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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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

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THE
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA

FIRST MEETING, 2025

Tuesday, 11th March, 2025

The House met at 11.04 a.m.

[MR SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR]

PRAYERS

The Speaker: Hon Members, the item numbered 6 on the Order Paper — Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS
AND THE OFFICIAL REPORT**

We will start with the correction of *Votes and Proceedings* of Friday, 7th March, 2025.

Hon Members, page 1...8—

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Issah Atta: Mr Speaker, with respect, none of us on the last row has a copy of the *Votes and Proceedings*—It has not been uploaded.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Page 8—

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Mohammed Adamu Ramadan: Mr Speaker, page 8; for

consistency's sake, the item numbered 6(i)(a) "Methodist Girls High School, Mamfe from Akuapem..." Akuapem has been spelt here with an 'e', however, when you go to page 2(62), the Constituency, Akuapim, has been spelt with an 'i'. I do not know whether it is the one with 'e' or the with 'i' that is correct.

Thank you.

11.13 a.m.

The Speaker: Yes, Table Office, kindly cross-check the correct spelling of "Akuapim". "Akuapem" with regard to the Constituency and not the general term "Akuapim", the right spelling of the name of the Constituency.

Mr Samuel Awuku: Mr Speaker, it is the correct spelling.

The Speaker: Which one is the correct spelling?

Mr Awuku: The one with the "e".

The Speaker: What about that which is on page 2, where it is an "i"?

Mr Awuku: The Electoral Commission designated it as an "i", but for the school—

The Speaker: I am not interested in the Electoral Commission (EC). I am interested in the correct spelling—

Mr Awuku: The correct spelling comes with an "e".

The Speaker: So why did you not draw our attention to it when we were on page 2, where it was spelt with an “i”?

Mr Awuku: All those of us here, do not have a copy of the *Votes and Proceedings* here.

The Speaker: That is not a challenge to me but a challenge to you—[*Laughter*]—If it is that the whole House has not been given copies, that I could come in. But when some individuals do not have copies, it is not a point of order, for the Speaker to interrupt the proceedings.

Yes, Minister for Foreign Affairs?

Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa: Mr Speaker, I am most grateful.

The item numbered 5 (ii) on page 8, the Communication from His Excellency the President, informing the House that the Hon Mohammed-Mubarak Muntaka has been assigned additional ministerial responsibility for National Security—

Mr Speaker, the word additional has been omitted. It should be inserted, so that it does not create the impression that this is—Because he, the Minister for the Interior, has been assigned responsibility at the National Security. The rendition here does not convey accurately what the Communication is. Because, he is the Minister for the Interior and he has been assigned that additional responsibility to National Security.

Mr Speaker, if the Table Office can capture the essence more accurately. One does not get that impression here.

The Speaker: Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, what is your authority on this?—[*Laughter*]—Is it in the law or in the Communication?]

Mr Ablakwa: Mr Speaker, it is from the Communication and Hon Ministers—

The Speaker: Have you cited of the Communication?

Mr Ablakwa: Yes, we were copied.

The Speaker: Whether you were talking or laughing, that is not an issue—[*Laughter*]—The issue is, have you cited the Communication?

Mr Ablakwa: Yes.

The Speaker: Are you sure? Because the copy I read, did not have any word like additional. The Communication is that he has been assigned the responsibility and not an additional responsibility. Minister for Foreign Affairs, you are out of order—[*Laughter*]—Yes, can we proceed?

Yes, Minister for Energy and Green Transition?

Mr John Abdulai Jinapor: Mr Speaker, just a suggestion through you to the Table Office. It is true that not all of us have hard copies of the *Votes and Proceedings*. Under your abled leadership, you have provided us with

beautiful and working computers. Maybe, I thought I could appeal to you, that next time, if you could direct the Table Office to make available the *Votes and Proceedings* on the computer. So that even without the hard copy, we can easily follow on the computer and then make comments and suggestions as necessary.

Mr Speaker, this is just for your guidance and consideration.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon Members, the structure we are using as the Chamber of Parliament was constructed in 1964. In spite of all our attempts to modernise it, we are still having challenges. It is not easy to upload some of the applications we have. Even the electrical connections are also giving us serious problems. It means that we have to replace all, including that of Job 600 Building. That is quite a colossal sum which our budget has not been able to take.

We have a lot to upload unto your personal computers (PCs) but we are facing challenges. You would see that we are doing it piecemeal and I hope in the near future we would succeed in putting all there. So that it would be a paperless Parliament; we do not want to be giving you hard copies. It is quite expensive to run such a system. So, bear with us, we would get there sooner than later.

Hon Members, can we turn to page 9...13—

Yes, Hon Member?

Mr Frank Afriyie: —[Inaudible]—

The Speaker: Hon Member, my microphone is working—[Laughter]— Hon Members, is it the case that your microphones have stopped working? [Some Hon Members: Yes]

Hon Members, I would proceed to suspend Sitting for a few minutes, so that it could be rectified. Please, just some five minutes—

Mr Sulemana: Mr Speaker, it is back on.

The Speaker: Hon Member, are you sure?

Mr Alhassan Tampuli Sulemana: Mr Speaker, it appears that my microphone is working, and I am ready to yield my space to anybody who wants to speak in the House. I am ready to do that.

The Speaker: Hon Members, Sitting is suspended for five minutes.

11.13 a.m. — *Sitting suspended.*

11.43 a.m. — *Sitting resumed.*

The Speaker: Hon Members, may we continue with the correction of *Votes and Proceedings*? We were at page 8; we will now move to page 9.

Page 9...13?

Yes, Hon Member for Afadjato South?

Mr Frank Afriye: Mr Speaker, I am exceedingly grateful for the opportunity. With your leave, let me please seek your superior judgement and wisdom on the item numbered 15(ii), “Dr Justice Srem-Sai” a nominee for Deputy Ministerial portfolio. Mr Speaker, taking the thirteenth Report of the Appointments Committee, the Nominee has been designated as Deputy Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, but over here, the *Votes and Proceedings* have captured it as “Deputy Attorney-General and Deputy Minister, Ministry of Justice”. I do not know if it is a needless repetition especially with the “Deputy” coming at the two ends. I seek your superior judgement.

The Speaker: Hon Member, this is the correct designation. He is a Deputy Attorney-General and also a Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Justice. That is the correct designation.

May we go on now?

Page 14—

Yes, please?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, on page 14, the item numbered 16, “Motion”, the second sentence under “(Conclusion of Debate)” reads: “The Hon Second Deputy Speaker withdrew from the Chair at 16.31 p.m. The Hon First Speaker took the Chair.” The word “Deputy” is missing, so could it be inserted? The same applies to the next sentence so there should be a consequential amendment to that. Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon Member, we are grateful. Table Office, kindly take note.

Page 15...16?

Yes, Hon Member for Kumbungu?

Prof Hamza Adam: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. On page 16, the item numbered 9(i)(a) (11), “Hon Prof Grace Ayensu-Danquah” —

The Speaker: Page 16?

Prof Adam: Page 16, the item numbered 9(i)(a) (11), Committee of Selection.

The Speaker: You are talking about the item numbered 19(i) and not 9(i).

Prof Adam: Mr Speaker, the item numbered 19(i). I am guided.

The Speaker: Yes?

Prof Adam: In the arrangement of the title, I see some inconsistencies. I know for the standard in our *Votes and Proceedings*, we usually have the title, Prof, coming at the end of the name, and in a bracket. But in this arrangement, it is different, it is “Hon Prof.” and I see that again on page—we have not reached page 22 but I have seen that repeated several times, so could there be some consistency with the arrangement? I think that would be helpful.

The Speaker: Hon Member, we will take note of that.

Page 17...18—

Yes, please?

11.53 a.m.

Mr Ramadan: Thank you, Mr Speaker. On page 18, the items numbered 19(i)(d) (11) and (12) have been repeated, that is, “Hon Alfred Nii Kotey Ashie”. He is both at the items numbered 19(i)(d) (11) and (12).

I have a copy of the *Official Report* of Tuesday, 25th February 2025. Any corrections?

Hon Members, in the absence of any correction—

The Speaker: Hon Members, my attention has been drawn by the Chief Whips to the fact that there have been some errors in the list that was submitted and approved on Friday. They are working at it and will come back to us properly, so, we await that. So, if you identify some of the issues we are raising now, kindly hold your peace. With regard to the composition of both the Standing and Select Committees, we will get the errors corrected later on. Page 19 up to page 58 which is the end, will be taken later on.

Hon Members, hold your peace until they resubmit the proper composition to the House. In the meantime, the Committees by law are established. It is only the composition that we are having issues with. The referral will be to the Committees and that is what will happen after the presentation of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy.

Please, with that, we will take page 59...60?

Hon Members, in the absence of any further corrections, the *Votes and Proceedings* of the 29th Sitting, dated Friday, 7th March, 2025, as corrected, is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Yes?

Prof Kingsley Nyarko: Mr Speaker, there are some minor corrections on column 79, paragraph 2, line 8, the former President, John Agyekum Kufuor—Names are very significant. The second “Kufuor” was spelt wrongly. It should be K-u-f-u-o-r, not “...o-u-r”. It is Kufuor.

Then the last sentence of the last paragraph, “...beginning to tend to that concept”, “tend” is used here, but I suspect the right word should be “turn”: t-u-r-n, instead of tend: t-e-n-d.

Thank you.

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

Yes, Hon Member?

Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama: Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, on column 75, line 8, the sentence should read, “But I want to highlight one important thing that maker...”. Mr Speaker, the article “the” has been excluded, and I think that it is proper we include that. Still on the same column, line 17, it should read as, “I

think that apart from the law, the Act that was passed by the House ...". "We" has been omitted. "...we should look at other projects."

Mr Speaker, the Office of Chamber Reporting should—The Table should include "we" there.

Mr Speaker, column 76, paragraph 3, we have:

"Mr Speaker, lastly, I would want to also suggest that apart from the budgetary offloading of projects..."

The mistake here is that the phrase, "the maker of the Statement" has to be deleted and replaced with "we", so that it would then read as:

"Mr Speaker, lastly, I want to also suggest that apart from the budgetary offloading of projects, we could include in every brochure..."

So, I think that should be the rendition.

Mr Speaker, lastly, the same paragraph, line 12, "...I would be able to tell that when I call this investor, they would [be]...", the "be" is excluded, and it has to be included in the sentence. "...be able to..." and would replace "participate" with "partner" in the same sentence.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker: Well, Table Office, you have to listen to the voice and do the proper thing. Well, this is

quite massive, and "partner" and "participate" are quite different and distinct. So, the voice would determine which one to use because if you read the Standing Orders, it talks about it being put, as much as possible—It is a verbatim reportage of what is said on the Floor.

Yes, please?

Mr Ablakwa: Mr Speaker, my contribution to the tribute to Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah on column 144 of the *Official Report*, the second paragraph, the word is "fifth columnist", not "feed". So, it should be "f-i-f-t-h". What we have here is "f-e-e-d". So, if that can be corrected. And then the first paragraph at column 144, Fidel Castro should not belong to that category. It should be put in a different category. So, if the corrections could be effected accordingly.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

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

Hon Members, there being no further corrections, the *Official Report* of 25th February, 2025, as corrected, is hereby adopted as a true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, we will now move on to the item of the day. I mean the main item of the day, and that is the item numbered 7—Statements.

The first Statement—
Yes?

First Deputy Minority Whip (Alhaji Habib Iddrisu): Mr Speaker, thank you.

Mr Speaker, on today's Order Paper, the item numbered 7, as you rightly called, the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government for the year ending 31st December, 2025.

Mr Speaker, I want to invite you to Order 195(2) of our Standing Orders, and, with your permission, I need guidance and I would read it—*[Interruption]*

[Minister for Finance walked into the Chamber]

[Some Hon Members of the Majority sang]

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker—

The Speaker: Hon Members, please, let us listen to the First Deputy Minority Whip.

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I think the Minister was—Mr Speaker, Order 195(2), with your permission, I need guidance, and I would read:

“The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government shall be presented to the House by the Minister responsible for Finance on behalf of or on the authority of the

President and in a form the House may determine.”

Mr Speaker, I am emphasising the last part, “... in a form the House may determine”. As we speak about the new Standing Orders of the Ninth Parliament, we have not determined any form the Budget Statement would be presented as at now.

Mr Speaker, I have gone to read Order 6, and I have checked on our Schedule, from Schedule 1 to Schedule 10 and that of Order 6, and I have not been able to understand, and as we stand—*[Interruption]*—As at now, the House has not determined the form the Budget is going to be presented.

12.03 p.m.

Mr Speaker, the House has to determine the form before he can present any Statement.

Mr Speaker, that is my plea. My application is that the House must determine the form of the Budget Statement before he reads the Statement.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, Majority Leader?

Majority Leader (Mr Mahama Ayariga): Mr Speaker, the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act and its various amendments spell out clearly the budgeting process, the requirements of a budget, what must be contained in it, *et cetera*. That was a legislation enacted by this same Parliament, and this Parliament acts

according to the prescriptions of that legislation. So, if there are provisions in the Standing Orders that recommend that we have a form in which the Budget Statement should be presented, the provisions of the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, 2016, of course, is the parent legislation that deals with financial management and the presentation of budgets.

So, Mr Speaker, I do not think there is an issue here. Let us proceed and take the Budget Statement from the Minister for Finance.

The Speaker: Yes, Minority Leader?

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, I have listened to the application by the Member of Parliament for Tolon and I have also listened to the Leader of the House respond to the said application. The Leader of the House makes a general submission. The application was anchored on the Rules of this House: a mandatory provision in Standing Order 195(2). There is no “may” there. For the avoidance of doubt and at the risk of being repetitive, this is what it says;

“The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government shall be presented to the House by the Minister responsible for Finance on behalf of or on the authority of

the President and in a form the House may determine.”

—[*Uproar*—Yes, wait. Look at them. Mr Speaker, they should take it easy. This is law; take it easy.

So, Mr Speaker, what is the reverse logic? Please, for the benefit of the young ones—[*Uproar*—Mr Speaker, this House is a house of procedure. This House is equally guided by its own rules and precedents. Wait a moment; for those who are in a hurry to shout in disagreement, if the law says, “may determine”, is it also the case that in reverse logic, the House may decide not to determine any form? [*Interruption*—No, wait. The law is that a Budget Statement must be presented. But we are saying again that as a House, we may have to determine which form.

So, Mr Speaker, the invitation by the First Deputy Minority Whip is well-founded. He is inviting us, as a House, to determine whether we are going to allow him to make a Statement or to move a Motion? Is it going to be in a form of a Motion or in a form of a Statement? This is a well-anchored application. Do not use your numbers to shout to intimidate him. He has made a solid argument.

This House has not determined the form in which this item has to be taken. The First Deputy Minority Whip is inviting us to set the ground rules. The Majority leader got up and referred to the PFM Act to say what? He did not quote the specific provision. The man has made an application under our own rules. The Majority Leader did not attack him on the rules—[*Interruption*—No,

you did not say anything against his application on the rules.

Mr Speaker, as the Minister is here, in which form are we going to listen to him? Is he going to make a Statement or is he going to move a Motion? Mr Speaker, this House is being invited to determine this matter. The Supreme Court has had an occasion to give a contextual interpretation, where “may” is placed to mean “shall”—[*Uproar*]*—Yes. Come on.*

Mr Speaker, even that argument aside, there is no need for any interpretation of whether “may” should be “shall”. The point is that the law provides that we should determine the form. The law says we should determine the form. In this House, there are ways to come here. One comes to make a Statement or to move a Motion.

What is the Minister coming to do? It is for this House to determine. Is he going to move a Motion in accordance with Article 179 or is he coming to make a Statement? When he makes the Statement, what happens? Is it going to be left with the Chairman of the Finance Committee to now move that this House should debate the Statement? Mr Speaker, this is a solid application and he should be applauded for what he has done.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I will want to rule on this matter. I have heard enough. I think in terms of procedure; the right thing has been done. The Order you quoted clearly states the Statement of the estimates of revenue and expenditure of the Government. What does it say? The Statement. So, what they are bringing to us is a Statement and when Statements are admitted, they are presented as Statements.

Now, when you go to Standing Order 195(2), which you referred to, it says:

“The Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government shall be presented to the House by the Minister responsible for Finance on behalf of or on the authority of the President...”

That is first. The second is:

“...and in a form the House may determine.”

Hon Minority Leader, you are not in a shouting battle. Please. This is the House. The only way the House can determine however you define form is when the Statement is presented to you. The House cannot determine this matter outside the House.

12.13 p.m.

You can only determine it when you are truly sitting as a House. And this is the House that he is presenting the Statement to. If you decide that you want a form, you define form in

any different manner, as you are doing, then this is the time when it is presented, you take this opportunity to determine that form you want

which is different from the earlier form that we have decided and been practicing. If this is what you want to do, please, the Statement must first be presented to you. It has to be presented to the House, and if you may, you determine the form you want it to be presented and that can be part of the debate. But I am not sure the definition you are putting on the word “form”, please, go back to your lexicons—*[Hear! Hear!]*—to determine the meaning of “form”.

I think the right thing is being done; the Statement was admitted, it has been properly captured on the Order Paper as programmed by the Business Committee, and the Minister is here to present the Statement to the House. So, the Minister may do so. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Hon Members, at the commencement—

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu —*rose*—

Alhaji Habib Iddrisu: Mr Speaker, I just want to thank you for your guidance and the proper interpretation of Order 195(2) of the Standing Orders. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Hon Members, the item numbered 7— Statements, the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of the Government for the year ending 31st December, 2025.

Minister for Finance? *[Hear! Hear!]*

STATEMENT

Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government, 2025

Minister for Finance (Dr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson) (MP):

Section One: Introduction

1. Mr Speaker, on the authority of His Excellency the President, John Dramani Mahama—*[Hear! Hear!]*—and pursuant to Articles 179 and 180 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, Standing Orders of the House, Order 195(2) and today’s Order Paper, item numbered 7 and sections 21 and 23 of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921), I respectfully present to this august House the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the 2025 Financial Year.

2. Mr Speaker, today marks a moment of great significance and I have the singular honour to stand before this House to present, on behalf of His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama, following his extraordinary mandate, the maiden Budget of his new administration.

3. I am deeply grateful to His Excellency the President for entrusting me with this responsibility.

4. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House approves the Financial Policy of Government for the year ending 31st December, 2025.

5. Respectfully, I also submit to this august House the following statutory reports as required by law:

- i. the 2024 Annual Report on the Petroleum Funds, in line with Section 48 of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (Act 815), as amended;
- ii. the 2024 Energy Sector Levies Report, in accordance with Section 6 of the Energy Sector Levies Act, 2015 (Act 899); and
- iii. the 2024 Annual Report on collection and utilisation of African Import Union Levy in line with Section 7 of the African Union Import Levy Act, 2017 (Act 952).

6. Mr Speaker, with this Budget, I will also be seeking a review of the following Acts to support the policies of government aimed at stabilising the economy and promoting inclusive growth:

- i. Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (Act 815);
- ii. Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund Act, 2014 (Act 877);
- iii. Minerals Income Investment Fund Act, 2018 (Act 978);
- iv. Energy Sector Levies Act, 2015 (Act 899);
- v. Ghana Cocoa Board Act, 1984, PNDCL 81 (and its amendment);

- vi. Earmark Funds Capping and Realignment Act, 2017 (Act 947);
- vii. Public Procurement Authority Act, 2003 (Act 663) as amended with Act 914;
- viii. Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) Act, 2000 (Act 581);
- ix. Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2018 (Act 982) and incorporate it into a comprehensive Public Financial Management Act; and
- x. Revenue Administration Act, 2016 (Act 915).

7. Mr Speaker, we remain committed to the pursuit of our 24-Hour Economy policy aimed at stimulating economic growth and job creation. This policy will contribute to addressing Ghana's structural economic challenges by creating an integrated, efficient and increasingly export-driven industrial economy that fully utilises our national resources, capital and labour power.

8. We will be presenting the 24-Hour Economy policy to Parliament in due course—[Hear! Hear!]
—In this respect, the Labour Act, the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act and other enabling legislations will be reviewed.

9. Mr Speaker, as part of efforts to stabilise the Cedi through foreign exchange and gold reserve

accumulation, I will also submit a Bill to provide a legal framework for the establishment of the Ghana Gold Board for the consideration of this honourable House.

10. Mr Speaker, this Budget Speech is an abridged version of the 2025 Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government.

11. I respectfully request the Hansard Department to capture the entire Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government for the year ending 31st December, 2025.

12. Mr Speaker, standing here evokes a sense of nostalgia as I reflect on my journey in public service. From my early days as a young Parliamentarian in 2009, destiny has guided my path from a Backbencher and a Member of the Finance Committee, to Deputy Minister for Finance, to Ranking Member of the Finance Committee, to Minority Leader, to Majority Leader briefly, and now, Minister responsible for Finance — *[Hear! Hear!]*—

13. Mr Speaker, the invaluable experience I gained in this Chamber has shaped my perspective, sharpened my focus, and prepared me for the task at hand. I fully commit to supporting the President to fix the economy.

14. I take this opportunity to extend my profound gratitude to the people of Ajumako Enyan Essiam, and to Mr Speaker and Members of this House across the aisle, for your unwavering support throughout the years in this Chamber.

15. Mr Speaker, this esteemed House is a sanctuary of rigorous debate, principled cooperation, and at times, constructive disagreement, all in the pursuit of the greater good of our beloved country.

16. I look forward to working with you, the Speaker, and my Colleagues on both Sides of the aisle, to reset Ghana's economy through sound policy and structural reforms that will propel our country forward.

17. Mr Speaker, there comes a time in a nation's history when fundamental challenges must be confronted, difficult choices must be made, and a new course must be set for the future.

18. For Ghana, the defining moment is now.

19. Mr Speaker, President John Dramani Mahama made a commitment to reset Ghana for jobs, accountability and prosperity for all, as captured in the NDC Manifesto. In this regard, the theme for this budget is "Resetting the Economy for the Ghana we Want".

20. Mr Speaker, the democratic principles we tirelessly fought for, are being hailed. Our democracy has been consolidated with yet another peaceful transition of power.

21. That notwithstanding, our youth face an uncertain future with growing unemployment and hopelessness. This suggests that the dividends of democracy, such as economic prosperity and social justice, remain elusive.

22. Mr Speaker, the choice before us as a country are clear: we can either continue on a path of self-destruction by not confronting the problems or we can embark on a journey of fundamental reforms and transformation—one that resets our economic model, redefines our priorities, honours our social contract and provides opportunities for all.

23. Mr Speaker, President Mahama has chosen the path of reforms and transformation. He will fix the economy — *[Hear! Hear!]* — He will restore hope and lead us to build the Ghana we want together.

24. Mr Speaker this Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government, 2025, was preceded by the National Economic Dialogue on the theme “Resetting Ghana – Building the Economy We Want Together” on 3rd and 4th March, 2025. Through this consensus-building dialogue, the people demanded decisive action and real solutions to the severe challenges that plagued us as a country.

25. Mr Speaker, the 2025 Budget is the culmination of the true aspirations, felt needs and genuine desires of the people of Ghana, expressed through engagements with diverse stakeholders.

26. As part of our broad consultations ahead of the Budget Statement and Economic Policy of Government, 2025, we recently engaged traders at major trading centres, including the Makola Market, to listen to their concerns, gauge their expectations and elicit their inputs.

27. Mr Speaker, the extensive consultations revealed that the overriding concern among Ghanaian traders and the business community, remains price and exchange rate instability.

28. Apart from eroding their working capital, exchange rate volatilities make effective business planning impossible and increase the cost of doing business.

29. This budget outlines far-reaching measures which will be implemented in close collaboration with the Central Bank, the Bank of Ghana, to effectively and efficiently manage the exchange rate and inflation.

30. Mr Speaker, we also engaged the youth of Ghana in a dialogue on new media as part of our new Budget Statement and Economic Policy consultations.

31. Mr Speaker, during my engagement with the youth, it was revealed that 321 pharmacists who were employed since June 2023, have not received their salaries. We will take urgent steps to remedy this situation — *[Uproar]* —

32. Mr Speaker, this conversation was an eye-opening experience — one that strengthened my belief that the voices of the youth matter in designing policies that directly or indirectly impact their lives and future.

33. Mr Speaker, in 2016, I came to this Chamber, on behalf of the then Minister for Finance, Honourable Seth Emmanuel Terkper, and led the passage

of the Public Financial Management Act (2016) Act 921 to deploy a robust Public Financial Management (PFM) System.

34. Even though Ghana's Public Financial Management Act remains one of the best in the world, its poor implementation has rendered our Public Financial Management system weak, allowing for abuse and costly infractions.

35. Mr Speaker, President Mahama's Government is committed to the full implementation of this critical legislation.

36. Accordingly, we will enforce the sanctions regime, link contracting and public procurement to budgetary provisions in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and seek Parliamentary approval for all multi-year commitments as required by law.

37. Mr Speaker, we will comply with procurement processes and link them to approved Budgets. We will also respect the limits of the appropriation approved by Parliament.

38. We will rationalise the management of compensation of employees, including conducting headcounts.

39. Mr Speaker, I now turn my attention to:

- i. the state of the Ghanaian economy as at 31st December, 2024.

- ii. macroeconomic policies, targets, and measures for 2025 and the medium-term;

- iii. policy initiatives and budget allocations; and

- iv. sectoral performance and outlook.

Section Two: The State of the Ghanaian Economy in 2024

40. Mr Speaker, at this point, let me now focus on the state of the Ghanaian economy.

41. Mr Speaker, we inherited an economy in deep crisis, hard hit with debt and beset by other fiscal challenges such as large accumulation of MDA arrears/payables, energy sector financing shortfalls, and large fiscal risks from the cocoa and financial sectors.

42. Mr Speaker, weak commitment control systems and reckless public spending have reversed the progress made in fiscal consolidation even under the IMF-supported Programme which commenced in 2023.

Status of IMF-supported Programme

43. Mr Speaker, notwithstanding the gains made under the IMF-supported Programme, that was achieved through the painful sacrifice of domestic bondholders, external creditors and taxpayers, the economy remains in distress.

44. Mr Speaker, key performance indicators to be assessed by the IMF staff in the upcoming 4th review of the Programme scheduled for April 2025 such as the primary balance (commitment), inflation, and social protection spending for end-December 2024, are likely missed.

45. In addition, all structural benchmarks due by end-December 2024 are likely missed.

46. Mr Speaker, inflation worsened in 2024 from 23.2 per cent in 2023 to 23.8 per cent in 2024.

47. The 2024 end-period inflation also exceeded the budget target of 15 per cent by 8.8 per cent points and the IMF central target of 18 per cent by 5.8 percentage points. This has triggered a discussion with the IMF under the Monetary Policy Consultation Clause.

48. Mr Speaker, the primary balance on commitment basis worsened from a deficit of 0.2 per cent of GDP in 2023 to a deficit of 3.9 per cent in 2024.

12.33 p.m.

49. Mr Speaker, the primary balance on commitment basis target for 2024 was a surplus of 0.5 per cent of GDP. Sadly, the previous government recorded a deficit of 3.9 per cent of GDP. This represents a slippage of a whopping 4.4 percentage points.

Update on Arrears/Payable Accumulation

50. Mr Speaker, at the end of December 2024, total central government arrears/payables amounted to GHC67.5 billion, representing 5.2 per cent of GDP, with the road sector recording arrears of GHC21 billion.

51. Mr Speaker, when I assumed office on 23rd January, 2025, my office was inundated with requests for payment from many government contractors and suppliers.

52. To ascertain the total arrears/payables (outstanding claims) for all MDAs, the Ministry of Finance formally requested the MDAs on 28th January, 2025 to submit information on all arrears/payables (outstanding claims) as at end-2024.

53. Subsequently, Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Finance held special hearings with the MDAs to validate the arrears/payables submitted.

54. The responses from the MDAs and the validation revealed that a staggering amount of GHC67.5 billion is owed to government contractors and suppliers.

55. This consists of MDA outstanding Interim Payment Certificates and invoices of GHC49.2 billion and outstanding Bank Transfer Advice of GHC18.3 billion at the Controller and Accountant-General's Department.

56. Mr Speaker, these total central government arrears/payables exclude the following:

- i. US\$1.73 billion owed to Independent Power Producers (IPPs);
- ii. GH¢68 billion owed by the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG);
- iii. GH¢32 billion owed by the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD); and
- iv. GH¢5.75 billion owed by Road Fund.

57. Mr Speaker, the Bank of Ghana is also asking for a bailout of about GH¢53 billion to address the negative equity challenge that they face.

58. Mr Speaker, as part of measures to address these mounting accumulated arrears/payables, we have commissioned an audit of these arrears/payables and guarantee value for money before a penny would be paid. [*Hear! Hear!*]

59. Mr Speaker, in addition to the GH¢67.5 billion in arrears/payables, the validation process also revealed that MDAs have committed government through contract awards in excess of GH¢194 billion, about 16.5 per cent of GDP as at the end-2024, with the road sector alone accounting for a GH¢100 billion.

60. Mr Speaker, most of these contracts were awarded without

commencement certificates and authorisation, and budgetary provision. This is in blatant violation of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921).

Mr Speaker, let me now update you on our debt service obligations.

Update on Debt Service Obligations

61. Mr Speaker, apart from the huge arrears and commitments, our fiscal situation is further complicated by huge bullet debt service and constrained financing options.

62. Currently, the Government's options for financing the Budget are limited to only the treasury bill market following the debt restructuring programme.

63. Moreover, the forthcoming debt service of both Domestic and Eurobond debt obligations will have profound implications for fiscal sustainability and balance of payments.

64. Mr Speaker, the Domestic Debt Service alone programmed for the next four years is GH¢150.3 billion. Simply put, the interest and principal payment that would be due for payment beginning now and for the next four years is GH¢150.3 billion. This represents 11.6 per cent of GDP in domestic debt service obligation alone, of which 73.3 per cent is due for payment in 2027 (GH¢57.6 billion) and 2028 (GH¢52.5 billion).

65. Mr Speaker, the debt service obligations of 2027 and 2028 are major

humps. These humps are cancerous and pose significant risk to the economy of Ghana, but Mr Speaker, touch wood, we shall fix it! [*Hear! Hear!*]

66. Mr Speaker, our debt service obligation for this financial year is equally burdensome with significant humps. In February, we were called upon to pay GHC9.9 billion, in July, we will be paying GHC6.2 billion, and in August, we will be paying GHC10.1 billion, all in this year.

67. Mr Speaker, the fiscal challenges are further compounded by the significant short-term treasury bill maturities that we have inherited.

68. These obligations, totalling about GHC111.1 billion, require rollover on a weekly basis, placing additional pressure on cash flow and liquidity requirements.

69. Mr Speaker, beyond domestic maturities, Ghana faces significant external debt service obligations over the next four years. We would be called upon to pay US\$8.7 billion, representing 10.9 per cent of GDP, with heavy concentration in 2027 and 2028.

70. Again, Mr Speaker, 55 per cent of the total external debt service of US\$8.7 billion is due to be serviced in 2027 (US\$2.5 billion) and 2028 (US\$2.4 billion).

71. It seems the debt restructuring undertaken by the previous administration was designed to make 2027 and 2028 debt repayment heavy. I

do not know how we sat and allowed that design to happen. Mr Speaker, that is cancerous, but I can assure you, we will fix it. [*Hear! Hear!*]

72. Mr Speaker, in spite of all these upcoming domestic and external debt service obligations, no buffers were built to cushion these unprecedented debt service burdens.

73. Mr Speaker, as at 7th January, 2025, the debt service reserve dollar account (Sinking Fund) had a balance of about US\$64,000. Mr Speaker, when we were leaving office, we left behind US\$319 million in that same account. The debt service reserve Cedi account had GHC143 million, but Mr Speaker, when we were leaving office, the balance was GHC430.

Mr Speaker, I now move to stalled projects.

Stalled Projects under Bilateral Loans

74. Mr Speaker, due to the bilateral creditor debt restructuring undertaken by the previous administration, a staggering number of 55 projects have come to a halt.

75. This leaves a massive amount of about US\$3 billion in undisbursed loans and about US\$300 million in outstanding interim payment certificates (IPCs).

76. Some of these projects are Effia Nkwanta Regional Hospital, Kejetia Market Phase 2, Bolgatanga-Bawku-Pulmakom Road Project and Tema-Aflao Road Project.

77. Delayed payments and demobilisation from site could result in cost over-runs of about US\$1.1 billion.

78. Mr Speaker, the IMF-supported Programme imposes an annual disbursement ceiling of US\$250 million for official bilateral loans that are being restructured. This constraint means that it will take a minimum of 12 years from the re-commencement of disbursements to complete these 55 stalled projects. Mr Speaker, unfortunately, as a result of the debt restructuring, and working with the IMF, all these projects will take a minimum of 12 years if we decide to go business as usual.

79. We will be engaging, in the coming days, to resolve this.

Mr Speaker, I now move to the famous Energy Sector Fiscal Risks.

Energy Sector Fiscal Risks

12.43 p.m.

80. Mr Speaker, the increasing energy sector financing shortfalls is posing significant fiscal risks to the country's finances.

81. In 2024, the MoF supported the energy sector with payments of about GH¢20.8 billion. These resources could have been used for job creation and other development programmes like roads, schools, and hospitals if the sector inefficiencies were resolved.

82. Mr Speaker, a recent exercise conducted by the energy sector financing

modelling team under the Energy Sector Recovery Programme (ESRP) revealed that the Business as Usual (BAU) energy sector financing shortfall has increased significantly to about GH¢35 billion for 2025 alone, even after the rather large spending in excess of about GH¢20 billion for the sector's shortfall in 2024.

83. Mr Speaker, more importantly, the shortfall for the period 2023 to 2026 has been estimated at about GH¢140 billion. This amount is over 20 times more than the allocation for Goods and Services for all MDAs for 2025.

84. Mr Speaker, in addition to the energy sector shortfall which relates to current invoices, there are largely unpaid legacy arrears due the Independent Power Producers (IPPs). The legacy arrears stood at US\$1.73 billion at the end of 2024.

Cocoa Sector Fiscal Risks

85. Mr Speaker, the cocoa sector which has long been the backbone of the Ghanaian economy is sadly on its knees owing to gross mismanagement in the last few years and is now unable to support the economy as it should despite record-high world market prices.

86. The sector faces declining output and financing challenges characterised by unsustainable debt, roll-over cocoa contracts risks and quasi-fiscal expenditures including cocoa roads, a non-core function of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

87. Mr Speaker, cocoa production has dropped by nearly 50 per cent over

the past three years. In the 2023/2024 crop season, COCOBOD was unable to supply 330,000 tonnes of cocoa to meet its full contractual obligation. This sharply decline has affected the finances of the Ghana Cocoa Board. This under-supply has been rolled over for subsequent supply for the new administration to pay.

88. Mr Speaker, these 2023/2024 forward sales contracts locked-in at lower prices than current market rates, have resulted in revenue losses of US\$840 million for both COCOBOD and impoverished the Ghanaian farmer.

89. Mr Speaker, the rolled-over contracts will result in additional losses of US\$495 million this year. This implies that for every tonne of cocoa delivered this year in fulfilment of the rolled-over contracts, COCOBOD and the Ghanaian farmer will lose US\$4,000 in revenue.

90. There are also risks in relation to market price differentials and smuggling. The large gap between market prices and farmer payments encourages smuggling and threatens long-term sustainability of the industry.

91. Mr Speaker, COCOBOD's outstanding debt amounts to GH¢32 billion, of which GH¢11.92 billion is due to be paid in 2025.

92. Outstanding cocoa road contracts reached GH¢21 billion (US\$1.3 billion) in 2024, of which only GH¢4.4 billion has been accounted for in COCOBOD financial statements for the year 2025.

Financial Sector Risks

93. Mr Speaker, the financial sector still struggles even after spending GH¢30.3 billion in the financial sector clean-up exercise by the end of 2024. This includes GH¢26.9 billion spending for the banks, savings & loans companies, financial houses, micro-finance institutions, and asset management companies.

94. Mr Speaker, as we speak, the financial sector is still struggling, and the sector requires GH¢10.45 billion to address the remaining financial sector legacy issues and emerging risks.

95. In addition, an amount of GH¢2.2 billion is required to fully capitalise National Investment Bank (NIB) and Agricultural Development Bank (ADB).

2024 Fiscal Performance

96. Mr Speaker, I will now update the House on fiscal performance for the 2024 financial year.

97. Mr Speaker, the fiscal performance in 2024 was characterised by improved revenue collection but with significant expenditure overruns. In addition, large arrears or payables were accumulated over the period.

98. Mr Speaker, in summary, provisional data show the following:

- i. The primary balance on commitment basis, the key fiscal anchor, of the IMF worsened from a deficit of 0.2 per cent of

- GDP at the end of 2023 to a deficit of 3.9 per cent of GDP at the end of 2024; that is 4.4 percentage points worse than the target surplus of 0.5 per cent of GDP;
- ii. On cash basis, the primary balance was a deficit of 1.2 per cent of GDP against a target deficit of 0.6 per cent, representing a 100 per cent deviation;
 - iii. The overall fiscal balance on commitment basis for 2024 was a deficit of 7.9 per cent of GDP against a target deficit of 4.2 per cent, while the Overall Fiscal Balance on cash basis was a deficit of 5.2 per cent of GDP against a target of 5.3 per cent;
 - iv. Total revenue and grants amounted to GH¢186.6 billion or 15.9 per cent of GDP, 5.3 percent above the revised target of GH¢177.2 billion or 17.4 per cent of GDP. The performance was mainly driven by the higher-than-programmed Oil and Gas receipts and higher non-oil tax revenue;
 - v. Total expenditure on commitment basis, including discrepancy amounted to GH¢279.2 billion or 23.7 per cent of GDP. This is 27.1 percent above the budgetary provision of GH¢219.7 billion or 21.5 per cent of GDP in 2024;

- vi. Primary Expenditure on commitment basis, including discrepancy amounted to GH¢232.4 billion or 19.8 per cent of GDP. This is 35.3 percent above the target of GH¢171.7 billion or 16.8 percent of GDP;
- vii. Unfortunately, all expenditure lines exceeded their respective targets for the period, except for Interest Payments, Goods and Services and Other Expenditure; and
- viii. The discrepancy for 2024, being unclassified expenditure, was GH¢3.8 billion as compared to a discrepancy of GH¢12.9 billion in 2023.

Public Debt Stock

99. Mr Speaker, as at end December 2024, provisional data indicate that gross central government and guaranteed debt was GH¢726.7 billion from GH¢610.0 billion in 2023. This represents 61.8 per cent of GDP in 2024 compared to 68.7 per cent of GDP in 2023.

100. Mr Speaker, it is instructive to note that the reduction in debt-to-GDP ratio and the dollar component of our debt stock is as a result of the 37 per cent haircut on the principal of the Eurobond debt under the debt restructuring programme.

Ghana's Debt Restructuring Update

101. Mr Speaker, you may recall that the government commenced the debt restructuring programme in 2022 to restore debt sustainability and economic stability.

102. Mr Speaker, as of now, the restructuring process is approximately 93 percent completed. The remaining 7 percent relates to debt of US\$2.7 billion owed to commercial creditors.

103. We are committed to completing the remaining debt restructuring as soon as possible.

12.53 p.m.

Real Sector Developments in 2024

104. Mr Speaker, provisional 2024 GDP statistics published by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) on 10th March, 2025, shows that overall real GDP grew by 5.7 per cent in 2024—[*Hear! Hear!*—]—compared to the growth rate of 3.1 per cent recorded over the same period in 2023. The key driver of this growth was largely from mining and quarrying, mainly gold, which recorded a growth of 19.1 per cent and this included *galamsey*. Mr Speaker, *galamsey* growth cannot be sustainable.

105. Mr Speaker, non-oil GDP grew by 6.0 per cent in 2024, compared with a growth rate of 3.6 per cent recorded in 2023.

External Sector Developments

106. Mr Speaker, Gross International Reserves (GIR) increased to a stock position of US\$8.98 billion at the end of 2024 and was enough to cover four months of imports—[*Hear! Hear!*—]—exceeding the target floor of three months of imports cover.

107. By the end of 2024, the currency had depreciated by 19.2 per cent, 17.8 per cent, and 13.7 per cent against the US dollar, British Pound and Euro respectively.

Section Three: 2025 and Medium-Term Policy Objectives and Targets

108. Mr Speaker, it is what it is. The state of our economy is troubling, but we will fix it. Mr Speaker, touchwood, we will fix it. It will require some sacrifices, truthfulness, transparency, and discipline.

109. We will take strong measures to confront the situation head-on.

110. Mr Speaker, the sacrifice must come from all stakeholders, beginning with the Government.

111. His Excellency President Mahama appreciates this and has led the charge by significantly downsizing his Government from the elephant 88 to the umbrella of 60 Ministers. [*Hear! Hear!*]

112. He has also reduced the number of Government Ministries from the elephant 30 to the umbrella 23. [*Hear! Hear!*]

113. Mr Speaker, as part of its contribution to the resetting agenda, Organised Labour has followed suit by working with Government and employers' association to agree on a modest 10 per cent increase in base pay and minimum wage for 2025.

114. On behalf of His Excellency the President, I would like to express our profound gratitude to Organised Labour and employers.

115. Mr Speaker, ordinary Ghanaians have also sacrificed by enduring the negative impact of severe currency depreciation, hyperinflation, high food inflation, principal and interest haircuts, soaring interest rates, among others since the year 2022.

116. Mr Speaker, it is now time for the peoples' representatives, the Members of the Parliament of Ghana, and the judiciary to also follow suit.

117. I would also like to call on all other stakeholders, including the business community, faith-based organisations, academia, and civil society to support this national call.

118. Mr Speaker, our immediate task is to reset our nation to restore good governance, reduce the excruciating suffering of our people and set our country on a trajectory of economic transformation.

119. Mr Speaker, our vision is to build a prosperous and a democratic state anchored on the principles of freedom and justice and providing equal

opportunities for all. Through this vision, we will work together to build the Ghana we all want.

120. Mr Speaker, the resetting agenda will be anchored on the following:

- i. Restoring hope in our democracy, renewing trust in public officials, and helping every Ghanaian attain their full potential;
- ii. Offering a trusted hand to the vulnerable, particularly women and youth, and creating a new Ghana for coming generations—*[Hear! Hear!]*—and
- iii. Stimulating demand by patronising made-in-Ghana goods under the 24-Hour Economy Policy. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, today, I came to this Chamber with a made-in-Ghana bag signifying that—*[Uproar]*—Mr Speaker, they do not know that we sew suits in Ghana.

121. Mr Speaker, I would like to first present the Government's immediate and strong measures to address the current challenges we are confronted with, followed by the medium-term vision, policy objectives, and targets.

Fiscal Policy Objectives

122. Mr Speaker, consistent with Section 14 of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921), the

fiscal policy objectives of this Government is to support the economic transformation agenda to ensure the macroeconomic stability of the country within the macroeconomic and fiscal framework.

123. More specifically, the fiscal policy objectives of Government include the following:

- i. Rationalising Government expenditure and eliminating wasteful expenditure;
- ii. Optimising domestic revenue mobilisation through the broadening of the tax base, increased non-tax revenue collection, adopting enhanced tax compliance measures, and modernisation of tax administration through digital technology;
- iii. Increasing the share of domestic capital expenditure to spur economic growth and job creation;
- iv. Reducing public debt to sustainable levels and adopting prudent debt management practices to support debt sustainability;
- v. Reducing the fiscal deficit progressively in accordance with an amended Fiscal Responsibility Act to promote fiscal and debt sustainability; and
- vi. Restoring confidence in Ghana's economy.

124. Mr Speaker, our approach will be to foster economic growth, accelerate job creation, reduce inflation and stabilise the cedi.

125. To achieve this, it is crucial that we establish macroeconomic stability and ensure debt sustainability.

126. Mr Speaker, we are confident that by prioritising these foundational elements, we can cultivate an environment where individuals can prosper and businesses can thrive in Ghana.

127. Mr Speaker, Ghanaians, through the recent National Economic Dialogue, have expressed a clear desire for the fiscal deficit and public debt to be reduced through cuts in Government spending, rather than through only tax measures. We wholeheartedly agree.

128. Mr Speaker, going forward, we will tailor our expenditures to align with our fiscal realities. After all, "whoever pays off their debt, gets rich".

129. Mr Speaker, we are poised to implement a three-pronged approach to achieve our objectives, beginning with this budget:

- i. Recalibrate the fiscal adjustment. We believe that prioritising a spending-led fiscal adjustment can initiate a positive cycle. Firstly, it will help lower inflation and curb the depreciation of the cedi. Secondly, it will lessen Government's reliance on borrowing, which in turn will

reduce the crowding out of the private sector and lower interest rates. Lastly, this approach will ease the strain on monetary policy, allowing the Bank of Ghana greater flexibility to reduce monetary policy rates, ultimately resulting in lower bank lending rates;

- ii. Deliver a shock therapy. We are implementing a form of “shock therapy” to the economy by making significant spending cuts this year, thereby reducing the Government’s financing needs and frontloading fiscal adjustment. This is the down payment for our policy credibility and creditworthiness;

1.03 p.m.

- i. Deliver a shock therapy. We are implementing a form of “shock therapy” to the economy by making significant spending cuts this year, thereby reducing the Government’s financing needs and frontloading fiscal adjustment. This is the downpayment for our policy credibility and creditworthiness;
- ii. The third approach is to restore fiscal responsibility. Moving forward, we will enhance public financial management by empowering Ministers to effectively manage their budgets on their own, ensuring strict compliance with the commencement certificate system, passing

and enforcing the revised Fiscal Responsibility Act and finally, enforcing sanctions regime for non-compliance of the Public Financial Management Act (PMFA).

2025 Macroeconomic Targets

130. Mr Speaker, in pursuit of the overarching macroeconomic objectives, the following macroeconomic targets have been set for the 2025 fiscal year:

- i. Overall Real GDP growth of at least 4.0 per cent;
- ii. Non-Oil Real GDP growth of at least 4.8 per cent;
- iii. End-Period inflation rate of 11.9 per cent;
- iv. Primary Balance on Commitment basis at a surplus of 1.5 per cent of GDP; and
- v. Gross International Reserves (including oil funds and encumbered/pledged assets) to cover not less than 3 months of imports.

Addressing Inflation and Exchange Rate Pressures

131. Mr Speaker, to address inflation, Government will implement a number of measures to complement monetary authorities and the Bank of Ghana’s (BoG) monetary and exchange rate policies to stabilise inflation and the exchange rate.

132. Mr Speaker, the measures to stabilise the exchange rate include the following:

- i. The establishment of the Ghana Gold Board to enhance the generation and accumulation of forex to support the stability of the cedi;
- ii. The BoG will continue to implement its FX forward auctions to support the stability of the cedi;
- iii. Government's strong fiscal consolidation through the reduction in public sector spending and the fiscal deficit will reduce pressures on the exchange rate; and
- iv. Our import substitution drive under the 24-Hour Economy involving the domestic production of key products originally imported will reduce imports and related FX requirement, boding well for FX stability.

133. Mr Speaker, we are addressing the inflation problems through a number of measures including the following:

- i. First, specific intervention including the Agriculture for Economic Transformation Agenda is expected to increase food production and reduce food inflation.

- ii. Government will implement policies that target items with large weights in the CPI basket such as transportation and utilities to reduce their prices;
- iii. Mr Speaker, our aggressive fiscal consolidation drive aimed at reducing the fiscal deficit and borrowing, will contribute significantly to reducing inflationary pressures;
- iv. Our strategy to improve exchange rate stability will reduce imported inflation and fuel prices; and
- v. The BoG will maintain an appropriate monetary policy stance and use its liquidity management interventions to support the disinflation process.

2025 Fiscal Measures

134. Mr Speaker, to achieve our expenditure-led fiscal consolidation objectives, we will implement a number of fiscal measures.

Mr Speaker, I now take you to our expenditure measures.

2025 Expenditure Measures

135. Mr Speaker, the following expenditure measures will be implemented in the 2025 fiscal year and the medium-term to support the fiscal consolidation agenda:

- i. First, we would conduct a comprehensive audit to validate the quantum of arrears/payables and commitments as at 31st December, 2024 before payment;
- ii. The mandatory use of the “Blanket Purchase Order” to capture multi-year commitments/contracts in line with Medium-Term Expenditure Framework ceilings;
- iii. Amend the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663) to provide for an Independent Value-for-Money Office to scrutinise Government procurements above a threshold to be determined by Parliament;
- iv. We would work with Parliament to amend the Public Procurement Act, 2003 (Act 663) to make commencement certificates and budgetary provisions prerequisites for all procurements to be paid by central Government—*[Hear! Hear!]* —
- v. We would fully integrate Ghana Electronic Procurement System (GHANEPS) with Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) to ensure that only Ministries, Departments and other Agencies’ (MDAs) projects and purchase orders that have approved budgets and allotments can obtain procurement approvals;
- vi. We would operationalise the Compliance Desk at the Ministry of Finance to monitor reports on commitments and arrears accumulation to enable them, among others, publish a PFM league table for compliance purposes;
- vii. We would strictly enforce sanctions under Sections 96 to 98 of PFM Act for breaches of the PFM Act, especially those that relate to arrears accumulation and commitment control;
- viii. We would cut waste and we would cut it very deeply — *[Hear! Hear!]* — We would cut wasteful expenditures, on inefficient and duplicative programmes to reduce expenditure under the fiscal consolidation programme. In this regard, selected expenditure items including the Ghana CARES “Obaatanpa Programme”, the YouStart Programme and the One District One Factory (1D1F) will be eliminated — *[Hear! Hear!]* —
- ix. We would reassign the functions of the Development Authorities such as Costal Development Authority (CODA), Northern Development Authority (NDA), Middle Belt Development Authority (MBDA) to the District Assemblies and do away with the development authorities;

- x. We would amend the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (Act 815) (PRMA) to allocate all Annual Budget Funding Amount (ABFA) resources for infrastructure projects and use, and not for goods and services;
- xi. The National Health Insurance Levy (NHIL) will receive full allocation under the Earmarked Funds Capping and Realignment Act, 2017 (Act 947) — *[Hear! Hear!]* —
- xii. The Road Fund will receive full allocation under the Earmarked Funds Capping and Realignment Act, 2017 (Act 947) — *[Hear! Hear!]* —
- xiii. Reduce the GNPC's share of net Carried & Participating Interest (CAPI) from 30 per cent to 15 per cent and fully restore transfers to Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) under the Earmarked Funds Capping and Realignment Act, 2017 (Act 947);
- xiv. We would be amending the Mineral Income and Investment Fund (MIIF) Act 2018, (Act 978) to ensure the 80 per cent Mineral Royalties originally maintained by MIIF is transferred to the Consolidated Fund for infrastructure development; and
- xv. We would strengthen social protection through the implementation of new social

intervention programmes including the No-Academic-Fee Policy for all first-year students in public tertiary institutions under the 'No-Fees-Stress' Initiative — *[Hear! Hear!]* — it would also include the Free Tertiary Education for Persons with Disability (PWDs), Free Primary Healthcare, the Ghana Medical Care Trust (MahamaCares), and the free sanitary pads for school girls— *[Hear! Hear!]* —

2025 Energy Sector Measures

136. Mr Speaker, to address the energy sector challenges, including reducing the quantum of the large energy sector shortfalls, the following energy sector recovery programme interventions will be implemented:

- i. Electricity Company of Ghana Limited (ECG) and Northern Electricity Distribution Company Limited (NEDCo) will implement a number of measures including metering and the implementation of a Private Sector Participation (PSP) strategy to improve collection efficiency;
- ii. We would also implement the Liquid-Fuel-to-Gas-Swap through an increase in N-Gas supply from the 60 mmsc per day to 100 mmsc to take advantage of cheaper gas prices; and
- iii. We would complete the Independent Power Producers (IPP) capacity renegotiations, to generate some

savings through negotiated lower fixed capacity charges and variable O&M charges.

137. Mr Speaker, as agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by the previous administration, we will implement the following Energy Sector Recovery Programme (ESRP) measures to achieve the Structural Benchmark of the IMF Programme:

- i. Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC) will continue to implement the Quarterly Tariff Adjustment to reflect changes in inflation, exchange rate, and generation mix;
- ii. PURC will also undertake the major tariff adjustment which will be due in the fourth quarter of 2025, to reflect capacity charges, additional liquid fuel usage and additional capex;
- iii. The Weighted Average Cost of Gas will be increased from the current US\$7.836 per mmbtu to US\$8.45, to reflect the increased prices of natural gas as well as the changes in the supply mix; and
- iv. The subsidy on Weighted Average Cost of Gas granted to some ceramic companies through the Discounted Industrial Development Tariff will be reversed.

Mr Speaker, I now take you to the revenue measures.

1.13 p.m.

2025 Revenue Measures

138. Mr Speaker, Government is proposing some revenue measures to achieve the 2025 fiscal targets for the consideration and approval of Parliament.

139. This is consistent with our commitment under the IMF-supported programme to observe a non-oil tax revenue effort of 0.6 percentage points of GDP annually as part of measures to improve domestic revenue mobilisation and achieve our debt sustainability targets over the medium-term.

140. Mr Speaker, despite our commitment to increase the non-oil tax revenue by 0.6 percentage points of GDP, we have programmed the following nuisance taxes for removal in line with our manifesto promise. [*Hear! Hear!*]

141. Mr Speaker:

- i. we will abolish the 10 per cent withholding tax on winnings from lottery, otherwise known as the “Betting Tax”; [*Hear! Hear!*]
- ii. we will abolish the Electronic Transfer Levy (E- Levy) of 1 per cent; [*Hear! Hear!*]
- iii. we will abolish the Emission Levy otherwise known as “nwusie tax” on industries and vehicles; [*Hear! Hear!*]

- iv. we will abolish the VAT on motor vehicle insurance policy; and [*Hear! Hear!*]
- v. we will abolish the 1.5 per cent withholding tax on winning of unprocessed gold by small-scale miners.

142. Mr Speaker, the removal of these taxes will ease the burden on households and improve their disposable incomes. In addition, it will support business growth and improve tax compliance.

143. Mr Speaker, the Tax Refund Account has been abused in recent years. A study on the use of the tax refunds in the last eight (8) years revealed that GH¢29.11 billion had accrued to the tax refund account with only GH¢12.5 billion, representing 43 per cent of the total accrued amount is used for tax refund purposes. [**Some Hon Members:** Oh!]

144. The study also revealed that GH¢16.6 billion, representing 57 per cent of the total amount accumulated in the tax refund account was misapplied, [**Some Hon Members:** Eii!] which is a total violation of the Revenue Administration Act, 2016 (Act 915) and the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921).

145. Instructively, there were virtually no tax refund arrears over the period.

146. Therefore, we are reducing the current tax refund ceiling by 2

percentage points from 6 per cent to 4 per cent of Total Revenue as defined in Section 69 of the Revenue Administration Act, 2016 (Act 915).

147. Mr Speaker, by reducing the ceiling on the tax refund from 6 per cent to 4 per cent, we have saved the tax payer GH¢3.8 billion. This amount is enough to close the revenue shortfall from the removal of the E-Levy and the Betting levy. The E-Levy would have accrued GH¢1.9 billion and the Betting Tax would have accrued GH¢180 million. The two put together is just above GH¢2 billion. By reducing the Tax Refund Account from 6 per cent to 4 per cent, it is enough to remove this tax and the saving would be provided to take care of social interventions.

148. Mr Speaker, already we have saved GH¢3.8 billion for 2025 alone from only one source and this is enough to close the gap from the taxes that we have removed today.

149. Mr Speaker, to address the concerns from well-meaning Ghanaians on how we are going to close the revenue shortfall as a result of the removal of selected taxes, the answer is we have stopped the bleeding.

150. Accompanied with this Budget, we will amend the Revenue Administration Act, 2016 (Act 915). This measure will improve the tax revenue, net of tax refunds by 2 per cent, representing 0.3 per cent of GDP.

151. Mr Speaker, in line with Government policy, the 2025 minimum

wage recently negotiated with the National Tripartite Committee will be zero-rated. This is consistent with our resolve to protect the poor and the vulnerable.

152. Mr Speaker, again, without increasing the levy, we will also review the Energy Sector Levies Act (ESLA) to consolidate the Energy Debt Recovery Levy, Energy Sector Recovery Levy (Delta Fund), and Sanitation & Pollution Levy into one levy and use the proceeds to cater for the energy sector shortfalls and service the inherited debt service obligation. Mr Speaker, the reset has just begun.

153. Mr Speaker, the rest of the energy sector levies, including, Road Fund Levy, Energy Fund Levy, Price Stabilisation & Recovery Levy, Public Lighting Levy and National Electrification Levy will remain to support the achievement of their intended objectives.

154. Mr Speaker, Ghana has not sufficiently capitalised on the benefits of its extractive sector to generate revenue to support development and diversification. We have failed to leverage our natural wealth by capturing its rent and channelling it towards productive infrastructure and human capital.

155. Natural resource rent which is the difference between the revenue of a commodity and the average cost of producing it is about 14 per cent of GDP for Ghana. However, revenue from the extractive industry is around 1.5 per cent of GDP only. This is because as a

country, we have failed to fully capture the economic rent of our natural resources.

156. Mr Speaker, whereas global gold prices have seen some significant increase in recent times, Ghana has not been able to take full advantage of this development.

157. Consequently, we are proposing to increase the Growth & Sustainability Levy from 1 per cent on the gross production of mining companies to 3 per cent to enable the nation to have its fair share of the windfall—[Hear! Hear!]¹—from increase in gold prices.

158. We will also propose to extend the sunset clause of the Special Import Levy to 2028.

159. Mr Speaker, Ghanaians and this Hon House will recall that road tolls on public roads were zero-rated in the year 2022. Demand for construction and improvement of road infrastructure continue to increase even as substantial arrears and claims in the road sector remain.

160. Mr Speaker, while the annual average collections from road tolls have not been significant compared to its potential, the existing zero-rate policy for road tolls has exacerbated the situation and dimmed any prospects of raising enough revenue from tolls for road construction and maintenance.

161. Accordingly, Government will work with stakeholders, including

the private sector, to roll out a technology-driven solution to re-introduce road tolls this year, 2025 as part of the Big Push Programme.

162. Mr Speaker, Government will also strengthen the legal and regulatory regime for Non-Tax Revenues (NTR) and enforce the framework for improved service delivery. This will be achieved through the introduction of an overarching NTR Legislation, amendment of existing relevant laws and the development of a National NTR Strategic Policy/Framework.

1.23 p.m.

163. As part of the reform efforts to improve other NTR streams, Government will explore and operationalise a regulatory framework for the collection, management and reporting of property rates consistent with the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy (2024-2027), and the Local Government Act. Mr Speaker, we believe that the local authorities must be given the opportunity to collect their own property rates.

164. Mr Speaker, the current compliance rate for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and personal income tax is below 30 per cent, which is extremely low. Government will embark on an aggressive and sustained tax education campaign in the next 2-3 years to ensure improved compliance and tax revenue mobilisation.

165. We will also institute quarterly dialogue on tax issues among Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), Ministry of

Finance (MoF) and the business community to ensure that issues affecting businesses are addressed promptly.

Mr Speaker, I now take you to Value Added Tax (VAT) Reforms.

166. Mr Speaker, we commit to the people of Ghana and the business community that we will undertake comprehensive VAT reforms this year with the aim to review the current distortions and cascading structure of the VAT regime. [*Hear! Hear!*]

167. Ghana's effective VAT rate is about 22 per cent. This is because GETFund Levy of 2.5 per cent, National Health Insurance Levy (NHIL) of 2.5 per cent and COVID-19 Levy of 1 per cent are all added to the base for the final determination of the VAT rate of 15 per cent.

168. Mr Speaker, aside the high VAT rate, businesses are not permitted by law to claim their input for the NHIL, GETFund Levy and COVID-19 Levy, compounding the burden on households.

169. Mr Speaker, our VAT regime has been distorted and rendered inefficient. It combines both VAT and sales tax principles with a flat rate, standard rate and levies.

170. We have requested Technical Assistance from the Fiscal Affairs Department of IMF on VAT reforms. It is expected that the IMF Mission will commence in April, 2025. The recommendations from the Technical

Assistance Mission are expected to inform our VAT reforms.

171. Mr Speaker, ahead of the IMF Technical Assistance Mission, I will inaugurate a VAT Reform Task Force to hold broad consultation with key stakeholders for their inputs.

172. Mr Speaker, the parameters for the VAT reforms which will be completed this year will include:

- i. abolishing the COVID-19 Levy;
- ii. reversing the decoupling of GETFund and NHIL from the VAT;
- iii. reducing the effective VAT rate for households and businesses;
- iv. reversing the VAT flat rate regime;
- v. upwardly adjusting the VAT registration threshold to exempt micro and small businesses from the collection of VAT; and
- vi. improving compliance through public education and awareness.
[Hear! Hear!]

Mr Speaker, I now take you to Revenue Mobilisation and Resource Allocation.

173. Mr Speaker, Total Revenue and Grants for 2025 is projected at

GHC223.8 billion or 17.2 per cent of GDP up from GHC186.5 billion or 17.4 per cent of GDP. The projection is underpinned by non-oil revenue measures which are expected to yield at least 0.5 percent of GDP.

174. Total Expenditures (commitment) for 2025 has been programmed at GHC269.1 billion (20.7 per cent of GDP) down from GHC279.2 billion (26.0 per cent of GDP) in 2024.

175. Primary Expenditure on a commitment basis (expenditures net of interest payments) is projected at GHC204.7 billion, representing 15.8 per cent of GDP in 2025, a significant decline from GHC232.4 billion, representing 21.7 per cent of GDP in 2024.

176. Mr Speaker, based on the resource allocations for the 2025 fiscal year, the total appropriation for the year ending 31st December, 2025 is GHC290,971,212,435.

Mr Speaker, 2025 Budget Balances and Financing Operations.

177. Mr Speaker, based on the estimates for total revenue & grants and total expenditure (commitment), the projected overall balance on commitment basis is a deficit of GHC43.8 billion, equivalent to 3.1 percent of GDP. The corresponding Primary balance on commitment basis is a surplus of GHC 20.3 billion, equivalent to 1.5 percent of GDP.

178. On cash basis, Overall balance is a deficit of GHC56.9 billion,

equivalent to 4.1 percent of GDP. The corresponding Primary balance on cash basis is a surplus of GH¢7.3 billion, equivalent to 0.5 percent of GDP.

179. Mr Speaker, the cash deficit of GH¢56.9 billion is expected to be financed from both foreign and domestic sources. Total foreign net financing will amount to GH¢21.4 billion (1.5 per cent of GDP). Foreign financing will include a provision for financing from IMF-ECF programme disbursements of US\$720 million and World Bank Development Policy Operation (DPO) funding of US\$600 million.

180. The residual Net Domestic Financing, will amount to GH¢36.9 billion (2.6 per cent of GDP), representing 65.0 percent of the total financing for 2025. This is expected to be sourced from the issuances of debt at the short end and opening of the domestic market.

Mr Speaker, 2025 Debt Policy Objectives and Liability Management.

181. Mr Speaker, the Government will take steps to re- open the domestic bond market to extend the maturity profile. The reopening will be executed cautiously to establish large-sized benchmarks bonds that will enhance market liquidity.

182. To further reduce risk on the debt portfolio, Government will build sufficient cash buffers to support effective implementation of the liability management strategies.

183. This will help smoothen the redemption profile and mitigate refinancing/rollover risks associated with the Ghana's debt portfolio.

184. Mr Speaker, the Government in 2025 and the medium term, will implement liability management operations to manage the risks imbedded in the Eurobond debt portfolio.

185. Mr Speaker, beginning 2025, we will commence the operationalisation of section 37 to 44 of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921) for the first time since the passage of the Act in August 2016 to build sufficient buffers in the Sinking Fund as our landmark reform to manage our public debt.

Mr Speaker, Yield Curve (Interest Rates) in 2025.

186. Mr Speaker, I am pleased to report that following our Government's proactive fiscal management in our engagement with the market, this management strategy has yielded a significant reduction in treasury bill rates. This achievement is a testament to the positive shift in investor sentiment regarding our country's economic outlook.

187. Mr Speaker, on 7th January, 2025, we inherited a 91- day treasury bill rate of 28.19 per cent. Just two months into this Administration, we have successfully reduced this rate to 17.72 per cent as at Friday, 7th March 2025. This represents a reduction of 1,047 basis points.

188. Mr Speaker, similarly, on 7th January, 2025, we inherited a 182- day treasury bill rate of 28.92 per cent. We have successfully reduced this rate to 18.97 per cent as at Friday, 7th March, 2025. This represents a reduction of 995 basis points in two months.

1.33 p.m.

189. Again, on 7th January, 2025, we inherited a 364-day treasury bill rate of 30.15 per cent. We have successfully reduced this rate to 19.93 per cent as at Friday, 7th March, 2025.

Mr Speaker, this represents a reduction of 1022 basis points in just two months. [*Hear! Hear!*]

190. Mr Speaker, on average, rates have fallen by over 1000 basis points, signifying a strong investor confidence, crowding in the private sector, reducing the cost of doing business and overall acceptance of the economic policies of President John Dramani Mahama, ultimately laying the groundwork for sustained macro-economic stability. It has been done already.

Section Four: Key Policy Initiatives and Resource Allocation

191. Mr Speaker, the key policy interventions to support the economic transformation and job creation agenda include the following:

- i. Mr Speaker, 24-Hour Economy aimed at stimulating economic growth by creating an enabling environment for businesses and

institutions to operate 24/7 in three shifts of eight hours each to boost production, promote productivity, and generate well-paying jobs. We will be presenting the policy to Parliament in due course for consideration. Accordingly, the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651), the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, 2013 (Act 865) and other enabling legislations will be reviewed to support the 24-Hour policy.

- ii. Mr Speaker, we would roll out the implementation of our \$10 billion “Big Push” policy for strategic infrastructural development to open up the country and drive sustainable economic growth and transformation under the 24-Hour Economy policy;
- iii. Mr Speaker, the Ghana Gold Board (GOLDBOD) would be established in the course of the year and as soon as possible.
- iv. We are establishing the Ghana Gold Board (GOLDBOD). Its primary objective will be to support foreign exchange inflows and gold reserve accumulation for the benefit of our dear country. To achieve this, the GOLDBOD shall regulate, oversee, monitor and undertake the purchasing, assaying, refining, exporting, selling, and other related activities concerning the gold resources of Ghana.

- v. Mr Speaker, we will stabilise the Ghana cedi and provide stability to the macro-economy through an urgent economic recovery programme to shore up our foreign reserves. In addition, we will develop a deliberate policy to build economic buffers through external reserves to cushion the Ghana Cedi;
- vi. We would implement an Economic Transformational Agenda underpinned by structural reforms anchored on promoting modernised agriculture, agribusiness and value addition for import substitution, exports and job creation;
- vii. Mr Speaker, we would complement monetary policy with fiscal and real sector policies to reduce inflation. Food inflation will be reduced through the implementation of the Agriculture for Economic Transformation Agenda (AETA) anchored on our 24-Hour Economy. *[Hear! Hear!]*
- viii. Mr Speaker, we would undertake key structural reforms to support inclusive economic growth, fiscal and debt sustainability, sound public financial management, efficient public service delivery and good governance.
- ix. Mr Speaker, we would restructure the Bank of Ghana to strengthen its independence and operationalise its efficiency mandate to deliver more

effectively on its price, financial stability and development mandate.

- x. Mr Speaker, we would ensure that social protection is adequately catered for in the course of the year through the introduction of various social intervention programmes to complement existing programmes to alleviate the current economic hardships and protect the vulnerable; and
- xi. We would use government procurement to drive a “Made-In-Ghana” agenda to promote the production and consumption of made in Ghana goods. *[Hear! Hear!]*
- xii. Mr Speaker, to demonstrate this agenda, as I said, I came to this House with a presentation of a bag proudly made in Ghana by Horseman. Mr Speaker, this should be encouraged. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Ghana Labour Export Programme

192. Mr Speaker, beginning this year we will formalise the export of Ghanaian labour to other countries. We will ensure a structured and beneficial system for Ghanaian workers seeking employment abroad and create safer, legal pathways for them to work in foreign countries, while protecting their rights and welfare. *[Hear! Hear!]*

193. Mr Speaker, this will also reduce illegal migration, prevent worker exploitation, and maximise the economic

benefits of remittances and boost foreign exchange earnings. *[Hear! Hear!]*

2025 Allocations to Key Policy Initiatives and Interventions

Mr Speaker, I now take you to how these resources would be allocated in the year 2025.

194. Mr Speaker, we will provide a cedi equivalent of US\$279 million as a revolving fund for the Ghana Gold Board (GOLDBOD) to be able to purchase and export, at least, 3 tonnes of gold per week from small scale miners—*[Interruption]*

195. Mr Speaker, we have allocated GH¢13.85 billion for the Big Push Programme. *[Hear! Hear!]*

196. Mr Speaker, an amount of GH¢499.8 million has been allocated for the Non-Academic-Fee policy for all first-year students in public tertiary institutions under the ‘No-Fees-Stress’ initiative. *[Hear! Hear!]*

197. Mr Speaker, we have allocated an amount of GH¢292.4 million to commence the distribution of free sanitary pads to female students in primary and secondary schools. *[Hear! Hear!]*

198. Mr Speaker, we have allocated GH¢242.5 million to support victims of the Akosombo Dam spillage. *[Hear! Hear!]*

199. We have also allocated an amount of GH¢200 million to support the victims of tidal wave disaster that

recently displaced residents in certain parts of the Ketu South Constituency.

200. Mr Speaker, the overarching concern about Free Senior High School policy has been its quality and the absence of a dedicated source of financing. His Excellency the President, Mr John Dramani Mahama, has resolved the funding challenges by uncapping the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund). *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, this makes available dedicated funding for full financing of Free Senior High School policy and free tertiary education for Persons with Disability (PWDs).

201. Mr Speaker, therefore, the Capping and Realignment Act will be amended to uncap Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) and amend the GETFund Act to provide for full funding of the Free Senior High School (FSHS).

202. Mr Speaker, this year the budget for Free Senior High School programme is GH¢3.5 billion. By uncapping the GETFund, we will be making available an additional GH¢4.1 billion to the GETFund, specifically for the financing of the Free Senior High School programme and other related expenditures.

203. Mr Speaker, aside the uncapping of GETFund, we have also absorbed the debt service made up of interest and principal from the Daakye bond that GETFund contracted.

204. Mr Speaker, we have also allocated an amount of GH¢564.6 million for the comprehensive provision of free curricula-based textbooks covering the following:

- i. four sets of kindergarten (KG) books and workbooks for about 2.8 million learners;
- ii. four sets of primary textbooks for 800,000 learners; and
- iii. nine sets of junior high school (JHS) 3 textbooks for 540,000 learners. *[Hear! Hear!]*

205. Mr Speaker, under the School Feeding Programme, budgetary provision has been increased from GH¢1.344 billion last year to GH¢1.788 billion in 2025, representing a 33 per cent increase. The allocation for 2025 reflects an increase in the feeding cost per meal per child per day from GH¢1.50 to GH¢2.00, representing 33.3 per cent. *[Hear! Hear!]*

206. Mr Speaker, Government has also allocated GH¢145.5 million to the Capitation Grant, up from GH¢84 million in 2024; this is an increase of 73.2 per cent over the previous year's allocation.

207. We have also allocated GH¢203 million for the payment of the Teacher Trainee Allowance and another GH¢480 million for Nursing Trainee Allowance. *[Hear! Hear!]*

1.43 p.m.

208. Mr Speaker, we have uncapped the National Health Insurance Levy (NHIL). An amount of GH¢9.93 billion has been programmed for the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)—*[Hear! Hear!]*—This amount is expected to be used for the following:

- i. claim payments;
- ii. essential medicines;
- iii. vaccines payments;
- iv. the Free Primary Healthcare—*[Hear! Hear!]*
- v. the Ghana Medical Care Trust (MahamaCares); and
- vi. bridging of the USAID financing shortfall, among others.

209. In 2025, Government will continue to implement reforms and increase budgetary allocations to enhance the implementation of the four targeted social protection programmes, namely NHIS, the LEAP Programme, the School Feeding Programme, and the Capitation Grant.

210. Mr Speaker, under the LEAP Programme, benefits have been indexed to inflation and the number of beneficiary households will be increased from 350,000 to 400,000 from July 2025.

211. The allocation for LEAP benefits have also been increased by 30.8 per cent from GH¢728.8 million to

GH¢953.5 million in 2025. Additionally, the budget for the School Feeding Programme as well as the cost of feeding per pupil per day has been increased by 33 per cent.

212. Similarly, the allocation to the Capitation Grant has been increased from GH¢84 million in 2024 to GH¢145.5 million in 2025, representing an increase of 73.2 per cent.

213. Mr Speaker, we have also uncapped the Road Fund. An amount of GH¢2.81 billion has been programmed for the Ghana Road Fund to be used solely for road maintenance. This represents an increase of 155.5 per cent over the 2024 allocation of GH¢1.1 billion.

214. Mr Speaker, we have allocated an amount of GH¢7.51 billion to the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF)—*[Hear! Hear!]*—In accordance with our decentralisation policy objective, we propose to Parliament that a minimum of 80 per cent of the funds be sent directly to the District Assemblies to spur economic growth at the district level and deepen decentralisation. *[Hear! Hear!]*

215. Mr Speaker, it is worth noting that this is in stark contrast to what has happened to the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) in recent years, where less than 50 per cent of the released amount to DACF goes to the District Assemblies, with a significant portion spent at the centre.

216. Mr Speaker, we have allocated an amount of GH¢1.5 billion for Agriculture for Economic Transformation Agenda (AETA) of which the Feed Ghana Programme, Ghana Grains Development Project, Vegetable Development Project, and Nkokɔ Nketenkete are all key components. *[Hear! Hear!]*

217. Mr Speaker, we have also allocated GH¢51.3 million as seed fund for the establishment of the Women's Development Bank. *[Hear! Hear!]*

218. Mr Speaker, we have also allocated GH¢300 million to the National Apprenticeship Programme. *[Hear! Hear!]*

219. Mr Speaker, we have also allocated GH¢100 million to the 'Adwumawura' Programme. *[Hear! Hear!]*

220. Mr Speaker, for the National Coders Programme, we have allocated GH¢100 million. *[Hear! Hear!]*

221. Mr Speaker, an amount of GH¢100 million has been allocated for the payment of monthly allowance to all Assembly Members. *[Hear! Hear!]*

[Some Members of the Majority rose and sang.]

Dr Forson: 222. Mr Speaker, in response to the recent tidal waves disaster that displaced residents of Agavedzi and surrounding communities in the Ketu South Constituency, we have also allocated enough resources to the

Ministry of Works and Housing to address the challenge.

Sector Performance and Outlook

223. Mr Speaker, sector Ministers will be presenting to this House a detailed sectoral performance and outlook as well as sector specific policy interventions to deal with the challenges at various MDAs.

224. This is, indeed, a departure from the norm where Ministers for Finance present detailed sectoral performance as part of the budget speech.

Mr Speaker, I believe sector Ministers must be made to do so.

Section Five: Conclusion

225. Mr Speaker, the state of the economy, as I have just presented, does not reflect an economy that has turned the corner; it reflects an economy in severe distress, burdened by debt repayment humps, mismanagement, and a lack of accountability.

226. This budget sets Ghana on a path of fiscal responsibility, debt sustainability, macroeconomic stability and job creation. It is about resetting the economy and restoring hope.

227. Ghanaians reaffirmed their faith in a better future when they actively participated in the National Economic Dialogue on 3rd and 4th March, 2025.

228. A key outcome of the Dialogue was the confirmation that the fundamental problem with our economy is fiscal indiscipline.

229. The NPP Administration awarded contracts outside the expenditure framework.

230. They borrowed over and above Ghana's capacity to repay.

231. Mr Speaker, H. E. President John Mahama's Administration will be fiscally disciplined and deliver improved public services to our people in a cost-effective manner.

232. We remain steadfast in meeting the IMF programme targets while restoring Ghana's credit-worthiness.

233. We have achieved a lot in a short time, but this is only the beginning. Our commitment to reform we will not waver.

234. Those who doubt our resolve, underestimate the determination of the people of Ghana who will no longer tolerate ineffective governance.

235. Together, we will navigate these turbulent times and emerge stronger.

236. Mr Speaker, we are making progress:

- i. We committed to running a lean and efficient Government of 60 Ministers — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- ii. We committed to scrapping the e-Levy — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- iii. We committed to scrapping the Betting (winnings) Tax — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- iv. We committed to eliminate academic fees for first year public tertiary students — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- v. We committed to providing free tertiary education for all People with Disability (PWD) — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- vi. We committed to having a dedicated source of funding for free secondary education — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- vii. We committed to distributing sanitary pads to our schoolgirls — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- viii. We committed to uncap the GETFund — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- ix. We committed to uncap the NHIL — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*

- x. We committed to uncap the Road Fund to maintain our roads — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- xi. We committed to hold a National Forum on Education — We have delivered! *[Hear! Hear!]*
- xii. We committed to hold a National Dialogue on the Economy — We have delivered!

1.53 p.m.

- i. We committed to hold a National Forum on Education — We have delivered.
- ii. Mr Speaker, we committed to hold a National Dialogue on the Economy — We have delivered.
- iii. Mr Speaker we committed to deliver Free Primary Healthcare — We have delivered.
- iv. Mr Speaker, we committed to deliver the MahamaCares programme to finance the treatment of non-communicable diseases — We have delivered.
- v. Mr Speaker, we committed to deliver free textbooks to school children — We have delivered.
- vi. Mr Speaker, we committed to sustainable debt management — We have delivered.
- vii. Mr Speaker, we committed to implement the US\$10 billion Big Push Programme for

accelerated infrastructure development — We have delivered.

viii. Mr Speaker, we committed to a Constitution Review process — We are delivering.

ix. Mr Speaker, we committed to build the Ghana we want together — We are delivering.

x. Mr Speaker, we committed to recover all looted state funds under our Operation Recover All Loot programme — We are delivering.

xi. Mr Speaker, we committed to Reset Ghana — We are delivering.

237. Mr Speaker, I call on Parliament, the business community, civil society, investors, and all citizens to support the bold reforms outlined in this Budget.

238. Together, we have the power to build a resilient economy that not only tackles today's challenges but secures a prosperous future.

239. This Budget is a foundation upon which we will build a more resilient and equitable society.

240. Mr Speaker, this is not just about numbers; it is a blueprint for growth, stability, and opportunity.

241. With unity and determination, we can restore faith in our economy,

foster innovation, and uplift every Ghanaian.

242. Mr Speaker, on behalf of His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama, I invite this august House to join hands as we work to build the Ghana we want together.

243. Mr Speaker, I thank you so much *edey bee kɛkɛ* — [*Hear! Hear!*]—

[Some Hon Members from the Majority Side Sang]

The Speaker: Hon Members, the Minister for Finance has taken 1 hour 40 minutes to make the Statement and I believe by our Standing Orders, Statement time is ended.

We will now move on to the Commencement of Public Business, the item numbered 8— Presentation of Papers. The following Papers to be presented—

PAPERS

By the Minister for Finance—

Annual Report on the Petroleum Funds for the 2024 Fiscal Year.

Referred to the Finance Committee.

By the Minister for Finance—

Annual Report on the Collection and Utilisation of the African Union Import Levy for the 2024 Fiscal Year.

Referred to the Finance Committee.

I will now want to hear from the Leaders. I saw the Minority Leader give an indication that he may want to have a word.

Yes, Minority Leader?

Minority Leader (Osahen Alexander Kwamena Afenyo-Markin): Mr Speaker, this afternoon we have been presented with part two of the lamentation sales — *[Laughter]*— Mr Speaker, the part one was *Mahamanomics*. The part two is *Forsonomics* and it is very clear that under the economy that they complained about, the growth was 5.7 per cent and under the reset economy, the growth is rather going down. They are projecting about 4 per cent growth. That is what they are doing.

Mr Speaker, the economy that they complained about left us with four months of import cover and they are projecting three months under reset.

Mr Speaker, these are the very people who managed the economy up to 2016 and left us with some Independent Power Producer (IPP) debts. Today they are telling us that they are coming to renegotiate the very disaster they left us.

Mr Speaker—

2.03 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, we are not debating today, we are giving an indication.

The Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, please be guided by Order 91.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, exactly so. I am very guided by that.

The Speaker: But your statement was that you are not debating today.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, we are not going to make comments today. Mr Speaker, Order 91 says that when one makes a Statement, we are supposed to comment on it.

The Speaker: Yes.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Yes, so I am saying that we are not going to engineer the comment today because, Mr Speaker, they are not ready. We are ready, but we think they are not ready.

The Speaker: Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: So, I am only going to give an indication. Mr Speaker, let the Minority Leader enjoy his *bona fides* for this minute. Just relax, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I only want to draw your attention to the fact that you can only make comments. And the comments should not be more than five minutes.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, in commenting on this Statement by the Minister for Finance, it is clear to all of us in this Chamber that today, they decided to populate this Chamber. *[Uproar]*

Mr Speaker, they populated this Chamber with their Members only to come and sing.

The Speaker: Hon Minority Leader.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Yes, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: The Minister for Finance did not talk about the population of the Chamber. So that is not part of the Statement of the Minister. Please.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I noticed that when the Minister for Finance came to present his Statement, for the first time after the inauguration, the Majority Side was heavily populated.

Mr Speaker, that notwithstanding, we have witnessed what we can best describe as an *azaa* Budget. Their own much talked about 24-Hour Economy, the President came here and they said it was not ready. The Minister for Finance comes here and again, the 24-Hour Economy policy is not included in his Budget Statement.

Mr Speaker, the youth of this country have been waiting for this 24-Hour Economy policy. The Minister tells us the policy will be brought later. Ei Ato! The policy will be brought later? It is clear that all the jobs they promised the youth of this country were merely an *azaa* promise. Mr Speaker, there is no inspiration from this Budget. There is no hope in this Budget. The repetition of the social intervention programmes.

Mr Speaker, the Minister complained that some contracts at the Road Sector had no commencement certificate. Go to the Chain Home Road. There is a new road being constructed to the Chain Homes with a new roundabout. There is no commencement; we did a search. There is no Public Procurement Authority (PPA) approval. They have started construction on the only at Chain Homes.

The Speaker: Hon Minority Leader, please, comment. I have given you a privilege; do not abuse it.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, I shall conclude my comments by saying that whereas the Minister for Finance told us that there will be heavy sanctions against all those who go contrary to the Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, under his Administration, the Chain Homes Road has a new roundabout being constructed. Meanwhile, there is no commencement certificate; there is no PPA approval.

Mr Speaker, the sanctions must start with his Ministers. We are ready for a comment. We know they are not ready, but if the Minister is going to stay, Mr Speaker, let us start the comments on this Budget Statement here and now. Because this *azaa* Budget, we cannot allow it to get onto the shelves for Ghanaians to think that there is any hope. There are going to be comments to expose them. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon Majority Leader.

Mr Mahama Ayariga: Mr Speaker, the Minority Leader and I share something in common; we were both assemblymen. And when the Minister for Finance made the unprecedented announcement of a gargantuan sum of money for assemblymen, I saw the gleeful smile on his face. Unfortunately, it will not apply to ex-assemblymen.

Mr Speaker, this, clearly, is a Budget of a Government and a party that keeps its promises. Almost every promise that was made by John Dramani Mahama is being fulfilled in less than 120 days. This Budget is a budget for Makola women. *[Hear! Hear!]* This Budget is a budget for assemblymen. *[Hear! Hear!]* This Budget is a budget for girls. *[Uproar]*—for students. It has to do with the sanitary pads.

Mr Speaker, it seems to me that the men on the other Side have started using sanitary pads—*[Laughter]*—Because the sanitary pads are for the female students, that is why I said girls.

2.13 p.m.

They would now get the set of textbooks that they need to study, and peace of mind.

Mr Speaker, this is a Budget that delivers solid reforms, and this is also a Budget that is moving our growth from *galamsey* growth to real growth—*[Hear! Hear!]*—By the time we finish implementing this Budget and finish implementing the three that will come after this one, “ɔsono beye ketekete”—

[Laughter]—To wit: “the elephant will become small.”

The Speaker: Majority Leader, the Minister for Finance did not talk about “ɔsono.”— *[Laughter]* — So please, “ɔsono” is not part of the Statement.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, on that note, I want to assure my Friend, the Minority Leader, that the road at Chain Homes that is being done is not a new project.

Mr Speaker, this is a Budget that gives hope to Ghanaians. This is a Budget that will stabilise the economy, and this is a Budget that will create jobs for the youth of this country. This is a Budget that will provide an enabling environment for the private sector to thrive and create jobs for the youth of this country. *[Hear! Hear!]*

Mr Speaker, fishermen, *okada* riders, taxi drivers, students, and the energy sector are going to be salvaged by the implementation of this Budget. I want to thank the Minister for Finance for making the Statement. I want to assure my Friend, the Minority Leader, that we are ready to debate their records and our records, and we are ready to demonstrate that the proposals contained in the Statement of the Minister for Finance will indeed reset Ghana. Ghana is being reset.

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

The Speaker: Hon Members, as I stated early on, this Statement is not to be

debated. You are to make comments on the Statement, and to guide you, we are going to provide a few things for Members because it is a transition. We used to debate Budgets by making it a Motion. Our Standing Orders from experience guided us to change it to a Statement, and so, last Budget was a Statement and this one too is a Statement. So, it is a new field, and you need some guidance as to what to do during the course of that. If not, the Speaker will have a hell of trouble managing the House. So, what we intend to do is to exhibit Budget Statements since Independence at the foyer. You can go to the foyer and get the Budget Statements since Independence. We also have soft copies of *Hansards* of Budget Statements with the pictures of the various Ministers for Finance. They will all be on display for you to go and either have a picture view or request for a copy so that you can, at your own leisure, go through it yourselves. There is a viewing session now of what has happened today, and that one is also available as a side attraction. You can go and have access and view it. We believe that this will assist you. As we do that, we may focus on some of you, and we particularly want to project the excellent inputs that our ladies make on the Floor as part of the affirmative action, the law that we passed. So, we will give the ladies a priority of place in this feature.

So with this, Hon Members, I will proceed, since we have not yet sat for five hours, to put the Question and then you decide whether we should adjourn or not. So, I am going to put the Question. Hon Members, I will allow the Leaders

to move the Motion. So, I will call on the Minority Leader.

The Minority Leader wants to move the Motion for adjournment.

Osahen Afenyo-Markin: Mr Speaker, thank you. I believe that since 7th January, 2025, this is the first time the Majority is entering this Chamber in full. So, we can do some two more hours of comments before we move the Motion for adjournment.

Mr Speaker, this is the first time we are having a full House. So let us give them the opportunity to comment, especially those who are not regular in this Chamber. Once we are done, we can then move the Motion to adjourn the House.

Mr Speaker, that is my humble prayer. I do not know whether they would agree, but if they are in a hurry to go back home, I would therefore move that this House be adjourned to enable them to go back home. [*Laughter*]

The Speaker: Yes, Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, what the Minority Leader says is a reflection of the constitution of this Side. It is testimony to the fact that when they are needed, they will be here. [*Hear! Hear!*]

When they are needed, they will be here—

[*Some Hon Members of the Majority rose and sang*]

2.23 p.m.

The Speaker: Hon Members, the Winneba Youth Choir sings— [**Some Hon Members:** No!/] —I want to repeat it; I am sure you did not hear what I was trying to say. The Winneba Youth Choir sings better than you all—[*Laughter*]

Hon Majority Leader, you may now go.

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, it is obvious that the Minority have withdrawn from participating in the development of this country. They started it and then they got the response.

Mr Speaker, on that note, I second the Motion for adjournment.

Question put—

The Speaker: Yes, Hon Majority Leader?

Mr Ayariga: Mr Speaker, there is rebellion on that Side of the House

because their Leader moved the Motion, and they are rebelling against their Leader. Hon Leader, put your house in order. Watch your back.

The Speaker: That is democracy; they are entitled to disagree, even with their Leader.

Yes, Hon Minority Leader?

Osahen Afenyo-Markins: Mr Speaker, I have a very peaceful Caucus— [*Hear! Hear!*] —I moved the Motion for adjournment for the benefit of the Majority Side to enable them to go home and rest, but we are ready to work, so they are right. The Hon Majority Leader seconded; it means that his people are tired.

Question put and Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The House was accordingly adjourned at 2.30 p.m. till Wednesday, 12th March, 2025, at 10.00 a.m.

Editor's Note

This *Official Report* was corrected by the House on 21st March, 2025 as follows:

- a) Column 8, paragraph 3, line 2
“are” was inserted after “there”
- b) Column 10, paragraph 2, line 2,
“the” was deleted after “to”
- c) Column 4, paragraph 1, line 2,
was deleted after “is”