases to ensure profitability. The Nominee emphasised that even in the absence of immediate support from the Women's Development Bank, he would collaborate with other financial institutions to facilitate access to loans, to enable women to secure and store foodstuffs for greater economic benefits.

## **29.5 Addressing the Lack of Schools and the Support for Girl-Child in Hinterland Areas**

The Nominee acknowledged that access to quality education remains a significant challenge in the hinterlands, where school infrastructure is lacking. He emphasised that if he is approved, he



will prioritise community engagement to highlight the importance of education and demonstrate the long-term benefits it brings to individuals and communities.

The Nominee further stated that he will work closely with local leaders to raise awareness and foster a culture of education to ensure that parents and guardians recognise the value of sending their children to school, especially girls. Additionally, youth empowerment would be a key focus, with efforts directed at providing both formal education and vocational training opportunities for young people.

He stressed that this approach will help reduce school drop-out rates, particularly among girls, and equip the youth with essential skills necessary for their personal and professional development, ultimately securing a brighter future for the next generation.

### **30.0 Recommendation**

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Francis Owusu Antwi** as Bono East Regional Minister.

### **MR FELIX KWAKYE OFOSU**

**Minister Of State, Government Communications**

### **31.0 Background**

Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu was born on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1982 at Darkuman in the Greater Accra Region. He had his

secondary education at Wesley Grammar School for the Senior Secondary Certification Examination (SSSCE) from 1999 to 2001. The Nominee proceeded to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and obtained Bsc Chemistry from 2001 to 2005. He then proceeded to the University of Dundee and acquired Master of Science in International Oil and Gas Management, and further pursued and obtained Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy (CEPMLP) at the Centre for Energy from 2010 to 2011.

With regard to the Nominee ministerial portfolios, he served as the Deputy Minister for Information from January 2013 to June 2014, where he played a critical role in shaping Government communication strategies to ensure timely and accurate dissemination of information and also conducted regular press briefing to update citizens on Government initiatives and policies.

From June 2014 to January 2017, Mr Ofosu was appointed the Deputy Minister for Communications where he assisted the Minister to oversee policy implementation in the communications sector which focused on improving telecommunication infrastructure and digital inclusion.

The Nominee has other curriculum activities which include Coordinator-National Electoral Ballot Print Monitoring (NDC), Member-Committee for Joint Action (CJA), Member-Government Communication Team, Member-Science Students Association, KNUST, Member-Electoral Committee, Students Chemical Society-KNUST, Member- University Hall (Katanga), KNUST.

The Nominee is married and his hobbies are tourism, reading and sight seeing

### **Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **32.0 Difference Between the Ministry of Information and Government Communication**

When asked about the distinction between the erstwhile Ministry of Information and the newly established Minister of State, Government Communication, the Nominee explained that while both entities share similar functions and output, they differ significantly in structure and approach.

He elaborated that the Ministry of Information operates as a full-fledged ministerial entity, with an established bureaucratic structure consisting of directors and agencies working under its umbrella. This traditional setup allows for policy formulation, public information management, and engagement with media stakeholders at the ministerial level.

However, the Government Communication structure, as envisioned by His Excellency the President, is designed to function directly under the Office of the President rather than as an independent ministry. The Nominee emphasised that the President believes that Government communication machinery can be more effectively and efficiently managed within the Presidency, allowing for greater coherence, responsiveness, and strategic messaging.

Nonetheless, to add weight and credibility to the communication function, a designated Minister is required to coordinate, manage, and oversee the dissemination of Government policies, initiatives, and public engagement efforts. This new structure is expected to enhance Government messaging and ensure consistency in information flow across all sectors of governance.

#### **32.1 Mandate as Minister of State, Government Communication**

When asked about his mandate as the Minister of State, Government Communication, the Nominee stated that if confirmed, he would serve as the official spokesperson for the President. In addition to this role, he would be responsible for managing and overseeing all Government communication efforts across various Ministries, Agencies, and Departments (MDAs).

The Nominee emphasised that this new approach to Government communication is cost-efficient, as it

eliminates the need for a separate Ministry of Information, thereby reducing administrative overheads and minimising the financial burden on taxpayers. Unlike in previous administrations, where multiple agencies managed government communications, this streamlined approach centralises all communications under a single authority within the Office of the President.

He further disclosed that His Excellency the President has explicitly instructed him to take full charge of the entire Government communication machinery, ensuring effective coordination, strategic messaging, and seamless information flow between the Government and the public. The Nominee assured the Committee that he is fully prepared to execute this mandate with professionalism, transparency, and efficiency, ensuring that Government policies and initiatives are clearly communicated and accurately represented.

### **32.2 Future of Staff and Agencies Under the Former Ministry of Information**

In response to concerns about the fate of staff under the former Ministry of Information, the Minister-designate assured the Committee that no civil servant would lose their job. He clarified that while political appointees would no longer work in the agencies, all civil servants would be retained and continue to serve in various capacities. However, he emphasised that substantial restructuring would take place to

improve efficiency and reduce operational costs.

The Nominee highlighted that the Information Services Department (ISD) currently has over 200 staff, stationed across Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), as well as Ministries, where they function as Public Relations Officers (PROs). He indicated that additional recruitment is unlikely, as the President strongly believes that Government communication can be effectively managed with a leaner, more efficient workforce.

Regarding the Ghana News Agency (GNA), the Nominee noted that it remains a credible and reliable news outlet for the Government. He disclosed that the President envisions a merger between GNA and the ISD to form a new entity called the Government Communication Office. This office would be rebranded and equipped with modern technology to enhance information dissemination and ensure that Government messaging is strategic, timely, and widely accessible.

For the Ghana Publishing Company, the Nominee acknowledged that it has been overtaken by private printing firms in terms of productivity and competitiveness. To address this, he stated that a transformation and restructuring plan would be implemented to make the company more competitive, enabling it to secure more Government and private-sector contracts, thereby

generating substantial revenue for the State.

Additionally, the Nominee emphasised the urgent need for restructuring and reforms within the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and the Graphic Communications Group. He stressed that these State-owned media organisations must become more efficient and productive to ensure that they remain relevant in an evolving media landscape while maintaining their public service mandate.

### **32.3 Revitalisation of the Information Services Department (ISD)**

In response to a question on how he intends to revive the Information Services Department (ISD), the Nominee acknowledged that a lack of investment and strategic policy direction has significantly diminished the Department's effectiveness, despite its crucial role in Government communication and public information dissemination.

He highlighted a notable instance where information gathered by ISD officers in a district helped prevent a violent conflict that arose from a chieftaincy dispute. This, he stated, underscores the Department's importance in intelligence gathering,

community engagement, and crisis management.

The Nominee reiterated the President's vision to merge ISD with the Ghana News Agency (GNA) to create a Government Communication Office, which will be properly resourced and modernised. He emphasised that targeted investments in infrastructure, training, and technology will be required to transform the ISD into an efficient and responsive Government information vehicle that effectively serves its mandate of public education, Government outreach, and strategic communication.

### **32.4 Assessment of the President's Appointments**

When asked about his impression of the President's appointments, the Nominee commended the President's commitment to strike the right balance between experienced professionals and young, dynamic individuals from diverse backgrounds.

He highlighted that despite reducing the number of Government appointees, the President has ensured equitable representation across gender, regional, and ethnic lines. The Nominee particularly praised the significant inclusion of women in ministerial and executive roles, emphasising that this reflects the President's dedication to gender inclusivity and empowerment.

Additionally, he noted that the appointments extend beyond members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), incorporating civil society leaders, academicians, and former critics of the Government. This, he believes, demonstrates a commitment to national unity and inclusive governance.

The Nominee concluded by stating that in his view, this Administration is set to be the leanest and most representative Government in Ghana's Fourth Republic, with a strong emphasis on efficiency, accountability, and national cohesion.

### **32.5 Inclusion of the NDC Diaspora in Government**

When asked whether members of the NDC diaspora would receive preferential consideration in Government appointments, the Minister-designate clarified that he could not preempt the President's decisions on such matters. However, he acknowledged that if members of the NDC diaspora or the broader Ghanaian diaspora demonstrate competence and capacity, they could indeed find opportunities within the Government.

He further emphasised that the President has already demonstrated an unprecedented level of inclusivity in his appointments to ensure that all segments of Ghanaian society are well represented. According to the Nominee, the President has broken every existing barrier in governance, making it evident that his Administration prioritises merit,

diversity, and national representation over partisan considerations.

### **32.6 Commitment of the President to a Lean Government**

When asked whether the President regrets his promise to appoint only 60 Ministers, the Nominee firmly stated that the President has no regrets about making that commitment. He emphasised that the President stands by his decision and was fully aware of the governance landscape when he made that pledge. According to the Nominee, this promise was not made lightly or as a mere campaign tactic to appeal to voters, but rather as a firm commitment to ensure a lean and efficient Government.

The Nominee further highlighted that the President's focus on discipline within his Administration is evident, particularly in his strict stance against Government appointees engaging in small-scale mining, whether legal or illegal. He reiterated that the President is dedicated to modest governance, prudent resource management, and the need to ensure that no official exhibits arrogance, disrespect, or misconduct towards the Ghanaian people.

While acknowledging that the NDC does not claim to have all the answers or to be composed of exceptional individuals with extraordinary knowledge, the Nominee assured the Committee that the Government is committed to serve with integrity and responsibility. He concluded by affirming that the President will not hesitate to take action against any deviant elements within his

Administration. He stated that the NDC Government remains determined to use its mandate effectively to address the concerns of Ghanaians and make tangible progress by the end of its four-year term.

### **32.7 Commitment to Fairness and Independent Judgment**

When asked whether he would remain independent-minded, fair, and acknowledge mistakes while defending the Government, the Nominee provided a principled response and he affirmed that holding Government accountable does not necessarily conflict with his role as a spokesperson. He acknowledged that the position of Minister of State for Government Communication is dynamic, with individuals entering and exiting the role as part of the political cycle.

The Nominee emphasised that one can effectively communicate the President's vision and articulate the Government's position on various matters without resorting to dishonesty or misinformation. He cited a key statement from the President's inaugural address, which emphasised the exercise of sound judgment and the need to make the right decisions at the right time.

Describing himself as a conviction politician, the Nominee stated that unless presented with verifiable evidence that proves his stance to be incorrect, he would stand by his beliefs, even if doing so causes discomfort among certain

individuals. He referenced instances where he had publicly voiced opposition to certain actions taken by the National Democratic Congress (NDC), reinforcing his stance that principles should always take precedence over party loyalty.

Concluding his remarks, the Nominee asserted that those entrusted with public office must serve with integrity and humility, rather than seeking to impose their authority on the people. He firmly declared that he would not be an outlet for disinformation or misinformation and would remain committed to ensure that the people of Ghana receive truthful and transparent communication from the Government.

### **32.8 Commitment to Transparency, Accountability, and Ethical Governance**

The Nominee emphasised the Government's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical governance. He underscored President Mahama's principled approach to leadership that ensures that all Government actions align with national interests and fiscal responsibility.

The Nominee pointed out that President Mahama has consistently demonstrated a strong track record of

holding Government officials accountable, particularly in instances of misconduct or abuse of power. He highlighted that the President does not hesitate to take swift and punitive actions when necessary, reinforcing the Administration's dedication to maintains integrity in governance.

He further assured the Committee that under President Mahama's leadership, there would be zero tolerance for corruption, inefficiency, or any action that undermines public trust. This, he stated, exemplifies the President's firm stance on good governance, ethical leadership, and responsible management of national resources.

### **32.9 Presidential Travel and Cost Management**

Addressing concerns with regard to presidential travel, the Nominee assured the Committee that President Mahama prioritises cost-effectiveness and propriety when making travel decisions. He explained that in some instances, the President uses his brother's private jet for official duties as a means of minimising cost and ensuring efficiency. This, he emphasised, aligns with the Government's broader strategy to reduce unnecessary expenditures and safeguard public resources.

On the use of the presidential aircraft, the Nominee confirmed that President Mahama would ensure that the aircraft is in optimal condition before any official

travel. However, he stated that when a more cost-effective and safer alternative is available, the President would choose the cheaper option to protect the taxpayers' money while maintaining high safety standards. This approach, he noted, demonstrates the Administration's commitment to prudent financial management and responsible governance.

Regarding the use of his brother's aircraft, the Nominee clarified that this option has occasionally been utilised for official duties in the interest of cost-effectiveness and convenience. He reassured the Committee that no public funds were spent on these trips and this makes this arrangement a cost-saving measure and a contribution to Ghana's governance efforts.

Furthermore, he disclosed that legal counsel had been consulted to determine the classification of the aircraft usage to ensure that all necessary legal and ethical considerations were met. This, he stated, reflects the Government's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and adherence to due process in all Executive decisions.

### **32.10 Addressing Concerns of Conflict of Interest**

In response to concerns about potential conflict of interest, the Nominee categorically dismissed any allegations of undue influence by President Mahama's brother on Government operations, particularly in communication infrastructure. He

emphasised that President Mahama's brother had been a successful businessman for over a decade before his brother assumed the Presidency, making it unfounded to attribute his success to political influence.

Furthermore, the Nominee underscored that President Mahama has never demonstrated a tendency to appoint family members to Government positions, despite having had multiple opportunities to do so. He argued that this reflects the President's dedication to meritocracy and impartial governance.

He reiterated that President Mahama's Administration prioritises transparency, ethical leadership, and public trust to ensure that all Government appointments and contracts are awarded based on competence and national interest, rather than nepotism or favoritism.

### **32.11 Role of the NDC in Government Communication**

In his response to a question on the role of the NDC in Government communication, the Nominee asserted that the Party, as the ruling political organisation, has every right to support Government communication efforts. He emphasised that it is standard practice worldwide for governing parties to align their messaging with Government policies to ensure clarity, consistency, and cohesion in public engagement.

He further explained that while Government communication is expected to remain objective and factual, it is equally important for the party in power

to provide strategic support to ensure that Government initiatives, policies, and achievements are effectively communicated to the public.

The Nominee assured the Committee that his role would be to maintain a balance between Government communication and party messaging to ensure that Government information remains transparent and accessible to all citizens, irrespective of political affiliation.

### **32.12 Enhancing Support for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Impairments**

The Nominee underscored the urgent need to enhance support for individuals with hearing and speech impairments, particularly in rural and underserved areas. He highlighted the significant barriers to education that these individuals face, including limited access to specialised learning resources, a shortage of trained educators, and inadequate assistive technology.

To address these challenges, he proposed stronger collaboration between Government agencies, particularly in the sectors of education and social protection. He emphasised the importance of inclusive education policies, advocating for greater investments in specialised teacher training and the provision of assistive devices. Additionally, he called for the improvement of infrastructure in schools to accommodate students with disabilities to ensure that children with hearing and speech impairments can



fully participate in the educational system. The Nominee reaffirmed his commitment to promote disability-inclusive policies and advocate for equal opportunities for individuals with special needs.

### **32.13 Government Communication Structure and Staffing**

The Nominee, in response to a question regarding the structure of Government communication, provided an outline of the established framework. He explained that the Government operates a well-defined communication system, which includes a deputy spokesperson to support public messaging efforts and ensure a streamlined flow of information to the public.

Addressing concerns about political appointees within the communication structure, he emphasised that staff appointments and placements are rigorously assessed. He noted that individuals selected for communication roles are evaluated based on their competencies, experience, and ability to execute communication strategies effectively.

The Nominee reiterated that efficiency and professionalism are at the core of Government staffing decisions to ensure that Government communication remains effective, transparent, and responsive to public concerns.

### **33.0 Recommendation**

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Felix Kwakye**

**Ofosu** as Minister of State, Government Communications.

### **MR EKOW PANYIN OKYERE EDUAMOA**

### **Minister-designate for Central Region**

#### **34.0 Background**

Mr Ekow Panyin Okyere Eduamoah was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 1972 in Agona Swedru in the Central Region of Ghana. His early education began at Potsin L/A Primary School, where he studied from 1979 to 1985. He then proceeded to Potsin T.I. Ahmadiyya Senior High School, completing his secondary education between 1986 and 1992. He obtained a Teacher Certificate 'A' from 1992 to 1995 at Komenda Training College, he enrolled at the University of Cape Coast, where he earned a Diploma in Management Studies between 2003 and 2006. He further pursued a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from 2016 to 2019 at the same University. In 2020, he obtained a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in General Management from the Central University.

The Nominee's professional career began as a teacher at Petuduasi T.I. Basic School, where he taught from 1996 to 1999. He later established himself as an educational entrepreneur, serving as Proprietor of Multi-care School from 2000 to 2008.

Mr Eduamoah's political career commenced in 2004, when he was

elected as the Organiser for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Gomoa East Constituency, a position he held until 2008. His political involvement deepened when he became the Secretary for the Central Regional NDC MPs Caucus from 2009 to 2012. He was later elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) for the Gomoa East Constituency, serving two terms from 2009 to 2017. During his tenure, he also held the position of Chairman of the NDC Parliamentary Caucus in the Central Region from 2013 to 2017.

Since 2017, the Nominee has been serving as the Executive Director of the Center for Artisan and Apprentice Development, focusing on vocational training and skills development. In 2023, he was elected as the Central Regional Vice Chairman of the NDC. With over twenty (20) years of experience that spans education, governance, and administration, Mr Eduamoah is recognised as an accomplished leader committed to national development.

### **Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses**

#### **35.0 Population Influx and Tax Revenue Implications**

In response to a pertinent question regarding the influx of population from Greater Accra to the Central Region and its implications for tax revenue, the Nominee asserted that this population shift is a blessing rather than a burden. He emphasised that as the Coordinator for the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), he

intends to leverage this demographic change to enhance the Internally-Generated Funds (IGFs) within the Region.

To achieve this, the Nominee outlined a strategy to improve tax collection mechanisms to ensure that all individuals obligated to pay taxes are accounted for. He noted that an efficient and transparent taxation system would optimise revenue generation for the Region, ultimately fostering development, infrastructure expansion, and improved public services. The Nominee reaffirmed his commitment to strengthen local government capacity in tax administration and ensure that the Region benefits from its growing population.

#### **35.1 Oversight and Coordination of Regional Projects**

When asked about how he would ensure proper oversight and coordination of projects initiated by various Ministries and Agencies, which often operate independently from the regional office, the Nominee emphasised the importance of fostering collaboration and maintaining frequent communication with these entities. He stated that his approach would involve actively staying informed about developmental projects being undertaken in the Region to ensure that they align with regional priorities.

To achieve this, the Nominee proposed integrating the operations of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) into the regional administration framework. This coordinated approach, he explained, would create an

environment where agencies are not viewed as isolated entities but rather as integral components of the regional governance structure. He believes that this strategy would enhance cooperation, improve efficiency, and streamline project oversight within the Central Region to ensure that all developmental initiatives contribute meaningfully to regional growth and national objectives.

### **35.2 Enhancing District Assembly Revenue Collection**

When asked about his plans to improve revenue collection from District Assemblies, particularly considering the inefficiencies in property tax collection and market levies, the Nominee highlighted the importance of taxpayer education as a key strategy. He stressed that many individuals and businesses are either unaware of their tax obligations or hesitant to comply due to a lack of understanding of the benefits associated with taxation.

To address this, he proposed an educational campaign that targets both taxpayers and District/Municipal Chief Executives (DCEs/MCEs), especially the newly appointed officials, to ensure that they actively participate in improving tax collection efforts. Additionally, he advocated for the implementation of more flexible and taxpayer-friendly collection methods that would encourage compliance while making the tax-paying process more efficient and less cumbersome. He further assured the Committee that under his leadership, the Central Region would adopt modernised revenue mobilisation

strategies to maximise IGFs while reducing inefficiencies in tax collection.

### **35.3 Encouraging Non-State Actor Participation in Local Governance**

When asked about his plans to encourage non-state actors' participation in local governance, particularly at the District Assembly and Regional Coordinating levels, the Nominee emphasised the critical role these actors play in strengthening governance structures and enhancing development outcomes.

He highlighted the need for targeted education and outreach programmes to build closer relationships with non-state actors to ensure that they understand their potential contributions to governance. He further noted that adopting a friendly and inclusive approach would be essential in fostering greater involvement from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), private sector players, and traditional authorities.

The Nominee particularly emphasised the role of Traditional Council in governance by stating that if the State recognises their authority and engages them as key stakeholders, it would strengthen collaboration between State and non-state institutions. By making them feel like integral partners in regional administration, he believed that their participation in policy-making and developmental planning would be significantly enhanced, leading to more effective and community-driven governance.

### **35.4 Addressing Abandoned Projects in the Central Region**

The Nominee acknowledged the numerous abandoned projects in the Central Region, including the E-block project and the Komenda Sugar Factory. He emphasised the negative impact of these stalled developments on economic growth and community welfare, noting that revitalising them is critical for the Region's progress.

To address these challenges, the Nominee outlined a structured plan, which includes: conducting a comprehensive audit of all abandoned projects in the Region to assess their current state, funding status, and challenges hindering their completion; restructuring the implementation strategies of these projects to align them with the Government's resetting agenda led by H.E. the President; engaging relevant stakeholders, including sector ministries, development agencies, and private investors, to mobilise the necessary resources for their completion; and ensuring an urgent and efficient approach to complete these projects in a cost-effective and transparent manner, thereby delivering the intended benefits to the people of the Central Region.

The Nominee reassured the Committee that if approved, he would work diligently to ensure these projects do not remain dormant but are revived to serve their intended educational, industrial, and developmental purposes.

### **35.5 Legacy and Vision for the Central Region**

In response to a question about what he would like the people of the Central Region to remember him for after his tenure as Minister responsible for the Region, the Nominee expressed a strong desire to leave a lasting legacy that fosters youth participation, job creation, and the growth of the tourism sector. He emphasised that empowering young people through skills development and economic opportunities would be a key focus of his administration and this would ensure that the Region benefits from active and productive workforce.

The Nominee also highlighted the tourism sector as a crucial driver of economic development in the Region. However, he noted that many of the current tourism facilities are not affordable for Ghanaians, limiting local engagement and participation. He stressed the need for policies that would make tourism more accessible to the local population, thereby increasing domestic tourism and generating more economic opportunities for businesses and individuals in the Region.

By promoting job creation and making tourism more inclusive, the Nominee aims to create a sustainable economic model that will significantly impact the livelihoods of the people of the Central Region. He believes that these efforts will not only contribute to the Region's overall growth but also ensure that his tenure is remembered for tangible improvements in economic empowerment and community development.

### 36.0 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Ekow Panyin Okyere Eduamoah** as Minister for Central Region.

**MR PUOZUING CHARLES LWANGA**

**Minister-designate, Upper West Region**

### 37.0 Background

Mr Puozuing Charles Lwanga was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1977 in Jirapa and hails from Nyeni-Sabuli in the Upper West Region. He is a Christian, married, and has three children. His early education began at Wa Catholic Primary and Wa Community Junior Secondary School from 1984 to 1989, after which he continued at St. Francis Xavier Minor Seminary from 1993 to 2001. Upon completion, he pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Law (B.A. Law) at the University of Ghana from 1997 to 2001. He then advanced his studies with a Professional Law Course (PLC) at the Ghana School of Law and later obtained a Master of Laws (LLM) in Ocean Governance and the Law of the Sea from the University of Ghana School of Law.

Professionally, the Nominee has a diverse background in law and academia. He served as a part-time lecturer at the Institute of Business Management (IBM) and the then Institute of Professional Studies. He also worked as a lawyer at the Legal Aid Board and Kulendi @Law.

Since 2022, he has been a lecturer at the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Studies (UBIDS) while simultaneously serving as the Managing Solicitor at Puozuing & Associates.

Mr Lwanga is an active member of the Ghana Bar Association and the National Bar Council. In 2015, he contested the National Democratic Congress (NDC) parliamentary primaries in the Jirapa Constituency. He also holds membership in the National Executive Council (NEC) and the Lawyers Association Ghana of the NDC.

His interests include playing football, table tennis, and athletics.

### Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses

#### 38.0 Addressing Challenges in the Upper West Region

When enquired about the strategies to tackle the pressing issues of poverty, outmoded cultural practices, and lack of infrastructure in the Upper West Region, the Nominee responded that the Upper West Region is indeed one of the poorest regions in Ghana, and it is imperative that these challenges are addressed head-on.

He plans to empower the youth through education and skills training, encourage them to stay in the Region and succeed rather than migrating to urban areas. This would involve the creation of jobs as outlined in the NDC Manifesto,

such as coding and apprenticeship programmes and the establishment of farmer service centres to support agricultural productivity. Recognising the agrarian nature of the Region, he intends to promote agricultural development and encourage young people to explore opportunities in farming and related industries. This, he believes, would improve livelihoods and contribute significantly to the Region's economic growth.

To address the lack of infrastructure, he plans to invest in the development of roads, schools, and healthcare facilities. These improvements would enhance access to essential services and create a more conducive environment for economic activities and investments. To tackle poverty and inequality, the Nominee emphasised the need to reform outdated cultural practices and customary laws that perpetuate these issues. He believes that leveraging affirmative action measures can bridge existing gaps, particularly in women's education and economic empowerment, to break the cycle of poverty.

The Nominee further stated his commitment to engage with community leaders and elders to promote cultural sensitivity and understanding while advocating for policies and programmes that support women's empowerment and social inclusion. His broader vision is to create a brighter future for the people of the Upper West Region to ensure that they thrive and reach their full potentials.

### **38.1 Addressing Student Accommodation Challenges in the Upper West Region**

In response to questions about how he would reduce student accommodation challenges to the barest minimum, given that the Upper West Region serves as an educational hub with institutions like the University for Development Studies (UDS) facing significant housing shortages, the Nominee outlined a comprehensive plan to address the issue.

He assured the Committee that he would focus to foster private partnerships with the university to expand and improve student accommodation. This approach would involve collaborating with investors to develop and manage hostels on university land. Under this model, private investors would construct and operate hostels for a specified period, allowing them to recoup their investment before transferring ownership to the university.

This public-private partnership (PPP) model presents multiple advantages which includes:

- Reduced Financial Burden on Government – Shifting the financial responsibility of accommodation development to private investors would ensure that public funds can be allocated to other critical sectors.
- Improved Quality of Accommodation – Private

sector involvement would ensure modern, well-maintained facilities which would enhance students' living conditions.

- Increased Accommodation Options – A variety of hostel options would be made available to cater for student needs and financial capabilities.

To facilitate this process, the Nominee emphasised the need for engagement with university administrators, local government officials, and private investors to identify suitable land, develop partnership agreements, and establish clear guidelines for hostel development and management. He believes that through collaborative efforts, the student accommodation crisis in the Upper West Region can be effectively mitigated, providing students with a safe, supportive, and inclusive living environment that foster academic success.

### **38.2 Addressing Key Challenges in the Upper West Region**

In response to the question about the major challenges facing the Upper West Region and his plans to address them if appointed Regional Minister, the Nominee acknowledged several pressing issues that require urgent intervention.

One of the most critical challenges is the deplorable road network. Many roads in the Region are in poor condition, failing to connect the Upper West Region effectively to other parts of the country. This lack of connectivity makes commuting difficult and hinders economic growth. To tackle this, he plans to prioritise periodic road maintenance and rehabilitation. He also intends to engage the Government to ensure that major roads in the Region are given priority. Additionally, he would leverage District Road Improvement Programme (DRIP) machines from various Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to improve internal roads, making them more motorable.

Another significant challenge is youth empowerment. The Nominee expressed concern over the increasing number of young men and women who have turned to betting as a means of financial success. To address this issue, he stated that he would promote alternative livelihood and economic opportunities. He mentioned that his strategies would include implementing youth empowerment programmes, focusing on education, skills training, and entrepreneurship development. By equipping the youth with relevant skills and resources, he hopes to steer them away from gambling and introduce them to sustainable income-generating activities.

Lastly, the Nominee was informed that the Region has several abandoned projects, particularly in education and

health sectors and when completed, would significantly enhance access to essential services. The Nominee stated that he will conduct a thorough assessment of these projects, determine their feasibility, and explore external funding sources such as NGOs and international organisations to support their completion. He emphasised that waiting solely on Government allocations is not a viable option, and that he would be proactive in seeking alternative funding solutions.

By addressing these challenges head-on, the Nominee is confident that the Upper West Region can be transformed to create a brighter future for its residents and ensure sustainable development across key sectors.

### **38.3 Resolving Conflicts Between Farmers and Cattle Herders**

In response to the question on how to resolve conflicts between farmers and cattle herders in the Upper West Region, as well as in the Bono East and Savannah Regions, the Nominee emphasised the need for structured engagement and regional collaboration.

To effectively address these conflicts, he stated that his first step would be to engage with indigenous cattle owners. He pointed out that while most cattle belong to local owners, it is herders who manage them daily, making it challenging to hold the actual owners

accountable for damages caused by roaming livestock. He proposed the formation of associations of cattle owners, through which clear guidelines would be established regarding grazing areas, compensation for farm damages, and disciplinary measures for violations.

Additionally, he plans to collaborate with neighbouring regional ministers to establish regional conflict resolution committees. These committees would be tasked to develop sustainable solutions that are acceptable to both farmers and cattle herders. Since farming is the primary source of livelihood for many communities, protecting the interests of farmers while ensuring harmonious coexistence with herders is paramount.

He emphasised that regional cooperation is essential in tackling this issue because it affects multiple regions. By sharing best practices, implementing effective conflict resolution mechanisms, and engaging local stakeholders, he believes that a long-term solution can be developed to ensure peaceful cohabitation between farmers and cattle herders.

### **38.4 Utilising the Women's World Bank Concept to Empower Women**

In response to enquiry on how he would leverage the Women's World Bank Concept to empower women in the Upper West Region, the Nominee highlighted the critical role women play in household management and economic activities. He noted that with 51.2 per cent of the Region's population being



female, empowering women financially would significantly enhance household income levels and contribute to overall economic growth.

He emphasised that the Women's World Bank Concept could be a game-changer if properly implemented. To maximise its impact, he proposed that funds should be disbursed to organised women groups rather than individuals. This group-based approach has several advantages, including:

1. Group Collateral – Instead of requiring individual collateral, women can use their collective credibility to access loans, making it easier for them to secure funding.
2. Peer Support and Accountability – Group lending creates a sense of responsibility, ensuring that members support each other in business growth and repayment of loans.
3. Higher Loan Repayment Rates – Studies show that group lending models result in better loan recovery, as members hold each other accountable for payments.

By providing access to financial resources and fostering a sense of community among women entrepreneurs, the Nominee believes that the Region could unlock the full economic potential of women. This initiative, he added, would have far-

reaching benefits not just for women but for households and the broader community, ultimately contributing to poverty reduction and economic stability in the Upper West Region.

### **38.5 Unifying the Region and Unlocking Job Opportunities**

When asked about his plans to unify the Upper West Region and create job opportunities, the Nominee emphasised that dialogue is the key to fostering unity. As a peace-loving individual with 21 years of experience at the Bar, he is confident in his ability to manage human relationships and bring people together. The Nominee stated that his approach would involve engaging with various stakeholders, listening to their concerns, and working towards finding common ground.

In response to a question on job creation, the Nominee stated that he believes that investing in agriculture is the most effective path forward. Given that the Region is predominantly agrarian, he stressed the need to capitalise on this strength to generate more employment opportunities for the youth. He outlined several strategies to achieve this, including:

- a. Agricultural Development – Providing financial and technical support to farmers, improving irrigation systems, and introducing modern farming techniques to boost productivity.

- b. Value Addition – Encouraging agro-processing industries to transform raw farm produce into finished goods, thereby increasing market value and creating jobs in processing and packaging.
- c. Entrepreneurship – Offering business development training and financial support to young entrepreneurs in agribusiness and other sectors to foster innovation and self-employment.
- d. Infrastructure Development – Improving roads, electricity, and storage facilities to enhance market accessibility and reduce post-harvest losses, making agricultural ventures more profitable.

By leveraging these strategies and fostering collaboration among various sectors, the Nominee believes that the Upper West Region can unlock its full economic potential. He is confident that through inclusive growth and strategic investment, the Region can create a brighter future for all its citizens, ensuring that no one is left behind.

### **38.6 Improving Regional Road Connectivity and Economic Development**

When asked about his plans to enhance road connectivity and drive economic development in the Upper East and Upper West Regions, the Nominee acknowledged the critical role of

improved infrastructure in fostering economic growth and regional integration. He emphasised that strong road networks are essential for trade, agriculture, and overall development, particularly given the longstanding traditional ties between tribes in both regions.

To address the poor state of roads, he plans to collaborate with the 26 Members of Parliament (MPs) from both regions to collectively lobby the Hon Minister for Roads and Highways. Through dialogue and strategic advocacy, he believes they can secure the necessary funding for road rehabilitation and expansion projects.

A key priority would be the Wa-Savannah Region Road, which has significantly deteriorated, making transportation difficult for residents, traders, and farmers. He stressed that improving these roads would not only facilitate movement but also enhance economic activities and ensure that farmers and businesses can transport goods efficiently to markets in other parts of Ghana.

By working closely with relevant Ministries, MPs, and stakeholders, the Nominee is optimistic that meaningful road infrastructure improvements can be achieved which will ultimately enhance regional economic development and improve the livelihoods of the people in the Upper East and Upper West Regions.

### **38.7 Revitalising Cotton Production in the Upper West Region**

When asked about the state of cotton farming and whether it is dying out, the

Nominee affirmed that cotton production has drastically declined over the past 16 years. He explained that many farmers have moved away from cotton farming, shifting their focus to maize, soya beans, and other cereals, which they find more profitable and less risky.

Drawing from his personal experience as a sesame seed farmer in the Sissala East Municipal Assembly, the Nominee stated that his firsthand involvement in agriculture has given him valuable insights into the challenges faced by farmers in the Region.

He acknowledged that historically, cotton production was a significant part of the Region's agricultural economy, but its decline has been influenced by multiple factors, including low profitability, lack of market incentives, and limited support for cotton farmers.

However, he believes there is still an opportunity to revive the cotton industry. To achieve this, he proposed a thorough assessment of the causes of the decline and the implementation of targeted interventions to rekindle interest in cotton farming.

One key strategy he suggested is adding value to cotton production by establishing processing plants, which would create jobs and improve profitability for farmers. By investing in cotton processing and exploring modern farming techniques, he believes the Upper West Region can unlock its full agricultural potential to ultimately boost economic growth and improve the livelihood of local farmers.

### 39.0 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr Puozuing Charles Lwanga** as Minister for Upper West Region.

### 40.0 Conclusion

In accordance with Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217, the Committee considered the nominations submitted by His Excellency the President.

After thorough deliberation, the Committee finds the Nominees competent, knowledgeable and well-suited for their respective ministerial roles.

The Committee, therefore, recommends to the House, by **CONSENSUS**, the adoption of its report and the approval of the nominations of:

- i. Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh as Minister for Health;
- ii. Mr Seidu Issifu as Minister of State, Climate Change and Sustainability;
- iii. Mrs Charity Gardiner as Minister for Ahafo Region;
- iv. Mr Salisu Be-Awuribe Issifu as Minister for Savannah Region;

- v. Mr Wilbert Petty Brentum as Minister for Western North Region;
- vi. Mr Joseph Nelson as Minister for Western Region;
- vii. Mr Joseph Addae Akwaboa as Minister for Bono Region;
- viii. Mr Francis Owusu Antwi as Minister for Bono East Region;
- ix. Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu as Minister of State responsible for Government Communications;
- x. Mr Ekow Panyin Okyere Eduamoah as Minister for Central Region; and
- xi. Mr Puozuing Charles Lwanga as Minister for Upper West Region.

The Committee further recommends to the House by **MAJORITY DECISION**, the approval of the nomination of:

- i. Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa as Minister for Foreign Affairs;

Respectfully submitted.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, the substantive Motion has been moved by the Chairman of the Committee.

Yes, Hon Ranking Member of the Committee?

**Ranking Member of the Committee (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion and in doing so, I would want some observations to be properly captured for the *Hansard* in respect of the Reports we have.

Mr Speaker, first, on Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, it is without doubt that the Minority together with the Majority, agreed to approve him by consensus and there is no problem at all on his Report and the decision we took.

Mr Speaker, on the second Nominee, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, the recommendation on page 31 of the 103-page Report reads:

“Prior to the vote, the Minority recused themselves. Nonetheless, the Committee recommends to the House by consensus, the approval of the nomination of Hon Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa as Minister of Foreign Affairs”

Mr Speaker, this would have to be corrected. Our Side had a certain understanding of the communication of the Rt Hon Speaker. That notwithstanding, we want to presume this to be a regular vetting, though we recuse ourselves at a point.

The conclusion here is that the recommendation is by majority decision. Our Side is not part of it, and we would take a vote on this matter. Having said so, for the records—

9.21 p.m.

On policy, the Hon Nominee distinguished himself on the issues regarding the portfolio he is going to occupy. The Hon Nominee himself indicated in his *curriculum vitae* (CV) that he is a chair of the Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL), a committee which we have questioned its constitutionality. We are not against any desire of a government to investigate a crime; not at all. Crime is crime and if somebody decides to commit a crime, the laws of the land must deal with the person. But as it is known, if all men find a man's hand in a till, his guilt must be proven. Due process of law is what we have enshrined in our laws. A moment ago, the Leader of Government Business took us through the rule of law when he was commenting on J.B. Danquah and his contribution to national history.

So, Mr Speaker, we are against his chair of this ORAL and the activities in the country. We think and we hold this view firmly that their actions are taking this country back. They must allow due process to take place in our country. As a country, we have used institutions to deal with situations. That is why apart from the mainstream Ghana Police Service, we enacted a law to establish the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO). Not only that, we enacted a law to establish financial crime centre. That is why we set up the Office of the Special Prosecutor and why we have the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). That is why today we have various divisions at the Police Service with specialisation in different crimes.

So, Mr Speaker, we do not have to appear too populist by encouraging some of these unconstitutional interventions. He proudly said he is the chair and a member of that intervention.

Mr Speaker, I want to state for the record, although some members of this committee have been denying it, we have heard businessmen complaining that this so-called ORAL has been going to their houses and their office premises with video cameras and taking pictures. They have been using drones. Mr Speaker, I here, as a Leader of my Side, have been a victim of it, yet they say that they do not know.

The Former Minister for Defence, last week, called upon me, the Chief Whip, and the Clerk-to-Parliament. They chased his vehicle in the name of ORAL. Let us be very clear on certain things that are happening in this country. — *[Interruption]* Can I finish? Hon Colleagues needs to listen. They chased his vehicle all the way to this Parliament House. When we made enquiries, apparently it was not coming from National Security and those in charge said that they were sent by ORAL. Mr Speaker, National Security said these were not their men, but they were using national security vehicle and when they were interrogated further, they said that they are coming from ORAL.

Mr Speaker, we need to be careful which destination we want to drive the vehicle called Ghana to. I am happy that the ORAL Committee is denying this. That should tell us that when such a populist body is set up, people take advantage to settle scores. **[An Hon**

**Member:** Are you scared?] Scared of what? Mr Speaker, we do not have to wish this for the country.

Now, Mr Speaker, the Hon Nominee—*[Interruption]*—

**Alhaji Collins Dauda:** And you like it?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Alhaji Dauda, he is seconding the Motion so just let us tolerate him. Alhaji Dauda, I know why I am tolerating him.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Alhaji Collins Dauda is a very experienced Member of this House. He is recounting his own experience. But he knows—He calls me, *me wofase*—He knows that some of us who were in government never supported a thing like this; He knows that for a fact. Senior Members of this House know that there are some Members of this House who have the conscience of the society we live in and have never supported any actions detrimental to them when they were in opposition. They know. This is not a time to mention names but they know. If it was bad yesterday, it remains bad today and it will be bad tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Nominee went further, without being asked, to produce my own documents on my land. He said that in the name of ORAL, they had conducted a search. The good news is that in their attempt to find out whether my land in Winneba belong to the state, they came to a conclusion that it is not a state land. In fact, I had become aware that somebody had petitioned ORAL and

had said that the Police College in Winneba,—*[Interruption]*—My Hon Colleagues who are shouting should know that this became a subject matter of our proceedings. So, I am within the ambit of relevance. So please they should pay attention.

Somebody had filed a petition to ORAL claiming that my land in Winneba is part of state lands and, the chair of ORAL in coming to his vetting carried the search report. In that search report, at least, he got to know that where my building is in Winneba is not state land, and I have not looted. Again, it is important for him as chair and all the members of this ORAL to know that the entire Winneba lands are affected by vested assets through an Executive Instrument.

Mr Speaker, going further, the Hon Nominee, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, if you look at page 30 of the 103-page Report, I quote, “The Nominee promised to furnish the Committee with the following upon request by the Ranking Member with the leave of the Chairman.”

There is a list of documents that he promised to furnish us with.

The Nominee has been able to furnish the Committee with a documentation only on the Savvi Solutions and Volta Klenam Farms and Industries as at the time of finalising this Report.

We just need to put on record that there were nine documents that he

promised to furnish us with on his own volition; this, we have not received.

9.31 p.m.

We have not received it, Mr Speaker, they brought only two, and they are still here. The two they brought are his company registration, and I have it here. Those two company registration documents are the only two that they brought—*[Interruption]*—No, I have captured; pay attention. I said the Nominee has been able to furnish the document on only on Savvi and Volta Klenam companies. These are the only two we have received.

Mr Speaker, we believe that he who comes to equity must do equity. Let the record reflect that this Side is not pursuing a Member of this House. The Colleague himself publicly says that he is a public-spirited Ghanaian, and he is on record of always pursuing people and finding out their sources of income, especially the political class.

Mr Speaker, I will make this point: if he is holding people's feet to the fire, demanding accountability and transparency, it means that he must demonstrate that when subjected to it, he would—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, please—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, our Colleague, Mr Ablakwa, has been taking people on in the public space. He questions people's birth certificates; he questions people's sources of income; he questions people's

passports and travel; he questions them. If, today, he lives at Airport and provides it on his CV that he lives at Airport and claims that he is a tenant for eight years, it only stands to reason that he makes available all documents related to the tenancy. We are not pursuing his person. Mr Ablakwa knows that I, Kwamena, would be the last to stand against his political progress. Never—*[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, I will never—Those who know me and know me well know me and what I stand for. I am a politician like him, and I will not be the one to be pursuing him. I would not, but to the extent that he does not spare his Colleagues—Especially during the vetting, I found it very strange that Mr Ablakwa apparently took the car loan of 2021 because he is on record, both on social media and traditional media, questioning the car loan that Members of Parliament (MPs) take and he used the words, “It was unconscionable”. When I asked the question, he said that, in 2013, he took the car loan, and he used it to buy a Land Cruiser. In the second term, that was 2017, he used that one to buy two saloon cars, and then the third one, he used that to buy a combine harvester.

Mr Speaker, you and I know that there is no way that the Clerk to Parliament, upon receiving a letter that a Member wants to use his car loan to buy a combine harvester, would not issue a cheque to a vendor who is selling a combine harvester to a Member of Parliament. It is not true, and it cannot be possible. He has been pursuing people. He has questioned the integrity of

Members of Parliament that it is unconscionable to access car loan. Yet, on all the three terms, he has been a Member of Parliament, he has relied on these facilities.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to say it is hypocritical, but it is also for all of us, as a House, to realise that we must be measured in the way we pursue each other, one another and others. Today, he is now going into Government. I know Mr. Ablakwa as a true gentleman in terms of his dressing—*[Interruption]*—Yes, he dresses well. He wears quality things. He wears quality shoes, suits, and tie. He dresses well, and I respect him for that, and he knows. If, tomorrow, somebody says—*[Interruption]*—Colleagues, this is a serious matter. If, tomorrow, by mere fact that he is a gentleman and dresses well, somebody now comes to ask how much he bought his suits or how much he bought his designer shoe—For eight years, the Member says that all he has is his Member of Parliament salary of GH¢15,000. He says that all he does is his MP work, and he has not done other business because he folded the Savvi company up way back in 2015.

Mr Speaker, I am saying this because our Colleague has taken a lot of public officers to the cleaners, and this is not personal. He is taking a lot of us to the cleaners, and if he creates the impression that he is very holy, righteous and a crusader, yet he does not want to be scrutinised, then there is a problem. As a matter of principle, we are opposed to him because of the inconsistencies and the lack of clarity.

Mr Speaker, for the other nine Colleagues they took advantage of our absence to pass them, all we can say is that Majority should go and sin no more. The “Congratulation-bye-bye” group—There is a group of nine: all they got was “Congratulations, bye-bye, and I wish you well”. They even added “bye-bye and take care of yourself.” As for them, we would raise a procedural issue at the right time, but we would not stand in their way today because we have no problem with them. We believe that these Regional Ministers must take office. We cannot allow vacuum at the various Regional Coordinating Councils, and even on our Colleague, Mr Ablakwa, whom we are opposed to, we believe that because that Foreign Ministry is a very serious and important Ministry and organ of state, we will take a decision on him tonight.

Mr Speaker, let me without equivocation state that we would proceed with the same abstinence. We abstain from his decision; it is solely the call of the Majority. All the sins of Ablakwa are upon their head. Get me water. I need water. For this, I need proper water. This is not a dry washing; it is just a little water. Yes, Mr Speaker, we are washing our hands. We are washing our hands to tell them that every sin at the Airport Hills. I am cleaning my hands to tell them that we are not part of the sins that he has committed; all the Airport Hills sins are on their head.

*[Minority Leader washes his hands]*



9.41 p.m.

If tomorrow he and his Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) starts pursuing you, it is on your head but if he repents and comes back to this House, we will accept him and give him *awa awa atuu*.

Mr Speaker, we rest our case.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, the Motion has been moved and seconded. I am going to put the Question. Hon Members—[Uproar]—I am on the Chair and I am taking the decision.

Mr Dominic Nitiwul, please speak.

Hon Members— Mr Suhiyini, the speaker spoke as the Ranking Member, he has seconded. He spoke by virtue of being the Ranking Member of the Committee.

**Mr Dominic Bingab Aduna Nitiwul (NPP—Bimbilla):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much. We have nine Nominees that this House is approving. We are talking to the people of Ghana. We are speaking on behalf of the people of Ghana. To say that you approve nine Nominees with just one or two—we are not being fair to the people of Ghana—they are not nine, they are 12—Mr Speaker, when the Appointments Committee used less than two hours to approve these 12 people. So, I will plead with Leadership to do the people of Ghana good by allowing Members who are here after nine o'clock to have the opportunity to comment.

Mr Speaker, I want to say that we should put it on record that this group of Nominees have received the shortest time of vetting ever. That is the record that those who sat on their vetting are giving to the people of Ghana and if you listen to public commentary, the people of Ghana are not happy about what happened. Mr Speaker, none of us on this Side especially me or any other person, has a personal problem with any nominee. We do not but we have the duty to be able to point out to the people of Ghana.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Nitiwul, kindly hold on for me.

Yes, Majority Leader?

**Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga):** Mr Speaker, the vetting for the 12 people started from 10 a.m. and ended around 11 p.m. Mr Speaker, for the 12 people.

Mr Speaker, in the morning, the first person we vetted was Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh and the Minority participated. Even with their participation and all the opportunities that were given to them, they took only 25 minutes to vet him. They were involved. They used 25 minutes.

Mr Speaker, they left us and we vetted nine Nominees. Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu spent close to one hour. I personally took Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu through a very gruelling vetting exercise. I asked him every question that can be conceived and he answered very well.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Leader, I was going to give you opportunity —

**Mr Ayariga:** He answered very well, so you cannot create an impression that the Committee did not do a good job after you had left.

Mr Speaker, even when they were there, they used only 25 minutes to vet a nominee.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Leader, the work of the Committee is subjective. That is the way he sees it. So, allow him to speak.

We would give you the opportunity for you to also say the way you see the Committee.

Yes, Mr Nitiwul?

**Mr Nitiwul:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. In spite of his attempt to say that he grilled the Nominee, in 58 minutes, nine Nominees were approved. That is a record the people of Ghana have. That is a fact. You can check from social media; check from what the people of Ghana are saying.

Mr Speaker, our people say that the child who washes his hands well is the one who knows how to eat with visitors. My good friend, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa — they used their hands. Maybe you are from Accra but I am from the village. We are different.

Mr Speaker, my good friend, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, a very

young man, has decided that he wants to do good to the people of Ghana. It is good but when you decide, then you have to go the full walk with the people of Ghana. After the vetting, if you go everywhere, the people of Ghana are demanding answers from him. How is it possible, Mr Speaker, that an individual who says, he earns only GH¢15,000.00, can rent at Airport Hills? A mansion in Airport Hills on a two-acre land, where land is US\$500,000.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Dominic Nitiwul —

**Mr Nitiwul:** A piece of plot at Airport Hills today is US\$500,000. I did not say it, I am renting.

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Bernard Ahiafor):** Mr Speaker, as much as we do politics, we need to be very careful not to wash our dirty linen in public— [*Uproar*] — Mr Speaker, we know that some matters are for Closed Sitting so we should be very careful the way we handle certain issues.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well. Mr Chairman, thank you.

**Mr Ahiafor:** You and I are very much aware of certain things that we do in closed seating. So please. Chairman, thank you.

**Mr Nitiwul:** Mr Speaker, I was not at the vetting. In fact, I wanted to be there, but I was not there but Mr. Speaker, I watched him live. It was there for everybody to see. It was not about Closed Sitting, every Ghanaian heard

what he said when that question was put to him by the Minority Leader. So, the people of Ghana are still demanding these answers. It will help him, this caucus and every politician if he is able to let the people of Ghana know where he is getting money to rent that property at Airport Hills.

Mr Speaker, I commend them for saying that they will do ORAL work. I just want them to make sure that the ORAL Committee is set up properly according to law and do their work but Mr Speaker, I want them to go to Borteyman first. They should go to Borteyman first to check the land that was given between 2014, 2015 and 2016. Who are the Members who benefited at Borteyman?

9.51p.m.

Mr Speaker, I want the Chairman of the Committee to go to Borteyman Affordable Housing where President Kufuor built—The land that shares boundary with this is state lands; it was given in 2014 and 2015, and part of it was also given in 2016. He should find out the people who own those lands

Mr Speaker, I want the chairman of ORAL to go to Aviation land, that huge land at Madina-Adenta, to find out the people who own that land—*[Interruption]*—He is part of ORAL, so he should go and do that. I want him to go to Tamale behind where we call the Residency where the President sometimes sleeps when he is in Tamale, he should find out; they are all state

lands. He should find out the owners of those lands.

Mr Speaker, I want him to go—*[Interruption]*—I want him to go to the land adjacent to the Military Cemetery—*[Interruption]*—I would stay until I am—Mr speaker somebody is putting off the microphone. Mr Speaker, I thought that—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, please, let us respect ourselves. Those people who are putting on the microphones, please—

**Mr Nitiwul:** Mr Speaker, I asked the chairman of—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members—

Mr Nitiwul, I would not to take anymore.

**Mr Nitiwul:** Mr Speaker, when I start talking, they put off—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, those who are putting on their microphones—

Majority Leadership, please make sure your Members do not put on their microphones—Hon Members, when I say this and you get flared up, at times—We are doing Government Business, and we have to finish and leave and your own Members are putting on the microphones, so should we suspend Sitting?

Majority Leader, we suspend Sitting?  
What is this?

**Mr Nitiwul:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity once again.

Mr Speaker, I said I want the chairman of ORAL—And I would write officially to him to go to Tamale and assess—Let me put my hands behind my back, so that you know that I am not creating any problem.

**Mr Second Deputy Minister:** Hon Members, why can you not be tolerant a bit?

**Mr Nitiwul:** Mr Speaker, I have all the state lands that were obtained between 2010 and 2016. I would provide the chairman—*[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that accountability, which is our Constitution, has become a problem here. The chairman of ORAL—*[Interruption]*—Thank you very much—Mr Speaker, let us find out the land that is adjacent to the Military Cemetery; the letter that was written by the current Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, and why that letter was written and why that line was released to Chain Homes who are the real owners. Let us find out. I am charging the chairman of ORAL to find out.

Mr Speaker, I am asking the chairman of ORAL to find out the owners of the state land that is between the East Legon Police Station along the electricity pylon, under the high tension.

Who released all that lands and for who?  
I want to find out.

Mr Speaker, I am bringing this to the fore because we are building a country. The country we are building is called Ghana; we must ensure that actions of Government are in the interest of the country and not the interest of any individual or a political party. I am saying to the chairman of ORAL, and I am saying that when his committee is properly constituted, he should beware that some of us—I was Minister—I do not have a single government property, and I never stayed in a government house; I never built anything illegal, and I am saying that I would be writing officially to him when his committee—*[Interruption]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, please, wind up.

**Mr Nitiwul:** I cannot wind up; they would not allow me to wind up. I am yet to come to the others.

Mr Speaker, what happened on Saturday night is the same attitude that is being brought here. When the Majority Leader was on his feet, I sat down. I have been in Parliament, and this is my 19<sup>th</sup> year of being in Parliament. I have won six elections—*[Interruption]*—When I am talking, they would be putting on their microphone, and that is what caused the problem.

10.01 p.m.

It is wrong, so the Majority Leader should call them to order. You cannot—  
[Pause]

*[Some Members of the Minority sing the national anthem] [Pause]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, it is now 10 o'clock. Let us tolerate one another so that we can finish and leave.

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, I have paid attention. I have watched my back; if you notice, at a certain point, my back was to the Speaker. I have watched carefully. I do not think anybody on this Side is fiddling with their microphones. Maybe his microphone has a problem so if he can shift to another. I think that is where the problem is. [Pause]

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, I want to appeal to my Colleagues, all of us, not just the Majority, that we are all here at this time because we want to finish this Government Business. Mr Speaker, as democracy so demands, we must have our say. We want to plead with our Colleagues to allow a full debate to ensue. My mother, Ms Comfort Cudjoe, had earlier come to me to ask how many we were each going to take on the Report. I told her we have two Reports; Report number 10 and Report number 11. We are going to do five on each Side. We are done with the 10. We did not go through the rigorous voting process; we opted to abstain. We have done that one.

We are left with the 11th Report which I seconded.

Mr Speaker, the first person to make a contribution is Mr Nitiwul. He has been in this Chamber for 19 years. He is a Senior Member of this House and a former Leader. Please, Colleagues, let us hear him. When he is done, it will come to you and the process continues. It is 10 o'clock. We are here to help to conclude this.

Mr Speaker, our Colleagues must cooperate with you so that we get done. Our five would have their bites. What was the arrangement? Mr Speaker, respectfully, what number were you given? Because Leadership conferred. Mr Speaker, I am not challenging you. They sent Ms Cudjoe to me. Sometimes, when Members do not act in good faith, it becomes difficult. As if we are up on our feet and want to obstruct them. We agreed to do five Members and if the Majority Leader wants to reduce it, he can reach out to me. I am not a difficult person to insist on that. [**Some Hon Members:** Ei]—Maybe they do not know me but with time, they will get to know who I am; I am not a difficult person. What they are doing, I have done it before. I know how difficult it is. Even to bring all of them into this Chamber, I know how difficult it was for the Whips.

So I would not frustrate them, but we would do the politics. I will not frustrate you. Ask Mr Haruna Iddrisu, the kind of person I am. I will not frustrate their

politics—No, that is the truth; you must know the truth.

Mr Speaker, we agreed on five Members for each Side. If the Majority Leader wants us to negotiate on the numbers, I am amenable. I know you have been sitting for a very long time. We can deal with it and then make progress. Mr Speaker, I would want to accept four on each Side, the Majority Leader says he wants three. I will grant that. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, for the records, and not to avoid ambiguity, the three are Mr Nitiwul, Mr Abu Jinapor and Rev Ntim Fordjour. That is it.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, please take it from me. Everybody is speaking for five minutes. I am not going beyond five minutes. Five minutes, three each. I have been sitting here for long; I cannot go on.

**Mr Nitiwul:** I just want to make one point clear, that the policy to dispose of government properties, special houses and lands, started under the former President Rawlings, under what we call infilling. They are making it a crime that is why we are saying that Amrahia lands, Adenta aviation lands, Airport lands, East and West, and all the areas I have mentioned, would be submitted to them to figure out who the owners are. Then we would know those who sold land and those who did not steal land.

But, Mr Speaker, I want to wish the Nominees well. If they get the opportunity to be passed by this House

and be sworn in by the President, I want to wish them well.

I got an opportunity to serve Ghana for eight years without blemish as Minister for Defence. They should listen to what Mr Abu Jinapor said that if they enter the Ministry with attitude, within a year, they would be out of that place. If they enter the Ministry with a mindset, that I know all, they will not last. If they enter the Ministry that their party has won, and so they do whatever they want, you will not last. If they enter the Ministry with the mindset that they are going to make money, they will not last. If you enter the Ministry with the idea that everybody else is below them, they will not last.

There are people in and outside of this House, who never lasted one year as Ministers. Take it from me. Some did not even last six months; some lasted one year. Some lasted one and a half years as Ministers. Those who served four years and above should be proud of themselves. They are going to get sleepless nights. They are going to be tempted that is why I say I wish them well; I do not wish them bad. None of us will be appointed as Ministers. They are the people who will be appointed as Ministers. If they will have problems, it will be from their Side, not from this Side. We want to take power from you; we are not looking to be ministers. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Gentleman? So nobody is speaking from the Right Side? [**Some Hon Members:**

No!] Yes, Mr Samuel Abu Jinapor for five minutes. Thank you.

10.11 p.m.

**Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor (NPP — Damongo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the Motion.

Mr Speaker, let me begin by highlighting Mr Salisu Be-Awuribi Issifu, who is Minister-designate for the Savannah Region and to say that he is somebody I know very well. He was the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Regional Secretary, and indeed, I have known him as far back as my days in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). I find him a capable man, and I believe that we can all work together to bring about prosperity in the Savannah Region

Mr Speaker, Mr Akandoh, Minister-designate for Health, is somebody we all know very well, a senior Colleague in this House. He has been very vociferous on matters of health in the Eighth Parliament; he is a perfect and fine gentleman. We wish him well, and we believe that he would do very well at the Ministry of Health.

Mr Speaker, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, my very good friend, I believe distinguished himself when it came to the substantive matters. Let me put that on record: when it came to the substantive matters of foreign policy—And I think it is important that I underscore that point. I was very concerned about his perceived leftist and

socialist leanings. I posed a question to him, and he gave an answer which, I believed, would comfort the diplomatic community that, in this very complex geopolitical world of divide of multipolars, he would be able to shepherd Ghana's foreign policy to bring about—And of course, the issue of economic diplomacy is one that I find very important as well. His matter is still at large; of course, the Majority will pass him. When he gets there, we will all cheer him on and wish him well, cooperate with him to position Ghana's foreign policy.

Mr Speaker, but I think it is important that we put this on record, and I am not getting into the mind or head of my friend, Mr Okudzeto Ablakwa, but I can be almost certain that if he was offered the opportunity to chair Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) again, he would decline—[*Interruption*—He would decline because ORAL has brought Mr Okudzeto Ablakwa more problems than good, and, indeed, I think more problems would come. It has brought him more problems because of fundamental principles.

Mr Speaker, let me underscore one very important principle. The principle of hear the other side, listen to the other side, give the other side a hearing. I think two or three days ago, the Majority Leader underscored the same point that he never condemns a man until he hears the man. Let me refer the chairman of ORAL to the book of Genesis 3:9 onwards where the all-knowing and Almighty God, before condemning Adam, gave him the right of hearing and

before He posed the question to Adam, and indeed, it was only after Adam put up a spirited defence and God conducted an elaborate trial and gave him a hearing—What the lawyers call the *audi alteram partem* rule, a principle of natural. It was only after the defence that God punished and condemned Adam. I want to make a point: the problem of the chairman of ORAL is that he has created the impression out there that people are guilty when they have not been given a hearing. That is the fundamental problem the Ghanaian people have with ORAL.

Mr Speaker, let me refer the House once again—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, you are left with two minutes—[**Some Hon Members:** *Ei!*]—Let us hear you.

**Mr S. A. Jinapor:** Mr Speaker, I thought we were micro-Minority. Let them debate the micro-Minority—[*Interruption*]—I refer my friend and brother, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, the Member of Parliament for North Tongu, Minister-designate for Foreign Affairs, to 1 Corinthians 10:12 where it is said and I quote: “Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he falls.”

Mr Speaker, I conclude by saying that the chairman of ORAL himself is now struggling to wiggle his way and navigate through the web of ORAL and, therefore, that has brought him more problems.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member for Assin South, Rev Ntim Fordjour?

**Rev John Ntim Fordjour (NPP — Assin South):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to contribute to the debate and congratulate my Colleagues who have been nominated to various positions and to state that we wish them well and we would support them to succeed in the roles that they have been vetted to.

Mr Speaker, in respect of Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, Minister-designate for Health, he demonstrated all the experiences he has had being the Ranking Member of the Committee on Health, and it was brought to the fore, and we expect that he would translate these experiences to delivery in ensuring that National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) is maintained and timeous disbursement of payments are done to ensure the smooth running and effective healthcare delivery.

Mr Speaker, Mr Seidu Issifu, Minister of State-designate for Climate Change and Sustainability, we wish him well; even though we see clear duplication of roles and mandate here, with a substantive Minister for Environment, Science and Technology, with matters of climate change cutting across about five different Ministries, they still found it fit in their strategy to still create Minister of State for Climate Change and Sustainability. We wish him well. Climate change is an important matter, and it is expected that he would



coordinate a lot of these actions in this part of the world.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate Mr Ekow Panyin Okyere Eduamoah, the Minister-designate for Central Region, my region, and urge him to pay attention to the many chieftaincy disputes in the region and to see to their timeous resolution and to turn his attention to Assin Manso Slave Monument, which is a very huge potential tourist attraction.

Mr Speaker, Mr Felix Kwakye Ofosu, my neighbour, I wish him the very best. He is a great communicator, who would be the Minister of State for Government Communication. It is important that he realises that the integrity and credibility of Government is so important and must be delineated from political propaganda.

Mr Speaker, on my respected Colleague, Mr Okudzeto Ablakwa, I have travelled the world with him, serving on the Committee on Foreign Affairs. His knowledge in foreign relations is not in doubt. My good friend has carved a brand for himself; that is a man of accountability who seeks to save the public purse. When he was quizzed, in that same spirit, whether he was ready to sacrifice as a Minister of State to take economy class, he declined. He insisted that he would join; it is not befitting for a Minister of Foreign Affairs to fly economy class. He insisted on flying business class. We thought that, in that principle, he would have opted for economy to save money.

Mr Speaker, time will not permit me to quote quotations. My respected Colleague, Mr Jinapor, has quoted enough quotations, but when one stretches forth one's finger to their friend, the rest of the four point back to them. When one chews their tongue, they have not chewed much meat, so it is important that, as much as Hon Members are sensitive to their reputations and even demand apologies before start of vetting, they must equally be minded that there are many reputations out there that their actions, inactions or exposés, even before verification, have caused out there, whether National Democratic Congress (NDC) or New Patriotic Party (NPP), but the irony here is that ORAL so-called exposés only focus on 2017 to 2024.

10.20 p.m.

I have never heard in the extensive presentation of the so-called ORAL exposés, any exposé relating to 2009 to 2016. We have never seen any such exposé relating to 1992.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you—

**Rev Fordjour:** Mr Speaker, as I conclude, the Hon—*[Interruption]*—But when he was requested to submit only nine documents relating to his affairs, he was not able to provide them even within five days. But he was able to—But he was able to load about three bags of documents relating to others.

Mr Speaker, I wish my brother well, but I want him to know that in the world of diplomacy, he must exercise absolute circumspection, knowing that he—*[Interruption]*—The five minutes is being counted within the time the microphone is on. May I remind my respected friend—I wish him well to succeed, but he must have a positive image of this country and diplomacy.

Congratulations.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you so much. Hon Members, I am—

Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, let me thank my Hon Colleagues for such a spirited debate on the Report.

Mr Speaker, first and foremost, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa never said anytime, anywhere, that he earns GHC15,000 a month. He never said that. All of us in this Chamber know how much we earn. We know that we do not earn GHC15,000. So, they cannot say that he earns GHC15,000 and they use that amount as a benchmark to determine where he sleeps. Nobody said that. I beg of you, let us be factual when we are evaluating the Reports.

Mr Speaker, secondly, ORAL is a programme that says that “See something, say something.” We have not restricted what one can see and what they can say. If one has seen anything, they should say it. If one thinks they saw land being taken between 2012 to 2016, they should say it. If someone saw land being

taken between 2016 to 2020, he should say it; he should speak the truth.

We started with an in-filling Policy. Do you know what in-filling meant? The in-filling Policy was a policy—one would notice at that time; one would see one small bungalow on a one-acre piece of land at Cantonments and yet Government needed bungalows for workers. So, the in-filling policy enabled Government to fit in additional accommodation in that space. That is what in-filling meant under the NDC. But when the NDC left office, the in-filling became private people filling in. The records are there. So they should not come and create an impression that the NDC is running away from accountability. They had eight years. If they were concerned about protecting the public lands of this country, they should have done so.

Mr Speaker, we have come and are interested in protecting public lands. So, we have told the public to report anybody who has seen that public lands have been stolen. We have not yet tried anybody for stealing public lands. So those who are alleging that ORAL is not giving an opportunity to people to be heard—They are lawyers, and I am surprised. Because ORAL so far has only asked people to report and when they do, they have to go to their site and verify. All I have seen ORAL do on television is to go to the various sites where they have received reports, to verify. When they put together a report, and then they submit the report to the various investigative agencies, those people would be invited and they would have a right to be heard. They

would be able to explain if the land belongs to them or not. If the land belongs to them and indeed it was public property, how did it become a private property and at what price did they buy it?

Mr Speaker, so far, I have not seen ORAL commit anything that amounts to denying people a right to be heard. Let us not personalise ORAL. Let us not start calling Mr Ablakwa, “Mr ORAL”. He is the chairman of a committee set up by the President of the Republic of Ghana to give the public an opportunity to report any instance of what is perceived to be appropriation of public lands. He is not “Mr ORAL” but the Chairman of ORAL. What one does not know is that—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Would he hold on to that position thereafter?

**Mr Ayariga:** Mr Speaker, I was a member of the transition team and I was in the meeting in which the decision to initiate ORAL was taken. Indeed, there were those who argued that we should wait till the Government is formed, then we would pass a legislation, establish it, then they can start their work. I was one of those who argued that there was nothing in law preventing the President-elect from asking the public to report any instance of stolen property. I was there, and I convinced my Hon Colleagues that it was perfectly legal for the President-elect to set up a committee and the committee was set up.

Mr Speaker, there is nothing that prevents Mr Ablakwa as a Foreign

Minister to continue to chair the committee. There is nothing inconsistent with the law and his functions to continue to chair the committee.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude by saying that we thank our Hon Colleagues for their contributions. So far, there is nothing that has been said that disqualifies any of the Nominees. They have cautioned the Nominees. In some instances, they have given very useful advice and I believe the Nominees would take those pieces of advice on board, I now urge you, Mr Speaker, to put the question.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Before I put the question, I want to be clear with respect to the Nominee for Foreign Affairs. Are we taking that one on?

**Some Hon Members:** —[Uproar]

Hon Members, the Report indicated that there is unanimity, but the Minority Leader said with respect to Mr Ablakwa, they want it to be approved by the Majority. So, that is what I want to be clear on.

10.31 p.m.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well; let me do the rest then later on I will come to Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa.

At the conclusion of the debate, I will put the Question—

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin** —rose—

[Uproar]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Leader, I am listening to you.

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** They have started their thing again.

Mr Speaker, I indicated when I was seconding the Motion that we are proceeding in terms of the earlier position taken on Mr Samuel Nartey George—[*Interruption*—No, I just needed to bring clarity to it for the *Hansard* that this decision, again, is the decision of the Majority Caucus. The Minority is not part of this decision; the entire 88 Members of the Minority hereby reject the Nominee for the Minister for Foreign Affairs portfolio, and same should reflect in the *Hansard*. We abstain with our entire 88 in that rejection—[*Uproar*—The Majority should know that even if they are doing their Majority and would not be calm for us to cooperate with them, I can tell them that if they do a headcount of their Majority, they still require a certain threshold by the Constitution, so they should note the empty seats. They do not need the Minority; they need their numbers. They need the threshold; they should read the Constitution.

The Hon Member has come in as a Backbencher, but all he is learning to do is to shout. He is not even making it to the Deputy Ministerial position. He is

there at the Backbench and may not even make it to a good Committee, so he should sit and misbehave—[**Some Hon Members:** Ah!]*—Mr Speaker, Leaders have worked tirelessly to get all of us this far. Some Backbenchers who do not know the industry that has gone into where we are should learn from the Frontbench and not misbehave.*

10.41 p.m.

Mr Speaker, so in putting the Question, I am suggesting to the Chairman to be clear in the language to be used.

Thank you.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa is approved by the Majority of the House.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*[10.33 p.m.— Members of the Majority started singing]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members—[*Uproar*]

Yes, Mr Bernard Ahiafor.

**Mr Bernard Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, as a lawyer, I am always a student of the law. If we look at Article 104 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, it reads, “Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, matters in Parliament shall be determined by the votes of the majority of members present and voting...”

Mr Speaker, if I look at the Minority Side —

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, we have gone past this.

**Mr Ahiafor:** They do not have the number 88. But they always say 88 abstaining.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, I thought you were just thanking us.

**Mr Ahiafor:** Mr Speaker, let me use the opportunity to thank the entire House for having approved the Nominees of His Excellency the President. I am so grateful for the opportunity.

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

Hon Members, I believe you are in my hands now. Tomorrow, when are you coming?

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** Mr Speaker, we demand, since the Member

has raised a constitutional issue, we demand a headcount.

**Some Hon Members:** No! No!

**Osahen Afenyo-Markin:** We demand a headcount to confirm whether they had the minimum constitutional threshold. — *[Uproar]*— The Chairman of the Committee invoked a constitutional provision, Article 104, which requires that majority of Members present, so even if it is the Majority, they need a—*[Interruption]*

Hon Members, let us go through the process of a headcount.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, respectfully, we are coming at 12 noon tomorrow. The House is adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

*The House was adjourned at 10.47 p.m. till Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 at 12.00 p.m.*

