



## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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### OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE  
PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF GHANA

SECOND MEETING, 2025

Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2025

*The House met at the Chamber of  
Parliament at 2.32 p.m.*

[THE SECOND DEPUTY SPEAKER,  
MR ANDREW ASIAMAH  
AMOAKO, IN THE CHAIR]

[PRAYERS]

**VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS AND  
THE OFFICIAL REPORT**

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, let us turn to the item numbered 5 — Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Official Report*.

Hon Members, Correction of *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2025. Page 1...6—

**Prof Kingsley Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, under the item numbered 3(8), yesterday, I was visibly present in the House. I pray that we delete my name from the item numbered 3(8), and place it under Members who were present in the House yesterday.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Which page are you referring to?

**Prof Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, page 6, the item numbered 3 (8). Prof Nyarko Kingsley of Kwadaso was marked as

absent with permission, but I was here yesterday.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well. Table, please acknowledge the correction.

Page 7—

**Mr Frank Afriyie:** Mr Speaker, may I respectfully, invite your judgement on this. On page 7, the item numbered 5 (a), the name of the respected industrialist, “Mr Akenten Appiah-Menkah”; “Appiah Menkah” is hyphenated from all available literature.

Again, the Clerks-at-the-Table should take a look at the correct spelling for “Menkah”. From what I have seen so far, the letter “h” is not at the end. So, that should be checked, and the needed correction effected.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Table, kindly take a look at it again, and acknowledge the corrections, if there is a need to do so.

Page 8—

**Mr Abdul-Fatawu Alhassan:** Mr Speaker, respectfully, on page 8, on the item numbered 5(c), the first line, “Staff” has been misspelt.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well. Table, kindly take note of it.

Page 9...10—

**Prof Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, at the apex of page 9. It should read:

“The Order of Business was varied pursuant to Order, 67(2) of the Standing Orders.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

Page 10...16—

**Mr Afriyie:** Mr Speaker, on page 16, the item numbered 32, the name of my respected Colleague for Effia Constituency is hyphenated, and written as “Boamah-Nyarko”, But over here, the hyphen has been omitted. I know he is yet to see it anyway—*[Laughter]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** The Hon Member is so diligent. Table, kindly acknowledge the correction.

Page 17...22

Hon Members, in the absence of any further corrections, the *Votes and Proceedings* of Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025, is hereby adopted as the true record of proceedings.

Hon Members, we would move on to the item numbered 6 on the Order Paper, Urgent Questions. Is the Minister for Foreign Affairs already in the House?

Yes, Hon Majority Chief Whip?

**Mr Rockson-Nelson Etse Kwami Dafeamekpor:** Mr Speaker, I tried this morning to reach the Minister for Foreign Affairs in respect of the Urgent Questions, but I was not able to. So, may we proceed to the item numbered 7, to deal with the listed Questions in the meantime.

2.42 p.m.

I am sure that if he is able to arrive, then we can go back and take the Urgent Questions.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well, I can even see his staff at the Speaker’s gallery, so it means he is aware of the Urgent Questions.

**Mr Dafeamekpor:** Yes, but I was not able to reach him.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** No, I appreciate where you are coming from. So, we move to the—Yes?

**Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, we will support that application, as long as it is related to our Minister for Roads and Highways, but he should not stop pursuing the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Majority Chief Whip said he called him but could not reach him. We can excuse him to go and continue on his course.

But the Minister for Roads and Highways, that application is supported fully.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** This support is pregnant with—Yes, Hon Minister for Roads and Highways, may you take the appropriate seat. Why are you all praising the Minister? Is that going to end up doing the— Yes?

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, in fact, when my Chief Whip was the Majority Chief Whip, the Minister for Roads and Highways was the Minority Chief Whip. So, the Whips have some

common relationship. Nothing more. But Mr Speaker, maybe the Minister should explain to us his dressing, because as a Dagomba man, I was trying to find fault with it, but I could not find any. I do not know how a Voltarian will dress more like a Dagomba man. I need to know the secret, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well, that is just by the way.

**Mr Dafeamekpor:** Mr Speaker, I thought he was going to ask the Question on behalf of the Member. *[Laughter]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, let me invite Dr Gideon Boako, Hon Member for Tano North. But before then, kindly allow me to acknowledge our visitors, our students at the Public Gallery.

The first school is Koforidua Technical University. They are being led by Olivia Mbima, who is the administrative assistant and the school is located in the New Juaben South Constituency.

**Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh:** Mr Speaker, I am a former student, an alumnus. The Member of Parliament (MP) has assured me that he is on his way. Before we are done, or before they step out today, the Hon Member will be here to receive them.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** And you are also a former student?

**Mr Ayeh:** I am a former student.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, together with the MP, you are going to take good care of them.

**Mr Ayeh:** Solid, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Wonderful.

*[Students of the Koforidua Technical University were acknowledged]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Then, the second school is Asantewaa Konadu Academy. They are also being led by Eugenia Ankamanin, who is the general manager of the school. And the school is located in the Atwima Kwanwoma Constituency. I think Hon Kofi Amankwa-Manu is not yet in.

So, you are welcome. We wish you a fruitful stay. You should monitor what is going on. And that will urge you to fight on, so that tomorrow you will also be here. You are welcome. You may resume your seat now.

*[Pupils of the Asantewaa Konadu Academy were acknowledged]*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, Dr Gideon Boako, you may now take the floor to ask your Question.

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### MINISTRY OF ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

#### Progress of Work on Selected Roads in Tano North Constituency

**Dr Gideon Boako (NPP — Tano North):** Mr Speaker, I join my other Colleagues in appreciating the Minister for Roads and Highways for making

himself available to attend to these Questions.

Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the progress of work on the following road projects: (i) Bomaa – Tapa (ii) Bomaa – Duayaw Nkwanta (iii) Bomaa – Jamfo and Yamfo Town Roads and (iv) Bomaa Town Roads.

**Minister for Roads and Highways (Mr Kwame Governs Agbodza):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.

Mr Speaker, I have to respond to 10 Questions today. If it pleases Colleagues, I will skip the introductions and go straight to the current programme on all the Questions. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**(i) Bomaa – Tapa Road and**

**(iv) Bomaa Town Roads**

The Bomaa–Tapa Road is an inter-regional link between the Ahafo and Ashanti regions. It connects Bomaa, which is in the Tano North Municipality of the Ahafo region, to Tapa in the Ahafo Ano North district of the Ashanti Region.

**Current Programme**

The Bomaa – Tapa Road and Bomaa Town Roads were awarded under the contract titled “Upgrading of Tapa - Bomaa - Tanoso Road & Bomaa Town Roads (40km).”

The contract, which was awarded on 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2021, commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2023 for completion by 28<sup>th</sup>

February, 2026. The progress of works is estimated at 2 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled. Warning letters have been issued to the contractor to return to site to complete the outstanding works, failure of which the contract will be recommended for termination.

**(ii) Bomaa – Duayaw Nkwanta Road**

**Background**

The Bomaa–Duayaw Nkwanta Road serves as an intra-regional connector within the Tano North Municipality. The Road is 13.71km long and in poor surface condition.

**Current Programme**

The Bomaa – Duayaw Nkwanta road was awarded under the contract titled “Upgrading of Bomaa - Duayaw Nkwanta Road (13.71km).”

The contract was awarded on 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2023, for completion within 18 calendar months. The contractor is currently not on site, and works have stalled. Warning letters have been issued to the contractor to return to site to complete the outstanding works; failure of which the contract will be recommended for termination.

**(iii) Bomaa – Jamfo (Yamfo) and Yamfo Town Roads**

The Bomaa–Yamfo Road connects Bomaa to Yamfo in the Tano North Municipality. It is 36km long in poor surface condition.

**Current Programme**

There is no programme on the road.

**Future Programme**

Engineering studies will be carried out on the road for consideration under the 2026 Budget upon the availability of funds.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Hon Gideon Boako.

**Dr Boako:** Mr Speaker, listening to the Minister, the point is made clear that the contractor has been on the road for quite some time, yet the percentage of work done is below 10 per cent. The Minister has indicated that letters have been issued to the contractor to come back to the site; otherwise, the contract will be terminated.

Can the Minister assure us when, in his estimation, the contractor is expected to be on site? Mr Speaker, this is because if one goes there now, there is no activity on the roads, and the works that had begun have been left while it is raining. The gutters that were supposed to be completed but were not completed have developed into huge gullies that are causing severe issues for the people of the community.

2.52 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I want the Hon Minister to, if possible, give an assurance as to when, in his estimation, the contractor can go back to site for works to continue.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, I agree with my Colleague. It is very disappointing that a contractor would be awarded a project of this magnitude and significance and only carry out just 2 per cent of the work since the award of the contract. Indeed, as he describes, once the contractor went to site to attempt to do something and fails, it rather makes the situation worse in some cases. As I said, because it is a contract, there is a process by which you can legitimately terminate or encourage the contractor to continue work.

Mr Speaker, we are in the final stages of encouraging the contractor to abide by the tenets of the contract, failure to which we may have no other choice than to terminate and get a contractor who is more capable of doing the work. So, I want to sympathise with my Colleague and we shall work together to see how to get this done within the shortest possible time.

**Dr Boako:** Mr Speaker, may I respectfully beseech the Hon Minister to see how best he can get the contractor specifically to go to Bomaa Town to complete the portions of the gutter work that is being eaten away by heavy erosion as a result of having been left unattended to.

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, that is where I come from and if we get to my hometown now, there are portions of the gutter work which the contractor had already dug the grounds, but the concrete work has not been done; therefore, any time it rains, the gutters keep widening. Can the Minister get the contractor to

finish those portions of the road for us? That would be very dear to us.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, through the agency responsible for this, we shall do our best to make sure the contractor goes back to site, failure to which we would terminate the work and get a more capable contractor to complete the works.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, can we now turn to the Question numbered 275, which stands in the name of Hon Tweneboa Kodua Fokuo, Member of Parliament for Manso Nkwanta.

Hon Member, you have the floor now.

### **Status of Upgrading of Some Roads in the Manso Nkwanta**

**Mr Tweneboa Kodua Fokuo (NPP — Manso Nkwanta):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the status of upgrading the following roads in the constituency: (i) Pakyi – Antoakrom Feeder Roads (ii) Nweneso No.1 and Trabuom By-pass (iii) Pakyi No.1 – Pakyi No.2 Road (iv) Anwiankwanta – Manso Nkwanta Road.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker,

#### **Pakyi - Antoakrom Feeder Road**

##### **Background**

Pakyi - Antoakrom is a 21.3km Feeder Road in the Manso Nkwanta District of the Ashanti Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface

condition and connects Bekwai to the Bekwai – Manso Nkwanta Highway.

#### **Current Programme**

The Pakyi - Antoakrom Feeder Road has been awarded under the project titled “Upgrading of Pakyi No.2 – Antoakrom Feeder Road (21.3km) Trede – Pakyi No.2 Link (2.4km) and Critical Access (0.95km) (Total 24.65km)” to bituminous surfacing.

The contract commenced on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 for completion by 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2026. The project is at 34.08 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

#### **(ii) Nweneso No.1 and Trabuom By-pass**

##### **Background**

The Trabuom – Nweneso No. 1 Road serves as the shortest link connecting the Kwadaso – Trabuom Road (R-134) and the Anwiankwanta – Adumasa Road (R-105). The road traverses towns such as Hiakose, Manso Abodiase and others.

#### **Current Programme**

The Trabuom – Nweneso No. 1 Road was awarded under the contract titled “Rehabilitation of Trabuom - Nweneso No.1 Road (km 0.00 - km 16.00) and Trabuom Road (By - Pass) - 0.90km”. The contract which was awarded on 2<sup>8th</sup> May, 2024 commenced on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 for completion by 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2026. The project is at 18.5 per cent physical completion. The contractor is on site and works are ongoing.

**(iii) Pakyi No.1 - Pakyi No.2 Road****Background**

The Pakyi No.1 - Pakyi No. 2 Road is located in the Manso Nkwanta District in the Ashanti Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

**Current Programme**

The Pakyi No.1 - Pakyi No.2 road has been awarded under the project titled **“Upgrading of Pakyi No.1 - Pakyi No.2 (1.4km) Feeder Road and critical accesses (1.8km) Total (4.6km)”** to bituminous surfacing.

The contract commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2024 for completion by 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2025. The project is at 20.9 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

**(iv) Anwiankwanta – Manso Nkwanta****Background**

The Anwiankwanta – Manso Nkwanta – Abore – Adumasa Road (R-105) forms an integral component of the network of roads in the Amansie West District of the Ashanti Region. It serves as a link between the Daboase Junction – Paga Road (N-010) at Anwiankwanta to the Abuakwa – Osei Kwadwokrom road (I-005) at Adumasa.

**Current Programme**

The Anwiankwanta – Manso Nkwanta – Abore – Adumasa Road (R-105) has been awarded as an *addendum*

**“Rehabilitation of Anwiankwanta – Mim Junction Road (km 0.0 – 26.4km)”** under the project titled **“Reconstruction of Anwiankwanta – Obuasi Road (30km) - Lot 7.”** The contract was awarded on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2024 for completion within 48 calendar months. The project is at 26 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently not on site due to delay in payment for work done. Efforts are being made to get the contractor back to site to complete all outstanding works.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Hon Member, any supplementary question?

**Mr Fokuo:** Mr Speaker, for my first supplementary question, I think the Minister acknowledged that, for one of the roads, the contractor is not on site because payments have delayed. I want to ask the Minister if he has received interim payment certificates (IPCs) for the other roads as well and if there are payments in sight in the coming weeks or months.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, the cutoff point for IPCs at the Ministry, currently, date back to 2018. In other words, those whose certificates have been recognised since 2018 are yet to be paid. So, if this contract only commenced in 2024, it would not matter whether the certificate is in the system or not. It is in a queue. Unfortunately, that is the reality we face today. Government is working as hard as possible to make sure we raise enough funds to pay contractors for works done, so that they can complete the work and recover their investment.

**Mr Fokuo:** Mr Speaker, I appreciate the response from the Hon Minister. The response that the IPCs are in a queue is discouraging me from asking other questions. But this is just to ask the Minister: in his anticipation, when does he expect these roads to be completed?

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, the projects are supposed to be completed within the contracted period. So, whenever it is completed, the certificates are raised. I agree that when previous certificates are not honoured, it is not easy for many contractors to continue working. But the contract, as of now, is within the contractual period. So, it is not out of the stipulated time.

So, I would not say that the contractor has reached any rules yet because it is still within the contract period, though I must say that, maybe, the progress of work may not be as much as it should be. Maybe, it could be better if the contractor has been paid. So, we are still holding the contractor to finish within the contracted period.

3.02 p.m.

**Mr Fokuo:** Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon Minister for the Responses, but as you know, we receive specific questions in the constituencies where we are MPs and I would be grateful if he could be a bit specific here. If he says the IPCs are in a queue, then what sort of anticipation should we expect? When is it likely that it will get to the turn of these contractors on the roads mentioned?

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, currently, we owe the Government of Ghana (GoG) component to contractors in excess of GH¢21 billion and Road Fund component of another GH¢7 billion. The Government is in the process of paying part of that as part of the GH¢4 billion the Minister for Finance agreed to.

As I said, the contracted period is between 2024 and 2026. We shall continue to work towards paying the contractors who have raised IPCs. Unfortunately, I am unable to give a specific date by which any contractor would be paid, but as much as we raise enough resources, we continue to pay contractors, including this month and the months ahead.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, let us turn to Question number 276 and it stands in the name of Hon Richard Kuuire, Member of Parliament for Nandom.

Hon Member, you have the floor, but before then, Hon Michael Baafi Okyere and Hon Kofi Amankwa-Manu would like me to announce to their students that they are here.

### **Completion of Kambaa Bridge**

**Mr Richard Kuuire (NDC — Nandom):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the contractor will return to site to complete the construction of the Kambaa Bridge which was abandoned on October 2024.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, the Kambaa Bridge is located in Kambaa in the Upper West Region.

### **Current Programme**

The construction of the Kambaa Bridge was awarded under the contract titled “Construction and installation of 36.6m Mabey Bridge with 1 No. walkway” for the construction of the bridge structure, excluding the approach roads. The project commenced on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2024 for completion by 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2024. The bridge was completed and launched in October 2024.

However, the backfilling of the bridge and the construction of the approach roads were awarded as a variation to an existing contract titled, “Upgrading of Fian-Issah-Wahabu Road (km 0.0 - 9.0 & km 19.0 - 62.0) and Issah Town Roads (4.0km)-UW Lot 2”.

The contractor has suspended works due to delay in payment for work done. Efforts are being made to get the contractor to return to site to complete the outstanding works.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Kuuire, any supplementary questions?

**Mr Kuuire:** Mr Speaker, it looks like there is a mix-up somewhere because Issah roads and township roads are not part of the Kambaa Bridge, so, maybe, the Minister can explain.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, there is no mix-up. The Answer I read says that

the approaches are part of a variation on another project, which is a normal practice, so there is no confusion at all. The approaches are supposed to be done as part of a variation on another project, so that is normal practice.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, any further questions?

**Mr Kuuire:** Mr Speaker, I would like to know when the backfilling would be completed.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Minister, when will the backfilling be completed?

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, we shall continue to work with the contractors to encourage them to return to site and complete the works as scoped in the contract.

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

Yes, let me give you a last slot.

**Mr Kuuire:** Mr Speaker, I do not have any further questions and I thank the Minister for his Answers.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

Hon Members, we turn to Question number 287 and it stands in the name of the Member for Suhum, Hon Frank Asiedu Bekoe.

Hon Member, you have the floor.

**Mr Bekoe:** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and I also join hands with my Colleagues to congratulate the Minister for his hard work.

### **Completion of some Roads in the Suhum Constituency**

**Mr Frank Asiedu Bekoe (NPP — Suhum):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways when the following roads in the Suhum Constituency will be completed: (i) Amanhyia (ii) Akorabo to Nankese (iii) Suhum to Ateibu (iv) Ali-Tetekasu to Dokrochiwa (v) Krobom to Korkortesu (vi) Esaase to Aponoapono and Supresu to Obuotumpan.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker,

(i) **Amanhyia (Mangoase-Kukua-Akorabo-Amanhyia road)**

#### **Background**

The Amanhyia Road is captured in the Department of Feeder Roads (DFR) database as Mangoase-Kukua-Akorabo-Amanhyia feeder road, which is 17.6km long. The road is located in the Suhum Municipality of the Eastern Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

#### **Current Programme**

The Mangoase-Kukua-Akorabo-Amanhyia road was awarded under the contract titled, “Upgrading of Mangoase-Kukua-Akorabo-Amanhyia (17.6km)”. The contract was awarded on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 for completion by 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2022.

The overall progress of work is estimated at 66 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled due to delay in payment for work done. Efforts are being made to get the contractor back to site to complete the outstanding works.

(ii) **Akorabo-Nankese road**

#### **Background**

The Akorabo-Nankese road is a 10km long feeder road located in the Suhum Municipality of the Eastern Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

#### **Current Programme**

The Akorabo-Nankese road was awarded under the contract titled “Upgrading of Akorabo-Nankese (10.0km)”. The contract was awarded on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 for completion by 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2022. The overall progress of works is estimated at 37 per cent physical completion.

The contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled due to delay in payment for work done. Efforts are being made to get the contractor back to site to complete the outstanding works.

(iii) **Suhum-Ateibu road**

#### **Background**

The Suhum-Ateibu road is a 17.2km long feeder road located in the Suhum Municipality of the Eastern Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

### **Current Programme**

The Suhum-Ateibu road was awarded under the contract titled, “Upgrading of Suhum-Ateibu (17.2km)”.

The contract was awarded on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2019 for completion by 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2021. The overall progress of works is estimated at 7 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled. The contract has, therefore, been terminated for non-performance.

### **Future Programme**

Engineering design studies have been carried out on the entire 17.2km of the road for consideration under the 2026 budget upon the availability of funds.

3.12 p.m.

The contract has actually been terminated on this particular project.

#### **(iv) Ali-Tetekasu-Dokrochiwa Road**

### **Background**

The Ali-Tetekasu-Dokrochiwa road is an 8.6km long feeder road located in the Suhum Municipality of the Eastern Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

### **Current Programme**

The Ali-Tetekasu-Dokrochiwa road was awarded under the contract titled “Upgrading of Ali-Tetekasu-Dokrochiwa (8.6km)”.

The contract was awarded on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 for completion by 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2022. The Contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled. The contract has therefore been terminated for non-performance.

### **Future Programme**

Engineering design studies have been carried out on the entire 8.6km of the road for consideration under the 2026 Budget upon the availability of funds.

#### **(v) Krobom-Korkorteesu road**

### **Background**

The Krobom-Korkorteesu road is a 12.9km long feeder road located in the Suhum Municipality of the Eastern region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

### **Current Programme**

The Krobom-Korkorteesu road was awarded under the contract titled “Rehabilitation of Krobom-Korkorteesu (12.9km)”.

The contract was awarded on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 for completion by 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2022. The overall progress of works is estimated at 34 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled due to delay in payment for work done. Efforts are being made to get the Contractor back to site to complete the outstanding works.

**(vi) Esaase-Aponoapono Road****Background**

The Esaase-Aponoapono road is a 10km long feeder road located in the Suhum Municipality of the Eastern Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

**Current Programme**

The Esaase-Aponoapono road was awarded under the contract titled “Rehabilitation of Esaase-Aponoapono (10.0km)”.

The contract was awarded on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 for completion by 10th January, 2022. The overall progress of works is estimated at 23 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled due to delay in payment for work done. Efforts are being made to get the Contractor back to site to complete the outstanding works.

**(vii) Supresu-Obuotumpan Road****Background**

The Supresu-Obuotumpan road is an 8.8km long feeder road located in the Suhum Municipality of the Eastern region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

**Current Programme**

The Supresu-Obuotumpan road was awarded under the contract titled “Upgrading of Supresu-Obuotumpan (8.8km)”.

The contract was awarded on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 for completion by 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2022. The overall progress of works is estimated at 46 per cent physical completion. The Contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled due to delay in payment for work done. Efforts are being made to get the Contractor back to site to complete the outstanding works.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Hon Bekoe, any further questions?

**Mr Bekoe:** I think I have to spend time in his office to take him through the pronunciations of my communities.

Mr Speaker, from his response, about two contracts have been terminated, the Ali-Tetekasu-Dokrochiwa road and Suhum-Ateibu road. Can the Minister assure the illustrious sons and daughters of Suhum how soon these terminated contracts would be re-awarded? Because when it rains, people in communities on the Ali-Tetekasu-Dokrochiwa road, do not come to Suhum and nobody can also leave Suhum for these communities. Thank you.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, in the answer, I have already given the indication that engineering studies and designs have already been done awaiting consideration within the 2026 Budget cycle.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, we will turn to—Hon Baafi Okyere, I would not pass on the supplementary question. Come again? Yes, I am saying I would not pass on the

supplementary question because it is a constituency-specific question. Bear with me; the questions are many. Anyway, once the constituencies are connected, it is fine.

**Mr Michael Baafi Okyere:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just wanted to know, because the Supresu-Obuotumpan road is connected to a place called Nyamekrom, and those contracts were terminated together, so I just want to know whether ours will be re-awarded. This is because he only answered for the Supresu-Obuotumpan road, but it is connected. So, I just wanted to know when that one is also going to be re-awarded, that is all. It is St James-Nyamekrom-Supresu-Obuotumpan. 10.6 kilometres.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, my answers were limited to the questions within the constituency of the Hon Colleague who asked the Questions. I agree that no constituency is an island on its own; it links with others. Once we terminate contracts, the process that kicks in immediately is to do a reassessment of outstanding works and repackage them, and awaiting re-award. All those will be considered in the 2026 Budget window.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** We will turn to Question numbered 288 which stands in the name of a Hon Member for Sissala West, Mr Mohammed Adams Sukparu.

**Mr Emmanuel Kwaku Boam:** Mr Speaker, I have the authorisation of the Hon Member and I want to seek your leave to ask Questions on his behalf.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, which Order are you coming under?

**Mr Boam:** Order 88(3).

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, Hon Member, you may ask the Question. I want Members to be up-to-date with the Standing Orders; that is why I asked. So, you may go on to ask the Question.

### **Status of Road Construction from Gbal through Zini to Han**

**Mr Emmanuel Kwaku Boam on behalf of Mr Mohammed Adams Sukparu (NDC — Sissala West):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the status of the road construction from Gbal through Zini to Han.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker,

#### **Background**

The Gbal-Zini-Han Road forms part of the Regional Route R184. It is located in the Sissala West District of the Upper West Region. It is a gravel road in poor surface condition.

#### **Current Programme**

There is no upgrading or rehabilitation programme on the trunk road. However, the road is part of the 2025/2026 routine maintenance works.

#### **Future Programme**

Engineering studies and cost estimates will be carried out on the road for consideration under the 2026 Budget upon the availability of funds.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Member, do you have the mandate to ask supplementary questions, if any?

**Mr Boam:** No, please.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Then, I presume you will take Question 289 as well.

**Mr Boam:** Exactly.

### **Status of Road Construction from Gwollu to Jeffisi**

**Mr Emmanuel Kwaku Boam on behalf of Mr Mohammed Adams Sukparu (NDC — Sissala East):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the status of the road construction from Gwollu to Jeffisi.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker,

#### **Background**

The Gwollu-Jeffisi feeder road is 25km long. The road is located in the Sissala West district of the Upper West region. It is an engineered gravel road in fair surface condition.

#### **Current Programme**

The Gwollu-Jeffisi feeder road was awarded under the contract titled “Bitumen surfacing of Gwollu-Jeffisi (25.0km)”.

The contract was awarded on 8th October, 2014 for completion by 17th November, 2016. The overall progress of works is estimated at 21.3 per cent

physical completion. The Contractor is currently not on site and works have stalled. The contract has since been terminated.

#### **Future Programme**

Engineering design studies have been carried out on the entire 25km of the road for consideration under the 2026 Budget upon the availability of funds.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Minister, did you say the contract was awarded in 2014?

3.22 p.m.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, it was awarded in 2014 for completion in 2016. However, as of now, only 21.3 per cent of the works has been carried out. So, it has been duly terminated awaiting a new award.

Is Gwollu the hometown of the late President Hilla Limann?

**Mr Agbodza:** Yes, I think so.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Please, let us do something about it. We will turn to Question 290 which stands in the name of the same Hon Mohammed Adam Sukparu.

Yes, Hon Member?

#### **Construction of Gwollu Town Roads (Status)**

**Mr Emmanuel Kwaku Boam on behalf of Mr Mohammed Adams Sukparu (NDC — Sissala West):** Mr

Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the status of the construction of the Gwollu town roads.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, Gwollu is the district capital of the Sissala West district of the Upper West region and shares boundaries with Tumu and neighbouring Burkina Faso. The town roads are engineered gravel roads in poor surface condition.

### **Current Programme**

There is no programme on the roads.

### **Future Programme**

Engineering design studies have been carried out on the internal roads for consideration under the 2026 budget upon the availability of funds.

**Mr Boam:** Mr Speaker, I have no supplementary questions but to thank the Minister for the responses given. We believe in the shortest possible time; we will secure funds and get these roads completed.

Thank you.

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

We will turn to Question 291 and the Question stands in the name of Member for Odotobri, Hon Anthony Mmieh.

### **Dualisation of the Accra -Kumasi Highway between Ofankor and Nkawkaw (Completion)**

**Mr Anthony Mmieh (NPP — Odotobri):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the

Minister for Roads and Highways the timelines for the completion of the rehabilitation and dualisation of the Accra to Kumasi Highway between Ofankor and Nkawkaw.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Order! Order! Hon Members, we have so many discussions going on, please.

Very well, Hon Minister?

**Mr Kwame Govers Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, The Accra – Kumasi Road (N6) forms part of the Central Corridor Trunk Road. It is a critical route for trade and transit as it links Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger within the West Africa sub-region.

### **Current Programme**

The rehabilitation and dualisation of the Accra to Kumasi Road between Ofankor and Nkawkaw and beyond consists of ten (10) major contracts as follows:

1. Rehabilitation of Ofankor Nsawam Road (Dual Carriageway – 33.4km)
2. Rehabilitation of Nkawkaw By-Pass - Apedwa Section (79.45km) – Lot 2
3. Dualiation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction of Osino Bypass (11.6km) – Lot 1: Osino South Bound
4. Carriageway Dualisation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction of

- Osino Bypass (11.6km) – Lot 2:  
Osino North Bound Carriageway.
5. Dualisation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Anyinam Bypass (7.3km) – Lot 3: Anyinam South Bound Carriageway.
  6. Dualisation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Anyinam Bypass (6.1km) – Lot 4: Anyinam North Bound Carriageway.
  7. Dualisation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Enyeresi Bypass (9.1km) – Lot 5: Enyeresi South Bound Carriageway.
  8. Dualisation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Enyeresi Bypass (9.1km) – Lot 6: Enyeresi North Bound Carriageway.
  9. Dualisation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Konongo Bypass (13.6km) – Lot 7: Konongo North Bound Carriageway.
  10. Dualisation of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Konongo Bypass (13.6km) – Lot 8: Konongo North Bound Carriageway.

The various projects constituting the Accra – Kumasi link from Ofankor to Nkawkaw and beyond are ongoing and the work is progressing steadily. The physical progress are as follows:

<b>NO.</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Percentage completion (%)</b>	<b>Commence ment Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1	Rehabilitation of Ofankor Nsawam Road (Dual Carriageway – 33.4km)	74.5	20 <sup>th</sup> July, 2022	20 <sup>th</sup> July, 2024
2	Rehabilitation of Nkawkaw By-Pass - Apedwa Section (79.45km) – Lot 2	2.40	27 <sup>th</sup> February, 2025	26 <sup>th</sup> February, 2027
3	Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km)	69.17	15th June, 2023	15th December, 2025

	Construction of Osino Bypass (11.6km) – Lot 1: Osino South Bound			
4	Carriageway Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction of Osino Bypass (11.6km) – Lot 2: Osino North Bound Carriageway	69.88	15th June, 2023	14th December, 2025
5	Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Anyinam Bypass (7.3km) – Lot 3: Anyinam South Bound Carriageway	61.11	15th June, 2023	14th June, 2025
6	Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Anyinam Bypass (6.1km) – Lot 4: Anyinam North Bound Carriageway	99.00	15th June, 2023	14th June, 2025
7	Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Enyeresi Bypass	91.70	15th June, 2023	14th June, 2025

	(9.1km) – Lot 5: Enyeresi South Bound Carriageway			
8	Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Enyeresi Bypass (9.1km) – Lot 6: Enyeresi North Bound Carriageway	62.69	15th June, 2023	14th June, 2025
9	Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Konongo Bypass (13.6km) – Lot 7: Konongo North Bound Carriageway	80.00	15th June, 2023	14th June, 2026
10	Dualization of Accra – Kumasi Road (Apedwa – Ejisu Section – 106km) Construction Supervision of Konongo Bypass (13.6km) – Lot 8: Konongo North Bound Carriageway	56.00	15th June, 2023	14th June, 2026

The various projects constituting the Accra-Kumasi link from Ofanko to Nkoko and beyond are ongoing, and the works are progressing in many of the lots. But frankly speaking, Mr Speaker, some of the contractors are not on site.

**Mr Mmieh:** Mr Speaker, I am grateful. Mr Speaker, what measures are being taken by the Hon Minister to mitigate the impact of flooding, heavy traffic and pollution regarding that stretch in particular? Sometimes you ply

that stretch and for two hours you are in traffic. It gets so flooded to the extent that only big trucks are able to ply a section of the route, and that is the backdrop against which this Question is being asked. [**An Hon Member:** Go and ask Amoako-Atta!!]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Who said that? —[Pause]—

Hon Minister, come and respond to the question.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, these bypasses are very critical roads on the Accra-Kumasi Highway. I had an opportunity to comment on the situation on those contracts not too long ago when I said that at the time of contracting, the total value of this project was GHC1.9 billion and within the shortest possible time, a variation of GHC1.7 billion was raised, almost 100 per cent. Mr Speaker, that called for a bit of introspection as to how we got things so wrong in terms of how we were able to award a project and then we had to double the cost within the shortest possible time.

Mr Speaker, we are still going through that process and do not forget that what was budgeted for was GHC1.9 billion. We now need to look for the other GHC1.7 billion to be able to complete the project. It is unfortunate that we could not complete it, but the problem was the conception of the whole project. But it is a bypass. The main Accra-Kumasi Highway is still there. Yes, I know it is long overdue, we need to improve the Accra-Kumasi Highway because it is without a doubt the most

important highway leading from the capital to the second most important city.

Mr Speaker, we are working on it, but it is a very challenging situation, finding almost the same amount of money to top up to complete the project. I must say that at least one of the contractors has actually fully completed.

Unfortunately, the location of the completed one is in the wilderness. It is not connected back to the main road, so it cannot be used. That is how difficult the situation is.

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

Hon Minister, how do you relate the dualisation of Accra-Kumasi Road to the recent announcement by the President that he is going to do six lanes to Kumasi and back? I do not know how you can relate that one too.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, I would not fault you for trying to participate. After all, you are a Member of Parliament. What the President has promised is a completely new thing. We are not intending to improve the existing carriageway. We are building a brand-new road in Greenfield.

Mr Speaker, I will be seeking approval for the consultant to carry out the feasibility design and costing of that by the end of the week. Just wait for the Minister for Finance to give you more. You will be amazed at what you will be seeing. It is just a teaser for tomorrow. [*Hear! Hear!*]

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. I think all the MPs in the Northern sector are interested in this.

Hon Nyindam, let me hear you.

3.32 p.m.

**Mr Matthew Nyindam:** Thank you, Mr Speaker I would like to find out from the Hon Minister if it is possible that under the road engineering, such a variation can occur because he said the variation is almost 100 per cent. So, I am just trying to find out from the Hon Minister if it is possible for such a thing to happen?

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, variations are nothing new on projects of that scale. It is the size of the variation that is worrying. If the variations—Indeed, our laws allow for up to 10 to 15 per cent variation on projects. But when the variation is 100 per cent, what it means is that something fundamentally went wrong in putting the project together and it is a lesson for all of us. Because as I said, that road project is still very critical and we need to complete it. So, no one is saying that anybody did anything wrong. But it is not very usual that we would start a project and then get 100 per cent variation.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I will come to you, Chairman. Let me first give the opportunity to Prof Kingsley Nyarko.

**Prof Kingsley Nyarko:** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to ask a follow-up question. Mr Speaker, looking at the importance of that stretch, I would

like to find out from my respected Friend, the Hon Minister, if he has had discussions with the Minister for Finance to prioritise this stretch for completion and if he has not done that, will he be kind enough to engage him on this? So that, if possible, there could be some space within the Mid-Year Budget Review that is going to be presented to us tomorrow.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, President Mahama has already directed that all those major projects that are stalled now be taken on. So, as I speak to the House, the Ofankor project which has stalled will now be part of a new package too, so that we can continue as well as the Kasoa Road among others. As I said, the difficulty about the bypasses on the Accra-Kumasi Highway is simply because the size of the variation calls for much more detailed work. Ofankor and Nsawam ones are straightforward, so we will just repackage them for continuation. These ones have got fundamental problems that needed to be dealt with. So, we are already prioritising stalled projects for continuation. This is an outlier and needed to be treated differently.

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

Hon Ranking Member for the Committee on Roads and Transportation?

**Mr Kennedy Nyarko Osei:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Listening to the Minister, he made mention of variation

of the Accra-Kumasi project costs, which is almost about 100 per cent. I would like to find out from the Hon Minister, the plans of the Ministry in minimising design and build projects which mostly saddle the country into such heavy variation, that sometimes become difficult for the country to even pay. I would like to find out if they have any plans in minimising it.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, my Colleague has been the Chairman and is now the Ranking Member. He is very familiar. I am sure his question is well calculated to elicit the answer he already has in his head, which is to say that we need to be disciplined in terms of the way we contract and manage projects.

Mr Speaker, as a rule and a discipline currently at the Ministry, I do not approve any variation at all. If it becomes a certain value, I will tell them to go and repackage it as a new project. So, when they start a project, when the variation goes beyond a certain level, we do not tolerate it as a variation. I agree design and build is a challenge, though there is a place for design and build in contracting. But I keep saying, if one tells somebody to go and decide to set his or her own question and provide an answer, I wonder how many people will fail in providing the answer. Design and build basically gives the opportunity to the contractor to go and do his own studies, put cost to it and present an amount to us. Of course, we have the ability to scrutinise what he is presenting to us, but he has got the data. The data he is giving us is what we are going to use.

As a result, we have decided that we are minimising design and build as much as possible. We will notice when the Big Push projects start that almost all of them would be designs or studies done by the Ministry itself and maybe only a handful will be design and build simply, because the expertise and the time required to carry out those designs would delay the project. Those are the only ones and indeed, that is what the law allows us to do when it becomes difficult or time would not permit us. But when we have time to do things, it does not add up to make a feeder road project design and build or an ordinary road going between two district capitals, design and build. What is the complexity about that that we have to contract and pay somebody for the design? Because design and build basically means that there is sometimes 10 to 20 per cent extra cost for design. Mr Speaker, it is a way of cutting down cost of road projects and we hope that it becomes a culture we all learn to minimise cost.

**Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. The question put to the Minister was on timelines. If I may refer, we wanted to find out the timeline for the completion of the rehabilitation, but in the Minister's Answer, I did not hear the timeline. So, if the Minister could let us know the timeline.

**Mr Agbodza:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My Response was that because this is particularly an outlier in the scheme of variations, we are still looking at the reasons we have arrived at that and

actually prepare a new budget because we need to double the budget for that. So as soon as that process is completed, the contractors may move back to site. Mr Speaker, you will be surprised that the moneys made available in the budget for some of these have been exhausted. Some contractors have actually drawn down almost 90 to 95 per cent of what was allocated to them because they have carried out work after that. However, what they have drawn down ends up being only half of what the project is currently valued at. So, we need to make a new allowance for the shortfall in budget.

**Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh:** Mr Speaker, forgive me. From the Order Paper, there has been some provided Answers the Hon Minister has given and there are some timelines on page 25. I would like to ask if the timelines provided here are something we should go by or it is just there for the purposes of Answers. Because I believe the Minister for Roads and Highways has been reading from the various Answers. For example, number 2 reads: “Rehabilitation of Nkawkaw By-Pass - Apedwa Section (79.45km) – Lot 2.” We will see that the date of commence is there and the date of completion is 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2027 and it follows like that on the table. I would like to find out from the Hon Minister if these dates are correct.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, yes, the Hon Member is right. The reference to those numbers simply means that Ghana Highway Authority (GHA) has agreed with the contractors for an extension of

time up to that point, hoping that all the issues I have raised will be dealt with and additional funding will be arranged to complete.

3.42 p.m.

So, this is a hypothetical completion date because, as a matter of fact, almost none of the contractors is actively working on site. So, even this date, if we find the money tomorrow, maybe, we could even finish them ahead of schedule and if we do not find them, it could go beyond the dates in the document.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Richard Kuuire, Member of Parliament for Nandom, I am coming back to you on Question numbered 292.

### **Commencement of Construction of the Nandom-Ko-Dowini Road**

**Mr Richard Kuuire (NDC — Nandom):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways the steps being taken to commence the construction of the Nandom-Ko-Dowini Road.

**Mr Agbodza:**

### **Background**

Mr Speaker, the Jirapa – Dowini – Ko – Nandom Road forms part of the National Route N-12 and spans a total length of 58km from the Nadowli District. This critical corridor serves as a major link, connecting major towns including Wa, Nadowli, Jirapa, Ko, and Nandom, and extends further north to

Hamile, a border town adjoining Burkina Faso.

Currently, the initial 27km section from Nadowli to Jirapa is in relatively good condition, with a bituminous surface. The remaining section of the road is gravel and in poor condition.

### **Current Programme**

There is no upgrading or rehabilitation programme on the trunk road. However, the road is part of the 2025/2026 routine maintenance works.

### **Future Programme**

Engineering design studies will be carried out on the road for consideration under the 2026 Budget upon the availability of funds.

**Mr Kuuire:** Mr Speaker, I like the Answer he has given and it has given me hope that, in 2026, this road will find space in the Budget and I thank you very much.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** We will take the last Question from the Member for Tatale-Sanguli, Hon William Ntebe.

### **Update on the Status of Selected Road in Tatale-Sanguli**

**Mr William Ayo Ntebe (NDC — Tatale-Sanguli):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads and Highways to provide an update on the status of the following roads in the Tatale-Sanguli constituency: (i) Sheini to Kpajaba (ii) Zabzugu to Sheini and (iii) Zabzugu to Koryili.

### **Mr Agbodza:**

#### **(i) Sheini to Kpajaba**

##### **Background**

Shein – Kpajaba Feeder Road is 9km long. The road is located in the Tatale-Sanguli District of the Northern Region. It is an unengineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

##### **Current Programme**

The Sheini - Kpajaba road was awarded under the contract titled “**Rehabilitation of Zabzugu - Koryili Feeder Road (7.0km)**” and **Sangba – Banagando Feeder Road (3.0km), Sangba – Wunglunni Feeder Road (4.5km), and Sheini – Kpajaba Feeder Road (9.0km), totaling 23.5km**”. The contract was awarded on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 for completion by 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2026. The overall progress of works is estimated at 13 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

#### **(ii) Zabzugu to Sheini Road**

##### **Background**

Zabzugu - Sheini Feeder Road is 21.6km long. The road is located in the Tatale-Sanguli District of the Northern Region. It is an engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

##### **Current Programme**

The Zabzugu - Sheini Road was awarded under the contract titled “**Rehabilitation of Zabzugu - Sheini**”

**Feeder Road (21.60km)**". The contract was awarded on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 for completion by 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2026. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

### (iii) Zabzugu to Koryili

#### Background

Zabzugu - Koryili Feeder Road is 7km long. The road is located in the Tatale-Sanguli District of the Northern Region. It is a partially engineered gravel road in poor surface condition.

#### Current Programme

The Zabzugu - Koryili Road was awarded under the contract titled **"Rehabilitation of Zabzugu - Koryili Feeder Road (7.0km)" Sangba – Banagando Feeder Road (3.0km), Sangba – Wunglunni Feeder Road (4.5km), and Sheini – Kpajaba Feeder Road (9.0km), totaling 23.5km"**. The contract was awarded on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 for completion by 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2026. The overall progress of works is estimated at 13 per cent physical completion. The contractor is currently on site and works are ongoing.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** William Ntebe, any supplementary questions?

**Mr Ntebe:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, the Zabzugu-Koryili Bridge has been constructed for one year now and it has not been gravelled, so trucks cannot go to the community. I want to know from the Minister when it

will be gravelled, so that, during this rainy season, the people can use the road for other activities.

**Mr Agbodza:** Mr Speaker, the feedback from my Colleague is very important. If I understand him, the culvert has been built, but the approaches to fill up is not done. I will take note of that and see what we can do to advise the contractor to quickly do that, so that the culvert can be put in use, especially during this rainy season.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

Hon Minister for Roads and Highways, on behalf of the House, let me extend our gratitude to you for coming to answer about 10 Questions from your own Colleagues. We are grateful to you and you are hereby discharged.

Hon Members, let me now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs to take the appropriate seat. We are now going to take the Urgent Questions and we have two. The first one stands in the name of the Member of Parliament for Pru East, Hon Emmanuel Kwaku Boam.

Hon Member, the Minister is here for your Urgent Question.

### URGENT QUESTION

#### MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

#### **Rescue and Repatriation of Scammed and Trafficked Ghanaians in Côte d'Ivoire**

**Mr Emmanuel Kwaku Boam (NDC — Pru East):** Mr Speaker, I beg to

ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the urgent actions the Ministry is taking to ensure safe rescue and repatriation of Ghanaian youth who have been scammed and trafficked to Côte d'Ivoire by "QNet Squad"?

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa) (MP):** Mr Speaker, in recent years, a significant number of vulnerable Ghanaians, particularly the youth, have fallen victim to the increasing activities of cross-border fraudulent syndicates operating in some African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, under the banner of QuestNet International, popularly known as QNET.

The syndicates take advantage of Ghanaian nationals, mostly fellow Ghanaians who lure unsuspecting compatriots to supposed transit countries in West Africa. These countries include Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and others under the pretext of facilitating their further travel to France or other destinations in Europe or elsewhere for paid jobs.

The traffickers entice the victims to travel to the supposed transit countries for the processing of their visas, as the procedure takes longer to complete in Ghana. However, the supposed transit country, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, eventually becomes the final destination of the victims, where they are held captive in isolated locations and forced to lure their relatives and close friends as new victims into the criminal network.

The following key points may be noted. According to the Ghana Embassy in Abidjan, the clandestine nature of the

operations of the scammers and the silent arrival of victims in Côte d'Ivoire makes it challenging to determine the exact number of Ghanaians being held hostage in Abidjan and other Ivorian cities and towns. However, the Mission estimates that there are over 500 Ghanaians between 20 and 40 years of age who are currently held in secluded locations across Côte d'Ivoire.

Efforts are being made to bring them back home. Our Mission in Nigeria, Mr Speaker, has recently rescued and repatriated a total of 202 Ghanaians, 78 through the Abuja Mission and 124 through the Lagos Mission. The initial monetary commitments were paid to Ghana-registered mobile money numbers, which are charged frequently.

3.52 p.m.

Victims used to pay between GH¢18,000 and GH¢35,000 for the intended travel. However, recent schemes which advertise jobs in countries such as Canada, France, Belgium and others, require victims to pay between GH¢30,000 and GH¢40,000. The scammers demand payment of half the amount to Ivorian numbers, after which they are requested to travel to La Côte d'Ivoire to continue the process and pay the remainder of the visa processing fees. Majority of the leaders of the QNET groups in La Côte d'Ivoire are Ghanaian nationals.

Mr Speaker, our analysis so far indicates that communities in La Côte d'Ivoire identified as QNET hotspots include the following, Bondoukou, Abengourou and Agnibilékrou, largely

located in the eastern part of the country. On the southern part, communities in Dabou, Jacqueville, Songon and in N'djem are also being monitored closely, where we suspect that a considerable number of our youth are being kept. We are, also, keeping an eye on Koumassi, Yopougon, Adjamé and Bingerville, all in the Abidjan district. Yamoussoukro and Dimpogru, in the central part of the country, and Issia, Daloa, Gagnoa and Man, in the western part of La Côte d'Ivoire, are the trouble hotspots our mission in Abidjan has identified so far.

Mr Speaker, the actions we have taken so far include, collaborating with relevant Ghanaian and Ivorian authorities, not leaving out INTERPOL and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the affected countries, in the case of La Côte d'Ivoire and in the case of Nigeria. We continue to take measures to address this challenge, with the objective of raising public awareness, bringing the traffickers to justice and facilitating the return of the victims to Ghana.

Mr Speaker, on the rescue and repatriation of victims and prosecution of traffickers, reports on the victims of the QNET scheme are usually received from their relatives or friends. Complaints may be made to the Ministry, the Ghana Embassy in Abidjan or security authorities in Ghana and La Côte d'Ivoire, including the police and customs officials.

Upon receipt of a request for assistance, the Ministry communicates the information, including possible location of the victims and contact

details to the Embassy to liaise with Ivorian authorities and the Ghanaian community to investigate the case and provide the victims necessary consular assistance. In some cases, the information is shared with INTERPOL Ghana to assist.

Mr Speaker, to understand the operations of QNET groups and adopt appropriate countermeasures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ghana Embassy in Abidjan is collaborating with security agencies in La Côte d'Ivoire to investigate the activities of the groups, rescue the victims and repatriate them.

Investigations have revealed that the majority of the leaders of the QNET groups in La Côte d'Ivoire are, unfortunately, Ghanaian nationals, mainly former victims of the scheme who are indoctrinated, coerced and trained to become leaders of new groups, some with the hope of recouping the money they lost. Together, the aforementioned institutions, have conducted targeted joint operations over the years to rescue victims and repatriate them to Ghana.

From 2021 till date, they have all together rescued a total number of 230 victims. Available statistics indicate that over 30 victims were rescued and repatriated between January and March 2025, in some cases, with the help of INTERPOL. In situations where leaders of the syndicates are identified, they are detained and tried by authorities in La Côte d'Ivoire. In most cases, the cost of repatriation has been borne by the

families of the victims, the leadership of the Ghanaian community in La Côte d'Ivoire, as well as staff of the Mission.

The Embassy is collaborating with both Ghanaian and Ivorian transport operators plying the Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire route to assist in identifying and intercepting victims travelling to La Côte d'Ivoire. The Embassy also liaises with Ghanaian and Ivorian border agents to identify victims seeking to enter La Côte d'Ivoire and prevent them from reaching their escalators.

In addition to the rescue and repatriation exercises, the Ghana Embassy in Abidjan has enhanced cooperation with the leadership of the Ghanaian communities in La Côte d'Ivoire to create awareness in the various communities and among family members in Ghana with the objective of preventing further trafficking.

Mr Speaker, since 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has intensified its engagement with relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), including the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment, the Ghana Immigration Service, the Ghana Police Service, the National Security and INTERPOL, among others, to identify ways of addressing this menace. Key among the measures being taken is the implementation of a nationwide sensitisation programme on regular migration and human trafficking, which is scheduled to commence by the end of September 2025. The sensitisation

programme will target the youth and other vulnerable groups and communities.

Mr Speaker, in this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has held two stakeholder meetings on the campaign in June 2025 and is arranging the third meeting to be held in the last week of this month to further discuss the modalities of the sensitisation.

In addition, Government is negotiating labour agreements with other countries to provide credible employment opportunities abroad for interested Ghanaians and thereby, reduce the vulnerabilities that lure the youth through these trafficking schemes. A committee comprising some of the aforementioned institutions has met four times already, since January and June 2025, on some of the draft agreements between Ghana and countries such as Kuwait, Italy, Germany, Qatar, among others.

Mr Speaker, in spite of the aforementioned efforts, resource constraints and the proliferation of social media platforms which enhance the ease with which scammers are able to reach vulnerable persons make the challenge increasingly daunting. Besides, these fraudsters are continuously diversifying their operations to avoid detection of their fraud and to circumvent the countermeasures being implemented by governments across the West African region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would, therefore, encourage all Ghanaians to acquaint themselves with the evolving

modus operandi of those QNET scammers and assist in creating awareness in their families and communities.

In conclusion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is appreciative of the collaboration it has had with other MDAs in Ghana and authorities in La Côte d'Ivoire in taking joint action towards tackling this menace which is causing significant financial strain and emotional stress on affected Ghanaians and their families.

4.02 p.m.

The Ministry will continue to take necessary measures to ensure the public is well informed on these fraudulent schemes and ways to avoid becoming victims.

I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** No, let me give it to the owner of the Question first. Yes?

**Mr Ntekuni:** Mr Speaker, I really appreciate the elaborate Response by the Minister. But it will interest the Minister to know that, in my Constituency, I have about 30 young men and women who are falling victim to this. As he said in his Response, mostly this scheme, the report comes from the family, because when the young men and women fall victim to this, they do not have access to even get in touch with their families or any other person.

Since some of the areas within Côte d'Ivoire where most of these issues happen have been identified, would he

consider another extensive collaboration with them to see how we can raid those targeted areas, so we can get victims out of these? As I speak, a teacher who is gainfully employed had to be lured to sell his house and then gather money from family members, and he is part of these people who cannot be found.

The issue is, we do not even know whether some of these people are alive or they are dead. So, it is an urgent call on us as a country to make sure we get this. I still want to know how we can get these things done and see whether we can get our people back in the country.

Thank you.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister, did you hear the question? All right. [*Uproar*]

**Mr Ablakwa:** Well, thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, since Colleagues want to know the gravamen of the question, I was listening carefully. He is asking if we intend to further collaborate with the security authorities in Côte d'Ivoire to rescue Ghanaians who remain missing. He talks about a teacher in his constituency who is among the victims.

Let me use this opportunity, and I will urge Colleagues in this House to all join hands with us at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to educate our citizenry. I mean, why sell your house, other properties, go for loans to give money to these scammers, only to end up not only being defrauded, but now having to face

a situation of kidnapping where your family, your Member of Parliament, chiefs and nobody knows where you are. You cannot be located, and it imposes a lot of stress, financial burden on the Ministry, on our Missions abroad, in carrying out all these operations to locate you. We want to urge Ghanaians to avoid irregular migration.

All of these schemes, if one wants to travel, please deal with the Embassies directly. Either you go online or proceed to the Embassy following the processes that they have outlined, depending on the country in issue. So, Mr Speaker, we really have to intensify public education and public awareness.

I would also specially want to appeal to the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE) to assist us in educating our compatriots to stay away from these schemes. Nobody can help a person travel abroad if the person is not a recognised embassy official working in a consular department that issues visas. So, deal directly with the Embassies and High Commissions. Do not go through middlemen.

But let me assure the dynamic Member of Parliament that we continue to work with our counterparts in Côte d'Ivoire. If he has any more information, particularly on identity, he should let us have those details and we will share them with our counterparts. We continue to rescue. As I have indicated so far, we have rescued over 400 Ghanaians who had been kidnapped and we will continue to intensify efforts to get our compatriots back. But let us all join hands in public

education so that our young people will not fall victim to these schemes.

I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes?

**Mr Ntekuni:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I must thank my Senior Comrade and Minister for giving these responses. I will gather the names and share them with the Ministry so we can see how we can bring finality to some of these issues.

Thank you so much.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Let me go to Kwabre East.

**Mr Akwasi Gyamfi Oyina-Acheampong:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

There have been, recently in my Constituency, people who are from Gambia who have also been scammed under the pretext of something that is in the making of this QNET. They are about 43. They came in two batches, and they were also brought here under the pretext of being given jobs. I realised that when we decided to take action and involve immigration, they all bolted.

I would like to know what other plans the Minister is making so that people who are also from other countries who have been scammed into Ghana will also find a way around this, and make sure the perpetrators are also apprehended. And once they are also here, what alternatives

are there for them to get them back or to help them settle in?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well, I thought you were advising, or is it a question? Hon Minister, did you get it as a question? All right.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Well, thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I listened attentively to my Hon Colleague, and he wants to know what measures we are putting in place to deal with the reverse situation of those who are scamming others particularly in the West African region and are transiting through Ghana.

We are conscious of that development. It is a two-way affair. These QNET and other scammers are not only sending Ghanaians to neighbouring countries, but the reverse is also true. I can confirm that we are working, as I said, in a collaborative effort. So, we have INTERPOL. We have within Ghana, the Immigration Service, the National Security, and a standing committee that meets regularly. As I have indicated, this year we have held four meetings already, and we are really assessing the situation. If care is not taken, this can even degenerate where they can be recruited into joining terrorist organisations and all of that when they get desperate, because these are people who have been stripped of all their earnings, all their resources, and they are desperate.

So, it is a matter that we are paying serious attention to, and I can confirm

that as a member of the National Security Council, this is a matter that we have discussed quite seriously. I will only appeal that when some of these cases are detected in Members' constituencies, they can swiftly bring them to our attention so that we can involve the authorities. I see that in his case, he tried to round up his constituents and then he failed, which allowed them to escape. But if we had quickly shared the information and brought in the professionals; the National Security, the Immigration, or the Ghana Armed Forces, I am sure they could have rounded them up more easily, and that would have helped us to really unravel the network and see who the ringleaders are.

Because so far, unfortunately, we have not been able to arrest the masterminds, those who are spearheading this.

4.12 p.m.

We are able to identify where they are kept, and then we go in and rescue them. But we will be very delighted to get the masterminds, those who are the sponsors and the real architects of this fraudulent scheme.

Mr Speaker, let us share intelligence and bring in the professionals. I think that will produce the results that we all demand. But I want to commend the Hon Member for being proactive and helping to bring this matter to the fore. I believe that as we continue to work together and share information, we can get to the bottom of this. But as a public education,

let us get our young people to stay away from these schemes. Let us educate them on how to migrate. The only way is to go through regular channels, go to the Embassies or the High Commissions. It does not matter how many times they refuse one a visa, there is no sanction for multiple refusals and also, let us believe in our country. Let us believe that we can make it here. If someone owns a house, or has GHC80,000.00 or GHC150,000.00, that is good money that can be used to start a business. Why would one want to give it to a scammer who will kidnap him or her in another country? So, we really should educate our young people and change their mindset that they can make it here. Foreigners come here with far less and are able in no time to become owners of conglomerates, big companies, and they are employing other people. So let us help in that public education.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, let me plead with you. The noise in the Chamber is just too much. We have brought our own Brother to respond to pertinent issues within the country. He is speaking and we are making noise. We do not hear anything.

Yes, my Brother.

**Mr Emmanuel Kofi Ntekuni:** Mr Speaker, Pru East and Pru West are neighbouring constituencies and what affects Pru East to a large extent affects Pru West. As we speak, I have a number of youths who are trapped in there and some of them, as he indicated, have to

sell their cars, containers, and other things to get there. Some of them are sick there. The information we are getting is too appalling. I want to ask the Minister; can he consider establishing an office desk where he can receive complaints from the affected victims' relatives? Also, will the Minister consider extending reintegration measures to those who have been rescued successfully and repatriated.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, I commend the Hon Member for the question and his very useful recommendations. Save to assure the Hon Member that all the recommendations he has made are existing, let me use this opportunity to confirm that at the Ministry we have a department that specialises in these matters. We call the department the Consular and Humanitarian Affairs Bureau (COHAB) and Ghanaians are free to walk to the Ministry at any time. I will put out the contact numbers and the emails.

We have a very active Public Affairs Bureau as well, which interfaces with the general public. But please know that we have officials, well-trained experts in these matters who are well-honed in their skills in helping to detect these matters, and everyone is free and welcome at any time. If anyone has parents, a guardian, or a friend who has information, please contact either our Information and Public Affairs Bureau or COHAB and we will act promptly.

Mr Speaker, on the matter of integration support, I can confirm to the Hon Member that all of these people we rescue, we do not only bring them home without any integration mechanism. Counselling services were offered to the recent group we brought in from Nigeria. We supported them to make sure that they are in the right psychological frame, because these are people who are traumatised. Some of them are assaulted, starved, and all of that, and we cannot just watch and leave them in that state. So, we are doing a lot of reintegration.

We are working with our partners, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), and when they come, we attend to them psychologically and also, give them some stipends. That is why we continue to urge this House to support our efforts to establish the Consular Fund so that there will be funding available at all times to assist us in these efforts.

Mr Speaker, finally, I want to pay a glowing tribute to our Foreign Service officials across the continent, in particular. A lot of them use their own resources, when they run out of budget, they make contributions to support the rescue effort, to help our compatriots get some food and hotel accommodation, when they run out of budget because of the numbers involved, even before they arrive in Ghana. I really want to doff my hat and celebrate our Foreign Service officials for the incredible sacrifices and patriotism that they continue to demonstrate across our missions in helping us to rescue our fellow

compatriots. I think they are the unsung heroes in this matter, and we have not celebrated them enough.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, let me call our Brother who used to work at the Foreign Affairs, Hon Owiredu.

**Mr Charles Owiredu Asuako:** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I want to ask the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs what measures he has put in place to ensure that these officers that he spoke about are reimbursed for the cost of repatriation. The Hon Minister knows that these officers complain about their remuneration, their allowances, and what not. So, if he has paid this glowing tribute to them, I thought that being his responsibility as a Minister and as a Ministry to ensure that the Missions do have enough resources to cater for these repatriation costs, he would do the needful by at least letting us know the plans he has put in place to reimburse them for these efforts.

4.22p.m.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, let me commend Amb Owiredu for his question and as I did say, the Foreign Service officials are doing a great job in helping our efforts to repatriate and bring our victims back home to safety and remove them away from harm's way. Having said that, the Ministry reimburses. We have a policy to reimburse when it is formally requested. But as Amb Owiredu knows, the compassion and the love that

a lot of our Foreign Service officials have, not all of them put in formal requests for reimbursement. They do it to also show their love as Ghanaians supporting fellow Ghanaians. That is why I have really been celebrating them and saying that they are the unsung heroes. But we do have a policy where if they request to be reimbursed—Only a couple of days ago, our colleagues who assisted in the Trinidad and Tobago situation, I approved a reimbursement. Those who ask to be reimbursed are reimbursed. So,

The policy exists and I can assure the House that when we have the Consular Fund, that will deal with this matter clearly. It will not be left to the benevolence and the compassion—But I think that is a good spirit that we need to promote. Even if we have the Consular Fund, and there are fellow Ghanaians who want to help a citizen in distress, I think that nothing stops them. I am sure that there are special blessings for this category of Ghanaians and foreign service officials, and I know they will have a special place in heaven as well.

So, thank you very much for the question.

**Mr Samuel Awuku:** Mr Speaker, I would like the Minister for Foreign Affairs to also take note that, beyond the trafficking aspect of this whole thing, is an international visa fraud syndicate where we have these fraudsters exploiting the calendar date as far as the U.S. Consular and date services are concerned. So, one would have them sometimes telling him or her that they

can get him or her a date in Ivory Coast, Benin, or Togo. So, some of these people out of desperation—Because if there are businessmen who would like to travel for business and all, and they try a date today on the U.S. calendar portal, they get 2026 or 2028.

So, maybe beyond that, I would like to know the steps the Ministry is taking to engage the U.S. Embassy and their Consular Services to find out what we can do to help address the gaps that these scammers are exploiting.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I commend the Hon Sammy Awuku for his question. He has raised an important dimension. Mr Speaker, he is right, that there are some of the victims who are lured because they could not find visa dates. If one needs a visa appointment from some of these embassies, one may have to wait for six months to 10 months, sometimes over a year. And that is why, Mr Speaker, a couple of months ago, we put out a *note verbale* to all the diplomatic missions operating in Ghana to address the matter.

Only this morning, we—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Minister, hold on.

Hon Members, please—

**Mr Ablakwa:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I was making the point that we have issued a *note verbale* to all the Diplomatic Missions to address that challenge. It is not only with the United States. We have received petitions from a considerable number of countries. Only this morning, when I received the open letters of the new German Ambassador to Ghana I made that point because reports are coming in from those who want visa appointments to go to Germany. So, we have reiterated our demand that they need to address that bottleneck and open up the space so that those who require visa appointments can have them. It is their right.

I will emphasise that the embassies reserve the right to decide who they will grant a visa. That one is their sovereign right. We are not, as a House or as a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, going to dictate to them who they admit into their country. But as for the appointment date, they should make appointment dates available, particularly at this time when students are preparing for admissions. There are a considerable number of Ghanaians who go abroad for first degree or second degree, and this is the time. We are receiving a lot of petitions from parents and guardians who are in distress.

We want to reiterate our calls. The ambassadors know we have written to them already and we have been calling them already to take action. I must say that since the *note verbale*, we have seen improvements with some of the countries. Some of the countries are doing well, and to be fair, I would have

to applaud them for responding to our demands. But there are others who will have to step up and be more responsive to Ghanaians.

Linked to that is also how they treat the visa applicants, making sure that there are congenial environments where they can sit and wait to be interviewed, so that they are not just left at the mercy of the vagaries of the weather.

Mr Speaker, these are matters that the Ministry is taking very seriously and I am very certain that in the next few days, we shall all see an improvement because we have received assurances from the Heads of Mission that they will take action as we have requested.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

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

I am taking two more.

Yes, Hon Member for Takoradi.

**Mr Kwabena Okyere Darko-Mensah:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, this phenomenon has been growing for a very long time and it started with a website network called QNET. Currently, what we have realised is that those who have been detained or captured are being forced to call other people to also bring them on board.

So, we have cells in Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and just recently, I think in January before I left office, we had to

dismantle another cell in Anaji of about 40 persons. I want to know from the Minister, the plans they have put in place to dismantle the internet network of QNET such that they cannot use it as a stepping stone in luring more people into the business.

Secondly, what steps are they going to take to trace, especially the international calls that tend, based on the reports they get from other people, to locate all these cells around Africa, to disband these projects in the first place?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I wish the Hon Minister could cut the answers a bit shorter for us.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, I will follow your lead.

Let me assure the Hon Member of Parliament and the former Western Regional Minister that we are really focusing on the leaders and the masterminds who set up these cells and the network. For obvious reasons, I do not want to go into details about our *modus operandi*, but I just want to give him full assurances. And let me use this opportunity to urge Ghanaians, when they get a call from any of these cells, those who they can tell have been kidnapped and are being lured to bring in more victims, please let us know. All we need to know is the number that called. That is good enough. Once we get the phone number that was used to call, it helps us a lot. I do not want to give the details, but it will really help us to resolve the matter.

So, any information Ghanaians can help us with, particularly the web addresses they are using, the Momo numbers they are using or the calls Ghanaians are receiving, let us know and that will help us to unravel this mystery.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Eric Nana Agyemang-Prempeh:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Hon Minister mentioned the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) helping in the process of reception for the victims. Anytime the IOM is part of it, NADMO does not encounter problems financially in the course of reintegration. But the process whereby NADMO alone goes into it without IOM, sometimes financial issues become a problem during the reintegration. So, I want to find out—The Minister knows the financial problems of NADMO. What is he doing to support NADMO in case IOM is not part of the reception and reintegration processes?

Thank you.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I am very grateful to you for allowing my MP to ask this question. It looks like a lot of Colleagues do not know that many years ago, I was made an *mmerantie hene* in Tepa. So, I am a very strong member of the Ashanti Kingdom for those who do not know.

4.32 p.m.

So, Mr Speaker, he has asked an important question about the International Organization for Migration (IOM) collaboration. He is right that the benefit we get from collaborating with IOM is that they have dedicated funding and the reintegration package is loftier and more handsome when IOM is involved.

The challenge, though, is that now IOM is also facing some cuts because of the executive orders of President Trump. So, it tells us that we have to build our own resilience and we need to support NADMO, so that, with or without IOM, we can take good care of our people and we are doing that. I recall, at Cabinet, we discussed support for NADMO, which the Hon Member headed not too long ago and I am sure that in the next Budget cycle we will be improving the allocation to NADMO, so that they can help us.

We are seeing more numbers beyond even the QNET scam. A number of countries are doing deportations. So, as they deport people, we have to be ready to receive, reintegrate, and help them with startup capital to invest and get their lives back. So, I assure the Hon Member that we will give NADMO all the support, even though I acknowledge that it is under the Ministry of the Interior. But this is a larger Government commitment which I can speak to.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I will now come to Leadership if there is any—

**Mr Jerry Ahmed Shaib:** Mr Speaker, I have heard how eloquently the Minister for Foreign Affairs is dealing

with the Question. But one of the answers he gave was to do with petitions they have received. I am just trying to find out if, as part of the petitions he has ever received, he has been made aware of students' visas now being three months and it is a single entry. So, if a student is going to school for about two years, the student is given a visa for three months and it is a single entry. Respectfully, what is the Ministry is doing about that?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister, are you comfortable responding to this?

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, the question of Hon Jerry Shaib is one that we have to look into. Because the assurances we received from the U.S. Embassy is that the three-month single entry – which is a temporary measure for those 36 countries President Trump is looking at for various violations, in the case of Ghana, visa overstays – they say that 21 per cent of our students who have travelled over the last 10 years have not been returning, so they want us to take action. That is why they placed us in that 36-country category.

But they assured us that it is only for B1 and B2 visas, which are the visas issued to tourists: that is those who are going on a tourism visit or holiday makers. But for students who are given the F visas, if a student is going on a one-year programme, they will be given one year and if it is a four-year programme— We have verified from a number of Ghanaians and what I have seen, so far, is that if a student makes it clear that he or she is going as a student, has paid the

fees and is expected by the university in the United States of America (U.S.A.), the person is given a visa to cover the duration. So, I am quite surprised about this particular matter. I do not know if it was an error.

But I am willing to work with Hon Shaib after today's Sitting, so that we can intervene because that is not the assurance we received from the Americans. The B1 and B2 three-month single entry is just for that category of travellers: tourist visas. It should not affect students and those going for long-stay programmes who need other visas, like the F and J visas. So, Mr Speaker, that is my response to this.

**Mr Frank Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, let me thank the Minister for the detailed answers. The Minister had mentioned NCCE and had gone ahead to appeal to the NCCE, after having elucidated on collaborative efforts with other important and relevant Ministries.

Mr Speaker, will the Minister consider a deliberate attempt by the Ministry to rope in the NCCE and the media, so that it will not just be an appeal in passing, but it will be a deliberate policy? Because, over the years, the NCCE has been lamenting about budgetary provision, so they have always lacked the wherewithal to be able to do their constitutional mandate. I am afraid an appeal from the despatch box to the NCCE would not be enough, so I am interested in knowing what the Minister or his Ministry can do beyond the appeal.

Mr Speaker, let me conclude on this question. He has also appealed that Ghanaians should stay clear of fraudsters and they should stay and help build our country at one breath. Then at another breath, he has also spoken about how the Ministry is also formalising the process of ensuring that the youth can travel appropriately to other jurisdictions and work. My question to the Minister is, where does he draw the balance between engaging the youth to work in nation building and support and at the same time, maybe, helping them to also travel and leave the shores of this country?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister, you have another substantive Question, so I will cut it after this; then, we will take your last Question.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, I commend the Minority Chief Whip for the questions. He has asked two important questions.

The first one is support for the NCCE. Mr Speaker, I am sure that we are all aware that the NCCE is an independent constitutional body, so they are not under my Ministry. But I agree that over the years, they have not been receiving the resources that they need. I think there has to be a collective effort. All of us must really pay attention to the NCCE because if we resource the NCCE, there are a lot of social vices, nefarious and dubious schemes that people fall victim to out of genuine ignorance— They just did not know, did not have the information and were not empowered to stay clear of such schemes and they fall

victims; then, it becomes too late. So, we need to support the NCCE.

I am sure that in the next Budget cycle, we can all work to improve the allocation for the NCCE. I want to assure the Hon Member that they are on board. We are working closely with them and we have a deliberate policy to include them and the media. Perhaps, we should be looking at a formal meeting with the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), so that we can have a more spirited campaign to educate our young people. I will take that up and do that.

Finally, on the second part of his question on where we draw the balance, the point I was making is that if a person has that amount of money, GHC80,000 or GHC200,000, has a house and cars, but has sold his house and cars just to travel, the person could have used that money to set up a business and to invest in something here.

So, the Labour Mobility Agreement, as I conclude, Mr Speaker, is to take care of young people who are skilled but do not really have any means of investing, so that they can go out there under a specific contract, work, and then come back to develop our country.

4.42 p.m.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, all that the Hon Minister has answered is for one Question. He is left with another Question and I will ask Hon Nana Asafo Adjei-Ayeh, the Hon Member for Bosome Freho—Are you putting in any application? Very well.

Hon Member, you may go on with your Question.

### **State of Ghana's Embassy and Ghanaians Living in Togo**

**Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh (NPP — Bosome Freho):** Mr Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs the state of Ghana's Embassy in Togo and the state of Ghanaians living in Togo in the midst of the recent political instability in Togo.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much, Hon Minister. Hon Minister, people do not see you, so once you come here, everybody wants to, at least—

Go ahead, Hon Minister.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, it is very good and healthy. Except that, I do not know if you will allow me to make a preliminary comment. I am surprised that the Hon Asafo-Adjei Ayeh has a formal Question on Togo, but he has already held a press conference and condemned me for not taking any action. I do not think it is fair to hold press conferences and attack the Minister for Foreign Affairs when he knows he is going to ask a Question. I do not think that conduct is healthy.

Mr Speaker, I remember that Rt Hon Speaker Oquaye used to criticise that conduct. He said that if a Member is going to ask a Minister a Question, he or she should give the Minister a fair hearing first. Hear the Minister in Parliament first, before a Member goes

to hold press conferences to condemn the Minister. That is just on a lighter note. Mr Speaker, I have made that point, so I would like to proceed to answer the Question.

Mr Speaker, it may be recalled that the National Assembly of Togo, by a majority vote, adopted a new Constitution in March 2024, establishing the Fifth Republic and transitioning from a presidential to a parliamentary system. This represented a substantial departure from the previous Constitution—

**Mr Annoh-Dompneh** — *rose* —

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister, just hold on.

**Mr Annoh-Dompneh:** Mr Speaker, a while ago, the Minister having answered the Questions excellently, in his attempt to answer the Urgent Question numbered (b) in the name of the Hon Asafo-Adjei Ayeh, he prefixed his Answers with some comments that the Member had held a press conference and attacked him and that if the Member knew he was going to ask this Question, he should not have and that it is not fair, on the part of the Member, to have attacked or held a press conference before coming to ask him the Question on the Floor.

Mr Speaker, in this House, we are regulated by our Orders and the Constitution. I want to appeal to the Minister and our Colleague that that part of his Answer or his prefixed comment to his Answer should be expunged from the records. Why? Because there is no

provision in our Orders that bars the Member from holding a press conference.

To ask a Question is one of the tools that Members have at their disposal to elicit Response from Ministers. To say that if the Hon Member knows he was going to ask him a Question, he should not hold a press conference, it is not tenable. It is not right. We can hold a press conference tomorrow or today and ask the Minister a Question the next day; that is admissible.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. I have heard you.

**Mr Annoh-Dompneh:** Mr Speaker, yes, you have heard me, but some consequential directives are welcome here.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, he said that the former Speaker made a statement to that effect, that if you are going to bring a Minister here to respond to a specific Question, you do not—That is what he said.

**Mr Annoh-Dompneh:** Mr Speaker, I do not intend to litigate on this matter, but to the extent that the Hon Minister has not produced evidence to back his claim, we cannot accept that—*[Interruption]*—No. Why? If you have something to say, get up and speak. I am making my point; if you disagree with me, get up and make your point.

Mr Speaker, we insist. Mr Speaker, with respect, we on this Side of the House, insist that either the Minister

provides a backing to that statement or he should steer clear and simply go ahead and answer his Question. Mr Speaker, we are not taking this kindly at all.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, let him go on and answer the Question.

Hon Minister, come and answer the Question—

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** We should take it out from the records. Mr Speaker, we should expunge that from the records, then he can go ahead and answer his Question.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** That is what I am unable to do.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, why?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** That is what I am unable to do.

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** Mr Speaker, it is within your powers. We have not offended any of the Rules.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes?

**Mr Annoh-Dompreh:** So, he cannot tell us when to hold press conferences.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minority Chief Whip, as much as you have not offended any of the Rules, I do not think he has also offended any of the Rules—[*Hear! Hear!*—]—so let him go on.

Yes, Hon Minister?

**Mr Dafeamekpor** — *rose* —

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Majority Chief Whip, we have a lot to do.

**Mr Dafeamekpor:** Mr Speaker, please, we are doing politics; he is playing politics. Mr Speaker, we have a manner of answering Questions in this House, clearly captured under Order 88. The Minority Chief Whip may not like the Answer of the Minister, but he has provided an Answer to the Question.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** It was not an Answer.

**Mr Dafeamekpor:** Mr Speaker, please. He said a part of the Answer of the Minister should be expunged; yet, he has not been able to establish that any part of our Standing Orders has been breached and yet, he is making a submission to you—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Majority Chief Whip, his application was turned down, so I do not see why you should go on. We have a lot to do—

**Mr Dafeamekpor:** Mr Speaker, let the records reflect that the Answer of the Minister was parliamentary; he has not offended any part of our Standing Orders. So, Hon Minister, proceed to provide further Answers.

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, I think my Colleague, the Majority Chief Whip, was not listening to the Minister. The Minister did not even start answering the Question. He said the

Member was aware he was going to ask a Question, but he held a press conference to attack him.

Mr Speaker, if the Minister cannot provide sections of the press conference that attacked him, then that should be expunged from our records because it is not part of the Answer or the Question. He said he held a press conference to attack him, without answering the Question. If he does not have evidence to that effect and the Member performing his function, which is outside the Chamber, how can that be brought into the Chamber to be used against him? So, the Minister should answer the Question.

Mr Speaker, you should expunge the part that says that the Member held a press conference to attack him because the Member did not attack him. He was speaking to issues that he thought were necessary.

**Mr Samuel Abdulai Jinapor:** Mr Speaker, I heard the respected Majority Chief Whip. The problem with the Minister's way of proceeding is when he said, "before I answer the Question". Mr Speaker, Order 88 is very clear; it is titled, "Manner of asking and answering Question". The Minister himself, and the record will bear me out, said, "Mr Speaker, before I answer the Question, let me make a preliminary point".

4.52 p.m.

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Minister, as part of his answer, had said that he did not expect this question because the Hon Member had already spoken to it and

said ABCD, that would have been very much within the confines of our rules and even if we were not happy with the answer, we cannot call out the Minister. So, Mr Speaker, I think the Minority leadership is right. The Hon Minister is very capable of answering the questions. The Minister knows he is going *ultra vires*. The Minister knows that he has gone outside the rules so he should just accept that—I can see that the Minister has realised that he has been caught by technicalities. He should just accept the first part to be expunged and then he proceeds to answer the question. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for upholding the Oquaye doctrine which I invoked. Mr Speaker, I want to commend the House for the opportunity to respond to this question. It may be recalled that the National Assembly of Togo, by a majority vote, adopted a new constitution in March 2024 establishing the Fifth Republic and transitioning from a presidential to a parliamentary system. This represented a substantial departure from the previous constitution, which provided for the election of a President by universal suffrage with a two-term limit of five years each.

Under the new constitution, His Excellency Faure Gnassingbé was inaugurated as the President of the Council of Ministers, a newly created position held by the leader of the majority party in Parliament, with no specified term limit. This measure has been widely condemned by opposition factions, civil society organisations,

youth groups and Amnesty International as an attempt to extend his tenure in office. As a result, this became the primary catalyst for the violent protests that took place in Lomé and its surrounding regions.

Mass protests were reported to have occurred in Togo over recent weeks culminating in violent clashes between law enforcement authorities and demonstrators from the 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The protests emerged as President Faure Gnassingbé faced mounting demands from critics for his resignation amidst constitutional amendments that could potentially extend his stay in power indefinitely. Civil society organisations and social media influencers organised these protests in response to the government's suppression of demonstrations held earlier in the month.

## **Background**

Youth-led demonstrations organised via social media erupted in Lomé and other urban centres on the 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2025. The demonstration was primarily triggered by recent constitutional modifications which were regarded as an effort to prolong President Faure Gnassingbé tenure indefinitely. Additionally, grievances prompting the violent protests include the apprehension of prominent musician, Aamron (a Togolese rapper and activist known for his outspoken criticism of President Faure Gnassingbé's administration), deteriorating economic conditions and high youth unemployment rates.

While the demonstration was quite peaceful in the beginning, clashes with security personnel resulted in the deployment of tear gas and detention of approximately 80 individuals, comprising students, medical professionals and civil society members. Of these, 56 protesters were subsequently released on the 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2025. However, some individuals including a French national whose identity remains undisclosed, continue to be in custody.

Furthermore, journalists were reportedly subjected to physical mistreatment and compelled to delete footage from their devices during the demonstration. On June 16, the government subsequently suspended Radio France International (RFI) and France 24 from broadcasting within Togo for three months, accusing them of incitement and disinformation. Additionally, the government invoked Law No.2019-010, which prohibits unauthorised public gatherings. It accused the organisers of the protests of acting on the behalf of "foreign interests" with the intent to destabilise the State.

Despite the prohibition, spontaneous demonstrations emerged in multiple districts of Lomé, including Bé, Colombe de la Paix, and along Oti Boulevard from June 26 to June 28, 2025. Security personnel responded promptly and decisively, utilising tear gas to disperse the protesters. The application of crowd-control tactics incited panic among residents, resulting in disorderly scenes and fragmented movements. Throughout this period, the city experienced a substantial security

presence, with nearly all businesses closed and markets left vacant.

Four individuals are reported to have lost their lives in Lomé following violent clashes between security forces and anti-government demonstrators. According to local NGOs, the bodies of seven persons were recovered from bodies of water in and around the districts of Akodesséwa and Bé in Lomé.

The security personnel also purportedly carried out door-to-door operations, leading to arbitrary arrests and engendering fear and panic within the affected communities. Over 60 individuals, including students, activists and health workers, were reportedly detained. Nineteen of those arrested were found guilty of aggravated public disorder by the Public Prosecutor and received a sentence of 12 months' imprisonment, with 11 months suspended on July 4, 2025. The remaining individuals were released due to the lack of sufficient evidence. Meanwhile, a government spokesperson attributed the fatalities to drowning, warning against the dissemination of "unverified information".

## **Observation**

The protests have garnered criticism from regional observers and human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, which has urged for independent investigations into the deaths and alleged abuses. The persistent lack of official acknowledgement regarding casualties and the use of force has intensified mistrust, leading to

renewed calls for further demonstrations which occurred on July 16 and 17, 2025, coinciding with the forthcoming municipal elections.

Although there have been no reports of Ghanaian involvement in the fatalities or arrests, the Togolese government decided to close all unofficial crossing points amid heightened security measures along the Ghana-Togo border on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025. This action restricted access to residents of border communities and other individuals who depend on these crossings for their daily activities.

The decision was reportedly made due to concerns that the youth leaders behind the demonstrations from the 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2025, have established operational bases in Ghana and are coordinating activities from across the border.

Let me emphasise that the Government of Ghana is not aware of Ghana serving as a base for any protester or any activist in Togo, and these claims are baseless and totally unfounded.

Currently, only the main Aflao Border and the Beat 9 Pedestrian Border post remain open to travelers. Meanwhile, the situation in Lomé remains calm, with businesses and offices, including the Mission, operating normally without any hindrance to their activities. In a briefing to the Diplomatic Corps on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2025, the Foreign Minister of Togo, Prof Robert Dussey, reiterated the government's commitment to peace and security and assured the

Diplomatic Community that the situation across the country remains stable and peaceful.

### Ghanaians Living in Togo

On this note, Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that there have been no reports linking any Ghanaian national to the recent fatalities or arrests in Lomé.

5.02 p.m.

Our mission in Lomé continues to engage proactively with the relevant local authorities to monitor unfolding developments and uphold the safety and security of Ghanaian citizens in Togo. These engagements have included maintaining open and active channels of communication with Togolese law enforcement and Immigration services, providing timely consular assistance and advisory support to Ghanaian nationals, particularly those in areas impacted by recent unrest, participating in regional security dialogues to strengthen mutual cooperation and advance the protection of the rights of Ghanaian residents.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our mission in Togo remains vigilant and responsive, reaffirming Ghana's diplomatic principles of non-interference, citizen protection and constructive regional cooperation. It is pertinent, however, to observe that none of the diplomatic missions accredited to Togo have been closed down and citizens from other countries have not been evacuated as a result of the protests should any development arise, Mr Speaker, the mission is well positioned

to act swiftly and transparently in the interests of all Ghanaian nationals.

I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh, any supplementary question?

**Mr Ayeh:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Minister for coming to respond. Mr Speaker, press conferences are to inform the public and questions here in the Chamber demand answers. Let the Minister not confuse his personal discomfort with national duties. No? — *[Interruption]*—Let the Minister not confuse his personal discomfort with national duties. Mr Speaker, Asafo-Adjei did not do a press conference. It was the Minority Caucus that did the press conference. Let the Minister get it clear.

Mr Speaker, I want to find out from the Minister, given the reported killings and the arrest in Lomé, has the Ministry officially engaged ECOWAS or the African Union (AU) to trigger any form of regional protection or we are waiting to see how the situation will go.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Hon Minister, I will remind you once again, please keep your answers a bit brief for us.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the Hon Asafo-Adjei knows that I have a very thick skin. I have no personal discomfort at all. They can hold as many press conferences as they want and I can take them. *[Hear! Hear!]*

So, Mr Speaker, the Government of Ghana, as a founding member of ECOWAS and the pioneer of the African Union, which used to be the Organisation of African Unity, the OAU, we have, within these two Organisations, discussed the Togolese situation. Our position has been communicated in the various communiques that have been issued by the AU and ECOWAS and beyond that, Mr Speaker, we have the leadership of these Organisations. The current leader of ECOWAS is the distinguished President of Sierra Leone, President Julius Maada Bio, and he has been tasked by his peers to lead in the mediation with all the various factions within ECOWAS and we believe in his leadership.

In the same way, the AU is also doing its best and engaging with the various factions and the government in Togo and we believe that, for now, those regional efforts are adequate and should be supported and Ghana is being cautious because we are the closest neighbour and also, we, not being in the leadership of ECOWAS and the AU, we have to be mindful that we are not accused of undercutting or undermining those who are in the leadership to respond to these matters. But I can confirm to you that we remain committed to our principles of non-interference, good neighbourliness, and we are balancing all of these fundamental diplomatic principles so that it does not mar the good relations between Ghana and Togo.

**Mr Ayeh:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to find out, has the Embassy established any functioning 24-hour

hotline or digital communication platform that Ghanaians in Togo would reach out to the Embassy should there be any case? If they have, how many people have reached out through this 24-hour hotline or digital platform till now?

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

**Mr Ablakwa:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, let me commend the Hon Asafo-Adjei for just expressing his belief in the 24-hour economy of President John Dramani Mahama— *[Hear! Hear!]*—which continues to reflect in all aspects of national development.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, I can confirm that our dynamic and hard-working staff at our mission in Lomé have been in touch with the Ghanaian community and they have established communication channels for 24-hour communication. In terms of the details, the specific requests, I can submit a full report on the nature of the calls, the kind of assistance that the callers have been calling for, and I am happy to do that.

But, Mr Speaker, let me use this opportunity to place on the record of Parliament that even before this disaster in Togo, we had sent out a circular to all our 71 diplomatic missions, that they need to maintain 24-hour hotline services. We have to be responsive. All calls will now be recorded and we are putting in place simultaneous systems where multiple calls can be received at the same time and we are dealing head-on with this challenge of non-

responsiveness. So, all the missions were given a deadline, I think by 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2025, to install these modern communication systems and about 52 of them have complied. We are assisting the remaining to install all of these modern communication systems so that our embassies will be responsive to particularly the needs of Ghanaians who live within their jurisdictions.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. Hon Member, the last question.

**Mr Ayeh:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm to us whether the Embassy has any evacuation or operational plan or response and if they have, is there a way that the Ghanaian citizen in Togo or Lomé will be updated about such evacuation plans should there be any case?

**Mr Ablakwa:** I am grateful to you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I can confirm to you that all our missions have evacuation plans. Indeed, it is part of the new reforms and the new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that we have rolled out, every mission must have an evacuation plan and must have regular simulations so that these evacuations can be done seamlessly.

Mr Speaker, let me confirm that that is what we brought to bear in the recent Israeli-Iranian conflict and that is what allowed us to swiftly evacuate our students in Israel and in Iran, Tehran, to be specific and so far, Mr Speaker, the

evacuation plans are working and none of our compatriots has been caught up in any of these theatres of conflict across the world.

I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. Yes, Hon Isaac Boamah-Nyarko?

**Mr Isaac Boamah-Nyarko:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

5.12 p.m.

Mr Speaker, from the response of the Minister, he indicated that the Aflao Border currently remains the main border opened. But for purposes of business and trading, Aflao Border is an important corridor for tax purposes with the customs. There is also the Noepe-Akanu Border, which also has a place for trading between Ghana and Togo. With the incidents happening in Togo, it has had some significant effects on trading between Ghana and Togo and consequently, on our tax revenue.

Mr Speaker, I want to find out from the Hon Minister, the plan of Government to work towards ensuring that trade between Ghana and Togo, and the taxes that we generate on the Aflao and Noepe-Akanu Borders among others are not affected?

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, I can confirm that we are engaging with our counterparts in Togo to reopen the borders, because it is really a matter that

affects a lot of economic activity. Asigame in Lome is a very popular and major market. People travel from Aflao to the market, and vice versa. We are quite confident that these borders will be reopened soon, particularly, in the spirit of Pan-Africanism and within the objectives of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), where we want to increase trade among ourselves beyond the under 20 per cent that we are doing currently. So, the engagements are going on and we are quite optimistic that very soon the borders will be reopened.

**Mr S. A. Jinapor:** Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for his Answers. I have followed the presentation of the Minister.

Mr Speaker, the Minister will agree with me that at the heart of the age-old Togolese crisis, is the issue of democracy. My question to the Minister is, will the Ghanaian Government support the deepening of democratic practice in Togo, particularly, as it relates to term limits?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Minister, are you minded to respond to the question? [*Uproar*]

Hon Members, please allow me. The reason we brought the Minister is different from the question asked. That is why I asked if he is minded to answer that question, then I would give him the floor. If he is not, then I would ask the Member to file a substantive Question. So, Minister, if you are minded, then you can respond to the question.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Well, Mr Speaker, I do not want the Hon Ranking Member to say that I am running away from his question, even though, he should have filed a substantive Question in this regard.

Mr Speaker, having said that, there are a number of principles at play to this important question. As a democratic country that has emerged as a shining example to other countries, we remain a role model, a poster child for democracy, and we are committed at urging everybody to emulate the democratic credentials of Ghana. It is the best form of Government. It aids development. It allows for civic spaces to be expanded for inclusivity and for everybody to contribute towards national development. So, it is really what all of us must commit to.

Mr Speaker, let me say that we will continue to support democratic efforts not only on the continent, but globally. Everywhere that our expertise— Some of our former Electoral Commissioners, for example, Dr Afari-Gyan, is called upon by the United Nations (UN) every now and then to assist other countries and some of our institutions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is credited to have established the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Namibia. We support the institutions in Rwanda, Burundi and many others. So, I think that that is a soft power we have, that we must continue to really project and advocate. So, within that framework, Ghana will always be a force for good and a force for democracy, to deepen democracy globally.

Mr Speaker, having said that, we also have to be mindful of the sovereignty of other countries. When sovereign countries say they have voted and carried out a referendum, we will be careful not to be accused of meddling or interfering with what other sovereign countries are doing. It is a delicate balance. We will keep proceeding very cautiously and maneuver in a way that diplomatically does not affect our time-tested principles of being positively neutral and being friends of all and enemies to none. All of these overarching principles must continue to guide our foreign policy. So, we will be proceeding gingerly when it comes to these matters.

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan** — *rose* —

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Deputy Majority Leader?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, tomorrow is the day for the Mid-year review, which means that we would not be able to do very much tomorrow. I am just pleading with you, if we can limit the supplementary questions being asked, so that we can do the other Businesses.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

Yes, Hon Member for Suaman?

**Mr Frederick Addy:** Hon Minister, I want to find out, if your Ministry has identified and documented the total number of Ghanaians currently residing in Togo, including, students, traders, and undocumented migrants, and how these data are being verified in real time.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister, did you get the question? Please be brief.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, the question of the Hon Member is on data. It is an important question. He wants to know if the Ministry has compiled accurate data of all Ghanaians living in Togo. This raises a very important issue. Our Missions continue to encourage Ghanaians who enter other jurisdictions to make themselves known, report and have their details taken, so that we can always be on the lookout, seek their welfare and extend consular assistance to them when they need it.

Mr Speaker, in terms of the categories he has given, yes, we know the students, particularly, those on Government scholarships. We have the data of the Year Abroad Programme for students who study French. We have the data of those who are in Lomé studying French. We have the data on the recognised associations who have registered with the Mission. The challenge will be those who come in quietly, and do not either join the Ghanaian associations or make their presence known to our Embassy staff.

Mr Speaker, but we keep urging Ghanaians that when they enter a country, they should please let the Embassy know they are around, so that we can guide them.

Mr Speaker, I am willing to provide a breakdown of all of the Ghanaians who have been formally brought to our attention. We have the names and contact

numbers of the students and those in the associations. I can share that if the Speaker so decides.

5.22 p.m.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I will give the last question to the Hon Member and that would be all.

**Nana Agyei Baffour Awuah:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much; mine is to let the Minister clarify something he said. He stated that the Government was not aware of any operational base in the Republic of Ghana. He will agree with me that not being aware is not the same as not existing. Can he assure this House that the Government knows, as a matter of fact, that the youth in Togo involved in the violence do not have any operational base in the Republic of Ghana?

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, I want to commend the Hon Member for the opportunity to restate this point. I recall that, in my response, I even added that those allegations being hurled at Ghana are baseless. The Government can confirm, authoritatively, that we do not have an operational base here to destabilise Togo or any other country. We are stating that emphatically and very authoritatively and I want to thank him for the opportunity to re-emphasise that. Ghana will not serve as a base to destabilise any country, government or to foment trouble anywhere. And in the case of Togo, we have checked and nothing has come to the attention of National Security and those allegations are baseless, totally unfounded and are without merit.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, on behalf of the House, I would like to extend our gratitude to the Minister for attending upon the House to respond to his Colleagues. Hon Minister, we are grateful and you are hereby discharged.

Yes, Leadership?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, I want us to pray for you to vary the Order of Business, so we can lay some Papers captured as the item numbered 9(b) on the Order Paper for today.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, please, give me five minutes to suspend the House.

5.25 p.m. — *Sitting suspended.*

5.28 p.m. — *Sitting resumed*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, thank you very much for indulging me.

Yes, Hon Deputy Majority Leader?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, we are looking at the item numbered 9(b) for the Ministry of Education to lay some few annual audit reports. Mr Speaker, if he could actually take them all together, from the item numbered 9(b)(i) to (xxi).

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well. Hon Members, may I invite you to page 5, the item listed 9(b) – Presentation of Papers by the Minister for Education.

## PAPERS

*By the Minister for Education—*

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| <p>(i) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Chartered Institute of Bankers, Ghana, for the year 2024.</p>         | <p>(ix) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the St. Louis College of Education for the year 2024.</p>             |
| <p>(ii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the McCoy College of Education for the year 2024.</p>                    | <p>(x) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Komenda College of Education for the year 2024.</p>                |
| <p>(iii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Enchi College of Education for the year 2024.</p>                   | <p>(xi) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the National Schools Inspectorate Authority for the year 2024.</p>    |
| <p>(iv) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the SDA College of Education, Asokore, Koforidua, for the year 2024.</p> | <p>(xii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Akrokerri College of Education for the year 2024.</p>            |
| <p>(v) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the E. P. College of Education, Bimbilla, for the year 2024.</p>          | <p>(xiii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Takoradi Technical University for the year 2024.</p>            |
| <p>(vi) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Abetifi Presbyterian College of Education for the year 2024.</p>     | <p>(xiv) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Ghana Science Association for the year 2024.</p>                 |
| <p>(vii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the University of Media Arts and Communication for the year 2024.</p>   | <p>(xv) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Ho Technical University for the year 2024.</p>                    |
| <p>(viii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Wiawso College of Education for the year 2024.</p>                 | <p>(xvi) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Peki College of Education for the year 2024.</p>                 |
|   | <p>(xvii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the University of Health and Allied Sciences for the year 2024.</p> |

(xviii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the St Francis College of Education for the year 2024.

(xix) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the University of Mines and Energy for the year 2024.

(xx) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Mampong Technical College of Education for the year 2024.

(xxi) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Students Loan Trust Fund for the year 2024.

*Referred to the Committee on Education.*

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, I see the Minister for the Interior here, so if we could do the 9(c) as well.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

So, Hon Members, page 6, the item listed 9(c) – Presentation of Papers by the Minister for the Interior.

*By the Minister for the Interior—*

(i) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Ghana National Fire Service for the year 2024.

(ii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Ghana Prisons Service for the year 2024.

(iii) Annual Statement by the Audit Committee of the Gaming Commission of Ghana for the year 2024.

*Referred to the Committee on Defence and Interior.*

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, once again, I would like to seek your indulgence and ask permission for us to move to the Order Paper *Addendum* and take the Presentation of Papers by the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. That will be the item numbered 1, under Presentation of Papers, on the Order Paper *Addendum*.

Mr Speaker, thank you.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Minority Leadership?

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, I do not know why the Deputy Majority Leader is taking us back to the Order Paper *Addendum*. We had agreed to do some few clauses on the Bill. Tomorrow, we are expecting the reading of the Mid-Year Budget Review.

At the moment, it is almost 6 p.m. and if he wants us to do everything on the Order Paper *Addendum*, what time will we get to do some of the clauses in the Bill? He needs to prioritise the Business, so that we will know. This is because today, we cannot sit pass 6 p.m.; we have to be here by 10 a.m. tomorrow.

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, I will plead with my Hon Brother that we have actually prioritised the Business, so

we have an idea on what we are doing. I will just urge him to exercise a little patience and he will get a clear path of what we are doing today.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

Hon Members, let me invite you to the Order Paper *Addendum*, the item numbered 1 — Presentation of Papers by the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration.

Hon Chairman of the Committee, you will bow once for all of them; Table, take note of that.

*By the Chairman of the Committee—*

(a) Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

(b) Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Colombia for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of

Diplomatic, Official and Service Passports.

(c) Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports.

(d) Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

(e) Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Host Country Agreement for the Establishment of a Branch Office of AGRA in Accra, Ghana.

(f) Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 2017.

5.38 p.m.

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, can I indulge you again and get you back to the original Order Paper and take item numbered 16 on page 8 of today's Order Paper.

I also have the Minister for Education here who will go through a few of his clauses as was agreed.

Thank you.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, we will turn to page 8 of the Order Paper, item numbered 16, Ghana Scholarships Authority Bill, 2025 at the Consideration Stage.

Is the Chairman for Education Committee here? The Vice is here? Very well.

So, my understanding is that clause 1 to 3 have been done or are we taking everything afresh?

**Mr Haruna Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, the last time—The Chairman would drive it—We ended at clause 22. The intention is just to run through from clause 22 probably to the end and stay the question on “the source of funds” as I do further consultation and then also stay the question on “composition of the Governing Board.” I met with the Education Coalition yesterday and we have agreed to something that Hon Shaibu will give us a draft which will now include a representative of the

Student Union to be nominated by NUGS, which I understand we got. And then a representative of the National Development Planning Commission, which we agreed to. Mr Speaker, the President nominating three will now also be reduced to two so that we give the other one to the representative of the Minister for Gender Children and Social Protection. But that is clause 4 so Mr Speaker, we can move from clause 22, while the Vice Chairman takes us through.

We do not intend to conclude today. I will come back on the major clauses of 20 and 4 as I do consultation. The Coalition also argued strongly about a timeline for the Regulations. So, we will put in a new sub-clause that the Regulations to make this parent Act functional shall not exceed six months so that will give me an authority and mandate to come back to the House within the next six months to get—within 12 months—that is true.

So Mr Speaker, we are at clause 22 and we intend to just take a few clauses from clause 22 maybe to the end and come back later.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, what about the advertised amendment clauses that we have on the Order Paper?

**Mr Haruna Iddrisu:** I am still consulting on clause 4 with a higher authority and therefore, if it pleases you, Mr Speaker, let us do from clause 22 up to the end and come later for the rest.

Thank you.

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, we will be in difficulty starting from clause 22 to the end. Mr Speaker, the Minister was saying that we should just do about four clauses so we were of the view that from clause 22, we can do the “Accounts and audit”, “Annual reports and other reports” “Eligibility criteria for award of scholarship” then we can end at “Consideration of application;” that is clause 27.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Education in consultation said we are doing a few clauses. So, we can do from clause 22 and end at clause 27. That is “Consideration of the application”.

Mr Speaker, rightly so, because there are still other things—a Statement was admitted and because of tomorrow’s busy schedule, it would be in our interest to finish. We need to finish at “Consideration of the application”.

Mr Speaker, if you look at page 8, some of the advertised amendments that still needs to be looked at. So, Minister, I will strongly appeal to you that we end at “Consideration of the application” so that tomorrow, maybe after the Mid-Year Budget Review, when we have time, we can do the few clauses that are left.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I think we will have five minutes suspension again. Hon Members, indulge me to have another ten minutes suspension. The Rt Hon Speaker himself is coming.

**Mr Haruna Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, probably, as I said, we do not intend to get a question on clause 20 which is on source of funds for the authority. But as I continue, probably we can let the Minister for Foreign Affairs do his business while you engage further. But on clauses 4 and 20 and the Regulations, I am doing further consultations. But we are satisfied with our engagement of the civil society group that petitioned Parliament.

Thank you.

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, let us take your five-minute suspension and when we come back then—

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** No, if there is something to be done with Hon Okudzeto Ablakwa, let us do it while—the Rt Hon Speaker will come and handle the Scholarship Bill. If there is something that we can finish up with Hon Okudzeto Ablakwa, we can go ahead.

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, is it the case that you are suggesting we suspend the Consideration Stage?

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** The Rt Hon Speaker himself is coming to handle—

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** All right, Mr Speaker, then the Mace is tilted.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Leadership?

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, on the Order Paper *Addendum*, the other Businesses of the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs—Mr Speaker, they are now sharing their Reports. How do they expect us to read their Reports and make meaningful contribution? There are about four or five of them? Mr Speaker, we cannot take that Business now. The Minister for Foreign Affairs is saying it is simple. He just shared reports to us—

Mr Speaker, I even asked the Deputy Ranking Member whether he had the Reports and he said no, they are now sharing it. So, if they shared these four important Reports for us to read them now and make contributions, how is that possible?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, I think we agreed that we were going to take item numbered 16 and come back. But, Mr Speaker, you were saying something earlier as well, which got us —

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** No, I was actually going to suspend for ten minutes while waiting for the Rt Hon Speaker, because he wants to take the Scholarship Bill himself. So, once he is not here, if there is something that we can do with Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, we can do that and move on.

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Precisely so, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I would like to indulge my Brother to get this done. Otherwise, we will be sitting here with no Business.

Thank you.

5.48 p.m.

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, we will not have any difficulty with this.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Yes, Leadership?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, so we are looking at the Motion numbered 2 on the Order Paper addendum.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well. Hon Members, page 2, item number 2, Motion, by the Chairman of Committee of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration.

## MOTIONS

### Suspension of Standing Order 104 (1)

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a Motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the Motion is given, the Motion for the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports may be *moved* today.

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Agyei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Now, the substantive Motion numbered 3.

### **Bilateral Agreement between GoG and Commonwealth of Dominica for Waiver of Visa Requirements**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this Hon House adopts Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

In doing so I present the Committee's Report. So, Mr Speaker, your Committee met and considered the waiver. It is your Committee's recommendation, Mr Speaker, that this agreement signed in 2021 by the permanent representative of both nations, of the United Nations, is intended to strengthen south-to-south cooperation, deepen bilateral relationship and enhance trade, tourism and cultural exchange. It allows visa-free entry for eligible passport holders for up to 90 days within 180 days period, subject to

compliance with national immigration laws.

Mr Speaker, importantly, the agreement reflects reciprocal trust in immigration and security cooperation and is part of Ghana's effort to enhance its diplomatic footprint in Caribbean regions, consistent with engagements under the Caribbean Communities (CARICOM) framework. Mr Speaker, the Committee, recognising the agreement's strategic, diplomatic, economic and cultural value strongly recommends that Parliament ratifies the agreement without delay to enable its entry into force and to further consider Ghana's international participations.

**Mr Vanderpuije:** So, Mr Speaker, at this juncture, I ask the *Hansard* to please capture the full Report as presented.

### **Introduction**

Pursuant to Article 75(2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, regarding the waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, service, and ordinary passports, was duly laid before Parliament on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025, by the Hon Minister for Health, Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, on behalf of the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Following its presentation, the Rt Hon Speaker referred the Agreement to the Committee on Foreign Affairs for consideration and report, in accordance with Order 245 of the Standing Orders of the House.

**Deliberations**

The Committee on Foreign Affairs held a meeting to deliberate on the Agreement with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, the Chief Director of the Ministry, and other senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Committee extends its appreciation to the Honourable Minister and his team for availing themselves and contributing meaningfully to the deliberation.

**References**

In the course of its deliberations, the Committee made reference to the following key documents:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana; and
- iii. The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica on the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports.

**Background**

In the year 2021, the Agreement on the waiver of visa requirements between the Republic of Ghana and the Commonwealth of Dominica was signed by His Excellency Harold Adlai Agyeman, Ghana's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United

Nations in New York, and Her Excellency Loreen Bannis-Roberts, Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of Dominica to the United Nations. The Agreement was executed as a strategic step towards deepening bilateral relations and facilitating the movement of persons between the two countries.

At present, neither country maintains a resident diplomatic mission in the territory of the other. Ghana's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York is concurrently accredited to the Commonwealth of Dominica, while the Embassy of the Commonwealth of Dominica in Liberia holds concurrent accreditation to Ghana.

Accordingly, the ratification and operationalisation of this Agreement will not only promote ease of travel for citizens of the two countries, but also bolster trade, investment, and cultural exchanges, thereby enhancing the bilateral relationship. The Agreement aligns with the standard framework of visa waiver arrangements previously entered into by the Government of Ghana with other Countries. Its implementation will be governed by existing administrative procedures and protocols applicable to similar agreements.

The Agreement, once ratified, shall remain in force for an indefinite duration. However, it may be terminated at any time by either Party, subject to the issuance of a formal notification. In such an event, the termination shall take effect ninety (90) days following the date on which the notice is received by the other Party.

**Objectives**

The Agreement seeks to achieve the following strategic objectives:

- i. To strengthen South–South cooperation in line with Ghana’s foreign policy priorities;
- ii. To enhance Ghana’s diplomatic presence and engagement within the Caribbean region;
- iii. To promote trade, tourism, and cultural exchanges between Ghana and member States of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM); and
- iv. To facilitate seamless travel for businesspersons, tourists, and public officials of both countries.

**Key Provisions of the Agreement**

The core provisions of the Agreement are summarised as follows:

- i. The Agreement establishes the legal framework permitting holders of Diplomatic, Service/Official, and Ordinary Passports of either Party to enter and remain in the territory of the other without a visa, for a duration not exceeding ninety (90) days within a six-month period (180 calendar days) from the date of first entry.
- ii. Officials and employees of international organisations, as well as their family members

residing in the territory of either Party, shall also be exempt from visa requirements for the duration of their official assignment.

- iii. Passport holders benefiting from this waiver shall be required to use only designated international ports of entry and shall be subject to the applicable immigration, border control, and national security regulations of the host country.
- iv. The Agreement empowers either Party to suspend or terminate the application of the Agreement, in whole or in part, on grounds of national security, public safety, or public order, subject to prior notification through diplomatic channels.
- v. Notwithstanding the foregoing, each Party reserves the sovereign right to deny entry or residence to any individual it deems undesirable or persona non grata, in accordance with its domestic laws and policies.

**Justification**

As a dualist State, Ghana requires that international agreements be ratified before they acquire the force of law within its domestic legal framework. In this regard, Article 75(2)(b) of the 1992 Constitution mandates the ratification of international treaties and agreements by an Act of Parliament or a resolution passed by Parliament.

The ratification of the present Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica is thus fully in compliance with Ghana's constitutional and statutory obligations. Furthermore, the Agreement, upon implementation, is expected to deepen bilateral cooperation, facilitate people-to-people interactions, and strengthen diasporan engagement between the Government and people of Ghana and the Commonwealth of Dominica.

## **Implications**

### **Legal**

The ratification of the Agreement is in full compliance with the provisions of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, particularly in relation to the ratification of treaties and international agreements entered into by the State. It further aligns with Ghana's overarching foreign policy objective of leveraging international and bilateral cooperation to support national development.

Moreover, the implementation of the Agreement will be governed by the existing immigration framework, including all relevant rules and regulations in force. As such, it does not necessitate the passage of additional legislation or the amendment of existing laws.

### **Options and Impacts**

Article 11 of the Agreement stipulates that it shall enter into force on the thirtieth (30th) day following the date on which the Parties notify each other, through diplomatic channels, of the

completion of their respective internal legal procedures.

It is noted, however, that although the Commonwealth of Dominica has, for over three years, communicated its readiness to implement the Agreement, the Republic of Ghana has not yet ratified the instrument, thereby delaying its entry into force. This persistent delay risks casting doubt on Ghana's commitment to the terms of the Agreement and may be misconstrued as a lack of political will to operationalise it. Additionally, such a delay may undermine Ghana's efforts to build trust and deepen cooperation with States with whom diplomatic relations have been established.

### **Financial Impact**

The implementation of the Agreement is not expected to result in any immediate loss of State revenue, particularly as visa fees constitute a relatively marginal component of overall public revenue. Rather, the arrangement is expected to act as a catalyst for increased trade, tourism, and other bilateral engagements, ultimately generating long-term socio-economic benefits for both Parties.

### **Socio-Economic Impact**

The Agreement is expected to serve as a strategic instrument of economic diplomacy, strengthening economic linkages between Ghana and the Commonwealth of Dominica. It is anticipated that the removal of visa restrictions will encourage greater

volumes of trade and investment, thereby advancing shared development objectives.

Furthermore, the formal opening of Ghana's borders to the Government and peoples of the Commonwealth of Dominica is projected to yield positive outcomes in the areas of tourism, cultural cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges. Over time, the Agreement is also likely to foster deeper diaspora engagement, reinforcing historical and contemporary connections between the two nations.

## **Terms of The Agreement**

The Agreement comprises a Preamble, twelve (12) substantive Articles, and a Testimonium, all of which together articulate the mutual understanding of the Parties and outline the rights and obligations arising from the Agreement.

### **Preamble**

The Preamble underscores the mutual intention of the Parties to foster friendly relations and to facilitate the movement of citizens between their respective territories.

### ***Article 1 – Exemption from Visa Requirements***

This Article provides for the exemption from visa requirements for the following categories of passport holders:

- Republic of Ghana: Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports

- Commonwealth of Dominica: Diplomatic, Official, and Ordinary Passports

Holders of the aforementioned passports shall be exempt from the requirement to obtain a visa for purposes of entry, transit, exit, or temporary stay in the territory of either Party, for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days within a one-hundred-and-eighty (180) day period from the date of first entry.

### ***Article 2 – Accredited Diplomatic Staff***

Accredited diplomatic and consular personnel, as well as their dependants, may enter and remain in the territory of the receiving Party without a visa, for the duration of their official posting.

### ***Article 3 – Work Permits***

Citizens of either Party who intend to work, engage in a profession, pursue studies, or remain in the territory of the other Party for more than ninety (90) days, shall be required to obtain the relevant work permit or visa in accordance with applicable laws and procedures.

### ***Article 4 – Exchange of Specimen Passports***

The Parties shall exchange specimen copies of their passports through diplomatic channels to enable effective implementation and enforcement of the Agreement.

***Article 5 – Movement Control***

Citizens of either Party shall be permitted to enter or exit the territory of the other Party only through border posts designated for international passenger traffic.

***Article 6 – Compliance with Domestic Law***

Visa exemptions granted under this Agreement do not exempt individuals from the obligation to comply with the laws and regulations in force within the territory of the host country.

***Article 7 – Refusal of Entry***

The provisions of the Agreement do not restrict the sovereign right of either Party to refuse entry or to reduce the period of authorised stay for any individual deemed undesirable or declared persona non grata.

***Article 8 – Suspension***

Either Party reserves the right to suspend the Agreement, in whole or in part, for reasons related to public order, national security, or public health, subject to prior notification through diplomatic channels.

***Article 9 – Amendments***

The Agreement may be amended by mutual consent through the exchange of diplomatic notes between the Parties.

***Article 10 – Validity of Passports***

Only passports with a validity of not less than three (3) months from the date of entry shall be considered acceptable

under this Agreement. Suspension of the Agreement shall not affect the rights of nationals of either Party who are already present in the host country at the time of suspension.

***Article 11 – Entry into Force and Duration***

The Agreement shall enter into force on the thirtieth (30th) day following the date on which the Parties notify each other, through diplomatic channels, of the completion of their respective internal legal procedures.

***Article 12 – Termination***

The Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely. However, either Party may terminate the Agreement by providing notification through diplomatic channels. Termination shall take effect on the ninetieth (90th) day following the date of such notification.

***Observations***

The Committee made the following key observations during its deliberations:

***Comprehensive Inclusion***

The Committee observed with satisfaction that the Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica encompasses all categories of passport holders; namely Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports. This inclusive approach is considered a significant advancement in the promotion of bilateral relations, as it

extends the benefits of the Agreement beyond government officials to include ordinary citizens. The Committee further noted that this comprehensive coverage promotes people-to-people diplomacy, facilitates travel, and enhances economic, social, and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

### ***Reflection of Reciprocal Immigration and Security Trust***

The Committee acknowledged that the Agreement is a manifestation of reciprocal trust between the two countries in matters of immigration and security. This trust has been cultivated through years of mutual cooperation, particularly in multilateral settings, and is seen as pivotal to the smooth and effective implementation of the Agreement. The Committee emphasised that such trust not only facilitates the free movement of citizens but also enhances cooperation in critical areas such as trade, tourism, and cultural exchange.

### ***Past Delays in Ratification***

The Committee expressed concern regarding the delay in ratifying the Agreement, which was signed in 2021 but had yet to be submitted to Parliament until recently. In response to inquiries on whether other Agreements were still pending, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration informed the Committee that no other Agreements were awaiting submission. The Minister further assured the Committee that the Ministry had now instituted internal mechanisms, including a target of three months from signing to parliamentary

submission, to avoid future delays. The Committee welcomed this assurance as a positive development, reinforcing Ghana's commitment to honouring its international obligations in a timely manner.

### ***Fiscal Impact on the Ghanaian Economy***

A substantive discussion ensued on the potential fiscal implications of extending the visa waiver to ordinary passport holders. While some Members underscored the importance of this inclusion for its public appeal and symbolic value, others cautioned against possible loss of visa revenue and the need for heightened security oversight. In response, the Minister clarified that the fiscal implications were under active review, and stressed that "visa-free" does not equate to "no payment". He cited international examples where countries impose arrival levies or administrative charges, even under visa waiver arrangements, as a means of offsetting potential revenue gaps.

### ***Recommendation & Conclusion***

In furtherance of the principles of South-South Cooperation, the Committee views Ghana's ratification of the Agreement on the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports as a landmark development in the bilateral relations between the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica. The Agreement presents a unique opportunity to significantly enhance diplomatic

collaboration, facilitate ease of travel, and promote economic and cultural exchanges between the two States.

The Committee notes that the Agreement is poised to deepen diplomatic engagement and foster an enduring spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. By waiving visa requirements for all categories of passport holders, the Agreement promotes people-to-people diplomacy and facilitates greater interaction between the citizens of both countries. This is expected to result in a more robust and meaningful bilateral relationship.

In addition to the diplomatic benefits, the Committee recognises the Agreement's potential to bolster economic cooperation. The removal of visa barriers will enhance business travel, investment, and tourism, thereby contributing to the economic development and shared prosperity of both Ghana and Dominica. The anticipated increased flow of people, goods, and services is expected to unlock new opportunities for mutual benefit.

Culturally, the Agreement will serve as a bridge for intercultural dialogue, appreciation, and exchange. By facilitating the free movement of persons, it will encourage cultural understanding, tolerance, and collaboration, enriching the socio-cultural fabric of both nations. Citizens will have the opportunity to engage meaningfully with each other's traditions, customs, and heritage.

In view of the substantial diplomatic, economic, and cultural benefits highlighted

above, the Committee strongly recommends that Parliament ratify the Agreement and approve its implementation without delay. Such action will enable both countries to realise the full benefits of enhanced cooperation, deeper mutual understanding, and shared development.

In conclusion, the Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica on the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports represents a strategic milestone in the advancement of bilateral relations. Given its potential to facilitate travel, strengthen diplomatic ties, and promote economic and cultural exchange, the Committee urges the House to adopt this Report and to approve, by resolution, the ratification of the Bilateral Agreement, in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution.

Respectfully submitted.

*Question proposed.*

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Agyei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion for the ratification of the bilateral agreement for the waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic service and ordinary passport between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of the Dominica.

Mr Speaker, just to add, this is long overdue. In the spirit of reciprocity, it is

important that we do this. Mr Speaker, it will also facilitate trade and some culture. It will help the business people in the two countries move freely. So, Mr Speaker, I only want to support this one and say that for the clauses that have to do with we determining, by virtue of the fact that if it is against security or national security, we withhold the entries. Mr Speaker, I agree and I support that this agreement be accepted by the House.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** I will take one or two comments. If there is no comment, then I will put the question.

Yes, Hon Member for Okere?

**Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth (NPP—Okere):** Mr Mr Speaker, as indicated by the Report, these are agreements that enhance free mobility between the two countries. Mr Speaker, this agreement does not just go for only diplomatic or service holders, but also ordinary passport holders. For me, this is going to enhance the tourism, business and trade potential between these countries. Therefore, I urge the House to support the Motion.

**Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (NDC — Madina):** Mr Speaker, I also rise to support the Motion that we adopt this Report for us to waive the visa requirement between the Government of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica. Mr Speaker, by so doing, it also adds value to our passport, because the fact that one no longer requires a visa to enter into

those countries, it adds so much value to our passport.

So, in addition to what the Committee deliberated on and the recommendations made, I also propose that this Parliament ratifies this very important agreement, so that we can improve bilateral relations with the Commonwealth of Dominica. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That the House adopts the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Kabiru, we will have another one for you too, do not worry.

So, Hon Minister, may you take the resolution on page 3 listed as the item numbered 4? Hon Kabiru, I have already put the question.

**Mr Matthew Nyindam:** Mr Speaker, I think that what Hon Kabiru intends to put across is that for now, we are holding forth for the Leadership here.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** So, I am going to consider that.

**Mr Nyindam:** It would be good if you consider looking at the Minority Side. I think that is what he just intended to say.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Kabiru, no problem at all. Just pardon me for this one.

Hon Minister, take the Resolution 4.

6.08 p.m.

### RESOLUTION

#### **Bilateral Agreement Between the Government of Ghana and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica for Waiver of Visa Requirements**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

WHEREAS by the provisions of Article 75 of the Constitution any treaty, agreement, or convention executed by or under the Authority of the President in the name of Ghana is made subject to ratification either by an Act of Parliament or by a resolution of Parliament supported by the votes of more than one-half of all the Members of Parliament.

IN ACCORDANCE with the said Article 75 of the Constitution the President has caused to be laid before Parliament through the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

NOW THEREFORE, this honourable House hereby resolves to ratify the said Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Hon Members. The Resolution has been moved.

Hon Asafo-Adjei Ayeh, may you second the Resolution for us.

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Resolution.

*Question put and the Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Deputy Majority Leader?

**Deputy Majority Leader (Mr Geroge Kweku Ricketts-Hagan):** Mr Speaker, now I want to look at —

**Mr Haruna Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, I am sorry to arrest him. Just for the purpose of record – and the Table Office can guide the Speaker and the Minister. Reference is made in the Committee’s Report to Article 75(2) (b). For the record, it is my view that the Chairman of the Committee and the Minister should just reference Article 75 and do not need to particularise (2) (b), because Article 75 provides that:

“The President may execute or cause to be executed treaties, agreements or conventions in the name of Ghana.”

So, Article 75(2) relies on Article 75(1). If the President has not executed, the Minister cannot come to Parliament asking for ratification. So, the reference in paragraph 7.0 and for all other records should just be “pursuant to Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution”. The (2) should not be part of it because the President must execute. Then it says: “a treaty agreement or convention executed by or under the authority of the President”. It is referring to the one above. So that, Chairman of the Committee is guided at all times that he is walking to Parliament on the strength of Article 75 and not Article 75(2). It is the combined effect of both Article 75(1) and (2). I so submit.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Minister for Education, we thank you for that. We will take into consideration the next one we are going to take.

We will move to Motion 5, by the Chairman of the Committee.

## MOTION

### Suspension of Order 104(1)

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the motion is given, the motion for the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Colombia for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Official and Service Passports may be *moved* today.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, the Chairman has moved Motion 5 in the Order Paper *Addendum*.

Yes. Hon Asafo-Adjei Ayeh?

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, this is a Procedural Motion and therefore, I will put the Question.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Chairman, move Motion 6. For this, we will move and state the Report of the Committee.

**Bilateral Agreement Between the Government of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia for the Waiver of Visa Requirements**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this Honourable House adopts the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Colombia for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Official and Service Passports.

**Executive Summary**

The Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration examined the request for the ratification of the Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Colombia. The Agreement, signed on the margins of COP 16 in Cali, Colombia in October 2024, allows holders of Diplomatic, Official, and Service Passports from both countries to enter, transit, and stay visa-free for up to 90 days per calendar year. The Agreement,

once ratified, will facilitate official mobility, deepen bilateral ties, and enhance South-South cooperation in fields such as education, agriculture, and energy. The Committee noted that the Agreement is consistent with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution and poses no financial burden beyond existing diplomatic obligations. Furthermore, it strengthens Ghana's international engagement without requiring new legislation, as it conforms to current immigration policies. The Committee commended recent efforts by the Ministry to streamline the ratification process and enforce passport security protocols, addressing concerns of potential misuse. In view of the strategic benefits and legal compliance, the Committee recommended the ratification of the Agreement by Parliamentary resolution.

**Introduction**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025 the request for the ratification of the Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic, Official, and Service Passports between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia was laid before Parliament by the Hon Minister for Health, Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, on behalf of the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

The Rt Hon Speaker, upon receipt of the request, referred same to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration for consideration and report pursuant to Order 245 of the Standing Orders of the House.

**Deliberations**

The Committee met with the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, and Officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deliberate on the Referral.

The Committee expresses its gratitude to the Hon Minister and his technical team for appearing before the Committee and for providing detailed clarifications on issues raised during the engagement.

**Reference Documents**

In the course of its deliberations, the Committee made reference to the following key documents:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament;
- iii. The Agreement on the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Official, and Service Passports between the Government of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia; and
- iv. The Cabinet Memorandum with Executive Approval, dated 22nd May 2025, with Reference Number OPCA.3/3/230525.

**Background**

The Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia engaged in bilateral consultations on the margins of the Sixteenth Conference of Parties to

the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 16), held in Cali, Colombia, from 27th to 30th October 2024. Following extensive negotiations, three agreements were concluded, including the Agreement on the Mutual Exemption of Visas, which was duly signed by the Foreign Minister of Colombia, Mr Luis Gilberto Murillo Urrutia, and Ghana's then Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon Kwaku Ampratwum Sarpong.

The Republic of Colombia established its Embassy in Ghana on 2nd July 2013 and has since maintained a diplomatic presence in the country. However, Ghana has not yet established a Mission in Colombia; Ghana's Mission in Brasilia currently holds concurrent accreditation to Colombia. Additionally, Dr Norma Lozano-Jackson, a Colombian national, serves as Honorary Consul for Ghana in Bogotá.

The ratification and implementation of the Agreement are expected to facilitate the movement of Government Officials between the two nations. The Agreement mirrors existing visa waiver arrangements that the Government of Ghana has with other countries and is intended to be administered under similar regulatory and procedural frameworks.

Upon ratification and commencement of implementation, the Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely, subject to termination by either Party. In the event of termination, the Agreement shall cease to be in force ninety (90) days following written notification by either Party through diplomatic channels.

**Objectives**

The primary purpose of the Agreement is to promote and facilitate strategic bilateral relations between the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia. Specifically, the Agreement seeks to:

- i. Deepen diplomatic and bilateral ties with Latin American nations;
- ii. Support multilateral partnerships in key areas including education, energy, and agriculture; and
- iii. Encourage South-South cooperation, particularly within the context of shared development goals and mutual global engagement.

**Key Provisions**

The following are the salient provisions outlined in the Agreement:

- i. The Agreement establishes a legal framework that allows holders of Diplomatic, Official and Service Passports of either country to enter and remain in the territory of the other country without a visa for up to three months per calendar year, calculated from the date of first entry.
- ii. Diplomatic and Official personnel employed by international organisations in each other's territory—together with their dependents—shall be exempted from visa requirements for the full duration of their official assignment.

iii. Passport holders benefiting under this Agreement are required to enter the host country only through authorised border control points designated for international travel.

iv. Each Party reserves the right to suspend or terminate the Agreement, either in part or in whole, on grounds of national security, public order, or public health, provided that notice is duly given through diplomatic channels.

v. Notwithstanding the above provisions, each Party retains the discretion to deny entry or residence to any individual it deems undesirable or *persona non grata*.

**Justification**

The ratification of international agreements is a constitutional imperative in Ghana due to the country's dualist legal system, where international instruments require formal parliamentary endorsement to take effect domestically.

In line with Article 75(2)(b) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, all treaties, conventions, and agreements signed by the President must be ratified either by an Act of Parliament or by a Parliamentary Resolution.

The ratification of this Agreement is thus constitutionally compliant and legally requisite. Furthermore, its implementation is projected to strengthen

bilateral engagements between the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia, paving the way for deepened collaboration in diplomacy, economic development, and international cooperation.

### **Legal Implementation**

The ratification of the Agreement is in full compliance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, which mandates parliamentary approval of all international treaties, conventions, and agreements signed by the President.

In addition, the Agreement aligns with Ghana's foreign policy objective of promoting national development through international and bilateral cooperation. Importantly, the implementation of the Agreement will be subject to existing immigration laws and regulations and therefore does not require any further legislative amendments or enactments.

### **Options and Impact**

Article 11 of the Agreement stipulates that it shall enter into force upon the last notification by the parties confirming the fulfilment of their respective internal procedures.

The Agreement was signed during the bilateral consultations between Ghana and Colombia, held on the margins of the Sixteenth Conference of Parties (COP 16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Cali, Colombia, in October 2024. Therefore, for the Agreement to become operational, both

countries are required to complete their domestic ratification processes. The timely ratification by Ghana is essential to give effect to the Agreement and demonstrate goodwill and commitment to the bilateral relationship.

### **Economic and Social Impact**

The implementation of the Agreement is expected to strengthen diplomatic relations between Ghana and Colombia by facilitating easier travel for government officials and diplomats engaged in official duties, particularly those requiring short-notice travel.

Moreover, the visa waiver will enhance the operational effectiveness of joint monitoring committees and bilateral consultation mechanisms, such as political dialogues and meetings of the Permanent Joint Commission for Cooperation, by easing mobility and reducing administrative delays.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no immediate revenue losses anticipated from the implementation of this Agreement, given that the visa exemption applies strictly to holders of Diplomatic, Official, and Service Passports, whose numbers are relatively limited.

However, the Agreement is projected to facilitate trade, tourism, and broader bilateral cooperation between the two countries, with long-term socio-economic benefits accruing from strengthened partnerships and institutional exchanges.

**Terms of the Agreement**

The Agreement comprises specific Articles outlining the scope, conditions, and limitations of the mutual visa exemption between the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia.

**Article 1: Scope of Visa Exemption**

- 1.1 Citizens of the Republic of Colombia holding valid diplomatic or official passports, and citizens of the Republic of Ghana holding valid diplomatic and service passports, shall be entitled to enter, exit, and transit without a visa. They may temporarily stay in the territory of the other Party for a total period not exceeding ninety (90) days per calendar year, counted from the date of first entry.
- 1.2 Citizens of both Parties—alongside their dependent family members—assigned to work in diplomatic or consular missions, technical offices, or international organisations in the host country, shall also be exempt from visa requirements during the tenure of their official assignments. Such individuals must hold the appropriate diplomatic, official, or service passports and shall remain subject to the applicable laws and regulations of the receiving State.
- 1.3 The Parties undertake to facilitate the issuance of entry and residence permits, as well as eventual exit permits, in accordance with their respective immigration frameworks, for accredited officials and their dependent family members.

- 1.4 For the purposes of this Agreement, “dependent family members” are defined as spouses and unmarried children under the age of 23, including unmarried children who are mentally or physically disabled.

**Article 2: Work Permits**

The visa exemption provided under Article 1 does not confer the right to work. Citizens of either Party intending to work, carry out a profession, study, or remain for more than ninety (90) days must obtain the appropriate visa prior to entry. The exemption applies strictly to official, diplomatic, and service travel within the permitted timeframe.

**Article 3: Compliance with Immigration Rules**

- 3.1 All persons benefiting from this Agreement must enter the host country through designated border control points authorised for international travel.
- 3.2 Each Party reserves the right to deny entry or residency to any citizen of the other Party on grounds of national security, public order, or public health, or to curtail the permitted duration of stay, in accordance with domestic legal provisions.
- 3.3 All individuals granted entry under this Agreement are required to comply with the host country’s laws and regulations for the duration of their stay.

**Article 4: Suspension**

- 4.1 Either Party may suspend the application of this Agreement, in full or in part, on a provisional basis, for reasons relating to national security, public order, or public health.
- 4.2 Any such suspension or its subsequent lifting must be promptly communicated through diplomatic channels once the conditions warranting the suspension have ceased.
- 4.3 These provisions do not preclude mutual suspension by both Parties during the validity of a unilateral suspension initiated under Article 4.1.

**Article 5: Exchange of Specimen Passports**

- 5.1 The Parties shall exchange, through diplomatic channels, specimen copies of their diplomatic and official/service biometric passports, accompanied by a detailed description of such documents. This shall be done at least thirty (30) days prior to the Agreement's entry into force.
- 5.2 In the event of any modifications to the current diplomatic or official/service passports, the concerned Party shall duly inform the other Party and provide samples of the revised documents through diplomatic channels.

**Article 6: Compliance with Domestic and International Law**

- 6.1 Citizens of either Contracting Party holding Diplomatic, Official, or Service Passports shall comply with the laws and regulations of the host country both upon entry and throughout their stay in its territory.
- 6.2 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as overriding or affecting the rights and obligations enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963).

**Article 7: Passport Validity**

For the purposes of this Agreement, the passports of citizens of both Parties must have a minimum validity of six (6) months from the date of their entry into the other Party's territory.

**Article 8: Loss of Passport**

- 8.1 In the event that a citizen of one Party loses their passport while within the territory of the other Party, the individual must immediately report the loss to the appropriate authorities of the host State. A formal acknowledgement receipt shall be issued.

The respective diplomatic mission or consulate of the affected citizen shall thereafter issue a new passport or travel document, and notify the host country's authorities accordingly.

**Article 9: Amendments**

This Agreement may be amended or supplemented at any time by mutual consent of the Parties. Any such amendment shall be in writing, duly initialled, and communicated via exchange of diplomatic notes.

**Article 10: Dispute Settlement**

Any disputes or differences arising from the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement shall be resolved amicably through consultations or negotiations conducted via diplomatic channels.

**Article 11: Entry into Force, Duration and Termination**

11.1 The Agreement shall enter into force on the date when the last notification is received by either Party, through diplomatic channels, confirming completion of internal legal procedures necessary for its enforcement. The Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely unless otherwise terminated.

11.2 Either Party reserves the right to unilaterally terminate the Agreement at any time by providing written notice through diplomatic channels. Termination shall take effect ninety (90) days after the date on which the notification is received by the other Party.

**Observations**

The Committee made the following key observations during its deliberations:

**13.1 Compliance with the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana**

The Committee noted that the ratification of the Agreement is in full conformity with the provisions of the 1992 Constitution, specifically Article 75, which governs the execution and ratification of international agreements. The Agreement is consistent with Ghana's foreign policy objectives aimed at promoting national development through enhanced international and bilateral cooperation.

Additionally, the Committee observed that the implementation of the Agreement would be conducted within the framework of existing immigration rules and regulations, thereby ensuring that Ghana's sovereignty, border integrity, and national security are duly safeguarded.

**13.2 Streamlining the Ratification Process**

The Committee was informed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has introduced a new internal policy designed to streamline the ratification process for international agreements. This policy stipulates that all signed agreements should be submitted for Cabinet approval and Parliamentary ratification within a maximum of three months.

The Committee welcomed this development, noting that it would prevent undue delays in ratification,

as observed in previous instances, and help ensure that Ghana honours its international obligations in a timely and credible manner.

### 13.3 **Passport Security**

The Committee expressed concern regarding the potential abuse of diplomatic and service passports, especially in the context of visa exemption agreements. In response, the Ministry assured the Committee that it has undertaken several measures to tighten passport issuance and monitoring procedures. These include:

- Enhanced vetting processes to authenticate applicants' personal and professional details;
- Rigorous internal reviews to ensure compliance with issuance regulations;
- The cancellation of unreturned or improperly held passports to prevent unauthorised use.

The Committee acknowledged these efforts as crucial in preserving the integrity of Ghana's diplomatic credentials and ensuring that only qualified and eligible individuals benefit from the provisions of the Agreement.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation.**

The Committee, after careful deliberation, is satisfied with the content and provisions of the Agreement and therefore recommends to the House to adopt its Report and approve by

resolution the ratification of the Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption for holders of Diplomatic, Official, and Service Passports between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Colombia, in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

Respectfully submitted.

Mr Speaker, I so move.

*Question proposed.*

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

Yes, Hon Asafo-Adjei Ayeh?

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion on the ratification of the Agreement on Mutual Visa Exemption for the Holders of Diplomatic, Official and Service Passports between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Colombia.

Mr Speaker, in principle, even to say that this memorandum was signed on 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2024—So in principle I agree. Mr Speaker, even when we look at page 10, article 4 of the Report titled Suspension, it reads:

“Either Party may suspend the application of this Agreement, in full or in part, or on a provisional basis, for the reasons relating to national security, public order, or public health.”

Mr Speaker, this for me is a good indication which will allay the fears of anybody who has some concerns when it comes to visa waiver agreement between Ghana and Colombia.

Mr Speaker, when we come to page 12, there is an amendment clause which also for me, allays the fear of many Ghanaians. It states:

“This Agreement may be amended or supplemented at any time by mutual consent of the Parties. Any such amendment shall be in writing, duly initiated and communicated via exchange of diplomatic notes”.

Mr Speaker, I think that the Committee and the Ministry have done a good job to put in all these necessary clauses that will take care of future eventualities in the Report.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I thank you.

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

Hon Members, the Motion has been moved and it has been seconded. It is now before the House for consideration.

Yes, my Brother, Dr Anabah?

**Dr Thomas Winsum Anabah (NDC — Garu):** Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to support the Motion and also contribute. I am very happy to hear that Ghana and Colombia are waiving visas for a particular set of persons travelling to Colombia.

Inasmuch as this is a good move to improve our relationship and the South-South cooperation, I would hope that those who will be granted this waiver travel and exhibit “Ghanaianism”. I would say it that way. Let them understand that Ghanaians are very hospitable. Let them understand that Ghanaians have businesses that want to come there. In that way, the visa free will now be extended to those who are holding ordinary passports.

6.08 p.m.

Most of our businessmen who will have to go to Colombia or Colombians who want to come to Ghana may not be holding service passports, diplomatic passports or foreign affairs passports. They will be holding ordinary passports. So, I am calling on those who would enjoy this visa-free, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs is here, to exhibit real Ghanaian traits and discipline when they enter Colombia.

Mr Speaker, in that, way we can request for an extension of the visa-free waiver for ordinary businessmen who want to go to Colombia. Colombians have a lot of businesses and we all know we can do a lot with them. We can export to them and they can export to us. So, I am just calling for people who will get this visa-free entry to Colombia to exhibit true patriotism and discipline to let us get a visa waiver for everybody in Ghana travelling to Colombia.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much and I support the Motion for us to approve this treaty in the House.

**Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (NPP— Walewale):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I think that one of the anticlimax of the waves of globalisation is the restriction on the movement of goods and people. Mr Speaker, it is quite unfortunate that, by virtue of the fact that one is born in certain territory, his or her right to move is restricted and this visa waiver and visa agreement comes to solve some of these teething problems we find ourselves in this globalised world. I think that the decision by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to embark on this Visa Agreement and the subsequent ratification by Parliament, today, is a very noble one.

Mr Speaker, I am mindful of the fact that this is without prejudice to the right to work, national security and also mindful of the economic impact this Visa Waiver Agreement poses on the Ghanaian economy. There is only one concern that our agreement with Colombia brings that I need to put on record. The concern is that this opportunity is for only holders of diplomatic and service passports. Ordinary passport holders are not, unlike the agreement with Dominica, entitled to have this particular opportunity.

Mr Speaker, this also means that the threat of drug trafficking, which is also common in some of these jurisdictions we are talking about, is also real. So, it is just an opportunity; as much as the Government has provided us with this opportunity, holders of these passports should be mindful that this opportunity should not become a conduit for the

trafficking of drugs, using Ghana as a host. And it is just my humble appeal— As much as Parliament is doing this, we should be mindful that a law ratified by this House was used by someone to use it as a conduit to traffic drugs.

With these few words, I beg to support that this House ratify this agreement.

**Deputy Majority Leader (Mr George Kweku Ricketts-Hagan):** Mr Speaker, I think it is really a good thing that we get this kind of bilateral agreement, so that we deepen our relationship with these countries and look at opportunities in basically building trade with them, so I commend the Minister for this effort.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Bilateral Agreement between GoG and Republic of Colombia for the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Diplomatic and Service Passports Holders**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa) (MP):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

WHEREAS by the provisions of Article 75 of the Constitution any treaty, agreement, or convention executed by or under the Authority of the President in the name of Ghana is made subject to ratification either by

an Act of Parliament or by a resolution of Parliament supported by the votes of more than one-half of all the Members of Parliament.

IN ACCORDANCE with the said Article 75 of the Constitution the President has caused to be laid before Parliament through the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Colombia for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Official and Service Passports.

NOW THEREFORE, this honourable House hereby resolves to ratify the said Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Colombia for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Official and Service Passports.

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, now, I would cede the Chair to the Speaker, so let us go on and when he comes—

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, let us now look at the item numbered 8 on the Order Paper *Addendum* on page 5.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Very well. Now, the Chairman of the Committee, item listed 8, Motion.

## MOTIONS

### **Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the motion is given, the motion for the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports may be *moved* today.

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion.

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, this is procedural. The Chairman has moved and the Deputy Ranking Member has seconded, so I will put the Question.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**Mr Second Deputy Speaker:** Chairman of the Committee, let us now move to the substantive Motion numbered 9.

**Bilateral Agreement Between the GoG and Republic of Mozambique for Visa Requirements Waiver for Diplomatic and Service Passports Holders**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this honourable House adopts the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports.

6.16 p.m. —

[THE SPEAKER, RT HON ALBAN SUMANA KINGSFORD BAGBIN, IN THE CHAIR]

**Mr Vanderpuije:** Mr Speaker, in so doing, I present the Report of the Committee.

**Executive Summary**

This Report presents the findings and recommendations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration regarding the ratification of the Bilateral Visa Waiver Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique. The Agreement, signed during reciprocal high-level diplomatic engagements, seeks to facilitate visa-free travel for holders of diplomatic and service passports between the two States. It forms part of broader efforts to deepen bilateral cooperation, advance Pan-African integration, and support frameworks such as AfCFTA, SADC, and Agenda 2063. The Committee observed that the Agreement is fully consistent with Ghana's 1992 Constitution, especially Article 75(2) and imposes no significant legal or financial obligations beyond existing immigration controls. While the Agreement is expected to result in modest revenue losses due to visa exemptions, the Committee noted the potential for long-term economic, diplomatic, and security benefits, including increased trade, tourism, and political cooperation. Given the Agreement's alignment with Ghana's foreign policy priorities, its support for movement control, and the assurance of reciprocity from Mozambique, the Committee recommends its ratification by resolution of Parliament in accordance with constitutional requirements.

6.18 p.m.

## **Introduction**

In accordance with Article 75(2) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique on the waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and service passports was laid before Parliament on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025 by the Hon Minister for Health, Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, on behalf of the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Following its presentation, the Rt Hon Speaker referred the Agreement to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration for consideration and report, pursuant to Order 245 of the Standing Orders of the House.

## **Deliberations**

The Committee met to deliberate on the Agreement with the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, the Chief Director of the Ministry and other senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. The Committee expresses its gratitude to the Hon Minister and the officials for appearing before it and for providing valuable insights and clarifications during the engagement.

## **References**

In the course of its deliberations, the Committee made reference to the following key documents:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana; and
- iii. The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique on the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports.

## **Background**

The Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Mozambique have historically enjoyed cordial and productive bilateral relations, marked by high-level diplomatic engagements and the establishment of a Permanent Joint Commission for Cooperation (PJCC). These relations were further strengthened by a State Visit to Ghana by the President of the Republic of Mozambique, His Excellency Filipe Nyusi, in May 2022, which was reciprocated by Ghana's then President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in September 2023, during a PJCC Session.

During these diplomatic engagements, several Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the two countries, including the Agreement on the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports. As with all international agreements, the said Visa Waiver Agreement is subject to ratification processes in both jurisdictions prior to its entry into force and implementation.

In March 2024, the Republic of Mozambique further consolidated its diplomatic relations with Ghana by establishing a High Commission in Accra, thereby formalising its permanent presence in the country. Ghana, however, has not yet established a Mission in Mozambique; instead, Ghana's Mission in Harare, Zimbabwe, holds concurrent accreditation to Mozambique.

The ratification and subsequent implementation of the Agreement are intended to facilitate the movement of government officials between the two States. The Agreement is consistent with the framework and scope of other visa waiver arrangements previously entered into by the Government of Ghana, and upon its implementation, it will be regulated by the standard administrative procedures governing similar bilateral agreements.

Once ratified, the Agreement shall remain in force for an indefinite duration, but may be terminated by either Party upon the issuance of prior notification. Such termination shall take effect ninety (90) days from the date on which notice is received by the other Party.

## **Objectives**

The Agreement seeks to achieve the following strategic objectives:

i. To support the frameworks and principles of the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the African Continental Free

Trade Area (AfCFTA) in promoting regional integration and cooperation;

- ii. To enhance coordination between the two States on matters relating to climate action, peacekeeping operations, and capacity-building initiatives;
- iii. To facilitate the smooth movement of public officials by waiving visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and service passports; and
- iv. To align with the aspirations and targets of Agenda 2063, the African Union's strategic framework for the continent's socio-economic transformation.

## **Key Provisions of the Agreement**

The key provisions of the Agreement are as follows:

1. The Agreement permits diplomatic and service passport holders of either Party to enter and remain in the territory of the other Party for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days within a six-month period (i.e., 180 calendar days) from the date of first entry, without the requirement of a visa. Persons intending to stay beyond ninety (90) days are required to obtain the appropriate immigration permits for their continued stay, exit, or re-entry.
2. Citizens of either Party who are employed by international organisations operating in the territory of the other Party are not

covered under this visa exemption regime and are expected to undergo the relevant accreditation procedures as stipulated by the host country.

3. The Agreement requires that all eligible persons entering under the visa waiver use only approved ports of international passenger traffic and comply strictly with the immigration, customs, and border control regulations of the receiving State.
4. Either Party reserves the right to suspend or terminate the Agreement, in whole or in part, on the grounds of national security, public safety, or public order. Such action shall be communicated in writing through diplomatic channels.
5. Notwithstanding the above provisions, each Party retains the sovereign right to refuse entry into, or residence within, its territory to any individual it deems unsuitable or who is formally declared persona non grata in accordance with its domestic laws.

### **Justification**

Ghana operates a dualist legal system, whereby international agreements and treaties must be ratified by Parliament before they acquire the force of law and become applicable within the domestic legal framework. In this regard, Article 75(2)(b) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana expressly provides that international treaties, agreements,

and conventions executed by the President on behalf of Ghana shall be subject to ratification by an Act of Parliament or by a resolution of Parliament.

Accordingly, the ratification of the Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Mozambique is fully consistent with Ghana's constitutional obligations and national statutory requirements.

Furthermore, the effective implementation of the Agreement is expected to enhance bilateral cooperation and diplomatic engagement between the two countries. It will provide a legal framework for facilitating official travel, strengthening institutional relations, and advancing mutual interests within the context of regional and continental integration.

### **Implication and Impact**

#### **Legal**

The ratification of the Agreement is in full compliance with the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, particularly Article 75(2), which governs the ratification of treaties and international agreements entered into by the State. It also aligns with Ghana's foreign policy objective of promoting national development through international and bilateral cooperation.

The implementation of the Agreement will be carried out under the framework of existing immigration rules and regulations, and therefore does not

necessitate any additional legislative enactments or amendments to current statutes.

### **Options and Impact**

In accordance with Article 11 of the Agreement, the instrument shall enter into force on the date on which both Parties notify each other of the completion of their respective internal legal procedures.

The Agreement was signed by the Government of Ghana during the State Visit of the President of the Republic of Mozambique, H.E. Filipe Nyusi, to Ghana on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022, in Accra. To give effect to the commitments made under the Agreement, it is imperative that the instrument undergoes parliamentary ratification, in fulfilment of Ghana's internal requirements, to enable its entry into force and implementation by both Parties.

### **Financial**

There are no immediate or direct revenue losses anticipated from the implementation of the Agreement. However, it is projected that the visa waiver arrangement will contribute to increased trade, tourism, and other forms of bilateral cooperation, resulting in long-term socio-economic benefits to both Ghana and Mozambique.

### **Socio-economic**

The implementation of the Agreement is expected to deepen bilateral diplomatic relations and facilitate the

free movement of government officials between the two States. It will help ease travel requirements for diplomats and public officials, especially those undertaking short-notice official assignments, thereby improving the efficiency of government business.

Additionally, the Agreement will support the effective functioning of joint monitoring committees and enhance the regular conduct of political consultations and meetings of the Permanent Joint Commission for Cooperation (PJCC). These interactions are vital for advancing shared development priorities and strategic collaboration between the two countries.

### **Terms of The Agreement**

The Agreement comprises a Preamble, thirteen (13) substantive Articles, and a Testimonium, all of which, when read as a whole, reflect the mutual understanding of the Parties and establish the rights and obligations arising under the Agreement.

### **Preamble**

The Preamble affirms the Parties' shared objective to strengthen economic and political relations and to facilitate the travel of holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports between the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Mozambique.

### ***Article 1 – Visa Exemption***

Diplomatic and service passport holders of both Parties shall be exempt from visa requirements for purposes of

entry, transit, exit, and temporary stay in the territory of the other Party for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days within a one hundred and eighty (180) calendar-day period from the date of first entry.

Any extension of stay beyond this period shall require compliance with the applicable immigration procedures of the host country.

### ***Article 2 – Visas for Diplomatic Assignments***

Accredited Diplomatic and Consular Staff, including their dependents, may enter and remain in the territory of the receiving Party without a visa for the entire duration of their official assignment.

### ***Article 3 – Visas for International Conferences***

Diplomatic and service passport holders attending meetings or conferences organised by International Organisations or Government entities in the territory of either Party shall be exempt from visa requirements.

### ***Article 4 – Refusal of Entry***

Each Party reserves the sovereign right to refuse entry, shorten, or terminate the stay of any person it considers undesirable on grounds of state security, public order, or public health.

### ***Article 5 – Loss of Passport***

Diplomatic and service passport holders who lose their passports while in

the territory of the other Party must notify the relevant authorities within twenty-four (24) hours. The host authorities shall issue a certificate acknowledging receipt of the notification.

### ***Article 6 – Movement Control***

Eligible persons shall enter the host country only through designated border crossing points open for international traffic and must comply with the entry formalities in accordance with the immigration laws and regulations of the receiving State.

### ***Article 7 – Validity of Passports***

Diplomatic and service passports must have a minimum validity of six (6) months from the date of entry into the territory of the receiving Party.

### ***Article 8 – Compliance with Domestic and International Laws***

While in the territory of the host State, all eligible persons shall observe the immigration and domestic laws of the receiving Party. This Agreement shall not affect the rights and obligations of either Party under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations or the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

### ***Article 9 – Notification of Relevant Documents***

Each Party shall provide the other, through diplomatic channels, with specimens and details of its current and

new passports, at least thirty (30) days prior to the entry into force of this Agreement or any updates thereto.

### ***Article 10 – Suspension***

The Agreement may be suspended in whole or in part on a provisional basis by either Party, for reasons of security, public order, or public health, by written notification through diplomatic channels.

Such suspension shall not affect the status or rights of nationals who had already entered the territory of the other Party prior to the suspension taking effect.

### ***Article 11 – Revision and Amendments***

Any revision or amendment to this Agreement shall be effected in writing and initiated through the exchange of Diplomatic Notes between the Parties.

### ***Article 12 – Dispute Settlement***

Any disputes arising between the Parties concerning the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement shall be settled amicably through consultation or negotiation, using diplomatic channels.

### ***Article 13 – Entry into Force, Termination, and Duration***

The Agreement shall enter into force thirty (30) days after the date of receipt of the last notification by which both

Parties confirm the completion of their internal legal procedures.

The Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely, but may be terminated by either Party through formal notification via diplomatic channels. Such termination shall become effective ninety (90) days after the date on which notification is received.

### **Observations**

The Committee made the following key observations during its deliberations on the Agreement:

#### ***Movement Control Measures***

The Committee took careful note of the provisions within the Agreement that empower either Party to refuse entry to, or terminate the stay of, individuals deemed a threat to national security, public order, or public health. The Committee found this provision to be critical in preserving Ghana's sovereignty and ensuring that the Agreement does not undermine the country's security architecture. This safeguard affirms the State's constitutional mandate to protect its citizens and territorial integrity while maintaining full control over national borders and immigration procedures.

#### ***Consistency with Existing Legal Provisions***

The Committee observed that the terms and conditions outlined in the Agreement are fully consistent with the legal requirements of the 1992

Constitution, particularly Article 75(2)(b), which mandates parliamentary ratification of all international agreements and treaties entered into by the Government. This alignment with Ghana's constitutional framework guarantees the legitimacy and enforceability of the Agreement and ensures its implementation will not conflict with existing domestic laws.

### ***Improvement in Trade Facilitation***

The Committee noted that the ratification and implementation of the Agreement are expected to significantly enhance trade and economic cooperation between Ghana and Mozambique. By easing travel restrictions for diplomats and public officials, the Agreement will facilitate bilateral engagements, improve intergovernmental coordination, and create enabling conditions for increased trade, investment, and tourism. These developments are projected to yield long-term socio-economic benefits, including job creation, private sector growth, and strengthened diplomatic ties.

### ***Reciprocity and Pan-Africanism***

During the deliberations, the Committee was informed that the Government of Mozambique had already ratified the Agreement and had taken further steps to extend visa waiver privileges to Ghanaians, including holders of ordinary passports. The Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration highlighted the importance of reciprocity in international relations, particularly within the broader

context of African integration and Pan-African solidarity. The Committee considered the suggestion that Ghana could, in future, explore the possibility of extending similar privileges to Mozambican citizens, as a gesture of goodwill and mutual respect. Such a move would advance people-to-people diplomacy and reinforce Ghana's commitment to the objectives of the African Union and regional economic communities, including ECOWAS and SADC.

### ***Streamlining the Ratification Process***

The Committee noted with concern that delays in the ratification of international agreements in the past have often hindered the timely and effective implementation of such instruments. However, the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration informed the Committee that the Ministry had introduced a new internal policy framework aimed at streamlining the ratification process. This policy mandates that all signed international agreements be submitted promptly for Cabinet approval and subsequently for Parliamentary ratification within a clearly defined timeframe. The Committee welcomed this initiative as a positive institutional reform that would help ensure Ghana meets its international legal obligations in a timely and consistent manner.

### ***Visa-Free Africa Policy***

The Committee held an in-depth discussion on the broader implications of

extending visa waiver privileges to holders of ordinary passports, particularly within the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the concept of a "visa-free Ghana" for all Africans. While the ideals of Pan-African unity, continental integration, and economic mobility were widely acknowledged and supported in principle, the Committee recognised the need for a comprehensive analysis of potential revenue and security implications associated with such a policy.

The Hon Minister informed the Committee that a Cabinet Memorandum had been submitted to initiate discussions on the feasibility and modalities of implementing a visa-free policy, including an assessment of potential risks and opportunities. The Committee acknowledged the prudence of this approach and underscored the importance of balancing regional integration objectives with the imperatives of national security and economic sustainability.

### ***Fiscal Considerations***

The Committee also reviewed the fiscal implications of the Agreement, particularly in relation to the waiver of visa fees for holders of diplomatic and service passports. It was acknowledged that while a modest revenue loss may occur due to the exemption of these categories of travellers, the volume of such travellers between Ghana and Mozambique is expected to be relatively low.

Moreover, the Committee emphasised that any marginal loss in visa-related revenue would likely be offset by the long-term socio-economic benefits derived from the enhanced diplomatic cooperation, increased trade, and tourism promotion facilitated by the Agreement. The Committee was therefore of the view that the Agreement represents a net positive fiscal and economic opportunity for Ghana.

### **Recommendation & Conclusion**

The Committee, having thoroughly examined the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique on the waiver of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic and service passports, hereby recommends to the House that the Agreement be approved and ratified in accordance with the provisions of Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

This recommendation is informed by the understanding that the ratification of the Agreement will significantly strengthen bilateral relations between Ghana and Mozambique. By waiving visa requirements for diplomatic and service passport holders, the Agreement facilitates the free and unimpeded movement of government officials, which is essential for promoting diplomatic cooperation and advancing initiatives in trade, tourism, education and cultural exchange.

The Committee further notes that the Agreement is fully aligned with the foreign policy objectives of Ghana,

particularly in the promotion of regional integration and multilateral cooperation within the framework of the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In addition, by easing travel restrictions for public officials, the Agreement contributes meaningfully to the realisation of Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint for inclusive and sustainable development.

In view of the foregoing, the Committee respectfully urges the House to adopt this Report and to approve, by Resolution, the ratification of the Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Mozambique on the Waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports, in fulfilment of Ghana's constitutional obligations and international commitments.

Mr Speaker, I would like to note that this request also covers ordinary passports.

Respectfully submitted.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, the Motion has been moved by the Chairman. Any seconder?

Yes, please?

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Ratification of the Visa Waiver Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Republic of Mozambique.

Mr Speaker, in principle too, I agree and I accept it, but, many a time, when visa agreements are being done, some things people look at is the financial implication. Mr Speaker, your Committee also looked at the financial implication as well, and when you refer to page 8 of 19 of the Report, there are no eminent or direct revenue losses anticipated for the implementation of the agreement.

However, it is projected that the visa waiver arrangement will contribute to increased trade — Mr Speaker, this is very important – tourism and other forms of bilateral cooperation, resulting in long-term socioeconomic benefits for both Ghana and Mozambique. Mr Speaker, this, I think, is duly commended that we need to look at.

Finally, when you look at page 12 of 19, which has to do with dispute settlement, this is very important. Many a time, during the course of implementation of these visa waiver agreements, there are disputes. Mr Speaker, your Committee, again, made provisions for dispute settlements. Any dispute arising between the parties concerning the interpretation or implementation of this agreement shall be settled amicably through consultation and negotiation using diplomatic channels.

Mr Speaker, I commend this arrangement by the Minister and your Committee. With these few words, I rise to second the Motion, Mr Speaker.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (NDC — Madina):** Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Motion on the need to waive visa requirements between Ghana and Mozambique.

Mr Speaker, I recall that at the Committee level, the original proposal did not even include ordinary passports, but the Minister made a firm commitment that he was going to intervene to ensure that this is done. Mr Speaker, for one simple reason, when you look at the objectives of this agreement, in fact, the very first one says that

“...to support the framework and the principles of the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, which is the SADC and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement in promoting regional integration.”

Mr Speaker, this is so important because Ghana has always led the way when it comes to Pan-Africanism and if we look at the history and the role Ghana has played in this, it is the reason even today, Ghana is housing the headquarters of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement and being a leader in the sub-region, it is so important that the overall objective of the AfCFTA Agreement is free trade, free movement of persons and goods. Ordinary people in Africa should be able to move freely in and out of Ghana to increase trade in the sub-region.

So, Mr Speaker, I beg to support this Resolution and pray that the House will support for us to waive this visa requirement.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth (NPP — Okere):** Mr Speaker, I also add my voice in calling for support for this Report. In the sense that, Mr Speaker, we all should be aiming for a borderless Africa; so, for me, this is a great move between Ghana and its African counterparts to establish this sort of visa-free waivers for the listed passport holders. Just as the last speaker indicated, it is important that as Africa, we should be able to move freely, so in the spirit of having a borderless Africa, I think that this Report should be taken and accepted without delay.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I support the Motion.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I may put the Question—Yes, is that the available Leader?

**Mr Matthew Nyindam (NPP — Kpandai):** Mr Speaker, the available Leader. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, although the Chairman casually mentioned the inclusion of the ordinary passport, I will beg that Article 1 of the Report, that is “Visa Exemption” should be properly amended, so that whoever reads the Report will know that it includes the ordinary passport.

Mr Speaker, I also want to urge the Minister for Foreign Affairs because reading the Report, it clearly shows that we are yet to establish our Mission in Mozambique. It should be something

that now that we are ratifying this Report to give access to both countries to enter without any hindrance, a Mission should, as early as possible, be established.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I support the ratification of this Report.

**The Speaker:** Hon Minister, can we hear you with regard to this request?

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, I can confirm that we have engaged with our counterparts in Mozambique. They have acknowledged that the visa waiver must cover all the three categories of passports: diplomatic passports, service passports and ordinary passports.

Indeed, their Parliament has already ratified and so, in the spirit of reciprocity, we are proceeding on the same basis and we will amend the Report accordingly to reflect the Mobile Application Distribution Agreement (MADA), which we have signed as two countries.

On the second issue of establishing a diplomatic Mission in Mozambique, in that region of southern Africa, currently, we have diplomatic Missions in South Africa and Zambia, and they have traditionally been responsible for our diplomatic work in that region, including the Mission we have in Namibia.

But, Mr Speaker, we have been looking at the economic situation because to establish Missions, it comes with additional costs, such as purchasing diplomatic properties, engaging more people, both foreign service officials and locally recruited staff and we have to pay

them, their vehicles, logistics, and all of that. So, as the economic situation improves, I can assure him that that will be considered.

Already, the Mozambicans are here. They have an Embassy here, so it is only fair that, in the spirit of reciprocity, we also establish ours, but we think that with the Missions we have in Namibia, Zambia and South Africa, covering the SADC region, it is probably all right for now, until the economic situation improves, then we can establish one in Mozambique.

I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** When you refer to economic situation, are you talking about economy of Ghana or Zimbabwe?

**Mr Ablakwa:** For the avoidance of doubt, Mr Speaker, the Ghanaian economic situation. I am grateful to you and we are improving. We are on a positive trajectory, so as the improvement continues, we shall also expand our diplomatic reach across the world. We are currently doing 72 countries, so if we add Mozambique, we will be hitting 73, if this House decides, Mr Speaker,

**The Speaker:** I will encourage you to go further into the details to let us see the net benefits because Mozambique is a very key tourist centre because of the long coastline and the archipelago around that area and one of the few countries that speak Portuguese. So, there is a lot of this in there for us to earn, so do not look at only the costs. Also,

look at the benefits and the way you tweet the foreign affairs to focus on investment generation. There is a good reason why they are here and there should be a good reason why we have to go there, but as we said, it is good to look at the cost-benefit analysis and then take the decision.

Yes, please?

6.28 p.m.

**Mr Richard Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, I want the Minister to throw more light on the last statement that he made, because my understanding is that the original Agreement executed by the President excluded the ordinary passports. So, if the Minister is saying they are amending the Report to include ordinary passports, then the original Agreement must first be amended to include ordinary passports before we can amend it here.

Article 75 is very clear on this matter, so I do not know how we are going to deal with this situation. First, the original Agreement must be amended. That will give birth to the Report, so that we can also amend the Report presented to the House.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Minister?

**Mr Ablakwa:** I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I did indicate that that has been done. Originally, the two

Presidents signed for two passports: diplomatic and service. But subsequently, that has been amended. Ordinary passports have been added. So that amendment has been done and our Report will reflect that.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That this Hon House adopts the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports.

**The Speaker:** Minister?

## RESOLUTION

### **Bilateral Agreement Between GoG and the Republic of Mozambique for Waiver of Visa Requirements**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

WHEREAS by the provisions of Article 75 of the Constitution, any treaty, agreement, or convention executed by or under the Authority of the President in the name of Ghana is made subject to ratification either by an Act of Parliament or by a resolution of Parliament supported

by the votes of more than one-half of all the Members of Parliament.

IN ACCORDANCE with the said Article 75 of the Constitution, the President has caused to be laid before Parliament through the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs, Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports.

NOW THEREFORE, this honorable House hereby resolves to ratify the said Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports.

**The Speaker:** Any seconder?

**Deputy Ranking Member (Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Yes, Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**The Speaker:** Yes, Leadership?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, on the same Order Paper *Addendum*, we

would like to look at the Motion numbered 11.

**The Speaker:** Chairman of the Committee.

## MOTIONS

### Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a Motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the motion is given, the Motion for the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports may be *moved* today.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**The Speaker:** We move to the Motion numbered 12 on the Order Paper.

Chairman of the Committee?

## **Bilateral Agreement Between GoG and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the Waiver of Visa Requirements**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this honourable House adopts the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

### **Executive Summary**

This Report presents the findings and recommendations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration concerning the ratification of the Bilateral Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of visa requirements for holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports. Signed on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2021, the Agreement aims to facilitate seamless cross-border mobility, enhance bilateral relations, and promote trade, tourism, and diplomatic cooperation. In line with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution, the ratification is essential to give the Agreement legal effect within Ghana's domestic

framework, as Ghana operates under a dualist legal system. The Agreement allows eligible passport holders to travel visa-free for up to 90 days within a 180-day period, with provisions for security, compliance with domestic laws, and refusal of entry. The Committee notes that while potential visa fee revenue may be forgone, the socio-economic gains far outweigh any losses. It further observed with concern the three-year delay in ratification despite São Tomé and Príncipe's notification of readiness. Encouragingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has instituted a new policy to streamline treaty ratifications within a three-month window. The Committee concludes that the Agreement aligns with Ghana's foreign policy goals and recommends its ratification by resolution of Parliament, thereby reinforcing Ghana's credibility and commitment to regional integration and international diplomacy.

### **1.0 Introduction**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025, the Hon Minister for Health, Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, on behalf of the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, laid before Parliament a request for the ratification of the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of visa requirements for holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports, pursuant to Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

The Rt Hon Speaker, in accordance with Order 245 of the Standing Orders of

the House, subsequently referred the Agreement to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration for consideration and report.

## 2.0 Deliberations

The Committee held deliberations with the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to examine the terms of the Agreement and the implications of its ratification.

The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Hon Minister and his delegation for their attendance and for providing clarifications to issues raised during the engagement.

## 3.0 Reference Documents

In the course of its deliberations, the Committee made reference to the following documents:

- i. **The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;**
- ii. **The Standing Orders of Parliament;**
- iii. **The Agreement on the Waiver of Visa Requirements** for holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports between the Republic of Ghana and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe; and
- iv. **The Cabinet Memorandum** granting Executive approval, dated **20th May 2025**, with reference number **OPCA.3/3/220525**.

## 4.0 Background

The **Bilateral Agreement** between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, signed on **19<sup>th</sup> October 2021**, establishes the legal framework for **visa-free travel** for citizens of both countries who are holders of **Diplomatic, Service, or Ordinary Passports**.

The Agreement aims to eliminate the formalities and costs typically associated with visa issuance, thereby promoting **seamless travel** for eligible travellers for a maximum stay of **three (3) months** within a given period.

Beyond easing movement across borders, the Agreement is anticipated to enhance diplomatic and bilateral cooperation between Ghana and São Tomé and Príncipe. It is expected that this arrangement will further Ghana's foreign policy objectives, particularly in deepening engagements with the Caribbean diaspora and promoting regional and intercontinental integration.

## 5.0 Objectives

The primary objectives of the Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe on the waiver of visa requirements are to:

- i. Support intra-African mobility, particularly within the frameworks of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA);

- ii. Enhance bilateral cooperation in the areas of diplomacy, education, and tourism; and
- iii. Promote regional security, with a specific focus on maritime safety and environmental protection.

## 6.0 Key Provisions

The Agreement contains several key provisions designed to facilitate mutual access while safeguarding national security interests. These include:

- i. The Agreement provides a **legal framework for holders of Diplomatic, Service (or Official), and Ordinary Passports** from both countries to **enter and stay in the territory of the other for up to three (3) months within a six (6) month period**, counted from the date of first entry, without the requirement of a visa;
- ii. Citizens of either country who are **employed by an international organisation**, as well as their **immediate family members**, are **exempted from visa requirements** for the entire duration of their official assignment;
- iii. Passport holders benefiting from this Agreement must **enter through designated ports of international passenger traffic** and are required to **comply with all immigration and border**

**control regulations** in force in the host country;

- iv. Either Party reserves the **right to suspend or terminate** the Agreement, either **in whole or in part**, based on considerations of **national security, public safety, or public order**, by providing prior written notice through appropriate **diplomatic channels**;
- v. Notwithstanding the aforementioned provisions, each Party retains the **sovereign right to refuse entry or residence** to any individual it deems **unsuitable or persona non grata**, without the obligation to disclose reasons.

## 7.0 Legal Implications

The Committee is of the view that the ratification of this Agreement fully complies with the **constitutional requirement under Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution**, which mandates **Parliamentary ratification of international agreements** signed by or on behalf of the Republic of Ghana.

In addition, the Committee notes that the **implementation of the Agreement will not require additional legislative measures**, as the existing **immigration and border control frameworks** of both countries are deemed sufficient to operationalise its provisions.

The Agreement is also consistent with Ghana's **foreign policy objective** of leveraging **international and bilateral cooperation** to support

national development and regional integration.

## 8.0 Justification

As a **dualist state**, Ghana is constitutionally mandated to subject all international treaties and agreements to **parliamentary ratification** before such instruments may be deemed enforceable within its domestic legal order. This is in accordance with **Article 75(2)(b)** of the 1992 Constitution.

The ratification of the Bilateral Agreement with the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe is therefore both a **constitutional imperative** and a **pragmatic policy measure** aimed at enhancing **bilateral cooperation**. It will further promote **diaspora engagement**, facilitate **people-to-people exchanges**, and underscore Ghana's commitment to **continental integration** and **diplomatic outreach**.

## 9.0 Options and Impact

**Article 11** of the Agreement stipulates that the instrument shall enter into force **on the thirtieth (30th) day following the date of the last notification** by the Parties of the completion of their respective internal procedures.

It has been **over three years** since the Agreement was signed and **the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe duly notified** Ghana of its fulfilment of internal processes for implementation. However, Ghana is yet

to ratify the Agreement to enable its entry into force.

The Committee is concerned that this prolonged delay in ratification may **undermine Ghana's credibility** and commitment to the Agreement. It risks **sending a misleading signal** of unwillingness on Ghana's part to honour its diplomatic undertakings. Such inaction could also prove **counterproductive** to efforts aimed at strengthening bilateral trust and deepening cooperation with friendly states.

## 10.0 Financial Impact

The Committee notes that no immediate loss of revenue is anticipated as a result of implementing the Agreement.

On the contrary, the facilitation of visa-free travel between the two countries is expected to enhance trade, tourism, and other areas of bilateral cooperation. These engagements hold the potential for long-term socio-economic benefits, which far outweigh any perceived short-term fiscal considerations.

## 11.0 Socio Economic Impact

The ratification and implementation of the Agreement are expected to promote economic diplomacy between the Republic of Ghana and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe. It will provide a platform for enhanced trade, investment, and commercial exchanges between the two nations.

Furthermore, the liberalisation of cross-border movement is likely to stimulate tourism, foster cultural exchanges, and strengthen diaspora engagement, thereby reinforcing the shared values and mutual interests of the two peoples.

## **12.0 Terms of Agreement**

The Agreement comprises twelve (12) substantive Articles and a Testimonium, all of which collectively reflect the mutual understanding, rights, and obligations agreed upon by the Parties.

### **Preamble**

The Preamble underscores the shared objective of the Parties to promote friendly relations and facilitate the ease of travel for citizens of both countries.

### **Article 1 – Waiver of Visa Requirement**

Nationals of the Republic of Ghana holding Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports, and nationals of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe holding Diplomatic, Official, and Ordinary Passports shall be exempted from visa requirements to enter, transit through, exit, and stay temporarily in the territory of either Party for a period not exceeding 90 days within a 180-day period from the date of first entry.

### **Article 2 – Accredited Diplomatic Staff**

Accredited Diplomatic and Consular staff, as well as their dependents, may enter the territory of either Party without visa and may remain for the duration of their official assignment.

### **Article 3 – Work Permits**

Citizens of either Party who intend to work, pursue a profession, study, or remain beyond 90 days in the host country are required to obtain the appropriate work permit or visa in accordance with national laws.

### **Article 4 – Notification of Relevant Documents**

The Parties shall exchange specimen passports through diplomatic channels at least thirty (30) days prior to the Agreement's entry into force to enable effective implementation.

### **Article 5 – Movement Control**

Citizens benefiting from this Agreement must enter or exit the host country only through border posts designated for international passenger traffic.

### **Article 6 – Compliance with Domestic Laws**

Visa exemptions granted under the Agreement do not absolve beneficiaries from observing the domestic laws and regulations of the host country.

**Article 7 – Refusal of Entry**

Each Party retains the sovereign right to refuse entry or curtail the duration of stay for any person deemed undesirable or persona non grata.

**Article 8 – Suspension**

The Parties may suspend the Agreement in whole or in part for reasons relating to public order, national security, or public health, with appropriate notice provided through diplomatic channels.

**Article 9 – Amendments**

Any amendment to the Agreement shall be effected by the exchange of diplomatic Notes between the Parties.

**Article 10 – Validity of Passports**

For passports to qualify under this Agreement, they must be valid for at least three (3) months from the date of entry into the host country.

**Article 11 – Entry into Force and Duration**

The Agreement shall enter into force on the thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) day following the date of the last notification by which the Parties communicate completion of internal ratification procedures. The Agreement shall remain in force indefinitely unless otherwise terminated.

**Article 12 – Termination**

Either Party may terminate the Agreement at any time by providing

written notice through diplomatic channels. Termination shall take effect 90 days after receipt of such notification, unless otherwise agreed.

**13.0 Observations**

The Committee made the following observations during its deliberations:

**13.1 Compliance with the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana**

The Committee observed that the ratification of the Agreement is in full compliance with the provisions of Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. The Agreement aligns with Ghana's foreign policy objectives, which are directed towards supporting national development through enhanced international and bilateral cooperation. The Committee was satisfied to note that the implementation of the Agreement will remain subject to existing immigration rules and regulations, thereby safeguarding Ghana's sovereignty, border integrity, and national security. This ensures that while Ghana fosters international mobility and cooperation, the requisite control measures remain intact.

**13.2 Financial Impact**

The Committee acknowledged that the ratification of the Agreement for the waiver of visa requirements for holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and

Príncipe may result in a potential reduction in revenue generated from visa-related activities. The waiver of visa fees, particularly for Ordinary Passport holders, could impact the financial inflow derived from the issuance of visas.

However, the Committee equally recognised that this potential revenue loss must be weighed against the broader socio-economic benefits anticipated from the Agreement's implementation. These include the promotion of trade and tourism, people-to-people diplomacy, and the strengthening of bilateral cooperation. The Committee was of the firm view that the long-term gains—increased travel, investment opportunities, and closer diplomatic relations—would likely offset the marginal revenue forgone, and enhance Ghana's economic standing and influence in the sub-region.

### **13.3 Delay in Ratification of the Agreement**

The Committee noted with concern the considerable delay in the ratification of the Agreement. Although the Agreement was signed over three years ago, and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe has communicated its readiness and implementation on its part, Ghana is yet to fulfil its obligation to ratify the Agreement.

The Committee underscored that Article 11 of the Agreement provides for its entry into force on the thirtieth day following the last notification by either party confirming the completion of

internal procedures. Ghana's prolonged delay is therefore inconsistent with the intended timeline, and could undermine Ghana's diplomatic posture, inadvertently sending a negative signal to its bilateral partner and raising questions about the country's commitment to the Agreement.

The Committee stressed that such delays, if unchecked, could erode diplomatic goodwill, hamper cooperation, and create the impression of inertia in Ghana's treaty processes. It therefore called for improved internal coordination and urgency in the ratification of treaties to uphold Ghana's international credibility and trustworthiness.

### **13.4 Streamlining the Ratification Process**

In response to the delay, the Committee was informed by the Hon Minister that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has introduced a new internal policy directive aimed at streamlining and expediting the ratification process of international agreements.

According to the Hon Minister, the new policy mandates that all signed agreements be submitted for Cabinet approval and subsequent Parliamentary ratification within a period of three (3) months from the date of signing. This directive is intended to enhance administrative efficiency, ensure timely implementation, and prevent delays that could impair Ghana's capacity to honour its international commitments.

The Committee welcomed this development, noting that such a policy will enable Ghana to respond promptly to international obligations, maintain diplomatic confidence, and ensure that important bilateral and multilateral agreements are operationalised without unnecessary bureaucratic delays. The Committee encouraged the Ministry to institutionalise this timeline as a standard best practice, thereby reinforcing Ghana's reputation as a reliable and responsive international partner.

#### **14.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**

Following careful deliberation and consideration of the Bilateral Agreement for the Waiver of Visa Requirements for holders of Diplomatic, Service, and Ordinary Passports between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Committee is satisfied with the content, intent, and implications of the Agreement.

The Committee is of the firm view that the ratification of the Agreement is consistent with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, and aligns with Ghana's broader foreign policy objectives of promoting international mobility, regional cooperation, and diplomatic engagement.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends to the House to adopt its Report and to approve by resolution the ratification of the said Agreement, thereby giving effect to its provisions and enabling its full implementation in

accordance with Ghana's constitutional and international obligations.

Respectfully submitted.

**The Speaker:** Any seconder?

**Nana Ayeh:** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion for ratification of the Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé.

In principle, once again, I support it. This Agreement was signed on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2021, so it is long overdue. São Tomé is a very nice country, and I urge Ghanaians and Members of the House to visit São Tomé.

Mr Speaker, your Committee did a very good job. Once again, looking at and considering key critical issues that matter to some of these agreements. One of the issues that the Committee looked at is the refusal of entry, which is key and critical. Many times when there are agreements between two countries, there are freeways and free paths for anybody or anything to go.

Mr Speaker, Article 7, that is page 10 of 16, takes cognisance of the effect of the refusal to entry. Each party remains or retains the sovereign right to refuse entry or curtail the duration of stay of any person deemed undesirable or *persona non grata*.

Mr Speaker, this is very key and critical. It also makes room for citizens of both countries who are considering staying beyond the 90-day agreement to

either work or go to school. When we look at work permit; citizens of each party who intend to work, pursue a professional study, or stay beyond the 90 days in the various countries, it makes provision for them. This is a good job that your Committee has done. It also has a termination clause.

Mr Speaker, I would beg to move that the House and your Committee, having done a very good job, commend the Ministry and the Minister for a very good job.

Mr Speaker, I move that this ratification be approved by the House.

**The Speaker:** Yes, please?

**Mr Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, sorry to take Members to Resolution 7(2). The last paragraph is talking about the holders of diplomatic, official and service passports. We do not know any passport called an official passport. What I know is ordinary passport, a service passport and a diplomatic passport.

No, we need to correct it.

6.38 p.m.

**The Speaker:** Sorry, I did not get your—what is the paragraph—

**Mr Acheampong:** Mr Speaker, Resolution 7(2) on page 4 of the Order Paper *Addendum*.

**The Speaker:** We are considering Motion numbered 12.

Yes, Hon Minister.

**Mr Ablakwa:** Mr Speaker, the agreement we signed with Colombia— In Ghana, we have diplomatic, service and ordinary passports. So, the diplomatic and service passports are referred to as official passports. Then, ordinary passports. Those are official passports used largely by public officials. But in the Republic of Colombia, they have diplomatic and official passports; they do not have service passports. Now, remember that this is a bilateral agreement which covers the agreement that we are all signing and we signed the same agreement.

So, this rendition is accurate. In Ghana, ours is the diplomatic and service passports. Then, for our brothers and sisters in Colombia, it covers their diplomatic and official passports. So, that is the explanation. So, it is accurate to cover both countries.

**The Speaker:** I thought we were at item numbered 12. But, where does Colombia come in?

**Dr Mahama:** Mr Speaker, I thought that the House would have an opportunity to contribute to the Motion.

**The Speaker:** Yes, please, go ahead.

**Dr Mahama:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much. This agreement is between the Republic of Ghana and São Tomé and Príncipe.

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Article 75, we are supposed to ratify the agreement

but, there is a pattern in the Report and, I wanted to make it with the last report on the financial impact of this agreement. The Report goes, with an omnibus provision that says that, there is no immediate financial impact of the agreement on Ghana and it is on page 7 of the Report. I read,

“The Committee knows that no immediate loss of revenue is anticipated as a result of implementing the agreement.”

Mr Speaker, I think that this is too omnibus and the Minister for Foreign Affairs should by now have data of business applications per annum and, what that can be quantified to reflect what revenue we are losing.

Mr Speaker, admittedly the economic benefits, the social benefits, and the diplomatic benefits of this agreement far outweighs any potential loss in revenue. But, for the purpose of this House to take a decision, we should move away from this omnibus provision that there is no immediate loss of revenue. When this House should be informed, of the numbers; of the potential loss in revenue vis-a-vis the potential impact and subsequent reports should reflect deeply because, the Ministry has the data and, they know the fee and charges for the application. Much more so when it is covering ordinary service and diplomatic passports. So, that is just the point I want to note on the Report.

Mr Speaker, I also commend the Ministry and the Committee, reflecting

on the right to security of each country, the right to work of each country and, also noting well that these exemptions are not without exception, that is subject to termination by each member country or party to this particular agreement. With this view, Mr Speaker, I also beg to support the Motion for the ratification of the agreement.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved:*

That this honourable House adopts the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and Regional Integration on the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

**The Speaker:** We now move on to item numbered 13 which is the adoption of the Consequential Resolution.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

**Bilateral Agreement between GoG and the Government of Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the Waiver of Visa Requirement**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Samuel Okudjeto Ablakwa):** Mr Speaker, beg to *move*:

WHEREAS by the provisions of Article 75 of the Constitution any treaty, agreement, or convention executed by or under the Authority of the President in the name of Ghana is made subject to ratification either by an Act of Parliament or by a resolution of Parliament supported by the votes of more than one-half of all the Members of Parliament.

In accordance with the said Article 75 of the Constitution the President has caused to be laid before Parliament through the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs the Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

NOW THEREFORE, this honourable House hereby resolves to ratify the said Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for the waiver of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary Passports.

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Agyei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**The Speaker:** Are we taking item numbered 14?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Yes, Mr Speaker, item numbered 14.

Yes, Chairman of the Committee.

**Mr Matthew Nyindam:** Mr Speaker, we do not have the Report here. If they could do us a favour and let us have the Report. Unfortunately, we do not have the Report. This should not be difficult. If they could get us the Report—

**The Speaker:** Yes, Hon Members, we defer that and move on to whichever item that is ready. Well, my attention has been drawn that since we are going paperless, it has been uploaded onto your system and so you go to your system. It is there. Some Members are saying it is there, some are saying it is not there.

**Mr Nyindam:** Mr Speaker, it should not be difficult because we now have the hard copy. So, we can progress.

**The Speaker:** All right. So, please, Chairman of the Committee, you may now move the Motion.

## MOTIONS

### Suspension of Order 104(1)

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the motion is given, the motion for the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Host Country Agreement for the Establishment of a Branch Office of AGRA in Accra, Ghana may be moved today.

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**The Speaker:** We move on to Motion numbered 15. That is a substantive Motion on this matter. Chairman of the Committee.

6.48p.m.

### **Host Country Agreement for the Establishment of AGRA Branch Office**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this honourable House adopts the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Host Country Agreement for the Establishment of a Branch Office of AGRA in Accra, Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I ask that this House considers the full Report of your Committee. The Report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs on the request for the ratification of the host country agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and AGRA.

### **Introduction**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025 the request for ratification of the Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) was laid before Parliament by the Hon Minister for Health, Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, on behalf of the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. Following its presentation, the Rt Hon Speaker referred the request to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration for consideration and report, pursuant to Order 245 of the Standing Orders of the House.

### **Deliberations**

The Committees on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs held a meeting with the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, together with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to deliberate on

the referral. The Committee expresses its sincere appreciation to the Hon Minister and the officials for honouring the invitation and for providing clarifications on matters raised during the engagement.

### **Reference Documents**

In the course of its deliberations, the Committee made reference to the following key documents:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana;
- iii. The Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA); and
- iv. The Cabinet Memorandum seeking Cabinet approval for the Parliamentary Ratification of the Host Country Agreement.

### **Background Information**

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) was established in 2006, with the late Mr Kofi Annan serving as its founding Chair. Formerly known as the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa, AGRA is an African-led non-profit organisation headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, and operates across ten (10) other African countries, namely: Ghana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Malawi, Mozambique,

Mali, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania. In recognition of the organisation's significant contributions to agricultural development on the continent, several African governments have entered into Host Country Agreements with AGRA to facilitate its effective and efficient operations within their jurisdictions.

AGRA's mission is premised on the belief that agricultural transformation is central to Africa's economic advancement. The organisation seeks to expand the number of sustainable food systems across Africa by leveraging partnerships to foster an environment where smallholder farmers are empowered to produce sufficient, nutritious food. Working in collaboration with African governments, non-governmental organisations, and private sector actors, AGRA delivers evidence-based solutions tailored to the unique challenges faced by smallholder farmers and indigenous agribusinesses across the continent.

Between 2007 and 2021, AGRA facilitated forty-two (42) policy reforms, supported eleven (11) national flagship agricultural programmes, and mobilised approximately US\$1.4 billion in investments into Africa's agricultural sector. The organisation also recruited and trained 33,000 Village-Based Advisors (VBAs) and supported 9,000 agro-dealers. As a result of these interventions, a majority of AGRA-supported farmers have adopted improved agronomic practices, with 75 per cent using fertiliser, 48 per cent adopting improved seed varieties, and 60 per cent implementing improved post-harvest management techniques.

AGRA has operated in Ghana since 2007, working in partnership with the Government and other strategic actors to increase incentives for agricultural participation while enhancing smallholder farmers' access to finance, technology, and markets. From 2007 to date, AGRA has invested over US\$76 million in Ghana, supporting the completion of thirty-five (35) PhD and one hundred and two (102) MSc degrees in Soil and Crop Science, facilitating the establishment of the West African Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) at the University of Ghana, and supporting the launch of a Master's programme in Soil Science at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). Additionally, eleven (11) seed companies have been established and over one hundred (100) Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) have received support to enhance their operational capacities and adopt climate-smart agricultural technologies.

In January 2008, the Republic of Ghana, through the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, signed a Host Country Agreement with AGRA. However, the said Agreement was not submitted to Parliament for ratification, as is constitutionally required. To address this legal oversight, the current Minister for Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Management of AGRA and in consultation with relevant ministries and stakeholders, undertook a comprehensive revision of the Agreement, which was subsequently submitted to Cabinet for approval.

Consequently, it has become imperative to present the revised Host Country Agreement to Parliament for

ratification, in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, in order to ensure its legal validity and enforceability within the domestic legal framework.

### **Objectives of the Agreement**

The primary objectives of the Host Country Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) are as follows:

- i. To establish the legal status of AGRA in Ghana as an international non-profit organisation operating within the framework of Ghanaian law;
- ii. To facilitate AGRA's operations in Ghana through the grant of tax exemptions, privileges, and immunities similar to those extended to other international organisations;
- iii. To strengthen Ghana's partnership with AGRA in the pursuit of food security, agricultural transformation, and inclusive economic growth; and
- iv. To ensure that AGRA staff and their dependants are afforded the necessary rights and protections required to perform their official responsibilities effectively and without undue hindrance.

### **Key Provisions of the Agreement**

The Agreement contains several significant provisions that define the rights, obligations, and privileges of

AGRA within the Republic of Ghana. These include the following:

- i. AGRA's property and assets are to be protected under the laws of Ghana. The Ghanaian authorities are required to exercise due diligence when entering or accessing AGRA's premises, recognising the inviolability of its official functions.
- ii. The Agreement outlines the arrangements for tax and duty exemptions, along with other related privileges, to enable the efficient functioning of AGRA in Ghana.
- iii. AGRA is obligated under the Agreement to ensure that its premises are not used as a sanctuary for individuals evading lawful arrest under Ghanaian law. Furthermore, AGRA must cooperate fully with the appropriate Ghanaian authorities, maintain operational and financial accounts within Ghana, and collaborate with the Government in the delivery of agricultural programmes.
- iv. The Agreement provides for the unhindered transport and communication of official documents and correspondences related to AGRA's activities, in line with privileges accorded to other international organisations operating in Ghana.

- v. The Agreement stipulates that the laws of the Republic of Ghana shall apply, and the courts of Ghana shall have jurisdiction over all acts, omissions, and transactions that occur within AGRA's premises, subject to the provisions of the Agreement.
- vi. The Agreement grants to foreign AGRA staff and their spouses a defined set of privileges and immunities, subject to specific exceptions and waiver conditions. These privileges apply strictly in the context of the performance of official duties, and shall not extend to matters of personal interest or private activities unrelated to their responsibilities.

### **Justification for Ratification**

The Committee observed that the programmes implemented by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) are well aligned with the Government of Ghana's agricultural policy objectives, and have continued to make a tangible impact on the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, particularly women, youth, and low-income populations residing in deprived communities across the country.

Parliamentary ratification of the Host Country Agreement will serve as a clear expression of the Government's commitment to supporting AGRA's mission, while also affirming the organisation's strategic role in Ghana's agricultural transformation agenda. Ratification will further reinforce the

collaboration between AGRA and the various public institutions and sector agencies with which it partners to deliver interventions.

The Agreement is fully consistent with international best practices, and its provisions comply with the laws of Ghana, particularly the 1992 Constitution and the Exemptions Act, 2022 (Act 1083), which governs the grant of tax and duty exemptions to qualifying entities.

In addition, the ratification of the Agreement is expected to send a positive and reassuring signal to AGRA's investment partners and stakeholders, indicating the Government of Ghana's formal recognition and support for the organisation's operations within the country. Such an endorsement is likely to enhance investor confidence, catalyse further resource mobilisation, and enable the scaling up of agricultural programmes and innovations across the country. Furthermore, other international development organisations may view the ratification as a demonstration of Ghana's willingness to cooperate with global partners, thereby attracting additional investments and technical support into the agricultural sector.

## **Implications and Impacts**

### **Legal Implications**

The Committee notes that the provisions of the Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and AGRA are fully consistent with the legal framework

of Ghana. The procedures adopted in processing the Agreement adhere strictly to the provisions of the 1992 Constitution, particularly Article 75. Accordingly, the implementation of the Agreement will not necessitate any amendments to existing legislation, nor will it require the introduction of new statutory instruments.

### **Options and Impacts**

In evaluating the appropriate course of action regarding the Host Country Agreement, two primary options were considered by the Government:

- i. Cabinet approval followed by Parliamentary ratification of the Agreement; or
- ii. Cabinet withholding approval, thereby forgoing ratification altogether.

Upon comprehensive consideration of the merits and implications of both options, the preferred and recommended course was the endorsement of the Agreement by Cabinet and its subsequent submission to Parliament for ratification. This approach is aligned with international best practices and reflects Ghana's commitment to the principles enshrined in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, under which such host country agreements are traditionally framed.

Ratifying the Agreement serves as a formal acknowledgement of AGRA's contribution to Ghana's socio-economic development, particularly in the areas of

food security, agricultural transformation, and youth employment. Furthermore, it solidifies AGRA's legal status in Ghana, thereby creating a more predictable operational environment and enabling stronger collaboration, coordination, and resource mobilisation to support Ghana's development priorities within the agricultural sector.

### **Financial Impact**

The implementation of the Agreement will not impose any direct financial obligations on the Government of Ghana. The provisions concerning tax exemptions are in line with Article 34 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and Act 148 of the laws of Ghana. While some foregone revenue may be associated with the tax exemptions, the anticipated socio-economic gains from AGRA's expanded activities are expected to far outweigh these costs. The Committee is of the view that the benefit-to-cost ratio remains favourable.

### **Socio-economic Impact**

AGRA's interventions have already yielded measurable benefits in Ghana's agricultural sector, particularly in the areas of food security, employment generation, and access to finance for smallholder farmers. In addition, AGRA has contributed significantly to the marketing of agricultural produce, the empowerment of women and youth, and the advancement of agribusiness and entrepreneurial development along the agricultural value chain. The continued presence and legal recognition of AGRA

in Ghana is expected to amplify these outcomes, further supporting the Government's economic diversification and rural development agenda.

### **Global Development Impact**

AGRA's work directly contributes to the achievement of several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through its comprehensive interventions in areas such as food security, poverty alleviation, gender equity, and sustainable agricultural practices, AGRA supports the attainment of key global targets, including:

- SDG 1: No Poverty;
- SDG 2: Zero Hunger;
- SDG 5: Gender Equality; and
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth.

By facilitating the ratification of this Agreement, Ghana reaffirms its commitment to the global development agenda and strengthens its position as a cooperative and responsive partner in international development efforts.

### **Observations**

The Committee made the following observations during its deliberations:

### **Justification for Ratification of the Host Country Agreement**

In response to concerns raised regarding the necessity for the

ratification of the Host Country Agreement—particularly in light of AGRA’s longstanding presence and operations in Ghana—officials from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) offered clear justification for the parliamentary action.

It was explained that parliamentary ratification is essential to confer legal effect upon the Agreement and to provide the requisite statutory backing for its implementation. Such ratification would empower the Government, and specifically the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, to formally hold AGRA accountable to its stated commitments within Ghana’s agricultural sector.

Furthermore, ratification is expected to facilitate a more structured and sustainable mobilisation of resources, with a direct focus on strategic areas such as youth training programmes, support for agricultural start-ups, and the enhancement of farm productivity. The Agreement will also contribute to the strengthening of agricultural governance frameworks, including systems for seed traceability, fertiliser quality assurance, and improved data collection and agricultural extension services.

These benefits are aligned with national development priorities and underscore the importance of providing AGRA with a legally recognised framework within which to operate effectively and in coordination with public institutions.

## **AGRA’s Support and Impact in Ghana**

The Committee observed that the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has made substantial and strategic contributions to Ghana’s agricultural development through targeted support in key areas that are closely aligned with the country’s national priorities and sectoral transformation agenda.

A notable example of AGRA’s contribution is its provision of technical assistance during the formulation of Ghana’s flagship agricultural policy, the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) programme. This support was instrumental in shaping the overarching framework aimed at enhancing national food security and agricultural productivity.

In the domain of seed system development, AGRA has extended assistance to both the public and private sectors, including funding for start-up seed companies, strengthening of seed quality assurance systems, and the training of seed inspectors to improve regulatory compliance and oversight. At present, AGRA is collaborating with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) to procure essential laboratory equipment for the Ministry’s fertiliser testing facilities. This initiative aims to bolster the Ministry’s capacity to verify the chemical composition and quality of all inorganic fertilisers imported into the country, thereby ensuring the protection of both farmers and consumers.

AGRA has also played a pivotal role in supporting agricultural extension services in Ghana. Over the past decade, it has made significant investments toward the expansion and professionalisation of extension delivery, including collaboration with private sector actors and contributions to the development of regulatory frameworks. Notably, AGRA has supported the drafting of a legislative bill aimed at professionalising agricultural extension services to ensure consistent and standardised support for farmers across the country.

In addition, AGRA has supported the Statistics, Research and Information Directorate (SRID) of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in the enhancement of agricultural data systems. This includes technical and financial support for the collection of reliable grain stock data, which is essential for preparing national food balance sheets and informing evidence-based agricultural planning and policy formulation. The Committee noted that Phase Two (2024–2026) of this data initiative is currently underway, covering seventeen (17) zones in Northern Ghana, with the objective of assessing household and market stock levels to further inform national food security strategies.

### **Challenges in Achieving Food Security**

The Committee sought clarification on the persistent challenge of food insecurity in Ghana, particularly in light of the substantial technical and financial support provided over the years by AGRA and other development partners.

Members expressed concern that, despite these interventions, the country continues to import approximately US\$3 billion worth of food annually, raising questions about the slow pace of progress towards food self-sufficiency.

In response, officials from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) explained that agricultural transformation is a long-term and multifaceted endeavour, especially within the context of developing economies. They emphasised that Ghana is currently navigating a critical transition from a largely smallholder-based agricultural system to a more modernised, mechanised, and commercially-oriented sector. While this transformation is deemed both necessary and strategic, its complexity and scale have contributed to a slower-than-anticipated pace of progress.

The Officials further stressed that achieving food self-reliance will require a concerted focus on the rapid modernisation of agriculture, underpinned by sustained investment, institutional reform, policy coherence, and capacity building across all segments of the agricultural value chain. In this regard, the ratification of the Host Country Agreement with AGRA was described as a crucial step toward reinforcing collaboration between the Government and development partners. It would enable the implementation of more targeted and impactful interventions, while also attracting additional technical expertise and financial resources to support Ghana's agricultural transformation agenda.

## **Challenges faced by AGRA in its Operations in Ghana**

Officials from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) briefed the Committee on several challenges encountered in the course of AGRA's operations within Ghana.

Firstly, the issue of funding constraints was identified as a major impediment to the full implementation of AGRA's programmes. While AGRA has demonstrated a firm commitment to supporting Ghana's agricultural transformation, its capacity to undertake and sustain a broad range of interventions is frequently constrained by limited financial resources. This situation has been exacerbated by disruptions in external funding, particularly following the closure of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which had previously been a significant funding partner.

Secondly, the Committee was informed of persistent challenges related to tax exemption procedures. MoFA officials reported that AGRA and its implementing partners regularly encounter delays in securing tax exemptions for the importation of vital agricultural equipment and materials. These delays occur even in instances where such items are financed by international development partners, including USAID. It was noted that the resulting administrative bottlenecks have led to disruptions in project implementation timelines and may, over time, dissuade donor agencies from

maintaining support for agricultural initiatives in Ghana.

Officials expressed the view that the ratification of the Host Country Agreement would serve to address these tax-related difficulties, by establishing a clearer legal framework and procedural basis for the timely processing of exemptions. Such a framework would not only facilitate AGRA's operations but also enhance Ghana's credibility as a host country committed to honouring its obligations under international agreements.

## **Financial Accountability and Oversight**

The Committee expressed concern regarding the financial accountability and oversight mechanisms governing the utilisation of donor funds mobilised by AGRA in support of agricultural development in Ghana. Particular attention was drawn to the reported mobilisation of approximately US\$1.4 billion by AGRA between 2007 and 2021, and the Committee inquired whether these funds were properly captured within the national budgetary framework, specifically the annual budgets of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) as presented to Parliament.

In response, officials from MoFA stated that they would need to seek further clarification on the matter. While they expressed confidence that such resources are incorporated within the relevant financial reporting structures, they acknowledged the importance of providing comprehensive information

and documentation on the utilisation and impact of the funds in question. The Committee underscored the need for greater transparency and alignment between donor-funded interventions and national budget processes.

### **Recognition of Legacy of the Late Kofi Annan**

The Committee was informed that AGRA accords special priority to Ghana in recognition of the enduring legacy of the late Mr Kofi Annan, who served as the organisation's first Chairman and President. This privileged relationship provides Ghana with a unique standing within AGRA's institutional framework and presents an opportunity to negotiate preferential staffing quotas for qualified Ghanaians within AGRA's core establishment, particularly following the ratification of the Host Country Agreement.

The Committee formally recognised and expressed deep appreciation for the outstanding role played by the late Mr Kofi Annan in the establishment, leadership, and international positioning of AGRA. His vision and commitment to agricultural development and food security have left an indelible mark not only on Ghana but across the African continent.

In this regard, the Committee wishes to place on record its profound respect and gratitude for the legacy of Mr Kofi Annan, whose visionary leadership and global statesmanship continue to benefit generations of Africans.

### **Accountability and Contribution of AGRA-Supported Graduates**

The Committee raised concerns regarding the post-training accountability and developmental impact of individuals who received postgraduate sponsorships from AGRA, particularly at the Master's and PhD levels. The Committee sought clarity on whether such graduates are actively contributing to Ghana's agricultural sector following the completion of their academic programmes.

Officials from MoFA provided firm assurances that Ghanaian graduates supported by AGRA are meaningfully engaged in various aspects of the sector. Specifically, it was indicated that these individuals are employed in reputable research and academic institutions, including the Crop Research Institute, Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI), the University of Ghana, and the University of Cape Coast.

The Committee was further informed that these AGRA-supported graduates have made notable contributions to agricultural research and innovation, particularly in the development of improved local crop varieties, including maize and tomatoes, which are critical to enhancing productivity and food security in Ghana.

### **Conclusion And Recommendation**

The Committee affirms that the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) continues to play a

pivotal role in advancing food security, inclusive economic growth, and job creation, particularly among the youth in Ghana and across the African continent. AGRA's strategic interventions aimed at strengthening Ghana's agricultural sector and supporting smallholder farmers are clearly aligned with the country's broader national development agenda.

The ratification of the Host Country Agreement is expected to significantly enhance the effectiveness, reach, and sustainability of AGRA's operations in Ghana. It will create a structured legal framework through which the Government can leverage AGRA's technical expertise, mobilise additional financial resources, and benefit from innovative policy solutions that support sustainable agricultural transformation. The ratification will also deepen institutional collaboration between AGRA and the Government of Ghana, facilitating the achievement of shared developmental goals within the sector.

Having examined the content, scope, and legal implications of the Host Country Agreement between the Government of Ghana and AGRA, the Committee is satisfied with its objectives, provisions, and potential benefits. The Committee therefore recommends to the House to adopt this Report and to ratify the Host Country Agreement in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, I so move.

*Question proposed.*

**Ranking Member of the Committee (Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):**  
Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and the Committee on Food and Agriculture request for the ratification of the Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and AGRA.

Mr Speaker, AGRA, we all know, is a brainchild of a very renowned and profound Ghanaian. Mr Speaker, ever since that was birthed, AGRA has served and has been phenomenal to Ghana and all other countries that are hosting AGRA.

Mr Speaker, your Committee assessed a lot of indicators as to whether the re-hosting of the Agreement is important to us. Mr Speaker, your Committee came to find out a lot of things. AGRA has been supporting Ghana and our farmers on a wide scale. As we speak now, through the support of AGRA, we have been able to graduate almost 20 Ph.D. students in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, AGRA was even part of the brain policies of the Planting for Food and Jobs. AGRA has been supporting our farmers both directly and indirectly. AGRA has been providing logistics and technical know-how in diverse ways. Mr Speaker, when we went through a lot of the things that AGRA does for Ghana and the farmers, such as working closely with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, your

Committee had no other choice than to support and recommend for the House the approval of the host country agreement once again in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, in principle and with everything that the Chairman of the Committee has said, I want to also associate and support the host country Agreement approval and ratification by this House.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

**The Speaker:** Motion moved and seconded for the consideration of the House.

**Mr Francis-Xavier Kojo Sosu (NDC—Madina):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I also rise to support the adoption of this Report to ratify the host country Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and AGRA.

Mr Speaker, during the work of the Committee, one of the very important indicators of vetting such an Agreement that came up was the need to look at the financial implication of such an Agreement. Mr Speaker, as we can see on page 11, paragraph 8.3 of the Report, it clearly states that there are no financial obligations at all. No financial implications. In fact, Mr Speaker, the benefits of this Agreement are rather coming to the Republic of Ghana and farmers in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, quite apart from that, we would also realise that AGRA has been in this country for several years and its

impact in this country can never be overemphasised. But more importantly, I want to take us to page 12 of the Report on the global development impact. The work of AGRA supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, no poverty, zero hunger, gender equality, decent work and economic growth. And Mr Speaker, ratifying this Agreement would only show commitment to some of these Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr Speaker, it is based on this that I encourage the House to support the adoption of this Report to ratify the host country Agreement between AGRA and the Republic of Ghana.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity.

**Mr Daniel Nana Addo-Kenneth (NPP— Okere):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I also rise to add my voice to support the adoption of this Report. Mr Speaker, at the Committee level, we saw that the presence of AGRA has helped a lot in terms of socioeconomic impact. Mr Speaker, they have been in support from 2007 to date and have helped shape most of our policies—about 42 of these policies. Mr Speaker, just as the last speaker indicated, they are also looking at smallholder farmer empowerment, which includes our women and youth. And in our quest to have food sufficiency, Mr Speaker, having them establish their branch here is going to improve upon our crop yield and empower these smallholder farmers, so that they will be able to support the food

security that we need. In that case, Mr Speaker, just as my Deputy Ranking said, it has also been the brainchild of the late Kofi Annan, who was a founding Chairman in 2006.

I therefore urge that Colleagues in the House adopt this Report.

With these few words, I so submit. Thank you.

**Dr Godfred Seidu Jasaw:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to add my voice to calling on my Colleagues and the House to ratify this Host Country Agreement between the Government of Ghana and AGRA.

Mr Speaker, AGRA has been the household name in our country. At least, their operations in this country have been since 2007.

But, Mr Speaker, just before I proceed, I observed that the Report loaded on the console is not the exact Report. It is showing that it was a joint referral and the Report to the House is a joint Report between the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs. So, I invite the Table Office to reconcile that and make sure that the records say so.

Mr Speaker, just to add that AGRA has done a lot of investments since its inception. It has invested over US \$76 million so far. Mr Speaker, AGRA's programmes are aligned with Ghana's agricultural transformation programmes as well.

6.58 p.m.

Mr Speaker, the challenges of our country that AGRA is seeking to partner to be able to resolve are in direct conformity with the policy objectives of the government of the day. Mr Speaker, AGRA is making substantive investments in seed production and fertiliser production in this country.

Mr Speaker, AGRA is working with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection; Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment; and Ministry of Food and Agriculture to be able to support in the programmes that they are doing. AGRA is working with the Parliament of Ghana and its Committees. The Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs, for example, is a direct beneficiary of most of the capacity building efforts in support of AGRA. Mr Speaker, now AGRA is looking at an integrated approach where the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration is part of the support. Committee on Environment, Science and Technology and many other related Committees are working on the programmes that AGRA supports.

Mr Speaker, this ratification will be a clear expression of the commitment of the Government of Ghana to AGRA's support so far and I really invite this House to go ahead and ratify the Agreement.

Mr Speaker, as has been said by many of my Hon Colleagues already, there are no financial implications if we ratify this Agreement and I so invite you

to lead this House into accepting, adopting and ratifying this host country Agreement. It has enormous benefits for the relationship, capacity building, transformation of agriculture and youth employment in this country.

**Dr Abdul Kabiru Tiah Mahama (NPP — Walewale):** Mr Speaker, I will adopt the submission of other Hon Members as if they were mine but just to add to an important observation in the Report.

Mr Speaker, the adoption of the Report to host AGRA in Ghana as an international organisation or as a non-governmental organisation is without some identified challenges that operation of AGRA is faced with. The Report rightly captures that on page 17. Mr Speaker, the major one which is within the remit of this House is the report by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture that AGRA and its implementing partners regularly encounter delays in securing tax exemptions for the importation of vital agricultural instruments and materials.

Mr Speaker, this observation by the Committee brings to our attention the fact that, in as much as we accept to host this organisation, this House must be willing, at all times, to provide the incentive to address the bottlenecks to ensure that AGRA works.

Mr Speaker, operation of AGRA is planned around the policy of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, where he came up

with the rural agriculture policy, the Ujamaa policy. This policy has actually led to rapid transformations of rural agriculture and AGRA's policy of village-based farm advisers is very much aligned with that policy.

Mr Speaker, looking at the small-scale nature of our farmers, with the many small-scale farmers we have, their policy interventions are actually those we need to ensure agricultural transformation in the country. Their large-scale agricultural measures are not those that can help us. The number of the many small-scale farmers all the way from Pusiga to Axim far outweigh the large-scale farmers. Without a policy like AGRA, focus on rural agriculture and mobilising the people around smallholder farmers and introducing hybrid seeds for their production— Mr Speaker, the Green Alliance is mindful of the environment as well and this is something that we have not even detailed in this particular Chamber. The whole concept is to ensure sustainable agriculture, ensuring that our agricultural practices are climate-resistant.

So, Mr Speaker, I am very much in support of our decision to host it. Apart from the job potentials, it is an opportunity brought to the doorsteps of our farmers in Ghana.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker:** We will now take the consequential Resolution, the item numbered 16.

**RESOLUTION****Host Country Agreement for the Establishment of a Branch Office of AGRA in Accra**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa) (MP):** I beg to *move*:

WHEREAS by the provisions of Article 75 of the Constitution any treaty, agreement, or convention executed by or under the Authority of the President in the name of Ghana is made subject to ratification either by an Act of Parliament or by a resolution of Parliament supported by the votes of more than one-half of all the Members of Parliament.

In accordance with the said Article 75 of the Constitution the President has caused to be laid before Parliament through the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Host Country Agreement for the Establishment of a Branch Office of AGRA in Accra, Ghana.

NOW THEREFORE, this Hon House hereby resolves to ratify the said Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the Host Country Agreement for the Establishment of a Branch Office of AGRA in Accra, Ghana

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Nana Asafo-Agyei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved Accordingly*

**The Speaker:** Are we taking item number 17?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Yes, Mr Speaker, we are taking the item numbered 17 on page 9 of the Order Paper *Addendum*.

**MOTIONS****Suspension of Standing Order 104(1)**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That notwithstanding the provision of Order 104(1) of the Standing Orders which requires that a Motion shall not be debated until at least two sitting days have elapsed after the notice to move the Motion is given, the Motion for the adoption of the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 2017 may be *moved* today.

**Deputy Ranking Member (Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**The Speaker:** We move to the item numbered 18, the substantive Motion.

## **Report on the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 2017**

**Chairman of the Committee (Mr Alfred Okoe Vanderpuije):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

That this Hon House adopts the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 2017.

### **Executive Summary**

This Report concerns the request for the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), submitted to Parliament by the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The TPNW, adopted in 2017 and entered into force in January 2021, is the first comprehensive global legal instrument prohibiting the development, possession, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons. Ghana, which played a constructive and early role in its negotiation and signed it on the day it opened for signature, has not yet ratified the Treaty. The Committee's deliberations revealed that ratification would not impose any additional legal or financial obligations, as Ghana already complies with the Treaty's requirements through its non-possession of nuclear weapons and its agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The ratification will allow Ghana to participate fully in Treaty

meetings, consolidate its leadership role in disarmament, and align with its existing commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Treaty of Pelindaba. Moreover, it positions Ghana among the first 100 ratifying countries, reinforcing its global standing and commitment to peace. The Committee, therefore, recommends that Parliament approve the ratification of the TPNW to advance international disarmament and reaffirm Ghana's principled opposition to nuclear arms.

### **1.0 Introduction**

The request for ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was laid before Parliament on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025, by the Hon Minister for Health, Mr Kwabena Mintah Akandoh, on behalf of the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

Following its submission, the Speaker referred the request to the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, and Defence and Interior for consideration and report, pursuant to Order 245 of the Standing Orders of the House.

### **2.0 Deliberations**

The Committees on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, and Defence and Interior met with the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, and senior officials from the Ministry to consider the referral

concerning the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The Committees express its appreciation to the Hon Minister and his team for their attendance and for providing valuable clarifications on issues raised during the deliberations.

### **3.0 Reference Documents**

In the course of its deliberations, the Committees made reference to the following key documents:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana;
- iii. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW); and
- iv. The Cabinet Memorandum seeking Cabinet approval for the Parliamentary Ratification of the Treaty.

### **4.0 Background Information**

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is the first globally applicable multilateral legal instrument that comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons. It represents a landmark achievement in the global disarmament architecture, addressing a critical legal gap by explicitly outlawing the development, testing, production, possession, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The negotiation of the TPNW was driven by the growing concern within the international community regarding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. A nuclear detonation – whether intentional or accidental – would result in mass casualties, widespread environmental devastation, economic destabilisation, and the collapse of essential infrastructure. Furthermore, the ongoing maintenance and modernisation of nuclear arsenals divert critical public resources away from urgent social needs such as healthcare, education, and disaster response. Nuclear weapons are widely recognised as inhumane and indiscriminate, with effects that transcend national borders and persist across generations.

In response to the stagnation in global nuclear disarmament efforts, the United Nations General Assembly, in December 2016, adopted a resolution mandating the commencement of negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. This marked a significant turning point in the international disarmament agenda.

Following extensive negotiations, the TPNW was adopted on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, with the support of 122 Member States, including Ghana.

Ghana played an active and constructive role throughout the negotiation process. It was among the 127 States that endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge (2015 – 2016), committing to collaborate in efforts to

stigmatise, prohibit, and eliminate nuclear weapons. The Humanitarian Pledge served as a key driver in building momentum towards the adoption of the TPNW.

During the formal negotiations of the Treaty in 2017, Ghana voted in favour of its adoption and, in its opening statement at the negotiating conference, described the process as “long overdue” and a “genuine and timely opportunity to break the impasse and make real progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons.”

Demonstrating strong political commitment, Ghana signed the Treaty on the very day it was opened for signature, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017. Since that time, Ghana has continued to support and promote universal adherence to the TPNW, including through the co-sponsorship of and voting in favour of annual UN General Assembly resolutions urging non-party States to ratify or accede to the Treaty without delay.

The TPNW entered into force on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2021, a development described by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres as “an extraordinary achievement and a step towards the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons”. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, also welcomed the entry of the Treaty into force and called on all African States that had not yet done so to join the Treaty as a matter of urgency.

As of March 2025, a total of 73 States had ratified or acceded to the TPNW, while 94 States, including Ghana, had

signed it. Despite being among the first signatories, Ghana has not yet completed the ratification process. The ratification of the TPNW by Ghana would serve to solidify its leadership role in nuclear disarmament, particularly within Africa, and reaffirm the country’s longstanding commitment to international peace, security, and multilateralism.

## **5.0 Objectives of the Treaty**

The primary objectives of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) are as follows:

- i. To promote global disarmament through the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons and related activities;
- ii. To establish a robust legal framework for the irreversible and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons; and
- iii. To advance global peace and security by preventing the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and promoting a world free of nuclear arms.

## **6.0 Summary of Provisions of the Treaty**

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) comprises a preamble and 20 articles, each articulating various legal, humanitarian, and operational commitments binding on States Parties.

The preamble underscores the catastrophic humanitarian consequences arising from the use or testing of nuclear

weapons. It references international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations, and recalls the suffering of victims, including those in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as those affected by nuclear testing. It recognises the disproportionate impact of ionising radiation on women and girls and emphasises the role of disarmament, education, and gender-sensitive approaches in securing a nuclear-free world.

The substantive provisions are summarised as follows:

- Article 1: *General Prohibitions* – States Parties are expressly prohibited from developing, testing, producing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, transferring, using, or threatening to use nuclear weapons. It also prohibits the stationing of nuclear weapons on national territory and bans assistance or encouragement of such prohibited acts.
- Article 2: *Declarations* – Requires States Parties to submit a one-time declaration disclosing whether they have ever owned, possessed, or hosted nuclear weapons.
- Article 3: *Safeguards* – Obligates each State Party to maintain or adopt safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to prevent the diversion of nuclear energy from peaceful purposes to weapons use.
- Article 4: *Elimination of Nuclear Weapons Programmes* – Details specific obligations for nuclear-armed States joining the Treaty, including time-bound, verified, and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons or related programmes.
- Article 5: *National Implementation* – Requires States Parties to adopt legislative, administrative, and penal measures necessary for the effective implementation and enforcement of the Treaty's provisions.
- Article 6: *Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation* – Mandates support for victims of nuclear use or testing and calls for the rehabilitation of contaminated environments.
- Article 7: *International Cooperation and Assistance* – Encourages cooperation among States Parties, including the provision of technical, financial, and material support, bilaterally or via institutions such as the UN or IAEA.
- Article 8: *Meetings of States Parties* – Provides for biennial meetings to review implementation and Review Conferences to be held every six years.
- Article 9: *Financial Provisions* – Stipulates that States Parties shall bear the costs associated with the implementation of the Treaty, apportioned according to the United Nations scale of assessment.

- Article 10: *Amendments* – Allows any State Party to propose amendments, which are to be considered by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and deliberated upon during official meetings.
- Article 11: *Dispute Settlement* – Encourages the amicable resolution of disputes through negotiation or other peaceful means. The Meeting of States Parties may offer good offices to facilitate dispute resolution.
- Article 12: *Universality* – Imposes a duty on States Parties to promote wider adherence to the Treaty by encouraging non-party States to ratify or accede.
- Article 13: *Signature* – States that the Treaty shall remain open for signature indefinitely.
- Article 14: *Ratification, Acceptance, Approval or Accession* – Provides the legal pathways through which States may become Parties to the Treaty.
- Article 15: *Entry into Force* – The Treaty entered into force on 22nd January 2021, 90 days following the deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification or accession. For any State subsequently joining, the Treaty becomes effective 90 days after deposit.
- Article 16: *Reservations* – Prohibits reservations, ensuring that no State Party may make conditional declarations altering the legal effect of the Treaty's provisions.
- Article 17: *Duration and Withdrawal* – Establishes that the Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely, but allows for withdrawal under extraordinary circumstances, with 12 months' prior notice.
- Article 18: *Relationship with Other Agreements* – Affirms that the Treaty's implementation shall not affect States' obligations under other international instruments, provided such instruments are consistent with the TPNW.
- Article 19: *Depositary* – Assigns the Secretary-General of the United Nations as the official Depositary of the Treaty.
- Article 20: *Authentic Texts* – Confirms that the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish texts of the Treaty are equally authentic.

## 7.0 Justification for Ratification

The ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) by Ghana is both a reaffirmation and consolidation of the country's historic commitment to global nuclear disarmament and the pursuit of international peace and security.

Ghana has played an active and constructive role in the negotiation,

adoption, and advocacy of the TPNW. It was among the first signatories when the Treaty was opened for signature on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, underscoring its leadership and consistent support for disarmament initiatives at the multilateral level. The ratification will not only consolidate this leadership but also elevate Ghana's standing as a champion of international peace architecture.

In the current global climate – characterised by heightened geopolitical tensions and a renewed risk of nuclear confrontation – the universalisation of the TPNW has become a matter of urgent moral and strategic necessity. The stagnation in nuclear disarmament efforts makes it imperative for like-minded states to take decisive steps towards outlawing nuclear weapons and reinforcing international legal norms.

Ghana's ratification would be in full alignment with its existing legal commitments under the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba, which collectively prohibit the acquisition, production, and deployment of nuclear arms within the African continent. In essence, accession to the TPNW would serve to complement and reinforce Ghana's existing international obligations under these treaties.

Moreover, the obligations under the TPNW would not impose additional burdens on Ghana, as the State already adheres to all the core prohibitions under Article 1 of the Treaty. Ghana has also

concluded and implemented a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in full compliance with Article 3 of the Treaty.

Finally, ratification will allow Ghana to participate in Meetings of States Parties and Review Conferences in the full capacity of a State Party, thus enabling it to contribute meaningfully to the development, interpretation, and effective implementation of the Treaty. Such participation will empower Ghana to influence the global disarmament agenda from a position of legitimacy and moral authority, rather than as a mere signatory or observer.

## **8.0 Implications and Impacts**

### **8.2 Legal Justification**

Pursuant to Article 75(2)(b) of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, all international treaties, conventions, and agreements executed by or on behalf of the President shall be subject to ratification either through an Act of Parliament or by a Resolution of Parliament. The ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is therefore a constitutional imperative to give effect to the international commitment made by Ghana upon signing the Treaty.

### **8.3 Options and Impacts**

In considering the appropriate course of action in relation to the TPNW, the Committees examined two possible

options: ratification or deferral of the process. Consultations were held with relevant stakeholders, including officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and policy experts in international security. Following a thorough review, the option to proceed with ratification was unanimously endorsed.

The benefits of ratification include:

- Consolidating Ghana's leadership role in global nuclear disarmament;
- Reinforcing Ghana's existing legal obligations under other disarmament instruments such as the NPT and the Treaty of Pelindaba; and
- Enabling Ghana to participate fully and effectively in the development and implementation of the Treaty's provisions as a State Party, rather than in an observer capacity.

Importantly, ratification imposes no substantial new legal or administrative burdens on the State, nor does it conflict with existing domestic legislation or international commitments.

#### **8.4 Financial Impact**

The TPNW does not impose any significant financial obligations on States Parties that do not possess nuclear weapons. The only anticipated financial responsibilities are those ordinarily associated with participation in Meetings of States Parties, including voluntary contributions and costs related to the submission of declarations to the United

Nations Secretary-General, who serves as the Depositary of the Treaty.

These financial obligations are calculated using the United Nations Scale of Assessment, which ensures equitable contribution based on each Member State's capacity to pay. It is instructive to note that Ghana currently incurs similar costs in its capacity as an observer. For instance, the sum of US\$1,202 was expended for Ghana's participation in the Third Meeting of States Parties held in March 2025. Consequently, no additional financial burden is expected upon ratification beyond the present cost framework.

#### **9.0 Implementation Plan**

Upon the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Ghana shall be required to submit a one-time declaration in accordance with Article 2 of the Treaty. This declaration shall confirm that the Republic of Ghana has never owned, possessed, or controlled any nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices. It is important to underscore that the Treaty does not impose any continuing reporting obligations on States that neither possess nor host nuclear weapons.

Ghana, as a responsible Member State of the international community, already maintains a comprehensive safeguards agreement as well as an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). These instruments ensure full compliance with Article 3 of the Treaty.

Accordingly, no further action shall be required under that provision.

In compliance with Article 5 of the TPNW, Ghana shall, following ratification, undertake a comprehensive legal review to assess whether supplementary legislative, administrative, or regulatory measures, including appropriate penal sanctions, are necessary to ensure the effective domestication and enforceability of the Treaty within Ghana's legal framework.

Additionally, in accordance with the Vienna Action Plan adopted at the First Meeting of States Parties in June 2022, Ghana shall designate national focal points to participate in and monitor the Treaty's intersessional activities. This will ensure continuous engagement with developments under the Treaty framework and reaffirm Ghana's commitment to advancing the cause of global nuclear disarmament.

## **10.0 Observations**

The Committees, during its deliberations on the referral concerning the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), made the following key observations:

### **10.1 Consistency with Ghana's Foreign Policy Commitments**

The Committees observed that the proposed ratification of the TPNW is wholly consistent with the Republic of Ghana's longstanding foreign policy posture that champions international peace, disarmament, and nuclear non-

proliferation. As a State Party to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba, which designates Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, Ghana has already undertaken binding international commitments never to acquire or support the development of nuclear weapons.

The ratification of the TPNW therefore serves to reinforce and complement these existing obligations by further embedding Ghana's opposition to nuclear armament within a strengthened global legal framework. It affirms Ghana's dedication to the principles of international law, peaceful coexistence, and the collective resolution of global security concerns.

### **10.2 No Additional Legal or Financial Obligations**

The Committees noted with satisfaction that the ratification of the TPNW would not impose any new or onerous legal or financial obligations on the State. Ghana's domestic policies and its current international engagements are already in full alignment with the prohibitions and commitments outlined in the Treaty.

Ghana neither possesses nor seeks to develop nuclear weapons, and its existing comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) adequately satisfies the requirements of Article 3 of the Treaty. Accordingly, ratification will not necessitate the enactment of new laws or amendments to current arrangements.

Financially, the Committees noted that Ghana's obligations under the Treaty would be limited to routine participation costs such as attendance at Meetings of States Parties, voluntary contributions, and diplomatic notifications, all of which are standard and manageable within existing budgetary provisions.

### **10.3 Consolidation of Leadership Role**

The Committees was further informed that Ghana has played an active and constructive role in the negotiation, adoption, and ongoing promotion of the TPNW. Indeed, Ghana was among the first States to sign the Treaty upon its opening for signature on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017, a clear testament to its unwavering commitment to nuclear disarmament.

By proceeding to ratify the TPNW, Ghana would be reaffirming its principled opposition to nuclear weapons and its enduring commitment to a world free of nuclear threat. Moreover, such ratification would consolidate Ghana's leadership status within the African region and globally, particularly within international disarmament fora, thereby enhancing its diplomatic influence and credibility.

### **10.4 Positioning Ghana among the first 100 Ratifying States**

The Committees was apprised that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is approaching a significant symbolic milestone of one hundred (100) ratifications. As global momentum continues to gather pace, the

opportunity now presents itself for Ghana to be counted among the first 100 countries to ratify the Treaty.

The Committees is of the considered view that such timing would be both strategic and impactful, reaffirming Ghana's long-established role as a principled actor in matters of international disarmament and multilateral diplomacy. By undertaking ratification at this juncture, Ghana would reinforce its international standing as a nation committed to peace, security, and the eradication of nuclear weapons, whilst affirming solidarity with the emerging global consensus against such weapons of mass destruction.

### **10.5 Full Participation in Treaty Implementation**

The Committees further observed that ratification of the TPNW would confer upon Ghana the full rights and privileges of a state party, thereby enabling effective participation in all aspects of the Treaty's implementation and decision-making processes.

At present, Ghana participates in the Meetings of States Parties in the limited capacity of an observer, without voting rights or the ability to formally influence agenda-setting and policy direction. By ratifying the Treaty, Ghana would gain the legal standing to vote, propose agenda items, and actively contribute to the interpretation, refinement, and advancement of the Treaty's goals. This would elevate Ghana's engagement from symbolic support to substantive leadership.

## **10.6 Reinforcing the Global Consensus Against Nuclear Weapons**

The Committees observed that each new ratification of the TPNW serves to fortify the international consensus against the possession, use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this context, Ghana's ratification would provide a powerful moral and political signal in favour of universal disarmament, particularly in an era of increasing nuclear tensions and stagnation in disarmament efforts.

By aligning with this growing consensus, Ghana would further solidify its normative stance against nuclear armament and assert its belief in multilateral cooperation, rule-based international order, and the pursuit of a more peaceful and secure world. This act would also signal Ghana's continuing leadership within the African Union and the global disarmament architecture.

## **11.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**

In view of the continuing and urgent global threat posed by nuclear weapons, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) constitutes a pivotal and timely instrument for advancing the cause of disarmament and the promotion of enduring international peace and security.

Upon a comprehensive review of the Treaty and due deliberation on its legal, humanitarian, and strategic implications, the Committees is firmly persuaded that the ratification of the TPNW is fully

aligned with Ghana's longstanding foreign policy posture in favour of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Furthermore, ratification would significantly contribute to the universalisation of the Treaty both on the African continent and across the international community.

The Committees is equally convinced that Ghana's ratification of the TPNW would serve to consolidate its leadership role in multilateral disarmament fora, enhance the country's international credibility, and reaffirm its commitment to the principles of global peace, human security, and a nuclear-free world.

In light of the foregoing, the Committees respectfully recommends to the House that it adopts this Report and approves, by Resolution, the request for the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution and the Standing Orders of the House.

Mr Speaker, this is the Report of the joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and the Committee on Defence and Interior on the request for ratification of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapon.

Respectfully submitted.

7.08 p.m.

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the

Motion. The Committee looked at the content of the treaty that we are going to ratify and I refer you to page 6 of the Report, under “General Prohibitions”, the Report is clear. It says:

“States Parties are expressly prohibited from developing, testing, producing, acquiring, processing, stockpiling, transferring, using, or threatening of use nuclear weapons.”

Mr Speaker, this is what your Committee is bringing before you, that we sign this treaty.

Mr Speaker, it has some other benefits to Ghana and the House. One of the benefits is that it consolidates leadership of Ghana as a role in global nuclear disarmament. Two, it reinforces the existing legal obligation of Ghana under other disarmament instruments, such as the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Treaty of Pelindaba. The last one, enabling Ghana to participate fully and effectively in the development and implementation of treaties provisioned as a States Parties, rather than in an observer capacity. Mr Speaker, this Treaty is going to give us some State Party, not observer capacity.

Mr Speaker, what the Committee looked at, which for me, I am very interested in, is the consistency of this Treaty we are going to sign to the international policy statement or policy position of the country. Mr Speaker, if I may refer you to page 14 of the Report,

item numbered 10.1, under “Consistency with Ghana’s Foreign Policy Commitments”. Mr Speaker, this Agreement is consistent with the policy statement of Ghana and I read:

“The Committees observed that the proposed ratification of the TPNW is wholly consistent with the Republic of Ghana’s longstanding foreign policy posture that champions international peace, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.”

Mr Speaker, your Committee, the Ministry and the Minister for the Republic have all done a very good job.

On this note, Mr Speaker, I support the adoption of the Ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of the Nuclear Weapon.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*Question proposed.*

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, the Motion has been moved and seconded and we have heard enough from the mover and the seconder, so I want to put the Question.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker:** We move to the consequential Resolution numbered 19 on the Order Paper.

Yes, Minister?

**RESOLUTION****Report on the United Nations Treaty  
for the Prohibition of Nuclear  
Weapons**

**Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa):** Mr Speaker, I beg to *move*:

WHEREAS by the provisions of Article 75 of the Constitution any treaty, agreement, or convention executed by or under the Authority of the President in the name of Ghana is made subject to ratification either by an Act of Parliament or by a resolution of Parliament supported by the votes of more than one-half of all the Members of Parliament.

IN ACCORDANCE with the said Article 75 of the Constitution the President has caused to be laid before Parliament through the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs the Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 2017.

NOW THEREFORE, this honourable House hereby resolves to ratify the said Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration on the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, New York, 2017.

**The Speaker:** Any seconder?

**Deputy Ranking Member of the Committee (Mr Nana Asafo-Adjei Ayeh):** Mr Speaker, I rise to second the Motion.

*Question put and Motion agreed to.*

*Resolved accordingly.*

**The Speaker:** Any more items?

Yes, please?

**Mr Ricketts-Hagan:** Mr Speaker, there is no item on the Order Paper at the moment. This is just to thank the Hon Minister for these Resolutions that we have moved today with regard to the waiver. Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and the Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs.

Mr Speaker, there is no other Business, but we have been here for over five hours, I believe, and, therefore, we are in your hands.

**The Speaker:** Yes, First Deputy Minority Whip?

**Alhaji Habib Iddrisu:** Mr Speaker, rightly so, like the Deputy Majority Leader—*[Pause]*

Mr Speaker, I understand that tomorrow, we will be starting at 12 noon; that is the indication I am getting from the Majority Frontbench.

Mr Speaker, tomorrow, we will be expecting the Minister for Finance to deliver the Mid-Year Budget Review.

Certain things that I cannot disclose on the Floor, except that yesterday, we had a Closed Sitting and many other things were agreed on. The Majority Chief Whip and the entire Majority Leadership were in the meeting, so I am giving them an indication that even though we agreed to sit at 12 noon, if the needful is not done, we will not listen to the Minister for Finance tomorrow. Probably, he will have to go somewhere and deliver his Mid-Year budget. He can call a press conference and deliver it.

7.18 p.m.

Mr Speaker, we will not be here. We need to listen to him on when he will satisfy certain things that we have all agreed on. Certain things that we have all agreed, he need to satisfy it before we come tomorrow to listen to him. Mr Speaker, so I am calling on my Colleagues that yesterday, it was not the Minority's agreement; it was our agreement.

Mr Speaker, the Chief Diplomat, the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs is drawing my attention that I should take it lightly. As a whip, the welfare of the Members of Parliament (MPs) is my concern that is why you see me in this tone but I am guided. But tomorrow, the Hon Minister responsible for Finance must do the needful before we listen to him.

Thank you. We support the adjournment to 12 noon tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Hon Majority Chief Whip?

**Mr Dafeamekpor:** Mr Speaker, let me assure my Brother from across the Atlantic Ocean of the well of the House that yesterday we had a closed Sitting, joint Caucus, to tackle some pertinent matters affecting the House and we had agreed on some road map and the road map that we agreed on with the Deputy Minister responsible for Finance has been vigorously followed since last night. Today, you would realise that I have not been stable in the House. It is just to ensure that those roadmaps— Mr Speaker, in fact yesterday he threatened us —[*Laughter*]— and we took the threat seriously so he need not repeat them today. [*Laughter*]—He is now taking matters from the closed Sitting to open Sitting so he is breaching protocol and the etiquette of the House. So those matters are being assiduously attended to. We want to assure him that the issues raised will be tackled mainly. The Hon Minister responsible for Finance himself, a former Leader of the House and still a senior Member of the House together with his Deputy—Yes, we know the sentiments of the House and I am sure that yesterday when he spoke, the applause was loudest from my back— So, the assurance is being doubly given; assurance double sure that the issues will be attended to. So tomorrow, let us have a very convivial atmosphere to do what we do ritually every mid-year. Let us hear him and then after that other matters will be dealt with.

Mr Speaker, just to assure the House. In fact, the Deputy Minister has just arrived and if he has the opportunity, he can reiterate the matters that he assured the House with, but we would not do that. Mr Speaker, we want to assure my

Colleagues on the other Side of the divide and your good Self that tomorrow will be a good day. It will be busy because we will be launching the Second Democracy Cup after the ceremonies in the afternoon. So, let us come and be in a joyous mood to do this. Let us join the Speaker to launch the second Democracy Cup, then we can have a good day. Mr Speaker on this note, I urge that we adjourn proceedings for today, come back tomorrow at midday sharp, and to hear the Hon Minister responsible for Finance.

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

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, I just want to add my voice in commending all of you for a job well done and to reiterate an earlier point raised in this House concerning the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The protocols will have to be relooked at. We are now in a democracy. Parliament is an arm of government. I am not happy with how Members are usually received, hosted, and handled by our representatives in these various embassies when they go on official assignments. I have had the opportunity to draw the attention of some of your officials outside. They still have that non-democratic government's protocols. That is not what is applicable now and I think that they should take this seriously.

I have taken it upon myself to be meeting them anywhere I go and to emphasise this point. Because of your busy schedule, I could not get access to you to let you know. I just came from France and I held a meeting with them on this matter, so kindly take these concerns

across and if possible, make it official for all of them to go by. I will be overseeing and marking the various ministries myself. We do not want to sanction any person. With this, it is a word to the wise and I believe it is enough.

Yes, may I recommend Leaders to have a sitting with my senior Brother, the Member of Parliament for Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abrem, Hon Samuel Atta-Mills for an advice—Leadership of the House.

With this, I proceed to adjourn the Sitting. [*Hear! Hear!*]

**Mr Dafeamekpor:** Mr Speaker, we are guided. We would do so accordingly.

**The Speaker:** Hon Members, the House is accordingly adjourned to tomorrow at 12 noon. We need to finish and as you have been informed, launch the second edition of the Democracy Cup please. We will launch it tomorrow at 3.00 p.m. at the Justice D.F. Annan auditorium. All of you are expected to be there. We want to make it grand and roll it out so that all your constituents become involved in our attempt to build a democratic culture in the country. These are all meant to not just guarantee but practicalise your rights and freedoms in a democracy. So please do not just ignore them; be part and parcel of them.

With this, Sitting is adjourned to tomorrow as stated earlier.

## ADJOURNMENT

*The House was accordingly adjourned at 7.26 p.m. till Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2025, at 12:00 noon.*

