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THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Tuesday, 21st January, 2025

The House met at 11.48 a.m.

[MR FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER IN
THE CHAIR]

PRAYERS

ABSENCE OF THE SPEAKER

Ag. Clerk to Parliament (Mr Ebenezer Ahumah Djietror): Hon Members, I wish to bring to your kind attention some important information. This is to inform Hon Members that the Rt Hon Speaker is unavoidably absent—*[inaudible]*—on a mission and in accordance with Standing Order (12)(2), ...the First Deputy Speaker shall perform the duties and exercise the authority of the Speaker in relation to all proceedings of the House until the Speaker resumes the Chair.

Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Mr Clerk.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND
THE OFFICIAL REPORT

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, correction of *Votes and Proceedings* of 9th January, 2025.

Page 1... 3 —

Mr Matthew Nyindam: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Unfortunately, some of us are left inadequate because we are not following what you are doing. The system is not working—I know you want to talk about the system but unfortunately it is not working so if Mr Speaker could give us some time so that we can get the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip.

Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, my Hon Colleagues are justified in raising—*[inaudible]*—I want to further corroborate with them. Ordinarily, this is not how it should be. The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Department and the other offices that are involved—in times past, no—*[Interruption]*—in times past, where new systems are introduced and we have to depart from what we are used to, we are given prior notification. This approach of coming into the Chamber and being hit in the face with this surprise, cannot be justified.

Mr Speaker, the Clerk—I know he is a very efficient person and I see the incoming “somebody” staring at me. This should not be an issue at all. They should have given us prior notification through the Hon Whips and that has been the approach. The Hon Majority Chief Whip is leaving so he is not paying attention. They should give us the notification and we communicate same with Hon Members so they are armed with it before they come to the Chamber. Why? They should be able to deal with it. The systems are not working.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, this should not cause too much problems. Let us proceed with the correction of the *Votes and Proceedings* with few people—Hon Members, hear me out—so that if any Hon Member thereafter has an issue with the *Votes and Proceedings*, it can be taken up with the Table Office.

Yes, Hon Member.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, the challenge is that it is only a few of us who have copies of the *Votes and Proceedings*. Yes, we agree that we would deal with it, but in the meantime let the Table Office hurriedly work on getting us copies of the *Votes and Proceedings* then we can follow—*[Interruption]*—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, we are speaking the same language—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: But Mr Speaker, they do not have it.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: So those who do not have it now, can take it up with the Table Office whatever issue they have with the *Votes and Proceedings* and the necessary corrections would be effected. I give the floor to Hon Governs Kwame Agbodza, the Majority Chief Whip.

Mr Governs Kwame Agbodza: Mr Speaker, thank you.

As a matter of fact, when we started the Ninth Parliament, the Acting Clerk to Parliament, through the ICT Department

took us through some work in terms of introducing us to the new system we are going to use. This morning, the ICT Director actually came in and told us that Parliament—well, as we know, myself and my Hon Colleague were part of the people who talked and got Parliament to improve on our working tools where we have screens in front of us so that we can limit the amount of paper we print.

Mr Speaker, this morning, we were taken through and, in fact, I can see the *Votes and Proceedings* on my screen. So, it is difficult to hear how some people can see the same thing and others cannot. I know it is technology. It can happen that one or two may not have it but I know that in Parliament, sometimes, if one wants to speak and their microphone is not working, all that the person does is to move to the next screen because one does not need any login. It is here—so, we are saying the same thing. The Minority Chief Whip is an advocate for climate change and what we can do to improve things. It is surprising that he is telling the Table Office to go and print more paper and distribute to people.

11.58 a.m.

The world is watching him because he has read more Statements in this House in support of climate change so he is now asking.

Mr Speaker, the ICT officials can check whether the screens are only working on that Side. We can even do more things. I think we are saying the same thing. It is not difficult. We can actually proceed. This is just *Votes and*

Proceedings, so it is not a problem. Let them give more of our Hon Colleagues the hardcopies, but we encourage the ICT officials to see what they can do to improve it.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I recognise the Hon Majority Leader.

Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson: Mr Speaker the screen works largely, but I also recognise that some of our Hon Colleagues are complaining that their screens do not work. My plea is that we print some additional copies of the *Votes and Proceedings* and share it among Hon Colleagues whose screens do not work so that we can make some progress.

Mr Speaker, I also urge that as a matter of urgency, the Clerks-at-the-Table immediately engage Hon Colleagues in the form of a training. We cannot assume that everybody is conversant with the way things like this would work. So, it is very important that as soon as possible, Hon Members are taken through the process of how the screens before us work.

Mr Speaker, clearly, I can see the documents of which there is the Business Statement, Order Paper, Standing Orders, and all. So, let us engage Hon Members as early as possible, and give them the needed training so that they can apply it. Now, we have enough copies. I can see most of our Hon Colleagues holding copies of the *Votes and Proceedings*, so I urge you, Mr Speaker, to continue so that we can make some progress.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Mr Nyindam, are you still on your feet?

Mr Nyindam: Mr Speaker, yes; I would like to draw your attention to something and appeal to Leadership—the fact is that it is only the Leadership who have access to the electronic device—**[Some Hon Members: No!]**—Mr Speaker, that is what I can see. I would like to appeal to them to think about Hon Members. They should not think about themselves alone because they keep making reference to their electronic device, but unfortunately, majority of us here, including their Hon Members on the other side do not have it. That is what I would like to draw your attention to. I think we now have enough copies and can proceed.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Nyindam, your point is well taken. They should work on the system as early as possible and give some training to some Hon Members, particularly those of us who are Information Technology (IT)-challenged.

Hon Members, in the meantime, can we proceed with the correction of *Votes and Proceedings*? It is being distributed. In the likely event that there is a correction, an Hon Member may draw the attention of the Table Office.

Page 3...7—

Yes, Prof Kingsley Nyarko?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, on page 7, the item numbered 20, Nyarko, Kingsley (Prof) was marked absent. With respect, I did apply for leave of absence according to Order 15, and it was duly submitted to the Hon Minority Chief Whip so I am surprised I have been marked absent. I would be grateful if my name is captured under “Absent with permission.”

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Table Office, take note.

Page 8...10—Yes, Hon Second Deputy Speaker?

Mr Andrew Amoako Asiamah: Mr Speaker, indulge me to bring you back to page 7, the item numbered 5. On 9th January, 2025, I was sitting here with you; yet, I have been marked absent; so, if that could be addressed.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Table Office, please, take note.

Page 11...12—

Hon Members, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Thursday, 9th January, 2025, as corrected is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, we would take the Business Statement.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Chairman of the Business Committee/ Majority Leader (Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson): Mr Speaker, the Business Committee met today, 21st January, 2025, at 9 a.m. and arranged the Business

of the House for the week ending Friday, 24th January, 2025.

Introduction:

Mr Speaker, the Committee met today, Tuesday, 21st January, 2025, and arranged Business of the House for the Second Week ending Friday, 24th January, 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.

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.

Mr Speaker, the Committee of Selection is urged to expedite work on the composition of the various Committees of the House and submit its report on same to the House as soon as possible. The Members of the Committee are therefore implored to avail themselves for this important assignment during meetings.

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 debated and their consequential Resolutions, if any, taken during the week.

Mr Speaker, the Business Committee extends a warm welcome to all Hon Members as we reconvene following the short break. The Committee also urges Hon Members to manage their time effectively to fully cooperate in the conduct of the business of the House.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, in accordance with Order 216 (2) and subject to Order 67 of the Standing Orders, the Committee submits to the House the order in which the Business of the House shall be taken during the week.

Tuesday, 21st January, 2025

Roll Call

National Pledge

Statements

Presentation of Papers

(a) First Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers.

(b) Second Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers.

(c) Report of Leadership on the Formula for Composition of Parliamentary delegations and other Parliamentary groups and associations.

Motions

(d) That this honourable House adopts the First Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers.

(e) That this honourable House adopts the Second Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers.

(f) That this honourable House adopts the Report of Leadership on the Formula for Composition of Parliamentary delegations and other Parliamentary groups and associations.

Committee sittings**Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025**

Statements

Presentation of Papers

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

Motions

12.08 p.m.

That this honourable House adopts the Third Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Business Statement for the second week is duly presented by the Chairman of the Committee. It is now time for Hon Members to make comments.

Committee sittings

Hon Minority Leader?

Thursday, 23rd January, 2025

Statements

Mr Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Business Statement presented the Majority Leader.

Presentation of Papers

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

Mr Speaker, he tells us in the Business Statement, paragraph 2(b), that in the course of the week, he expects some Ministers to come and make Statements on Government policy. In other words, he anticipates the swearing-in of some Ministers and expects that those Ministers would be working. This House, particularly, our Side, indicated from day one that, we would assist them to form their Government because it is only when they form their Government that we would be able to hold their feet to the fire but Mr Speaker, the question is whether they themselves are ready to form their Government.

Motions

That this honourable House adopts the Fourth Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers.

Committee sittings

Friday, 24th January, 2025

Statements

Mr Speaker, Mr Haruna Iddrisu should know that we have not passed him yet. —[Laughter]— If this is going to be his approach to the Minority Leader, he does so at his own peril. This is a moment of humility and calmness.

Presentation of Papers

Motions

Mr First Deputy Speaker: But Hon Minority Leader, you have assured him that surely, he is passed.

Committee sittings

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, rightly so but subject to good behaviour.
—[*Laughter*]

Mr Speaker, this nomination in bits and pieces is unacceptable. Fortunately for President Mahama, on the 8th of December, 2024, he had the benefit of seeing the weather clearly. He had between the 8th of December, 2024 and the midnight of 6th of January, 2025 to have taken decisions on who would go where; he had a whole one month. We are now hearing that the nomination for the Ministry of the Interior is on its way and Alhaji Muntaka —[*Interruptions*]— that is in the media. The communication must first come to this House. It has just been delivered and we know the content of the communication. Like we told you before, we know —[*Interruptions*]— Yes, but it has delayed.

Mr Speaker, we would not accept this bits and pieces approach. There are other matters of constitutional concern that at the appropriate time, we would let the nation know. But that aside, I believe that our democracy has come of age. It has been over 30 years. Two years ago, we celebrated 30 years of democracy with a lot of activities. It must never be said that this country still tolerates lawlessness and violence. I was expecting my respected Colleague, Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, to have found space to introduce this subject matter at the Business Committee and to even propose that the House should constitute a by-partisan Committee to look into the thuggery in our nation. The Majority Leader has decided not to talk about this.

Just last week Thursday, the Electoral Commission (EC) was ready to finalise the Ablekuma North collation process. What did we see? Some thugs invaded the EC office, threatening lives and destroying properties.

Mr Speaker, this is unacceptable. It puts a black spot on our beautiful democracy. Maybe today it is benefiting somebody but tomorrow, the same thugs that we are encouraging to be lawless may come back at us. The Government cannot pretend not to be aware of this. The EC as a constitutional body needs protection. The police, headed by the respected Inspector General of Police (IGP) and his team, must do all it can to protect the EC. We are aware of the good work that they have done thus far, but this is a 276 Member Chamber. We are 275; the EC, in a statement, has said that it is ready to finalise but thugs are preventing it from doing its work. There cannot be anymore silence on this matter. I call on Mr President to take charge and call the thuggery out.

Mr Speaker, we know that Mr President, in his records in this House, was known to be a peace-loving Ghanaian. Indeed, his calm approach in addressing media issues was what endeared him to the heart of Ghanaians. So, without doubt, I may disagree with him but I know he is a peace-loving Ghanaian.

At Jubilee House, maybe he may be too busy to read the newspapers or to watch the news, but I am taking advantage of this platform, the Chamber of Parliament, to tell Mr President that there is violence on our streets.

12.18 p.m.

The thugs are destroying the gains we have made as a country and this must end now. The second issue, which I believe my respected Hon Colleague, the Majority Leader, should have found it necessary to make a part of the Business Committee's deliberation, is what have just happened in Obuasi.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Let me get you clearly.

Do you expect the Hon Majority Leader to put the first issue that you raised in the Business Statement?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, what I have just said on point one — I said I have two issues. With the first issue, I was expecting the Hon Majority Leader to have included the matter in the Business Committee's deliberation for us to consider so that at least, a by-partisan parliamentary Committee could be established after deliberations on the matter to get into this thuggery, these attacks. That is the first issue. With the second issue, I was expecting him to have also included the Obuasi incident.

Mr Speaker, I know as politicians, based on the expectation of the people, we sometimes slip here and there on campaign platforms out of enthusiasm. But once we win, and we are in charge, we need to call the people to order. This country can only survive when the business community has confidence in our country. AngloGold Ashanti is listed on the international stock exchange. It is a major investment. AngloGold Ashanti was shut down for years and it took

squired diplomacy and engagement to get an investor to invest in AngloGold Ashanti. They contribute to our economic growth in this country. What has happened there is very unacceptable. We should not encourage it. It is unfortunate that able-bodied young men have lost their lives. Young men who could have otherwise been productive for society have lost their lives. It should not be happening.

Mr Speaker, we as a House, expected the Hon Majority Leader to have brought this matter up to the Business Committee. Yes, H. E. the President can make his orders but this is the people's representative— [*Hear! Hear!*]. Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, my respected Hon Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, today is his first time of being at the dispatch box to read Business Statement, and this is a national issue. The people of Obuasi, his own friend, Mr Kwaku Kwarteng's people are suffering. There is lawlessness in his backyard. It could not have been that he will forget it and not table it for discussion. That is my concern. Although he is on his way to the Ministry of Finance, he should do something for the records.

Mr Speaker, it is unacceptable. With all the killings and lawlessness, this country, *eye yen ara yen asaase. Yen nyinaa*. All of us— [Some Hon Members—rose—]

[Some Hon Members sang Yen ara asaase ni]

[Some Hon Members displayed a printout]

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, the violence must stop—[*Uproar*]—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order!

Hon Minority Leader, please, conclude.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I shall be grateful for just one more minute to conclude. I thank you, nevertheless, for this treasured space to bring this national issue to the fore. I entertain no doubts that my respected Hon Colleague, the Majority Leader, will take this matter up and ensure that the right thing is done to assure all Ghanaians.

Mr Speaker, that notwithstanding, this is just a teaser. We would come formally if no action is taken. We would invoke all the parliamentary tools available at our disposal to ensure that if the Government does not act—and we do not want any empty action. We want a comprehensive action that people would have confidence in. This Parliament will have to constitute a committee to immediately visit Obuasi to get into this matter and ensure that the business community gets the assurance that this Parliament stands with them and that they are safe to do business. The Government must take steps to stop the violence and allow people to freely do their work at all places where there is violence.

Mr Speaker, thank you and I rest my case.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Dr Forson: Mr Speaker, this morning the Business Committee met. The Hon Minority Leader was absent. He did not attend the Business Committee meeting—[*Uproar*]—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order!

Hon Minority Chief Whip, you do not have the Floor.

[*Some Hon Members chanted “Obuasi”*]

Dr Forson: Mr Speaker, he was visibly absent; visibly missing. The Hon Minority Chief Whip was present. But the Hon Minority Chief Whip who represented the Caucus, also failed to table anything for us to discuss.

He failed to table anything as such for us to discuss and he has turned around to accuse me.

Mr Speaker, I recognise that these are tools that the Hon Minority Leader can use to address issues of national concerns. Let me put on record that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) does not subscribe to violence; we do not.

12.28 p.m.

Let no one create an impression that there is an upsurge of political violence in the Republic of Ghana; that is not the truth. What happened at Obuasi is most regrettable. The President, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama—[*inaudible*]— H. E. the President

immediately ordered for an immediate full-scale investigation into the killing of nine small scale miners.

Mr Speaker, it is obvious that the Government is in motion; it is obvious that the Government has already acted. So, I would take the matter up with my Colleague. But I urge him to attend Business Committee meetings. I was at the Business Committee meeting. When we ended the meeting, I attended the Appointments Committee meeting. So, the Hon Minority Leader should not say that he was at the Appointments Committee meeting; he was not there.

Mr Speaker, next time let him attend the Business Committee meeting, so that together we can find solutions to national issues. We are here to work for the Republic of Ghana. Let us work together and I can assure him that as long as I remain the Leader, I would work with him and together we can find a better way to resolve issues of national importance.

Mr Speaker, I believe that the Business Statement is quite brief, so I urge you to adopt today's Business Statement for us to make progress.

Thank you.

[Pause]

An Hon Member: No Ablekuma, no Business!

[Hon Members of the Minority Caucus rose to sing "Yen Ara Asaase Ni" while displayed their placards]

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order! Order!

Hon Members, I would engage the Leadership of the House, particularly the Majority and Minority Leaders so that we can effectively resolve the issue.

Hon Members, the Business Statement as presented is hereby adopted. Hon Majority Leader, any indication?

Dr Forson: Mr Speaker, we agreed that we would suspend Sitting for 20 minutes and immediately reconvene into a Closed Sitting. Prior to that, we would lay Reports before we go into a joint Caucus meeting after which we would come back and conclude. Hopefully, the joint Caucus meeting would not last more than 20 minutes, so I urge you to stick to the time.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Leader, are we laying the Reports before we move to the joint Caucus meeting? Hon Minority Leader—Well, I recognise the Hon Minority Leader. You have the Floor.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, at the pre-sitting, the understanding was that we would proceed with the joint Caucus meeting and when we are done and back, we proceed with the other matters. That is the understanding, so we would go with that.

Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I suggest that we lay the Reports for distribution to Members and

thereafter we can have the joint Caucus meeting and come back to the Plenary.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, we had —*[Interruption]* They want to vote? Vote on what? We had an understanding so let us go by the Majority Leader's discussion—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, you know the rules of the House. Just address the Chair.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, the respected Leader of Government Business and Leader of the House has suggested that we go into a joint Caucus meeting and upon return proceed with other businesses —*[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, we had an understanding, let us go into a joint Caucus meeting and when we come back the Reports would be laid. If some Standing Orders would have to be suspended for the matter to be taken, we are going to cooperate with them and of course, subject to good behaviour.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Leader—

Dr Forson: Mr Speaker, as earlier indicated, it is time for us to move into a joint Caucus meeting, so I urge you to suspend Sitting, so that we move into the joint Caucus meeting.

Thank you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Sitting is accordingly suspended.

12.37 p.m. — *Sitting Suspended*

1.13 p.m. — *Sitting resumed.*

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Order! You are welcome. — *[Pause]*— At the commencement of —

Hon Minority Leader?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I have just observed that the Majority Front Bench has my respected Hon Colleague, Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan. Is he an available Deputy Leader? If so, we should know. There cannot be an available Deputy Leader when there is a Majority Leader, a Majority Chief Whip and a Deputy Majority Whip seated. If there is anything that we need to know, we must know. Mr Speaker, that is the first thing. It has to be formalised.

Mr Speaker, secondly, this goes to our clerks. I have observed an unlikely protocol on the Floor on how people move all the way here. Since 2013, I have never seen the west gate open. It is for good reasons. You are seated at the east of this Chamber so, it is for a good reason the west gate is always locked. It is for your safety in particular. However, it is always being opened and Hon Members are getting in through there. I am sure they may not know, especially the first-timers. So, let it be observed that, that gate should never be open. Also, Hon Members should not just cross anyhow. They must always bow to the Mace.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Majority Leader?

Dr Forson: Mr Speaker, I have also observed that Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah has taken the seat as Deputy Minority Leader. Mr Speaker, I do not know if there is a *coup* in the Minority Side. If there is something, it is only right that we are informed that Ms Patricia Appiagyei has been changed. But, until then, I only recognise him as an available Leader.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, for now, we have not received any communication to the effect that Mr Ricketts-Hagan is the Deputy Majority Leader and Mr Boamah is also the Deputy Leader in place of Ms Patricia Appiagyei *alias* ‘Mama Pat’.

Hon Members, I have taken note of the observation by the Hon Minority Leader and I expect certain things not to happen particularly after the orientation of our new Members of Parliament. Hon Members, I believe it is about time we applied our rules strictly because during the orientation programme, you were taken through the rules of the House and the rudiments of the game. I implore all of us to observe them accordingly. Thank you very much.

Hon Members, at the commencement of public Business, the item numbered 9, presentation of Papers.

Mr Mahama Ayariga: Mr Speaker?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Yes, you have the floor.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, by your leave, could we vary the order of Business so that we can lay the report of the Appointments Committee? Mr Speaker, by our Standing Orders, reports ordinarily should be laid by the Chairman of the Committee, but given that the Chairman of the Committee is presiding as Speaker, the rules permit any Member of the Committee to lay the report. If leave is granted, I would like to lay the first report of the Appointments Committee on H. E. The President’s nomination of – Orders 285 (1) and 67 (2) of our Standing Orders —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, we are speaking the same language. The item numbered 9 on the Order Paper for today is, “First Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President’s Nominations for Appointment as Ministers”. That is the item under reference. The item numbered 9 (ii), “Second Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President’s Nomination for Appointment as Ministers”. So, it is that particular item that is under reference.

Hon Minority Leader?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, my very respected Hon Colleague, Mr Ayariga had earlier referred to the rules of the House to suggest that he was varying the Order of Business. We know that we have done the Business Statement for the second week then from there, we go to Statements. Then, he prayed for leave to vary same. Mr

Speaker, with respect, I do not know how that aspect of his application ended.

Again, he was referring to Order 285 (1) – no, he said 285 (2) and 67 (2). I was struggling with how Order 285 (2) can relate to Order 67. Mr Speaker, if he is putting his application to a fruitful rest, that is fine, otherwise, I would want to —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, I believe strongly, having drawn his attention to it — he was not at the pre-Sitting Meeting with us. We had some discussions after the Joint Caucus meeting. So, if I point his attention to the fact that the item under reference to be taken by the House is the exact item that he is trying to vary the order of Business to take, that puts the issue to rest.

Mr Ayariga?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, by the order of Business, we should be at Statements as captured in the Order Paper. Mr Speaker has not communicated to us that there is no Statement to be made, therefore, we should be moving to the next item. So, if I am on my feet before Mr Speaker has communicated that there is no Statement, the only way I could proceed is to ask for a variation of the order of Business so that item numbered 9 will then become the appropriate item which is the Presentation of Papers. When I got up and said that, Mr Speaker indicated that he had already given indications that we should proceed to item numbered 9.

1.23 p.m.

Mr Spekaer, the Hon Minority Leader wanted some education on the provisions of Order 285 and Order 67. I had been approached by the Clerk to Parliament earlier, if the Hon Minority Leader was watching, before we took the break, and it was the Clerk to Parliament who indicated that there was an agreement that I should vary the order of Business in order to lay the Report, and that was why I got up and did that. I referred you to Orders 285 and 67 because together they talk about the laying of Reports of Committees and also the variation of order of Business which the provision is made; that is all.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us make progress.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader—

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Are you saying I cannot speak?

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I am not saying you cannot speak, but how long are we going to go back and forth on this?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, you gave an indication, and he on the Government Side should have taken a cue. Once he has taken you through the path of procedure, it is important that I also make my contribution however long.

Mr Speaker, he was insisting on the rule that he is relying on Orders 285 and 67. I have gone through the two Orders; I do not see how those two Orders help to advance his cause. It is for him to take a cue from you, and he should say that for the records that he has taken a cue from you.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, when a referral is made to a Committee, ordinarily, the Chairperson of the Committee is supposed to lay Report. I am not the Chairperson of the Committee, so if I seek to lay the Report, I must find my decision on some provisions of the Standing Orders. So, if the Hon Minority Leader pays a little attention, I would read the provisions for him.

Order 285(1) says that:

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

And Order 285 (4) says that:

“The Chairperson or Member of the Committee may move a Motion in the House, after notice, that the report of the Committee be adopted.”

So, there are provisions for members of the Committee and the Chairperson to do so, and, since I am not the Chairperson, I thought that I must draw attention to a provision that allows me as an ordinary member of the Appointments Committee to be able to

lay Reports and move for the adoption of those Reports. Please, can we make some progress?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, he said that he was seeking your leave—*[Interruption]*—No, but the rule does not require the leave of the Speaker—No, it does not mean—Order 285(4)—First deal with it. They are two different matters. One does not need the leave of the Speaker for the Order 285(4). Where a leave is required in this Standing Orders, it would say so. We are not dealing with variation of order of Business; we are dealing with—*[Interruption]*—I know. He believes in his law, and I like that, but, in this occasion, he got it wrong with the greatest of respect. He does not need the leave of Mr Speaker for Order 285(4). He said he is coming for leave —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members —

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, it is for him to take a cue from you. He is taking it through law. —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: With all due respect—

Mr Afenyo-Markin: He needs to do Government Business —

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Can we make some progress?

Hon Members, we would take the item numbered 9(a)(i).

PAPERS

By Mr Mahama Ayariga on behalf of the Chairman—

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

Mr First Deputy Speaker: The item numbered 9(a)(ii)—

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, with respect, he says he does not have it, and it is only the item numbered 9(a)(i) that is available and we are happy to support you, but the 9(a)(ii) is not here. They should hurriedly bring it; we peruse it because, as your Ranking Member, I do not have a copy of that draft, but, as for the first one, I have it. I have gone through it, and I do not have a problem. As a matter of—There must be sufficient copies of the Report; that is the rule. They should make it available, so that we lay it. Place that one on ice, and let us proceed with the first one—*[Interruption]*—Yes, we would lay it, do it and go to the next one. Mr Ayariga does not even have a copy of the second one; I do not have it either. They should bring it, so that we can quickly deal with it for you.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Deputy Majority Leader?

Deputy Majority Leader (Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah): Mr Speaker, I would urge the Table Office to make sure that copies are made available to us for us to go forward and take our Report, so we can continue.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Chief Whip?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, let me encourage the Hon Deputy Majority Leader to probably take a cue: when we were seated there, we go to the Table Office and the printing room—He could check from the printing room. Please, the Deputy Majority Leader should not just get up on his feet and say that he is urging the Table Office; he should go there and do something—*[Laughter]*

Mr Buah: Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon Minority Chief Whip. I think that what we have been seeing in the last week is that they would want to quickly show the Minority Side and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) that they are working. What I would tell them to do is to pick the issues that matter. There are things that they should not do as Minority Side, and there are things we did not do. I think they know them because they saw our records.

Mr Speaker, I think what is important is that we can make progress and take the Report that is available.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the item numbered 9(a)(i) is duly presented.

Hon Deputy Majority Leader, can you move the Motion numbered 10?

Hon Members, the Hon Second Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

Hon Deputy Majority Leader, can you move the Motion?

Before that, the Hon Minority Leader was on his feet.

1.33 p.m.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I would want to plead with you that we should not just be doing our work, but we should be seen to be doing it in a manner that is known to our rules. I believe that since you have called the respected Hon Second Deputy Speaker to take the Chair, we may wait for you to move the procedural Motion, so that we can proceed.

I would just plead with you; it is just some few seconds, so—[*Interruption*]—Yes, it would be tidier for Mr Speaker himself to proceed to move the procedural Motion. That is my—

Mr First Deputy Speaker: I said so for the Second Deputy Speaker to be prepared to take the chair; I did not want to hold the House to ransom; that is why, in that situation, I called on the Deputy Majority Leader to move the procedural Motion.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

Deputy Majority Leader (Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah): Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That the Motion numbered 10 on page 3 of today's Order Paper be taken.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Is there any seconder?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, that is not the right way to move the Motion. Let us get it right and insist on the right thing being done. It cannot be that the Hon Deputy Majority Leader merely be on his feet and say, "Motion numbered 10 is taken". The respected Hon Deputy Majority Leader knows that it cannot be his approach; it is unacceptable for him to get up to say that it is moved. How?

Mr Speaker, you are someone who believes that the right thing must be done. We have indulged the Hon Deputy Majority Leader, so he should patiently rise again and do the right thing. There are first timers who are learning and are aspiring for Leadership, and they must know how procedural Motions are moved.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, Motions are moved in terms of the Motion Paper and, even in court, we say, in terms of the Motion Paper and the supporting affidavit—This is not the first time a Motion is similarly moved in the manner the Hon Deputy Majority Leader moved the Motion, so Hon Minority Leader, with all due respect, if the Hon Deputy Majority Leader says that, "I moved the Motion numbered 10 on page 3 of today's Order Paper; I so move", it is in the right direction.

Hon Minority Leader, I would offer him the opportunity to move the Motion numbered 10 on today's Order Paper.

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

Deputy Majority Leader (Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah): Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

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

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Is there any seconder?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion moved.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, Motion moved and seconded.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Hon Second Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

1.37 p.m. —

[MR SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us now turn to the item numbered 11 which is the substantive Motion.

Yes, Chairman of the Appointments Committee?

MOTION

First Report of the Appointments Committee on the President's Ministerial Nominations

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

That this honourable House adopts the First Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointments as Ministers.

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I present to you the Committee's Report. It is a 48-page Report, and I would urge that the *Hansard* captures the entire Report as having being read.

1.0 Introduction

On Wednesday, 9th January 2024, H.E. the President, John Dramani Mahama, per Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution, communicated to Parliament the nomination of the following persons for appointment as Ministers:

- i. Hon Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson - Minister Designate, Ministry of Finance
- ii. Hon John Abudulai Jinapor - Minister Designate, Ministry of Energy
- iii. Hon Dr Dominic Akurinting Ayine - Minister Designate,

Attorney General and Ministry of Justice

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

2.0 Reference Documents

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

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

3.0 Consideration of the Referral

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

The Committee held a public hearing on Monday, 13th January, 2025, to consider the nominations. The nominees subscribed to the Oath of a Witness

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

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

4.0 DR CASSIEL ATO BAAH FORSON —

MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

4.1 Background

Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson was born on 5th August, 1978 in Ajumako Besease in the Central Region of Ghana. He received his basic education at Sekondi Presbyterian School from 1984 to 1987 and at Bethel Hill International School at Ajumako Besease from 1987 to 1989. He then pursued his secondary education at Besease Senior High School (1989 to 1994). Dr Forson obtained an ACCA certificate at the Institute of Professional Studies, Accra, in 2000.

The Nominee obtained his Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from South Bank University, London, in 2003. He further obtained a Master of Science degree in Economics from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in 2017, and a Master of Science degree in Taxation from the University of Oxford in 2020.

He obtained a PhD in Business and Management (Finance) from KNUST in the same year.

Before venturing into politics, Dr Forson was a Director at Protech Integrated Services, UK, from 2003 to 2005. Since 2009, the Nominee has represented the Ajumako/Enyan/Essiam Constituency as a Member of Parliament. He became the Leader of the Minority Caucus in Parliament in January 2023. Before that, he was the Ranking Member of the Finance Committee for six years, having served as a member of the Committee from 2009 to 2012. He also served as the Vice Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs from 2009 to 2011. The Nominee is currently the Majority Leader of the NDC Caucus and a member of the 2024 Transition Team.

Dr Forson served as the Deputy Minister for Finance of the Republic of Ghana from April 2013 to January 2017, during which he was a member of Ghana's Economic Management Team, a Board Member of the Bank of Ghana, a Board Member of the Ghana Cocoa Board, and Ghana's Alternate Governor at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. He also chaired the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System Reforms (GIFMIS) Implementation Committee.

The Pan African Republic Honorary Awards named the Nominee as one of the top 10 most influential Members of Parliament for 2017/2018. Additionally, the University of Professional Studies,

Accra, awarded him a special recognition for his contribution to Ghana's financial administration and governance.

The Nominee is a Christian, married with two children. His hobbies are reading and taking walks.

Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses

4.2 Additional Financing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

This response was based on a report that the current National Democratic Congress (NDC) Administration intended to go to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for additional financing, the Nominee was asked to share with the Committee, the proposal that will be put before the IMF for consideration. He refuted the claim and added that the reportage was inaccurate. He explained that his statement was to the effect that the NDC Government will request additional funding from IMF if needed.

4.3 Scrapping of Some Taxes and Revenue Mobilisation

Reference was made to the NDC's Manifesto promise of scrapping some taxes, including the Betting Tax and the Electronic Transfer Levy (E-Levy). With such a decision, the Nominee was asked how the Government intends to enhance revenue mobilisation and bridge the revenue gap as required by the IMF.

In his response, the Nominee indicated that Ghana collects approximately 13.8 per cent of GDP in tax revenue. By virtue of being a member of the Transition Team, he believe the country can do better considering the available data. He noted that from the assessment of the country's economic data, Ghana has huge potential for revenue mobilisation. He said Government do not necessarily have to increase taxes before it could rake in more revenue. This is because there are other ways of raising additional tax revenues to make up for the revenue losses that will result from the implementation of the decision to scrap the taxes in question. He cited compliance as one of the ways and explained that more revenues can be raised from other existing taxes if compliance is ensured. He assured the Committee he would work with the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) and the Tax Policy Unit of the Ministry of Finance to ensure compliance.

He informed the Committee that in the medium term, his vision is to increase tax revenues from 13.8 per cent of GDP to about 16 per cent or 18 per cent. This will be done by ensuring that existing taxes bring in the expected revenue instead of increasing their rates or imposing new taxes.

He recounted the reasons for the introduction of the Betting Tax and stated that it was intended to discourage the youth from engaging in such enterprises, however, has not achieved its purpose. He stated that the Government gets less than GH¢50

million a year from the Betting Tax and added we can get even more of the amount if we make some adjustments to our fiscal policy, particularly on the expenditure side.

He spoke about the number of Ministries that has been reduced from 30 to 23 with the issuance of the Civil Service (Ministries) Instrument, 2025 (E.I. 1) by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama. This was issued on 9th January 2025, for which seven cost centres would be eliminated to make some savings. He said the reduction demonstrates the Government's commitment to reducing public expenditure.

He further noted that Government would also abolish the E-Levy in the first Budget Statement and Economic Policy to be presented to the House in March 2025. This is because it discourages a cashless society, among other reasons. With the proposed scrapping and reduction of taxes, the Nominee was asked whether fiscal consolidation would be a priority for the Government in the interim. He responded that fiscal consolidation is not only a priority for the Government, but will be front-loaded to ensure growth and protection for the vulnerable.

4.4 Interest Rates and the Private Sector

The Nominee was asked what he would do to ensure that macroeconomic policies are more effective in lowering interest rates for the private sector. He shared the view that the Government has a role to play in bringing down interest

rates as part of efforts to create a favourable business environment for investors, among other reasons. He said if the country is actively involved in borrowing from the market, with an amount of GHC111 billion being rolled over every week, interest rates will certainly go up.

He explained that aside from other economic factors or indicators, inflation is also a function of interest rates. The Nominee assured the Committee that should he be approved, the Ministry of Finance will work to avoid excessive borrowing to reduce interest rates, bring down inflation, stabilise the Ghana Cedi, and create jobs.

4.5 Inflation

The Nominee was asked what the Government would do to reduce inflation and interest rates. He admitted that the Government has a key role to play regarding fiscal policy. He added that the country needs to take a critical look at its expenditure by reducing the waste in the system. The Nominee elucidated that the Government would also front-load fiscal consolidation in the short term to help deal with some of the country's economic challenges, including inflation.

4.6 Tax Exemptions

The Nominee's attention was drawn to his position on tax exemptions, which he stated is not fair, transparent, or well targeted and has become a major source of tax expenditure in our fiscal framework. He did not depart from his position and earlier assertions on the

matter. He maintained that if the Government believes tax exemptions on raw materials and other inputs for production or manufacturing are necessary, they should be legislated to benefit all qualified entities. He paid tribute to Mr Kwaku Agyemang Kwarteng, Member of Parliament for the Obuasi West Constituency, who shared similar sentiments on the matter and added that his position was not political.

Dr Forson posited that the Government should not give huge tax exemptions to some entities while others suffer from increases in tax rates. The Nominee was reminded of his comments and protests on some tax exemptions on raw materials and other inputs applied by some entities under the One-District, One-Factory (1DIF) Policy. The Nominee was reported to have protested the application because it was not transparent and had a huge quantum.

When the Committee enquired whether he had re-organised his protest, the Nominee answered in the negative and added that his stance on the matter had not changed. He recollected that initially, the House was called upon to approve an amount of US\$458 million as tax exemption, but upon his insistence, the amount was reduced to about US\$100 million. He said his involvement led to the reduction of the amount and added that it saved the country some good money.

4.7 Funding Government Machinery

The Nominee was asked on how he intends to secure funding to enable Government machinery to run, given that

lenders are reluctant to give long-term loans and the money market is already flooded.

In his response, he said the country needs to, first and foremost, bring back investor confidence by presenting a Budget Statement and Economic Policy that will contain stringent measures aimed at reducing particularly the expenditure. This he said would help to achieve an inflation target of about 8 ± 2 per cent to send the right signal. He noted that bringing down inflation will help cure the harm caused to investors in the Domestic Bond Market due to the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP) and reopen the Bond Market to enable the country avoid overreliance on Treasury Bills.

He explained that we need to reduce system wastage and stay within our resource envelope. He assured the Committee that if given the nod, the Ministry of Finance will work with development partners, like the World Bank, IMF, European Union, and Africa Development Bank, to raise cheaper sources of financing to finance Government spending and ensure inclusive growth.

4.8 Implementation of the Exemptions Act, 2022 (Act 1083)

The Committee observed that there is a claim that even though the Exemptions Act 2022 (Act 1083) allows the Government to take an equity stake in entities that apply for tax exemptions, it has never been implemented since the enactment was made.

The Nominee was asked whether he could be bold enough to fully implement the said legislation. He recalled that the said provision had been implemented once and cited Hon Kweku Kwarteng as the one who championed it. He recalled seconding the Motion that set the tone and allowed for the implementation of the provision referred to. He explained that he is not opposed to granting tax exemptions, however, he is a proponent of relevance or necessity, fairness, and transparency in the administration of such tax exemptions.

4.9 Mobilisation of Tax Revenues from the Informal Sector

Regarding the Mid-Year Budget of 2024, which states that taxes from Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) amounted to GH¢21.113 billion and taxes mobilised from the informal sector amounted to GH¢1.572 billion (a ratio of about 13:1), the Nominee was asked what the Government could do to increase tax revenues from the informal sector.

The Nominee in his response noted there is the need to formalise the informal sector by educating and encouraging those in that sector to register with the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) and incentivise them. He cited the example of what pertains in Uganda, where a percentage of the taxes paid by those in the informal sector are set aside as pension contributions for them. He suggested that Ghana should learn from Uganda which has been able to incentivise its informal sector, and is now collecting more taxes than most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. He

suggested that the country can consider various options in addition to the model adopted by Uganda and make a choice based on the country's circumstances and experience.

4.10 Fiscal and Debt Sustainability Challenges

Dr Forson noted that Ghana's debt management has been a major concern in recent years. He bemoaned the introduction of the DDEP and the restructuring of our Euro Bond by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Government in the immediate past. He indicated that the new National Democratic Congress (NDC) Administration intends to introduce an Independent Debt Management Bureau to deal with debt management. However, he mentioned that the country first needs to make some settlements, including an amount of GH¢6.8 billion due on 18th February, 2025. He believed that the Ministry of Finance was preparing to make the payment. The Nominee assured the Committee that he would work with the country's development partners to avoid a second wave of the financial crisis experienced in 2022.

4.11 Vision of Revenue Mobilisation

The Nominee was asked to share his vision on revenue mobilisation with the Committee. He recounted his experience with Hon Seth Terpkper, former Minister for Finance, describing him as an astute tax practitioner. He stated that he gained substantial experience during his tenure as Deputy Minister for Finance, working collaboratively with Hon Seth Terpkper

for a period of four years. He disclosed that the former Minister for Finance held bi-weekly meetings with the revenue authorities, which contributed to notable improvements in revenue mobilisation during that period. He further stated that his vision is to leverage the experience gained from Hon Seth Terpkper, adopt a similar approach, and collaborate closely with the GRA to significantly enhance revenue mobilisation. He lamented that other former Ministers of Finance did not pay as much attention to revenue mobilisation as they should. He emphasised the importance of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in actively collaborating with the GRA in revenue mobilisation efforts, rather than leaving the responsibility solely to the Authority, to enhance overall revenue performance.

4.12 Description of the 2024 Economy Inherited by the National Democratic Congress (NDC)

Reference was made to some successes chalked by the immediate past NPP Government in terms of revenue targets, inflation, banking sector assets, and other economic indicators. The Nominee was asked to describe the 2024 Economy that the NDC has inherited.

Dr Forson declined to make any pronouncement on the 2024 outturns because there were none. He added that the Government needs to wait for the end-of-year figures before one can draw any conclusion. He said he does not want to make any speculation; he believed that even though the revenue target was exceeded by an amount of about GH¢400 million under the immediate

past Government, revenue alone cannot give a true picture of the state of the economy. He said he would present the true picture of the country's situation when the time comes.

4.13 Resetting Ghana

The Nominee was asked what the Government would do to reset the economy as canvassed by the NDC in its Manifesto. He said Ghana is not out of the crisis yet and added that there is much work to be done by the Government in the area of macroeconomy. He, however, shared the view that we do not only grow the economy from the macro level but also from the micro side. He noted that over the past seven years, the Government has placed excessive emphasis on the macroeconomic aspects of the economy. He emphasised the need to refocus on the fundamentals by addressing the microeconomic dimensions to facilitate job creation, stabilise the Ghana Cedi, and achieve additional economic benefits. He indicated that cocoa production dwindled from 968,000 metric tonnes a year to less than 500,000 metric tonnes, adding that it is a microeconomic issue that needs attention.

4.14 Stabilisation of the Ghana Cedi

The Nominee was queried on measures to stabilise the Ghana Cedi. He proposed anchoring the Cedi with the Gold Reserve Programme, suggesting the establishment of a Ghana Gold Board as a long-term solution, as outlined in the

NDC's Manifesto. He further advocated for the revitalisation of the oil palm and cocoa industries, as outlined in the ruling party's Manifesto, emphasising their potential to significantly boost the country's foreign exchange earnings. He noted that the Bank of Ghana (BoG) alone cannot stabilise the Ghana Cedi and reiterated the Government's commitment to reducing inflation to approximately 8 per cent \pm 2 per cent by implementing robust measures to enable the BoG and other monetary authorities to effectively address the Cedi depreciation. He expressed concern that, over the past eight years, no new sources of foreign exchange earnings have been introduced, emphasising the urgent need for action in order to address this shortfall and mitigate some of the country's challenges. He further suggested intensifying efforts to develop additional upstream oil fields to enhance revenue generation from the oil and gas sectors.

4.15 Priority Areas of the Nominee

The Nominee was asked to share with the Committee the areas of the economy he will prioritise to enable him to deal with the challenges the country is grappling with, if given the opportunity to serve as Minister for Finance. He said his priority areas are the stabilisation of the Ghana Cedi, low inflation rate, and job creation. He stated that he would collaborate with Cabinet to allocate resources towards the Government's Policy on Agriculture for Economic Transformation, with the aim of reducing food prices and ensuring food security.

He reiterated that the Government will work closely with the BoG and front-load fiscal consolidation within the shortest possible time to reduce inflation. He said the Ghana Cedi needs to be anchored to help bring down inflation. He also pointed out that monetary financing must be eliminated, adding that his position on the matter has not changed.

He stated that, if given the opportunity to serve as Minister for Finance, he would collaborate closely with the Minister for Food and Agriculture to implement the Government's agricultural policies, aimed at expanding agribusiness and reducing food costs.

4.16 Value for Money

The Nominee was asked to elaborate on how the NDC's Manifesto commitments, such as infrastructure development and the establishment of a 24-hour economy, would be implemented while ensuring value for money and prioritising the needs of vulnerable groups. He assured the Committee that the NDC Government would fulfill its promises by devising certain measures, including reducing the wastage in the system and tax compliance strategies. He asserted that he is firmly convinced that significant wastage exists within the system and emphasised his commitment to addressing this issue to free up resources for the Government to deliver on its promises. He highlighted the Government's intention to ensure value for money by establishing an Independent Value for Money Audit Bureau to minimise inefficiencies. He

assured that the proposed measures would be designed to consider the needs of the vulnerable and support economic growth, aligning with the social democratic principles of the NDC.

4.17 Investor Confidence

The Nominee was asked to share his plans for boosting investor confidence. He said he has plans to tackle the distorted Value Added Tax (VAT) regime, simplify our taxes, among other measures, to help create a friendly working environment for the private sector. He emphasised the importance of engaging with investors to develop a strategic blueprint that fosters private sector growth. He noted that providing the right signals to investors, such as reducing inflation and implementing a robust, expenditure-based, and front-loaded fiscal consolidation plan within the shortest possible timeframe, is critical to achieving this goal.

The Nominee posited that he will take suggestions from Hon Members of the House and the investor community to determine how to deal with the issue. He informed the Committee that the Government is committed to effectively manage the public debt and urged against despair. He assured that an NDC Government would not default on debt servicing and emphasised the implementation of a robust debt management system to prevent repeating the mistakes of previous administrations. He reiterated the commitment to adopting improved strategies for better debt management.

Furthermore, he emphasised the need to establish financial buffers to facilitate refinancing when necessary. He expressed concern that the country currently lacks adequate buffers to address foreign debt obligations, contrasting this with the situation in 2016 when the NDC Administration left sufficient buffers for the incoming NPP Government.

4.18 Debt Management

The Nominee was asked about his plans for managing the country's debt. He acknowledged the gravity of the debt situation and reassured that the Government remains committed to addressing the issue, urging against despair. He emphasised the Government's determination to mitigate the adverse effects of the DDEP. He highlighted the country's significant financial obligations, noting that in 2025, Ghana will need to pay an amount of GHC12.6 billion for amortisation, debt repayment, loan interest, and other commitments. He further indicated that repayments would increase to amounts of GHC15.7 billion in 2026, GHC53 billion in 2027, and GHC48 billion in 2028. He further indicated that there are significant financial obligations related to Eurobond payments, noting that the Government has already settled approximately an amount of US\$364 million. He disclosed that, starting from 2026, the country will be required to pay an amount of US\$1 billion annually toward Eurobond commitments. Additionally, he informed the Committee that the financial obligations to bilateral official creditors remain uncertain, as a Memorandum of

Understanding (MOU) has not yet been signed. He acknowledged the financial challenges confronting the country and emphasised the need to reassess strategies by returning to the drawing board to explore refinancing options and establish buffers for debts that cannot be refinanced. He highlighted the Sinking Fund, introduced by Hon Seth Terkper, as a prudent measure for saving during favorable economic periods to address financial challenges during adverse times.

4.19 Road Tolls and Property Rates

The Nominee was asked whether the NDC Administration would bring back the road tolls and decentralise the collection of property rates. In his response, he said the NDC had always contended with the decision made by the immediate past NPP Administration to remove the road tolls. Therefore, he was not surprised when the NPP was later considering its reintroduction. He informed the Committee that the NDC Administration will not depart from its position. The Government will reintroduce and collect the road tolls in an effective and efficient manner to cater for road infrastructure development in the country as pertains in other jurisdictions.

4.20 Public Debt and the Depreciation of the Ghana Cedi

The Nominee was asked to explain how he would deal with public debt since it is also a contributing factor to the depreciation of the Ghana Cedi. He admitted that the depreciation of the

Ghana Cedi has an adverse impact on our public debt. He indicated that the NPP Administration was not transparent with the disclosure of public debt and cited the Energy Sector Levy Account (ESLA) Bond, Sinohydro Loan, Daakye Plc Bond, and many others which were excluded from our public debt. He noted that the NDC raised concerns in 2020 and 2021 regarding the exclusion of certain financial commitments from the country's debt profile. However, these warnings were ignored, and he expressed no surprise that the country was eventually compelled under the IMF Programme to include the previously exempted financial commitments in its debt obligations.

He was of the view that debt reports should be transparent enough to keep citizens informed about economic developments. He said that since public debt is also a contributory factor to the depreciation of the Cedi, the Government has the responsibility of stabilising the currency to keep public debt in check.

He also indicated that monetary financing plays a role and that the Government will work with the BoG to address the issue of depreciation and anchor the Ghana Cedi.

4.21 Producer Price of Cocoa

The Nominee was questioned on whether the NDC Administration intends to increase the producer price of cocoa to an amount of GHC6,000 as promised. He responded that, if approved, he would co-chair the Producer Price Review

Committee alongside the Minister for Food and Agriculture, as mandated, which would provide him the platform to share his views and advance the Government's agenda in this regard. He expressed concern over the decline in cocoa production, attributing it partly to inadequate compensation for cocoa farmers. He emphasised the need to fairly reward farmers for their significant contributions to the economy and cautioned against complacency, noting that Ecuador is rapidly closing the gap as a major cocoa producer. He assured the Committee of his commitment to working with Ghana COCOBOD as an active player in the sector to revitalise the cocoa industry, with particular focus on ensuring fair remuneration for cocoa farmers.

4.22 Construction of the National Cathedral and Related Matters

The Nominee was asked whether he would set up an investigation into the US\$58 million spent on the construction of the National Cathedral, which was not completed. He reiterated his position for the country to learn from its mistakes, cut down on wastage and not commit the itself to reckless expenditure.

On whether the issue will be investigated, the Nominee said the Ministry of Finance is not clothed with such powers. He said the Government may let the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General's Department, and the newly established Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) Office handle such matters because of their mandate.

4.23 Youth Unemployment

The Nominee was asked to share with the Committee specific programmes that the Government intends to implement to support entrepreneurship, skills training, and the expansion of industries with job creation potential.

He stated that the job creation strategies outlined in the NDC's Manifesto, including the implementation of a 24-Hour Economy, are already well-articulated. He emphasised that his primary responsibility would involve mobilising the necessary revenue to support the realisation of this objective. He expressed confidence in Ghana's potential to enhance its GDP through the effective utilisation of financial and human resources. He underscored the importance of skills development and assured the Committee of his commitment to collaborating with various Ministries to ensure the efficient allocation of resources, with a focus on creating employment opportunities for the youth.

4.24 Free SHS Policy

The Nominee was asked to clarify the position of the new Government on the Free SHS Policy. He responded that the NDC's stance on the policy is well known, as evidenced by His Excellency the President's declaration that the policy is here to stay. He emphasised that there is no further assurance he could provide beyond the commitment already made by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, who has unequivocally stated that the policy will not be abrogated.

4.25 School Feeding Programme

The Nominee was queried on whether the School Feeding Programme would be sustained. He affirmed that the Programme would continue but expressed concern about the current allocation of GH¢1.50 to a child per day, describing it as grossly inadequate to cover the cost of food, let alone provide a profit margin for caterers. He indicated that the Government would consider increasing the allocation to caterers but refrained from specifying an exact amount.

4.26 24-Hour Economy

The Nominee was asked to elaborate on the 24-Hour Economy policy proposed by the Government. He explained that a 24-Hour Economy involves continuous activity within specific sectors, ensuring that economic operations do not pause, typically through a three-shift work system. He cited the mining and power sectors as examples of industries where this model is effectively implemented. He noted that while there are some existing elements of a 24-Hour Economy within the system, they are not present in the core sectors.

The Nominee expressed confidence that, if properly executed, the policy would significantly expand the workforce. When asked whether any cost analysis had been conducted for the policy, he declined to comment, explaining that the responsibility for such matters has been assigned to the Special Advisor to the President, and he would not preempt their findings.

4.27 Agenda 111

The Nominee was asked to provide assurance to the Committee regarding the continuation and completion of ongoing projects under implementation, including Agenda 111. He affirmed that all such projects, except for the National Cathedral and similar initiatives, would be completed and utilised for their intended purposes.

4.28 Free University Tuition Fees

The Nominee was asked whether the Free University Tuition Fee policy will be implemented now and whether it will be extended to all the tertiary institutions including the Colleges of Education. He responded that the cost and other details, including the coverage and other related costs, would be put in the Budget for 2025 and presented to the House for approval. He also informed the Committee that, if given the opportunity to serve as Finance Minister, he would present a comprehensive government plan with respect to the policy to the House for scrutiny.

5.0 HON JOHN ABDULAI JINAPOR — MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY

5.1 Background

Mr John Abdulai Jinapor was born on 8th June, 1979 in Buipe in the Savannah Region of Ghana. He had his secondary education at Ghana Senior High School in Tamale. The Nominee proceeded to the University of Development Studies, where he obtained a Bachelor of Science

in Agricultural Technology in 2003. He also holds several Master's degrees including; a Master of Business Administration Marketing Division in 2008, a Master of Science in Development Finance in 2019, and a Master of Arts in Economic Policy Management in 2022, all from the University of Ghana Business School (UGBS). He also obtained a Master of Science in Energy Economics from the Ghana Institute of Management Administration (GIMPA) in 2020.

The Nominee acquired a Postgraduate Degree in Finance and Financial Law from the University of London in 2014, and a Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing in the United Kingdom in 2011. He is currently pursuing Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Development Finance at the University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town, South Africa.

Mr John Abdulai Jinapor did his national service with the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the National Service Secretariat in the then Northern Region from 2002 to 2003, and also served in various capacities as Research and Development Officer at Africa Invest from 2003 to 2004 and became the General Manager of Sophie Fisheries Ltd. from March 2005 to December 2008. From 2009 to 2012, he was the Special Assistant to the then Vice President, H. E. John Dramani Mahama and subsequently, Presidential Aide and Spokesperson to H. E. President John Dramani Mahama from July 2012 to May 2013. He was later appointed Deputy Minister for Energy and Petroleum and Power, in which capacity

he served from May 2013 till January 2017. Hon John Abdulai Jinapor was elected Member of Parliament for Yapei-Kusawgu Constituency in 2017 till date.

The Nominee has served on a number of Councils, Boards and Parliamentary Committees. He was the President of the Students' Representative Council and National Union of Ghana Students and, by extension, the University Council of the University of Development Studies, Nyankpala. He also served as the Graduate Students' Association President, a member of the University Council, and a Member of the Finance Committee of the University Council, University of Ghana, Legon. The Nominee was a board member of the Electricity Company of Ghana, Chairman of the Nuclear Energy Programme Implementing Organisation under the Ministry of Energy, and a member of the Economic Management Team from 2015 to 2016.

With regard to parliamentary Committees, Hon John Abdulai Jinapor served on the Finance Committee as a Member, and on the Committee on Mines and Energy as a Member and, subsequently, Ranking Member.

Hon John Abdulai Jinapor enjoys reading and playing music.

Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses

5.2 2017 Energy Sector Debt versus Current Debt

The Nominee was asked to apprise the Committee on the energy sector debt at the time he left office as Deputy

Minister for Energy in 2017. In his response, he stated that the debt stock consolidated was close to US\$2.1 billion. Referring to a document titled "Summary of Energy Sector Debts and Lenders", the Nominee indicated that in August 2017, ESLA PLC got a full audit of the entire energy sector debts and that the total energy sector liability at the time was GHC9.4 billion.

On the current energy debt, the Nominee said per information from the Ministry of Energy, Energy Commission, and the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG), the debt has ballooned to a little over US\$3 billion. He added that the Energy Sector Levies Act, 2015 (Act 899) raked in about GHC45 billion, and that paid part of the interest on the principal of GHC9.4 billion.

5.3 Implications of Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)

When the Nominee was questioned about the implications of signing Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and whether such agreements were signed during his tenure at the Ministry of Energy, the Nominee confirmed that some PPAs were indeed signed during his time. He acknowledged that these agreements included take-or-pay clauses and noted that under the NPP Administration, six additional PPAs were signed with similar take-or-pay provisions. Providing more insight into take-or-pay agreements, the Nominee said that in the energy parlance, these agreements are called "capital recovery", where a developer who would have borrowed money to set up a plant can recoup the money invested in the infrastructure.

On whether take-or-pays contributed to the energy debt, the Nominee said the country is consuming way above its contractual volumes therefore, take-or-pay could not have been an issue. According to him, a chunk of the debts incurred were from power delivered and sold with revenues not collected.

The Nominee further referenced a debt owed by Lukoil International Trading and Supply Company (LITASCO) for the supply of heavy fuel oil between 2017 and 2021 to the tune of GH¢270 million on account of fuels and guarantees.

He added that once fuel is consumed, it means there is no take-or-pay, and that the plant is running.

Admittedly, the Nominee said some elements of capacity charge contribute to debt, but the bulk of the debt is an account of power produced and consumed but not paid for.

5.4 ENI Negotiations

The Nominee was asked if he believed the negotiated price with ENI at the time was good for the country, and he said the Sankofa price of six was not the most expensive. He further said the country saved GH¢1.2 billion from import substitution from light crude while using gas, adding that he believes gas is competitive rather than expensive.

5.5 ECG Privatisation and ATC&C Losses

The Nominee was asked on the privatisation of the ECG, and he stated that he has consistently advocated for

private sector participation in the billing and collection components of ECG's operations. However, he expressed disagreement with the structure and approach of the Power Distribution Services (PDS) arrangement.

The Nominee indicated that as former Deputy Minister for Energy, he led the privatisation process and travelled to several countries to learn from best practices.

He was further asked whether his Government supports the full privatisation of ECG. In response, he mentioned that his Government believes there should be private sector participation, and they intend to form a seven-member committee chaired by technical, legal, and financial experts, some industry players, and a consumer representative to develop a framework. This committee, he said, will be tasked to determine whether a concession approach or full privatisation will work. The Nominee emphasised that the Government will initiate a competitive tender process and further stressed that they will not engage in sole sourcing when it comes to the ECG private sector participation. He added that engagements towards encouraging private sector participation will be done in 2025.

5.6 ECG Metering

Concerns were raised about the non-availability of meters in some rural areas, and the Nominee was asked what he would do about the situation. He was also asked about his initiatives toward

revenue increase and his thoughts about proposals to phase out all post-paid meters.

In response, the Nominee stated that the ideal approach is to adopt prepaid meters, particularly smart meters that meet all necessary requirements. He shared information obtained from ECG, indicating that the company has approximately 5.2 million meters, of which 4.8 million are active. However, he noted with concern that about 3 million of these active meters are not functioning properly. The Nominee further noted that with advancements in technology, the Government is considering the option of selling meters directly to consumers. He added that plans are underway to license individuals, and utilising smart technology, to install these meters efficiently.

5.7 Inconsistent Power Supply

When the Nominee was asked how he plans to address inconsistent power supply in the country, he stated that his priority would be to bridge the fuel supply gap, identifying it as a critical challenge in the energy sector. He explained that the country currently faces a deficit of approximately 40 to 60 mm scale of gas. The Nominee highlighted that he has already engaged in discussions with Jubilee Partners, Ghana Gas, and other operators, expressing confidence that liquid fuel reserves can be supplemented through reconditioning efforts.

On the financial challenges plaguing the energy sector, the Nominee emphasised the need to enhance

operational efficiency to generate sufficient revenue to cover the cost of power consumption.

5.8 CENPOWER and Other Contractual Issues

The Nominee responded in the affirmative, indicating that he was aware that the light crude oil at Cenpower was for a period of 23 days.

He was further asked about the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) contract with Stratcon Energy to supply 12 million litres of HFO to AXA. In response, the Nominee said that per his checks at the GNPC, the company indicated that they do not have a contract with Stratcon to supply those litres.

Regarding Stratcon's supply of some 19,561 tonnes, the Nominee said he would not be surprised by any such supply and intends to investigate the issues surrounding these supplies.

He further explained that on 9th January, he learned that some people were discharging heavy fuel oil into the tanks at AXA and that the Chief of Staff had tasked him to lead a technical team to avoid the looming challenge of fuel shortages.

The Nominee further mentioned that he contacted the Energy Ministry, ECG, VRA, and GNPC to seek clarification on a reported fuel discharge, but none of these institutions were aware of such an operation. He stated that he has recommended halting the delivery

pending a thorough investigation, which he intends to pursue if confirmed as Minister. The Nominee emphatically stated that to the best of his knowledge, the Government had not officially received any site delivery. He clarified that while delivery processes were underway, they were being conducted without proper authorisation. Consequently, directives were issued to halt the delivery and ensure compliance with the appropriate procedures.

5.9 Institutional Investment in ECG

The Nominee was asked if he would consider local institutional investors like the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) who may want to invest in ECG. In response, he said getting institutions in Ghana to take up shares and getting a technically competent company, would be the ideal situation since that would lead to a lot of value retention.

He pointed out that the primary issue with ECG extends beyond revenue collection, emphasising concerns about how the company allocates and manages the funds it collects. The Nominee stated that although ECG collects an average of GH¢1.3 billion monthly, only GH¢850 million to GH¢900 million is channeled into the cash waterfall mechanism. He stressed the importance of improving efficiency and ensuring that ECG adheres strictly to the cash waterfall mechanism to enhance financial accountability and resource allocation.

5.10 Position on Gold for Oil Policy

When asked for his opinion on the Gold for Oil Policy, the Nominee argued that the policy was not well-conceived, referencing a publication that outlined the Bank of Ghana's decision to phase it out. He remarked that if the policy had been effective in addressing the issues and delivering tangible results, the Governor of the Bank of Ghana would not have recommended its discontinuation. The Nominee stated that under his leadership, the Gold for Oil Policy would undergo a thorough review and analysis to develop a fit-for-purpose model. He also proposed the establishment of a Gold Board to centralise and manage all gold resources effectively.

On the issue of foreign exchange, the Nominee highlighted that the country maintains an escrow account where foreign exchange or hard currency would be deposited. These funds would be utilised to support fuel imports and meet financial obligations to Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and gas suppliers.

5.11 Plans for Tema Oil Refinery (TOR)

Outlining his plans for the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR), the Nominee stated that his primary objective is to seek strategic partnerships, ring-fence existing liabilities, and leverage the refinery's assets for capital injection. He emphasised the importance of identifying a strategic partner willing to invest funds into the refinery. Additionally, he noted that while the refinery requires a workforce

of approximately 250 employees, it currently has over 700 staff members, underscoring the need to address these inefficiencies. He stressed the urgency of resolving these issues to restore the refinery's operations, which have been dormant for the past four years. The Nominee highlighted that according to the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, revenue from crude oil must be deposited into the Petroleum Holding Fund within a stipulated timeframe. He explained that for any refinery including TOR, to access crude oil, it must comply with this requirement. He described TOR as a "hydra-headed problem," emphasising the complex challenges it faces that require comprehensive solutions.

5.12 Upstream Petroleum Sector

Commenting on the Voltaian Basin Programme and how he intends to add value to what his predecessors have done, the Nominee stated that he would engage stakeholders to get Ghanaians' buy-in and incentivise the upstream players to invest because it is very expensive.

He further mentioned that 2D seismic data has been acquired and allocations made in the Voltaian Basin. He emphasised that these agreements are required to be presented to Parliament for approval. He indicated his intention to review the agreements thoroughly, and if they are deemed satisfactory, the necessary actions will be undertaken. The Nominee raised issues with the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act, 2016 (Act 919), stating that Ghana's neighbouring countries' participating

interest is 10 per cent. As the country moves through the energy transition, there is a need to tap its stranded assets.

The Nominee noted the need to increase investor incentives in strategies to attract big players in the energy sector.

He also mentioned the Government's posturing, stating that the many legal cases the Government lost affected the country. The Nominee said his approach would be to sit around the table and discuss the real problems and try to resolve them.

5.13 Energy Legacy

Commenting on his leadership approach and legacy, the Nominee acknowledged the challenging nature of the role but expressed his determination to enforce discipline within the energy sector. He stated that he aspires to be remembered as a Minister who carried out his duties with integrity, dedication, and hard work, while maintaining humility throughout his tenure.

5.14 Commitment to Nuclear Power Implementation

Providing insight into efforts to promote the use of nuclear power, the Nominee noted that during his last briefing as Chairman of the Nuclear Energy Programme Implementing Organisation (NEPIO), it was revealed that two potential sites, two partner countries—China and the USA—and two technologies have been identified for the project. However, he emphasised that nuclear energy involves significant

milestones, and the earliest timeline for generating power from nuclear sources is approximately six years.

5.15 VRA and Bui Power Merger

Speaking on the timelines for the proposed merger of the Volta River Authority (VRA) and Bui Power Authority, the Nominee outlined a distinct approach that does not involve privatisation. He stated that the merger would lead to the creation of the Ghana Power Company, a holding entity with three subsidiaries: hydro components, thermal components, and renewable energy components. These subsidiaries would operate under a unified structure overseen jointly by VRA and Bui Power.

He emphasised that as a strategic measure, it is not prudent to place all energy assets in private hands. The Nominee assured that staff from both institutions would be consulted before critical decisions are made. Additionally, he highlighted the Ministry's plan to consolidate the expertise of VRA and Bui Power to enhance specialisation and operational efficiency.

5.16 Affordable Energy Prices

On how he seeks to stabilise energy prices and ensure affordability to Ghanaians, the Nominee said the first requirement for the energy sector is the anchoring of the currency because a lot of the receivables and expenditure are dollar denominated. As a result, he said the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Ghana would have to work hard to anchor the currency.

From the technical side, the Nominee noted that measures would be implemented for efficiency and added that when collections are increased, there would be no need for tariffs to be increased.

5.17 ENI Arbitration Case

When he was asked whether any order was made against the Government in the ENI arbitration case, the Nominee said that in the arbitration involving Eni Ghana Exploration and Production Limited, Vitol Upstream Ghana Limited, and the Republic of Ghana, along with Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC), the tribunal found Ghana liable for breaching the underlying contract, specifically regarding unitisation directives for the Sankofa oil field.

6.0 HON DR DOMINIC AKURINTINGA AYINE —

MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

6.1 Background

Dr Dominic Akuritinga Ayine was born on 6th January 1966, in Zuarungu in the Upper East Region of Ghana. He attended the Lawra Muslim Primary School in the Upper West Region, the Tongo-Beo Primary School, and Adekura Middle School in Zuarungu in the Upper East Region for his basic and middle school education from 1976 to 1981. He gained admission to the Notre

Dame Seminary Secondary School in Navrongo in the Upper East Region for his Ordinary Level Certificate from 1981 to 1986 and then to the Tamale Secondary School in the Northern Region for his Advanced Level Certificate from 1986 to 1988.

The Nominee proceeded to the University of Ghana, Legon, from 1990 to 1993 for his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree. From 1993 to 1995, he entered and completed the Ghana School of Law and obtained his Professional Practice Certificate. He further pursued and obtained a Master of Laws (LLM) specialisation in International Economic Law from the University of Michigan Law School, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, from 1997 to 1998. The Nominee furthered his education at the Stanford Law School, Palo Alto, California, USA, where he obtained a Master of the Science of Law (JSM) from 2002 to 2003 and a Doctor of the Science of Law (JSD) with specialisation in Trade Law and Democracy from 2003 to 2006.

He was a Fulbright Fellow at the Stanford Law School, Palo Alto, California, USA, from July 2002 to June 2003. He was also a Library of International Relations Fellow at the Chicago Kent Law School in Chicago, Illinois, USA, from April to June 2002.

Dr Ayine served his graduate national service as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Law of the University of Ghana in Accra from 1996 to 1997 and his undergraduate national service at the Notre Dame Seminary Secondary School

from 1988 to 1989. The Nominee has had a sterling career as a Director of the General Law Consult, which he co-founded and was a shareholder from 1998 to 2001. He was also the Executive Director of the Center for Public Interest Law from 2001 to 2009. The Nominee undertook several teaching and non-teaching assignments at the University of Ghana and Stanford University from 2000 to 2013, during which he researched and published many academic journal articles relevant to teaching areas.

Dr Ayine serves as the Managing Partner of the law firm Ayine and Partners and has, over the years, applied his extensive knowledge and expertise to provide consultancy services to numerous key state and non-state organizations. His notable contributions include the preparation and drafting of the Dam Safety Regulations for the Water Resources Commission in 2012; the development of a guide for analyzing oil and gas legislation for the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) in 2012; and conducting a comprehensive analysis and preparing a report on agricultural credit regulation in Ghana for the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana under the DANIDA Business Sector Advocacy initiative in 2006. The Nominee also served as the Deputy Attorney-General and Deputy Minister for Justice, responsible for litigation before the superior courts of Justice from April 2013 to January 2017, during which time he handled a number of critical international arbitrations involving the Republic of Ghana.

Dr Ayine has been the Member of Parliament for the Bolgatanga East Constituency since January 2013. In terms of leadership, he has served as the Deputy Ranking Member for the Constitutional, Legal, and Parliamentary Affairs Committee. He was also the Chairman of the Committee on Subsidiary Legislation from October 2018 to December 2024. He also co-chaired the *Ad-hoc* Committee on Vote of Censure.

Questions asked of the Nominee and His Responses

6.2 Nomenclature of the Designation

The Nominee was asked to clarify what his designation ought to be. He affirmed what was stated in his nomination letter as "Attorney General and Minister for Justice.

6.3 Reintroduction of Regional and District Tribunals

In responding to why the NDC intends to pass a law to re-introduce the community and circuit courts, which were abolished and criticised by the Africa Watch Report on Human Rights as having disregard for human rights, he responded that it is to align fully with Article 125(1) of the Constitution which posits that justice emanates from the people and to encourage the participation of the ordinary citizen in the administration of justice. He also explained that the empirical evidence the Africa Watch Report on Human Rights used for their publication was from the pre-Constitutional era when revolutionary

justice was being administered. He assured the Committee that the reintroduction of the tribunals would be done in accordance with the 1992 Constitution and inhumane and degrading treatment of the citizens would not be permitted. He added that a public tribunals act would be enacted to regulate their operations to prevent the recurrence of human rights violations.

On why the NDC government previously accepted the recommendation of the Constitution Review Commission to abolish tribunals but has made a U-turn and now wants to re-introduce them, the Nominee said that the re-establishment of the tribunals is because experience has taught them that the participation of ordinary citizens in the justice system is a good thing.

The Nominee clarified that the tribunals are established under Article 142(1) of the Constitution. However, he noted that subsequent amendments to the Courts Act removed provisions related to their operation. He stated his intention to introduce a Bill aimed at comprehensively addressing the implementation of the letter and spirit of Article 142 of the Constitution.

6.4 Constitutionality of the Operation-Recover-All-Loot(Oral) Committee

The Nominee, in answering whether or not the ORAL committee is a constitutional body, explained that ORAL is not listed in the Criminal and Other Offences Procedure Act because the Act does not create bodies but merely

lays out the procedures relating to criminal trials, including summary trials, trials on indictment, and the treatment of evidence in criminal matters. He further clarified that the fact that ORAL is not a legal body established under the Act does not render it illegal. ORAL operates within the constitutional value of accountability as highlighted in the preamble of the Constitution, which emphasises the need to exact accountability from individuals, particularly those in public office, who misuse their positions to loot public resources.

6.5 Conflict of Interest

When asked whether the Nominee, given his prior role as legal counsel for Cassius Mining and his belief in the company's claims against the Government of Ghana, would ensure that the Republic is not burdened with the US\$441 million arbitration claim filed by the company, he stated that he was previously instructed by Cassius Mining to file pleadings in the High Court of Bolgatanga but clarified that he is no longer the company's lawyer. He emphasised that the Constitution prohibits public officers from allowing their private interests to conflict with their public duties. He assured the committee that, as Attorney General, he would act solely in the best interest of the Republic of Ghana, adhering to the highest traditions and ethics of the legal profession. He further referenced his prior experience as Deputy Attorney General, highlighting the commendable reputation of the Attorney General's office during his tenure.

6.6 Asset Declaration

The Nominee was asked whether he has complied with the Public Office Holders (Declaration of Assets and Disqualification) Act, 1998 (Act 550) by declaring his assets. He affirmed that he has consistently complied with asset declaration requirements and confirmed that he has filed his asset declaration for the year 2024.

6.7 Agreement Between GPGC Ltd V. Government of the Republic of Ghana

When questioned about his involvement in the agreement between GPGC and the Government of Ghana, which resulted in a \$134 million judgment debt against the state, the Nominee clarified that his law firm, Ayine & Felli Chambers, was listed as GPGC's registered address because Dr. Abdul Baasit Aziz Bamba, a former member of the firm, independently handled the company's registration before leaving the firm with GPGC as his client. He further emphasized that he had no private dealings with GPGC and only provided a legal opinion as part of his official duties as Deputy Attorney General.

6.8 Establishment of Regional Tribunals

The Nominee dismissed the notion that the creation of regional tribunals signifies an era of terror prior to the coming into effect of the 1992 Constitution, and intended to abuse the rights and privileges of the citizenry. Dr

Ayine informed the Committee that, per **Article 125 of the 1992 Constitution**, justice emanates from the people and is administered by the Republic through the Judiciary. He further stated that the logic of establishing the tribunals is to ensure the participation of the ordinary Ghanaian.

The Attorney General and Minister for Justice designate prompted the Committee that the Judiciary is defined to include the Public and Regional tribunals as espoused in Article 142 of the 1992 Constitution and as Parliament by law would establish. He stated that if approved, he would introduce a Bill to govern the conduct of Public Tribunals to adapt to Article 132 of the Constitution; Dr Ayine expressed that the tribunals would be regulated to conform to the dictates of Chapter five of the Constitution and not breach the rights and privileges of Ghanaians.

6.9 The Legality or Otherwise of Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL)

In response to whether Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) is legal or illegal, the Hon Nominee affirmed that the Committee operates within its mandate. He explained that the Committee's role is to gather information for onward transmission to the appropriate authorities for investigation and prosecution if material evidence is established. He emphasized that accountability is a fundamental principle of the Constitution, which enjoins all citizens to protect the State of Ghana and its democratic framework. He

reiterated that accountability is essential for the sustainability and progress of the nation, and the Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) initiative is a mechanism to uphold this principle. According to Article 41(f) of the 1992 Constitution, it is the duty of all Ghanaians to combat the misuse and wastage of public funds and property. Ensuring accountability is a civic responsibility, which aligns with the objectives of "Operation Recover All Loot" (ORAL). The Nominee affirmed that the ORAL Committee operates within the legal framework and is fully aligned with the constitutional mandate to uphold accountability and protect public resources.

6.10 Cassius Mining and Conflict of Interest

The learned Nominee assured the Committee that even though he has represented the company in his capacity as its legal counsel, he no longer represents the company, nor is he on a retainer. Dr Ayine assured the Committee of his commitment to discharge his role as Attorney General and Minister for Justice, with zeal devoid of conflict of interest. According to the hon nominee, as Attorney General and Minister for Justice, he only has one client, the Republic of Ghana, and he would not compromise the interest of the Republic.

6.11 Representation of Fidelity Bank as External Solicitor

Dr Ayine confirmed to the Committee that he once represented the Electricity of Ghana, but is currently not representing the

Company. He narrated that he represented Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) against the erstwhile PDS company. The case was subsequently settled, but the hon nominee informed the Committee that, in the referenced suit, he was on the side of the Republic.

6.12 Ministry for National Security

The Committee sought the opinion of the hon nominee on the omission of a ministry responsible for National Security from the list of advertised Ministries established by His Excellency the President. The Attorney General and Minister for Justice designate surmised that, per Session 12 of the National Security Act, 2020 Act 1030, any ministry that assumes National Security's responsibility is deemed the Ministry responsible for National Security.

On whether or not he would proffer a suggestion on the issue, the learned Nominee further stated that his candid opinion would accordingly be shared if the President of the Republic seeks same.

6.13 Reintroduction of the Amendment of the Criminal Procedure Act

The learned Nominee uttered to the Committee that the current scope and substantive nature of the Bill would not find expression in the amendment of the criminal procedure Act if Government decides to reintroduce it. He referenced the portions of the Bill that seek to scrap interlocutory appeals and stated that if a decision is made for its reintroduction, the new version would be substantively

different from the Bill intended for amendment in the 8th Parliament.

6.14 Jurisdiction and Size of the Supreme Court of Ghana

In response to questions on the size and jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, the Nominee acknowledged that its jurisdiction is indeed extensive. He suggested that this could be managed through various mechanisms. One option is to reduce the scope of the Court's jurisdiction. Alternatively, the number of Justices on the bench could be increased. If the Court's current jurisdiction is maintained, it must adopt effective mechanisms to manage its caseload.

The Nominee emphasized the need to educate the public and court officers on the limitations of the Supreme Court's jurisdiction, underscoring that not all cases qualify for consideration at that level. He proposed the introduction of procedural mechanisms to filter cases, distinguishing those with legitimate grounds from frivolous ones. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of increasing the number of Justices and fostering specialized expertise within the bench to improve efficiency and case management.

6.15 Nominee's Relationship with the Judiciary

The learned Nominee humbly urged the Committee to consider everything in context. According to the hon nominee, he does not run public commentary on cases he handles unless it borders on politics. Even in those scenarios, he

hardly makes public commentary on cases. Dr Ayine assured the Committee of his intention to have a respectful relationship with the Judiciary.

The Attorney General and Minister for Justice designate opined that he has confidence in the Judiciary, but there is certainly room for improvement.

6.16 Use of In-House Attorneys in International Arbitration

The Nominee indicated that the use of State Attorneys in international arbitration is not a new practice, and he intends to uphold this tradition. However, he highlighted scenarios where the arbitration forum is located outside Ghana's jurisdiction. In such cases, he advised caution against excluding lawyers familiar with the laws and practices of that jurisdiction. He explained that it is both prudent and conventional to engage counsel from the relevant jurisdiction to assist with the arbitration process. Outside these specific circumstances, the Nominee committed to fully utilising the services of State Attorneys in international arbitration cases.

7.0 Conclusion and General Recommendation

The Committee, in accordance with the provisions of Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217, deliberated on the three ministerial nominations made by H.E. the President. The nominees exhibited competence, extensive knowledge, and exceptional

skill in addressing matters relevant to their respective Ministries. The Committee, therefore recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the adoption of its report and approval of the following nominees:

- i. Hon Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson
- Minister for Finance
- ii. Hon John Abdulai Jinapor
- Minister for Energy
- iii. Hon Dr Dominic Akuritinga Ayine
- Attorney-General and
Minister for Justice

Respectfully submitted.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, the Motion has been moved.

Yes, Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi?

Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah (NPP — Ofoase Ayirebi): Thank you, Mr Speaker, I come under Order 97(3), and the Orders of this House are that when a Paper of this nature is laid, a short explanatory statement shall be made by the person presenting a Paper when requested by the House or a Member upon the presentation.

Mr Speaker, what the Chairman of the Committee, respectfully, has done is to lay and ask that we approve, but the substance of it has not been made available to us, so I come under Order 97(3), requesting that an explanation be given.

1:43p.m.

Mr Buah: Mr Speaker, I am not sure where the Hon Member was reading from because the Standing Order he quoted—It is actually 97(2) says,

“If so desired by the person presenting a Paper, a short explanatory statement may be made...”, I am not going to Order 97(3). So, the Hon Member is completely out of Order.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Leader?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, my respected Colleague, who is the applicant in this matter, made an application. The Hon Member of Parliament for Ofoase Ayirebi, Mr Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, rose under Order 97(3) to make his application. In mounting his application, he relied on Order 97(3) and for the avoidance of doubt I quote:

“A short explanatory statement shall be made by the person presenting a Paper where requested by the House or a Member upon the presentation.”

So, he has requested. He rose to make an application. Mr Speaker, I leave it—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader, thank you very much, but at this juncture, I will turn down the application. [*Hear! Hear!*] Mr Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, let me turn down your application based on Order 97(2),

that “If so desired by the person presenting the Paper”, so if the person decided not to give—

Mr Oppong-Nkrumah —*rose*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Oppong-Nkrumah?

Mr Oppong-Nkrumah: Mr Speaker, if you would kindly indulge me. Once you have made the pronouncement I should not be speaking, but I just want to draw your attention to something—[**Mr Buah:** Please, you cannot challenge Mr Speaker, and you must allow Mr Speaker to give you the chance to speak. Mr Speaker must allow you to speak.]

Mr Oppong-Nkrumah: That is what I am requesting of the Speaker.

Mr Buah: I have not heard Mr Speaker asking you to speak.

Mr Oppong-Nkrumah: Yes, but that is what I am requesting of Mr Speaker—

Mr Second Deputy Leader: Hon Leader, I have also not given you the chance to also speak, so Mr Oppong-Nkrumah, let me hear you.

Mr Oppong-Nkrumah: Mr Speaker, please, indulge me; Order 97(2) says that, if the presenter of the Paper so desires, then he may give a short explanatory statement, but Order 97(3) says that, A Member may request for that explanation and where that request is made, a short explanatory statement “shall” be made. Not even “may”, so I come under Order 97(3) with my request.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Yes, Mr Mahama Ayariga?

Mr Mahama Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the Hon Member for Ofoase Ayirebi came under Order 97(2) and (3)—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: He did not come under Order 97(2) and 3. He said Order 97(3).

Mr Ayariga: But, Mr Speaker, we have passed the stage of Order 97. Order 97 talks about the presentation of a Paper, but what he has done was not to present a Paper but to move for the adoption of a report. He is not presenting a Paper. I presented a Paper, so at the point when I presented the Paper, he could have then asked me to give some explanation as to what was contained in the Paper instead of just presenting it, so we have gone past there. With this one, he moved for the adoption of the Report, so let him move for the adoption of his report [*Hear! Hear!*].

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Minority Leader?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, the literalist interpretation— [*Interruption*— The literalist approach to interpretation is not what operates today. This is a House of Parliament; we must be purposive in how we interpret our rules. We must be purposive, but this is not a time to litigate on matters of this nature.

Mr Speaker, it is early days; what is important is to ensure that Ministers of State are approved to take charge of our Ministries. The Ministries are not for civil servants to manage. It is for political leaders with a political mandate to manage. So, this is a matter that we would revisit: laying of Papers and presentation of reports.

Mr Speaker, when we talk about reports, are they not the same items that are described as Papers. The Acting Clerk to Parliament may allow me to intervene for the applicant; the applicant would want to pick something. Are the Reports not the Papers that have been laid? So, the argument that the horses have voted and there is an empty stable would not suffice, but we would not litigate this matter today.

Mr Bernard Ahiafor —*rose*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon First Deputy Speaker, may you first take your seat.

Mr Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon First Deputy Speaker, I have not given you the opportunity.

Mr Ahiafor: Very well.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I believe the first timers are monitoring. In the House we deal with procedures and what we are talking about is the procedure for presenting Papers, so Mr Kojo Oppong-Nkrumah, I

think you will agree with us to move on; I have already ruled. The Motion has been moved, and I am looking for someone to second the Motion.

Yes, Hon Deputy Majority Leader, would you second the Motion? No, if you are not seconding the Motion, I would not give you the floor. I want someone who will second the Motion. Yes, Mr Afenyo-Markin, you may second the Motion.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, —[Pause]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, please, address the Chair.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion moved by the Chair of the Committee. Indeed, the Rt Hon Speaker read to us this Communication from His Excellency the President. At the time the Communication got to this House, the one who signed it was the secretary to Mr President. At the hearing, the matter was raised, and I must state for public record that His Excellency subsequently brought a letter signed by himself and that put that matter of constitutional procedure of a sort to a peaceful rest.

Mr Speaker, as contained at page two of this 48-page Report, the Committee requested for and received a security report on the nominees from the National Intelligence Bureau, and I must say that all three reports proved favourable. We, therefore, proceeded to hear them.

Mr Speaker, first, on our respected Colleague, the Majority Leader, Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, he distinguished himself. The necessary questions were asked him and he explained to the best of his ability.

1.53 p.m.

Of course, there were clear commitments that our Side, the Minority, expected from him regarding some promises that his party made in its manifesto. We expected him to have given us clear and straightforward answers, but he came under the fact that he had not been to the Ministry and the need for some consultations was open in his answers. Mr Speaker, this House will hold his feet to the fire by demanding answers from him even as he assumes that high office.

We are also not too sure about his designation. The Executive Instrument (E. I.) establishing the Ministry talked about the “Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning”, whereas the letter to us referred to him as the “Minister for Finance” designate. I believe that is a matter that has to be done because it is a constitutional matter which I believe the President may have to look at.

Mr Speaker, this Government has made a lot of promises that it is going to repeal some taxes at our ports; yet, those port taxes have still not been repealed, but I can understand, it is because they do not have a Minister for Finance. We can understand that it is because they have not presented their first budget, but,

at least, we expect them to make a public commitment that, indeed, given the opportunity, they would walk the talk. Importers are anxious and expectant; they want to see taxes and levies reduced. They want to see taxes that they call obnoxious repealed. They promised them great reliefs and those importers are expectant.

Mr Speaker, regarding the all-important support for the private sector, the One District One Factory (1D1F) initiative, we asked the Minister-designate why he did not support the 1D1F while in opposition. His views were to the effect that these exemptions, when given, are often abused. But, Mr Speaker, merely saying that the exemptions are abused is not enough. What is important is for the Government to put in place measures to ensure that those who benefit, use that benefit for the good of industry.

Again, it appears that in opposition, he acted, perhaps merely for the sake of politics; we still believe that the only way for this Government to survive is to ensure a thriving private sector. Granting exemptions to the private sector is something that must happen; it must be done. You cannot continue to over-tax the private sector. I spoke about tax waivers yesterday, I would speak about them today, and I would speak about it tomorrow. Mr Speaker, they are talking about their so-called “big push”. The so-called “big push” was re-echoed again by my respected Colleague at his vetting and we are holding him to the commitment he has made.

Mr Speaker, for the first time, he defined the 24-Hour Economy. All these months that they talked about the 24-Hour Economy, there was total confusion. He now says that the 24-Hour Economy would only look at the real sector of our economy; so, we are looking at the manufacturing and mining sectors. He said so for the records and he has been captured. If we read page 9 of the Report—I have the 48-page Report with me, and that is what he referred to, that the 24-hour economy is going to concentrate on the real sector.

I am sure that if this concentration is done —[*Interruption*]—Yes, it is here, ‘Funding Government Machinery’; he said the implementation of this and he talked about it generally. Mr Speaker, if they really implement the 24-Hour Economy, we would not be seeing desperate youth on our streets. We would not be seeing youth invading people’s company premises, violence, and unemployment at high levels—[**An Hon Member:** Na who cause am?]. Mr Speaker, so we look forward to the resetting agenda that my respected Colleague talked about.

Mr Speaker, he is a Member of this House, a fourth term, he has distinguished himself —[*Interruption*]— I am sorry, he is a fifth term. Mr Armah-Kofi Buah, thank you. — [Interruption]— No, he is my senior; that is correct. Though we agreed to enter this Chamber in the same year, I was not fortunate because I lost my primaries by a single vote. I had to go back to the assembly to contest again as an assemblyman to become a presiding

member, and catapulted myself into the Chamber four years after. So, I agree, Dr Ato Forson is my senior in this Chamber; that is fine.

Mr Speaker, I have absolute confidence in him that being a young man, he is 46, and has served as a Deputy Minister. Per what he told me during the Inauguration of the President, he was a young man when he came into the Chamber and he was seated behind the pillar where nobody saw or recognised him. He did not even qualify for leadership of a Committee, but by the grace of God, industry, and patience, he has gotten to where he is. I believe that Ato's rise to that high office should be an inspiration, and I tell him not to forget about that. If he falls, it will be the fall of the Ghanaian youth.

Going to manage an economy is no joke; we can only pray for him and wish him well. We pray that he works with the team there, consult more, and be firm in his own approach to things. It is not a very popular position to take in Government. His party people would come after him and other Government Ministers would be on him because everybody would be anxious to have a bite at the national cake, so he should be minded of the challenge ahead of him.

Mr Speaker, the next person is our own respected Colleague, Mr John Abdulai Jinapor, who is going to the Ministry of Energy. I would rest my case on him as there are some more experts in that area, hence I would not attempt to go there.

2.03 p.m.

There are people who are well versed in those energy related issues and I know that they are very anxious to make a meaningful contribution in that area. So I would skip him; suffice to state that he is such an affable fellow. If we look at his family, his brother is with us and has distinguished himself. He is on the other Side, and Ghanaians should watch this, that the politics we do, should not divide a family.

Mr Speaker, I would pause here to remind the Majority Side that they are in Government; they are no more in Opposition.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, just address me and ignore them.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I am addressing you but I am reminding them that they are in Government and if they want to be litigating, their Government Business would delay and we would have our say.

Mr Speaker, the Jinapor Brothers have something to tell Ghanaians; politics should not make us think to the extreme. Those of us here who when it gets to politics, we forget that we are friends, and we hit so hard, should learn from the Jinapor Brothers. Those who when it gets to electioneering periods, they are sent to peoples'—unacceptable and they proceed, and when they finish, they come and pretend like they are brothers. Those who go to polling stations and collations centres to

misconduct themselves, forgetting that we are in this together, should learn from the Jinapor Brothers. Those who lead tags to collations centres to insult and threaten, yet they know they are Members of Parliament, should remember that the Jinapor Brothers represent the hope of this country, and they should learn from them.

Mr Speaker, with that said, I shall rest my submissions by having a bite on the nominee, Dr Dominic Akuritinga Ayine. This gentleman has earned the respect of this House. I remember when I was on Government Side, leading Government Business, there were situations where as a professional, he even departed from certain positions taken by his Side and he got a lot of social media attacks on him, but he stood firm. No wonder, His Excellency, in looking for a formidable but moderate lawyer, to mount that ministry, he found him worthy for that cause.

He has made his name in the academia. In my early days of practice, there was one case I relied on to make my bail applications and to defend my client; the famous “Kwabena Amaning (Alias Tagor) v. The Republic”. The Tagor case was a case that no lawyer wanted to venture. Tagor was jailed with others and lawyers felt that it was a radioactive substance.

This was a man who took the judgement of the High Court, read through it, and took up the appeal. I would encourage young lawyers and law students to go and read what Appau, Justice of the Supreme Court, as he then

was, said of Dr Ayine. What My Lord, Apesera, said of Dr Ayine. He distinguished the law, and set us on a new era of Criminal Jurisprudence, and that has enriched the law in the area of Criminal Justice; all these go to his credit. When I was practicing in the area of Financial Crime, there were a lot of times that we clashed at the Supreme Court but the beauty of the relationship was that when we left court, he, as the Deputy Attorney General, came to me to even encourage me that I should continue, and that is the beauty of the game.

Mr Speaker, I would like to remind him that going into that important Ministry, we on this Side of the House are watching him closely and keenly. There would be extremists and hardliners who would be looking for the people's justice. He should remind them, that Ghana is a country of rule of law. He should remind those extremists, that due process is the only means to achieve an end. He should not allow people to be pushing him here and there.

Mr Speaker, let *Hansard* testify to this point I want to make. Once upon a time, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, was confronted with a situation. A situation where indeed, those supposed suspects had really not done any wrong, but some omissions resulted in they having done some wrong against the State. I am referring to the double salary situation. The President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo decided to pursue a path, to bring down the temperature of the country.

Many were those extremists in the New Patriotic Party (NPP) administration, pushing the Akufo-Addo Government to pursue the double salary and even jail them. I remember, as a member of His Government, President Akufo-Addo said, to what would he gain if all these Members of Parliament are sent to court and are jailed, what becomes of the politics of the country? This is my word of caution to my respected Senior and the Law Professor, pursue those who have committed a criminal wrong; no problem at all, but do not pursue political opponents. If somebody has wronged the State or committed a crime, there is no problem, but do not allow anybody to push you to attack your political opponents.

Mr Speaker, in 2013 and 2014, I was on this Side, some of us the lawyers, I remember, myself and three other lawyers who were always doing our cases, were being chased to file our taxes, and they were having issues and sending us to Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO). I remember it took Dr Ayine to tell those extremists that these are MPs who are lawyers and they should not invade their offices. There are always extremists who would be chasing the Attorney General to go after his opponents. Let us make getting into Government attractive, and getting out of Government also attractive. Do not let us create an impression that we get into Office only to focus on so called political opponents—[**Some Hon Members:** O.R.A.L.]—I am coming to O.R.A.L.—[*Laughter*]

Mr Speaker, that so called Committee claiming to be going after loots, must be cautioned that that committee is unconstitutional and illegal.

2:13 p.m.

And I pray that my respected Hon Colleague, Dr Ayine, after taking office, would review the activities of this illegal unconstitutional body, bring things to order, and allow the State institutions clothed with the mandate to investigate, to follow due process, investigate, and prosecute if necessary. The way this Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) is going, it would not help the cause of our democracy.

Mr Speaker, today they are in Government, tomorrow they could be in opposition. Do unto others, as in all situations, you wish them do unto you. If the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Side in government made some mistakes, they know they do not have to continue that path. So, live above board, and pursue justice for all Ghanaians.

Mr Speaker, on that note, I shall thank you for indulging me, and rest my case, and encourage Hon Members to support this Report which is by consensus. Thank you so much indeed. [*Hear! Hear!*]

Question proposed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us please be snappy with our contributions. I believe we agreed at the pre-Sitting meeting that we would have five Hon Members from each Side.

Mr Buah: Mr Speaker, before we proceed, it has been agreed. We would not argue about that, but we need to talk about it. Going forward, we need to revisit the number of people who would speak. We have 187, including independent candidates, and quite frankly, 88 Hon Members. So, when it comes to debates, it must be proportional, which is fair. I am not arguing about the agreement but I am saying that going forward—time immemorial—because of the numbers. Other than that, we have so many Hon Members who do not have—
[Interruption]—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members! Hon Members—

Mr Buah: But I am not going back on the agreement that has been reached. It is very important that we say it.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, please, let us have some order. The decision has already been taken at the pre-Sitting. It has been agreed that we take five from each Side. So, Hon Deputy Majority Leader, please, the decision has already been taken. Now, we have the names here. We would begin with Hajia Ayamba. Hon Member, you would not go beyond five minutes. Indulge me so that we can have this Report concluded and attend to other Business.

Hajia Laadi Ayii Ayamba (NDC — Pusiga): Thank you, Mr Speaker, but the title should come as Hajia.

Mr Speaker, let me first of all thank the Almighty Allah for bringing us to this level, and thank the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, for making these nominations to take up the mantle of governance in his Government.

Mr Speaker, the first three people who have come to the table are individuals whom I have known for at least, not less than 12 years each, some of them more. Let me start with the person of Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson. This is a person who has been so forceful in all his activities. He has never taken the issue of his personality to be something that he feels he may feel big or think that he is above others. His demeanor has been so encouraging. His knowledge of the subject matter is not questionable. He was the Deputy Minister of Finance, and he worked to the best of his knowledge. He did so well that we all saw the kind of things that he did, until the National Democratic Congress (NDC), then left Government in 2016. I became so happy with the Hon Majority Leader and continued to watch him. As we sat on your left Side, Mr Speaker, when he had this issue of being dragged to court, I had more confidence in him. When one day I said: “Leader, this issue”, he said: “Hajia, do not worry, it shall be well” and I said: “*Insha Allah*, it shall be well”. It has been well.

Mr Speaker, this is the same man who has been nominated, and at the Appointments Committee, his responses left no stone unturned. He did so well. I sat and watched him, and there was nothing I could say or think about than to

wish him well, because I know he has that good knowledge. I know he will deliver. All we need is for us to work and work well, and ensure that he delivers for the good of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, from what I have said, one would realise that his capability is not questionable. Scrapping of taxes—People have spoken and said time and again, especially about the almighty Electronic Transfer Levy (e-Levy) that it does not only affect those that we think it is affecting, whereby maybe we here do not care, but I can assure Hon Members that it affects us because there are times that our constituents, in sending money to their children or relatives, would complain to us about these taxes, which, I would describe, a nuisance tax. It has been a big worry, and I am so happy that he mentioned it, and has reaffirmed the President's position that that tax would be scrapped. That is a *kudos* to us, of the NDC, for thinking and thinking so well about the good of Ghanaians.

Mr Speaker, tax exemptions came to the table time and again. Many a times, we had to go through the exemptions and ensure that we took out some of the items that were locally manufactured; yet, were being brought and put among tax items that needed to be exempted. It was very worrying. We need to re-look at most of the taxes and ensure that items, especially those that can be gotten locally, should never be part of any exemptions. I would not be done on the issue of Dr Ato Forson coming up to support and lead. When it came to these exemptions, we had taxes that needed to be exempted, even with those already

existing factories, we ensured it never happened and I believe that he would continue in that dimension.

Mr Speaker, I would not like to talk so much because I know you have already spoken about time, and there are many others who are yet to come. Hon Majority Leader, I wish you the best in your office, and I hope and pray that you are able to work as you have always been, to the benefit of us all. Not only NDC or NPP, but to all Ghanaians and to the world at large.

02.23 p.m.

Mr Speaker, Mr John Abdulai Jinapor, who has been presented as Minister-designate for the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition, is one whom anybody at all would like to interact with. He is highly sociable, very lovely, outgoing, and a person who is always ready to listen and to share knowledge. He is so good in his area of study that when we were in opposition, whenever he got up to talk about the energy sector, one was compelled to listen carefully to him and learn from him.

Mr Speaker, during the vetting, he spoke nothing but the truth. He knows it himself that the energy sector is a sector that he should not play with. Immediately after the vetting, he had to come out to talk about the issue of some energy deficits and how there was the possibility of us having power outages which we do not want to hear about. When he was questioned, he said it as it was; he was not saying it because he was

just interested in talking for himself or giving himself that accolade. No! He said it as it is—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, hold on.

Yes, Mr Yaw Boamah?

Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah: Mr Speaker, we have a 48-page Report on three ministerial Nominees. We have 25 Hon Members to contribute to the Report. The Appointments Committee has to go back and vet two other Nominees. So, I beg of you to please regulate the time so that Hon Members would have the opportunity to make their contribution to the Motion.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Well noted.

Yes, Hon Chairman of the Committee?

Mr Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, let me also state that at the pre-Sitting, it was agreed that an Hon Member should not speak for more than five minutes. That was the limitation placed at the pre-Sitting. We need to go strictly by it so that we can go and continue with our work.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Mrs Laadi Ayamba, I think I pre-cautioned you and other Hon Members who would be speaking that five minutes would be allotted to each Hon Member; so, please—

Mrs Ayamba: Mr Speaker, it is unfortunate. I thought it was a point of order on what I was saying. I did not know it was the issue of time, but I would let it go. With him, I cannot talk much, else he would mention my local name.

So, Mr John Abdulai Jinapor, congratulations. I wish you all the best. I hope that we continue to have the lights on.

Mr Speaker, my own Hon Brother, Mr Dominic Akuritinga Ayine, has been one of the persons who I have always liked to talk to and personally approach to discuss issues because of his demeanour. He is so diplomatic. He is such that he would let one understand why he is on a particular tangent—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, please, wind up for me.

Mrs Ayamba: I wish him all the best. He knows what I am saying. I know once he has been a Deputy Minister before, he would work better as a Minister. My Hon big Brother, congratulations. I wish you all the best, and take care of yourself.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let us remind ourselves of the time. It is not that we are cutting anybody short, but apart from this, we have other Businesses to do. Please, let us respect the time. At times, it is not palatable to tell an Hon Member that their time is up, so they should wind up or stop, but if I have to do that, I would.

Yes, Hon Member for Asante Akim Central?

Mr Kwame Anyimadu-Antwi (NPP—Asante Akim Central): Mr Speaker, I wish to first congratulate the Hon Nominees.

Mr Speaker, Dr Dominic Ayine was my classmate for five years at the Faculty of Law and the School of Law. I know him very well to be a man of his words and of good integrity. He is a very hardworking gentleman, and a very brilliant young man. He has worked very hard to be where he is.

Mr Speaker, when we came into politics, I thought he was not interested in it, but later, he joined us, and has been a good politician, having served at the Ministry as a Deputy Minister, before Ghanaians decided that he should go and rest.

Mr Speaker, I have worked with Mr Jinapor, whom we call “JJ” on the Finance Committee, and I have always admired him as a young man for his background and the knowledge that he has in steering the affairs of the Committee. Though, he is sometimes mischievous, we play with those things.

Finally, I would like to also congratulate specially, Dr Cassiel Ato Forson. He is a fine gentleman. He has taught us a lot of things at the Finance Committee, and he has always lived by his word.

Mr Speaker, I have no doubt that these three gentlemen that the President selected—I have so much confidence in

them. I can only advise that they should not disappoint us. They should live up to the confidence that we have in them in order that Ghanaians would benefit from the nominations that the President has made.

Mr Speaker, with this, I would like to, again, wish them all the best if they are given the nod in their new career.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

I believe we can all take a cue from him. He was very snappy, and he was able to touch on all three Nominees. Indeed, he was a teacher.

It is now the turn of the Hon Member for Cape Coast South.

Some Hon Members — rose —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I have been given a list, and I am just going by it.

Yes, Mr Ricketts-Hagan?

Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan (NDC—Cape Coast South): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion numbered 10 on the Order Paper.

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I would like to first of all congratulate the three gentlemen: Dr Cassiel Ato Forson, who is the Minister-designate for the Ministry of Finance; Mr John Jinapor, who is going to the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition, and Dr Dominic

Ayine, who is the Minister-designate for the Office of the Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice.

Mr Speaker, I think at the vetting, Dr Ato Forson distinguished himself very well. He said everything that he needed to say as a Minister who is yet to go to the Ministry, and he did promise to deliver the promises that His Excellency the President has made in terms of tax that we hope to repeal.

2.33 p.m.

Mr Speaker, Dr Ato Forson was at the Ministry of Finance as a Deputy Minister with me over eight years ago. He has been a Ranking Member of the Finance Committee for about six or seven years. So, he has basically been following the Ministry of Finance for at least over a decade. I have no doubt in my mind of his ability to perform his duties as the Minister in the times that we are in. I wish him all the best and I know that he would do well. We are all here to support him to make sure that he succeeds in this difficult economic climate that this country is seeing at the moment.

Mr Speaker, I move on to Mr John Jinapor. He is a fine gentleman who is passionate about matters that involve energy and I think he has followed matters concerning energy for a very long time. I have no doubt in my mind that he is the right person to go to the Ministry in these difficult times.

My good friend, Dr Dominic Akuritinga Ayine, congratulations.

The interesting thing is that all three gentlemen here, have previously been Deputy Ministers of the Ministries they are going to. It shows clearly the succession plan the New Democratic Party (NDC) has in terms of promotion of people to positions. The places they are going to are not new to them and I know that they would do well. We pray and hope that we would all support them to succeed.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, thank very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. It is now the turn of Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah.

Mr Patrick Yaw Boamah (NPP—Okaikwei Central): Mr Speaker, I had the opportunity to sit at the vetting, so I would yield to Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, if he is not on the list.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah is on the list.

Mr Boamah: So, Hon Member for Takoradi.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

Mr Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah (NPP—Takoradi): Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion moved on the nominations of the President.

I believe that the first person we are interested in is Dr Ato Baah Forson, who was my school mate, even though he was

my junior. He has been a very good friend since we both came to Parliament and I believe that the nomination is in the right direction. More so, he has been a member of the Finance Committee for a very long time and a part of the NDC campaign.

Mr Speaker, if you take a lot of the pronouncements and the campaign promises made by the NDC, naturally, finance was a major part of it. It is therefore unfortunate that when my friend, Dr Ato Forson and others, are asked direct questions on the promises, they tend to tell us to wait for them to show us their next budget. They tell us to wait for them to get to the Ministry before we get the full view of the data. So, the question I ask myself is, is that kind of attitude not downgrading our politics? I believe that it is time that we politicians start making promises of which data we are sure about and consider how effectively we are going to implement it for the benefit of Ghanaians.

Mr Speaker, another area that Dr Ato Forson made some suggestions, which I believe are good and need to be encouraged, is the use of the taxes or some parts of the taxes paid by the informal sector as pensions for themselves. I believe it is one area he has mentioned and I implore him to make sure that the implementation of these ideas is effected immediately he gets the nod, so that we can formalise the informal sector.

Mr Speaker, other areas he also mentioned had to do with issues of value for money, investor confidence, and issues

of employment and entrepreneurship in particular. On the issue of value for money, I believe it is one area we need to quickly look at in a very big way, especially the processes at the Ministry of Finance. In situations where loans for a project are approved in Parliament and yet, it takes over a year before the project is implemented, the real value we get out of the project is affected.

Mr Speaker, we have had challenges in this country where we continue to do road projects that are too expensive and the value we get out of it over a period of time diminishes. These are some of the issues I believe should also be looked at.

On entrepreneurship, one of the biggest challenges we have is the concept of all young people believing and thinking that after school, Government would employ them. That is one major difficulty that we have had as politicians. I believe that investment in the areas of private sector, small businesses and medium scale businesses that Ghanaians can manage for the long term should be one area that Government should be investing a lot of public funds into, starting from now. This is to ensure that we can expand that area in order to generate employment and also generate taxes for the country.

On the issue of the nominee for the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Justice, I have worked with Dr Ayine on the Subsidiary Legislation Committee for the last four years, and he has shown to be a moderate person who believes in consensus building and he has always stood his grounds and

admitted his mistakes. I believe he is one person we are all quite frankly happy has got this nomination. I believe that the House would also support and make sure that he becomes the next Attorney General and Minister for Justice to be able to do the work for Ghana.

Last but not least, I would talk about Mr John Jinapor. I have worked with him on the transition at the Ministry of Energy and Green Transition and since he has a lot of information and has worked in that sector, all we are praying for is that *dumsor* does not come back; all we are praying for is that the fuel would flow as it has been in the last seven years.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I support this nomination so that they can start work.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Let us now turn to Mr Francis-Xavier Sosu.

Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (NDC — Madina): Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the Motion ably moved for the approval of the three nominees of H.E. John Dramani Mahama.

Mr Speaker, Dr Ato Forson has shown extreme leadership in this House. He has also shown in-depth knowledge in finance and national economy which I believe makes his nominations one of the finest and one of the best. It is often said that true leadership is revealed by adversity.

2.43. p.m.

Mr Speaker, you will bear testimony to the fact that Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson was one of the people who was politically targeted, and throughout last year and two years ago, he had to endure all manner of attacks on his personality. He had to endure going to court while serving as a very firm voice of the opposition on the Finance Committee.

Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member for Madina, hold on.

Mr Kwame Anyimadu-Antwi (NPP—Asante Akim Central): Mr Speaker, I must sound a caution. My friend said that Dr Forson was politically targeted. I think this is not fair and this is below the belt. To say that he was politically targeted, I think this must be expunged from the records. Because if he is asked to justify why he was politically targeted or the circumstances of political target, I am not sure the Hon Member will be able to justify this.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much. Mr Sosu, once you are also an officer of the court, I think you do us an honour and withdraw that.

Mr Sosu: Mr Speaker, I respectfully withdraw that statement.

Mr Speaker, Dr Forson was one of the Hon Members of Parliament last year that underwent all kinds of struggles, let me put it that way, in the face of delivering his work before this very

House. But, Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that he distinguished himself. He was firm, he was principled, he stood his grounds to defend his position when it came to matters of the economy. We recall how he led our Side to fight fiercely against the e-Levy. What is good about Dr Forson is the fact that even now, at the Appointments Committee, he stood his position to say that definitely, the NDC Government is going to honour its promise by scraping off the e-Levy and other taxes that he has always stood by.

Mr Speaker, Dr Forson represents some inspiration to young people because he is in his 40s and yet he has already distinguished himself by rising through the ranks to the pinnacle of becoming an Hon Minister for Finance. That is an inspiration to all of us and I believe that he is definitely going to carry the people of Ghana through and honour all the promises that the NDC has made in its manifesto, particularly, when it comes to youth employment.

Mr Speaker, our brother and friend Mr John Abdulai Jinapor has also distinguished himself as an Hon Member of Parliament and has also shown very excellent knowledge when it comes to the Energy sector. I believe that he is also going to do very well and be an answer to the energy challenges that we were plunged into by the former administration.

Mr Speaker, finally, Dr Ayine was my lecturer and has been an inspiration to me in various ways. I must say that in the last Parliament, when I led some

private Bills like the abolition of the death penalty, Dr Ayine played a key role in ensuring that we achieved that goal of abolishing the death penalty and criminalising witchcraft accusation.

I would want to use this opportunity to urge Dr Ayine that Ghana still has to sign the second optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and also work on removing the death penalty from the Armed Forces Act. I hope that, as he assumes his ministry, he will lead the way to make this happen and, most importantly, also work on the non-custodial sentences for petty crimes.

Mr Speaker, Thank you very much. I wish all of them the best.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: It is now the turn of Dr Gideon Boako. Dr Boako, you have the floor now.

Dr Gideon Boako (NPP— Tano North): Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to support the Motion ably moved for the Hon Ministers—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, may you speak up a bit?

Dr Boako: I rise in appreciation of the opportunity you have given me to comment on the nominees whose reports have been brought before this House.

Mr Speaker, the nominees we are considering today, as has been said by one of us, have all served as Hon Deputy Ministers in the respective Ministries

that they are going. It is interesting that the Government led by H. E. the President, Mr John Dramani Mahama, is a Government on a reset agenda, but these nominations indicate an upgrade from former Hon Deputy Ministers to substantive Hon Ministers. It gives an indication that, indeed, it is good to upgrade in life as human beings.

Mr Speaker, Dr Forson, who has been nominated to the prestigious office as the Hon Finance Minister, is a distinguished personality. He served as an Hon Member of Parliament, he served on the Committee on Finance and has been an Hon Deputy Minister for Finance before. So, truly, his competence and experience in the ministry he is going to is not questionable. The Hon Minister-designate came to the School of Business, KNUST for one of his programmes at a time I was a lecturer there. But Mr Speaker, while we approve the nominee as the Hon Minister for Finance, it is important for me to note that he is going into that office to perform three main functions as any finance manager will perform. He is going to take investment decisions for the country, financing decisions for the country, and budgeting decisions.

Mr Speaker, it is important as a country, having one of us go into such ministry, to remind ourselves that we need to enter into contracts that the Ghanaian people will have value for money. Recently, H. E. the President met the President of the African Development Bank and put before them initiatives and projects that the Government wants to embark upon.

Mr Speaker, we have been on this curve before and Ghana in the past have procured some loans for infrastructure projects and most of these loans have come at exorbitant prices to the Ghanaian people.

Mr Speaker, if you will indulge me, I would like to remind the nominee going to the Finance Ministry that in the year 2015, the Government of Ghana through the African Development Bank took a loan for the Terminal 3 project. That loan came with an interest of 8.5 per cent, which is so high for the Ghanaian people. It took the Government of H. E. the former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to renegotiate that interest down to 5 per cent.

Also, the initial loan agreement for the Tema Akosombo Standard Gauge Railway project that was contracted by the NDC Government that Dr Forson was the Deputy Minister, came with an interest of 6 months liable plus 1.75 per cent. This was so high and it took the Government of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), to renegotiate this down to 6 months liable plus 1.5 per cent.

Mr Speaker, then again if you look at the Pokuase Interchange —

2.53 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I believe you would get time to debate some of these issues. So, wind up.

Dr Boako: Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that as the Minister heads to the Ministry to take financing

decisions for the country, we must ensure that if we are going for loans, we go for cheaper loans. If we are procuring financing, we must ensure that the financing we are procuring are not coming up with exorbitant prices to the Ghanaian people.

Mr. Speaker, in winding up, I want to comment briefly on the Hon Minister for Energy and Green Transitions, Mr John Abdulai Jinapor. Permit me—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I would give the Hon Member one more minute.

Dr Boako: Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Speaker, something that is of utmost interest to the Ghanaian people today is electricity tariffs. I wish to remind the Minister that the Ghanaian people would be very appreciative if he is able to work to reduce prices of electricity. Ghanaians have gone through a lot and I would further support what I am saying with this data. In 2009, there was no increase in electricity tariffs. In 2010, Ghanaians paid 10 per cent, in 2011, 8.9 per cent, in 2012, 7.4 per cent, in 2013, 58 per cent and in 2014, 28 per cent.

Mr Speaker, in the heat of *dumsor*, we were paying 90 per cent for electricity tariff—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, thank you so much. You would get the opportunity—

Dr Boako: Mr Speaker, if you juxtapose this—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member—

Dr Boako: Mr Speaker, thank you. I am so grateful for the opportunity given me.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, you would get the opportunity one day to give your —[inaudible]

Mr Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah: Mr Speaker—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Leader, he is a first timer—

Mr Buah: I just want to advise my Colleague. I understand that this is a very exciting time for him and that is why we indulged him. But please, when Mr Speaker asks you to wind up, please do so; it is important. We work towards the Speaker, so when he tells you to wind up, please do so.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: It is now the turn of Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem, MP for Asuogyaman. Please work around five minutes for me.

Mr Thomas Nyarko Ampem (NDC — Asuogyaman): Mr Speaker, I would try to do less than five minutes. The announcement of the nomination of these three Hon Members: Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, Mr John Abdulai Jinapor, and Dr Dominic Akuritinga Ayine was greeted by Ghanaians with a lot of excitement and approval. In fact, it tells all of us that President John Dramani Mahama has started getting things right.

Mr Speaker, there is one thing that is common about all these nominees and it is the fact that they are all being nominated to Ministries that they previously worked in as Deputy Ministers. In fact, Dr Forson was Deputy Minister for Finance, Mr Jinapor was Deputy Minister for Energy, and Dr Ayine was Deputy Attorney General and Minister for Justice. This tells us that when you are given an opportunity and you work hard, one day you would be recognised— Mr Speaker, Mr Oppong Nkrumah is harassing me—one day you would be recognised and elevated to higher heights. So, this is a lesson to everybody that any opportunity that you get, no matter how small it is, work hard and one day you would be rewarded.

Mr Speaker, their responses show clearly that they are ready for the work and they appreciate fully the tasks ahead of them. In fact, Dr Forson stated clearly that he is going to walk the talk — President John Dramani Mahama intends to walk the talk and to deliver on all the promises that he made to Ghanaians. I was so excited hearing him give assurance through the Committee to all Ghanaians that in the next Budget, Ghanaians would see the repeal of those taxes that we spoke against when we were in Opposition. That the e-Levy, the betting tax and others would be abolished.

Mr Speaker, Dr Forson made rather an ambitious promise that he aims to work hard to bring inflation down to eight per cent plus or minus two, knowing that inflation had risen to over 50 per cent under the previous

Administration, it is quite refreshing to note that that is one of his targets that he would bring down inflation to a single digit.

We know that inflation came down to a little over 20 per cent. But if that is one of the targets of Dr Forson at the Ministry, then it is very encouraging and I believe all of us would work hard to support for the realisation of this.

Mr Speaker, he explained the 24-Hour Economy and contrary to what the Hon Leader said, that he said “it is going to be only about the real sector”, that was not his response. He said “we would focus on the real sector.” In fact, we in the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have stated clearly that selected public institutions with large customers like the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA), Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA), Passport Office and others would all be under the 24-Hour Economy and it would help create a lot of jobs for us.

Mr Speaker, Dr Ayine has demonstrated to the admiration of all of us in this House that he knows the subject which is Law, and that when he worked at the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's Department, he really learnt and he is going to bring that to bear in the execution of his duty. I admire Dr Ayine for one thing which is that he is a very principled man. In fact, he took certain positions that were unpopular to those of us in his party. But he stood by them and said that with his background, this is what he believes

should be done. This is the man that is going to the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's Department, so when the Minority Leader was appealing that he should not go and persecute political opponents and all that—I can assure him that the man going to this Office is principled and he would do his work very well.

Finally, on Mr Jinapor—He is my friend and if I do not mention him, it would not be fair. Mr Jinapor is someone I have worked with on the Committee on Finance. He has also demonstrated that he is ready to help us solve the energy challenges. He said something about Power Purchase Agreements and I was so happy with that response. Because an erroneous impression has always been created that it was wrong for us to have take-or-pay clauses in Power Purchase Agreements. But he demonstrated that even succeeding governments after him signed about six agreements that also included take-or-pay clauses. So, I encourage all of us to approve these nominees.

Thank you, Mr Speaker

Mr First Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. It is now the turn of Mr John Darko.

Mr John Darko (NPP — Suame): Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity given to me to support the Motion for the approval of the three Nominees in the persons of Dr Ayine, Dr Forson and Mr Jinapor. In the case of Mr Jinapor and Dr Ayine,

3.03 p.m.

I had the opportunity to put a few questions to them during the vetting, and I believe their answers to the questions are out there. I believe the jury is still out there on whether their answers were satisfactory or not.

Mr Speaker, I did not get the chance to ask the Hon Finance Minister nominee one or two questions that I had, and I would want to bring that to the fore. When the Finance Minister nominee, Dr Forson, appeared before the Committee, he presented a *curriculum vitae* (CV) which I went through. I saw that the Finance Minister nominee has stated that he was once a director of a company called Protech Integrated Services Limited in the United Kingdom (UK). When I searched on the company, I realised that the date in which the nominee claimed that he was a director from 2003 to 2005—A search at the UK company registry, which is on the internet, shows that the company was actually setup in February 2005. I also realised, through the records of the company, that the nominee's name was not there as a director, contrary to what he had stated on his CV. A search also showed that that company was liquidated some time in 2009.

This is a person who would be a Minister for Finance for the country, so I was wondering how someone who is going to run our Finance Ministry was once a director of a company which has been folded up. Then, the fact that the date in which he claimed he was a director clearly showed that he was not a

director at the time. The company was actually set up in 2005, but he said that he was a director from 2003 to 2005.

Mr Speaker, if it is a mistake, we would like to have the nominee clarify that.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, hold on.

Yes, Hon Member for Bawku Central?

Mr Ayariga: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, the practice in the UK is that when a person is going to start a business, initially, it is not registered. There are a few businesses that start as registered businesses. It is started under a concept known as “trading as”. So, they would trade as a particular name and would do business until the business is well established to a point where they can formally register that name as a business—[**An Hon Member:** Mr Speaker, no]—So, he started trading as that name and worked for about two years after which he then registered the company.

The records are there; if the Hon Member does not understand the concept, he can google “trading as”, and he would see that this is a common practice that is encouraged in the UK. So, this business was conducted in the UK, and that is how it started. That is why, at the point that the Hon Member was talking about, it was not registered, but it was actually an existing business. He can

check; he should just google it on his phone. He will see that, in the UK, it is a common and accepted practice.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Suame, you may conclude.

Mr Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, respectfully, this is a point of clarification.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member for Manhyia South, I have not given you the opportunity.

Nana Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, that is a clear misinformation to the House on UK company law and practice.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hold on; let me give the opportunity to the Hon Chairman of the Committee.

Mr Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, it is observable from the fact that Hon Members get up, without catching the eye of the Speaker, then they put on the microphone. They have gone through an orientation, so these habits can no longer be entertained in this House. Once again, Hon Members should take note that, by practice and convention in this House, they get up and, until they catch the eye of the Speaker, they do not put on their microphone. It is not looking good. We have gone through the orientation exercise with them, so I do not want to see this reoccurring.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Yes, Hon Member for Suame, you may continue.

Mr Darko: Mr Speaker, as I said, the registered company that we know, which is the Protech Integrated Services Limited, was registered in 2005. I do not care what my Hon learned Colleague on the other Side said that the company has to be operated for a particular period before it is registered. I think it is inaccurate. What we are dealing with is a registered company, and that is what he has provided to this House and the people of Ghana that he was a director of that company, Protech Integrated Services Limited from 2003 to 2005. If it is a mistake, he should come to this House to correct it. This is a house of record. He would be the Hon Minister for Finance, and it important that some of these things are corrected.

Mr Speaker, on that, I yield.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon Member.

We would take the last from the Majority Side, and it would be from the Hon Member for Bole Bamboi, Alhaji Yusif Sulemana.

Alhaji Yusif Sulemana (NDC — Bole Bamboi): Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion that is before us this afternoon.

Mr Speaker, indeed, the three gentlemen who have been nominated and vetted are assets to this nation. We

all know Dr Forson and are aware of his humility. He is someone who is focused, diligent and knowledgeable. This was demonstrated when he was vetted. His responses were apt.

Mr Speaker, when he was asked on the issue of tax exemptions, he was clear that we should give tax exemptions to companies that really deserve it, and we should be fair in giving out these tax exemptions. That, for me, is something that we have to take into consideration. This is a person that needs to occupy this important position, so that he would demonstrate fairness and not be biased.

Mr Speaker, let me also touch on my Hon Brother, Mr John Abdulai Jinapor. He is a young man with vision, one who has demonstrated competence and knowledgeable in energy and finance, and one who is able to give us assurance that *dumsor* will be a thing of the past. We had just inherited *dumsor*, something that the John Mahama administration had worked to resolve. We inherited it from the NPP Government, and this young gentleman gave us the hope that *dumsor* will not resurface in this country. He has taken pragmatic steps, so that we will not sleep in darkness and the Minority Side will also not sleep in darkness.

3.13 p.m.

So, they should begin clapping for him that this young man who is a visionary leader has given us hope for this mess they have caused. These are the kinds of people that we expect H. E. John Dramani Mahama to put into very

strategic positions like this. I call on the Minority Side to enormously approve these men of integrity, so that they would be able to resolve the mess that we have inherited for us.

Mr Speaker, lastly, because I do not want to take so much time—When the name of Dr Dominic Ayine is mentioned, people shiver. This is a man who we all know. His credibility level is high, and one can compare him to other outgone Hon Attorney-Generals and Ministers for Justice, and he or she would see the difference.

Mr Speaker, Dr Dominic Ayine is a lecturer, an experienced lawyer and, in fact, some of us seated here are his students. I can see some of them—*[Laughter]*—I can see some of them seated there and listening. This is a man who taught them, and they know his worth, and he is the man who is coming to lead them when it comes to issues of law and courts in this country. I think they should be clapping for President Mahama for giving them such a respected person that, even on the international front, when he speaks, he brings credibility to Ghana. Once again, I want to call on them to rise up and give a unanimous approval to these young men to save us from the position we have inherited. God bless you all.

Mr Speaker, I am very grateful—*[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Lastly, we would listen to Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah.

Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah: Mr Speaker, it appears that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) has a knack for three wise men. When President Mills was in power, he had his three wise men, and President Mahama appears to have started off with his three wise men, our Hon Brothers, who have been nominated and performed creditably when they appeared before the Appointments Committee.

Dr Ayine was a Deputy Attorney-General and Minister for Justice when I was called to the Bar. He actually handed me my Qualifying Certificate of Law (QCL); his track record is well-known and well-respected, and we wish him well. He is not only going to be Attorney-General, but he would also be the Minister for Justice; justice is a subject that, across the country, many people still look forward to: court infrastructure, residences for magistrates and judges, the kind of budget that must go there, the availability of lawyers for Legal Aid Commission to ensure that justice is done in the nooks and crannies of this country. These are things that we expect Dr Ayine, in addition to other functions, to pay attention to, and we wish him well.

Mr Speaker, Mr John Jinapor, our Hon Brother, is well-versed in the subject of energy and finance. He has offered a lot of explanations about take-or-pay and things that have gone on in the past. No matter the explanation that we give—And I speak as a former member of Cabinet; there are a few lessons that we could share with our Colleagues. No matter the explanations

you give, what the people of Ghana are waiting for is that fuel prices do not go up, electricity prices do not go up, fuel is available at the pumps and the lights do not go off. We wish our Hon Brother well, and we hope he delivers in that area.

Mr Speaker, Dr Ato Forson spoke about four things that I want to briefly comment on: one was on raising revenue. Dr Ato Forson said that his target is to move tax to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio from 13 per cent to about 18 per cent, and that is about 500 bases points.

Mr Speaker, one per cent of GDP is about GHC10 billion, so to move it from 13 to 18 is about GHC50 billion. This is at a time that we have agreed across the political divide that some tax handles be removed: e-Levy, COVID-19 and betting. E-Levy and COVID-19 alone is nothing less than GHC20 billion, so what he has promised us is that he would take away about GHC20 billion from the revenue handle but still grow it by another GHC50. We are hoping that he would do that without introducing new taxes or renaming some of the taxes. Whatever he would do in that area, we would support him and help him. If it works well and Ghana moves to 18 per cent of GDP, it works well for all of us.

Mr Speaker, he spoke about expenditure cuts, and he said that he is committed to it. On this Side of the House, we had already advertised that we are looking forward to about a cut of 3 per cent of GDP, so we would be looking forward to the expenditure cuts that he

would present in his first Budget, and we would help him achieve it. However, whatever cuts we do, we should ensure that quality of projects are not sacrificed. They should expect that ongoing projects that are delivering value to Ghanaians are not sacrificed. Yesterday, Mr Agbodza, at his vetting, mentioned that commitment on roads is about GHC100 billion, and that means that GHC100 billion worth of road projects are ongoing. These cuts, we are hoping, would not lead not to a stop of major critical road and other infrastructural projects across the country.

Mr Speaker, the third thing he spoke about, which I want to briefly comment on, is debt management. That under the NDC Administration, they would do better in debt management. At the same time, he is considering taking some more money from International Monetary Fund (IMF). That is not a grant; it is a debt. What would that debt do: worsen our debt situation or improve it? We would be looking forward to these things and helping our Brother, Dr Ato Forson, achieve those objectives.

Mr Speaker, finally, the respected Minority Leader drew our attention to the fact that when the President issued the Executive Instrument (E. I.) on the Ministries, he referred to the Ministry as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. But when he issued the communication to the Speaker, he said the Minister for Finance. We would urge our Brother to avoid the trap of creating the impression that he is responsible for the economy. The Minister responsible for fiscal policy, the Minister for

Finance, like my Brother, Mr Ricketts-Hagan, knows, is the Minister for Fiscal Policy, not the whole economy. There are external economic developments that he does not have control over. There are things happening in the monetary policy space that he does not have control over. There are real sector economic issues in other areas that other Ministers would be taking decision and impacting the economy; he does not have control over that. From our lessons, we wish them well, and we would give them all the support that we can, and, if it works, it works well for all of us.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, we would support the Motion that our Brothers be approved to take up their positions.

Thank you, Mr Speaker,

Question put and Motion agreed to.

3.23 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, on behalf of the House, I would like to extend our congratulations to our own Brothers in this House, and we hope that they would make us proud.

Yes, Hon First Deputy Speaker?

Mr Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, as the mover of the Motion, I want to use the opportunity to thank the Appointments Committee and the entire House for adopting the Report by a unanimous decision. On behalf of the nominees, I sincerely thank the entire House.

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leadership?

Mr Buah: Mr Speaker, we intend continue the vetting of the nominees of the President and, on that note, we ask that you suspend the House to allow the Appointments Committee to do its work. After, we can come back with the second Report; that was the agreement.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minority Leader? But are the Reports not ready?

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, respectfully, I disagree with him because we had Conclave and two very important Statements were admitted; it is important that we allow Hon Members to read their Statements—*[Interruption]*—Yes, they are important at this time. They are equally important. He was not at Conclave, and he admits to that.

Mr Speaker, we should rather proceed to take the item numbered 8, after which we could decide on what to do next.

Mr Buah: Mr Speaker, indeed, that was the agreement; I was not there, but it has been agreed that two Statements be taken.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well

Hon Members, let us turn to the item listed 8 at page 2 of today's Order Paper—

Statements. The first Statement is by the Hon Member for Suhum, Mr Frank Asiedu Bekoe.

Yes, Hon Member, let us hear you. I was going to talk about the topic, but I cannot see the headings well, so you can go ahead.

STATEMENTS

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) and Ghana's Surveillance System.

Mr Frank Asiedu Bekoe (NPP—Suhum): Mr Speaker, I am honoured to join my Colleagues to congratulate you on your re-election as the Speaker for the Ninth Parliament of the Fourth Republic—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: As the Second Deputy Speaker—

Mr Bekoe: And to welcome you back to the Speaker's chair.

Mr Speaker, also, permit me to thank the illustrious sons and daughters of the Suhum Constituency for electing me to this august House, and I promise to serve them in dignity and in truth.

Mr Speaker, I am fortified by Orders 93 and 67(ff) and I thank you for the opportunity to highlight a matter of growing importance in global public health, named Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), and how Ghana can strengthen its surveillance and preparedness efforts in response to this virus.

HMPV is a respiratory virus known to cause symptoms often similar to the common cold, including a stuffy nose, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fever, and occasionally rash. While HMPV typically presents mild illness, it can be more severe in young children, adults over 65 years, and individuals with weakened immune systems, which can result in mortality. It mirrors some of the symptoms we observed with COVID-19, underscoring why testing and proper diagnosis are essential.

HMPV spreads primarily through respiratory droplets: via coughing, sneezing, and close physical contact such as handshakes, hugs, or kiss. It can also be transmitted by touching objects or surfaces contaminated by the virus and then touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth.

Recent data from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, up to 29th December, 2024, indicated notable increase in common acute respiratory infections, including those caused by seasonal influenza viruses, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), and Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV). This trend serves as a warning sign for countries around the world to enhance surveillance and be ready to mount a timely response.

Ghana must draw on the lessons learnt during COVID-19 to protect our population. We must draw on the experience of H. E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and Dr Mahamudu Bawumia's Administration. These included the critical role of robust surveillance systems,

Statements

widespread testing, clear public health communication, and the readiness of healthcare facilities to respond to spikes in respiratory infections.

The Ghana Health Service (GHS) and all relevant public health authorities should work in tandem to strengthen surveillance, enhance public awareness campaigns, promote preventive measures, and maintain readiness of healthcare facilities.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Ghana Health Service for coming out on this matter. I, therefore, draw the attention of Government to these, and further advise it to give the needed support to these state institutions to be able to handle the situation.

Mr Speaker, our collective experience with COVID-19 underscores the critical importance of vigilance, preparedness, and swift response. The similarity in symptoms of HMPV to other respiratory infections means that our surveillance efforts must be comprehensive and well-coordinated. By investing in robust public health infrastructure, we can safeguard our citizens, preserve their health, and sustain productivity.

Mr Speaker, it is incumbent on us to assure the Ghanaian public that we stand ready to address any emerging threat to the health of our nation. With appropriate planning, clear communication, and collaboration across sectors, we can effectively manage HMPV and any future respiratory viruses as we think

globally and act locally. Our people deserve a health system that is resilient, proactive, and committed to protecting the well-being of all.

3.33 p.m.

Thank you for your kind attention—
[*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, I have another Statement which I want us to take as well; after which, I will invite Members to contribute. You may decide to contribute to the one you are interested in. Let me invite the Hon Member for Madina to also read his Statement on Ghana's Leadership in Ensuring the full Implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with respect to you and on any day I would defer to you, I would want to humbly suggest that, looking at the subject matter and the title of that Statement that was read by Mr Frank Asiedu Bekoe, it is important that—This is not to challenge your directive, but I have a strong feeling that if we put the two together, we may not exhaust that particular subject matter enough. So, I want to humbly appeal to you that if we could separately take those Statements and also entertain—Mr Speaker, it is also for *Hansard*, and I am sure that while the contributions are made, you may end up giving some consequential directives; so, my humble suggestion.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes?

Statements

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, I agree with the Minority Chief Whip; because of time constraints, we have to take the two together.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member for Madina, hold on. Let me invite contributors to the first Statement.

Yes, let me invite—How many ladies have spoken today? No, I have not seen any lady, so I will give the opportunity to the two ladies who are up first before I give opportunity to any other person. Let me go to the Hon Member for Tempene. Yes, let us hear you.

Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba (NDC — Tempene): Mr Speaker, thank for the opportunity to contribute to this important Statement.

Looking at the Statement, the Hon Member has done justice to it, but there are some few items that I would want to add to the Statement. As an infection that mimic pneumonia and bronchitis, Ghana Health Service should note that when people report at the health facility, they should be able to do differential diagnosis. How do we diagnose somebody who has this virus? We can only do this by nose swapping, taking the sample to the laboratory, so that we are able to isolate the virus because it has the same symptoms with normal pneumonia and bronchitis.

Ghana Health Service has to take this virus seriously because it seems all the viruses that come into this country, usually comes from China. Though this was discovered in 2001 in Germany, it is

mostly found in the Chinese parts of the world and we should watch out, so that do not wake up one morning and we have something like COVID-19 which we had in 2019. I have learnt from what has just been read that a lot of people or schools have been closed down in China because of this particular virus.

What virus are we talking of? The proper name for this virus is Human Metapneumovirus. It is a virus that has to do with your lungs, so when one gets it, they cough and also have symptoms like normal pneumonia. It is serious in children, where they have to go through mechanical ventilation, so that they would be able to breathe.

It also affects people whose immune systems are very low and predisposed, like people who have hepatitis B and HIV. So, when people who have these symptoms come to the health facilities, it is best to also diagnose them of all to find out if they have any of these viruses.

Again, in this Chamber, we can see from the sitting arrangement that we are too close to each other. I think that we should look at a way to space out in this Chamber, where if somebody coughs and we do not know what is bringing the cough, we would not infect each other or re-infect each other. This is because as we sit here, when there is an outbreak of this virus, we would have a lot of people getting infected.

Again, we have to look at our people whose ages are a bit high, like 65 years and above. This is because, at that age, their immune system is low, so this virus

Statements

easily attacks them and when it attacks them, it becomes more serious than any other person who is of a lower age.

Mr Speaker, I would urge the health system, the Ghana Health Service, and the Ministry of Health to take this virus seriously because we think that it is not here. However, we should begin to do differential diagnosis to be able to isolate it, so that we do not wake up one morning and get something like COVID-19.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, let me go to the Hon Member for Atiwa West. I said that I wanted to satisfy the ladies first before I come to the men.

So, Hon Member for Atiwa West?

Mrs Laurette Korkor Asante (NPP — Atiwa West): Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to my Colleague's Statement.

Although the Human Metapneumovirus, HMPV for short, is nothing to panic about, we need to take it seriously and be vigilant. As leaders, we are on the ground and we have a direct impact on our communities and constituencies. We need to work with the local assemblies to promote preventive measures such as hand washing, less handshake; I know it is our culture, but perhaps, we have to limit shaking of hands, and wear masks when one feels ill, so that we prevent a catastrophe.

We all recall that when COVID-19 started, it was not too worrying or a problem, and not a big deal, but look at

how it morphed into catastrophic losses. So, we are not trying to create fear or panic, but we need to be vigilant and promote these preventative measures

3.43 p.m.

Also, we need the Ghana Health Service to implement robust surveillance systems that would do early detection to prevent any crisis. I must commend the Ghana Health Service because during COVID-19, it was excellent in the contact tracing and tracking, and I am very confident that with these seeming threats, they would also be committed to implementing some robust surveillance systems which would detect any looming threat and also prevent the crisis.

Mr Speaker, we have a responsibility to be proactive and educate, and make the public and constituents aware of this threat. Although it has been around for years, it can be deadly in infants and the elderly as well, as my colleague from the Majority Side said. So once we keep the public informed and educated, I believe that we would be able to prevent any catastrophe because we do not want another COVID-19.

Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, I would want to give an opportunity to the first-timers. Yes, Hon Member? Hon Members, please do not be offended if I ask for your name and constituency. We need to know each other so that next time when I see you I will be able to call you by your name.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, if I can have the attention of the available Leader, while you were speaking, I saw his Back Bencher standing. He would have to do some work in his backyard, please. He has to carry his Members along and they must come to appreciate that when the Speaker is speaking, they would have to listen to him in silence. That is what our Orders say. What does he say to that?

Mr Ricketts-Hagan: Mr Speaker, I take note of that; I have just arrived.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. I believe the orientation—

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, he said he just arrived. In what capacity— *[Laughter]*

Mr Ricketts-Hagan: As an available Leader

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: “As an available Leader”; has he answered you?

Yes, Hon Member, let us hear you.

Prof Titus Kofi Beyuo (NDC — Lambussie): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

I want to commend my Colleague, the Hon Member for Suhum, for drawing the attention of the nation to this important condition. I would say that at this time, we should call for calm and there is no need to panic. Available data suggests that this is not a very deadly

virus, but it is important that we strengthen our surveillance systems, and I have every confidence in the surveillance system of the Ghana Health Service that we have used for COVID and other infectious diseases. I can say it is almost foolproof; however, I would say that the call for us to adopt the preventive measures has additional benefits other than protecting us from this virus. We noticed how, at the height of the COVID when we were all practising handwashing, social distancing and the use of face masks, we had zero cholera cases and deaths in the country. That is one benefit we stand to gain if we practice these measures, so I want to call on Hon Members in this Chamber as a Colleague alluded to. When you develop symptoms of any flu, cough or cold, it is advisable to use face masks whether you have been treated or diagnosed with any condition or not.

I would conclude by saying that we employ the health system, especially the diagnostic services, at Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, to improve diagnoses just in case we have some of these cases lurking around so they can raise the necessary alert.

Thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me now come to Dr Mahama.

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (NPP —Walewale): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Statement by the Hon Member for Suhum.

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Mr Speaker, the subject matter is very important and I would join my colleagues in asking that we treat it with the utmost urgency because we had a similar experience in the case of COVID-19 while we were asked to stay calm not to shiver and get scared, but we were faced with a catastrophe that was declared as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Mr Speaker, if the House would note, COVID-19, based on our experience, has led to over 700 million infections with over six million deaths. The economic costs of COVID-19 to families and individuals were so huge. The cost of COVID-19 to Ghana was unimaginable and very burdensome and I think that we would need to take this issue seriously. My Colleagues talked about surveillance but much more important is the need for us to scale up and safeguard the initiative that the former President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, took. He commissioned the National Vaccine Institute which was supposed to wrap up our local capacity in terms of the development of vaccines in the case of an emergency like the one we are facing now or the imminent threat of the HMPV virus.

Mr Speaker, we also have the Agenda 111 Project. Such an outbreak will require that we prepare in terms of the health infrastructure and I think that this is a clarion call to the President and Executive to ensure that they wrap up work on the Agenda 111 Project so that if any eventuality does happen, we would be adequately prepared to address that.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, since we have another Statement and there are other Businesses to also conduct, I would take one from each Side; then we listen to the other statement.

Let me listen to the Member behind.

Mr Emmanuel Kwasi Drah (NDC — Upper West Akim): Mr Speaker, this is a very important national issue. My take on this has to do with the fact that we have institutions that are highly responsible for some of these emergencies. Taking veterinary services, for instance, a lot of research has shown that some of these outbreaks are from animals. I am yet to know whether the Veterinary Division or Department is under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture or the Ghana Health Service, and I think it is time we started involving some of these important national institutions that can take control of some of these issues.

Mr Speaker, it would surprise you to know how deteriorated the structures of the head office of the Veterinary Services Department.

3.53 p.m.

The systems are failing and I think it would be prudent to get the right institutions involved.

Sometimes you see the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission go round from chopbar to chopbars checking some of these animals that are cooked at these various chopbars. So, if

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we get the right institutions, for example, the veterinary, that are in charge of animals and other areas that can generate or cause this virus to spread, I think it would be good.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Kwabre East, let me hear you.

Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Onyina-Acheampong (NPP— Kwabre East): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute. I would like to commend the Hon Member for Suhum for bringing this Statement up, and also for alerting this House on the emergence of this new virus.

Mr Speaker, it seems that the whole country, in fact, the world at large, has forgotten so soon, the devastating effects of a virus of this nature. We should bear in mind the effects of COVID-19 and the measures we once instituted to prevent viruses of this nature from escalating to a pandemic. Even though there is information in the media space, as I said, there is very little that is being done.

Mr Speaker, reminiscing the lingering plagues that many countries have suffered due to COVID-19, we need to start embarking on awareness creation at all levels. I think this august House should be a shining example to this country. Common preventive measures like washing of hands, social distancing, covering of nose and mouth when sneezing, could be encouraged and enforced once again. I would like to repeat that this House can set the example to the country.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that institutions like National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) should immediately start with the public awareness campaign, to ensure that we do not go back and suffer the costly consequences of an outbreak that is mirroring COVID-19.

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

Before we move to the next Statement, let me say this; the Statement is very important and it needs urgent attention. The House has not constituted the Committees yet, so we do not have Committee on Health, neither do we have the Minister of State. So, let me urge the Ghana Health Service, to put in place measures that would curtail this particular urgent health issue.

I would urge the Leadership, especially, the Business Committee, if possible, plan to invite the leadership Ghana Health Service to brief the House. I think that can also help.

Yes, Hon Minority Chip Whip?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh): Mr Speaker, I just to commend you highly of the consequential directive given in the wake of the Statement, duly delivered by our Colleague, and the directive is spot on.

Mr Speaker, except to say that in this House, we have always been guided often by some timelines, especially when matters of such importance have come up on the floor of the House. So, I would

further plead with you, if you may, you should give some timelines as to when the Ghana Health Service should be programmed by the Business Committee for them to apprise Members duly. Timelines would be of essence.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well.

I hope the Business Committee would meet on Thursday to decide on the Business for the ensuing week. You are part of the Business Committee, so let me assign you to table it at the Business Committee on Thursday, for us to invite the leadership of the Ghana Health Service, to at least come and brief the House and, by extension, brief the nation.

Hon Members, we will take the second Statement but before then, kindly indulge me to take the item numbered 9(a)(ii) — Second Report of the Appointments Committee, on His Excellency, the President's Nomination for Appointment as Ministers.

So, the Chairman for the Committee, you may lay the Report.

PAPER

By the Chairman of the Committee —

Second Report of the Appointments Committee, on His Excellency, the President's Nomination for Appointment as Ministers.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Chairman?

Mr Bernard Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, I rise on Standing Order 97(2), and with your permission, I read:

“If so desired by the person presenting a Paper, a short explanatory statement may be made by the person upon the presentation of the Paper.

Mr Speaker, I want to reiterate the fact that it is at this stage that Order 97 of the Standing Orders of Parliament applies but not at the stage of the presentation of the Report of the Committee for adoption.

Mr Speaker, the Report under reference is on His Excellency, the President's Nomination of Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza to the Ministry of Roads and Highways; Mr Haruna Iddrisu, Ministry of Education; and Hon Eric Opoku, Minister-designate for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well, Hon Member for Manhyia South?

Mr Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah: Mr Speaker, very respectfully, I stand on Order 97(3) which reads as follows:

“A short explanatory statement shall be made by the person presenting a Paper where requested by the House or a Member upon the presentation.”

Mr Speaker, I humbly request that a short explanatory statement is made to

accompany each of the Report on each of the nominee, which has been presented to the House.

Respectfully submitted, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: But have you gotten a copy of the Report?

Mr Baffour Awuah: No, Mr Speaker.

4.03 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Table, please let us make sure the reports are distributed to Members. Members are seeking to have short explanation but I think the reports are self-explanatory.

Yes, Chairman of the Committee, what would you want to say?

Mr Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, it is for a stated reason that I said I am rising on Order 97(2). Order 97(2) that I have read to the House indicates that if the person presenting the Report so desires, the person can give a short explanation to the Report being presented. That is what exactly what I have done.

Let me use the opportunity to say that fresh Members of Parliament should hasten slowly. It is in the absence of the Member giving a short explanation to the Report under reference that Order 97(3) can be invoked. Once the Member has given the explanation based on the Member's own desire, then Order 97(3) is no longer applicable because Order 97(3) states that:

“(3) A short explanatory statement shall be made by the person presenting a Paper where requested by the House or a Member upon the presentation.”

In this case, by my volition, I have offered under Order 97(2) to give that particular explanation. So, it should not be the case that Order 97(3) should again apply because once I have exercised my discretion to voluntarily give the short explanation, then Order 97(3) can no longer be invoked. It is the absence of exercising the right under Order 97(2) that that request can be made.

Mr Speaker, let me state that when a procedure is set down for a right to be exercised, it accords with common sense and reason that it is only that procedure that would have to be exercised in doing so. Let me also state that I have been in this House for some time and I was a Member of the Standing Orders Committee and we drafted the Standing Orders of this House.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Manhyia South?

Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah (NPP —Manhyia South): Mr Speaker, this is a matter that accords with interpretation of the rules. I once upon a time went to a lecturer of mine, an English lecturer, and I sought his interpretation of a poem that he had written. His simple response was that when a poem is written, it is not for the author to interpret the poem but for

the world to interpret the poem. It is so with Statutes. When a Statute is written, it does not matter who was part in the authoring of the Statute. It is for the people to interpret the Statute; so, the position taken by the First Deputy Speaker, very respectfully is clearly misconceived.

Mr Speaker, on the true and proper interpretation of Order 97(3), only three circumstances arise. It is only under three circumstances that an explanatory statement may be made. The first is where the person, very respectfully, presenting the Paper so desires. In the absence of that, a Member may make a request and the House may also make a request. Otherwise, Order 97(3) would have said, “subject to”. In the absence of the use of the word or phrase, “subject to”, respectfully, Order 97(3) is not subservient to Order 97(2). They are independent provisions of the Standing Orders. And so even in the absence of your personal desire, very respectfully, the personal desire of a Member may require that one gives that explanatory statement. The desire of the House may also require that one gives that explanatory statement. So, the statement by the First Deputy Speaker is clearly misconceived. — [*Hear! Hear!!*]—

Mr Ahiafor: Mr Speaker, it is trite learning that when interpreting a Provision, the Provision must be read as a whole. Reading Order 97 as a whole, there is an option for the presenter of the Paper to give a short explanation. There is also an option that in the absence of a voluntary short explanation, the House or a Member may request the presenter

to give a short explanation. That is what Order 97(2)(3) are talking about. Mr Speaker, in this case, on my own volition, I have decided to give a short explanation after presenting my Report. Having done that, it does not lie in the ambit of the House to call on me to give a short explanation that I have already given on my own volition. This is the meaning that we can place on Standing Order 97.

Mr Speaker, I am sorry to say that my friend should take his time and study the Standing Orders. To say that the clear explanation of Standing Orders that I am giving is misconceived — Mr Speaker, the least said about it, the better. I would resist the temptation of descending into certain arenas. I have been in this House for a long time and I think I should put up a conduct that is worthy and deserving of emulation, particularly by the fresh Members of this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I thank so much for giving me the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon First Deputy Speaker, I think you have given the explanation, only that the tail end of it was a bit— You have already given a short explanation as you said. He was also coming from the point of view that a Member who so desires, can request for explanation if you refuse to do that. But as you said, you have already done that. My only problem with you was the last aspect of it. You have been here; we all came to meet you, but it does not matter that a first timer may also have his view— [*Hear! Hear!*]— So, I think we can move on. You have already given

explanation to the —What I am saying is that with respect to Order 97, the First Deputy Speaker has already crossed that hurdle. He gave a short explanation to it. So, I think that one is—

Mr Dafeamekpor, let me hear from you briefly.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, this is a house of records, procedure and rules. Indeed, my brother, upon the submission by the Chairman of the Appointments Committee and the First Deputy Speaker, insisted that he appropriately invoked Order 97(2) and the issue is that I was hoping that he would have submitted forcefully that there is no evidence of that brief explanatory memorandum being given.

4. 13 p.m.

I was hoping that he would have insisted that there is no such evidence before the House. But, the Chairman of the Committee insisted that in invoking Order 97(2), he elected to give that short explanation in respect of the memorandum. I think the issue is about what will constitute that brief explanation. It is up to this House to decide. But whatever it is, once he submits that as part of his presentation, the short explanation has been given. Should my brother accede to that then, Order 97(2) has been satisfied. So, there would be no need to now invoke Order 97(3). It is when Order 97(2) has not been complied with that one will have to invoke Order 97(3). With all due respect to him.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Minority Leader?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I have followed the discussions on the Floor. My respected senior at the Bar, the First Deputy Speaker— he has done 23 years or more at the Bar, his law is solid, and his call through practice comes with excellence. I respect his views. I believe that sometimes when we are young, our approach may not be the way the elderly would want to approach things. So, I can understand how he feels and I would say that when we meet at the coffee area, I am sure my respected Hon Colleague and junior at the Bar and in the House will find space to further engage him and I will facilitate that. But, that notwithstanding, Hon Colleagues, this an opportunity for us to manage ourselves. Best practices will require that where one holds a different view, one makes a forceful submission and use the phrase “I disagree, with respect”. So, one must never say someone is wrong when it comes to a debate.

Mr Speaker, this matter was brought to the fore by our respected Hon Colleague, Mr Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, which is good. It has been a good teaser. And, I am happy it is being explored. I always tell people that the best way to develop our Standing Orders will be to tease it out and encourage a healthy debate on same. So, it is good that today, Order 97 has come to the fore.

In fact, the respected Hon Member, Mr Ayariga, who sooner than later will assume the black seat, actually took us

through some intellectual debate and I nicely chickened out when I realised that my arguments were very weak. I found a way to invoke jurisprudence. Mr Speaker, you know how we survive when things are difficult. So, I was going round and all but anyway that is the beauty of democracy. So Mr Ahiafor, I will assure that our respected Hon Colleague, Mr Baffour Awuah has taken a cue. It is good Mr Ahiafor did not take the matter too seriously. I am sure in the future, he would find a better way of disagreeing with you. Mr Ahaifor should forgive and forget. Is that alright? So, Mr Ahiafor should take it that Mr Baffour Awuah's statement, "it has been misconceived" has been withdrawn and, in its place, the appropriate phrase should be that he disagrees with Mr Ahiafor.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, I hope the Reports have been distributed.

Very well. If the Reports are yet to be distributed—

Hon Members, you will need to catch my eye.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, the Reports have been generally distributed.

The Hon Minority Chief Whip just walked in, if he has not got a copy—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I just wanted to find out whether the Reports have been distributed.

Hon Members, may you take your seats.

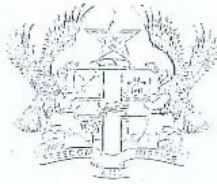
Leadership, please take your seats first. Leadership, you are to help the Chair to manage the House.

Hon Members, new Leaders who are yet to sit at the right Side of Leadership, it is you together with the Minority who will help the Chair to manage the House. So please, let us bear in mind that we are here to do Government Business and to work for Ghana. Let us help each other so that once we come here, we would be able to progress in whatever is ahead of us.

Before I will invite any Hon Member to speak, kindly allow me to take us to page 2 of today's Order Paper, the item numbered 4; Message from the President.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE PRESIDENT

Nomination of Ministers for Parliamentary Approval



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Jubilee House

The President

21st January, 2025

Rt. Hon. Speaker,

NOMINATION OF MINISTERS FOR PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL

In accordance with Article 78(1) and 256(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, I submit through you, to Parliament for your prior approval the names of persons, attached hereto, I intend to appoint as Ministers.

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

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

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


 JOHN DRAMANI MAHAMA

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

cc:

The Vice President
 Jubilee House
 Accra

The Chief of Staff
 Jubilee House
 Accra

The Secretary to Cabinet
 Cabinet Office
 Jubilee House
 Accra

Regional Ministers

	REGION	NAME
1	Upper West	Puozuing Charles Lwanga
2	Bono	Joseph Addae Akwaboa
3	Bono East	Francis Owusu Antwi

Ministers of State

	MINISTRY	NAME
1	Ministry of Defence	Dr. Edward Kofi Omane Boamah
2	Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations	Samuel Nartey George, MP
3	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources	Emmanuel Armah-Kofi Buah, MP
4	Ministry of Sports and Recreation	Kofi Iddie Adams, MP
5	Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment	Abdul-Rashid H. Pelpuo, MP
6	Ministry of Health	Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, MP
7	Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology	Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed, MP
8	Ministry of Transport	Joseph Bukari Nikpe, MP
9	Ministry of Interior	Muntaka Mohammed-Mubarak MP
10	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, MP
11	Ministry of Works, Housing and Water Resources	Adjei Kenneth Gilbert
12	Minister of State in Charge of Special Initiatives	Emmanuel Kwadwo Agyekum, MP
13	Minister of State, Government Communications	Felix Kwakye Oforu, MP
14	Minister of State, Climate Change and Sustainability	Issifu Seidu

4.23p.m.

The list is accordingly referred to the Appointments Committee for consideration and report. Yes, Minority Leader—

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, thank you.

We appreciate the step you have taken to bring to the attention of the House this Communication from H. E. the President, particularly, when same was signed by him. We note that quite a number of the Nominees are from Parliament and we therefore appreciate the work of this Chamber.

On our Side, we want to signal the Government that we would treat the Nominees on case-by-case basis. For those who disrespected the rule of law and encouraged violence, we would have to make a case for them to know that violence cannot be used to enjoy democracy. We are also disappointed in the choice of the President because there are a lot of women on his Side. We have over 30 women elected to Parliament from the NDC Majority Side.

In view of the Affirmative Action posture of the country—we have passed the Affirmative Action Law. Of all these hardworking women, only a few of them have so far been given substantive ministerial appointments. Is it the case that they are matching them for deputy ministerial appointments? That is not right. Our women cannot be second-class appointees. The President must demonstrate his belief in the capacity, the

capability and the competencies of our women. The Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo Government demonstrated that women have equal capacity as men; he did that in all his appointments and the records are out there for all to see.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Greater Accra Region— A government should have a representation of all shades of opinions and all stakeholders must find space in government. In this Government, we do not see indigenous Ga people. We do not see sufficient indigenous Ga-Adangbe people in this Government.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Leader, hold on—

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, very well—on a Point of Order?

Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor: I rise on the Point of Order that the Minority Leader – *[Interruption]*— I am speaking on the authority of the Rules of Parliament—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Dafeamekpor, if you are under authority then give us the specific Standing Order—

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, with all due respect—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I was just overlooking what the other Side was saying, but if you say you are—

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I rise on the *point of order* in terms of misinformation. Mr Speaker on the

matter that the —[inaudible]— the Minority Leader is taking is a very dangerous one—you rise and speak on tribalism—[inaudible]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Dafeamekpor, please I said earlier that it is the Leadership that would help the Chair to manage the House. So, if you are speaking and I want you to hold on and you would not listen to me, I find it a bit problematic. Because the Minority Leader was speaking, you rose up and I recognised you and asked him to stop. So, if you are also speaking and for whatever reason I am asking you to hold on, you should also respect the Chair. Anyway, you can continue.

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, with all due respect to the Minority Leader, the tangent that he is taking is very dangerous for the cohesion of this Nation. The President has not exhausted his appointments. The President has the Executive authority to make over 7,000 appointments.

4.33 p.m.

We run an executive presidency in this country and Ga people will continue to occupy important and enviable positions in this Government. So, he must withdraw the claim that he has made on this hallowed Floor. **[Some Hon Members:** No] He will withdraw it because there is no basis for putting out such an information. Mr Speaker, you must urge it upon the Hon Minority Leader to withdraw that comment.

Secondly, on the Business before us, before you decided to evoke item

numbered 1 on the Order Paper to where it was to read the communication from the presidency to the House, was for us to conclude the debate on the Motion that has been ably moved by the Chairperson of the Appointments Committee, the First Deputy Speaker and have it seconded. We have agreed on the number of people who would contribute towards the debate so, Mr Speaker, may I urge you that we conclude that Business because as we speak, it is in abeyance. Let us conclude that Business then the Hon Minority Leader can have his say on this matter then we can bring finality. But, may I plead with you that we conclude the Business in respect of the Motion that is presently pending before the House. I humbly submit.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Hon Minority Leader? No, I want Mr Afenyo-Markin to be on his feet. I want him to conclude what he was saying so that we — Hon Members, the House is run procedurally. He was speaking, someone came on a *point of order* so, after the *point of order* —[inaudible]

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Mr Speaker, with respect, if you may indulge me. If for nothing at all, I am in Leadership and in this House, the convention and practice has been that when any of us in Leadership rises, at least we listen to the person. Mr Speaker, would you listen to me?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes. I will listen to you but I want the Hon Minority Leader to conclude what he was saying.

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: If he concludes, what I am going to say will be moot. I want to respond to some of the things Mr Dafeamekpor spoke to. Mr Speaker, I thank you for your patience.

First of all, I want my Hon Colleague whom I know, would eventually come into Leadership to appreciate one fact. He is going to be in Leadership for a marathon period so, he should hasten slowly. This temptation of my Hon Colleague suddenly getting angry and getting in a certain mood is inappropriate. First of all, he made a point which — it was totally inappropriate of Mr Dafeamekpor to say that he is an authority on the rules. The interpretation of the Orders lies in the bosom of the Speaker and not him. He cannot be an authority when it comes to the interpretation of the rules. That is wrong. He should get that correctly put out.

Again, if I were him, when the Hon Leader was speaking, I would rather be taking notes. He has made important points. *[Interruption]*. They were not listening. They should take notes and transmit same to H. E. the President. Conspicuously missing are the Ga people; is that not a fact? We do not have Ga people in the appointments so far. How many Ewe people are featuring in the appointment names that are put out so far? They should take note and communicate same to H. E. the President to make amends. They must not show aggression. They can decide to defend it but so far, the names that have come out — Mr Speaker, the Hon Minority Leader could not have captured it better when he

said the Ga people are conspicuously missing. What is their defense to that? The Ewe people are conspicuously missing. The Constitution makes provision for regional balance in such appointments and they know this.

Besides the point, is he the available Leader or he is the Majority Whip? I do not know which is which. He should rather take a cue and communicate same to H. E. the President. **[Mr Sosu — rose —]**

What is the problem with Mr Sosu. The Hon Member for Madina should sit down. He is obviously seeking attention for H. E. the President to see him. He has lost out on the selection so what does he want to say? He has lost out. The names are out and the Ga and Ewe people have lost out. He should be communicating this to H. E. the President and not defending it. What is he going to say? He should stop defending it, it is wrong.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, we can take things lightly but, at times, if we are not careful, we can also instigate certain actions. It is the prerogative of H. E. the President to make his nominations. The Constitution also enjoins him to at least be guided with the regional balance. I believe he might be doing that. I have personally not checked the names but if the Hon Minority Leader sees — have you checked? **[Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** We have checked]. So, Hon Member, let him finish so that we can go to the substantive matter because these are all — let the Hon Minority Leader finish so that we can go to the substantive matter of the second Appointments Committee's report.

Hon Minority Leader, please finish it up for us.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I shall refer my Hon Colleagues to Article 35 (6) (b) of the Constitution and it states:

“6. Towards the achievement of the objectives stated in clause (5) of this article, the State shall take appropriate measures to-

- b. achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices;”

The state and its government are headed by the President who alone has executive powers of state. Article 58 of the Constitution provides that:

“1. The executive authority of Ghana shall vest in the President and shall be exercised in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.”

So, I agree with him that the President has a prerogative but, that prerogative, as you again said, must be exercised within the ambit of the Constitution and that is provided for by Article 35 (6) (b). Mr Speaker, my observation is well founded. So far, we have heard chief executive appointments and these chief executive appointments to state-owned institutions have no regional balance. The appointments to ministerial office thus far cannot be said to have a fair representation.

4.43 p.m.

I have already argued the gender imbalance, and I would not go there. We have Western, Central, Greater Accra Region, which is predominantly made up of Gas and Adangmes, Volta Regions, generally made up of Ewes and Anlos, how many of them have been appointed into this Government? We have Oti Region; how many from Oti are getting the opportunity?

Mr Speaker, if you go to Upper West and North East Regions—In the North East Region, they are predominantly Mamprusis—*[Interruption]*—Yes, it is a fact. Are we seeing a representation of them? This is a constitutional requirement. It is in the Constitution; all we are saying is that Mr President should check the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, maybe, I should walk my Colleagues down memory lane. When President Kufuor was in office, I recall that, in his first term, it got to a point, during the appointment, someone asked President Kufuor about this same matter and he said that he has made an appointment to Upper West Region, but the person insisted he was referring to his Cabinet. At least, there should be a representation from all corners of the country. The President at the time made sure that somebody was appointed to fill a Minister of State—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Prof Kasim Kasanga.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Prof Kasim Kasanga, therefore, came in to fill the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. Our friends should listen. They have come into government, yet they oppose any useful comment. They are behaving as though they are in opposition; they should listen to us. At least, when you made that first mistake of letting a Secretary to the President write to us and we corrected it, today, the President himself is writing to the House.

Mr Speaker, I would plead with my Hon Colleagues that when we make comments, they should convey it to the presidency. Mr Dafeamekpor is now telling us that the President has up to 7,000 appointees to appoint. He said that the President has 7,000. Really? So, it is no more 60 appointees—*[Interruption]*—Now they are telling us that there are 7,000 appointments to be made, so would they appoint 7,000 party foot soldiers?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, thank you; you have made your point.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, let me conclude.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member now says that we should wait because it is early days yet, and that the President would appoint 7,000 people. So, we would have 7,000 appointees, and that is what they have told us.

Mr Speaker, if that is true, then we would wait for the 7,000 appointees to come, and we would assess them on whether or not there is a true balance

because I am looking forward to seeing Ewes, Ga-Adangmes —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minority Leader.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: I am looking forward to seeing more Kusasis, Mamprusis, Gonjas, Dangombas in this Government—*[Hear! Hear!]*—I want to see more of them. We do not want one-way appointment. It should be constitutional.

Thank you.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me give it to the Hon Member for Ada, Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe.

Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe (NDC — Ada): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, we have Government Business to do, but I would respond to this gender and Ga-Adangme issue. Because when it comes to gender, H. E. John Dramani Mahama is the best that one could clap for—*[Hear!Hear!]*—Because he started with a woman as his Vice President—*[Hear!Hear!]*—The woman is there to fight for women and hold the door for women to pass through.

Mr Speaker, H. E. President John Dramani Mahama promised 60 Ministers, and he is supposed to take 50 per cent of the Ministers from this Chamber —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: More than 50 per cent

Ms Cudjoe: Yes, more than 50 per cent from this Chamber—We have 16 regions, so if even each region is given two, that would be 32. If every region is given two, and he has given Greater Accra Region two although he has not finished with his appointment yet, what is the big deal? Mr Samuel Nartey George is Dangme; Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey is a Ga—*[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, H. E. John Dramani Mahama lives in a Ga land, and he gives that respect to the Gas and appreciates the votes he got in the Ga land, so he would do the needful. So, please, *di wo fie asem*—*[Laughter]*

Mr Speaker, let me tell you this story: when a woman is disappointed in her husband, one would see that she assumes talking every day; she argues about things that are not even necessary. This is exactly what is happening to the NPP—*[Hear! Hear!]*—Please allow Government Business to flow—

Mr Speaker, we have the second batch of the nominees to be appointed, and the Motion has been moved. Mr Speaker, move straight to the debate; two from each Side and one Leader from each Side, making it three each, so that H. E. President Mahama would get the right people to manage this economy for us. We are ready to reset Ghana, and we are in a hurry to save Ghana from the mess that they have created. So, their plenty talk would not do us anything but sabotage the work of Government Business. We are pleading with them; they have already exhausted their time,

and Ghanaians are not happy and they voted for us to come and work, so they should allow us to work.

Mr Speaker, to the second issue is that we carry along every First Deputy Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker in this Chamber the First Deputy Speaker, Mr Ahiafor, has been in this House for the past 12 years and has helped the NPP Government with their laws, Bills, and he has done a lot to support them. All this while, we have been carrying all their First Deputy and Second Deputy Speakers along. If he is been well trained and respects each and everyone in this Chamber does not mean that we should take his respectfulness for granted.

Mr Speaker, they should respect his leadership. Today, I am not happy at all because, ever since he became the First Deputy Speaker, all their plan is to take advantage of his respectfulness—*[Interruption]*

4.53 p.m.

That is exactly what they are doing.

If he is well trained, it does not mean they should take advantage of that to disrespect him. That would not work.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Second Deputy Majority Whip, I think the First Deputy Speaker is fortified enough to go through this. It is part of the game.

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, they should stop harassing him. They always want to harass him.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Second Deputy Majority Whip, the harassment happens to all of us.

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, if they do not stop, some of us would not take it because it would turn into something else. He is a very respected person in this House.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe, like I said, Mr Bernard Ahiafor has what it takes to go through this, so he is fortified enough. Let us take this as part of the game.

Yes, Hon Member for Asante Akyem Central?

Mr Kwame Anyimadu-Antwi: Mr Speaker, I rise to ask for direction from the Chair. I know there was a communication from the President, and the Leader stood up to make a comment on that. I realised that we are debating on this, and I would be very grateful if the Chair would direct us as to where we are. This should not generate into a heated debate, and I think the comment that was made, in my view, should not be a harmful comment, and, indeed, it was not harmful. It has generated into a debate which should not be, and it is about time we curtailed this and move on. There are other things that we have to do, and I would be grateful if we can proceed and end this debate.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, I think the Hon Member for Asante Akim Central, Mr Anyimadu-Antwi, could not have said it in any better way, so we are moving on. Let us turn to page 3, and take the item numbered 12—Motion by the Chairman of the Committee.

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

Chairman of the Appointments Committee (Mr Bernard Ahiafor): Mr Speaker, I rise to move:

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

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, Motion numbered 12 has been moved; is there any seconder?

Yes, Hon Minority Leader?

Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let us now take the substantive Motion, which is the item numbered 13.

Second Report on the President's Ministerial Nominations

Chairman of the Appointments Committee (Mr Bernard Ahiafor): Mr Speaker, I beg to move:

That this honourable House adopts the Second Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations for Appointment as Ministers.

Mr Speaker, in doing so, I present the Committee's Report. I will read portions of the Report, and I would urge that the *Hansard* capture the entire Report as having been read.

1.0 Introduction

On Thursday, 16th January, 2025, H.E. the President, John Dramani Mahama, pursuant to Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution, communicated to Parliament the nomination of the following persons for appointment as Ministers:

- i. Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza — Minister-Designate, Ministry of Roads and Highways
- ii. Mr Haruna Iddrisu — Minister-Designate, Ministry of Education
- iii. Mr Eric Opoku — Minister-Designate, Ministry of Food and Agriculture

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

2.0 Reference Documents

The Committee referred to the underlisted documents during the consideration of the Nominees:

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

3.0 Consideration of the Referral

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

The Committee subsequently held a public hearing on Monday, 20th January, 2025, to consider the three nominations. The Nominees subscribed to the Oath of a Witness and answered questions from Mr Members. The Nominees were asked questions relating to their curriculum vitae,

eligibility, competencies, issues of national concern, and those pertaining to the offices to which they have been nominated.

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

4.0 Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza: Minister-Designate for Roads and Highways

4.1 Background

Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza was born on 22nd September, 1973. He is a Chartered Architect with professional expertise in project management, infrastructure planning, procurement, and construction. He is a Principal Consultant at Kay+ Partners Ltd and a Consultant with Architects Co-Partners Ltd. As a member of professional bodies such as the Architects Registration Board (UK), the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), and the Ghana Institute of Architects (GIA), he has established himself as a leading figure in his field.

The Nominee holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice in Architecture (RIBA Part III) from Westminster University (2009–2010) and a Professional Diploma in Architecture (RIBA Part II) from East London University (2002–2004). He also earned a BSc (Hons) in Architecture (RIBA Part I equivalent) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana (1996–2000).

The Nominee's professional career spans over two decades, marked by significant contributions to architectural design and project management in Ghana and the United Kingdom. Since 2014, he has been the Principal Consultant at Kay+ Partners Ltd, providing design and construction supervision consultancy services. Some of his notable projects include the Tarkwa District and Bekwai Hospitals (2010–date), the construction of a new Ophthalmology Training Centre for Lions International Eye Centre (LIEC), from 2012 to 2014, infrastructural development for the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) in Ho and the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) in Sunyani (2011–2012). He also led consultancy services for the School of Nuclear and Allied Sciences at the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (2010–2012), overseeing feasibility studies, designs, and supervising construction.

As a Consultant with Architects Co-Partners Ltd since 2010, Mr Agbodza has collaborated on similar large-scale projects in Ghana. His work emphasises health, educational, and community development.

From 2006 to 2011, Mr Agbodza served as a Project Architect with Tangram Architects Ltd in the United Kingdom. During this period, he managed the extension of the Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) Unit and the refurbishment of various units at St. George's Hospital, London. His portfolio includes upgrades to St. Christopher's Hospice, the National Hospital for

Neurology and Neurosurgery at University College, London, and the Women's Health Unit at St. Helier Hospital. Between 2005 and 2006, he worked as an assistant architect with Pringle Brandon Architects, contributing to the refurbishment of Morgan Stanley facilities at 25 Cabot Square, Canary Wharf.

From 2004 to 2005, he was an assistant architect at Kuma Environmental Design Ltd, where he was involved in housing developments at Dale Road and Aldington Road in London. Earlier, from 2003 to 2004, he worked with Chana Design Ltd, contributing to the redevelopment of Sunningdale in Ascot and residential flats at Barrington Road.

The Nominee has served as a Member of Parliament for Adaklu since 2013, and he became the Minority Chief Whip in 2023. Currently, he is the Majority Chief Whip. From 2013 to 2022, he served in various Committees. He was the Vice Chairman and Ranking Member of the Roads and Transport Committee and a member of the Environment, Science, and Technology Committee.

Responses To Questions

4.2 Road Sector Debt

Addressing the Committee on the state of road sector arrears, the Nominee lamented the huge unpaid arrears in the road sector which he said has escalated significantly from about GHC17 billion in 2016 to over GHC135 billion by the end of 2024 representing about 60 per

cent of the 2024 Budget Statement and Economic Policy. He expressed his disappointment at the fact that a significant proportion of the accumulated debt is interest on unpaid certificates. In providing further details on the structure of the debt, the Minister-designate informed the Committee that in addition to the over GHC100 billion debt on Government of Ghana commitments, there is an outstanding amount of GHC20 million in unpaid certificates for completed road projects. Moreover, the Road Fund, which serves as a crucial funding source for road maintenance and development has accrued arrears totalling GHC15 billion.

The Nominee attributed this alarming increase in the road sector debt to systemic delays in the payment of funds owed to contractors. According to him, these delays often lead to the accumulation of interest on unpaid sums, compounding the financial burden on the sector. He emphasised the need for prompt and efficient payment systems to mitigate the adverse effects of such delays and ensure the sustainability of Ghana's road infrastructure development efforts.

The Nominee expressed worry that a significant proportion of the debt is not work done in the communities but accumulation of interest on unpaid certificates. He described the situation as unacceptable and indicated that the country cannot continue to traverse the path of accumulating arrears and paying huge interest at the expense of actual road constructions. He indicated that the payment of interest on the unpaid

certificates is part of all the contracts, and the Government can only avert it by ensuring that certificates issued by contractors are promptly honoured. He therefore called for a review of the terms of contracts awarded by the State to make it less expensive to the Government without necessarily hurting the interest of contractors. The Nominee further hinted on the need to engage all contractors involved to agree on terms that will make it easy for Government to pay the indebtedness to operators in the sector without suffocating other sectors of the economy.

He also called for the need to review the entire contract systems to ensure that State institutions do not enter into contracts to commit Government when there is no certainty about the source of funding for projects.

In response to a question on whether he intends to review existing contracts that the Government has with contractors to address the accruing interest on delayed payments, the Nominee assured the Committee that reviewing existing contracts was not the most effective way of addressing the mounting debts in the road sector.

He emphasised on the need to ensure prompt payment to contractors to eliminate the need for such interest accruals. The Nominee's stance was that focusing on timeliness in fulfilling financial obligations would prevent the Government from incurring additional costs through interests, thus alleviating some of the financial pressures that result from delayed payments. This position

reflected a commitment to improving the Government's financial management practices, ensuring that contractors are paid on time to avoid the accumulation of unnecessary interests on unpaid certificates.

4.3 Big Push

In reference to the four-year US\$10 billion "Big Push" proposal as part of the Government's agenda, the Nominee acknowledged the President's ambitious intervention in infrastructure development, aimed at revitalising the economy and positioning it on a sustainable growth trajectory. He emphasised that the projects included in this initiative should be cutting-edge and designed to make significant impact across various sectors. The Nominee clarified that the policy is not limited to road construction or rehabilitation but encompasses a broader range of infrastructure projects to drive comprehensive development.

4.4 Suspension of Road Tolls

In addressing the issue of whether the suspension of road tolls in the country was legal or illegal, the Nominee stated that the cancellation of the road tolls constituted an act of illegality and pointed out the degree of negligence in the manner it was executed. He assured the Committee that road tolls would be reintroduced, albeit not through the traditional physical toll booth system. Instead, a technological platform would be adopted to facilitate the collection of levies, thereby improving accessibility, accountability, and efficiency.

When asked about the Ministry's plans to engage Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) who were previously employed in the operation of toll booths, the Nominee informed the Committee that he had held several meetings with these individuals and that further consultations would be conducted to explore their re-engagement within the framework of the new mechanised toll system.

In response to a follow-up question regarding the justification for reintroducing road tolls, the Nominee emphasised that this initiative formed part of the National Democratic Congress' (NDC) Manifesto. He assured the Committee that a key aspect of securing public support for the reintroduction would be the effective utilisation of funds generated from the tolls to improve road infrastructure and enhance the overall living standards of the populace.

4.5 Improvements of the Road Networks in Ghana

When the Committee inquired about strategies to improve the country's road network, the Nominee highlighted the need for spot improvements on certain roads and outlined plans to comprehensively assess the entire network. He emphasised the importance of prioritising critical areas to prevent further deterioration.

Regarding the integration of sustainable road drainage systems into urban road projects, the Nominee stated that the general principle is to incorporate essential safety features such

as drainage systems, walkways, bus stops, and speed humps in specific locations when constructing public roads in built-up areas.

In response to a question about revisiting the sizing of drainage systems in the country, the Nominee explained that determining the size of a drainage system falls under the purview of road engineers and depends on the specific road design. He further underscored the necessity of increased commitment to road maintenance to prevent defects and ensure the longevity of infrastructure.

4.6 Funding Gap

When asked to outline practical plans to address the funding gap in the road sector, the Nominee reiterated that the funding shortfall remains the Ministry's greatest challenge, as the country struggles to generate sufficient funds for road interventions.

The Nominee stated that, as the Minister for Roads and Highways, it would be his responsibility to identify critical road projects, ensure their proper design, and package them in a manner that meets value-for-money standards before presenting them to the Minister for Finance for funding consideration.

He further emphasised that reducing waste and revisiting the methods of awarding road projects are among the most effective strategies to improve funding efficiency for infrastructure projects. The Nominee also advocated for a national dialogue on road funding to ensure that revenue generated and

allocated for road development is used exclusively for that purpose.

Additionally, he suggested that the country needs to generate and set aside between GHC6 billion and GHC10 billion annually to support road infrastructure development. In response to whether alternative funding methods would be considered, the Nominee indicated that it is the responsibility of the Minister for Finance to explore other funding sources for road projects.

4.6 Capping of Road Fund

The Nominee, addressing the issue of capping road funds, informed the Committee that he had previously advocated for decapping statutory funds, including road funds. He assured the Committee that he would continue to advocate for the decapping of road funds to ensure the Ministry secures adequate resources to execute critical road projects across the country.

4.7. Abandoned/Incomplete Road Projects

When asked whether he would prioritise abandoned projects alongside the commencement of new ones, the Nominee assured the Committee that the Government's priority is to complete ongoing projects, initiate new ones, and address critical road projects that have been abandoned over time.

He acknowledged the suggestion to implement the completion of abandoned projects on a regional basis and emphasised that the feasibility of such an

approach would depend primarily on the availability of funds.

4.8. Quality of Road Constructions

When questioned about his specific plans to improve the quality of road construction in the country, the Nominee assured the Committee of his intention to engage all industry stakeholders, including contractors, to identify and address the underlying causes of defects in road construction. He attributed the poor quality of roadworks to factors such as inefficient supervision and the substandard quality of materials used by contractors.

The Nominee highlighted that State agencies responsible for road supervision lack adequate technical staff necessary for effective oversight. He noted that the staff composition within these agencies is heavily skewed toward administrative roles, to the detriment of the technical expertise required for effective supervision. Additionally, he underscored the critical role of project consultants in ensuring the success of road projects.

To reduce failed projects in the road sector, the Nominee proposed the strict enforcement of the 12-month Defect Liability Period (DLP), during which contractors are required to address any defects at no additional cost to the State. He also outlined plans to increase the number of architects, quantity surveyors, engineers, and other technical staff at the Ministry and its affiliated agencies to enhance the quality of supervision.

The Nominee further suggested the introduction of professional indemnity insurance for project consultants to ensure that the State is adequately compensated for losses or damages to road projects resulting from misjudgment or negligence on the part of consultants.

He assured the Committee that, if approved, he would not only recruit new and qualified engineers but also focus on building the capacity of existing engineers to ensure improved performance and project outcomes.

4.9. Re-Development of the Tema-Beach Road and Street Lights

In response to a question on the poor street lighting along the Tema-Beach Road project, the Nominee informed the Committee that streetlights could only be installed at the appropriate stage of the project's execution, as determined by the project's design and progress.

He, however, assured the Committee of his commitment to engage further with stakeholders on the project to ensure its continuation and successful completion.

4.10. Award of Unbudgeted Contracts

When questioned on how he intends to address the process of awarding road contracts, the Nominee emphasised the need for dialogue among key stakeholders, including the Attorney-General's Department, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Roads and Highways. He underscored that any solutions must be fair and in the best interest of the people.

The Nominee stated that he would not support the culture of awarding contracts without proper costing and insisted that road projects must ensure best value for money through a transparent and competitive tendering process.

4.11. Women in Road Construction

In response to a query on promoting equitable opportunities for female contractors and ensuring gender equity in the awarding of major road projects, the Nominee emphasised the importance of deliberate efforts to include women in contracting processes and further acknowledged the low participation of females in the engineering and construction industry. He assured the Committee that his approach would focus on fostering a more inclusive environment by actively identifying and engaging qualified women contractors whenever they express interest or make themselves available for such opportunities.

He called on all sections of society to work together to create a fair opportunity for everybody, irrespective of gender, to participate fully in all economic activities in accordance with the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024. He pledged to take conscious steps to develop capacity and create more opportunity for women in the construction and engineering sector.

4.12. Traffic Congestion

When questioned about strategies to address the pressing issue of traffic congestion, particularly in the Greater

Accra Metropolis, the Minister-designate for Roads and Highways stressed the importance of a unified and collaborative approach through a comprehensive inter-agency plan. He underscored the need to diversify public transportation options to provide efficient and reliable alternatives, thereby reducing the overdependence on private vehicles.

The Nominee also advocated for the development and implementation of policies aimed at minimising private vehicle use while improving urban mobility. He identified inter-ministerial cooperation and coordinated interventions as critical components in effectively addressing the challenges of traffic congestion. He further emphasised the necessity of collective action and sustained efforts to ensure long-term and impactful solutions.

4.13 Airport E-Gate

In addressing the claim regarding the cost of implementing the E-Gate system at the Kotoka International Airport, the Nominee clarified that the Ghana Immigration Service's assertion of GH¢297 million referred to the life cycle cost of the project. He explained that the E-Gate system, comprising 15 units with accompanying accessories, is part of the border management system being installed at the Airport, at a total cost of US\$1.7 million.

The Nominee further stated that no contract was raised specifically for the construction of the E-Gate system at the Airport. He noted that the implementation

of the project falls under the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority and was intended to be constructed at no cost to the State.

4.14 Repeal of Ghana Highway Act, (Act 540)

When asked for his opinion on the repeal of Act 540 and the National Labour Commission's actions that have effectively suspended the implementation of the National Roads Authority, the Nominee explained that Act 540, which established the Ghana Highway Authority (GHA), was duly approved by the House. He clarified that the intent of the Act is not to dismantle existing road agencies such as the Highways, Feeder Roads, and Urban Roads but to harmonise their operations under a new apex body led by a Director General.

The Nominee acknowledged the implementation challenges currently faced by the Act. He expressed his readiness, if necessary, to pause its implementation and re-examine the framework. He also suggested the possibility of introducing Legislative Instruments (L.Is) to the House for approval to effectively operationalise the law.

4.15. Legacy

Responding to a question about his desired legacy in the road sector, the Minister-designate for Roads and Highways expressed his aspiration to establish a sustainable framework for managing the debt associated with the Road Fund. He assured the Committee of his commitment to addressing compensation

issues and delivering on his mandate in a timely manner. The Nominee further pledged to adopt a more efficient approach to the maintenance and rehabilitation of roads across the country, ensuring impactful and sustainable improvements in the sector.

4.16 Alternative Arrangements for the Disabled Employees

The Nominee in response to a question on how to integrate Persons with Disability (PWDs) into the plans to reintroduce the toll, having regard to the proposal to introduce technology into the process, which could potentially limit opportunities for manual roles traditionally reserved for PWDs, assured the Committee that the interest of PWDs would be factored into the new arrangement. The Nominee further emphasised the need to factor in the former employees into any new arrangement to effectively integrate them into the new system. He assured the Committee that efforts would be made to identify roles within the digitised framework for these individuals. Additionally, for those whose skills might not align with the new technology, he proposed offering assistance in finding alternative employment opportunities to safeguard and protect their welfare.

4.17 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **MR KWAME GOVERNS AGBODZA** as Minister for Roads and Highways.

5.0 MR HARUNA IDDRISU —

MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR EDUCATION

5.1 Background

Mr Haruna Iddrisu was born on 8th September, 1970, and hails from Wayamba, Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana. He started his education at the Kulikuli School in Tamale. He proceeded to Tamale Secondary School for his Ordinary Level Certificate and Navrongo Secondary School for his Advanced Level Certificate. His leadership qualities were unearthed when he became the dining hall prefect of the school. The Nominee obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Ghana between 1993 and 1997. In his final year, he contested and won the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) presidency. After graduating from the University of Ghana, he studied Law and was successfully called to the Bar. He has been a Member of the Ghana Bar Association since 2002.

The Nominee became the National Youth Organiser of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and served from 2002 till 2010. He contested the parliamentary primaries of the NDC in the Tamale South Constituency and has since represented the good people of the largest constituency in the Northern Region in Parliament for five consecutive terms. He is currently in Parliament for a sixth term.

His leadership attributes came to bear strongly when he was elected the Minority Leader from 7th January, 2017 to 23rd January, 2023. He was subsequently appointed a Member of the Parliamentary Service Board and the Chairman of the Committee on Administration and Human Resources of the Board for four years. The Nominee has served in various capacities on several parliamentary committees during the 7th and 8th Parliaments. These include Vice Chairman of the Special Budget Committee; Ranking Member of the Appointments Committee, Business Committee, and House Committee; and a Member of the Committee on Selection and the Committee on Employment, Social Welfare, and State Enterprises. Additionally, he was a member of the Technical Committee responsible for the review of the Standing Orders of Parliament.

Mr Haruna Iddrisu has also held multiple ministerial portfolios, including Minister for Employment and Labour Relations (2014–2016), Minister for Trade and Industry (2013–2014), and Minister for Communications (2009–2013).

During his tenure as Minister for Communications, the Nominee championed the deepening of competition in the telecommunication industry in Ghana by introducing Mobile Number Portability (MNP), SIM Card Registration, and Data Protection Law to protect privacy. He was the chairman of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council's Ad hoc Group on Internet Policy, which also resolved

fundamental differences on internet issues.

As Minister for Trade and Industry, the Nominee led several trade and investment delegations to various countries, including the high-level sessions at the EU-Africa Summit in Brussels in 2013 and the U.S-Africa Summit in Washington DC in 2014.

When he was Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, he chaired the Technical Co-operation of the 323rd Governing Body Session of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland, in March 2015. He also launched the first-ever National Employment Policy for Ghana in April 2015.

The Nominee is married with three children and enjoys playing football with his constituents.

Responses to Questions

5.2 Commitment Beyond Manifesto

When the Nominee was asked what he would do in terms of the 4th industrial revolution to ensure a more robust educational system beyond the commitment expressed in the NDC's Manifesto, the Nominee assured the Committee that he conceives education not just as a matter of human rights but as a powerful key driver of development. He explained that education is one of the strongest elements that can be used to reduce poverty, improve health, and ensure gender inequality.

According to the Nominee, the President, John Dramani Mahama, intends to review education and respond to infrastructure deficits in the education sector from pre-school through to the tertiary levels. He intimated that enormous financial commitments would be required to continue with significant initiatives within the sector. He also stated that he would tap into the varied experiences and expertise of the sector to guide policy formulation and improvement.

He assured the Committee that the President would not cancel the Free Senior High School (SHS) Policy. He referred to what the President stated during the campaign, which was to expand free SHS to private schools. This meant that as President of the Republic, he would give true meaning to Articles 25 and 38 of the 1992 Constitution, which spells out the objectives of Ghana's educational policy. More importantly, he indicated that the President has intimated that the free SHS should be subject to review. This means subjecting it to a national stakeholder education forum to discuss the future and state of education in Ghana. The forum will emphasise the future of the free SHS policy, particularly how to sustain it with reliable, adequate financing. He sought permission from the Committee to steer controversy on the numbers to be subjected to some statistical validation. He plans to undertake a stakeholder forum involving donor partners, academia, parents and students to review the policy. He acknowledged that free SHS remains one of the boldest steps in transforming education. He noted that it is a matter of debate between free universal education and progressive free education, starting with infrastructure.

5.3 Promise of Free First-Year Tertiary Education

The Nominee was asked to express his view on the Manifesto commitment of the NDC to provide free first-year academic fees for all first-year tertiary students attending public tertiary institutions. In his response, the Nominee reiterated the President's commitment to free academic fees for all level 100 students pursuing various programmes at the public tertiary institutions and its possible expansion to cover private tertiary institutions.

He told the Committee that the country would require about GH¢345 million to fund the cost of an estimated population of 125,000 students entering public tertiary institutions. He explained that the policy would be opened for parents willing to pay. He intimated that funds would be released to the various tertiary institutions.

Touching on the issue of first-year students who might have already paid their academic fees at the commencement of the academic year, the Nominee indicated that the Government would refund the monies to the affected students.

5.4 Views on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education

The Nominee was asked to outline plans to maintain the progress made with the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education, which has been validated worldwide. He stated that the significant step for the

NDC, as far as education is concerned, is to contribute meaningfully to the country's national sustainable development efforts. At the tertiary level, emphasis would be placed on access, quality, and relevance. Emphasis at the secondary level would be on foundational learning to produce critical thinkers for the future. He intimated the review of pedagogy and curriculum at all levels of education to meet the country's aspirations for the future and offer meaningful contributions to the nation's development.

The Nominee acknowledged the previous Government's efforts in institutionalising STEM and added that the NDC aspires to build at least, in every Region of Ghana, a modern STEM school from Kindergarten to SHS to produce employable skills for the future of work. He admitted that in the future, the Government would improve the education of more STEM pupils to meet industry needs without compromising its core academic objective model.

5.5 Debate on Capping of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund)

When the Nominee was queried about his intentions regarding advocating for the uncapping of the GETFund formula, he recalled his pivotal advocacy role in the establishment of the GETFund in 1997. He noted that the Fund had faced significant challenges due to the decision of a former Minister to cap it, which constrained its resources.

The Nominee informed the Committee that H.E. President Mahama has expressed a commitment to uncapping the

GETFund to release additional resources for infrastructure development in the education sector. He explained that removing the cap would make an estimated GH¢7.9 billion available to the GETFund. This amount could be utilised to accelerate infrastructure expansion, and address challenges such as overcrowding in approximately 2,800 schools and the lack of hygiene facilities for young girls in over 26,000 schools.

The Nominee further assured the Committee of his intention to engage with the President and the Minister for Finance to review the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). This engagement would aim to negotiate measures to free additional resources accruing to the GETFund for broader education financing, with a particular focus on higher education.

5.6 Transformation Agenda of Public Schools

The Nominee was asked whether as Minister for Education, he would ensure that all children have access to quality public schools to enable parents with meagre resources who cannot afford private schools to opt for public schools. In his response, the Nominee disclosed that the NDC's intervention in the education sector would be all-encompassing. He indicated that the Government would give true meaning to the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) to bridge the rural/urban, northern/southern dichotomy in the quality of education which affects the performance of deprived schools due to the quality of teachers.

He intimated his intention to engage the Minister for Local Government to provide teacher accommodation, as part of the financial re-alignment of the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF), to provide accommodation for teachers in the rural areas.

The Nominee expressed concern over the general conditions of service for workers, highlighting its cascading impact on professionals such as teachers, nurses, and pharmacists. He emphasised the need for enhanced revenue mobilisation to address these challenges.

He proposed dedicating 20 per cent of the national budget or allocating a minimum of 5–6 per cent of GDP to support education. He projected that adherence to this recommendation could, within a decade, significantly expand and improve educational infrastructure and facilities nationwide.

He informed the Committee that while the number of school drop-outs in the urban areas can be accounted for, that of the rural areas is unknown. The Nominee therefore, mentioned the need to improve free SHS graduates' employable skills, hence the Government's plan to expand access to all Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. He attributed the previous Government's inability to achieve the initiative to expand TVETs to 20 or 30 due to the capping of GETFund.

On the issue of uncapping the GETFund to free resources to fund TVET institutions, the Nominee assured

the Committee that President Mahama and the NDC Government will complete all the TVET institutions, bearing in mind the responsibility imposed on the President under the Directive Principles of State Policy to continue every good initiative of the State.

5.7 Boarding Facilities for the E-Blocks

The Nominee's opinion was sought on the possibility of the Government continuing with the completion of E-blocks and adding boarding facilities for schools located far from the community. In his answer, the Nominee stated that the Government has no difficulty in working towards expanding boarding facilities where necessary. He recounted a personal experience witnessed where students had to walk long distances from home to access the schools. He reiterated the Government's policy to expand access to ensure relevance and quality education delivery. He also spoke about plans to improve the conditions of service for teachers, which will motivate them to give their best.

5.8 Drop-Out Rate at the Basic Level

The Nominee's attention was drawn to a publication by the African Education Watch, which highlighted alarming statistics indicating that only five out of 10 students enrolled in kindergarten complete primary school, and only three of those five proceed to complete Junior High School. Consequently, the Nominee was asked to outline plans to address the high drop-out rates at the basic education level.

In response, the Nominee acknowledged that the north-south divide has contributed significantly to disparities in accessing education across the country. He assured the Committee of his commitment to closing this gap. He further informed the Committee that while the first school in the south was established in 1876, the north saw its first school much later, in 1951, illustrating the historical inequities that need to be addressed.

On the implementation of the free SHS, Mr Iddrisu noted that the participation rate is very high in northern Ghana, and the situation confirms the assertion that poverty has been a problem in accessing quality education.

Touching on the infrastructure deficit between the northern and southern sectors, the Nominee identified a deficit of 5,000 against the northern sector. Regarding the Oti and Western North Regions, the statistics appear not too encouraging.

He acknowledged the problem but assured the Committee that having been entrusted with the Ministry of Education, he will work towards equity, improve the quality of education at all levels and endeavour to close the gap by employing affirmative action interventions to correct some of the historical imbalances.

5.9 Strategies to Minimise Industrial Unrest

In response to the question on strategies to address industrial unrest within the education sector, the Nominee

highlighted that the sector benefits from exceptional human resources, including professors, doctors, and other professionals. He acknowledged that while industrial disputes are inevitable, particularly those arising from conflicts between labour and Government over conditions of service, these challenges can be anticipated and managed effectively.

The Nominee emphasised that labour unrest cannot be entirely avoided, but timely responses by the Government to agreements reached with trade unions and organised labour are crucial in mitigating conflicts. Referring specifically to universities, he noted that their statutes outline the role of University Councils in negotiating contentious issues, stressing that engagement with stakeholders is key. For example, he cited that to minimise labour unrest, commitments to revise allowances must be honoured per agreements made.

The Nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to utilising all available means to safeguard industrial peace and maintain harmonious labour relations in the country.

5.10 Membership at the Bar

When asked to confirm whether he is a lawyer in good standing, the Nominee stated that he has been affiliated with the Law Trust since completing law school in 2002. He affirmed that he has consistently fulfilled all obligations required of him as a lawyer, including the payment of all annual subscriptions, and is currently in good standing with the Bar.

5.11 Nominee's View on the Review of Free SHS Policy

The Nominee was asked to express his views on the assertion that Ghana, a developing nation, should not provide free education with free boarding facilities, noting that even in advanced democracies such as the USA, free education does not typically include free boarding. In response, the Nominee emphasised that under President Mahama's vision, free boarding facilities as part of the Free SHS Policy should be sustained and expanded to ensure broader access to education, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Nominee indicated that as a beneficiary of free education, he believes in the review of the Policy. He, however, does not ascribe to the assertion that Free SHS should exclude free boarding facilities.

In explaining his position, the Nominee stated that the road networks and access to transport in the advanced democracies cannot be compared to that of Ghana. Experience has shown that for many children, the distance to commute to school each day is a problem as the locations of the schools are isolated from the communities.

Regarding quality, the Nominee stated that to attain quality education, the boarding facilities should be increased, especially, in the deprived rural areas. He reiterated President Mahama's intention not to cancel the Free SHS Policy but to improve it.

5.12 Teacher Licensure Policy

In response to whether the Licensure Policy for teachers should be maintained, the Nominee advocated for the systematic review and abolishment of the Policy.

5.13 Views on Legislating LGBTQ+

The Nominee was asked whether he ascribes to the assertion of the President that the current curriculum does not incorporate the proper value system of the country on LGBTQ+. According to the questioner, the President has intimated a position that enacting a law to regulate the practice of LGBTQ+ would not eradicate same-sex practices. However, incorporating the proper values into the school curriculum would help change the mindset of pupils.

The Nominee stated that the position of the President on LGBTQ+ has not changed. He, as a Muslim, does not intend to reduce the matter to a religious debate as the practice of LGBTQ+ is repugnant to the values and ethics of the country. He stressed that he does not believe many Ghanaian parents would allow their children to be exposed to LGBTQ+ and called for respect and preservation of the Ghanaian values subject to principles of the 1992 Constitution.

5.14 Robust Education System

Regarding the Nominee's plans to ensure Ghana has a robust education system during his tenure as Minister, the Nominee assured the Committee that the

Ministry will focus not only on upholding the rights of children to have education but also on improving the quality of education. The Nominee emphasised that the President is committed to enhancing infrastructure at all levels of education, from kindergarten to tertiary institutions.

Additionally, the Nominee stated that the sector ministry would guide efforts to achieve these improvements. The President has also reiterated on several occasions that, as part of strengthening the education system, stakeholders, which include experts, parents, and academia, will be engaged to review the educational system, particularly the Free Senior High School Policy, to ensure optimal outcomes.

5.15 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Mr HARUNA IDDRISU** as the Minister for Education.

6.0 MR ERIC OPOKU —

MINISTER-DESIGNATE FOR MINISTRY OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

6.1 Background

Mr Eric Opoku was born on 5th June, 1970 at Sankore in the Ahafo Region. He had his primary school education at the Roman Catholic Primary School, Sankore in 1982 and went on to L/A 'B' Middle School also in Sankore where he

obtained the Middle School Leaving Certificate in 1986. Mr Opoku continued to Ahafo Senior High Technical School at Goaso and Bekwai SDA Secondary School, Asante Bekwai for the General Certificate of Education – Ordinary Level, and Advanced Level, respectively. The Nominee proceeded to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi where he obtained Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Law in 2004. He then went on to the University of Rhode Islands, USA where he acquired a Certificate in Management of Fisheries Resources and another Certificate in International Legislative Drafting from the Tulane University, Louisiana, USA. The Nominee pursued and acquired Master of Laws (with Distinction) in International Business Law from the University of Essex, United Kingdom in 2023.

Mr Eric Opoku worked in various capacities. He served as a teacher in the R/C Primary School from 1995 to 2000 and in the SDA Primary School from 1999 to 2001 all in Sankore. He was the Secretary to the Kuapa Kooko Bowohommodem, Sankore from 1996 to 2000 and the Sankore Area Council, and also a member of the Dominase Unit Committee at Sankore from 1997 to 1999. The Nominee served as Member of Parliament for Asunafo South Constituency from 2005 to 2009. He also served as Deputy Minister for the then Brong Ahafo Region from 2009 to 2013 and Regional Minister for Brong Ahafo and the Ashanti Regions from 2013 to 2017. Mr Eric Opoku was re-elected Member of Parliament for Asunafo

South Constituency and has served from 2013 to date. The Nominee is also an astute farmer.

Mr Eric Opoku has served on several parliamentary committees in various capacities. He served as member on the Committees on Finance, Communication, Works and Housing, Privileges, Subsidiary Legislation and the Appointments Committee. He also served as Deputy Ranking Member on the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs from 2005 to 2009, and Ranking Member on the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs in the 8th Parliament.

Mr Eric Opoku has received several honorary awards. He was awarded Honorary Doctorate Degree by the Ternopil National Economic University, Ukraine, in May 2018. He also received the Pan African Republic Honorary Awards as one of the Top 10 Best Performing Members of Parliament for the period, 2014-2018. He was also adjudged the Best Regional Minister by FAKS Investigative Services in 2015, and the Best Member of Parliament for Communal and Rural Development, 2017 by the Bureau of Research on Governance, Commerce and Administration (BORGCA).

Mr Eric Opoku has also attended some international conferences, sessions, workshops, and summits. He was a member of the Presidential Delegation to the 48th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of States and Government in December, 2015. He was also on the Parliamentary Delegation

to Alberta, Canada for the Livestock Trade Mission in August, 2018. He again attended the Global Parliamentary Summit Against Hunger and Malnutrition in Madrid, Spain in October, 2018; the Trade and Investment Mission to Moscow, Russia from June to July, 2017; and the Workshop on Plant Variety Protection – Exploring Policy Options in Geneva, Switzerland in January 2019.

Mr Eric Opoku is a Christian and married with four children. He speaks Asante Twi and English and likes singing and reading.

Responses to Questions

6.2 Challenges of the Agricultural Sector

The Committee asked the Nominee how he intends to deal with the challenges of the Agricultural Sector as enumerated in the 2024 Manifesto of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The Nominee stated that the NDC Manifesto not only identifies the problems, but also proffers solutions for those challenges. He noted that the Manifesto highlights key areas for solution such as FEED GHANA to ensure food sufficiency; FEED THE INDUSTRY to build a strong linkage between agriculture and industry, which in the long run would create jobs for the teeming youth in Ghana. He also added that the Government would establish the Ghana Agricultural Insurance Scheme (GAIS) to subsidise agricultural insurance in order to deal with financing gaps in the sector.

The Committee further inquired what new idea the Nominee intends to implement to deal with the challenge of food losses in the sector. To this, the Nominee said that he would encourage the private sector to set up miniplants near farms across the country to process excess produce for the market.

6.3 Increment in Cocoa Producer Price

The Committee asked the Nominee whether, based on his call on the previous Government to pay cocoa farmers GH¢6000.00 as opposed to the prevailing GH¢3100, he could assure cocoa farmers that the price offered them by the Government would be increased from the current GH¢3100.00 to GH¢6000.00 by February this year.

The Nominee explained that he had only made a proposal to the previous Government to increase the price to GH¢6000 because at the time the world market price of cocoa had gone up drastically, and per the principle of paying 70 per cent of per-bag-value of cocoa to farmers, his calculation based on Freight on Board per tonne, the Government at the time should have paid not less than GH¢6000 to cocoa farmers.

6.4 Reduction in Cocoa Production

The Committee asked the Nominee to indicate when the debt of the Ghana COCOBOD, which translates to a production deficit of 350,000 metric tonnes of cocoa could be repaid to shore up production.

The Nominee asserted that the country was in default of its syndicated loan as it could not deliver some 374,000 tonnes of cocoa and has since rolled it over to the next season. He, however, cautioned that the debt portfolio must be critically assessed to ascertain the true nature of the debt. He added that there are some indications that those figures may not reflect the true nature of the prevailing situation. He intimated that when the new Chief Executive Officer of the COCOBOD assumes office, that question on cocoa sector debt would be fully answered.

6.5 Wasteful Administrative Expenses at COCOBOD

With reference to an audit report on the accounts of COCOBOD, as well as the NDC Manifesto which promised to deal with the challenges of wastage in administrative expenditure, the Committee asked the Nominee to indicate which of the administrative expenditure items on the account of COCOBOD he considered wasteful and therefore would abandon. The Nominee pointed out that he had already argued on the floor of the House in reference to the Auditor-General's Report that it was unjustifiable for cocoa production to decline while administrative expenditure increased.

6.6 Tree Crop Development Authority Programme (TCDA)

The Committee wanted to know from the Nominee whether he has any intention to scrap the Tree Crop Development Authority Programme

(TCDA). The Nominee emphasised the difference between an Authority and a Programme. He said that the Government would reform the TCDA to suit its agenda.

6.7 Feasibility of Agriculture for Economic Transformation Agenda (AETA)

The Committee enquired of the Nominee whether Feasibility of Agriculture for Economic Transformation Agenda (AETA) would be feasible under the existing challenges of the land tenure system of Ghana. The Nominee explained that the challenges have made agriculture unattractive to the youth. He added that AETA intends to effectively address the challenges by identifying the real owners of the lands, acquire them from their holders, prepare and hand them over to investors.

6.8 Cost of Rehabilitation of Dams

The Committee sought to know from the Nominee how much the Dam Rehabilitation Programme would cost. The Nominee intimated, that even though he had a figure to that effect, he could not readily make it available due to inflationary effects, and that the cost would be placed in the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government going forward.

6.9 Challenges of Youth in Agriculture and Extension Services to Farmers

The Committee sought to know from the Nominee how he intended to address

the challenge of youth in agriculture, as well as the Extension Officer-to-farmer ratio.

On youth in agriculture, the Nominee cited the Heifer International Report on Ending Hunger, Poverty and Rehabilitation of the Earth, that suggested that only five per cent of all Ghanaian youths are in the agricultural sector. He indicated that he intends to resolve this manpower gap by creating huge markets for agricultural products through agribusiness.

Addressing the matter of Extension Officer-to-farmer ratio, the Nominee recognised the importance of extension officers in modernising agriculture and intimated that under his leadership at the Ministry, more extension officers would be recruited to address the gap in the ratio.

6.10 Contextualisation of Agribusiness

The Committee asked the Nominee how he intended to make agribusiness relevant to the Ghanaian context. The Nominee indicated that agribusiness differed greatly from general agriculture in that, agribusiness involved technology and marketing as part of the value chain. He emphasised that agribusiness is the only way to attract the youth into the sector.

The Committee further asked the Nominee how he intended to change the mindset of the Ghanaian youth to embrace agriculture. The Nominee responded that he intends to reintroduce the similitude of the "Operation Feed

Yourself Programme” where basic vegetables would be cultivated in home gardens. He added that he would also encourage and implement institutional farming where labourers would be hired to assist schools to produce their own food. He intimated further that he would encourage churches and mosques that are already running farms to expand and assist others to come on board.

6.11 Smart Agriculture

The Nominee was asked how he would situate sustainability and green agriculture into the Ghanaian context. He stated that the concept of smart agriculture was about sustainable agriculture. He further designated that the issue of sustainable agriculture was critical since if agricultural policies went wrong, it would create economic challenges for the country.

6.12 Access to Land and Credit for Women and Marginalised Groups in Agriculture

The Committee requested of the Nominee what he would do to ensure that women and marginalised groups in agriculture have easy access to land and financing. In his answer to the question, the Nominee referred to a World Bank Report of 2021 which indicated that only 44.1 per cent of women are in agriculture. He intimated that the Ghana Agricultural Insurance Scheme would subsidise agriculture insurance to de-risk agricultural lending to help women and marginalised persons in the sector.

On the issue of access to land for women and marginalised groups, the Nominee emphasised that the implementation of the land banks would solve the land acquisition for the programme.

The Committee further urged the Nominee to consider employing more actuarial scientists to do detailed analysis of the Agriculture Insurance Policy to ensure it was in compliance with legal requirements. The Nominee indicated that the idea had already been captured in detail in the NDC Manifesto.

6.13 Poultry Industry

Speaking on the poultry industry, the Nominee, making reference to the 2024 Budget, stated that locally produced poultry constituted a staggeringly low 4.6 per cent of Ghana's total poultry consumption in 2022. This implies that the bulk of poultry consumed in Ghana is imported. The Nominee therefore highlighted that the starkly low statistic indicates that the poultry sector remains comatose and requires targeted interventions to resuscitate the industry.

The Nominee apprised the Committee of an intervention known as Poultry-Farm-to-Table Programme in the NDC Manifesto to mitigate this challenge. Under this Programme, the Ministry would work with the Ghana National Poultry Farmers Association and provide them with the financial resources to enable them to expand their businesses, increase production to close the existing huge gap between demand and supply.

The Nominee added that if given the nod, the Ministry would zero in on the production of poultry feed to make it more affordable and consequently reduce food prices in Ghana, as the increase in food inflation is largely influenced by the rising prices of eggs, according to the Ghana Statistical Service.

The Nominee finally made reference to the famous *nkokor nkitinkiti* programme, and asserted that it was an already existing programme that the new Government intend to improve by distributing caged chicks, goats, sheep, among other livestock, deploying veterinary services accordingly. He assured the Committee that as a national initiative to create jobs, the youth, especially in all parts of the country, will benefit from it, including youth in the north as guinea fowl is also included.

6.14 Agriculture Growth Rate Under Both NPP and NDC Governments

The Nominee was again asked for his opinion on the claim by the NPP Government that they increased the average agricultural growth rate from the 2.9 per cent rate that the NDC Government bequeathed to them to 5.7 per cent.

The Nominee questioned the relevance of the alleged increased agricultural rate if within that same period of the recorded growth, there is a record of alarming food inflation, rendering a lot of Ghanaians poor and a huge increase in food import bill. He continued to aver that the lowest food

inflation rate was recorded under President Mahama in 2014 and the highest under President Akufo-Addo in 2023.

According to the Nominee, economic data should be the mathematical representation of the economic activities or life of the people; therefore, if the former is in conflict with the reality of the latter, then economic data is questionable.

6.15 Strategies to Address Rising Food Inflation

The Nominee presented to the Committee his comprehensive multifaceted approach to addressing rising food inflation in the country. This includes increasing food production through programmes such as the “Feed Ghana Programme”, reducing the cost of agricultural production through the establishment of farmer service centres where agricultural machinery and subsidised fertilizers would be distributed to farmers, among others.

6.16 Default of Cocoa Syndicated Loan by COCOBOD

The Nominee was requested to confirm whether there was any record from the transition to the effect that COCOBOD had defaulted from any procured loans, which he affirmed, referencing an US\$800 million loan, taken in 2024, which had not been paid as at the time of transition. According to the Nominee, COCOBOD has indicated that they rolled over 374,000 tonnes of cocoa and still have an outstanding

300,000 tonnes of cocoa to deliver although there was an assurance that the quantity would be delivered by the end of December 2024. According to the Nominee, as at the transition, the indebtedness of COCOBOD was GH¢26.54 billion, out of which GH¢5.37 billion must be paid this year 2025. Even though the Nominee could not inform the Committee of the outstanding amount to be paid from the US\$800 million loan, he was able to tell the quantity of cocoa to be delivered to pay the debt.

Regardless of other loans, the Committee was informed that the Deputy Chief Executive, Finance and Administration of COCOBOD, had declared that by the time of transition, the cocoa syndicated loan had been fully paid.

6.16 Mismanagement of the Cocoa Sector

When further prodded on whether low production can also be attributed to mismanagement of the cocoa sector, the Nominee affirmed that indeed the low production can be partly attributed to mismanagement, that reduction in production was around 28 per cent while in Ghana, it was over 45 per cent.

6.17 Strategies to Mitigate *Galamsey* Implications on Cocoa Production

The Committee asked the Nominee to propose a comprehensive approach on the part of the political class in addressing these *galamsey* activities. The Nominee stated that managers of the

cocoa sector, knowing very well that the impacts of *galamsey* on cocoa production ought to have been moderate on their cocoa projections, made huge projections without putting in adequate measures to produce those quantities, after which they blamed *galamsey* for falling way below projections. He further stated that Article 257(6) of the 1992 Constitution provides that every mineral resource in its natural state shall be vested in the President on behalf of, and in trust for the people of Ghana. He explained that this places the responsibility on the President to protect the mineral resources and the environment in order to support cocoa production.

8.0 Conclusion and General Recommendation

The Committee, in accordance with the provisions of Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217, deliberated on the three ministerial nominations made by H.E. the President. The Nominees exhibited competence, extensive knowledge, and exceptional skill in addressing matters relevant to their respective Ministries. The Committee, therefore recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the adoption of its report and approval of the following Nominees:

- i. Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza
- Minister for Roads and Highways
- ii. Mr Haruna Iddrisu
- Minister for Education

- iii. Mr Eric Opoku
- Minister for Food and
Agriculture

Respectfully submitted.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Hon Members, the Motion has been moved, and it is now ready for secondment.

Yes, Hon Member for Effutu and the Minority Leader?

Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, on this rising, I am to second the Motion, and I in doing so, I want to make some few observations.

First, I would like to commend the Chairman of the Committee for his industry in seeing to it that we conduct this exercise. The Report of the Committee is a seven-paragraph Report with unnumbered pages. I shall start with Mr Haruna Iddrisu.

5.03 p.m.

Mr Speaker, Mr Haruna Iddrisu, an experienced Member of the House who distinguished himself during the vetting process, but our Side of the House had some issues regarding some key policy commitments of the NDC in its manifesto. Mr Speaker, the NDC, in its manifesto, made a commitment to Ghanaians that it was going to ensure free first-year tuition for our children

going to the tertiary. In other words, parents upon hearing this, voted for them thinking that if the NDC should assume office, the first-year fees would be paid. Is this NDC Government telling Ghanaians that there is a voice for taking vote and another voice for governing? That when they campaign, they say one thing, and when they govern, they say another.

Mr Speaker, what I expected the respected Haruna Iddrisu to tell us was that the Government was going to call for the total enrolment and order the universities not to levy the students or wave it, and Government was going to reimburse the universities. What are we hearing? That the parents should look for money to pay and apply for refund. Let it be heard here and now; we do not trust their Government to refund. This was the answer given to us during the hearing.

The Hon Member, Mr Haruna Iddrisu, said that students would receive refunds when they apply. Mr Speaker, —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Leader?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Oh! Is that the path we are going to go?

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I do not know.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: He has moved and I am seconding; is that the path that we are going to go? Mr Speaker, if you entertain this, things would degenerate. Mr Speaker, he has moved his Motion

and he had an opportunity to wind up. All right—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: I am coming. Hon First Deputy Speaker, you moved the Motion; please, let us indulge him because we have to move. Leader, move on.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, they still think they are in opposition, where they would get up to react to everything. Please, *gbɔdzidi*, patience. Mr Speaker, we expected this Government to have issued a directive to the universities that they should not charge fees. Poor parents have gone for loans to pay school fees. Poor parents are struggling. Some people have their admission letters, but there is no money so they cannot go, and they are telling them that, they should pay so that they refund. What of those who would not get the means to go? What they are saying is that, if they do not go, they would not pay. Is this another form of *m'atricki wo* policy?

Mr Speaker, this is unacceptable. If the NDC Government means business, that it is committed to a social intervention programme such as providing free tuition, for first-year students, it should do so and now.

Mr Speaker, the records of *Hansard* would testify that when the Akufo-Addo Government came into office, the Free SHS policy was not deferred. Indeed, it was implemented there and now in that very academic year. Mr Speaker, the Government of Akufo-Addo did not defer the implementation of Free SHS. In

spite of the doubt of the policy, the Government implemented the Free SHS in the first academic year that the NPP assumed office. Clearly, the NDC has no such commitments. It is obvious that they misled the people of Ghana into believing that they would enjoy free tuition at the tertiary level for the first year. Mr Speaker, what is happening is shameful. Parents are in pain, parents are suffering. Parents feel misled.

Mr Speaker, the academic year of the university started in January; if they do not know, I am telling them. There is a university in my constituency. In January, the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results came out in December. Relying on their first-year free tuition policy, students bought admission forms.

Mr Speaker, I want this Government to conduct a survey in all the universities and tertiary institutions. Very few students who got admission have made it so far. Very few, because parents cannot afford, and instead of just taking the records, all that the Government needs to do is to go to all the universities and other tertiary institutions, take the records of all those who gained admission, and give a directive that the universities should allow them in and they would reimburse them. Why did they tell them that students should pay and that they will refund?

Mr Speaker, practically, what it means is that those who are unable to pay cannot attend the university. They would stay at home, so that they would add up to the unemployment burden. These

same people eventually would have no hope and may get involved in some thuggery in the country.

Mr Speaker, I want the Minister-designate for Education to take immediate steps, upon assumption of office, to issue a directive to all the tertiary institutions to forward the total enrolment to his office for reimbursement. That would be a true commitment that he is walking the talk.

We would hold their feet to the fire. They think they can just campaign, so they have gotten it on a silver platter. They would see; they said we are micro-Minority. [*Uproar*]— With time, Ghanaians and all of us would see their true colours. They would not have it free. We are going to ensure that we follow every single promise they made when they were promising on the campaign platform. Today, they are in Government.

5.13 p.m.

Mr Speaker, the second point is feeding at our secondary schools. President John Dramani Mahama promised and same was scripted in their manifesto, to the effect that they were now going to release money to the head teachers to buy the food items; we are looking forward to that. The nominee gave some answers and we do not want to see anything less. The President said the policy about buffer stock purchasing food items and distributing them to our schools was not helpful, so he would give the money directly, so that they could buy the *agbelima*, *gari*, tuna, and all.

If the Hon Minister for Education nominee is sworn in tonight, by tomorrow we expect him to be at the Ministry of Education. Again, we expect him to implement this policy, no bend, no curve. He cannot move backwards on this matter. The head teachers are expectant.

Also, Mr Speaker, the nominee promised that the many day schools would be converted into boarding facilities. He committed to that and we expect that he would immediately take steps to address all of these. That is that for the Minister for Education.

I shall now move on to my respected colleague, Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza. Mr Speaker, Mr Agbodza told the whole country, and this morning, I saw that *Daily Graphic* had captured him on the front page about the indebtedness at the road sector. What Mr Agbodza failed to tell Ghanaians was that yes, there was indebtedness but many more roads have been constructed. [*Hear! Hear!*]

What he failed to tell Ghanaians was that the Akufo-Addo Government made sure that many roads, especially the eastern corridor roads which were abandoned — Today, travel within the city of Accra; all of us here are in this city and we know how it is to drive through Accra. La-Beach Road was initiated by the Akufo-Addo Government — [*Interruption*]—Hon Member for La Dadekotopon, respectfully, let me debate. If for some reason, our administration could not complete them, we expect Mr Agbodza to take

immediate steps. We want the La-Beach Roads to be constructed, and we are waiting for it.

Mr Speaker, we expect them to find the money to pay the many road contractors who have done government work. We do not want excuses, and we do not want them to create NPP contractors and NDC contractors; we do not want discrimination. We expect them to do what is right in the road sector and we are waiting on them. On the issue of road tolls, they said they would digitalise. We were of the opinion that they would lessen the burden on Ghanaians when it comes to levies and taxes because they are committed to it, but now, they are going to impose another levy.

Mr Speaker, when they remove the e-Levy, they are going to look for the money through road tolls, so the value is the same. They claim that they would repeal the e-Levy law, introduce road tolls, and charge even more. That is the conflict they are introducing. They are not committed to relieving Ghanaians of the burden they claimed was on the ordinary Ghanaian. If they, indeed, are committed to the ordinary Ghanaian, I do not want them to introduce any road tolls. Mr K Agbodza told us that they would introduce road tolls and more levies; they are going to levy the ordinary Ghanaian more. So, they take one levy out and introduce two more, or they take one levy out and introduce 10 more. That is not acceptable.

Mr Speaker, for Mr Eric Opoku, and I shall conclude on him. He has said so many things about the agro sector. It is

one thing being outside, and another thing when you have control. We look forward to him implementing all the promises in the agro sector. His records are there, and all that he said during the vetting, has been captured by the *Hansard*. From time to time, he would be asked questions, and we are waiting for the commitment he made to the vegetable farmers and poultry farmers, and his claim to introduce something new to land tenure system. We really wish him well, but he should walk the talk.

Mr Speaker, with these said and without more, I rest my case and second this Motion to enable this House debate and approve these Nominees, who by the Report, have already been agreed on and taken by consensus.

Mr Speaker, thank you so much.

Question proposed.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, irrespective of the time the mover and, especially seconder of the Motion have taken, I want to regulate the rest of the time, so please indulge me. I would not allow Members to go beyond five minutes. I would give opportunity to four Members from each Side.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I do not want surprises. We have agreed on five Members for each Side and nothing will change. With the greatest respect, if we do that it helps all of us. We agreed on five Members for each Side at Conclave, so let us go by it; nothing will change.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Very well. Please, do not worry, I will take five members for each Side, but nobody should speak for more than five minutes, so please, indulge me. This is because I understand that the Appointments Committee have a nominee to vet, so five minutes each. Let me have the list. I will start with the Hon Member for Bawku Central. Hon Members, please, once again, five minutes for each Member; help me so that we can all work around this.

Mr Mahama Ayariga (NDC — Bawku Central): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of adopting the Report of the Committee in respect of the nomination of Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza for the Ministry Roads and Highways; Mr Haruna Idrissu for the Ministry of Education, and Mr Eric Opoku for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

5.23 p.m.

Mr Speaker, we are all aware that these are all colleagues who have been with us in this Parliament, and by the Constitutional provisions, are definitely qualified for the nomination to the various posts to which they have been designated.

Mr Speaker, a lot has been said about the Nominees and in seconding the Motion, the Hon Minority Leader who appears to have studied the Manifesto of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) inside out, and who appears to have fallen in love with the Manifesto and the promises of the NDC — indeed,

as I listen to him, I am wondering whether he did not vote for the NDC. *[Laughter]*.

Mr Speaker, he shows so much love for the promises that we made, and every day, he commits himself and promises that he would ensure that the promises we made to the people are implemented. If he does not believe in those promises, I do not see why he is that committed to the implementation of those promises. So I am happy to observe that the Hon Minority Leader has fallen in love with the promises made by the NDC. But let me assure him that we have started implementing the promises. I can tell him on authority that the President, John Dramani Mahama, has already transferred over GHC101million to the senior high schools to deal with the purchases that he is talking about. *[Hear! Hear!]*

I can show him evidence of the transfer, that H.E. the President, is dealing with the issues in the senior high schools. He has directed that because of the emergency involving secondary education, food that we had purchased, the rice, the maize, to deal with some other problems, be distributed to them. So, the schools do not have problem with food; they have enough food.

In addition to distributing the food to the senior high schools, he has made direct transfers to the schools so that they can purchase ingredients that they need to provide food for the students. So, we have started implementing the promises because we are people who keep to our promises. Just as we promised a lean

Government, we are clearly implementing a lean Government. We are promising equity in the distribution of appointments and we are implementing same.

Mr Speaker, we are not reneging on any of our promises. The Minister-designate for Education is needed at post to deal with the problem of the payment of fees by first-year tertiary education students. So, if you approve him and he gets to the office, he would definitely deal with this particular issue which is clearly a commitment that we have made in our Manifesto.

Mr Speaker, on that note, I urge Colleagues to adopt the Report, so that we can give approval to the President, to swear in these Ministers, so that they can hurriedly address the question of the payment of the first-year university fees.

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

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. Let me turn to the Hon Member for the Bosomtwe Constituency, Hon Adutwum, the immediate past Minister for Education.

Dr Yaw Osei Adutwum (NPP—Bosomtwe): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. Beginning with the Minister for Food and Agriculture, a distinguished Member of this House, I would like to say I wish him well, as he proceeds to solve the various challenges he has outlined, and the promise to the cocoa, vegetable and all the other

farmers. As the Hon Minority Leader has said, we are waiting and watching.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Minister designate for the Ministry of Roads and Highways, Mr Govers Agbodza is a distinguished Member of this House. From the vetting, there were many things that he brought out that he was going to do, and I think it is a question of monitoring, to make sure that the promises made, will be promises kept.

Mr Speaker, moving on to the Ministry of Education, the Minister designate said many things. Of course, outlining his Party's Manifesto and pledging that the Manifesto's commitments would be delivered.

Mr Speaker, the issue of the fees for tertiary students, I think we have heard a lot about it. We look forward to a situation where universities would, at least, be encouraged, to allow those students who applied to them with the hope that they would not have to pay the fees for the first-years. Allow them to come in and not sit at home, because if they do not, they are going to lose their spot. I think if this commitment is there, it would be much easier on the parents. If the Government were to speak with the universities, asking them to give the first-year students grace, allow them to enter and that the fees would be paid, I think it is a better option than closing admissions, shutting the doors in the faces of those who thought it was going to be free and therefore applied, rather than asking them to look for money and pay and that they would reimburse them.

Mr Speaker, reading the Manifesto of the NDC's private schools' participation in the Free Senior High School Education, I am waiting to see the fine details of how they would abolish the double-track system and keep Presbyterian Boys' Senior High School (PRESEC) going. Abolish the double-track system right now and all the first-year students of PRESEC would have to be sent back home. The first-year students of Opoku Ware School would have to go back home. So, I am looking forward to the details of the proposal.

However, Mr Speaker, having said all that, I have confidence in the expertise and the policy grasp of the Minister designate and I hope he would be able to implement all the policies that would ensure that we continue to march forward in the area of education. So much has been done and I would hate to see us take a step back instead of taking a step forward.

So, I look forward to and expect that public school transformation would continue. That the burden of the middle class of Ghana, who are working so hard to find money to pay the fees of their children in private schools, would be eased, by creating quality public schools. We began a journey, and I hope that journey would be continued for the benefit of Ghanaians, to ensure that in our villages, leaking roofs would be replaced, which would create a better learning environment, for all children. We need to have a Ghana, where both people from deprived and disadvantage areas, get the opportunity to access quality education.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon Member Hon Eric Edem Agbana, let us hear you.

Mr Eric Edem Agbana (NDC—Ketu North): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute to the Second Report of the Appointments Committee on His Excellency the President's Nominations, of the three senior Members of this House for the various ministerial positions.

I would want to respectfully begin with the Minister-designate for the Ministry of Roads and Highways. Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza, at the vetting yesterday, discharged himself excellently and displayed mastery over the sector. We are confident that given the opportunity as Minister responsible for Roads and Highways, Ghana's road infrastructure would see some massive improvement.

However, Mr Speaker, it was quite alarming yesterday, to learn, that the previous Government that boasted of constructing about 11,000km of roads in eight years, all of that was nothing — *[Uproar]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Edem Agbana, you have the Floor.

5.33.p.m

Mr Agbana: Mr Speaker, I would humbly plead with the Minority Leader to kindly allow me to continue. The previous Government made several claims about road infrastructure and road the networks that they constructed but at

the vetting yesterday, it was revealed that less than 700km of roads were actually constructed and I think it is important for us to place these matters on record. I am confident that the Hon Minister designate, who was a very active Ranking Member on the sector in the previous Parliament would be able to discharge his duties very well and ensure all the road infrastructure that we promised the good people of Ghana, President Mahama's Government would see to these roads being constructed, especially, the road from Denu to Ho which also passes through my Constituency and also the constituency of the Minister-designate. I would want to plead with him to make that road a top priority in his ambitions for the sector.

The second nominee happens to be Mr Haruna Iddrisu who happens to be a mentor and a big brother since his days as a student leader. He was National Youth Organiser of the New Democratic Congress (NDC) and since his coming into this august House, we can all bear testimony to the fact that he is an excellent legislator. And all the times that he has held ministerial positions; we have seen how he discharges his duties effectively. I am confident that under his leadership as Minister for Education, the sector would see some real growth and improvement. Currently, the Education sector is one of the most challenged in this country. As we speak today, one of the things that is of great concern to me, as a young person and as the Member of Parliament for a constituency that can be described as rural constituency, is the fact that there exists a huge gap between rural education and education in the urban centres.

Mr Speaker, I look forward to a day where children schooling in KpeKpekope Junior High School can make the same grades as children schooling in public schools here in Accra. I look forward to Mr Haruna Iddrisu leading the Ministry to bridge that gap, especially, learning that since 1992, he is the first Minister for Education from the northern sector. I believe that should serve as a motivation for us to do our best to bridge that gap.

Mr Speaker, in my concluding remarks, with regards to the Minister-designate for Food and Agriculture, we all know Mr Eric Opoku. He has become not only an authority, but an institution on issues of agriculture and he displayed that yesterday before the Appointments Committee. I believe that the Agricultural Sector would see some steady growth under his leadership.

Mr Speaker, the three nominees, I believe, constitute what we can properly describe as a solid team to move this country forward. — *[Hear! Hear!!]*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Let me now turn to Rev Ntim Fordjour.

Rev John Ntim Fordjour (NPP — Assin South): I rise to support the Motion that this House adopts the Second Report of the Appointments Committee and in so doing congratulate all the nominees. I have every confidence in their ability to deliver and they can be rest assured on our support. In respect of the nominee for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, it is our expectation that he would keep true

to his commitment that all the brilliant initiatives he enumerated to the Committee would actually translate to the reduction in food inflation. We are also expecting to see how he would not renege on his advocacy when he was very vociferous on the other Side of the House when he was the Ranking Member for the Committee on Agriculture on the promise that if they were in power, they would have offered the cocoa farmer GH¢6,000 per bag instead of the GH¢3,100 that our previous Government offered our farmers. I wish him well in his endeavors.

In respect of Mr Agbodza, he articulated a lot of competence and demonstrated his knowledge and experience in the built environment and we are hopeful that he would translate those experiences into the new portfolio that he has been appointed to. However, his commitment that even though their Government is going to initiate new projects, they would remain true to the continuation of the massive road infrastructure and the massive road construction projects initiated by former President Akufo-Addo, we are going to watch closely to see that we are not going to see a cancellation of projects, we are not going to see suspension of road projects and that these massive roads which all of us, across the length and breadth of this country passed on, would be continued to improve our infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, in respect of Mr Haruna Iddrisu, it is my expectation that he would leverage on his expertise and the

marks that he made when he previously served as Minister for Communication even at age 39, subsequently also to the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Employment and Labour Relations, to navigate around the complexities of the Education Ministry. I have every confidence in his ability to succeed. Mr Speaker, on page 20 of the Report, for the first time, we see the nominee acknowledging the monumental policy and vision of former President Akufo-Addo and noting that Free SHS policy is one of the boldest steps in transforming education. I read:

“The nominee acknowledges that Free SHS remains one of the boldest steps in transforming education in this country.”

I am very excited that we have come to a point where Free SHS that is touted as a visionary policy that ensures that a child of a watchman in a big corporation gets the opportunity to sit in the same classroom with the daughter of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and both having the opportunity for a brighter way of contributing to social and economic pursuit. On page 21 when the nominee was asked about his position on curriculum and pedagogy reform, he assured that at all levels of our education system, curriculum and pedagogy would be reformed to meet the aspirations of this country.

But Mr Speaker, let me be quick to draw the attention of the Table Office to correct an error on page 21 paragraph 5.4. The spelling of pedagogy is not as has been captured. It actually ends with

“y” not “ue”. Having noted that correction, we hope to see how Mr Haruna Iddrisu would sustain the gains we have made in our education outcomes to continue the sterling legacies left by Dr Yaw Osei Adutwum and Dr Matthew Opoku-Prempeh to ensure we do not go back to the era where in 2015 only two per cent of our pupils in this country had the ability to read but rather, we would improve from the 38 per cent as of 2022, the outcome of the National Standardised Test to a point where minimum 90 per cent of our learners would be able to read.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

5.43 p.m.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: It is now the turn of Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba. Ms Akanvariba, please, give me five minutes.

[Pause]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much for indulging me.

Ms Lydia Lamisi Akanvariba (NDC—Tempane): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion on the floor of this House which states that this House should approve the three Nominees by H. E. the President, Mr John Dramani Mahama.

First of all, we thank the President for giving us people with the needed capabilities to take care of the various ministries that they have been appointed to.

Starting with my Brother, Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza, with his wide range of experience in project management and infrastructure development, I believe he is good for the job that he has been nominated for. My only challenge in that sector is the debt of GHC1.5 billion awaiting him. But I know by collaborating with the Hon Minister for Finance, he would be able to scale through to make sure that our roads are worked on. I know that the road from Bolgatanga to Pulmakom is under construction. It has been there for the past eight years. We were told that they would have to readjust the contract. The contract has been readjusted but the road has not been worked on. Travelling from Bolgatanga to my constituency will have taken me just an hour but today, I need about two or more hours to get to the Tempene Constituency. I believe that with his experience, he is going to do a good job and complete that road for us.

It will be difficult for me to talk about my senior brother, Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu. It is normal for a woman to say that my mentor is a woman but for me, my mentor is a man. I like his humility—with the fact that yesterday, he was able to mention that he started his education from Kulikuli School. Those from the north will understand what Kulikuli means. Kulikuli is a dish made from groundnut. From that humble beginning, he has gotten to this level. It is just to tell us, especially, the youth, that one can start from anywhere and get to the place one wants to be, once one is determined.

The first time I met him was in 2021 at Marcos Hotel, where he told us on 5th January that a tortoise will ride an

elephant and we saw that happen. So, I know that at the back of his mind, he can do things much more than we understand he can do. And, I believe that when we give him the nod this evening, he is going to move the Ministry of Education to a different level.

He started politics not today, even during his school days. He became a National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) President and also became the National Youth Organiser for the party. He has handled so many ministries with a wide range of experience and that gives no room for doubt that Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu can do a good job and this country will see an improvement in our educational infrastructure, learning and teaching materials—even to the fact that he understands what education is. I know that by the end of the four years, the Ministry of Education will be a different matter than it is as we speak today.

Mr Speaker, I cannot end without mentioning Mr Eric Opoku. I liked the way he answered the question yesterday on what he was going to do about marginal people in land acquisition. I believe that in the rural constituency like mine, women have challenges in getting lands to farm. What they usually do is that when they give the lands to the men, they give a small place under a tree to the women to farm their onions, pepper and tomatoes.

Mr Speaker, in concluding, I will want to say that the people that have been nominated to these ministries—the President has done a good job and I urge this House to approve these nominees

this evening. As Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu will say, we approve them—[*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

It is now the turn of Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah.

Dr Fred Kyei Asamoah (NPP—Offinso North): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the second Report for the appointment of the Hon Ministers designate for Education; Roads and Highways and; Food and Agriculture.

I would like to start with the Hon Minister-designate for Roads and Highways. I know that Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza is a respectable architect and I enjoyed his vetting. The Hon Minister-designate for Roads and Highways made a statement that it is cheaper to construct asphalt roads as compared to concrete roads and it is definitely true because it cost about twice the amount of funds that one needs to construct an asphalted road as compared to concrete roads. But that is for the initial cost. For the long-term cost, it is cheaper for one to construct the concrete road because of its durability and longevity.

5.53p.m.

So, if the opportunity comes, I want to encourage that we do more of concrete roads since in the long-term it would to be cheaper.

Then, he also committed to completing ongoing road projects and I believe that the ones in my Constituency, which is Offinso North, specifically Afrantwo, Akumadan and Nkenkaasu and Kobreso would be completed.

I would want to move on to the Hon Minister-designate for Education. I have no doubt that Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu has the capacity and ability to deliver under the Ministry of Education. But on page 23, since this House is a house of records, the Report is not too clear. I read:

“...he attributed the previous Government's inability to achieve the initiative to expand Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) to 20 or 30.”

These are nominal figures and I do not know what kind of description one would give to them. But I want to put on record that since independence, the just-out-gone Government is one that has increased infrastructure as far as TVET is concerned. So much investment has been contributed to TVET in this country. We have been able to quadruple enrolment in the TVET sector and it has to be acknowledged as such. We cannot attribute the fact that we were not able to achieve our initiative to expand TVET to just capping Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund). Of course, everybody knows that the workplace requires that one has about 80 per cent of TVET skills. But if you look at the whole Report for the Minister-designate for Education, not much has been attributed to technical and vocational education. We all believe that

one would have to put his money where his mouth is and I would have expected that half of the Report under education would be committed to TVET, at least a quarter should have done the job. So that should be noted.

Notwithstanding, I believe the Hon Minister-designate, Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu has the capacity to be able to do well under the Ministry of Education. I also believe that he has a soft spot for technical and vocational education and as such, more funds would be allocated for technical and vocational education because that is the surest way one can provide and produce the jobs that our youthful nation needs.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much Dr Asamoah.

Let us now turn to Ms Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah.

Ms Zuwera Mohammed Ibrahimah (NDC — Salaga South): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Motion being considered on the Floor.

Mr Speaker, we are looking at approving the Appointments Committee Report on three Nominees to three respectable Ministries in Ghana. My first comment is in respect of Mr Kwame Agbodza, Minister-designate for Roads and Highways. Mr Agbodza presented himself at vetting yesterday; we all followed it and saw his performance and I can assure you that Mr Agbodza acquainted himself very well on the portfolio that he is assuming.

Mr Speaker, there is no gain saying the fact that the road network in this country is one that we cannot write anything about. We find roads riddled with potholes, without lights and without shoulder facilities for transport vehicles to stop. We also find a lot of unnecessary speed ramps on highways everywhere in Ghana including the inner and capital cities. I think it is only in Ghana that we have highways with speed ramps.

Mr Speaker, Mr Agbodza gave insights into how he is hoping to help H.E. the President John Dramani Mahama to address the debilitating road situation of this country. We all identify with him and are praying that by the grace of Allah, he would be able to discharge his mandate as he has so far promised the people of this country.

In saying this, I want to remind Mr Agbodza, the Minister-designate for Roads and Highways that on 5th October 2024, I had the singular honour of travelling with President John Dramani Mahama to some parts of my Constituency in the Kulaw-Abromase area. H. E. the President saw it for himself and indeed he lamented the nature of the road. He made a promise to the chiefs and people of Kulaw that when he wins—he did not say if he wins, but said that when he wins and becomes the President of this country, his priority would be to see to working on these roads. I want to share this information with Mr Agbodza, even before he sits in his office, that I would come there and remind him about the promise the President made to the people of Kulaw.

He spoke about the Abromase road, the Kulpi road, Kpandai road, Salaga-Kpandai road, Salaga-Bimbila road, Tamale-Salaga Road, Makango road, Bunkpa road and Sarkigona roads.

Mr Speaker, there is a very interesting development and I thought I heard one of my Colleagues allude to that. This phenomenon of new governments coming into power and either cancelling or frustrating existing road contracts must stop. I say this with particular reference to my Constituency where the just outgone Government stopped a road contract that President John Dramani Mahama had awarded in 2016 and for political expediency, terminated the contract on 20th August, 2020. As we speak, the contract is at the same stage where it was terminated in 2020. This behaviour is not acceptable. We know that Mr Agbodza, a very enlightened politician, is not going to go on that route.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Ms Ibrahimah, begin to wind up.

Ms Ibrahimah: Mr Speaker, the second Nominee, Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu, the Hon Former Minority Leader, annexing the education portfolio, gave us assurances at his vetting yesterday that he was going to work very hard to use education to bridge the gap of poverty and vulnerability. All of us know the damage that poverty does to a nation where people are exploited because they are vulnerable due to their lack of education.

We are hopeful that having experienced Alhaji Iddrisu's leadership, we feel very confident that he is going to be able to discharge his duties in this portfolio.

6.03 p.m.

Mr Speaker, before I sit down, I am sure Alhaji Iddrisu will take steps to feed us with the right information regarding his sector and correct the misinformation —

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you. It is now the turn of Mr Nyindam.

Mr Matthew Nyindam (NPP — Kpandai): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity to also congratulate the three Nominees who have been given the opportunity to serve in these ministries. Mr Agbodza, Minister-designate for Roads and Highways; Alhaji Iddrisu, Minister-designate for Education; and Mr Opoku, Minister-designate for Food and Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, these are Hon Colleagues that I have worked with, especially Alhaji Iddrisu, as the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader. I know him very well and do not doubt his ability to perform. I know very well that he will come up with policies that will bring some kind of relief to our educational sector, if any.

Mr Speaker, I want to take you to paragraph 5.12 and, it has to do with a question posed to him about the licensure exams. Teaching is a noble profession and it is not for nothing that the former government introduced this policy to

differentiate between a professional teacher and non-professional teacher. But when a question was asked about his position, he stated clearly that they were going to look at the system, but eventually they think that, that policy should not be maintained. I have a different view because in this country, almost all professions are practicing with licenses. So, if we decide to abolish the teacher licensure exams, what would differentiate a professional teacher from a quack teacher? It is important. We should not just say that because we have gone out there to promise the people that when we get the opportunity, we are going to abolish the licensure exams. It is for a good reason. I am not sure that teachers will be happy that they are just boxed, and there is no difference between a professional teacher and a non-professional teacher. It is not a good thing and I want to urge the Minister-designate to look at it very well. That policy is good.

Mr Speaker, let me talk about Mr Agbodza, the Minister-designate for Roads and Highways. He also came out with some policies, especially where he said they are going to introduce the road tolls, and were going to employ Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). It is a good idea and I will assure them that we will also follow closely to see the kind of employment they are going to give to these vulnerable individuals that they are talked about. It is an important point.

Now, Mr Speaker, let me congratulate my Hon Brother, Mr Opoku. But there is one thing I have

realised, and it is that when the Minister-designate for Finance was questioned about a proposal they made to the cocoa farmers. Clearly on this Floor, they promised them that if they get the opportunity, they were going to increase cocoa producer price from GH¢3,100 to GH¢6,000. When the Minister-designate for Finance was asked, he evaded that question. It is the same way when my Hon Good Friend Mr Opoku was also asked, he also evaded that question. I do not know if they can be bold enough to tell the cocoa farmers that they have deceived them. This is because it was clear that they promised them that when they get the opportunity, they were going to increase it from GH¢3,100 to GH¢6,000. What is holding them back?

My Hon Brother, Mr Ayariga, just told us how they have started fulfilling their promises. We expect them to fulfill this particular promise. They must just be bold enough and let the cocoa farmers know that, unfortunately, they have come for their votes, but they are not able to give them what they have told them.

On this note, Mr Speaker, I want to urge this House to approve these Nominees and give them the opportunity to come out with their policies. We, from this Side, like we rightly said, are prepared to support them. They should come out with the best and we would support them. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. I am going to take my last batch of contributors, but there is no way I can overlook my own Uncle.

Alhaji Collins Dauda (NDC — Asutifi South): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for indulging me. I also rise to add my voice to the debate to approve or adopt the second report of the Appointments Committee on H. E. the President, Mr John Dramani Mahama's nominations for appointment as ministers. Mr Speaker, we have before us three of our Hon Colleagues who have been nominated by H. E. the President, Mr Mahama. These Hon Colleagues, first and foremost, qualify to be ministers of state by virtue of the fact that they are Members of Parliament. That is what the Constitution requires of Ministers of State.

I would begin with Mr Agbodza. This country is looking for credible persons to lead ministries in order for them to perform for the benefits of Ghana. Having observed Mr Agbodza in this House as a backbencher and rising to become the Minority Chief Whip, he has distinguished himself creditably. I believe it is as a result of his performance that he caught the admiration of H. E. the President, Mr Mahama who nominated him as the Minister for Roads and Highways. I have a very firm conviction that Mr Agbodza will perform in this sector. Under his administration, Members will be happy. Members from both Sides will see massive road improvement in their constituencies. This is a very hardworking Member of the House, and he has Parliament at heart. Having worked as a Whip who was responsible for the welfare of Members of Parliament, carrying this sentiment into the Ministry, certainly Members will benefit from his appointment.

6.13 p.m.

Mr Speaker, a distinguished Member of the House affectionately called by some Members as “Leader oo! Leader” and some “Approved”, is a very hardworking young man.

Mr Speaker, this young man walked to me in the year 2004 in my house when the NDC had lost the elections, then, a very young person came and disclosed to me his intentions to contest in the Tamale South Constituency to become a Member of Parliament. I remember he requested for my pickup to travel to Tamale to announce to his constituents his intention to contest the elections in 2004. I could see victory in his face and he was full of wisdom, knowledge, and was very hardworking. I supported him to go and I am happy today. I feel so fulfilled that today, at this age in Parliament, I have somebody that I supported to rise to become the Minister for Education. I have no doubt in my mind that Mr Haruna Iddrisu would perform. Under him, we would see improvement in the quality of education in Ghana and also massive improvement in educational infrastructure in the country. I wish him well.

For Mr Eric Opoku, for those of you who do not know, I taught him in the then Ahafoman Secondary Technical School—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: You taught him as a pupil teacher?

Alhaji Dauda: As a teacher in the Ahafoman Senior Technical School

then. When he completed university, I was the Chairman of the NDC in the Brong-Ahafo Region and he disclosed his intentions to me to contest the elections. I supported him to contest the Asunafo South Constituency and by the grace of Allah, he won that election, came to Parliament, and lived with me for one year in my house. At the time, I used to go for radio and television programmes and he would carry my books and references. He has learnt and today if you watch and listen to Mr Eric Opoku espousing on Agriculture, you would fall in love with this young man. He is a very good debater and he has debated very well on this Floor to the admiration of many people including Mr Afenyo-Markin, who describes him as a knowledgeable person and very meticulous when it comes to facts. I am happy you have said it is true. I have no doubt in my mind that those of us who are cocoa farmers in addition to our political career would benefit a lot from his knowledge and performance. I wish to call on all Members to support the adoption of this report in order that these young men would start work today.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much.

Now, we would take Mr Asenso-Boakye.

Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe — *rose*
—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Ms Cudjoe, I would give you two minutes

but let me listen to Mr Francis Asenso-Boakye, the immediate past Minister for Roads and Highways.

You have the Floor but you would work around five minutes for us.

Mr Francis Asenso-Boakye: Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the approval of the three nominees before us and most especially the Ministerial-Nominee for Roads and Highways, Mr Kwame Agbodza.

Mr Speaker, Mr Kwame Agbodza and I have known each other for many years. In fact, we were contemporaries at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). While he studied Architecture, I studied Urban Planning and Development at the same Faculty of Architecture and Planning. We also stayed in the same hall of residence, Independence Hall of KNUST. In fact, when he was the vice-chair of the Junior Common Room (JCR) of the Independence Hall, I was also the Faculty Student President of the Faculty of Planning and Architecture. So, I have known him quite well and since he took the leadership position in politics, he has been the foremost spokesperson of the then opposition in the infrastructure space. I believe that he is competent for the job. First of all, because he is a development professional and he brings a lot of expertise to his work. He has also been involved in construction management which means that he has experience in construction which is the major aspect of road development in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I was not in the country so I did not have the chance to participate in his vetting but he made some important points that I agree with him. First of all, regarding the uncapping of the Road Fund. It is important that the funds that we get for the Road Fund is ring-fenced and given to the Ministry of Roads and Highways to specially undertake the primary assignment it is supposed to do which is road maintenance. So, I agree with him on that.

He also said that he would continue with ongoing projects. That is very important and I commend him for that. And I think it is important that we put it on record that the NPP Administration also continued all ongoing road projects when it assumed office. He said that he would make sure that he would only implement projects that are budgeted for. Mr Speaker, that is ideal and that is what is supposed to be done and I wish him well on that. I wish him goodwill on that. But he is coming into the space not that experienced enough in terms of ministerial responsibility unlike the case of Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu and Mr Eric Opoku. He would realise that when you are on the seat, it is a completely different ball game but I wish him well. If he is able to do that, it would help.

He also talked about electronic tolling. It is one area that I would want to talk about in the next phase, that is, the areas that I do not agree with Mr Kwame Agbodza during his vetting.

First, Mr Agbodza engaged himself in what I would call political optimism

and misrepresentation of facts regarding the number of roads that the Akufo-Addo Administration constructed during its eight years of service. In fact, Mr Agbodza is someone who has been passionate about criticising the past administration regarding the number of roads that the Akufo-Addo administration constructed. Mr Speaker, let me put it on record that as at the end of December per what is stated in the transition report, the Akufo-Addo Government had constructed 13,624 kilometres of road as against 4,630 kilometres by the previous Government in eight years. During the vetting, Mr Agbodza just picked one component of the road construction which is the construction of new roads which is 673 kilometres to represent the total number of roads that the Akufo-Addo Administration had constructed and I thought this was a misleading representation of facts and did not help in having an accurate and good debate on the Floor.

Mr Speaker, out of the 13,624 kilometres of roads constructed under the Akufo-Addo Administration, asphalt overlay alone is 1,955 kilometres. You can all bear witness to asphalt overlay projects that went on in the country in Accra, Kumasi, Sunyani and Takoradi. Those are not new roads; those are already existing roads that we put asphalt overlay to improve driving quality. We also constructed 35 bridges which is also part of the Akufo-Addo record of 13,624 kilometres. Graveling and re-graveling is about 6,000 kilometres. Many of us are MPs from rural communities and we know the importance of graveling in

connecting people in these rural communities so those are very important parts of the road construction projects that were done under the Nana Akufo-Addo Administration.

Mr Speaker, reconstruction and upgrading of roads constituted 1,665 kilometres. Today, if we are reporting on the construction of new roads, we would not talk about reconstruction and upgrading. Let me give you one example. The past Government initiated the construction of the Ofankor-Nsawam road and that is over 20 kilometres of road. That is an existing road but it is classified under upgrading and rehabilitation; so, it would not be counted under new roads. It is a major construction project with major funding. Today, there is Tema-Motorway reconstruction and upgrading and that is going to provide a facelift regarding the transportation network between the harbour city and the capital city. This would not be classified under new roads but it is a major construction project that we know.

Mr Agbodza is someone who is very experienced in this. He is a technical person and he knows this. So, I was very disappointed when he used just new roads to represent the total number of roads constructed under Nana Akufo-Addo.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I think you would have the opportunity to give us a lot of information regarding the Ministry but for now I think you have given us enough.

Mr Asenso-Boakye: Mr Speaker, it was important that I put that—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: That is why I have indulged him. All the people who contributed, I gave them five minutes but because I was interested in the information—

Mr Asenso-Boakye: Mr Speaker, these notwithstanding I believe that Mr Agbodza is competent and has the capacity to manage the very important Ministry of Roads and Highways and I recommend that he is approved so that he can go, deliver and produce results.

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you so much, Mr Asenso-Boakye.

Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe, I would give you two minutes.

Ms Comfort Doyoe Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to add my voice to the Motion moved by the Chairman of the Appointments Committee and First Deputy Speaker to approve the nominees appointed by His Excellency the President, Mr John Dramani Mahama.

Mr Speaker, when it comes to Mr Kwame Agbodza, my immediate boss, he has done all that is needed in this Chamber and that qualifies him more than what we are thinking to occupy that position.

When it comes to Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu, he is marvellous and I know he is going to deliver to the satisfaction of Ghanaians.

Mr Speaker, when it comes to Mr Eric Opoku, if you look at the line-up, you would realise that we really have the men. —[*Hear!Hear!*]

If you look at the first line-up of H.E. John Dramani Mahama then you would know where the reset is going to start from because these are the men who have been in this Chamber for years. Being in this Chamber for just one year is even more than enough because this is where archaeology to zoology passes through. They have learnt a lot from here apart from what they were taught in school and that qualifies them to go and work in those ministries.

Mr Speaker, H.E. John Dramani Mahama is not in a hurry. He is not in a hurry at all to crash this nation because on 21st February 2017, H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo came to this Chamber and told us how he is in a hurry and he ended up crashing the whole nation.

Mr Anyimadu-Antwi — *rose* —

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo did not start his Free SHS immediately—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member?

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, we did not interrupt anyone when they were speaking.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I would give you the opportunity so let her finish.

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, the former President, H.E Akufo-Addo, did not start the Free SHS in January; he started the Free SHS in September, 2017. Therefore, H.E. John Dramani Mahama in January cannot give any approval while his Ministers have not been approved because Budget is yet to be presented in this Chamber and Ministers are yet to take position.

Mr Speaker, if H.E. John Dramani Mahama cannot refer a letter to a Cabinet session at the Flagstaff House, how can he refer to students who are yet to resume? Some of them are yet to resume and he has not taken charge fully, how can we say he should go and speak about those who are now entering the university? He has promised and he would fulfil the promise. With Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu in the seat, we know he is going to deliver when it comes to education. They are going to restructure the Free SHS and make it attractive for every Ghanaian student to attend.

Mr Speaker, as Alhaji Collins Dauda said, he mentored him- I love people who mentor others, and today he has reached where he is.

6.23 p.m.

His first constituency was Gukpegu/Sabongida. He did everything he could as a young man and has reached this level, I know he would deliver.

Mr Speaker, Mr Governs Kwame Agbodza would fulfil the promise of H. E. John Dramani Mahama. For contracts that were abrogated in 2017, all contractors would move to site to complete those projects that were left for eight years. The contractor for the Kasseh to Ada Road has been investigated for the past eight years, and it is still the same. No one has touched that road.

Mr Speaker, we have not seen bitumen for past eight years in Ada, and the Cocoa Roads that were abrogated affected the farmers such that they could not bring their farm produce to the market, and that escalated the prices of the farm products. My Brother, Mr Governs Kwame Agbodza, would work on them, and we would see a massive improvement in this Government.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon Member.

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, please let me speak about Mr Eric Opoku because he would perform magic when it comes to agriculture. We have the men, and they would deliver and make sure we move Ghana to the next level.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity—[*Hear! Hear!*]

Mr Anyimadu-Antwi —*rose*—

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:

Hon Member for Asante Akim Central, Mr Anyimadu-Antwi, would you want to make a comment?

Mr Anyimadu-Antwi: Mr Speaker, I thought that the language used by my Hon Sister that Nana Akufo-Addo had crashed the nation was too high, and I did not want her to continue on that tangent. Let us be decorous and use decent language.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker:

Yes, Hon Minority Chief Whip?

Minority Chief Whip (Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh): Mr Speaker, I rise, certainly, to speak in support of the Motion. Let me start off by saying that all three nominees performed fairly well because I listened to them in detail.

Mr Governs Kwame Agbodza my good friend—Let me not belabor the point, the former sector Minister has dealt with a number of inaccuracies that were put out, so I would not spend too much time on that.

Mr Speaker, the three of them sounded very ambitious, which is good. We, on this Side of the House, would be watching. If, indeed, a review of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) is not cancellation, time would tell. There is a huge expectation out there, and members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) have said that all the good works of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) led by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo— We crashed the nation; we have heard you. We just wish you well.

Mr Speaker, in a broader context, Mr Governs Kwame Agbodza, who has displayed a lot of professional competence in the area of architecture, tried to answer most of the questions. However, on the matter of the US\$10 billion infrastructure fund promised by the NDC Government to support infrastructure—And mind you, infrastructure goes beyond roads: all manner of infrastructure. They are the same people who said that they would reduce taxes, cost of living and cost of kenkey would be reduced and the size of kenkey would increase.

Mr Speaker, last week I was at a very popular joint in Osu where good kenkey is sold. I went there to ask the price of kenkey—*[Interruption]*—What time do you want me to ask? The price of kenkey is actually increasing. The ex-pump price of petrol and diesel is also increasing. We would give them time to form their Government, and I know time would reveal their true colours. Indeed, what Mr Agbodza should do is to look at how he would get the balancing right. He has access to US\$10 billion, and he said that he would complete all the roads we started and even add more to what we constructed. Is that not the case? We would be watching.

Mr Speaker, we know that, under this Fourth Republic, it is only the NPP Government that has implemented the Free SHS successfully—*[Interruption]*—Is that true or false?

Some Hon Members: False!

Some Hon Members: True!

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: We know the review by the NDC certainly means cancellation. We would just be watching; if indeed—So, if there is any group of people in this country who the NDC needs to take a cue from, it is from Dr Yaw Osei Adutwum and the NPP. I would rather advise them to humble themselves, seek understanding as to how we did it, and I am sure that if they are able to do so, they would be able to chalk some success.

Mr Speaker, Mr Eric Opoku, usual of him, also showed dexterity and understanding of the industry, and no one can take that away from him. However, our Hon Colleagues are talking big. Mr Eric Opoku says he would to ensure that agribusiness takes a good height, cocoa farmers are paid well, and increase productivity and stop cocoa smuggling.

Some Hon Members: It is possible!

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Is it possible?

Some Hon Members: Yes—
[Laughter].

Mr Annoh-Dompreh: Three things are very critical when it comes to the current global narrative on agriculture: smart agriculture, sustainability and storage. I have scanned through the manifesto of the NDC, and storage is conspicuously missing. There is no mention of storage, so how would the Government increase productivity and also ensure bumper harvest and availability of food? Not too long ago, the former Minister for Food and

Agriculture worked so hard that we had bumper harvest and we had a lot of foodstuffs in Accra—[**Some Hon Members:** Ei!]
—There were a lot of—

Mr Speaker, during the bumper harvest, I travelled from Nsawam to Accra to buy some plantain for domestic use. I saw a number of my Hon Colleagues on the other Side with their cars parked waiting to buy plantain and other foodstuff. Today, they are saying that they would not recognise the good work of the NPP.

6.33p.m.

[Pause]

I only pray and wish him well.

Mr Speaker, Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza who has promised to do all the roads—I hope our approach would not be partisan. It should not be partisan, and we have to put on the cap of patriotism and look at the real needs of our country, especially in the hinter areas where foodstuffs are produced. We want to see more asphalt roads, not just in Accra, but in other parts of the country where roads are linking production centres for agriculture.

Mr Speaker, the linkage between roads and food supply and reduction in the cost of food is so clear, and we are only bidding our time. Climate change which has become a very topical matter is haunting. Mr Eric Opoku with all his knowledge could not situate the concerns about climate change and what solutions the NDC would proffer in dealing with

this matter, reducing the sustainability of food productivity and also ensure that there is abundance of food. If for nothing at all, the agriculture sector, under the New Patriotic Party, had a lot of food; a lot of them were made available at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and people were travelling from all over the country to the Ministry to buy food.

Mr Speaker, I am speaking in support of the Motion, but these are important lessons that we would want to nudge our Hon Colleagues and draw their attention to. They have just four years to perform. I pray that Mr Haruna Iddrisu, Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza, and Mr Eric Opoku would live up to the billing. When they succeed, the country succeeds. We pray that they would live up to the billing and deliver on the deliverables, and, very soon, the price of kenkey would, indeed, come down and also the size of kenkey would increase.

Mr Speaker, with these words, I would like to support the Motion and to support the adoption of the Report.

I am grateful Mr Speaker —*[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, at the conclusion of the debate—

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I have seen my respected Hon Colleague, the First Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Appointments Committee- I would hold on to what I would want to say. I would plead with you to hold on for a moment,

so I could engage with him privately as it is always the practice; then, soon thereafter, if I have some comments, I would make on this matter.

Mr Speaker, I would want you to indulge us; I want to engage him—*[Pause]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, can you keep your discussion outside while we go on? Other than that, the House will be kept in abeyance.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, my humble suggestion is that, looking at the numbers in the Chamber, we do not have what it takes to carry the Motion; that is why I wanted to have some engagements, but we have closed the debate. We would have to, perhaps, do some further engagements and know the direction we would go. But, as it is, if one looks at the numbers in the Chamber, we do not have—*[Interruption]*—

Mr Speaker, the Constitution is very clear on what it takes to take a decision, and I would want to strongly make the appeal to you that, looking at the numbers in the Chamber, we do not have what it takes to take a decision on the three nominees, so we would now have to put the issue of putting the Question on ice, so that we see to it that things are done right. Meanwhile, I would engage the Hon First Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the Committee outside of the Chamber, so that we come back to have further discussion—*[Interruption]*—If you say no—Well, Hon Members—

Mr Speaker, I have pointed out the law to you. If my Hon Colleagues in the Majority are of the view that, in this Chamber now, it is right to put the Question, you can go ahead, but, at least, I have told Mr Speaker what it is.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, that is well noted. If you want to raise an issue on quorum, then come appropriately; then we move it from there.

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, there are ways to solve a problem. I have spoken enough, and I have drawn attention to this matter. There are ways to solve a problem, so I have drawn your attention to it.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Okaikwei Central, Mr Boamah?

Mr Boamah: Mr Speaker, I believe if you look around—We do not want a situation where a decision is taken, and it is challenged, it would not be in the interest of the House. Let the Hon Chairman of the Appointments Committee who moved the Motion and the Ranking Member confer. The rules permit you to even suspend the House, so that the Majority can do the needful. I beg of you. That is another way; otherwise, there are decisions and constitutional provisions as to the number that can take a decision, and we know.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Member, I share your view, but what I said is that the Minority Leader should

invoke the right constitutional provision, so that we ring the bell for Hon Members in their offices to come. Either than that, we would go ahead and adjourn the House.

Mr Boamah: Mr Speaker, that is why I am begging of you to, at least, suspend the House for 10 minutes. I am sure we would find a way around it.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Yes, Hon Member for Madina, Mr Sosu?

Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, as a matter of practice, I believe that when debates are over, what is required by our Standing Orders is that you put the Question. When someone seeks to challenge the voice vote after you have put the Question, the person may call for a division, the bell is rung, and we give ourselves time to have our Members in here.

Mr Speaker, I think this practice of asking the House to suspend just because someone has made an observation and he is of the view that we do not have the numbers, I do not think, is borne out of the procedure of this House.

6.43 p.m.

So, Mr Speaker, I respectfully pray that you put the Question so we move forward. *[Pause]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, kindly indulge me to suspend the House for 15 minutes —*[Uproar]*— *[Pause]*

Yes?

Mr Dafeamekpor: Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, the mood of the House is that the Question be put. That is the mood of the House, and Mr Speaker — *[Uproar]*

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Mr Dafeamekpor, hold on. I was about to put the Question, but I got the inclination that you did not have the numbers— **[Some Hon Members:** We have the numbers!] —Hon Members, would you listen to me? I got the inclination that you did not have the numbers and — *[Pause]*— Very well. Hon Members, hold on.

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, our duty is to assist you in ensuring the peace of this House. I have the commitment of the Minority in this important endeavour. I indicated that I was going to engage my respected Hon Colleague, the Chair of the Appointments Committee, and thus far, the indication I have is assuring. I, therefore, have no hesitation in suggesting to the Chair to proceed as had earlier been indicated. Thank you.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: This honourable House has adopted His Excellency the President's nomination of Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza as Minister-designate for the Ministry of

Roads and Highways—*[Hear! Hear!]*; Alhaji Haruna Iddrisu as Minister-designate for the Ministry of Education *[Hear! Hear!]*; and Mr Eric Opoku as Minister-designate for the Ministry of Food and Agriculture—*[Hear! Hear!]*.

Hon Members, on behalf of the House, I would like to extend a word of congratulations to our Colleagues. The three nominees or Minister-designates are all Members of the House; we believe they will make us proud in the Ministries that they are going to head.

Leadership, any indication?

Ms Cudjoe: Mr Speaker, we are in your hands because we have exhausted the day and we need to go and rest for tomorrow.

Mr Second Deputy Speaker: Hon Members, before we bring the curtains down, kindly allow me some space to express a word of gratitude to the Leadership and to you, Hon Members of the House, for unanimously and graciously accepting and endorsing my nomination to serve this honourable House once again as the Second Deputy Speaker—*[Hear! Hear!]*— I am very thankful and appreciative of the honour you have done me.

Hon Members, let me pledge to this House, and by extension the whole nation, that I will be diligent, unbiased, impartial, fair, and most especially, I will go by the rules of the House, which rules we know are underpinned by the 1992 Constitution and our own Standing Orders. I will do that in all my

engagements as Deputy Speaker, most especially when I am presiding over the House.

I thank you and the good people of Fomena who brought me here. I thank my family who have supported me throughout my political journey. Also, I want to mention my wife's name, Mrs Grace Owusu Ansah Asiamah, for supporting me throughout my political journey. [**Some Hon Members:** Speaker o Speaker!]

Hon Members, on that note, I would like to thank you once again for the honour you have done me. The House is accordingly adjourned to tomorrow 12 noon. The House stands adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was adjourned at 6.57 p.m. till Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025, at 12 noon.

