



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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

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

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

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

THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Friday, 21st February, 2025

The House met at 11.19 a.m.

[MR SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER
IN THE CHAIR]

PRAYERS

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we will skip the item numbered 2 on the Order Paper. We do not have any message from the President and equally, we do not have any formal communication from the Speaker. So, please let us turn to the item numbered 5, which is correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND
THE OFFICIAL REPORT**

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*. We will begin with *Votes and Proceedings*.

Page 1...7—

Yes, Hon Peter Nortsu-Kotoe?

Mr Peter Kwasi Nortsu-Kotoe: Thank you, Mr Speaker, on page 7, the item numbered 4 (20), I was absent yesterday with duly approved

permission. So, Table Office should take note of this. Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, it is supposed to be under “absent with permission”. Very well, but check on the records.

Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Mr Mahama Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I came to Parliament before attending Cabinet yesterday but I have my name captured under Hon Members who were absent. Could that be addressed?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, thank you.

Table Office, take note of that.

Hon Members, let us turn to page 8. Yes, Hon Member for Kwadaso?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, on page 8, the item numbered 5 (iv), “Staff and Students of Holy Trinity Local School from Kwadaso Constituency...” this institution is not in the Kwadaso Constituency, it is located in Kwadaso Estate. Kwadaso Estate is within Nhyiaeso, it should be Nhyiaeso Constituency. Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Table, kindly take note of that. Indeed, the school is located within my residence so, it is true that it is Nhyiaeso Constituency.

Page 9...10—

Yes, Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, on page 9, the item numbered 8 (v) going into page 10, your directives were rightly captured. However, I recall that based on an application that was made by myself, you made some variation to the directives. Instead of putting the responsibility on the Business Committee, you rather said the Majority Chief Whip should take it up. He promised that he would get back to the House between yesterday and today. So, what has been captured by the Table is not entirely correct and it has to be a responsibility placed on the Chief Whip of the Majority and not the Business Committee.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Table, I think you have captured it well but that bit should be included.

Page 10...13—

Yes, Hon Member for Afadjato South?

Mr Frank Afriyie: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the recognition. On page 13, the item numbered 3 (xi), there is a name that is supposed to be “Emmanuella” but is wrongly spelt.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: That is the item numbered 3 (xi)?

Mr Afriyie: The name is “Emmanuella”. Mr Speaker, if you look critically, it is wrongly captured.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What I am saying is—

Mr Afriyie: It is (xi), that is Roman numeral 11.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes. Very well. Table, kindly take note of that.

Hon Members, in the absence of any further corrections, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Thursday, 20th February, 2025, as corrected is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

11.19 a.m.

Hon Members, we have the *Official Report* for Wednesday, 12th February, 2025 —[Pause]

Hon Member for Kwadaso.

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, on column 21, the fifth paragraph, under “Osahen Afenyo-Markin” the last word is “important” but if you read the sentence, it is “on a matter of national importance” but because of the confusion about verbatim report, I do not know whether he said “national importance” or “national important”. I leave that to your discretion and judgement.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Professor, what you do you think?

Prof Nyarko: If I give my opinion—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: National importance.

Prof Nyarko: Pardon?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Your opinion.

Prof Nyarko: I mean it is national importance.

At times, what is said is genuinely wrongly captured so we should be given the liberty to offer our perspective on it.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Table, kindly take note of that.

Hon Members, the title of our Minority Leader, is it official?

The “Osahen” to be captured in the *Official Report*, is it official? I wish he were here.

Prof Nyarko: I remember the Rt Hon Speaker sat in the Chair and said that that was what he had said. Since that day, it has been official. I was here when he said that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Afadjato South.

Mr Afriyie: Mr Speaker, with your leave, I wish to seek your direction. Yesterday, the Minority Leader was on his feet when I sought to correct a word that the Minority Chief Whip used which was wrongly captured. He drew my attention and for that matter, the attention of the House to the effect that such corrections in terms of spelling mistakes are minor and too minor to be done on the floor of the House. Mr Speaker, we really need some guidance

and direction from the Chair because these matters run at the heart of the integrity of the *Official Report* which is kept in record in the name of the Ninth Parliament. So, for corrections like these, I feel we have the responsibility to do right on the floor of the House. We need your direction.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I believe the essence of this exercise we are doing is to correct everything including grammar. Personally, I do not think it is out of place to correct a name that has been spelt wrongly or anything that has been constructed the way it is not supposed to be. I would rule that this exercise is actually to correct construction, grammar and everything. That is the way I see it and that is my ruling.

Yes, Hon Member for Tain?

Mr Adama Sulemana: Mr Speaker, with reference to what you just ruled, the First Deputy Speaker was in the Chair yesterday and the Minority Leader made reference to the inner cover of the *Official Report* and made the Hon Member read that portion. The ruling yesterday was that if it is a typographical or grammatical error, that could be done outside the Floor in the Table Office but if it is a substantive issue, then it could be done on the floor of Parliament. Mr Speaker, so, I am surprised that my Brother even asked you to make a ruling because the First Deputy Speaker actually ruled on that yesterday.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I do not think that we are making any

Votes And Proceedings and the Official Report

different —If it is an issue of grammar or spelling and somebody raises it, I do not think we can overlook it. If it is something that is running through then we could take a general position that the correction would be made across the board.

Hon Member, I think the essence of this exercise is to undertake whatever took place that probably, has not been captured properly. If a name has been spelt wrongly, you cannot say that you would not correct the name that has been spelt wrongly. I think the essence of this particular exercise is to do that.

Well, the First Deputy Speaker gave a general ruling but I think if it is something that comes before the House, we have to take note of that. So, if somebody raises any grammar or—I think we have to take it onboard.

Hon Member for Kwesimintsim.

Mr Philip Fiifi Buckman: Mr Speaker, respectfully, with what was referred to just now, the Minority Leader was referring to the statement made on the inner cover of *the Official Report*. Mr Speaker, it says that:

“Correction of errors of substance may be made only on the floor of the House with the permission of the Speaker. However, correction of typographical or grammatical errors which Members suggest for the Bound Volumes which will be compiled at the end of the Meeting may be clearly marked in the Daily Report, and the copy containing the

corrections submitted at the Editor’s Office, Parliament House, not later than four clear days after the publication of the Daily Report.”

It is that if someone finds the correction to be made, that person could write and submit it four days after the publication has been made. Insofar as it is here —And that was what was referred to by the Minority Leader.

Respectfully.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I do not know.

Majority Leader, do you have anything to talk about?

For now, my position is clear. The essence of this exercise is to raise any issue that have not been captured right. So, if it is even grammar or spelling and somebody raises it here, we cannot overlook it. I think that is how I would rule it.

Yes, Prof.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, I agree with you for this ruling. When a word or sentence could change the meaning of what has been captured, then we have the liberty to bring our opinion to that. The issue I raised now, I know that that Leader wanted to say that, “matter of national importance”. If it is made “national important”, it is not only a grammatical error but the essence of what he meant to say has been changed. That is simple.

Votes And Proceedings and the Official Report

11.39 a.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You are right.

Any further issue?

Hon Members, on that note, the *Official Report* of Wednesday, 12th February, 2025, as corrected, is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

We would turn to the item numbered 6, which is the Business Statement for the seventh week.

Majority Leader, please indulge me to acknowledge our children who have come all the way from Yendi. They are from Yendi Senior High School and they are led by Yakubu Sayibu, Amadu Zakaria and Saasi Zenabu.

They are all teachers and the school, as I said earlier, is located within the Yendi Constituency. Do we have the Hon Member for Yendi here?

Yes, Hon Member for Mion?

Mr Misbahu Mahama Adams: Mr Speaker, the Hon Member for Yendi is not in at the moment, but he asked me to receive them in his stead. That is the Member for Mion, his neighbour.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. So, Hon Member for Mion, please, take good care of them on your Brother's behalf.

Students from Yendi Senior High School, you are welcome. I hope you would monitor whatever is going on here and that would be a basis for you to study hard, so that tomorrow, when we are not here you would also come and take over from us. You may resume your seats.

[Students of Yendi Senior High School were acknowledged.]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Majority Leader, you may now take the podium and give us the Business Statement for the ensuing seventh week.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Chairman of the Business Committee/Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, your Committee met on Thursday, 20th February, 2025, to consider and propose the Business of the House for the Seventh Week ending Friday, 28th February, 2025.

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

Arrangement of Business

Formal Communications by the Speaker

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

Question(s)

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

No. of Question(s)

Minister for Finance	1
Minister for Energy	4
Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection	4
Minister for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry	2
Ministry for Education	2
Minister for Roads and Highways	10
Total Number of Questions	23

Mr Speaker, in all, six Ministers are expected to attend upon the House to respond to 23 Questions during the Week. The Questions are of the following types:

i. Urgent – 2

ii. Oral – 21

Statements

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

Papers and Reports

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

Motions and Resolutions

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

Address by H. E. the President

Mr Speaker, let me announce to the House that H. E. President John Dramani Mahama would be in this House on Thursday, 27th February, 2025, in accordance with Article 67 of the Constitution to deliver the Message

on State of the Nation. Let me just, with your indulgence, read Article 67; it says:

“The President shall, at the beginning of each session of Parliament and before a dissolution of Parliament, deliver to Parliament a message on the state of the nation.”

This is a constitutional injunction and the President would definitely be here to deliver the Message on the State of the Nation. The Business Committee, therefore, urges all Hon Members to be punctual and seated in the Chamber by 9:15 a.m. at the latest. Please, pay attention.

The Clerk to Parliament has also issued additional instructions which I want to bring to your attention. All Hon Members are to be seated in the Chamber by 9.15 a.m. This is because once H. E. the President enters the Chamber, National Security would not allow any Member access into the Chamber. So, note, that once the National Security takes over, no Member would be allowed access into the Chamber. So, after 9.15 a.m. it would be difficult to have access to the Chamber.

Hon Members are not to enter the Chamber with a stranger, so, do not enter or bring a stranger into the Chamber. Only the Deputy Speakers and the two Leaders will have access to the Speaker's Lobby.

Usually, the President would come in, go to the Speaker's Lobby, and from

there would be ushered into the Chamber. Because of security arrangements, during that period, no Member beyond the two Deputy Speakers and the two Leaders would have access to the Speaker's Lobby.

There would be limited access to the area in front of the Speaker's Lobby and the Clerks-at-the-Table's Lobby. During the address, the doors that leads into the Chamber from the Majority Side would be locked. So, from the Majority Side, the doors would be locked; hence, all Hon Members are kindly requested to exit the Chamber from the Minority Side or the exit at the Division Room.

Mr Speaker, Hon Members are kindly requested to park at the forecourt of the State House as the MPs car park area would be used by the military to form their parade. We all know that there is normally a parade and the military would be using where we normally park to form their parade, so we are advised or requested to park at the forecourt of State House.

Mr Speaker, these are the more detailed instructions relating to the Message on the State of the Nation and arrangements that are being made for security and access to the Chamber, as well as seating arrangements.

Conclusion

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

House shall be taken during the week for adoption.

Tuesday, 25th February, 2025

Roll Call

National Pledge

Statements

Urgent Question

(a) **Mrs Mavis Nkansah-Boadu (Afigya Sekyere East):** To ask the Minister for Finance what measures the Ministry is taking to address the recent significant depreciation of the cedi.

Questions

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

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

***43. Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for

Energy the measures being taken by Government to address the rising cost of energy and its impact on businesses and households.

***44. Ms Patricia Appiagyei (Asokwa):** To ask the Minister for Energy the state of the rural electrification interventions made by the Government since 2017.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee sittings.

Wednesday, 26th February, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Urgent Question

Ms Patricia Appiagyei (Asokwa): To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection what measures the Ministry has put in place to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the Affirmative Action Act, 2024.

Questions

***18. Mrs Mavis Nkansah-Boadu (Afigya Sekyere East):** To ask the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection what measures the Ministry is taking to ensure the full compliance to section 87 of the

Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560) which prohibits Child Labour exploitation.

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

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

***20. Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (Mpraeso):** To ask the Minister for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry the steps being taken by the Ministry to operationalise the rural enterprise factory in Mpraeso.

***21. Dr Abdul Kabiru Tia Mahama (Walewale):** To ask the Minister for Trade, Agribusiness and Industry the plans of the Ministry to ensure the operation of the Walewale Watermelon Factory that was recently commissioned under the 1D1F programme.

***30. Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (Offinso North):** To ask the Minister for Education when the boys' and girls' dormitories, multi-purpose dining hall, teachers' quarters and two (2) storey-classroom blocks in the Akomadan Applied Technology Institute will be completed.

***41. Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah (Old Tafo):** To ask the Minister for Education the details on the interventions aimed at bridging the digital divide in rural schools.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee sittings.

Thursday, 27th February, 2025

Roll Call

Address by H.E. The President —
Message on the State of the Nation.

Committee sittings.

Friday, 28th February, 2025

Roll Call

Statements

Questions

***7. Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (Offinso North):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when Afrancho, Akomadan, Nkenkaaso, Darso and Kobreso towns and its area roads upgrading project awarded by the previous Government would be completed.

***8. Mr Frank Yeboah (Atwima Nwabiagya North):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the Ministry plans to construct the

Offinso - Worapung road in the Atwima Nwabiagya North Municipality.

***9. Mr Frank Yeboah (Atwima Nwabiagya North):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the plans the Ministry has in respect of the Amanfrom – Offinso road and the Adankwame – Ntensere road in the Atwima Nwabiagya North Municipality which construction has stalled.

***10. Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh (Bosome Freho):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways what plans the Government has to construct the following roads: i. Beposo – Asia; ii. Mmontuo – Ankaase; iii. Asiwa Abosamso/Asumama; iv. Dwumakyi – Abosamso/Asumama; v. Nsuaem – Tebeso; vi. Anyaso – Tebeso; Anyaso – Nsueme; vii. Nsuta – Nsese; Nsuta – Damaskus – Appiakrom; and Keteke – Supom in the Bosome Freho Constituency.

***11. Nana Osei Adjei (New Juabeng North):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the Ministry plans to construct the deplorable road from Akwadum Roundabout to Effiduase Kingsby Roundabout in the New Juabeng North Constituency.

***12. Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (Kwabre East):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the following road projects in the Kwabre East Constituency would be resumed and completed: i. Fawoade – Kenyase; ii. Mampongtenge – Ahodwo; iii. Medoma Abass Junction – Maase;

iii. Abira – Abirem; iv. Aboaso – Kenyase Brofoyedur; and Wonoo/Ahodwo – Asonomaso.

***13. Mr Davis Ansah Opoku (Mpraeso):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the status of the Atibie and Twenedurase - Akwasiho roads leading to the paragliding site.

***14. Dr Kingsley Agyemang (Abuakwa South):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways plans for the completion of the following stalled bitumen surfacing road projects in the Abuakwa South Constituency: i. Asikam Town Roads; ii. Nkronso Town Roads; iii. Asafo Town Roads; iv. Asafo – Maase – Old Tafo Road; and Kyebi – Apapam – Larbikrom Road.

***15. Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (Walewale):** To ask the Minister for the Roads and Highways when the following road projects would be completed: i. Nasia – Janga; ii. Nasia - Kparogu – Mimima; iii. Wulugu – Kpansekpe; iv. Gbimsi – Nayorku – Gaagbini; and Mimima – Boayini.

***17. Mr Tweneboa Kodua Fokuo (Manso Nkwanta):** To ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the measures the Ministry is implementing to address the road infrastructural problems in the Manso Nkwanta Constituency.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Committee sittings.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Leader of the House.

Hon Members, the Statement for the seventh ensuing week has been read to us, and it is now before the House for consideration. So, let me begin from the Hon Member for Bosome Freho, Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh.

Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh: Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity once again, and I would want to commend the Members of the Business Committee for a good job done. I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude that my Question has found expression in the scheduling of the Business of the House. I am grateful.

But I am a bit concerned; I have been in this House and there have been a lot of Statements that have been read on the floor of this House. Many a time, I find a bit of challenge on the part of the Speakers, when they direct or give consequential orders on some of the Statements that have been made and as to whether they want to direct it to a Committee or some relevant Committees of the House that have to work on it. But, Mr Speaker, it is because there are no Committees.

Mr Speaker, I want to ask the Leader that based on Article 103 and Standing Order 204, it gives the House a bit of challenge to perform its oversight responsibilities. I think that by now, we should have some of these Committees that can clearly help the House to undertake its oversight responsibilities and perform its duty right and well.

Mr Speaker, I do not know why we are still at this stage. It is about the 18th or 20th Sitting and we still do not have the Committees in place. We are about to have another vetting. Order 217 is clear, apart from the composition of the Committees, Committee Leadership is also part of the vetting. Mr Speaker, I do not know why as at now the House has still not constituted its Committees to help perform its duties.

11.49 a.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Ayeh: I am aware that our part of the House has finalised its Committees, so I think that we should look at the other Side to find out why we are still here—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you. You have raised a fundamental issue, so do not dilute your message.

Yes, Hon Isaac Boamah, not Yaw Boamah.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko? Not Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah.

Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko: Thank you very, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity and let me also join my Colleague in thanking the Business Committee for its Report to the House and all the items that have been prepared for next week.

Mr Speaker, not to belabour the issue of the Committees, it is very important that it has been mentioned time and again that the Committees are almost constituted and the list would be submitted. Yesterday it was raised by the Minority Chief Whip and promises and assurances were made.

Mr Speaker, as we speak, we have issues with communication. People try to call and the network is bad. People call me from the Constituency in Effia and they say that my phone is off, yet my phone is on, and we are unable to even get these Committees where we can handle the matters with the Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You can go to the Minister personally.

Mr Boamah-Nyarko: No, Mr Speaker, the Committees are supposed to perform their oversight responsibilities in the House. It is better to use the Committees so that we can handle these matters. The Minister is out there closing FM Stations instead of ensuring that we get some of these issues addressed. So, Mr Speaker, let us get the Committees out by next week.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. From Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko, let me come to Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah.

Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know the Majority Leader is busy preparing his answers but I want him to listen to this. National

Government Agencies (NGAs) has formally notified the Volta River Authority (VRA) of its decision to suspend supply to Ghana due to our standing arrears, raising concerns over the country's energy security in a letter addressed to the managing director of the VRA on Tuesday, 18th February, 2025.

NGAs stated that effective 6th March, 2025, it will cease further deliveries in line with—

Mr Ayariga — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hold on, Mr Boamah. Yes, Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I hate to do this because he is a very senior Member of this House. If there is a Communication, Communication would have to come to Mr Speaker and the Speaker will convey the Communication to the House. If he has an Urgent Question for the Minister for Energy, he should please ask his Urgent Question for the Minister for Energy—

Communication coming from a private entity has no right to be brought to our attention without it going through the proper processes so I beg of my senior Colleague that he should refrain from what he is doing and all that he has read should be expunged from the records. Because this is a formal communication that he is trying to use the backdoor to bring to the attention of the House. Please, let us do what is right. There is a Business Statement that has been presented, a programme for

next week, we would debate the details of that programme, we would accept or we would reject, that is what we should be doing, but if there is a communication from a private entity, and one wants to bring it the attention of the House, there is a procedure for doing that, please.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah, I think the Majority Leader is right.

Mr Boamah: No, Mr Speaker, I am not delivering a Statement from a private entity. I was laying a foundation based on the newspaper article—This is *Business News of Ghana* dated 22nd February, 2025 which has the exchange rate and other business news of the country.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, I am saying that the issue raised by the Majority Leader is that—

Mr Boamah: I was laying the foundation to the effect that we have or we are going to be confronted with some energy security issues and that if the Minister of Energy could be programmed to come and brief the House. That is all I am saying.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, as a Member of the House, you know what to do. You have read this news item. You can bring the Minister here on Urgent Question to address us or you can even make a Statement, and based on that, we can invite the Minister to come and address the House.

Mr Boamah: Mr Speaker, rightly so. I am just serving notice that we would want the Minister to appear before the House to speak on this very important energy situation. I will be filing a Question too.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, file an Urgent Question on that.

Yes, Hon Member for Manhyia South?

Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the continuous refusal or default to constitute or delay—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is it the same matter?

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, there is a fundamental infraction of the Constitution of this country and the Standing Orders of this House by the delay in constituting the Select Committees of this House.

Mr Speaker, when you look at Article 103 of the 1992 Constitution, Mr Speaker, with your liberty, I read; “Parliament shall appoint standing committees and other committees as may be necessary for the effective discharge of its functions”

Mr Speaker, the procedure for taking the step very respectfully is provided for by Order 204. Indeed, not just the step or the approach, but also the timing. Mr Speaker, I will again take your liberty to read the Standing Orders 204, which is

titled Appointment and Composition of Committees.

Mr Speaker, Order 204(1) says:

“At the first meeting of the first session of Parliament, there shall be appointed Standing and Select Committees of the House for the effective and efficient exercise of the powers and performance of the functions of Parliament in accordance with Article 103 of the Constitution”.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, we are in the first meeting?

Mr Baffour Awuah: Yes, Mr Speaker, we are about to—*[Uproar]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us listen to him.

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, we are about to vet another batch of Ministers. Under Standing Orders 217, for the Appointments Committee to be complete, we need the Committees in place.

Mr Speaker, the Committees are not in place. Very respectfully, we think that we cannot support the continuous breach of the Standing Orders of this House.

Mr Speaker, unless—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I do not think there is any breach in what you read to the House.

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, there is a breach. Mr Speaker, very respectfully if you may allow me—*[Uproar]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, you will get the opportunity to speak, please.

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, 205(2) says, the Committee on Selection —*[Interruption]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, hold on. Yes, Majority Chief Whip.

11.59 a.m.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. Mr speaker, I rise in pursuance of Order 122(1)(a). Mr Speaker, this is a House of records. If the Hon Member is minded to anchor his submission on the fact that some Committees are yet to be properly constituted, he should say so, please. Mr Speaker, I have tried to listen to him in quietude, he should learn to listen to me in quietude.

The point I am making is that it is most inaccurate for him to say bluntly that Committees have not been formed or there is a refusal to constitute Committees; that cannot be accurate. If he intends to say that the formation of some Committees is not yet complete, he should say so. In any case, this matter was addressed just yesterday. He has not cited a single provision which says that the formation of Committees is time-bound and so on.

Now, the point is that, during the First Sitting of the First Meeting of Parliament, some Committees are statutorily and mandatorily composed, and it is those Committees whose further duty and mandate it is to constitute the Committees of Parliament—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, you came on a point of order.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, my point is that he has misinformed the House. He should withdraw and make his point that it is some Committees, not all Committees.

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker—*[Uproar]*—I was on my feet—**[An Hon Member:** Mr Speaker, you are the problem]—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Who said I am the problem? Who said that?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, it is important our Colleagues pay attention to our observations. This is a normal practice that when the Business Statement has been presented, we make inputs into the Business Statement. They would have to tolerate it, please.

Mr Speaker, back to the Majority Chief Whip, two Speakers have ruled on the matter I want to raise on the Business Statement. Business Statement is always at large, and the Majority Leader is a capable hand; in fact, for the fleeting period we have dealt with him, he has shown competence and leadership. I am wondering why the

Majority Chief Whip would come in on a point of order: Order 122—what is that? With the greatest respect to him—*[Interruption]*—No. A matter has been raised which is germane and relevant. Let us allow the Majority Leader to respond accordingly. He cannot come on a point of order, Mr Speaker; he cannot. He is rather disrupting the process. He should allow the Hon Member to speak and make his observations.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well

Mr Dafeamekpor — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Chief Whip, please—Hon Dafeamekpor, you should address me; I gave you the floor, so just ignore what he said. Do not worry.

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, please, the issue has been raised by Mr Asafo-Adjei and Mr Isaac Boamah. Please, let us conclude.

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, very respectfully, it is a serious matter for a Member of the House to be accused of misleading the House. So, I am referring the House to Standing Order 205(2), and it reads:

“The Committee of Selection shall prepare a report to the House within the first ten sitting days after

appointment. The list of Members to compose the Standing and Select committees of the House.”

This is the 20th Sitting, Mr Speaker, and the list of Members to compose the Committees is not—We are speaking for them. They are 180 Members, and only about 52 of them have got appointments; they are frustrated, and it shows on their faces. We are fighting for them.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon Member.

Yes, Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, when we come to this House, let us take our time and learn. He just said that Members on this Side are frustrated—*[Interruption]*—Even if he said they look frustrated, it is not right. He says they are looking frustrated because they have not had appointments.

Mr Speaker, everybody on this Side campaigned on a promise that we would not have more than 60 Ministers. All of us knew very well that only a maximum of 60 of us would make it as Ministers. We campaigned and won the election on that. We are happy we won the elections on that. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, this Side is all right; we are satisfied—*[Hear! Hear!]*—We are satisfied with the numbers. Indeed, this Side of the House, together with those who have agreed to do business with us,

is 188 in number because of that promise—*[Hear! Hear!]*—Because we promised Ghanaians that we would only make it 60.

Mr Speaker, so it is wrong for anybody on the other Side, led by their Leader to keep alluding to the size of the number of Ministers and the question of appointment in this Chamber. I want to place it on record that this Side is satisfied—*[Hear! Hear!]*—We have no issue with not being made Ministers. Indeed, several people have called me and said the Leader of Government Business and the Majority Leader should be a ministerial appointment. I want to say it here and place it on record that I do not want to be a Minister—*[Hear! Hear!]*—I do not see how being a Minister changes the role of a Leader of Government Business—**[Some Hon Member: Yes]**

A Leader of Government Business is a Leader of Government Business; he sits and listens to the debate in Cabinet, so that when he comes here, he can communicate the decisions of Cabinet effectively. He can lead the House to debate the position. We are not worried about not being Ministers. We are not; we are content. Yesterday, I was in Cabinet. What difference does it make?

Mr Speaker, let this debate about the number of Ministers end today. When I go to respond to their issues, I would address all the questions being asked, but he should first withdraw the statement or expunge from the records that Members on this Side are frustrated.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Leader, I do not think this calls for that, but I believe there is an invitation to the Minority Leader, so Minority Leader, I think that, invariably, he has invited you.

Yes, Minority Leader, let us hear you.

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, the Chief Whip of the mighty Minority has a few matters to raise, and I have noticed that some of my Colleagues also have some issues to raise. The Majority Leader has, indeed, extended an invitation and that invitation shall be attended to at the right and appropriate time.

Suffice to state that behind is massive frustration.

12.09 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, please whatever comment that you want to make should relate to the Business Statement.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, most respectfully, two Rt Hon Speakers of this House have ruled on matters that come up at comments regarding Business Statements. Mr Speaker, The Rt Hon Speaker Prof Mike Oquaye said that Business Statement and comments arising thereto, are always at large. The Rt Hon Speaker, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin re-echoed that position and our Friends in the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the Minority of the 8th Parliament, as they

were then—They were in Minority and by the grace of God, they are now in the Majority. They were led by the Majority Chief Whip, Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor who was in the middle bench at the time.

Mr Speaker, on Fridays, they would spend time to raise all issues—He is smiling. This is called karma. The Majority Leader himself was the chief legal advisor to the team and he would spy me and be passing his notes. We have seen it. I was in that hot seat. What are they saying today? They want to set a new precedent? “ɛnfa ɛnnɛ, ɛnfa okyena. Deɛ ɛsɛ sɛ yɛka biara, yɛ bɛka. Monya abotre ntwɛn. Yɛrekasa, yɛnwie yɛ”.

Mr Speaker, this is not the time to now tell us that this is Business Statement, we should confine ourselves and whatever. Their Colleagues behind feel very frustrated. We are aware—I am not saying they are frustrated but they feel frustrated and it is obvious. They do not need to tell me; I can see their frustrations. Mr Speaker, so, we would allow Colleagues to make their comments before we come in.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What did you say? If you have something to say, be on your feet. I would give you the opportunity but it appears—*[Interruption]*—Hon Members, this time, we are commenting on the Business Statement. It is not restricted to only the Minority. If you have any issue, you have the right to also get up and raise the issue.

Yes, Prof Nyarko?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, thank you for indulging me to make some few observations. The first one is, when the respected Majority Leader was making the Statement on the Business for next week, he said that Members should be in the House latest by 9:15 a.m. and that the doors would be shut to any Member who comes in afterwards.

Mr Speaker, this is news to me. I do not know whether there is insecurity in this country or on the premises. I have been in this Chamber for at least four years and this has never been done. So, I would like him to explain to us this new restriction of Members coming here before 9:15 a.m. Unless there is something that we do not know, otherwise, this is completely unfair to us.

Mr Speaker, number two, it has been in the news on Tuesday that the Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations has mandated the National Communications Authority (NCA) to take steps to suspend the licenses of six media houses and the seventh one has been shut down. I find this directive completely unacceptable because if one reads the Electronic Communications Act, 2008, if Mr Speaker, would indulge me, I would read Section 13(3):

“Where the Authority decides to suspend or revoke a licence or authorisation, the Authority shall give the licensee or authorisation holder the opportunity”

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Prof Nyarko, I am not cutting you short. This is an issue that you can bring the Minister here to respond to. So, I think you have the tool to bring the Minister here, either on an Urgent Question or by a Statement. So, I find it a bit difficult, I must confess. It is like the issue raised by Mr Yaw Boamah. The Ministers are there to serve the nation and they do that by, at times, responding to certain issues Hon Members raise.

So, this is a fundamental issue and I share with you but I think this time, for me, is not appropriate. You have raised it, we have all noted it, which is fine but I think you should do well by bringing the Minister here to respond to you and by extension to the nation. So, I would urge you to file an Urgent Question.

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, I respect your good self and office but in the 8th Parliament during the time for Business Statement, Members requested Ministers to appear before us. Mr Speaker, you were here and most times, you were in the Chair and this was done.

Our Colleagues requested that Ministers appear before the House on Fridays to respond to some of these issues. So, it is not new. I am not doing something new; I am not reinventing the wheel.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What do you seek to achieve with this?

Prof Nyarko: My point is that, there is tension out there. And I am saying that

we need to invite the Minister here to let us know the rationale behind the measures he has taken.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So how are you going to invite the Minister?

Prof Nyarko: Through your good self to do that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Prof, I know that you are an experienced—And you should know how to bring the Minister here. So, I am giving you a clue, please file an Urgent Question which would immediately be dispatched to the Minister to come.

Prof Nyarko: In my next observation, I yield to your judgment because I want to put on record that this is not the first time such a request is being made but I yield to you because of your experience. My last issue has to do with item 6, Statements. I remember yesterday or the day before, you did say that Statements should be of maximum length of two pages.

But I also think that Statements are important for us and also for future references in terms of research. That is why I am pleading with us that we need to encourage the writing of Statements grounded in research. What we can do is that we can do it like when we are laying Reports, that the Report should be captured in its entirety whilst we read certain portions of the Report.

So, I respectfully request that limiting Statements to only two pages would not

help us. We cannot do meaningful research to guide us into the future. Otherwise, we are suggesting that we are just making fun of Statements but Members spend time to do thorough research; two pages or less, Mr Speaker, with all due respect, is not the best. Let us agree on the quality regardless of content but we can on the Floor, just give excerpts whilst the Hansard Department captures the entirety of the Statement.

Thank you.

12.19 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let me refer you to our Standing Order 94. It reads:

“The time for Statements shall ordinarily not exceed one hour except that the Speaker may permit Statements and comments outside the prescribed period in exceptional cases.”

At times you may have—Today, we would take at least about four or five Statements. At times, the comments on the Statements can take a lot of time. If Leadership and the House do not manage the Statements—Three days ago, one Statement was six-paged. I realised that the maker of the Statement while reading, was even tired. So, if we decide to manage the Statements in such a way that a lot of Members can get the opportunity to make Statements and comment, I do not think it would be out of place.

As much as I share in your view, let us also look at the interests of all Members. Because, today, we have as many as about ten Statements to be taken. Everybody is so desirous to read his or her Statement. So that is why we are trying to come out with at least a policy that a Statement should not exceed two pages.

We attended secondary school years ago and we were taught about summary writing—You put the salient areas in the Statement in such a way that it would summarise what you want to portray. Prof Kingsley Nyarko, I think you have raised a fundamental issue, but for the good of the House, let us go by what we intend to do. Nobody from the Majority Side? Majority Leader, would you respond to them, so that we take a second batch? Very well—*[Interruption]*—

Hon Members, please, lots of issues have been raised. Let the Majority Leader respond to them. I would take another batch of comments, then he comes back to respond. Majority Leader, the floor is yours now.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the Business Committee indicated that some questions have been scheduled for the week; twenty-one Oral Questions and two Urgent Questions. Some of the matters that Hon Members are raising can be the subject of Urgent Questions.

They can ask Urgent Questions and that is why the Business Committee has programmed Question time. So, Hon Members can ask Urgent Questions of

the Ministers and once the Speaker admits them as Urgent Questions, he can get the Ministers here to answer those Questions.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of Committees, yes, as we know, the Committee of Selection has been formed already and it is the Speaker's Committee. So, the issue of the work of the Committee of Selection is the responsibility of the Speaker. So, we would convey their concerns about the timing of the composition of Committees to the Rt Hon Speaker. I think that their concerns to speed up the process and have the Committees inaugurated or established early are legitimate. So that they can assist with the Business of the House.

On the question of the claim that we have violated the Constitution—They can see that the Constitution in Article 103(2) says that: “The standing committee shall be appointed at the first meeting of Parliament...”

But in the Standing Orders, there is an attempt to derogate from that and to impose specific timelines. But if one reads the Justice Abdulai Case, one would know that if the Constitution is very clear on a matter and one goes in our Standing Orders and place restrictions on that matter, it is very easy for anyone to declare those provisions as being inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution. So as far as I am concerned, the Constitution says “first meeting”. We are still in the First Meeting of Parliament. So, they cannot question the conduct of the Speaker; it

is his Committee. The Speaker is the Chairman of the Committee of Selection. So, to question the conduct of the business of the Committee of Selection is to question the conduct of the Speaker. I discourage Hon Members from questioning the conduct of the Speaker.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of Statements, yes, I think it is important for us to pay attention to Order 93 which reads:

“By the indulgence of the House and leave of the Speaker, a Member may explain a matter of personal nature or make a Statement on a matter of urgent public importance...”

So, there are two things that a person's Statement must cover thus, personal matter and of urgent public nature. Why would one write a six-page document explaining a matter of urgent public nature? Why would one use a six-page document to explain a personal matter? So, let us be guided by what Statements are about. They are about personal matters and urgent public matters and that is why one should be brief.

In fact, in some jurisdictions, it is one-paged. In the Canadian Parliament, I am told one cannot exceed one page. In some jurisdictions, they just give the person a few minutes to make those Statements, so that as many Statements as possible can be taken within a day. We are trying to streamline these matters and insist that Hon Members should be brief about it because if it is an urgent public matter, one does not

need to write six pages to tell us what an urgent public matter is. If it is a personal matter concerning one's Constituency, one does not need a six-page write-up. If an Hon Member has a thesis he or she wants to give to us to study, he or she can give us a Statement and attach the thesis and refer us to it to go and read later on. So, I can understand the interest of professors in writing thesis. So, if an Hon Member has a thesis he or she wants to share with us, he or she can bring us a two-page Statement and then refer us to his or her thesis and then beg that his or her thesis be captured as part of the *Hansard* of the House.

Mr Speaker, I think that these are the two critical issues that have been raised by the Committee Members. But people should know that the Business Committee is made up of a representation from both Sides. So, when the Business Committee is going for its meeting, Hon Members can always communicate to their Members on matters that they think should be part of the Business. They would raise it with us at the Business Committee meeting and we would programme it.

They should also programme themselves to ask questions. They should also use the opportunity to make Statements of some urgent public importance such as the Statement that he was going to read about the energy situation. That may actually be a matter of urgent public importance. But it is not to be captured by the Business Statement. He can come on Tuesday morning and then make an urgent Statement and we would discuss it. Yes,

and this was the chair of the Majority Leader and he always drew our attention to these issues as well.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we would take the last batch of questions—

Prof Nyarko: Mr Speaker, he left out one question that I asked.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Prof Nyarko, enough is enough. Let me give other Members the opportunity, please.

12.29 p.m.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, there was something about the time to be here and then the security arrangements. At all times, this has always been the security arrangements. It has always been the case that when the President is here, we have different security arrangements to take care of the presence of the President, Vice President, Chief Justice and others here. They know that somehow, the drummers would be here, and then there would be restrictions in terms of the movement in and out of the Chamber.

And we encourage all the time that MPs should come early and be seated, so that we start on time. This is an arrangement that the Clerk to Parliament has always put in place. This is not the first time that these arrangements are being made.

Some Hon Members — rose —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Yes, one, two, three, four, five, then afterwards, we will— No, Hon Member for Kwesimintsim, you have spoken. I would not give— Yes, Hon Member for Akim Oda?

Mr Alexander Akwasi Acquah: Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I am following up on the security arrangement. So, if we come on time and we are supposed to step out to attend to nature's call, are we going to be allowed back in?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Acquah, is it a comment or a question?

Mr Acquah: Mr Speaker, it is a follow-up to the security arrangement.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Leader?

Mr Acquah: Are we going to be confined to our chairs?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Majority Leader, please, listen to him so that you will—

Mr Acquah: Mr Speaker, I was asking the Majority Leader that if we come on time, and are supposed to attend to nature's call or to move outside, would we be allowed back in or would we be confined to our chairs?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama?

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

Firstly, I would want to commend the Business Committee for capturing three of my several Questions to be asked of different Ministers. I want to commend them highly for letting my Questions find expression in the Business Statement for the ensuing week.

Mr Speaker, that said, my second issue has to do with a comment made by my senior Brother and respected Leader of the House, Hon Mahama Ayariga. He announced to this House that he sat in Cabinet. The Constitution of the Republic in Article 76 states, and Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, I read:

“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.”

Mr Speaker, the Hon Majority Leader is not a Minister of State. He would need to be appointed as a Minister for Parliamentary Affairs to have the locus standing to be in Cabinet. My Brother has just drawn our attention to a clear violation of the Constitution, unless he was there as an observer. If he was there as an observer, he should communicate it as such. If he was a member of Cabinet, then it is a violation of the Constitution and he would have to withdraw that too.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Yes, Hon Anthony Mmieh.

Mr Anthony Mmieh: Mr Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of this House to a pertinent issue that has been lingering for some time now. To the best of my knowledge, I believe parliamentarians represent the concerns, views, and interests of our constituents. This House should hold 276 Members, if I am not mistaken. If one looks at the gazetted Members, one would realise that we have only 275 therein; Ablekuma North is outstanding.

Times without number, Members from the Minority Side have drawn the attention of leaders responsible for elections and security to this very issue to make every effort to finish counting for a declaration to be made. So that the good people of Ablekuma North could also have their representation here in this House. Technically speaking, the people of Ablekuma North are being disenfranchised as a result of the fact that people who are responsible for the declaration of election results are refusing to perform their duty. I believe that this is serious, and we need a one-time solution to this problem.

Alhaji Nurideen Muhammed Mumuni: Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for this opportunity. I am just going to add to the issue my Brother, the Hon Member, raised. If we look at this issue of Ablekuma North, one would realise that on 24th January, my big Brother, the Hon Majority Leader, promised that he was going to follow up and brief the House later.

Mr Speaker—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: But he has done that.

Alhaji N. M. Mumuni: Yes, he said that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: But he has briefed the House.

Alhaji N. M. Mumuni: Mr Speaker, no, he has not briefed the House. He said he will come again to brief the House on the issue on 24th, but today is 21st February. It has been almost one month; the Majority Leader has not briefed the House.

The President will be in the House to read the Message on the State of the Nation. I think this Ablekuma North issue has to be updated, and we need to get a Member of Parliament for Ablekuma North before the President addresses the nation. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: The last person is the Hon Member for Old Tafo.

Mr Vincent Ekow Assafuah: Mr Speaker, let me first and foremost commend the Majority Leader for the Business Statement. Except to say that I filed about four Questions, but interestingly, when I was checking the item numbered two, I was thinking I would find the Minister for Defence there. To convince myself that it was not a mistake, I went through the Questions itself and I realised that one important Question that I filed, which bothers on security, in terms of the Minister for Defence's superintendence over the Ghana Armed Forces, has not been

captured here. So, I wanted the Majority Leader to take note of that Question that I filed. I filed four of them, and three of them have been captured here. I put it to him that the rest would have to be captured.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: It could be that that Question was not admitted. Yes, let me come to the Minority Chief Whip. I want to close this session.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, let me listen to you.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, these are a few observations. First of all, the Majority Leader related to security arrangement which I find important. However, I know the practice has been that the fine details are often communicated through the Whips and same is ferried to Colleagues on our respective platforms. This is because the details of it cannot be put out since it is about security matters. So, I would want to encourage the Majority Leader to take note of that.

I think about a fortnight ago, we had a Committee of the Whole—Majority Leader, if I have your attention—and some important matters were discussed in proper context. It has been a while; I want to respectfully suggest to the Leader of the House that these matters may have to be firmed up. These are matters I cannot elucidate appropriately as the Majority Leader knows. We need to come to some conclusion on these

matters which cannot be discussed at Plenary, so that we can get the House appropriately prepared to receive H. E. the President. These are very important matters and the Leader of the House, I am sure, understands.

Mr Speaker, I have looked at the Business Statement.

12.39 p.m.

You had earlier given directive that the Minister for Energy and Green Transition should appear on Tuesday. This is conspicuously missing in the Business Statement and I want to find out the reasons. Because earlier, the Minister, I am told, was here and had to leave for Cabinet.

Mr Speaker, you directed that we postpone the said engagement to Tuesday. That has not found expression in the Business Statement. I am sure it is an oversight, and if the Leader could take good notice.

Mr Speaker, a matter raised by Dr Mahama on the imposition of curfew at Walewale and its environs. I know Hon Colleagues and also, a number of constituencies are concerned. And the directive was the Majority Chief Whip should take the matter up — if the respected Majority Chief Whip is listening, and arrange with the two Ministers — Mr Speaker, the *Votes and Proceedings* today, captured it and the responsibility was placed on the head of the Majority Chief Whip that he would programme — In fact, as of yesterday, he had said that between yesterday and

today, he would be able to confirm the dates for the two Ministers to appear at Closed Sitting, emphasis mine, at Closed Sitting, not at Plenary. That is also missing, and I wish the Leader of the House could relate to such matters.

I have seen a number of Questions advertised and that is good; it is quite encouraging, except to add that we would not accept excuses. The Ministers would have to be notified as our Orders prescribe, and we would not allow excuses. The Ministers should be ready. Next week, we are expecting them in the House. We do not want one excuse or the other, regarding they travelling out of the jurisdiction or so. No, they must come; they must respect this Chamber and come and answer the Questions duly.

Mr Speaker, having said that, I would not add more.

I hope the Majority Leader would relate to these concerns.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Minority Leader, please.

The last person to. —[Pause]

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, thank you for the treasured space given me to make my own comments on the Business Statement ably presented by the Leader of the House.

Mr Speaker, first, in the course of the week, we —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Is this your comment?

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, yes.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Then Hon Members please indulge me for a five-minute suspension.

12.42 p.m. — *Sitting suspended*

12.44 p.m. — *Sitting resumed*

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, again, let me thank the Leader of the House for presenting the Business Statement. Mr Speaker, I have some few additional comments to make. I believe that these comments, if the Leader takes them on board, would help bring clarity to some national issues and put to rest some agitations in the public space.

Mr Speaker, first, is a decision of the Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, Hon Sam Nartey George. Mr Speaker, on 18th February, it was reported from the media secretariat of the Ministry that he directed the closure of seven radio stations, and this was with immediate effect.

Mr Speaker, in my view, the National Media Commission is the body responsible for making certain determinations and making recommendations as to the conduct of some of these radio stations in our country. I find it very strange that

the Minister would issue such a directive. Mr Speaker, I would therefore base on these concerns, pray that the Leader of Government Business indulges the House to invite the Minister to come and brief the House on what resulted in his actions. Mr Speaker, he is answerable to this House and not only to the President that appointed him. So that is my first issue.

12.49 p.m.

Mr Speaker, issue two has to do with Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). Mr Speaker, we all know that GBC is the nation's number one media House. Every support needs to be given to Ghana Television (GTV). I have been watching GTV and they are one station that is able to reach the remote parts of our country. They need support. We have seen other media houses, particularly the private media houses, gaining prominence lately in programmes of the State. We do not see GTV doing live broadcasts.

Mr Speaker, if it is about resources, I would again want the Leader of Government Business to programme the Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations to come and brief this House on steps that the Ministry is taking to resource GBC.

Mr Speaker, they have very nice programmes, especially their Breakfast Show. They are very educative. And if GBC does not get the support, they are likely to collapse. We do not want that to happen. So GBC would need support.

I would want the Minister to address the House and assure us on steps that the Ministry is taking in that endeavour.

Mr Speaker, there is also this issue of *galamsey*. The Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Hon Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, came to this House to make a certain revelation, and that revelation was to the effect that over 9 out of our 44 forest reserves have been completely taken over by illegal mining thugs with impunity.

Mr Speaker, he says that the Forestry Commission no longer has access to these forest reserves in the short term. He again explained that the forest guards and the Forestry Commission's rapid response team are unable to confront these miners effectively because they lack the advanced weaponry the *galamsey* operators possess.

Mr Speaker, he told us this on Wednesday, 19th February, 2025. I would not want to say this is very rich, but it is very alarming. Mr Speaker, the Minister only lamented and fell short of assuring the nation what steps Government was going to take to address this issue with alacrity. I am on the basis of that, also inviting the Leader of Government Business to programme the Minister to come back and brief us on the intervention that he intends to put in place. We have the military to support Government. Forestry Commission needs resources. It cannot be said that ordinary citizens possess sophisticated weapons; therefore, they are destroying our water bodies.

Mr Speaker, just this week, we had a number of Statements being made on the water situation in our country. A Member made a Statement on the situation of water supply; our people are not getting potable water to drink. In Winneba, the hospitals were complaining that Ghana Water Limited (GWL) is unable to provide water, and we know water is life. Ghana Water Limited has its own challenges, and our water bodies are also being polluted.

So, Mr Speaker, this is a time for the Minister to be very proactive, and he needs to come to this House next week to assure the nation of the steps his Ministry is taking to address this problem.

Mr Speaker, again, the persistent shortage of water has led residents in Greater Accra in particular to rely on expensive source of water. We know how much water tankers cost, and people rely on sachet water and all. These are serious matters, and we expect Government to take action.

Mr Speaker, we have also been told by the Leader of Government Business that His Excellency the President would be in this House next week Thursday, as part of a constitutional imperative to present a Message on the State of the Nation.

Mr Speaker, Article 67 of the Constitution makes that provision. Well, we welcome the President, but while we patiently await the President, there are two issues I want the Leader of

Government Business to ferry to His Excellency the President at the Jubilee House.

Mr Speaker, one, in the past, when H. E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo had to come here on a similar constitutional exercise, he had to wait for several hours before entering the Chamber. I hope that the Leader of Government Business would put in place the necessary support systems to allow an early entry of the President into this Chamber. It is his maiden entry into this House. He should ensure that all nagging issues are addressed, and that the President is safely brought in to do his work in peace.

Mr Speaker, the Leader of Government Business has a duty; that is why he is the Leader of the House, Leader of Government Business and the Majority Leader. He is aware of the situation of this House. He is aware of the 187 and the 88. The Leader of Government Business has a duty in communicating the concerns of this House to the President. My duty is to guarantee his peace in this House, but that would materially depend on the work of the Majority Leader. Mr Speaker, I have told him what to do. I have been in that chair before, and I know what it is.

Mr Speaker, the second issue is that in 2017, public sector workers enjoyed 12.5 per cent increment; 2018, 11 per cent; 2020, 15 per cent; 2021, there was a 4 per cent, plus interim premium of 15 per cent; in 2022, there was 15 per cent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) on

base salary; 2023, 30 per cent and 2024, 23 per cent between January and June; July to December was 25 per cent. We have just heard a paltry increment of 10 per cent. The Leader of Government Business must take note of this and inform His Excellency the President that these are the numbers he came to meet. The ordinary Ghanaian worker has a higher expectation in this 24-Hour Reset Economy. They have a legitimate expectation that President Mahama would do—If he cannot match it, he should do better. Mr Speaker, the 10 per cent is unacceptable.

12.59 p.m.

Mr Speaker, the last point before I resume my seat, is that, there are concerns about termination of appointment, and it is a matter that we are all expressing our reservations on. The Government's spokesperson is quoted by the media as having said:

“Let me also put on record that this action has been taken not because of a perception or belief that they were NPP; it is because we know that the recruitment process was attended by irregularities”

Hon Felix Kwakye Ofosu is quoted to have said this on Wednesday 19th February, 2025.

Mr Speaker, in law, there is something called ratification and rectification.

These are guaranteed rights in Chapter 5 of the Constitution. If

somebody has been employed and the Government is of the view that these employments were irregular, what is the use of the system regularising same through ratification or rectification? Mr Speaker, why would the Government send people away? So far, it is obvious that they are targeting NPP members.

Mr Speaker, it is so obvious that that is what the Government is doing. Nurses are being sent home. Teachers are being sent home. Mr Speaker, in fact, to worsen the situation, state-owned entities that are limited liability companies are also issuing letters.

Mr Speaker, I would plead with the Leader of Government Business that he should take steps to address these matters.

Mr Speaker, I am in the dispatch box, and Leader knows that in the dispatch box, there can be a point of order. I am in the dispatch box. Here, there cannot be a point of order and he knows that. My respected leader knows it. I have good reasons for coming here.

So, Mr Speaker, the ordinary Ghanaian has a legitimate expectation that upon receiving an appointment letter, until he does something wrong or does anything against the company rules and regulations, he is supposed to remain in the employment of that institution. Mr Speaker, state-owned institutions have employed Ghanaians and today, they have been given letters to go home. They are sacking them.

Mr Speaker, look at the extent to which cholera is affecting our people. People are in hospitals and nurses—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, conclude.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I am concluding. That is why I said the last point because Mr Speaker, this is an appeal to the Leader of Government Business to ferry same to the Government.

Mr Speaker, people are being sent home, particularly nurses, and these nurses are in the countryside to save lives. Teachers are in various communities teaching and they are being told that they should pack and go home.

Mr Speaker, *menyo o lo. Menyo o. Esesẽ ɲuto. Tsoo, nukae dzɔ? Mr Speaker, nukae dzɔ? Mr Speaker nukae dzɔ na Ghana ɖeviwo employment na sack sack. Nukae dzɔ? Tsoo Mr Speaker tsoo, tsoo.*

Mr Speaker, in other words I am saying that *ɛdeen na ɛrekɔ so yi? Aden? Obi annya adwuma, morepamo wɔn, tsoo!* Mr Speaker, *menyo. Medekuku na Government, employ the people back. Mr Speaker, medekuku na wo.*

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Leader of the House, please let us indulge him. The Leader is responding

to that. If there is any issue, you can raise it to the Leader to address that.

Yes, Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, yesterday, the Tripartite Committee met to negotiate with Government regarding salary increases. Mr Speaker, at the end of the negotiations, the workers of this country, led by their leaders, the union leaders, happily and gladly accepted 10 per cent increase — *[Hear! Hear!]*—Mr Speaker, accepting 10 per cent increment as against 25 per cent or 12 per cent or 13 per cent is a vote of confidence in the leader — *[Hear! Hear!]*—because they are confident that President John Dramani Mahama, when he collects the public taxes, he will not be flying aircrafts and bathing in the air — *[Hear! Hear!]*—He will not be engaging in profligate spending. He will not be engaging in wasteful spending and because they are confident —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, you are also going there.

Mr Ayariga: But President John Dramani Mahama is going to make good use of their public money—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, you are going there. I hope you would not toe the line.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, he says that once you are standing here, you cannot be heckled, and so you can stand here and take advantage and say whatever you want. So let me also say whatever I want. I am saying that the

workers of this country accepted 10 per cent as a vote of confidence in the NDC Government — *[Hear! Hear!]*—

Mr Speaker, something wonderful happened. For a very long time, Presidents have not been interested in the negotiations but yesterday, His Excellency, President John Dramani Mahama, went there himself in solidarity with the workers of this country because he identifies himself with the workers of this country.

Mr Speaker, that is why they accepted the 10 per cent. They are confident that President John Dramani Mahama will manage inflation better and so if they take 10 per cent, at the end of the year, the value of the 10 per cent will remain the same.

Mr Speaker, the second issue is about recruitments. I think we discussed the matter last week and I made our position very clear. I revealed that during the transition team meetings, we called on Government at that time not to carry out those recruitments and we were told in the face that they will carry out the recruitments and we made it clear to them that if they carry out the recruitments, we will reverse the recruitments. We said it. It was made known. It was public and the reason is simple.

You had created a difficult financial situation and so the point is that when you are leaving office, you should be the last person to try and encumber the incoming Government with bills that they may not be able to afford. So we

cautioned and they refused, and went ahead and did the recruitments. That is why this Government is reversing those recruitments because we told them, we cautioned them. We tried to stop them and they refused and insisted and recruited and we have no regrets reversing those recruitments — [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, on the issue of Message on the State of the Nation —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Amoah, please.

1.09 p.m.

Mr Ayariga: The arrangements have been made and we are sure that His Excellency the President will come here and deliver his address without any hindrance.

On the question of closure of radio stations, of course, this may be a matter of public importance and any Member can make a Statement or ask an Urgent Question and the Ministers may be brought here to answer Questions.

On the issue of curfews, curfews are routinely imposed by the Minister for the Interior. If any Member has an Urgent Question about a curfew or a Statement about a curfew such as what was made yesterday, they can make those Statements and I am told — I was not in the Chamber yesterday, but I am told that the Speaker indicated that the Ministers of the Interior and Defence should be arranged to come and brief the House on these curfews and I believe

that that would be done subject to the availability of the Ministers.

On the issue of the arrangement for the Minister for Energy and Green Transitions to come to this House, I am told he came but he had to leave for Cabinet and could not address the House on the matters that we had referred to him. So we would reschedule the Minister to come back.

The Minority Chief Whip raised an issue of a meeting of the Committee of the Whole to further discuss matters relating to the welfare of Members of Parliament. We can schedule one during the course of the week. On the issue of Ablekuma North, that has been raised several times and I want to draw the attention of Members to a number of constitutional provisions.

First is Article 43 of the 1992 Constitution, and please pay attention. Article 43 says, “there shall be an Electoral Commission...”. It is the Electoral Commission which organises elections. If they have a problem, they should go and see the Electoral Commission. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Speaker, Article 46 also says,

“Except as provided in this Constitution or in any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, in the performance of its functions, the Electoral Commission, shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority.”

So, I only offer to go and ascertain facts and come and report facts to the House, but I cannot direct the Electoral Commission to declare a result. It is not the business of this House to direct the Electoral Commission to declare the result of any constituency because under Article 46, nobody should control or direct the affairs of the Electoral Commission except by law. If one goes to the court, one can get court orders and then the Electoral Commission may conduct itself according to those court orders but it is not for this House to be directing the Electoral Commission.

So all the efforts they are putting into intimidating the Electoral Commission, please cease and desist; do not attempt to intimidate the Electoral Commission from this Chamber, please.

Now, let us go to the question of attending Cabinet and let me educate those who do not understand the business of how Cabinet is managed. There are Cabinet Ministers and Ministers who are not Cabinet members, but attend Cabinet as well as any other person, with the leave of the President.

And when one takes the minutes of Cabinet, one will see that there is a list of Cabinet Ministers who are 19 and all other Ministers, who are not observers, but in attendance. Because the business of the Cabinet is just to advise the President. Cabinet does not take decisions; with all these claims that the Cabinet has taken a decision, no, the Cabinet does not take decisions but advises the President and all decisions

are the decisions of the President. So, he can allow anybody into the meeting to assist him take any decision that he has to take. That is the arrangement that we have and I want to assure Hon Members that as a Leader, I attend Cabinet.

As for nature's call, I think the washroom is still where it is so in spite of the security arrangement that would be made on that day, the washroom would not be relocated but remain where it is. So one can always use the facility.

Mr Speaker, I think that I have addressed all the concerns raised and I, therefore, urge Colleagues to adopt the programme for next week for this House.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, the Business Statement for the ensuing Seventh Week as read to us by the Leader of the House and thoroughly discussed, is hereby adopted.

Hon Members, we would turn to the item numbered 7 — Statements. Yes, Minister for Roads and Highways?

Minister for Roads and Highways (Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza): Mr Speaker, I know we have passed that stage, but I just want to confirm with my Colleagues opposite us, who just left government a few days ago — 10 of them have asked me questions about

roads and I can assure them that I would be here on Friday to answer their questions. It is just an assurance that I will be here on Friday to answer their questions.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the first Statement is a commemorative Statement and we have two Members: one is the Minister for Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts who is the Hon Member for Ketu South; equally, we have the Hon Member for Atwima Nwabiagya North. So, I will ask both of them to read their Statements and afterwards, we will comment on the Statements.

So let me first and foremost give the floor to the Minister, Hon Abba Dzifa Gomashie, to read the Statement on the occasion of International Mother Language Day.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, at Conclave, you had also admitted a Statement which stands in the name of the Hon Member —

1.19 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, I just mentioned it. Yes, Hon Minister, please let us hear you.

STATEMENT

International Mother Language Day

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts (Ms Abba Dzifa Gomashie): Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

It is interesting that the Minority Leader chose this remarkable day to speak two Ghanaian languages when we are celebrating International Mother Language Day. He set the pace and I am very happy about that.

Mr Speaker, the Universal Declaration on cultural diversity states that cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as the bio-diversity for nature. Thank you for the opportunity to make this Statement on the floor of the House, today, 21st February 2024. It marks the occasion of International Mother Language Day, celebrated globally. This year marks the silver jubilee of this observance; a significant moment that highlights the importance of linguistic diversity and the global commitment to preserving mother tongues as essential elements of cultural heritage and identity.

Ghana, as a multilingual nation, is home to over 80 languages spoken across various regions. These indigenous languages are not just means of communication, but also carriers of our collective history, traditions, and cultural values. Unfortunately, many of our native languages are at risk of decline due to urbanisation, globalisation, and limited use in formal education and public life. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO), about 40 per cent of the world's population lack access to education in a language they understand, and Ghana is not exempt from this reality. The gradual erosion of our local languages threatens the very

fabric of our identity and the intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge systems.

Mr Speaker, I wish to commend this House for its progressive discussions on the promotion of Ghanaian languages, particularly the landmark decision announced on 15th February, 2024, prior to the former Second Deputy Minority Leader, Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah's, Statement to integrate local languages into parliamentary proceedings in accordance with Order 63 of the Standing Orders.

This initiative, which includes provisions for interpretation and translation services, is a bold and commendable step towards mainstreaming our indigenous languages in national discourse. It fosters inclusivity and ensures that parliamentary deliberations truly reflect the linguistic diversity of our nation.

Mr Speaker, however, while this decision was a remarkable achievement, its implementation has been slow. We must move beyond commitment and take concrete actions to ensure that our vision of a linguistically inclusive Parliament becomes a reality.

I urge the House to accelerate efforts in providing the necessary resources and infrastructure to make this initiative fully operational. Further, I applaud the former Hon Second Deputy Minority Leader, Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, for his advocacy on the

preservation of the Nzema language and his call for greater emphasis on teaching and learning local languages at all levels of education.

His Statement on this Floor last year, spurred constructive conversations on integrating local languages into basic education to improve comprehension and foster cultural pride. Studies have shown that children who receive instructions in their mother tongue during early education develop better cognitive skills, stronger literacy foundations, and a deeper connection to their heritage.

Mr Speaker, as the Member of Parliament representing the vibrant people of Ketu South, where Ewe is the predominant language, I am deeply committed to advocating for its preservation and growth, alongside other indigenous languages in Ghana.

The Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) has taken commendable steps in publishing educational materials in 11 local languages, including Ewe. However, these efforts must be reinforced with tangible policy interventions, such as increasing the number of trained teachers proficient in local languages, equipping schools with the necessary teaching and learning materials, and ensuring the systematic integration of indigenous languages into the formal education curriculum.

I, therefore, call on the Minister for Education and the Ghana Education Service to take concrete steps toward the implementation of recommendations

made by this House, particularly the adoption of local languages as mediums of instruction at the basic education level. Adequate financial and logistical support must be provided to sustain this initiative, ensuring that our language policies are not merely symbolic, but yield practical outcomes in education and societal development.

Mr Speaker, this year's theme, "Languages Matter: Silver Jubilee Celebration of International Mother Language Day", is a timely reminder that our mother tongues are not just tools of communication, but reservoirs of knowledge, history, and cultural heritage.

As we celebrate this day, let us reaffirm our commitment to linguistic diversity and make deliberate efforts to safeguard our indigenous languages for future generations. By doing so, we preserve not only our words, but also, the stories, wisdom, and identities that define us as a people.

Mr Speaker, Nelson Mandela said,

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart".

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o also said, that language is not just a means of communication; it is a carrier of culture, a reflection of the history and experiences of a people.

Mr Speaker, finally, Maya Angelou also said,

"Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow."

Let us cherish and preserve our Ghanaian languages for they are the essence of our humanity. *Meda akpe tɔxe na mi; mii da nye fɛɛ shi. Tswa! ni omanyɛ abla wɔ.*

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for your attention.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Let me, at this juncture, invite Mr Frank Yeboah, the Member for Atwima Nwabiagya North, to read a similar Statement on International Mother Language Day.

Yes, Hon Member, you have the floor now.

STATEMENT

International Mother Language Day

Mr Frank Yeboah (NPP — Atwima Nwabiagya North): Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion on the occasion of International Mother Language Day. This day, observed globally on 21st February, serves as a reminder of the urgent need to preserve and promote linguistic diversity. In Ghana, where we are blessed with over 80 indigenous languages, this occasion presents an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding our

linguistic heritage for future generations.

Mr Speaker, language is not merely a tool for communication; it is the foundation of culture, identity, and historical continuity. Our indigenous languages carry the wisdom, traditions, and world views of our ancestors, shaping our understanding of ourselves and our communities. Yet, according to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), in 2023, many of these languages are under threat of extinction due to the pressures of urbanisation, globalisation, and the increasing dominance of English language in education and media.

Mr Speaker, according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO), Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger 2021, several Ghanaian languages are classified as endangered, with a declining number of native speakers.

Many young Ghanaians today struggle to communicate fluently in their mother tongues due to lack of formal education in these languages and the growing preference for English language in social and professional settings. This trend, if left unchecked, could result in the extinction of some of our rich languages.

Mr Speaker, Ghana's language policy on education has seen frequent shifts over the years. The current policy mandates the use of local languages as the medium of instruction from

kindergarten to primary three before transitioning to English language. However, its implementation has been inconsistent, partly due to the limited availability of learning materials and trained teachers proficient in indigenous languages.

Mr Speaker, the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL), established in 1951, has played a pivotal role in promoting and preserving Ghanaian languages through publications, translations, and language development programmes. However, the Bureau faces significant challenges, including understaffing, inadequate funding, and lack of modern technological resources. If we, as representatives of the people, are serious about preserving our indigenous languages, this institution must be adequately resourced to fulfil its mandate effectively.

Mr Speaker, beyond Government's efforts, the role of community engagement, digital technology, and media, cannot be overlooked. Promoting indigenous languages on radio, television, and social media platforms can help sustain their relevance among young people. Additionally, initiatives such as oral history documentation, digital dictionaries, and language-learning applications must be encouraged to bridge the intergenerational linguistic gap.

Mr Speaker, I urge this House to support the Government to:

- a) Strengthen the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) by increasing funding and technical support for

its language development programmes.

- b) Ensure full implementation of the language-in-education policy by investing in teaching materials and training teachers in indigenous languages.
- c) Encourage the integration of indigenous languages in technology and media, ensuring they remain relevant in the digital age.
- d) Promote community-led language preservation programmes, including storytelling, oral history documentation, and intergenerational language transition initiatives.

Mr Speaker, we cannot afford to lose our indigenous languages, for in them lies the heart and soul of our identity as Ghanaians. Let us act now to protect and promote them, ensuring that future generations inherit not just the words but the history, values, and wisdom they carry.

Mr Speaker, I thank you once again for the opportunity.

12.19 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, we have three other Statements to take, so indulge me to restrict the number of comments that we would allow. We would have two from each Side and if possible, I may even decline the Leadership. Hon Member for Okere, let me start with you.

Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth (NPP — Okere): Mr Speaker, let me begin by commending the two makers of this Statement in commemorating today's celebration of mother tongue. Particularly, I am also happy that our Minister for Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts was also here to make this Statement.

Mr Speaker, some of us have been promoters of our culture and tradition. Language is one of the first ambassadors that show where one comes from and who one is. It is exciting to know that one's mother language is written and spoken. I come from Okere; we believe that we are one of the early settlers in Ghana.

However, our language has never been written. So, it was exciting when the Bible Society of Ghana decided that they want to translate the Bible into the language spoken by the people of Okere. Early this year, the first chapter of the Gospel according to Mark was read, and one could tell the excitement and the level of understanding when students and very young pupils were made to read the Bible in the Okere language.

Mr Speaker, I add my voice to the call, especially to this House, as a representative of the people, to take immediate action. Mr Speaker, I believe that you would guide us, so that at least, to show commitment to the fact that we want to promote our mother language. So, we can be proud as Ghanaians, speaking our own language.

At least we should be able to work towards a roadmap, so that by end of this year, we would be able to have an agreement of some of our local languages that would be acceptable in this House. This would help us to express ourselves better and our constituents who would also be watching us on the screen and listening to us can also appreciate some of the contributions that we make.

Mr Speaker, it is funny that when one goes on social media, people tend to make fun of some of us that because of the English Language, we are quiet in the Chamber. Why should we be bothered that somebody cannot express him or herself in somebody's language? But this is what we have bedevilled ourselves with, as a country. I am very excited that this Statement has been made and we as a people of Ghana, should be proud to speak our language.

Mr Speaker, somebody just travels outside this country, a year or two, comes back to Ghana and wants to put a tone to his own mother language. It spikes some sense of inferiority complex—We were here and communicating very well in our local language before the Europeans and other foreigners visited us. I am very excited and that is why I want to add my voice to this.

Mr Speaker, I would end by reiterating the point that we should take some immediate actions and have a roadmap, so that Order 63 can be looked at—the adoption of some languages that cut across all the sections, the length and

breadth of the country be adopted in this House. So that other people can frequently express themselves and demonstrate that we are proud of our own language.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Speaker, thank you so much. Yes, let me give the floor to Hon Member for Dadekotopon.

Ms Rita Naa Odoley Sowah (NDC — Dadekotopon): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I want to commend the makers of the Statements on the International Mother Language Day.

Mr Speaker, it is exciting to note that we have a number of languages in our country, Ghana. But it is heartening to note that most of these languages are not well taught. When you come to the Greater Accra Region, it is predominantly the Ga language that is spoken.

But most of the time, in our schools in the Region, the Ga language is not taught but the Akan language is rather taught. It is our desire that when teachers are trained in the Ga language, they be posted to schools in the Greater Accra Region.

But most of the time, when these teachers are trained in the Ga language, the Ministry of Education—I am calling on the Minister to support us in this direction—Most of them are posted to

other areas to teach other subjects instead of the Ga language.

Mr Speaker, most parents and grandparents do not speak their mother tongue or mother languages with their children and their grandchildren. They tend to speak English language instead. But I believe when children are brought up in their mother languages, it helps them to put together the structure of even the English language. So, I want to encourage parents and mothers out there to ensure that they speak their mother tongues with our children and our grandchildren. I am sure most of us here in the Chamber would be found wanting in this direction where when one goes to some homes, a parent can tell one that their child does not understand their local language, but instead understands only the English language.

As we celebrate the International Mother Tongue Day, I want to urge all of us that wherever you hail from, speak that language with your child or grandchildren. As a woman from the Dadekotopon Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, I wish to urge my Ga people to ensure that we do not lose out on the Ga language, but ensure that we teach our children and our grandchildren the Ga language. So that when it comes to where we have to speak the Ga language, we would not be found wanting.

Also, any other language, whichever region or town one comes from, please let us ensure that we speak our languages with our children and learn other languages from Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you for the opportunity. On this day, as we celebrate Mother Tongue Day, I want to urge the people of Dadekotopon that—

Mi manbii ne yɔ Dadekotopon kɛ Greater Accra fɛɛ, mikpa nyɔ fai ake wɔfɛɛ wɔ wie Ga. He fɛɛ— [Interruption]— we are in Greater Accra so I would speak the Ga Language— *he fɛɛ ne oje huo ye Ghana, kɛ ji Akanyo ji bo, fante nyo jibo, ewenyo ji bo jio, oge North jio. kɛ obi lɔ awie oman wiemo.*

To wit, “wherever one comes from, speak your mother tongue with your children and grandchildren.”

Thank you so much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, let me give the opportunity to the former Minister for Education, Hon Dr Yaw Osei Adutwum.

1.39 p.m.

Dr Yaw Osei Adutwum (NPP — Bosomtwe): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

I rise to add my voice to the Statement ably made by our two Colleagues regarding the International Mother Language Day.

Mr Speaker, as a former Minister for Education, I am deeply aware of this issue, the opportunities it presents and the challenges we face as a nation. As a Member of Parliament, when I go to the villages, nobody complains about the

fact that their children cannot speak their language.

When I visit Bonkoko in Bosomtwe Constituency, children speak their language fluently; they do not have any issue or concern. On the other hand, when one meets and visit Colleagues in their homes and attempt to say a word in the local language to their children, that is when it will be realised that we have a challenge. This is because the child would look at the person and have no clue what he or she is talking about.

I do not think it is intentional. There is no parent who does not want their children to speak their language but we have a challenge in this country. The lack of policy on second language or English language acquisition triggers this rush of parents sending their children to schools where they would only speak English. They send their children to private schools where the language of instruction would be English because the mark of success of a student is measured by how well and eloquent they are in the English Language. How do we blame these parents who are making investments in the future of their children? The language of instruction is in English and that is what they think would accelerate them and make their children do well academically.

Mr Speaker, in countries like the United States of America (USA), there is a policy that regulates English language acquisition for children who come from homes where English is not the primary language. Students are

assessed annually to see if they are proficient in the English Language so, parents feel comfortable speaking to their children in their mother tongue knowing that, their children are not going to be shortchanged in the education system.

But looking at what is going on here at the Ministry of Education where we have encouraged the use of the mother tongue in the official policy, what we realised was that the children could not do fractions by primary three because there was not enough vocabulary in their local languages to teach fractions.

If they were in a private school, by primary three they would be able to do fractions. We have children who are walking into high schools where they do not speak any Ghanaian language but they are Ghanaian children. We have students graduating from universities and would practice as medical doctors but they cannot speak a Ghanaian language to be able to have a conversation with a patient who cannot speak English.

So, in our middle-class homes we have a challenge. This will continue unless we have an English Language acquisition policy in our schools that can assure the parents that irrespective of the fact that their children are being taught in the local language, they can still master English. So, there is no cause for alarm, their child's future will not be at risk. Given what the two speakers eloquently stated on the benefit of knowing a second language, the brains development is enhanced and a

number of benefits come when a person can speak two languages.

So, Mr Speaker, as we commemorate this day and look for a way forward, I think our education system should look at an English language acquisition policy where parents would be assured that even if their child is taught in their mother tongue up to primary three, they would still master the English Language and would not be left behind. When that assurance is given and we have a well thought out policy for English Language acquisition then, parents are going to be convinced that speaking their language or talking to their children in Ga or Twi is not something that would make them fall behind.

Emmerahyebadwam Kyeame, anɔpa yi, me da wo ase se wo maa me akwanya na me kyere m'adwen wɔ saa ekwan yi so se, Ghanafoɔ nkwadaa ebe ka Twi, Ga, Dagbaani, ebe ka kasa biara. Na brɔfo kasa mu nso no, obiara entumi ensisi won, won betumi aka kasa no fefeeɛ. Me da wo ase. [Hear! Hear!]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon Member for Chereponi?

Mr Seidu Alhassan Alajor (NDC — Chereponi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to add my voice to the Statement.

The reason people are shying away from speaking the local language is because people in Africa and Ghana mostly have the perception that when a person speaks the English language accurately, it is a measure of intelligence,

which is not the case. People think that because of inferiority complex, once the child grows up and is able to speak the English language grammatically correct, that child is going to be a smart and intelligent child.

In Ghana today, in schools and in classrooms when children speak the local language, teachers tend to discipline those children, saying that the language is vernacular. It is not allowed but only English is allowed. These are the things that discourage our children from learning our mother tongue. We must do away with this kind of training from our homes, schools and even in this Chamber. When Hon Members interact with their Colleagues and try to learn the others language, if they make a slight mistake, they tend to mock the person. But, if they speak English, German or French, the person is considered a smart person. That is not acceptable.

We must show that Africa and Ghana had our own language before the migration of the Germans, French and English to Africa. We must hold strongly to our dear language.

One would go to some families' homes, like the former Minister for Education said, when they are greeted in their own language, they respond in English. When one tries to interact with the kids in their own language, they respond in English, meanwhile, the mother and dad are from the tribe or speak the same language but they do not speak the Ghanaian language to the

children. This is because they want to make sure that their children go out and speak big grammar then, they know that their child is attending this school or that school.

Mr Speaker, we must do well as Ghanaians and as Africans to ensure that our mother tongue—I speak Chokosi and I am here today to represent the good people of Chereponi and I appreciate them for giving me the mandate to represent them here.

I want to stand here to say: *M bisa am awo. N ja awo, N bo awo Be Nyeme duuri su Am afa m aba fen ka M ba jina fen na m ni ambere na ya bo anzama Deke kere bo i kɔsu Ghana n nu Na mini mmɔɔ fa n konvi Na n fa buka su. I ti ye ni ka, i ti ye ni ka Wɔrɔ kere bo awu baa A ama i si Anufo anie ni Na i si kpankpama anie Na i si Bimoba anie, na i si ɛɛ, Hawusa. M̀a am ma ya kan nasara nasara sanga kere. Nasara ni, i cin ya kɔ ya sin wɔ. So m da am asi.*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, just say whatever you said in English for *Hansard* to be able to capture.

12.39 p.m.

Mr Alajor: Just to summarise, what I said is that I appreciate the good people of Chereponi for giving me the mandate to represent them. I also entreated them to teach our kids the local language, which is Anufo, the Kokomba language, Bimoba, Hausa and Fulani Language. These are the indigenous languages in my Constituency so, I entreat them to let

the kids learn those languages, that is the mother tongue. That is who we are; we are not Europeans, Germans or Americans. We are Ghanaians and we must learn our language.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I am looking at those who have not spoken.

Let me give it to Hon Member of Parliament for Ahafo Ano South West, Hon Dapaah Elvis Osei Mensah.

Mr Elvis Osei Mensah Dapaah (NPP — Ahafo Ano South West): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and I would commend the makers of these Statements. In fact, we being Ghanaians, we have taken it that there is a prestige attached to speaking of English, Dutch and many languages overseas.

Now here is the case, to me, it is neither here nor there. I may encourage especially, all languages—Over 46 or 80 plus, that we should embark on it so that at least, wherever we stand, we would be able to express ourselves in our local languages.

Based on Order 93, I would not talk for long but all I would want to say is that, *mekrom Ahafo Ano South West fuɔ, yenso yebeka ye Twi biri a yebe duru abrokyireman mu anaa se ɔman biara yebe wura mu ewɔ wiase afanan nyinaa. Onyame nhyira yen.*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, just to allow the *Hansard* to

capture what you just said, just briefly state that in English.

Mr Osei Mensah: I was just trying to greet the people of Ahafo Ano South West Constituency—Just to encourage them to speak the Twi wherever they go even in America, Germany, France or wherever they find themselves, they should express themselves the Twi language. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I believe a lot of people are desirous—Let me give it to Okaikwei North.

Ms Theresa Lardi Awuni (NDC — Okaikwei North): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. Let me add my voice to thank the maker of the Statement and add that it is important that we teach our children how to speak the Ghanaian language first.

Mr Speaker, sometimes, when you go to our schools, our kids are forced to learn other local languages that they do not understand. I would want to encourage that, in every Region, the first language of the Region should be compulsory for all students to learn and if they want to learn any additional language, they add that to the curriculum or add it to the choice of the student to take up.

I was born in the Greater Accra Region; if I was born in America, I would have said that I am an American. But I was born in Greater Accra and my mother gave birth to nine of us of which I am the seventh born. All of us were taught to speak our local dialects.

I remember my elder brother who was frequently speaking Ga in the house and each time my father was coming from the office, my father used to work with the University of Ghana, they would turn around and say, “*Nuumo mli ba ee!*” to wit, the old man is coming and it means we had to switch from Ga to our native language. My father got angry one day and then carried all of us to the North, that we should go and learn our local dialect before we come back. So, we did more than a year in Bolgatanga and today, I can freely speak my dialect—*La-ansɔ*. I frequently speak Ga because it is my first native language that I learnt—“*mi wieɔ Ga ojogbaan ejaake Gafɔmɔbi ji mi*” to wit, I speak good Ga because I was born in Greater Accra but I did not stop at that. I also went further to learn the Frafra language. I come from Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region and so I speak Frafra a lot.

It is discouraging for people who are supposed to know better, we sometimes sit on the airwaves and cast insinuations. Recently, our former Minister for Information was heard on radio saying that Members of Parliament (MPs) on this Side cannot speak in Parliament because they cannot express themselves in the English Language. This was a Minister for Information. This was somebody who was our Minister for Information. She is my very good friend but her statement was unfortunate.

So, I would plead that, we be the ones out there to chart the path for everybody to follow. When one goes to places like Germany, even if they speak English,

they would force one to learn their language first. One cannot work with them unless the person learns their language. People say they are racist but I think it is the way to go. If one is in Ghana and a Ghanaian or from Bolgatanga, Greater Accra—Students in Greater Accra are being forced to learn Twi instead of the Ga language and I think it is something that we should all—We would plead with our Minister for Education to look at it for us.

Mr Speaker, before I take my seat, *mbo nsuri zaɲwa mbe farafara. Mboo Okaikwei North dumba zaɲwa mbe farafara. Mbo frafra dumba zaɲwa mbe farafara. Frafra ye tuw lawi ye tuwa tupa'l tutu pa tu zam' he. Tu zam he farefare. Tupa tuba baɲ kama' tuye towɔ.* To wit, Mr Speaker, let us teach our children to speak our dialect and speak it fluently because it is only from the house that we tell them what is right. When they go out there, whatever their colleagues teach them is what they take.

So, everyone here should make it a point to teach our kids—It is unfortunate that some Members of Parliament speak English with their children in the house. When one says, “*sɛbi, baa ho ni maya gbe bo po, amɛ le nɔ ni owieɔ*” to wit, when someone tells them that they should go, so that they cut off their head, they would not know what is being said.

Please, I would like to thank the maker of the Statement. Let us not just speak on the floor of Parliament, let us take it out to our constituencies and practise it.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, I said two from each Side but I think I have gone beyond that. I am taking the last one and it is going to be very brief.

Doctor, you have spoken so let me give it Hon Damoah. But please be brief.

1.59 p.m.

Col Kwadwo Damoah (NPP — Jaman South): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to add my voice to the celebration of the Mother Tongue Day. I also want to commend the two makers of the Statement to which we are making contributions.

Mr Speaker, I am a Bono and my local dialect is Bono and I am happy to announce to this House that just last Tuesday, 18th February, 2025, a Bono-Twi project was launched in Sunyani; we have a Bonoman Institute and attempts are being made to document and make it possible for pupils and students in Bono Region to have Bono language as one of the languages used for examinations and all purposes.

They are trying to have Bono Bible so that we can read in the Bono language. The meeting at Sunyani last Tuesday had a theme, “Language: Our heritage and way of life”, and the project entailed

documentation, preservation, promotion, writing and the use of the Bono Language as well as its adoption as a local language in the curriculum for schools in the Bono Region.

Very important dignitaries attended this project, and among them was the president of the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference of Ghana, the vice president of the Bono Regional House of Chiefs, representatives from the Bureau of Ghana Languages, the Bible Society of Ghana (BSG), and corporate organisations. We also had representatives from the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Ministry of Education.

Our expectation is that the Bono language, even though it is similar to some other Akan languages, would have its distinct recognition and would be used by pupils and students in the Bono Region. We have gone—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Col Damoah: Mr Speaker, as you allowed others to speak in their local dialect and since I am the lone ranger for NPP in Bono, the people of Bono would want to hear me speak Bono in this House.

An Hon Member: *Benkoto bensore.*

Col Damoah: That is also one unfortunate thing: the “*bɛ*” in Bono means “they” as a pronoun, so if you are not saying “they”, just as you cannot say “I see” in English, you cannot say “*bɛ*” when you mean one person or it is

singular. “*bɛ*” is plural, meaning “they”, and it is not only Bonos who speak “*bɛ*”. Along the western frontier, we have the Nzemas and Ayiis; all of us speak “*bɛ*” meaning “they”.

Me nuanom, me da Nyame ase sɛ ndɛ dadua yi, me nya akwanya me ka bono ɛwo Ghana Parliament ma Bono fo nyinaa bɛ te me nka. Yɛ re bo mpae sɛ nhyehye a aban reye sɛ yɛ nyinaa de bono kasaa ɛbɛ sua adeɛ na yɛ de akanne Bible na yɛ de aye nnooma wɔ yen sukuu mu. Abusuafo a hom wɔ bono man mu a hom wɔ sika na afade a mobetumi aboa, obiaa mfa ne ntoboa ne nimdeɛ na yenhwe sɛ yen kasa no, y’ani begye hon a yede adi dwuma ama Ghanafo nyinaa ahu sɛ ampa yɛ nso yɛ wɔ kasa bi.

To wit, I am appealing to all Bonos to be happy about the fact that now, we are making a deliberate and conscious effort to have the Bono language to be recognised, documented, written, and used for all purposes in schools in the Bono Region, and to also have the Bible written in the Bono language. [*Hear! Hear!*]

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much.

Hon Members, let me finally give opportunity to the Minister for Education who is actually in charge of the training of our children and the need for them to inculcate our mother tongue in their training.

Minister for Education (Mr Haruna Iddrisu) (MP): Mr Speaker, let me thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement ably made by the Hon Frank Yeboah on International Mother Language Day which falls on 21st February, 2025, and to commend him for making a Statement.

Mr Speaker, to begin with, as I listened to the debate of Hon Members, I am sure that it is not out of reach that one of these days, you would have to declare, on the floor of this House, a local language day. And every Member of Parliament must be compelled to speak and debate in his own mother language as part of our collective quest to encourage the use of local language.

Mr Speaker, the second point is to appreciate that in Ghana, there is no policy shift. Policy mandates the use of local language as the medium of instruction from kindergarten to primary 3 before transitioning to English. The policy remains the same, but there are difficulties. Apart from the Akan, Ewe, Ga, Ga-Adangbe, Gonja, Kasem, Dagaare, and Dagbani languages, for many of the languages, there are only reading materials at the early grade.

What the country needs is for our intellectuals to develop textbooks in local languages for its use in our pre and basic education institutions. All the Ghanaian languages in Ghana have no textbooks, so if we say we want to encourage the teaching of the Ghanaian language, how are we going to do it?

So, Mr Speaker, as Government, we will be reviewing the curricula from pre basic school to primary six, and we will inculcate in it—I just recently announced the teaching of even ethics and integrity, so that young people grow to know that they have a responsibility to the country and they must grow to be responsible citizens who love their country. We are discussing how ethics and integrity will become an essential part of the training of young people. But the problem we have at the Ministry of Education and particularly, GES is the lack of Ghanaian language textbooks. We should encourage persons in academia to want to write in those languages.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude with my broken Twi. When I was Minister for Labour and Employment, there was a day mortuary men said that they were going on strike, so I went to the Korle-Bu mortuary to engage—Both doctors were on strike.

Mr Speaker, I would speak Twi and end in Dagbani—*[Hear! Hear!]*—*Me kɔ duru hɔ no, na ɔmo dwene sɛ me nte Twi anaa ɔmo kasa a, me nte aseɛ. ɔmo se, wo Haruna, wo be tumi awura ha? Mo ntua yen yie na wo Haruna, wo be tumi awura ayaresabea? Ye se government government, Ebola body I carry, AIDS body, I carry, look at my pay; feri hɔ—[Laughter]*—

Mr Speaker, to wit, a mortuary man was sharing with me his plight as a Ghanaian worker said, “Haruna, Ebola body I carry, HIV/AIDS body I carry; look at my pay. It is not good enough.

You work for Government; go and tell your Government to pay us well". Little did he know that I could understand the particular language in which he spoke.

Then in some other by-election, I saw some of our own Colleagues speaking Twi and Ewe. They did not know that my Aid spoke fluent Ewe, but I would not dare speak that one, apart from *mia woezor*, I cannot risk anything again. *[Laughter]*

Mr Speaker, we should also encourage the teaching of local languages. The socialisation of a child is a shared responsibility between the parent and the teacher. We can imagine a mother and father, if we say the child should go and learn English, assuming the mother and the father are both illiterates, how is the child going to begin learning English in school? So, the fundamental is that both the parent and teacher need to work together for the upbringing of the child, and it must necessarily begin with the local language.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank him for bringing up this UNESCO day, and together with our Colleague, I also commend the Hon Dzifa Gomashie on the occasion of International Mother Language Day. Just to paraphrase her last paragraph, she said that, the Bureau of Ghana Languages has taken commendable steps in publishing educational materials in 11 local languages. Mr Speaker, there are several local languages in Ghana, more than 11; we cannot have the Bureau publish only 11 languages.

Then to the Member of Parliament for Savelugu, we can speak some Dagbani now. *Naawun' ni deei suhugu. Dama tiraabi tehi ni a di. Kug'maa ka ati dili maa. [Laughter]* To wit, to God be the glory because we did not expect her to win the seat, but she won. To spring a good surprise on her, but she knows what I am saying.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Ms Fatahiya Abdul Aziz (NPP — Savelugu): Mr Speaker, I thank you, and I thank my Brother.

One of the things Hon Haruna and his people used against me when I went to Savelugu was that, she cannot speak English. Meanwhile, when we go on campaign platforms, we speak Dagbani, and, in any case, my predecessor never spoke any proper English, so I was surprised they used that against me.

So, Hon Haruna, *ni sogu ka ti che kati yeri Dagbanli kpe*. To wit, I will support you so that they permit us to speak Dagbani here, so that in our next Parliament, Hajia Fatahiya Abdul Aziz would be back here.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, we would take the second Statement. Like I said, we have three more Statements, and the second one is from the Hon Member for Assin South, Hon Rev John Ntim Fordjour, and the topic is on the deportation of

Ghanaian citizens in the United States of America.

Hon Member, you have the floor now, but before then, may I indulge you to grant me another five minutes suspension.

2.07 p.m.— *Sitting Suspended.*

2.09 p.m. — *Sitting resumed.*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Rev John Ntim Fordjour, you may read your Statement.

STATEMENT

Deportation Of Ghanaian Citizens in The United States of America

Rev John Ntim Fordjour (NPP — Assin South): Thank you Mr Speaker, I rise to make a Statement to address the alarming and deeply troubling deportation of the 156 Ghanaian immigrants from the United States. Since the beginning of 2025, we have witnessed an aggressive crackdown on undocumented immigrants, leading to the forced removal of thousands of immigrants in the United States, many of whom have lived in the United States for decades, built families, and contributed meaningfully to their communities.

Mr Speaker, what is most distressing about these deportations is not only their scale but the inhumane treatment our citizens endure at United States detention centres before their forced removal. Stories in the new reports paint

a grim picture of our fellow citizens subjected to degrading conditions, overcrowded and unsanitary holding facilities, shackles on their hands and feet, denial of legal representation, physical and verbal abuse, lack of medical care, and many cases outright violation of their fundamental human rights. Mr Speaker, these Ghanaians, though facing deportation for various reasons, remain our brothers and sisters, we simply cannot turn a blind eye to their suffering.

Mr Speaker, the question before this House and the Government is, what immediate diplomatic measures are being taken to ensure that the human rights of Ghanaian immigrants in the United States are protected? Our citizens deserve fair treatment, and it is imperative that our government demands accountability from United States authorities regarding the treatment of deportees before their return. I urge the Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration to strengthen its diplomatic engagements to negotiate humane and appropriate deportation processes and ensure that the basic human rights of our dear citizens are not trampled upon.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, we must address the urgent issue of reintegration. Many deportees arrive in Ghana with no resources, no jobs, and no clear path forward. Some have spent most of their lives in the United States of America and will struggle to integrate back into Ghanaian society without support. It is, therefore, crucial that the government,

through the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment, establish structured reintegration programmes, including job placement initiatives, skills training, and mental health and psycho-social support for returnees. We must ensure that they are not left to suffer in silence.

Mr Speaker, due to various factors including economic hardships at home, many of our citizens have undertaken high-risk and precarious migration in search of better opportunities abroad. Therefore, addressing unemployment and expanding economic prospects is crucial in curbing the number of Ghanaians turning to irregular migration.

Government institutions, particularly the Youth Employment Agency (YEA), must take decisive action to combat unemployment by creating sustainable job opportunities and offering skills development programmes. Even more productive will be for the government to support and incentivise the private sector to create more jobs for the youth.

Mr Speaker, one of the most heartbreaking consequences of these deportations is family separation. Parents are ripped away from their children, spouses are left in limbo, uncertain about their future, and families are torn apart without any clear pathway nor hope to reunification. Many families have been shattered by these mass deportations, with parents separated from their children and spouses left stranded. I strongly urge the government to work through our embassies in the United States to

facilitate family reunification processes, ensuring that those affected have a clear legal pathway to reconnect with their loved ones.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I propose that the Government instruct our embassies in the United States to fast-track passport processing for undocumented Ghanaian immigrants who wish to regularise their status or make informed decisions about their future before deportation becomes their only option. A proactive approach could prevent further suffering and allow those affected to navigate their immigration challenges with dignity.

Now, more than ever, it is imperative for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration to lead the charge with alacrity in providing extensive consular services for Ghanaians living abroad, especially in the United States while deepening bilateral engagement with USA in relation to modalities of deportation.

As I conclude, Mr Speaker, we cannot remain silent while our citizens are treated unjustly abroad and left helpless upon their return. It is our responsibility as a nation to stand for the dignity and rights of all Ghanaians, no matter where they reside. I urge this House and the government to take immediate action to address this pressing issue.

I thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Hon Members, we are

going to invite two from each Side. Yes, Hon Member for Suame.

Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah (NPP — Suame): Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the Statement by my Brother, Rev John Ntim Fordjour. Mr Speaker, listening to him, one of the things one could come up with is that these deportees will be brought to Ghana but if one follows the American news cycle, one will realise that not all of the deportees are being brought to the country.

Indeed, Marco Rubio, who is the Secretary of State, has informed the United States that Panama and El Salvador have accepted to receive deportees from all nationalities into their country and Mr Speaker, when one follows the news article, one will see that El Salvador received these deportees into one of their notorious prisons, and the conditions in these prisons are so bad, they are not good for human beings to live in. These are the places where the deportees are being sent to.

We also realise that when the deportees are being sent outside the United States, we have seen news cycles which show that they are put in military planes without even proper seats, and so they travel in a very extreme and inhumane manner. This means that the United States has changed. I believe that the USA, which used to be the promoter of human rights, has changed its policy because of the kind of immigration policy that is being enforced right now.

Mr Speaker, for me, I believe that the reason people go over to America and these European countries is to seek for greener pastures. These days, we do not have political asylum seekers out of our country any longer. Indeed, if you go out there as a political asylum seeker from Ghana, you will not be accepted. It tells you where we have come as a country. The only reason people travel out of the country is because they are seeking to better their lives. Mr Speaker, it means for us as a country, we need to do better to provide jobs and job opportunities for the people of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I will not be able to end this Statement without also advising our people who have travelled outside the country, especially in the United States, to also take care of themselves and be law-abiding because one of the fastest ways to get arrested and be brought down is when you commit an offence.

In the USA, police will not be able to stop an individual without a just cause so, when you are driving a vehicle, you need to ensure that you have everything on the car, the car number, the lights, everything is working properly. Without a just cause, a police officer in the United States will not be able to stop you.

So, let us be law-abiding when we move from our country to live in places like America. If we do that, I believe that the rate of deportation will be low. On that note, Mr Speaker, I thank, the maker of the Statement, and thank you for giving me the opportunity. I yield the floor.

2.19 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, I thank the maker of the Statement and thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Member for Chereponi?

Mr Seidu Alhassan Alajor (NDC — Chereponi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to add my voice to the Statement. I have lived in America before and I know how the system works. I am very sure they know what they are doing and all I can say is that our citizens in America must always carry along with them the right document wherever they are going. I have friends and family there and I am always in touch with them. I believe that they are law-abiding Ghanaians.

The Ghanaian community in America and anywhere in the world are always law-abiding citizens; we represent the country at the highest level in terms of discipline, moral rights, behaviour and attitude towards our neighbours. I believe that the Trump administration knows exactly the worth of Ghanaians.

If one goes to America today, one would find Ghanaians in every office; in the hospitals and working hard at the grocery shops. We serve to the best of our ability wherever we are.

I believe the policy that the American government is presently executing—America is mostly inward; they consider what is best for them and Ghanaians also understand and know very well that wherever we represent ourselves, we live with the right behaviour. So I believe that Ghanaian citizens in America must always carry the right documents wherever they find themselves in order to avoid any litigation. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: At least, we have one of our own who used to be a diplomat. Hon Diplomat, let us hear you.

Mr Charles Asuako Owiredue (NPP — Abirem): Thank you Mr Speaker, I want to associate myself with the Statement made by the good reverend.

Mr Speaker, it is true that when people are arrested especially in the United States, they are subjected to some inhumane conditions. I remember when I used to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where we had times to complain about deportees being chained on flights from the United States of America to Accra. Ghanaians would be chained and not even allowed to pee on flights. I think that it is high time we looked at this issue and see what can be done about it.

At the Embassies, often when Ghanaians are arrested for violating immigration conditions in the State, they do not even inform the embassies. We only get to know when the American

authorities come for travel certificates to aid in the deportation of these detainees. Other than that, officials do not even know so I think that we would have to take this matter seriously with the Embassy here in Accra. The Minister for Foreign Affairs must also engage with his or her counterpart in the United States.

Mr Speaker, luckily for us, I think that we have the name of the top-most envoy to the United States yet to be mentioned by the President. We are yet to hear who is going to represent our interest in the United States as the ambassador. I am pleading with the President to get someone who has a network within the top echelons of the conservative establishment in the United States.

It should not be appointments as usual, where we have the former top official of a party representing the interest because, under this era of gunboat diplomacy of Trump, we need people who have the network; people who can engage the Trump administration to get our bit of the national cake of America. And if we succeed in doing this, it would help us a long way.

Mr Speaker, again, I would also want to talk about the Consular Fund which is yet to be established. The Minister for Foreign Affairs when he appeared before the Appointment Committee did say that this year, he is hopeful that the Minister for Finance would allocate some funds to this Fund. It would be very good if this is done.

Mr Speaker, at the embassies, often when Ghanaians are subjected to these deportation orders, officers of the embassy would have to sit down and do *lala su lala*. When I was the High Commissioner in South Africa, I called my officers to contribute to buy the tickets for deportees who were brought home—and we are all aware of the meagre salaries we take abroad.

Mr Speaker, it is good that this Consular Fund is being brought into fruition and we expect that the Minister for Finance will put some huge amount of cash into this fund so that when deportees are subject to deportation, we will be able to buy their tickets and help them come home safely.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I want to thank you and the maker of the Statement.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: All right, the last one. Yes, Hon Member for Kintampo South.

Ms Felicia Adjei (NDC — Kintampo South): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by Rev Fordjuor. Before I continue, I want to make a point of correction because this is a House of Records.

Mr Speaker, when they deport anybody from abroad, it is only when the person has done something bad, something criminal, that they are handcuffed. Most of the time when one

is deported it is not all the time that one is handcuffed.

2.29 p.m.

But the most important thing is that when something happens to someone outside the country, it is not even easy to get officials from the embassies. Something will happen and when we call the embassy—It has happened to me before. In 2019, when I was a Member of Parliament, I lost my bag in America. I was lucky because Hon Adwoa Safo was in America then and she happened to be with the Ambassador. They had to make another passport for me to come to Ghana.

So, most of our friends and family outside, it is not that they do not want to call the embassies but when they do, the way the person would even respond to them is very sad. Imagine being outside the country and something has happened to you—Mr Speaker, these are some of the things that we pray that His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, which I know he would do, would start this apprenticeship programme because we have a lot of people who go to Libya through the desert—My Constituency—

That is why this apprenticeship is very good. They would go to Libya and come back as masons or terrazzo tilers. They are very good, especially with the way they lay their blocks; so if this 24-Hour Economy and apprenticeship programme—*[Interruption]*—so we would give them a technical skill just for them to learn so they can sit in their country and work to pay their taxes.

Mr Speaker, in November, somebody was appointed. I do not even know whether it was in November or December in Atlanta's office. I do not know, Ambassador—I stand corrected. Imagine that time the person was appointed—Let something happen to somebody in Atlanta and call that office and see if somebody would pick up the phone—I am a witness. So, I pray that the new Minister for Foreign Affairs whom we know very well and is good, Mr Okudjeto Ablakwa, would change things at the Embassy so that our people there too would have people to call when they are in trouble.

Thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me come to the Minority Chief Whip.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I am privileged to have chaired the Committee on Foreign Affairs of Parliament, once upon a time. And my Ranking Member, interestingly then was the now Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Okudjeto Ablakwa. We cannot pretend about this matter; it is something bothering our minds and has kept us wondering. I have been particularly worried about it because we have seen footage of—I would not say Ghanaians because I am unable to confirm their identity. We have footage of our fellow human beings, Africans, put in chains and deported to their countries.

Mr Speaker, suffice it to say that we have international protocols on such undertakings and hence, where

countries have shown commitment to such protocols, countries in partnership cannot decide to do otherwise. And I could not have agreed more with my Colleague when he said the United States of America (USA) is respected for human rights and dignity of human beings. What is happening is not right and we cannot pretend about it. I think by this time, it should not be at the instance of we, Members of Parliament. The Minister for Foreign Affairs should be in this House to tell us in terms of giving us situational report. Nobody is saying he has caused it, no. This is not the first time deportation is happening, but the circumstance under which it is going on, is totally unacceptable and it frowns on human dignity.

Mr Speaker, I think we must take interest in this. I would have wished that the Committee on Foreign Affairs goes into this, invite the Minister and come and apprise us accordingly. We as the representation of the people must know what is happening; how many Ghanaians have been deported so far and what is the situation? We read on international media that Ghanaians cannot even go to churches. People cannot go to church; they cannot go about their social work and all that.

It is a problem and I would have wished that—We would grant the Government the benefit of the doubt because I know under the 24-Hour Economy, the Government would be able to encourage Ghanaians to move from the USA and come to Ghana because they are going to create more jobs. *[Laughter]* We would give them

some time to set the tone, create jobs and let Ghanaians move because all the people outside would be more willing to relocate and come and support the building of our country. Many of our compatriots who are outside the country want to come to this country and help in the building of our country, especially, on their call of 24-Hour Economy.

Mr Speaker, I want to limit myself to the terms of the Statement and not to generate any debate. However, if at one instance, they are displaying a 24-Hour Economy and they are telling us—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Leader, you said it rightly. Let us not degenerate into politics because this is a very sensitive topic and I do not want us to—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I would draw the curtain. If it is a case that they are afraid of their own 24-Hour Economy, that is fine because I wanted to put matters in context.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: No, Leader, this is a Statement. So let us refrain from that. I beg of you.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, you know I respect you and your rules but the fact must be told. Now that you have cautioned that I should stay away from the 24-Hour Economy—and they themselves are afraid of their 24-Hour Economy, that is fine. I would stay away but Mr Speaker, let it be put on record that on this day, my respected Colleagues in the Majority are shying

away from the 24-Hour Economy and they are saying I should not go there. *[Interruption]* That is fine; I will not go there. Let me rather conclude that it is a matter we do not have to politicise. Our own Ghanaian compatriots are outside. One can never know; it could be one's family relation or somebody dear to us.

Mr Speaker, we cannot wish this matter away. I want to pray your consequential directives. Because we do not have our Committees, the Minister for Foreign Affairs should be duly programmed—Thankfully, he is one of our own—to come to this House and let us know what the situation is. He should give us some situational report; how many Ghanaians have been deported so far? What is the situation? What is the capacity of our embassies outside to be able to contain the situation?

Mr Speaker, we cannot wish this matter away and I would be very glad if per your wisdom, we programme the Minister for next week. We are free on Tuesday; we are told His Excellency the President would be in this House on Thursday. So, we have Tuesday and Wednesday. Between one of these days, he could be programmed, or even on Friday, for the Minister to come and address this sensitive matter.

At least, Ghanaians should know that something is being done and we cannot invite anybody than the sector Minister to come and apprise us and Ghanaians would be able to know what the situation is. As for the 24-Hour Economy, we have to be proud about it.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Majority Leader?

2.39 p.m.

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, sometimes, I am careful when commenting on matters like this. What is the background? We must always be guided by the fact. The fact is that some people living in their country have laws about how one enters and stays in their country. We go into their country and we either go in clear violation of the laws or we try to stay in their country in clear violation of the laws.

They decide to enforce their laws and we are at the receiving end of their desire to enforce their laws. So, when discussing a matter like that, one should be a bit careful because one cannot be too much against somebody who is insisting on enforcing the laws of his or her country. Yet, we have a duty at all times, no matter what happens, to protect our compatriots wherever they may find themselves. That is why I join Colleagues in calling on our missions abroad, especially in the USA, given that they know around this time, the USA Government has taken a decision to enforce its immigration laws and many of our compatriots may be at the receiving end and may be deported, that they should extend to them their basic rights as citizens of our country.

They must be available to extend whatever support that our citizens may need in order that they may not be treated inhumanely. I join Colleagues here to

urge our foreign missions to be very responsive, especially around this time.

But Mr Speaker, we as a country owe them a duty, not just because they are compatriots, but their presence there over the decades have contributed to our welfare back here. Because if we look at the statistics and the revenues that come to our country, remittances are one major sources of foreign exchange that come into this economy. So, they have been contributing to the development of our economy.

So, I urge our Side, that when they are afflicted with such circumstances and they return home, we must have a buffer for them. We must make provision to receive them and make arrangements to help them to reintegrate into our society. I think that the Minister for Foreign Affairs will be up and doing in putting in place infrastructure to do that.

Mr Speaker, we are all just looking at the symptoms of a problem and failing to address the underlying cause of the problem, which is what I think the Minority Chief Whip alluded to. Why do our people walk across the Sahara Desert and risk to cross the Mediterranean Sea, just to cross into Europe? Why would they risk crossing the Atlantic Ocean into South America, and also walk across the desert through Brazil into the United States of America (USA)?

Mr Speaker, the underlying issues remain poverty, lack of economic opportunities, bad governance, and conflict on our continent, and these are the underlying issues that we must

address so that when they want to travel to any of those countries, they go there just as tourists or even as investors, as we now see from Asia to North America, then to Europe. Instead of those of us in this Chamber and the political class lamenting about the decision of the USA to enforce their laws, and the treatment that they may mete out to our citizens, let us sit up and look at the fundamental issues.

The underlying causes, which is the way we have mismanaged and misgoverned our countries, the way we have wasted our resources, the corruption that leads to enormous loss of revenues to our states, our inability to create the best healthcare system for our people, and our inability to provide our people with the best skills, so that they can compete—The USA and Europe need skilled labour. If we trained our people well and they were the most skilled, they would be here and the USA would look for them and Europe would beckon to them to come over.

The whole idea of green cards and *et cetera* are all just mechanisms for bringing in certain categories of labour. People who have the green card and live there are not treated the way these deportees are treated. So, we need to take seriously the commitments that the NDC has made in the manifesto to try and build the skills of the youth.

Mr Speaker, it is the way forward; that we invest in human resource development and skills. When our youth are skillful—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, are you also touching on this point?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, we are dealing with the underlying issues of immigration and migration, and what we should do to deal with it. I really had no objection with him providing such guidance. I think—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You had no objection, but I did. I equally have a problem with that.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, no, anytime he mentioned the 24-Hour Economy, the reason you heard some responses from this Side was that, they were excited that he was in love with the 24-Hour Economy. That he is the person engaged in advocacy of the 24-Hour Economy. [*Hear! Hear!*] That was why we responded; not that we were objecting to him mentioning the 24-Hour Economy. Indeed, we are happy when Friends on the other Side show that they accept the policy of the 24-Hour Economy the way Ghanaians accepted it and voted for NDC massively.

Mr Speaker, I think that as a political class, we owe it a duty to all those young people who have died in the Mediterranean Sea, died walking across the Sahara Desert, and who have been victims of rape, arson, killings in South America, trying to walk into the USA. We need to sit up and start running our countries properly, creating real opportunities, building their skills, and making the best use of our resources to create economic opportunities for them. I am not saying

there would never be migration, but if we did this, we would significantly minimise it. So that, when there are immigration enforcement measures in the USA, we would not be having sleepless nights about our family members being deported, because they would not be the target. This does not just apply to Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I have been a Member of the ECOWAS Parliament and this is a major issue for the sub-region. How we can ensure that we minimise conflict because it is one of the reasons many of our populace are compelled to migrate. They migrate within West Africa and some migrate across the oceans. Unless we fix our countries and deal with conflict, we would not easily deal with the problem of migration.

Mr Speaker, let me join Colleagues to commend the maker of the Statement for drawing our attention to this situation, and to join them to urge our Minister for Foreign Affairs to put in place adequate measures to support our compatriots who may be victims of deportation by USA.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, on that note, I would invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs to come to the House on Friday, a week today, to at least—

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, you said the Minister for Foreign Affairs, so you

can ask that we find out about his availability and bring him to this House. Because the Minister for Foreign Affairs' job is to go "foreign", so he might not be available on Friday. *[Laughter]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Anyway, let us get the information to him. If he is not available, he would let us know. Majority Leader, please, just carry the message to him that if he would be kind enough to be in the House on Friday, to, at least, brief the House on the matter. If there is something that would restrain him, he would let you know. I think that is all right, so let us move on.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, we have a duty to help you navigate properly. We must also put on record that his duty as a Minister is to Ghanaians. Of course, we agree that the portfolio is Foreign Affairs. Mr Speaker, let it be on record that it is this House that normally invites Ministers and not the other way around for the Ministers to say that as and when they are available. It cannot be the case—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Minority Chief Whip, we have gone past this.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, your directive should be that the Minister should come on Friday and that is your directive. The respected Majority Leader—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip, I think—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, that is your directive, that he should come in on Friday. We need the Minister here on Friday. The Majority Leader also speaks in support—*[Interruption]*—I am out of order?

2.49 p.m.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, I am just saying that this particular Minister is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his duty is to represent us at international conferences, African Union (AU) meetings, United Nations (UN) meetings, and all other international events. So, I just cautioned that we should not fix a particular date. Let us consult him, get his availability, and then communicate to the House. But to just say that he has to come on Friday—If he is not in the country on Friday, we would be forced to come and tell you that he is not available on Friday.

I would not say same in relation to the Minister for the Interior and the Minister for Defence. But for the Minister for Foreign Affairs, please, let us not be rigid about it, but make it subject to his availability. Mr Speaker, you know that this is somebody who likes to attend this House, so ordinarily, if he is in the country, he would love to come here. He is one of our very punctual MPs. Please, let us not create an impression that Ministers do not want to come to this House.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Minority Chief Whip, please—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, I plead with you. I represent my people. This is the Minority. With respect, we should not set that precedent. Over the years, the practice has been, communication and directives from you. Go to the Ministry, and where they have difficulty, they write to the House.

Mr Speaker, let it be as you have directed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: So, that is so; that is what I have said. I said Friday.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Exactly, it should remain like that. If he has any difficulty, he should get back to us.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: That is fine.

So, the third Statement is a Statement from the constituency of the Rt Hon Speaker, that is Nadowli/Kaleo constituency. This Statement is being read by Hon Anthony Sumah, on the need for a legal and regulatory framework on human organ and tissue donation and transplantation in Ghana. Hon Member, you have the floor now.

STATEMENT

Legal and Regulatory Framework on Human Organ & Tissue Donation and Transplantation

Mr Anthony Mwinkaara Sumah (NDC — Nadowli/Kaleo): Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity to make this Statement in an effort to underscore the need for a legal framework to

regulate human organ and tissue donation and transplantation in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, in recent times, there have been numerous calls from various stakeholders including the media especially, a campaign by *Ghanaweb*, health professionals as well as health institutions on the need for a legislation to guide the harvest, storage and transplantation of human organs and tissues. These concerns reached the summit a few months ago following the increase in the cost of dialysis for patients patronising the renal unit of the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital and the associated controversies that ensued.

Mr Speaker, the justification for the proposal cannot be overemphasised. Fundamentally, it will facilitate and streamline the availability and the provision of this life-saving medical intervention. The matter in question has gained currency to the extent that it has become a subject at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and World Health Organization (WHO) resolutions.

Mr Speaker, the proposal for legislative enactment is further necessitated by the following: Firstly, globally, only 10 percent of tissue and organ transplantation needs are met while the need in the African region including Ghana is largely unknown though estimates point to a worse situation.

The epidemiologically trend is quite alarming with unofficial records suggesting that 13 per cent of Ghanaians

have one form of a kidney challenge while over 1000 persons are undergoing dialysis. The extent of the problem could be worse as there exist no effective system to diagnose kidney and kidney related diseases beyond the urban centres such as Accra and Kumasi.

Thirdly, the incidence and prevalence of human organ trafficking and transplantation tourism in the Africa Region, including Ghana, equally require adequate measures to overcome. The availability of the capacity in terms of the skill set and medical expertise to conduct the services but hindered by the lack of enabling framework, is yet another justification.

Organ transplantation is a high value medical treatment which is a life-saving option to patients with end-stage organ failure. It improves the quality of life by restoring organ function and eliminating debilitating conditions associated with chronic organ failure such as poor mobility, depression and infertility. It therefore presents a more useful intervention compared to dialysis in perpetuity.

Mr Speaker, facilitating organ donation and transplantation will contribute to significant cost-saving for both patients and the health system as a whole. This is because between GHC600 to GHC1200 is spent on a session of dialysis while it will cost the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA) a sum of about GHC2.3million annually to cater for the dialysis needs of persons below 18 years and above 60

years. Comparatively, a one-off transplant provides long-run cost saving together with accidental benefits of enabling reintegration, employment and educational opportunities.

The excessive cost of procuring a kidney transplant outside this country is estimated at about \$250,000 particularly in Asia compared to having it conducted in Ghana, and the preliminary estimate puts it at \$21,000, also provides an additional impetus for the need to facilitate the provision of this medical services domestically.

Mr Speaker, the statute, if enacted will make provision for a council, transplantation centres, cell banks and prohibit commercial dealings in human organs, tissues and cells. It will provide a system for equitable access to transplantation services across the country. It would also make it an offence for illegal dealing with human organs, tissues and cells. It would also protect the integrity, dignity, identity and guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms with regard to the donation and transplantation of human organs, tissues and cells.

Mr Speaker, it is important to call on the relevant stakeholders particularly the Ministry of Health to take the necessary steps to facilitate the enactment of the legislation. Secondly, this House can equally activate its processes in support of this call. Finally, I wish to call on all other stakeholders to play their respective roles to ensure that the passage of legislation on the subject matter takes effect.

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you once again for granting me the opportunity to bring this important matter to the attention of this august House and the country at large.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, this is an important Statement, but I am compelled to take one person from each Side because we have another Statement. I believe all of us are tired.

Let me go to the pharmacist and educationist, Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah.

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (NPP — Offinso North): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I would like to commend the maker of the Statement, the Hon Member of Parliament for Nadowli/Kaleo constituency on the need for a legal and regulatory framework on human organ and tissue donation and transplant. Mr Speaker, most of the time, when we talk about organ transplant, everybody's mind turns to the kidney. We forget about the heart, liver, pancreas and most of the time we even forget about the intestines and the lungs.

In order to govern and ensure that we have an ethical practice as far as organ and tissue transplant is concerned, it is critical that we as a country have such a law in place. A typical example we want to look at is the United States of America. They have what we call the National Organ Transplant Act of 1984 which prohibits and regulates the organ transplant and how it gets to another patient. They also have, in addition,

what we call the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA) that also regulates how people can give their organs to people.

Mr Speaker, it is quite unfortunate that we in Ghana still do not have such a law in place because what happens is that there are different approaches. Most countries may want to look at presumed consent, some countries may look at what we call the informed consent and some countries may look at what we call the required request system. Because we do not have any legal system in place, people are able to do whatever they want, disregarding the risks that come along with transplants.

But if we should have this law in place, Mr Speaker, what it is going to do is to help any one of us who could be at an end-stage where we may need an organ transplant. But because we do not have a legal system in place, we do not have a system where we can locate and identify the number of people that are in need of transplant and how many people that are ready to donate their organs for transplant.

In such countries that have such laws in place, people are able to either go under the presumed organ transplant system or the consent system. In that case, people can decide, when going for their driver's licence, to voluntarily donate one part of their organ when they pass on or they can give that permission to their relative to be able to do that. So, it is critical that we have such a thing in place.

Then, of course, because we also do not have an Act in place—A country like the United States of America right now is talking about over 104,000 people who are on the waiting list to receive one organ or the other for transplant. But because we do not have it in place, we are not able to justify who should be fairly given a transplant or an organ because we do not have this law. So, it is critical that we have this Act in place.

In that case, when any of us is in need of an organ or the ordinary man in a small village like Brehoma in my Constituency needs an organ transplant, they will be treated fairly. This is because we are all human beings so, when we need an organ, we have to be treated fairly.

2.59 p.m.

It is very critical that we have this organ donation legal framework in place.

Mr Speaker, one other thing that could also help us—When it has to do with organ transplant, there are a whole lot of risks that go with it. And because we do not have any legal framework guiding organ transplant, we realise that people go through crude means to be able to either acquire organs or to be given organs.

But if we have these things in place, we would be able to help curb what we call the surgical risk that comes with organ transplant. And many times, these surgical risks are taken for granted. But while we are trying to solve a problem,

this ends up giving us another problem. And most people tend to bleed to death. Most people tend to get infections while going through this transplant. And most people tend to have problems with complications that come with anaesthesia.

Mr Speaker, looking at all the risks that are involved, the fact that people could voluntarily donate their organs, the fact that people could be treated fairly to receive an organ, and the fact that as a country, we can make resources available, and also train people to have the capacity to be able to go through a proper transplant process. We need to have this framework in place so that this country could make some budget available and can also make sure when our people should receive it, they can be treated fairly.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, Dr Sandaare?

Dr Sebastian Ngmenenso Sandaare (NDC — Daffiama/ Bussie/ Issa): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. I want to commend the maker of the Statement, the Hon Member for Nadowli-Kaleo Constituency, for his Statement on the need for a legal and regulatory framework on human organ and tissue donation and transplantation in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member has done a very good work. This is one of

the very important Statements in this House, and he has demonstrated his competencies as an expert in health policy. He has identified one of the gaps in our health system; the absence of legal framework to deal with this very important area, and he has provided the justification on some of the areas that would guide formulation of a legislation and legal framework in this area.

Mr Speaker, he has advanced the need where more than 10 per cent of need in Africa in this very important area. We could go to special centres, for instance, if we take the fertility centres and visit those facilities, we would understand the need for women and men struggling and doing everything possible to get a child. Many of the centres are filled up, but there is really no legal framework or legislation to guide. In this country, we have specialist centres that can do liver and kidney transplants, but we need some legal framework to ensure that things are done according to law and that the rights of people who donate and people who receive these tissues organs are respected.

Recently, there has been an issue of dialysis for kidney failure patients. But one other area is kidney transplant. Because if you are able to get a kidney from a donor, you live longer, but for dialysis, you have to struggle for so many sessions and only God knows for how long you live. All these justify that there is a need to look at this area and ensure that we have a legal framework that guides many of these specialist centres that we have in this country. Because medical technology has

advanced and therefore our laws must also be advanced to accompany this advancement in medical technology. So I support the maker of the Statement.

Mr Speaker, I also appeal that you refer this Statement to the Ministry of Health to study it and have a look at it and that would guide us to ensure that we develop a legal framework in this particular area.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I think this is a very important Statement, because I have also come across some of the medical personnel commenting on this, that Parliament should legislate on these matters. So I think consequently, I will refer this particular Statement to the Minister for Health to actually look into it and see if legislation could be crafted into this particular matter.

Hon Members, we are left with the last Statement, and that Statement is coming from Hon Member for Akwatia, Hon Ernest Kumi. It is about enforcement and responsible mining practices.

Yes, Leader?

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, this House needs to be careful. Mr Speaker, if you look at our Constitution, Article 127—

Mr Speaker, if you have a copy of your Constitution, let us look at it together. Article 127 talks about the independence of the Judiciary. It says that:

“Neither the President, nor Parliament, nor any person acting under the authority of the President or Parliament nor any other person whatsoever shall interfere with Judges or judicial officers or other persons exercising judicial power in the exercise of their judicial functions; and all organs and agencies of the State shall accord to the courts such assistance as the Courts may reasonably require to protect the independence, dignity, and effectiveness of the Courts subject to this Constitution.”

3.09 p.m.

Mr Speaker, if you look at our Standing Orders, it is also clear on your functions and your responsibilities as a Speaker. Let us go to Order 20. Mr Speaker, Order 20 is clear that the Speaker shall uphold the honour, dignity, and sanctity of the House. Mr Speaker, the maker of the Statement has been convicted by a High Court.

I have read it in the papers and on social media and he wants to come and stand in this Chamber and make Statements so that this House will be telling the courts that it does not matter what one does.

Mr Speaker, it does not uphold the dignity and honour of this House.

[Hear! Hear!] It does not uphold the dignity and honour of this House that he has been convicted by the courts and indeed, the basis of his conviction is a conduct in this Chamber. The basis of his conviction is a conduct in this Chamber. He was cautioned that if he insisted and had himself sworn in as a Member of Parliament in the face of a restraining order by a court, if the court came after him, he would be accountable alone. We would not be part of it. This was made very clear in this Chamber and he took it upon himself to take the risk that he was ready to take responsibility for his conduct.

Mr Speaker, it is time for him to go and account for his conduct. But, for him to come and stand in this Chamber and we will all participate by sitting here to listen to him make a Statement as if the courts are nothing, Mr Speaker, I am not ready to be part of it.

So, I have strong objections to him reading a Statement in this Chamber because the courts have convicted him. He should go and appeal against the conviction, have it set aside and come back. We have a duty as a House to uphold the dignity, integrity and the respect of our courts and the rule of law. He is aware. The Minority Leader on several occasions told the Speaker that even if he was not served, once he became aware of a decision of the courts, the Speaker must act on the basis of him becoming aware. So, it is not a question of whether he has been served. He is aware that the courts have convicted him and he wants to come and stand in this Chamber and make a

Statement. I cautioned. I said do not do that, do not make a Statement.

Mr Speaker, so, we have strong objections.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Minority Chief Whip?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Let me allow my Colleague.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Afterwards, you would not comment, please. This is not a matter of debate. I am giving the opportunity to you because you are a Leader. Once you yield it—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, this is a subject matter which is very important as legal jurisprudence of our parliamentary democracy, and also in respect of separation of powers. It is important that Mr Speaker, we educate ourselves on this matter and I will defer to you. If it is the case that when he speaks, I will not speak, so be it. But I thought that he being an industry person, we should hear his side or what input he can bring to the matter at table. Then we can conclude on that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: What I am saying is—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect to our Colleagues, when the Leader was speaking, we all paid attention and listened to him in silence. Why can they not listen to our Side in silence? Why? Or is the Parliament of this Republic

one-sided? It is not right. Anytime we are on our feet, they want to interfere, why? When the Leader was speaking, we listened to him. They have to stop this. It does not help.

Mr Speaker, my point is, please, with the greatest of respect, and I am saying this because we were at Conclave, we engaged on same subject matter, and Mr Speaker, you decided to admit the Statement. You were not under duress. Mr Speaker, you exercised your powers to admit and the admission of Statement is in the bosom of the Speaker. So, Mr Speaker has admitted a Statement and upon hindsight, some concerns come up. We all have to be patient and listen.

Mr Speaker, on this note, I pray you that we listen to our Colleague. When he is done and you find it needful to listen to me, so be it. *[Interruption]* Otherwise, we can proceed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah?

Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah (NPP—Manhyia South): Mr Speaker, I am very grateful for the opportunity and I am also very grateful to the Minority Chief Whip.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, why?

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, I am also very grateful—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I have asked him to speak on behalf of the Leadership, so afterwards— *[Uproar]*

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, I am also very grateful to the Minority Chief Whip who is keen on seeing to the development of his first timers. Minority Chief Whip, may you live long.

Mr Speaker, it is important we emphasise that the principle of separation of powers does not mean that Parliament is inferior to the Judiciary. It is very important. The protection which is given by the Constitution, in the same token —[*Interruption*—The Hon Member is saying that the African wear is improper dressing. *Ei!*

Mr Speaker, in the same token, the Constitution also protects Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, when one looks at Article 117 of the 1992 Constitution, it is one of the means by which the Constitution protects Members of Parliament.

3.19 p.m.

Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, if I may read;

“Civil or criminal process coming from any court or place out of Parliament shall not be served on, or executed in relation to, the Speaker or a member or the Clerk to Parliament while he is on his way to, attending at or returning from, any proceedings of Parliament.”

Mr Speaker, the Standing Orders even does the job. Starting from Order 25,

which is titled, “Matters Relating to Criminal Processes.”

Mr Speaker, it is very important, that we emphasise that contempt proceedings are quasi criminal. In other words, it is like criminal.

Mr Speaker, when one looks at Order 25 (3), it says that;

“Where a Member of, or the Clerk to Parliament is convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction, the Registrar of the court shall, within twelve hours after the conviction, inform the Speaker of the conviction.”

Mr Speaker, do you have any notice from the court?

Some Hon Members: No!

Mr BaffourAwuah: Mr Speaker, it is very important that we do not go searching through newspapers or listening to news to find out which Member of Parliament has been convicted. Mr Speaker, that is not our job. Our job, very respectfully, is to represent our constituents in Parliament and serve as Legislators.

Mr Speaker, if there is any conviction, same will be served on you. Until that is done, Mr Speaker, respectfully, it appears that what we are being fed in this house by the distinguished and venerable Majority leader would thus, appear to be a hearsay. Very respectfully, Mr Speaker, Parliament does not dabble in *akeekakee*, *ye see ye see*.

Mr Speaker, unless there is notice, very respectfully, what has been brought before you would seem to be *akεε akεε, yε see yε see*. Mr Speaker Order 25(5) says that,

“Failure of the Registrar to inform the Speaker constitutes contempt of Parliament”.

Mr Speaker, it may seem that the Majority Leader is bringing to our attention contempt of Parliament by the Registrar of the court if there is any such conviction, is that what the Majority Leader is doing before the court? Venerable Majority Leader, distinguished Majority Leader, is it that you are bringing to the attention of the court contempt of court by the Registrar of the court? Or are you now the Registrar, very respectfully?

Mr Speaker in the circumstance of this, this Parliament cannot trade in *akεεakεε* to disenfranchise or disallow a Member of this House from performing his legislative duty.

Mr Speaker, I am very grateful, and in conclusion, I want to thank once again the venerable Mr Annoh-Dompreh, the MP for Nsawam/Adoagyiri, for the encouragement he is given to the Backbenchers. Hon, we are grateful. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the Hon Member who just spoke, cited Order 25 of our Standing Orders. Mr Speaker, Orders 25 and 24 deal with the service

of processes. We are not talking about the service of processes.

Mr Speaker, secondly, Order 25 talks about detention. “Subject to Order 24, where a Member of or the Clerk to Parliament...”—*[Interruption]*—Please, listen.

“Where a Member of or the Clerk-to-Parliament is restricted, detained or arrested, the person responsible for the restriction, detention or arrest shall within six hours of the restriction, detention or arrest inform the Speaker of the restriction, detention or arrest.”

Has the man been arrested?—**[Some Hon Members:** No]—Has he been restricted?—**[Some Hon Members:** No.]—Has he been detained?—**[Some Hon Members:** No]—So, how does Order 25 come into play?—*[Uproar]*—

Mr Speaker, here we are talking about a conviction. He has been convicted—**[Some Hon Members:** How do you know?]

—Mr Speaker, I know because he is defending his right to speak here because he said even if he has been convicted, if we have not been properly served, then we should not deny him a right to speak in this Chamber. That is what he said. He is not denying that he has not been convicted.

Nobody in this Chamber is denying that he has not been convicted because they know he has been convicted. It is public knowledge. It is common knowledge. It is been covered widely by the media, and my argument is that this

House must respect a coordinate branch of Government. We will not arrest him and hand him over to the judges. We will not arrest him and hand him over to the prison authorities, but we will not condone him coming here and boldly making Statements on the floor of this House, as if we don't care about the Judiciary and what they are doing.

It does not speak well of the rule of law; that somebody who knows very well that he has been convicted by the court for a conduct that he engaged in this House and we cautioned him in this House. We said look, there is a court order restraining you from being sworn in. If you refuse and you allow us to swear you in, you will be held accountable, and he said yes, he is ready to be held accountable. Now he has been held accountable by the courts and he wants to come and use this Parliament as a shield.

Mr Speaker, it will not happen. This Side will not allow that. We will not allow him to make the Statement on this Floor because he has been convicted by the courts. At least he should go and file an appeal and seek to stay the execution of the orders of the court, then we know that due process is being complied with.

Mr Speaker, I want to indicate clearly that if you insist and admit this Statement and you allow him to make the Statement, this Side of the House will wash their hands off and walk out and leave you to make your Statements—[Uproar]— We will wash our hands off because we do not believe in undermining the Judiciary. We do not

believe in undermining the rule of law. We will not join you to undermine the rule of law. We will not join you to undermine the judiciary. We will wash our hands off and then leave the Chamber.

3.29 p.m.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I was watching proceedings from my office and I heard you call the Member for Akwatia to make a Statement which you duly admitted. Upon calling his name, the Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business rose up relying on Order 20 and Article 127 of the Constitution and argued.

The first leg of his argument, invited you to uphold the dignity of this House and generally, to help in respecting the independence of the Judiciary. Let me say that those submissions he made, though they are legal submissions, but I find those submissions very rich in the context that he submits same on the floor of this House.

Mr Speaker, first, the applicant—In October 2024, a matter arose regarding some vacant seats. I, as the Leader of Government Business, feeling dissatisfied and upon reading the Constitution, felt that the right place and forum was the Supreme Court.

Mr Speaker, the Majority Leader, who was a *de facto* legal advisor to the then Minority Frontbench, was very much aware of the matters in issue. I first sought an *ex parte* relief. I first

applied to the court, invoked the jurisdiction of the court through an *ex parte* application, and made all the matters known to the court and the court ruled in my favour. That order of the court, staying the decision of the Speaker, which stay of execution allowed the Majority to stay in its place, was forcefully challenged.

With all the energy from the Majority Leader who was a *de facto* legal advisor to the Front Bench.

Mr Speaker, his Side did not respect the Supreme Court. In fact, physically, they moved in to occupy the seat of the Majority.

The issues were determined after the parties had filed all their written submissions and argued in court. The Attorney-General (AG) was the first respondent, the Speaker of Parliament was the second respondent, and when the Court finally made a determination, Hon Mahama Ayariga, MP for Bawku Central as he then was, now he is a Majority Leader, but then he was not, argued on radio challenging the Court. They still occupied our seats, making it virtually impossible for Parliament to Sit.

Until after the elections, there was not even any discussion, they got back and because they knew they had won, they resumed their seats on the Minority Side without anybody telling them that go and sit on your own seat. Mr Speaker, this is the same person who today is talking about law. This is by way of my preliminary observation.

Now, let me respond to him on the proper law. But as smart as he is, and as I know him to be when he was landing, he argued some law to create a ventilation for his argument. And it is that ventilation that I will use to arrest his argument. What was the ventilation? He said unless the Member has filed an appeal and is staying in the execution of the order. I am able, as a Leader of my Side, to provide him with the information that if his consent is about the rule of law, the Left Side will always respect the rule of law.

The Hon Member has indeed filed an appeal, filed a state of execution, and for their information, there was a stay of proceedings application pending before the very judge, yes, and he is a practitioner. Mr Speaker, there was also an application invoking the supervisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Article 132 of the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, the Court below, the High Court in Koforidua had been served and the registrar of the Court had brought that process to the attention and notice of the judge. Our Side, even where we disagree, will not go insulting judges. The fact that we have been quiet does not mean that we think the judge has been fair to us but you will not see us calling the judge names. We are not like some people. When we disagree with a judge, we will use lawful process and means to challenge the orders of the courts.

Mr Speaker, we are saying that there is a process pending before the courts. There is no finality in the matter in

issue. The Hon Majority Leader who raised the matter knows very well that a conviction, even if the Member has been served, the judge himself said he was going to have time.

Members of both Sides — *rose* —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, hold on.

Yes, Mr Dafeamekpor, let me hear you.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to intervene in pursuance of Order 122(1a). First of all, it is most inaccurate for the Minority Leader to submit on this Floor that the Majority at the time, before the general elections of 7th December, forcefully refused to respect the court order. It cannot be accurate. The terms of the Court order were specific. The Court orders were directed at the Speaker to perform a certain function and being the occupier of that seat, we submitted that until that decision was taken by the House, the status quo ante will remain. What was the status quo ante?

Our position by occupying the Majority Side before the court decision. That cannot be erroneous in law. The Court itself ordered that the House must take that decision. So for him to submit that we unlawfully, forcefully and refused to obey the Court order, that cannot be allowed to form part of the records of this House. Tomorrow it can be invoked against us.

That is one. Secondly, Mr Speaker, when one is convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction, one does not file stay of proceedings; they have been convicted.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge. He has been convicted. Please, I am not misquoting the Hon Minority Leader. I heard him clearly. — *[Interruption]*— Mr Speaker, I have not yielded the floor to the Hon Minority Leader. I have not. So, he should listen to me in much pain and in silence. I know he will come back. If a Member is convicted by a competent court of jurisdiction, what follows is sentencing and that is what is pending in this matter. One does not file a stay of proceedings, with all due respect. Mr Speaker, I rose, — Mr Speaker —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Dafeamekpor, listen. He was speaking. I would have given you opportunity to also speak if you had allowed him to finish. I thought you were coming on a point of order.

3.39 p.m.

Mr Dafeamekpor: But Mr Speaker —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You have raised the issue, let him finish.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I am not done. I anchored my submission pursuant to Order 122(1a). I am not done.

Mr Speaker, sometimes, you give the Minority Leader one hour to make

submissions. I have not even done five minutes. So, permit me. This House is a House of politics. What he is doing is politics. It is not religion, it is not faith, it is not economics but it is politics. What they seek to do is politics and we cannot allow politics to impound the integrity of the courts We cannot.

Mr Speaker, this House is mandated by law not to engage in an irregularity in any unlawful conduct. We cannot participate in it and we cannot allow the House properly constituted, to engage in it. It cannot. So, the information before this House is that the Hon Member for Akwatia has been convicted and he has become a fugitive of justice. — [*Hear! Hear!*]— He is a fugitive of justice. For what follows conviction is sentencing. What he should be doing is sending his lawyers to the High Court to submit a plea of *allocutus*, a plea of mitigation pending sentencing.

Mr Speaker, we will not and with all due difference to my Leader, he gave a direction. Yes, by all means we will take that. But we will not yield the Floor. We will not disengage; we will not depart. We will not participate in any proceedings that will allow the Hon Member to have locus to make submissions on the Floor. It will not happen.

Mr Speaker, so let me conclude by saying that the Minority Leader, an able lawyer that he is and as eloquent as he is, should be advising his Colleague to go and respect the court and submit to the powers of—even if he is proceeding to the Supreme Court or whichever

court, he needs to submit to the jurisdiction of the court first of all. He cannot be doing so as a fugitive of justice. An arrest warrant has been properly issued, for his arrest that this House, cannot gloss over the issuance of an arrest warrant for him and still permit him to have locus.

Mr Speaker, on this note, we want to urge you that, Leader, if I have your permission, let me move that the House be adjourned. [*Hear! Hear!*]

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

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, let me refer my Colleagues to the decision of the Supreme Court on 18th October, 2024. This is what the Supreme Court said;

“The Parliament of Ghana is hereby directed to recognise and allow the four Members of Parliament here renamed to duly represent their constituents and conduct full scope of duties of their offices as Members of Parliament pending the determination of this suit.”

Mr Speaker, in his submission, the Majority Chief Whip said that the court decided that this House should take a decision. The court directed—if people are diluting their law with politics, they should dilute it properly because these are reputational issues. The Supreme Court did not urge upon us to take a decision. It directed and I submit that they refused to respect the decision of the Supreme Court. That is what they

did and today, I am directly confronting them with that decision you took in October.

Mr Speaker, that aside, in my earlier submissions, my argument was to the effect that prior to the conviction, the court was seized with an application to stay proceedings. I did not say the man filed a stay of proceedings pending appeal. I did not say that.

He had a stay—Mr Speaker, I know some people at the back there, I am aware they have finished their Bachelor of Law (LLB) and I know they are still attempting to get into the Law School. I am a practitioner. —[Uproar]—Mr Speaker, I am a courtroom practitioner. I know courtroom practice and courtroom rules. So, I am talking law and I want my Colleagues to listen. I am saying that Mr Kumi had filed a stay of proceedings application which application was pending before the court at the time that the same court was seized with the application committing him for contempt.

The court was aware and I am saying that the court after taking a decision, there is a stay of execution and a notice of appeal. These two processes have been filed. If they do not know, I am letting them know now. It is most unfair for Mr Dafeamekpor to describe a respected Colleague as a fugitive. Never! Never again should such a statement come out of the mouth of a Colleague. Maybe today he finds it convenient but trust me, karma awaits

each one of us. He cannot describe his Colleague as a fugitive.

3.49 p.m.

The man has submitted to the authority of the court and it is the reason he has filed a notice of appeal and has supported that notice with a stay of execution. There is an application of a stay of execution.

Mr Speaker, meanwhile, let me also inform this House that prior to the High Court coming out with that decision, the High Court was again seized with the application, invoking the supervisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court on its conduct, because the Registrar of the Court had been served and the Court indeed was on notice, but decided to proceed. We do not mind because we believe that we can still rely on judicial processes.

Again, I said that our Side does not turn to insults. We would not go to radio stations to insult judges when we disagree with them. It is the reason we have been most decent. We would not go attacking a judge on social media and using unprinted words on them just because we disagree with them, no.

Mr Speaker, the invitation to you to restrain the Member from making his Statement is most unfair. That invitation sits on stilt and it is not based on any solid foundation in law. An attempt to be hoodwinked into any valley of confusion would amount to a general confusion in this House.

Because the Majority Leader knows that he was only doing politics and not doing law. In this House, how can a Member of Parliament (MP), who in the performance of his parliamentary duties has not been served with a court process—*[Interruption]*—

[Hon Members of the Majority Side rose and banged their tables]

Mr Speaker, let them sit quietly and listen to me to finish my submission—If they want—*[Uproar]*—Then let us all rise.

[Hon Members on the Minority Side rose]

Mr Speaker, it is clear that the Majority Side does not want anybody else to speak when they speak. This was started by him and I am responding to his arguments—*[Interruption]*—Mr Speaker, he has to listen to me—*[Uproar]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: When Afenyo-Markin speaks, many of the Members from the Majority Side would get up on a point of order—They cannot tolerate—*[Interruption]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, if you would not allow me, I would go ahead and suspend the House—*[Hear! Hear!]*—

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: You would not adjourn the House. Mr Speaker, they want an adjournment; we would argue the case today and there would be no adjournment. Let us argue the issue—*[Uproar]*—They are running away. They want the House to be adjourned.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the time is 3.55 p.m. and Members are in my hands. The House is adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was adjourned at 3.55 p.m. till Tuesday, 25th February, 2025, at 10.00 a.m.

