

## Monetisation of Politics: Parliament take steps to check campaign financing

Page 4



MP for Kumbungu, Hon. Ras Mubarak.

## Stop Making Homophobic Statements

- Speaker of Parliament, Others Urged

Page 5



Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Prof. Aaron Mike Oquaye



Hon. Frank Annoh-Dompseh (MP for Nsawam Adoagyiri)



Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa (MP for North Tongu)

# MPs Unite Against Climate Change

Please turn to pages 3&11

-As Floods Sweep Across The Country



IT'S OUR PARLIAMENT

# Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

## LAST WEEK IN PARLIAMENT

By: Benjamin Opoku Aryeh

Parliament was in the news many times last week over many of the events that took place in the House, including statements made by some MPs on whether or not Ghana should decriminalize suicide, and the Speaker's position on LGBT rights. We present to you, our cherished readers, all businesses transacted on the Floor of Parliament and at Committee level from 29th October to 1st November, which represent the four Sitting Days of Parliament last week.

### Bills

The Narcotics Control Commission Bill, 2019 was taken through the Second Reading. The Hon. Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Ben Abdallah Banda (MP, Offinso South), also presented his Committee's report on the Corporate Insolvency Bill, 2019.

### Presentation of Papers

The Hon. Deputy Attorney General and Deputy Minister for Justice, Mr. Joseph Dindio Kpemka (MP, Tempene), laid the Adoption (Amendment) Rules, 2019; High Court (Civil Procedure) (Amendment) (No. 2) Rules, 2019; and Civil Proceedings (Fees and Allowances) (Amendment) Rules, 2019. The Speaker referred the Rules to the Committee on Subsidiary Legislation for consideration and report.

The Hon. Majority Leader and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (MP, Suame), laid the following papers:

Report of the Auditor-General on the Statement of Foreign Exchange receipt and payments of the Bank of Ghana for the half year ended 30th June, 2018, which was referred by the Speaker to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to be joined by the leadership of the Finance Committee to consider and report; Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General on the dismantling and disposal of electronic waste, which got referred to the PAC with leadership of Environment, Science and Technology Committee asked to join for consideration and report; and the Annual Report of the National Pensions

Regulatory Authority (NPRA) for the year 2017 which was accordingly referred by the Speaker to the Committee on Employment, Social Welfare and State Enterprises for consideration and report.

Others included the Annual Report and Accounts of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) for the year 2018; and Annual report of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) for the year 2015. The Rt. Hon. Speaker referred both reports to the Special Budget Committee for consideration and report back to plenary.

A Request for waiver of import duties, import VAT, import NHIL/GETFund Levy, AU Levy, ECOWAS Levy, Exim Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana cedi equivalent of Seven Million, Five Hundred and Sixty-three thousand, Nine Hundred and Thirty-two Euros on project materials and equipment to be procured under the Modernisation and Equipping of the Tetteh Quarshie Memorial Hospital, Kibi District Hospital, Aburi Hospital and the Atibie Hospital Project, was also laid and then referred to the Finance Committee for consideration and report.

Dr. Anthony Akoto Osei (MP, Old Tafo) in his capacity as Minister for Monitoring and Evaluation, laid the annual statement by the Audit Committee of the University of Cape Coast for the year 2018; Mid-Year statement by the Audit Committee of the University of Cape Coast for the period January to June 2018; and the annual statement by the

Audit Committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ghana) for the year 2018. The Speaker referred the paper to the PAC for consideration and report.

### Committee Sitings

At the time of going to press, the following meetings of Parliamentary Committee were captured by official records of Parliament;

Meeting of the Standing Orders Committee to commence the review of the Standing Orders; meeting of the Special Budget with officials of the Electoral Commission to discuss the preparedness towards the upcoming District Assemblies' Elections and referendum; and a meeting of the Business Committee to determine the business of the House for the Third week ending 8th November 2019.

The Finance Committee met and considered the Loan Agreement between the Government of Ghana and the International

statement on the strict enforcement of the electoral and other relevant laws to forestall the phenomenon of votebuying or selling during elections to protect the country's democracy. The Speaker directed the Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to engage relevant stakeholders on the subject matter and report to the House by end of the first meeting of the fourth session.

The Hon. MPs for Gomoa East and South Tongu, who are also Vice Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Youth, Sports and Culture respectively, Mr. Kojo Asemanyi and Mr. Kobena Mensah Woyome, made statements on the recent election of the Executive Council Members and President of the Ghana Football Association and urged stakeholders to ensure an efficient, transparent and accountable administration.

### Questions

Mr. Frank Annor-Dompreh



Parliament House Of Ghana, Accra

Development Association of the World Bank Group for an amount of Seven Million United States Dollars being additional financing for Enhancing Natural Forest and Agro Forest Landscape Project.

### Statements

Mr. Frank Annor-Dompreh (MP, Nsawam-Adoagyiri) and Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa (MP, North Tongu) made separate statements which focused on climate change as part of the commemoration of the 74th United Nations Day which is observed on 24th October each year.

The Hon. MP for Kumbungu, Mr. Ras Mubarak, made at

(Nsawam-Adoagyiri) asked the Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture when the contractor involved in the restocking of the selected dams and dugouts with four million catfish and fingerlings would be paid accordingly. The Minister answered saying that all the companies that supplied the fingerlings have been duly paid.

Again, the MP asked what steps are being implemented to ensure that we have a waiver tax on aquaculture input materials as a boost to the industry. In her answer, the Minister said the Ministry has agreed on a list of inputs for tax exemptions. She added however that the list is expected to be updated.

Mr. Rockson-Nelson Ete Kwame Dafeamekpor (MP, South Dayi) also asked the Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister when the Tongor-Dzemeni fish landing site will be constructed. The Minister mentioned that the Ministry of Transport is currently leading the construction of the landing sites.

Mr. James Agalga (MP, Builsa North) asked the Minister for the Interior when government will set up the National Disaster Fund to deal with disasters and when the Ministry will implement the National Migration Policy which came into force in 2016. The Minister answered that the Governing Council of the Fund has approved for the opening of a bank account with the Consolidated Bank to receive monies coming into the fund. He added that the Ministry is in the process of implementing the National Migration Policy.

A question by Mr. Albert Akuka Alalzuga (MP, Garu) directed to the Minister for Special Development Initiatives sought to inquire about the cost per dam under the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme (IPEPP) in the three Northern Regions in 2017 and 2018. The Minister in charge answered that the average cost of a small earth dam is GHS250,000.

The following Hon. Members, Mr. Ekow Hayford (MP, Mfantseman), Mrs. Angela Oforiwa Alorwu-Tay (MP, Afadzato South) and Mr. Andrew Dari Chiwitey (MP, Sawla/Tuna/Kalba) took turns to ask the Minister for Energy when the Hasowodze will be connected to the national grid, when electricity will be expanded to some communities within the Afadzato South District, and when electricity will be connected to some communities within the Sawla/Tuna/Kalba constituency respectively.

### The Week Ahead

Seven Ministries are expected to answer 12 Questions with respect to their sectors. Several bills including the Narcotic Control Commission Bill, 2019; the Corporate Insolvency Bill, 2019; and the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2019 are expected to be taken through various stages of the lawmaking process on the Floor of Parliament.

## Environment, Lands & Forestry

# MPs Unite Against Climate Change -As Floods Sweep Across The Country

By Sammy Obeng

Members of Parliament (MPs) from both the Majority and Minority sides of the House last week turned their attention to the chilling effects of climate change on Ghana and other parts of the World, when they spent time discussing the subject on the floor of Parliament, and linked it with the disturbing cases of floods in many parts of the country over the past few weeks.

This followed two separate Statements delivered in Parliament by the Hon. Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and the Hon. Ranking Member of the same Committee, Mr. Frank Annoh-Dompreh (MP, Nsawam Adoagyiri) and Mr. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa (MP, North Tongu) respectively, to mark this year's United Nations (UN) Day which was under the global theme "Our Planet. Our Future." The country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs selected the theme "Clean environment for a healthy living, our collective responsibility" for this year's commemoration, identifying that climate action is the new drive which now demanded intergovernmental support at all levels.

Hailed by his colleagues for a well-researched paper on the subject which focused on Consolidating the Global Agenda for Climate Change, Mr. Annoh-Dompreh called on Ghana's frontline actors to "focus on simplifying our needed efforts as a nation and build the capacities of all stakeholders in their appreciation of climate change concerns," while recommending the need for an Environmental Conservation Tax which he explained "may also be in need as issues surrounding climate change develop."

Speaking to what he described as "apocalyptic dangers of climate change", Mr. Ablakwa

elaborated on the drastic change in weather patterns with this year's rains confounding many people in Ghana. "We are yet to recover from the severe flooding in the Upper East region which claimed the lives of 28 Ghanaians and displaced over 600," he noted.

Mr. Abdul-Rashid Pelpuo, the Hon. MP for Wa Central, bemoaned the lack of a "coherent policy approach in dealing with climate change in Ghana" adding that "if there is any, it is not known to many many of us [MPs]." He and his colleague the Hon. MP for Builsa South, Mr. Clement Apaak, called on the Executive branch of Government to bring to Parliament a policy on Climate Change for consideration and approval. However, the Hon. MP for Assin South, Rev. John Ntim Fordjour, alluded to the existence of a "formidable national climate change policy" and a "national adaptation plan" which requires orientation and awareness creation among stakeholders.

Many parts of the country, including the national capital have experienced floods of serious dimensions, with one institution of higher learning, the University of Cape Coast, suspending all lectures due to a flooded campus. Many Ghanaians have been reported dead in different parts of the country with several others displaced from their homes, a situation that cuts across many constituencies represented by MPs in Parliament. However, parliament missed the opportunity to take any concrete steps on the matter as the Rt. Hon. Speaker did not refer the subject to any Committee of the House for further actions.

*Below are excerpts of the Statements made by the MPs in Parliament.*

**Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa**  
The history of the United Nations (UN) can be traced from the League of Nations which was established during World War I in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles. Its primary goal was

to encourage cooperation between countries and keep international

The setback necessitated the need for a more robust entity to achieve the set targets. This birthed the 'United Nations' which was first used by Franklin D. Roosevelt, the then President of the United States in the 1942 Declaration to describe the group of countries which originally signed the pact. The Declaration by United Nations was a pledge by twenty-six nations to fight together as the Allied Powers against the Axis Powers during World War II. The Axis Powers being a coalition of countries in World War II headed by Germany, Italy, and Japan.

With the ratification of its founding document by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations officially came into being on 24th October, 1945.

United Nations Day marks the anniversary of the UN Charter's entry into force, and celebrates its sterling credentials in maintaining global peace and security.

As is well known, the United Nations' mandate is to protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development and uphold inter-



Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa (MP for North Tongu)

national law.

In achieving these noble objectives; Ghana has played an enviable role in that journey, gaining a golden reputation as a top troops contributing country in UN peace operations and in producing one of the finest UN Secretary Generals of all time - the Busumuru Kofi Annan of blessed memory.

The theme for this year's celebration is "Our Planet. Our Future." This is not surprising considering the exponentially increasing levels at which extreme atmospheric conditions affects our planet.

The issue of climate change has dominated major discussions around the globe and the call to find lasting solutions is gradually attaining consensus although skeptics continue to hold on to their reservations.

Over the past two decades, evidence has mounted that the global climate is changing and has resulted in severe disasters claiming lives and properties. As the old adage goes, a stitch in time saves nine, there is abundant and convincing scientific data confirming that a refusal to take timely action will spell doom for humanity.

In October 2018, a finding published by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), revealed that "climate-related and geophysical disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis have killed 1.3 million people over the last 20 years and left a further 4.4 billion injured, homeless or in need of emergency assistance." The research also emphasized that the poor and vulnerable are the first to suffer and are the worst hit largely due to late industrialization and weak infrastructure.

We cannot overemphasize the adverse effects of climate change all around us. In our own country we are living testimonies of drastic change in weather patterns with this year's rains confounding many. We are yet to recover from the severe flood-

ing in the Upper East region which claimed the lives of 28 Ghanaians and displaced over 600.

Elsewhere on the continent, cyclone Idai which struck Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe this year claimed the lives of thousands and rendered millions homeless. Torrential rainfall in Sierra Leone in 2017 caused mudflow which left 1,141 dead and over 3,000 homeless.

The story was no different in Indonesia where almost half of

**However, parliament missed the opportunity to take any concrete steps on the matter as the Rt. Hon. Speaker did not refer the subject to any Committee of the House for further actions.**

the total surface area was submerged in flood water leaving 29 dead and many dozens missing.

Only a few weeks ago in this very month of October, Typhoon Hagibis which is described as the most devastating disaster to hit Japan left at least 58 persons dead and devastating destruction in its wake estimated at US\$9billion. I can go on and on as these examples are by no means exhaustive. Our hearts go out to all victims of Climate Change.

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, in his speech in March 2019 at the high-level meeting

## Political & Presidential Affairs

# Monetisation of Politics: Parliament take steps to check campaign financing

The Speaker of Parliament has directed the Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee to engage relevant stakeholders on the phenomenon of monetisation of politics in Ghana to “review, discuss, seek further opinion and make recommendations” to Plenary for consideration before the Easter Holidays next year. This is intended to help the House take appropriate steps on a situation that has been identified as having major effects on the Country’s democratic systems and its fight against corruption.

This referral to the parliamentary

**If honourable Members are to open up about their personal stories and pressure to gift what they don't have, I'm sure this country would be in shock.**

Committee was after a Statement on Enforcing Laws Governing Elections made on the Floor of Parliament by the Hon. MP for Kumbungu, Mr. Ras Mubarak.

Applauding Mr. Mubarak for the bravery garnered to speak out on a subject that many politicians desist from discussing, his colleague MPs, many of whom appeared fatigued with the effect of the subject on their finances and its impact on their work, took turns to share their experiences as part of contributing to the Statement.

“Our democracy is sick because of the level of monetisation of our politics” was how one MP described the situation, as connections were drawn between the cost of campaign financing in Ghana and the high attrition rate



MP for Kumbungu,  
Hon. Ras Mubarak.

in Parliament which many watchers have decried its effect on the quality of work of Parliament.

Many civil society organisations, including the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CD-Ghana), Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) and others, have spoken countlessly on the subject and called on authorities to act with urgency.

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) in its research report titled The Cost of Politics in Ghana, which was launched in March 2018 in partnership with CDD-Ghana, explored

gram below pulled out from the WFD report.

### Ras Mubarak's Statement

In Japan, the Minister of Trade, Isshu Sugawara, resigned just one month into the job after he was accused of violating election law.

Mr. Sugawara was accused of giving his constituents expensive gifts. The BBC reported on Friday 25th October, that the Minister/MP had gifted his constituents food items such as watermelons, oranges, roe and royal jelly.

He is also reported in local and international media to have offered an amount of twenty thousand yen, which is equivalent to one hundred and eighty-five US dollars (\$185), or one thousand Ghana cedis “condolence money,” what we in Ghana call funeral donation, through his constituency secretary, to the family of a constituent who had passed away.

The alleged violation of electoral laws of Japan and subsequent resignation of the Minister who doubles as MP, got the Prime Minister of Japan - Shinzo Abe, to issue a statement which read in part, “I bear responsibility in having appointed him. I deeply

me thinking about our own circumstances in Ghana. Can you imagine an MP or a Minister being forced to resign his job because he had donated one thousand cedis to a grieving family or being accused of vote buying because he or she had gifted constituents water melons and oranges in the lead up to an election.

I am wondering if there’s anywhere in Ghana, where the MP can gift constituents fruits, and not be kicked out even before election time.

If honourable Members are to open up about their personal stories and pressure to gift what they don’t have, I’m sure this country would be in shock.

This is not an attempt to justify gifting constituents items and money. As a matter of principle, I have always been against anything that holds to ransom people who are genuinely in politics to serve the nation.

There are copious provisions in the criminal code 1960, ACT 29, relating to Public Offices and to Public Elections; the Political Parties Law of 2000 (Act 574); and the Representation of the People’s Law - PNDC Law 284.

All of these laws make the buying

50) and above.

How many of us can hold our heads up, before God and man, and say that we have complied and have not at one point or another broken the law? How many of our constituents - who have received bicycles, motorbikes, mobile phones, cloths, television set, gas cylinders and other items, can say they have gone to pay the necessary taxes on such gifts?

As law makers, it should be part of our duty to help in the education of the relevant provisions in the laws Parliament has enacted to our constituents and the public generally.

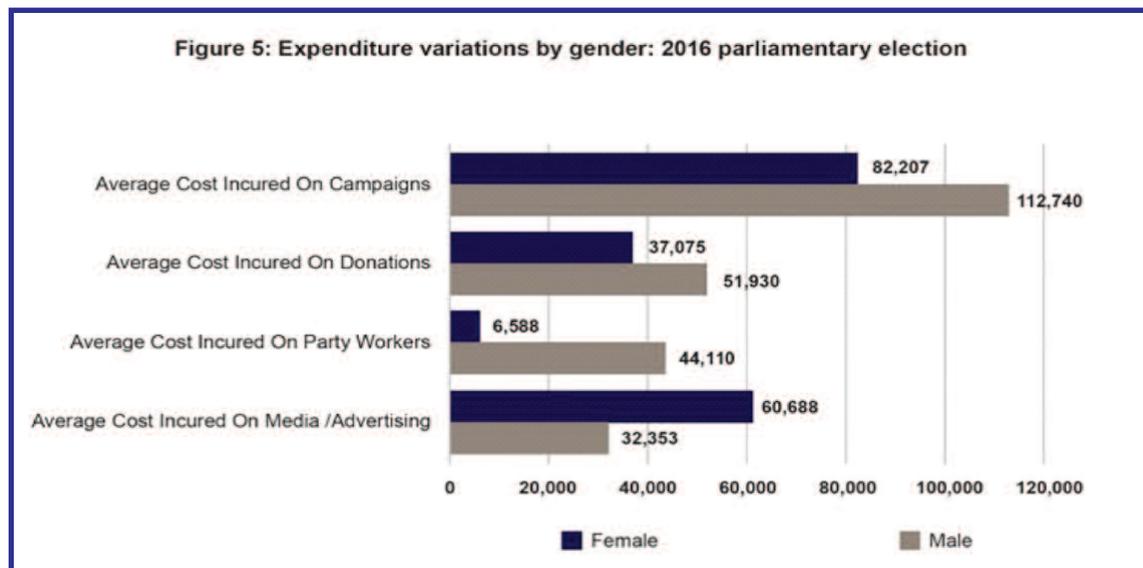
Japan, and some other countries of the world, are shining examples of what integrity and honor in public service mean. We can learn and uphold the law.

We do indeed have some good laws, but if we are already not enforcing existing legislation, it makes enacting new ones to deal with some of these violations of the law unattractive.

I want to see some radical changes - starting with political parties and politicians, committing and acting in a manner that eliminates corruption from our politics by way of opening up the way and manner we elect Constituency, Regional, National executives, flag-bearers and Parliamentary candidates. If all registered members of any political party within a geographical location were to have a say in who gets elected as parliamentary candidate or constituency executive, we would be doing the nation a lot of good.

Further to this, the time is long overdue for parliament to enact legislation that would (1) compel politicians and parties to disclose the source of their funding and (2) put a cap on how much individual Ghanaians running for elections can take by way of donations from institutions and individuals.

The US struggled with campaign finance laws, but eventually they made some significant progress in that regard. We do not have to reinvent the wheels. Leadership could go to places like Japan, and the USA to look at their legislation, speak to people and take a leaf with the view to enacting similar or same here.



how the average spend by candidates to secure their political parties’ nomination at the primaries stage and contest the parliamentary election in Ghana between the 2012 and 2016 elections increased by 59%. This has telling effect on the ability of young people and women to get involved in politics as shown in the dia-

apologize to the Japanese people.”

I heard the story last Friday on BBC radio whilst driving to Parliament, and subsequently read an online version just to be sure I had heard right.

The incredulity of the story got

or selling of votes an offense in Ghana and punishable by law.

Let me also draw the attention of colleagues and the general public, to the gift law of Ghana - the Internal Revenue Act 529, which stipulates that Ghanaians are to pay 15 percent gift tax rate on any gift valued at fifty cedis (GhC

## Legal & Human Rights

# Stop Making Homophobic Statements - Speaker of Parliament, Others Urged

### News Desk Report

The Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Aaron Mike Oquaye, and other persons occupying high profile public offices have been urged against making homophobic statements which have the tendency to incite violence, hatred, and discrimination against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender (LGBTs).

This was contained in a press release from the Africa Center for International Law and Accountability (ACILA), who has also revealed in a survey it conducted last year that more than 75% of Ghanaians applaud homophobic statements by state officials, religious leaders, or influential people in society, with only 24.5% holding that homophobic statements should be condemned.

The Executive Director for ACILA, William Nyarko, reiterated that Ghana's obligation under domestic and international human rights law "provide equal protection of the law to all Ghanaians, including LGBTs." ACILA is an independent, non-partisan, and not-for-profit organization that monitors African States' com-

pliance with their international obligations and commitments under international law, advocates justice for victims of international crimes, and promotes the rule of law, human rights, and public accountability.

The Press Release came a day after Rt. Hon. Oquaye reiterated his long held views on LGBTs at a Prayer Breakfast Meeting he hosted in Parliament together with representatives of the US-based Family Watch International, and the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values – an advocacy group that has been very vocal against the introduction of a Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in the curriculum of basic schools in the Country.

Describing same sex marriage as "a deviant conduct" that leads to "corruption of public morals," Speaker Oquaye argued that "you cannot have a right as gay apart from the fact that you are also a human being." He urged all Ghanaians to "stand up together and show what our stand is" at a time lobbyist are considered to be intensifying their efforts in getting LGBT rights entrenched in national laws including that of Ghana. He however spoke vehemently against harming or killing LGBTs, and recommended spiritual, medical or psychological treatments for these LGBTs, a group of people he described in the past as "mentally deformed."

Rt. Hon. Oquaye who has indicated that he will resign as Speaker if any amendments to Ghana's Criminal Offences Act was presented to Parliament in respect of the Section that describes as offence the act of unnatural canal knowledge, has also stated that Parliament will not make laws to promote gays rights, stressing that "nobody is going to make any law that will support this kind of thing." But William Nyarko considers such utterances as possible abuse of his office and powers as Speaker, who he considers to be stating his personal positions on the matter as though they were the official position of the State.

Parliament's Acting Director of Public Affairs, Ms. Kate Addo, is reported to have challenged persons holding similar views as Mr. Nyarko to follow the processes laid out by parliament's rules of engagement through such actions as filing "that they want to bring a motion, speak about it or

they can do something about it, whatever it is that they want to do." She adds that Speaker Oquaye at the Prayer Breakfast Meeting "spoke for himself and also as Speaker of the House" explaining that the Speaker considers issues of homosexuality and bestiality as "alien to our culture and, therefore, we shouldn't encourage it."

On November 7, 2017, Ghana appeared before the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for a review of its human rights records under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism. During the review and follow up discussion by the Working Group, Ghana rejected recommendations to legalize same-sex marriage or decriminalize consensual sexual relations but accepted recommendations to provide Equal Protection of the Law from violence and discrimination against LGBTI people in accordance with Ghana's domestic law and international human rights law obligations. The Country specifically accepted to "take the steps necessary to protect LGBTI persons from violence and discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation and gender identity" and also "take measures to fight against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity."

The country further committed to "continue to implement the discrimination reporting system in order to tackle stigmatization and discrimination of the most vulnerable groups" and pledged to "ensure that victims of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity have access to rehabilitation and remedy and that all perpetrators are punished."

#### ACILA's Survey

ACILA, in a survey ACILA conducted in June 2018, showed that despite the fact that majority of Ghanaians surveyed know that the 1992 Constitution guarantees human rights to all persons in Ghana and that Ghana is required by the UN and other international instruments and obligations to protect the rights of all citizens in Ghana, 60.7% of them were not aware that Ghana has committed to provide Equal Protection of the Law from violence and discrimination to all persons including LGBTI people under the United Nations Universal Periodic Review mechanism.

More than two-thirds (70%) of

Ghanaians are unaware the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has a "Discrimination Reporting System" for reporting on violence and discrimination against LGBTIs and Persons Living with HIV.

The survey also revealed that Ghanaians are more concerned about the perceived negative consequences of LGBTI issues than armed robbery, high cost of living, unemployment, gnamsey, rape/defilement, and poor infrastructure. Corruption was the number one concern followed closely by LGBTI issues. And also that about 60% of Ghanaians "strongly disagree" or "disagree" LGBTIs deserve equal treatment as heterosexuals.

A significant number of Ghanaians (87%) are against allowing LGBTI persons holding public meetings to discuss LGBTI issues. A staggering 91% of Moslems are against allowing LGBTIs holding public meetings, while 87% of Christians, 73.1% of Traditionalists and 33.3% of Atheists held similar views. Respondents in the Volta Region had the highest approval (19.4%) of allowing LGBTIs to hold public meetings to discuss LGBTI issues.

The survey showed that more than 97% of Ghanaians are aware the Police has a responsibility to protect every citizen against mob injustice, and "strongly agree" or "agree" by 94% that any person who engages in mob activity should be brought to justice. However, 20% "strongly disagree" or "disagree" that the Police has a responsibility to protect LGBTI people against mob injustice. About 13% of Ghanaians will "physically abuse", "verbally abuse" or "force" an LGBTI to hide his or her identity if they discover a person who is LGBTI. Majority of Ghanaians (45.3%) will "socially shun" an identified LGBTI.

Similarly, majority of Ghanaians (80%) are "very uncomfortable" or "uncomfortable" associating themselves with LGBTIs. However, about 67% will receive emergency medical treatment from a nurse or doctor they perceive as LGBTI. Thirty per cent of Christians; 40% of Moslems; and 50% of Traditionalists will not receive emergency medical treatment from a nurse or medical doctor who is perceived as LGBTI. Forty-four per cent of Ghanaians who are 51 to 61 years will not receive emergency medical treatment from a nurse or medical doctor who is perceived as LGBTI.

The key highlights of the survey findings ended with the revelation that 36% of Ghanaians are of the opinion that LGBTIs should be discriminated against in job search, religious association (10%) and public appointments (9.16%). More than 54% of Ghanaians say expelling students perceived to be LGBTI should be promoted.



Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Aaron Mike Oquaye

## Health

# First parliamentary resolution to achieve health coverage for all by 2030 adopted

## IPU Press Office

A landmark resolution calling for parliaments to take all legal and policy measures to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030 has been adopted by the world's parliaments gathered in Serbia for the 141st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly. The resolution urges parliaments to put in place effective UHC legislation to ensure that the right to public health and medical care is guaranteed for all in law and in practice, without discrimination.

Over 1,800 parliamentarians and UN and civil society partners from around the world met in Belgrade in October. The resolution was adopted at the closing plenary Assembly session. The resolution is designed to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage for up to 5 billion people who are projected to lack access to essential health services by 2030. It follows the Political Declaration adopted at the seventy-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on universal health coverage in September.

Gabriela Cuevas Barron, IPU President, said: "This landmark IPU parliamentary resolution has the potential to have a real impact on people's lives – if we want it to. It's a question of political will. As parliamentarians, we have a duty to the people we represent to make their lives better by making universal health coverage a reality, especially for women, children and adolescents. This is one of the main priorities of

the IPU- to translate international agreements into national realities for our countries and people."

Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General said: "The world has 11 years left to make good on its commitment to the 2030 global development agenda. This timely IPU resolution is a roadmap for parliamentarians to help them put in place the necessary legislation and resources for universal health coverage and to make sure their governments are fulfilling their promises."

"There is now unprecedented momentum and political commitment behind the conviction that health is a human right to be enjoyed by all people, not a privilege for the few," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization who was in Belgrade for the occasion. "Building on the political declaration on universal health coverage approved at the United Nations General Assembly, this milestone IPU resolution is the vital next step in translating that commitment into concrete laws and resources to make UHC a reality in the lives of people all over the world."

The resolution calls on parliaments to use all their power to hold their respective national governments accountable for the effective

implementation of UHC commitments, to monitor the impact of UHC policies and programmes, and to establish parliamentary mechanisms to measure progress on achieving access to health care for all by 2030.

The IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians meeting at the Assembly also looked at ways to ensure universal health coverage addresses the needs of women and girls and to remove the barriers that prevent them from accessing health-care services as well as helping to reinforce the gender component of the resolution.

**"This landmark IPU parliamentary resolution has the potential to have a real impact on people's lives – if we want it to. It's a question of political will. As parliamentarians, we have a duty to the people we represent to make their lives better by making universal health coverage a reality, especially for women, children and adolescents. This is one of the main priorities of the IPU- to translate international agreements into national realities for our countries and people."**



Healthcare workers in Ghana tend to patients in a mobile clinic



141st IPU Assembly

# Agriculture

## FOOD AND AGRIC COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT ENGAGES U.S. TRADE MISSION



U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Stephen Censky (L) and Chairman of Parliament's Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs, Mr. Kwame Asafu Adjei



U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Stephen Censky



Parliament's Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs Chairman, Hon. Kwame Asafu Adjei



A group photograph of the U.S. delegation and Parliament's Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs members



Ghana's Parliament's Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs in a meeting with the U.S. Trade Delegation to West Africa led by Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Stephen Censky

### News Desk Report

Parliament's Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs hosted the United States (U.S.) Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Stephen Censky, and his Trade Delegation to West Africa as part of a four-day trip from October 28-31, to help U.S. exporters foster new opportunities in a region where strong economic growth is driving demand for American exports of food and farm products. The trade mission was based in Accra, Ghana, and included buyer delegations from Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Nigeria, and Senegal.

At this meeting, Deputy Secretary Censky discussed with Members of Parliament (MPs), led by the Hon. Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Kwame Asafu Adjei (MP, Nsuta-Kwamang-Beposo), the United States' engagements and investments in the Ghanaian agriculture sector as well as the benefits of U.S. agricultural trade to domestic industries and Ghanaian consumers.

The U.S. delegation, which also met with Ghana's Ministers of Food and

Agriculture, Trade and Industry and Finance, also saw the delegation engaging with other Government officials, private sector representatives, members of business associations, and academic institutions. The Deputy Secretary also interacted with African alumni from two U.S. government agricultural exchange programs – the Cochran Fellowship and the Borlaug Fellowship. The alumni received training in the United States to develop market-driven food systems and increase trade links with U.S. agribusinesses, and performed research at U.S. institutions in topics ranging from animal health, food safety, and biotechnology.

"At the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) we are working to sell the bounty of American agriculture. West Africa is a bright spot with a growing middle class that are hungry for our delicious and wholesome agriculture products," said Deputy Secretary Censky. "Through this trade mission and other efforts, USDA is proud to support President Trump's Prosper Africa initiative, which is seeking to boost two-way

trade and investment between the United States and Africa. Prosper Africa brings together the full range of U.S. government resources to connect U.S. and African businesses with new buyers, suppliers, and investment opportunities – a win for the United States and for countries across the African continent."

The U.S. delegation included Nebraska Department of Agriculture Director, Steve Wellman, North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner, Doug Goehring, officials from the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and representatives from the following companies and organizations:

1. AFRO Plus Logistics, Bear, Delaware
2. American Premier Meat, Connersville, Indiana
3. American Soybean Association/World Initiative for Soy in Human Health, St. Louis, Missouri
4. Anna Carter's The Seed Lady, Los Angeles, California
5. Archer Daniels Midland Company, Chicago, Illinois

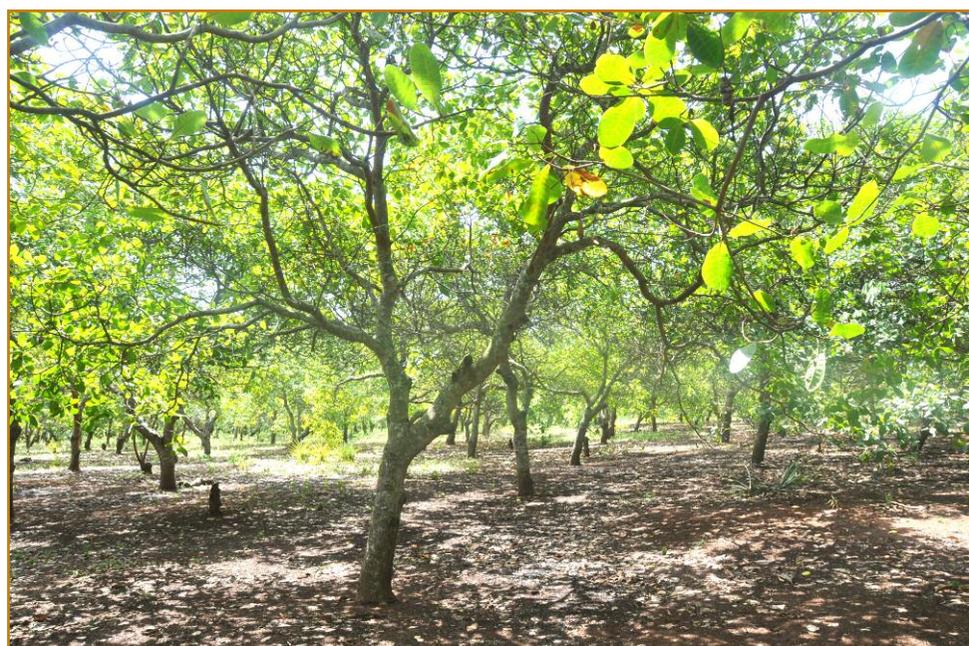
6. Berkeley Capital Group, Inc, New York, New York
7. Crown Products, Inc, Metairie, Louisiana
8. CTB, Inc., Milford, Indiana
9. DAUUS Company, Bloomington, Minnesota
10. East West International Group, Inc, Moreland, Ohio
11. Fobrose Group, Houston, Texas
12. Geotan Enterprises, LLC, Humble, Texas
13. Ghantex Holdings Limited, Houston, Texas
14. Global Export Marketing Co. Ltd., New York, New York
15. Green Plains Inc., Omaha, Nebraska
16. Growth Energy, Washington, D.C.
17. Hills Harvest, College Park, Maryland
18. International Feed Corporation, Excelsior, Minnesota
19. I.P.P International, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
20. JBR International Trade Group, Inc., DuPont, Washington
21. Livestock Exporters Association of the USA, Chicago, Illinois
22. Marquis Energy, Hennepin, Illinois
23. Mariani Packing Company, Vacaville, California
24. National Swine Registry, West Lafayette, Indiana
25. Neil Jones Food Company, Vancouver, Washington
26. North Star Food Trading LLC, Minneapolis, Minnesota
27. Now International, Bloomington, Illinois
28. Oakmont & Associates, Addison, Texas
29. Perdue Foods, Salisbury, Maryland
30. Steel City Global Trading, LLC, Enterprise, Alabama
31. St. Louis African Chamber of Commerce, St. Louis, Missouri
32. Tam Global Consultants, Portland, Oregon
33. Tomex Foods, Inc. Lombard, Illinois
34. Triad Fisheries Ltd, Portland, Oregon
35. U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc., Mount Horeb, Wisconsin
36. U.S. Grains Council, Washington, D.C.
37. U.S. Soybean Export Council, Chesterfield, Missouri
38. U.S. Wheat Associates, Arlington, Virginia
39. United Source One, Belcamp, Maryland
40. Virginia Natural Beef Inc., Lexington, Virginia
41. Wakava Food and Beverage, LLC, St. Louis, Missouri
42. Wygold LLC, Woodland, California

# Special Report

# CASHEW - Africa's



Harvested yellow cashew fruits in hands



A cashew farm in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana

Introduced in many parts of Africa to fight desertification and soil erosion through agroforestry and to establish protected forest areas, the cashew tree has over the years evolved to make up a mighty business industry on the Continent with huge potential for significant growth in the coming years.

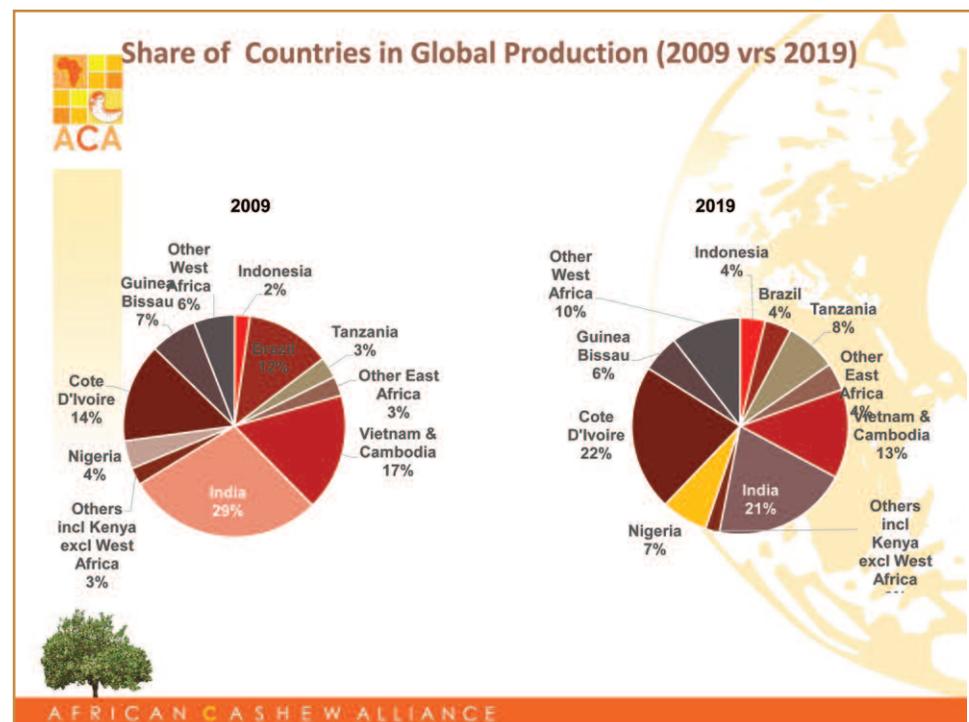
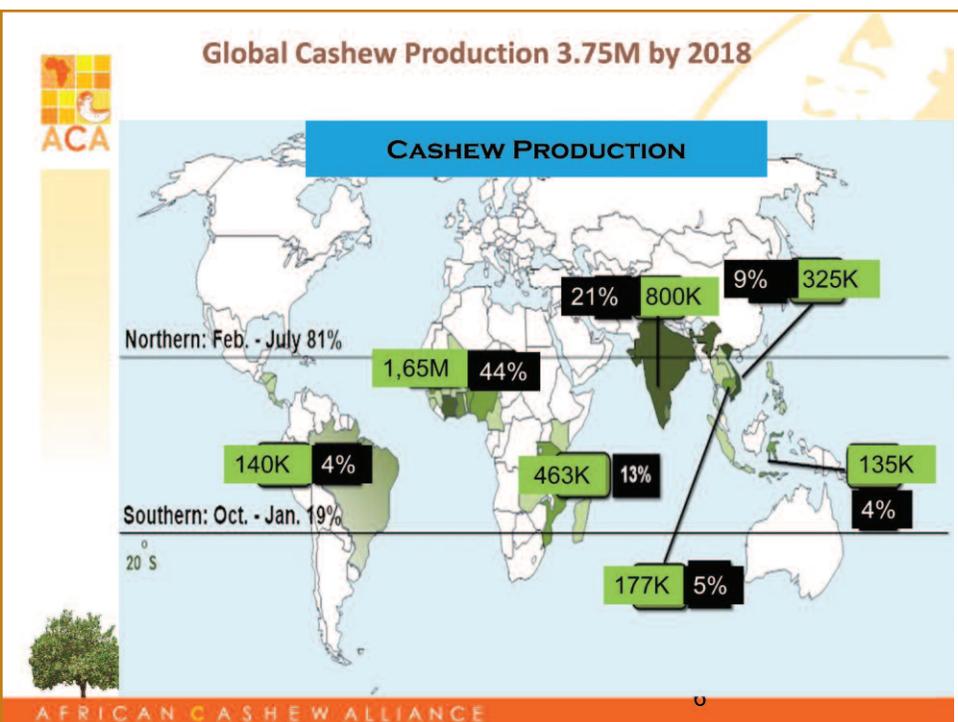
The evergreen tropical tree, which is nicknamed the 'grey gold' has lived its billing as a golden opportunity creator for farmers and other players along the value chain in Africa, including the governments of about

a third of the Continent's countries that have focused some attention on the sub-sector.

Not only does the cashew tree have the ability to survive in difficult conditions, including sandy soil and grow up to 12 metres high for which it is highly recommended by environmentalists for reforestation programmes; it also has shown the ability to provide survival for farmers and the people of Africa, with potential for high yields and an increasingly growing revenue generation potential.

With over 2.5 million African farmers currently growing about 57% of the world's cashews according to the African Cashew Alliance (ACA), the African cashew sector has become a highly visible contributor during the last 10 years. Africa's smallholder farmers have more than doubled production to make the Continent the world's largest producer of raw cashew nuts (RCN).

From the year 2009 to date, African Countries and their share in the global cashew production statistics have grown exponentially as represented by the diagrams below.



# Special Report

# Grey Gold

With Cote D'Ivoire leading the way, Ghana has also shown real potential to becoming a powerhouse in cashew production in Africa just like Tanzania and other Western and Eastern African Countries.

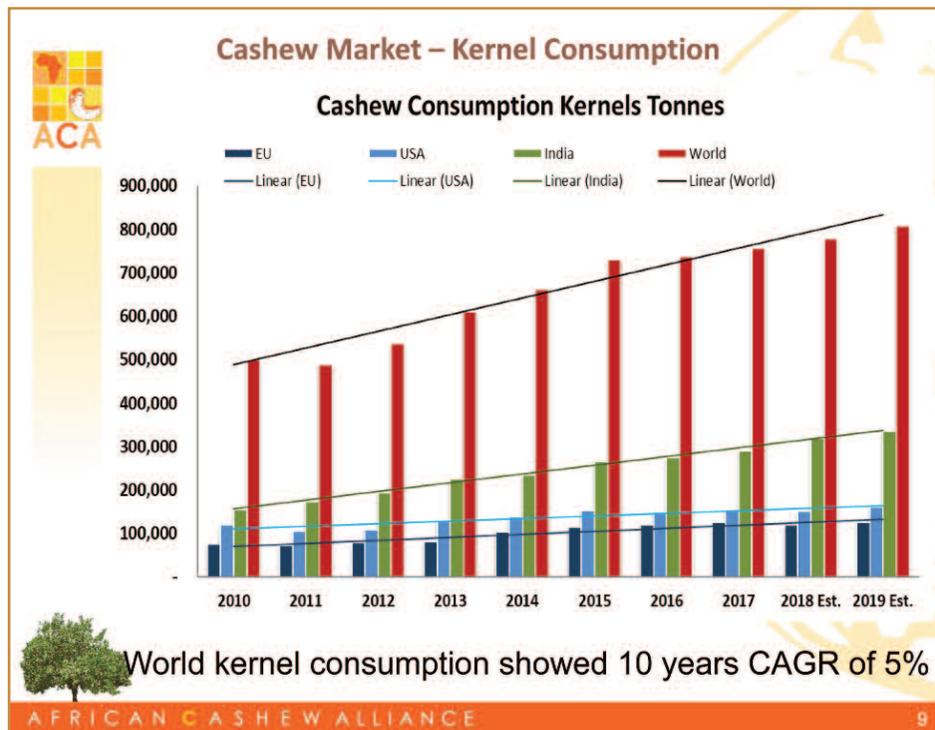
Despite these giant strides in production, the Continent is still trailing in processing what it produces locally. Additionally, whereas the consumption of cashew across the world has increased significantly, the Continent consumes close to nothing of the grey gold it produces.

### Processing

With the extra-ordinary potential for job creation in cashew processing,

cashew is processed in Africa, and the great disservice done to the continent, as almost all of cashew produced are shipped to Asia to be processed before they get exported to Europe and the United States which lead in consumption of cashew. The processing and consumption pathway represented in the diagram shows how it would make better business sense to process cashew in Africa, considering the continent's proximity to the consumption market.

While processing in Africa remains low, it is on the rise, growing from 35,000 MT in 2006 to 105,700 in 2015 but there is more room for improvement considering the potential for income generation. It is estimated

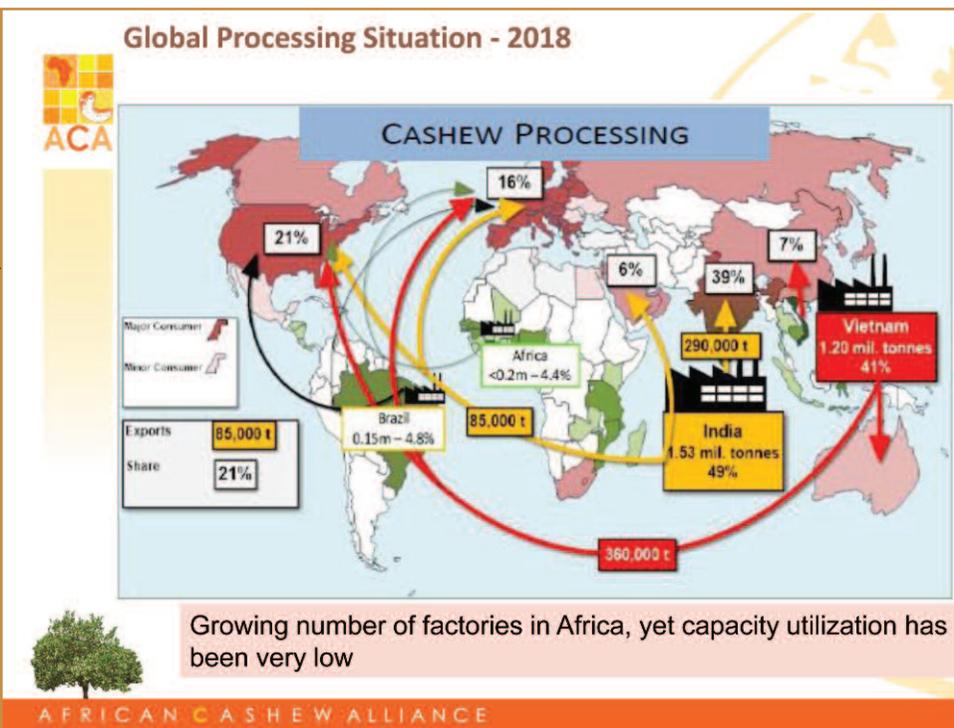


### Consumption

With an average of five per cent growth in the annual consumption figures across the world, it is imminent that the Continent focuses its attention on developing holistic value chains in countries of the Africa through such policy measures and interest in the sub-sector by policy makers and legislator, whose constituents become better-off with an industry boom.

With two-thirds of Africa's population employed in agriculture, making it the continent's largest employer, it is worrying that most African countries today, face the challenge of making the agricultural sector sustainable and fit for the future. The sector must receive a greater focus as it remains important in offering perspectives to rural populations and above all to young people, who make up more than 60% of the African population.

**In the Special Report to be published in the next edition of this newspaper, we will bring you details on cashew production in Ghana as the national parliament readies itself to pass a Tree Crop Development Authority law. This will be followed with other interesting articles around processing in Ghana; issues of the existence of cashew policies in Ghana as compared to other countries on the Continent; the private sector and the cashew industry; as well as interesting perspectives on climate change, technology, innovation, research and health dimensions to cashew.**



not mentioning the export and other related revenue to be derived from local processing of cashew, the diagram below shows a staggering reality of how only 4.4% of the world's

that a 25% increase in RCN processing within Africa would generate more than US\$100 million in household income, improving the lives of many families in rural areas.

**This Special Report is part of a visibility and advocacy project for agricultural value-chains implemented by Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) with funding from**



Implemented by: giz



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra  
Swiss Confederation  
Federal Department of Economic Affairs FDEA  
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

13<sup>th</sup> ACA Annual Cashew Conference



# FOSTERING SYNERGIES INFLUENCING MARKET DYNAMICS



Dar es Salaam & Zanzibar  
**Tanzania**  
7-9 November 2019



## Join over 350 international cashew industry stakeholders at Africa's largest cashew event!



### BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MEETINGS

Network and develop new business relationships



### PLENARY SESSION

Learn from industry leaders and experts about the latest trends and best practices in the cashew industry



### CASHEW EXPO

Grow your business by displaying your equipment and services to cashew stakeholders worldwide



### CASHEW FORUM

Interact with fellow delegates in themed workshops



### FIELD TRIPS

Discover Tanzania's cashew industry and beautiful cultural sites



For more information, please contact the ACA Secretariat at [aca@africancashewalliance.com](mailto:aca@africancashewalliance.com) or visit [www.africancashewalliance.com](http://www.africancashewalliance.com)



[facebook.com/africancashewalliance](https://facebook.com/africancashewalliance)



[twitter.com/africancashewalliance](https://twitter.com/africancashewalliance)



[linkedin.com/company/african-cashew-alliance](https://linkedin.com/company/african-cashew-alliance)

## Environment, Lands & Forestry

# MPs Unite Against Climate Change -As Floods Sweep Across The Country

**Continued From Page 3**

on climate remarked “Climate change is happening now and to all of us. Every week brings a new example of climate-related devastation. No country or community is immune.” In other words, the fangs of climate change does not recognize neither the poor nor rich. All of humanity is at risk.

The world and particularly the more industrial polluting nations must show greater commitment to the Paris Climate Change Agreement signed in 2016. The accord remains the best deal to tackle greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement largely achieved consensus-building, and allows for voluntary and nationally determined targets. It is therefore regrettable that the US under President Trump has withdrawn from the Paris Accord.

May I at this juncture pay tribute to phenomenal activist Greta Thunberg and other inspiring climate change advocates such as Leonardo DiCarrio and Al Gore who stir up global awareness creation and highlight the apocalyptic dangers of climate change while canvassing consensus to achieve climate change goals.

There can be no doubt that climate change threatens decades of development and places in jeopardy all our plans for inclusive and sustainable development. That said, African countries which all missed the great industrial revolution ought to fashion out appropriate

mitigating interventions that do not further disadvantage the continent from industrialising especially in this era of a Continental Free Trade Agreement.

As we commemorate this important UN day, we are reminded of our collective responsibility in protecting our planet and making it safer for future generations especially guided by SDGs 6,7,11 and 13.

### Frank Annoh-Dompreh

The United Nations is so far the largest intergovernmental organization. Having a membership of one hundred and ninety three (193) sovereign states, the UN remains the most influential body, representing a global identity for humanity and built on a solid foundation of securing the future generation and our planet earth. This honorable house has had the privilege over the years, to foster the inclusion of our dear nation Ghana into the global sphere, through relevant dialogue that informs our policy making process and aligns it with the overarching aim of the United Nations charter.

The United Nations marked 74 years on the 24th of October this year, consolidating all the efforts of international and local actors, and drawing our attention to the major present day challenge, climate change!

All around the world, some member states of the UN themed this celebration to highlight key issues in the different regions of the world. Nonetheless, I concur with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ theme that stated “Clean environment for a healthy living, our collective

responsibility” and with the view that climate action is the new drive, now demanding intergovernmental support at all levels.

In recent times, aside the annual Conference of Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework for Climate Change (UNFCCC), Africa has seen a proliferation of climate related events including Africa’s maiden edition of the Climate Chance Summit that took place in Ivory Coast last year, the Africa Climate Week, the Water Security & Climate Change Conference, the African Climate Risks Conference, with a host of others, all reflecting the importance of this global move as recognized by the UN this year.

It is also on this tangent, that local actors which comprise of non-governmental organizations, the civil society groups, private enterprises, farming communities, as well as the citizenry in energy and environment related industries, are being mobilized to contribute one way or another to climate action.

According to the International Negotiations Survey (INS) hosted by the Center for Climate Science & Policy Research in Sweden, an assessment of climate action, with emphasis on various categories of local actors since 2010, has identified certain roles under the broader climate action plan. They include; (i) influencing the agenda, (ii) influencing policy makers, (iii) taking mitigation action, (iv) taking adaptation action, (v) proposing solutions, (vi) providing expertise, (vii) evaluating consequences, (viii) raising awareness, (ix) representing public opinion and (x) representing marginalized voices.

In all the roles identified, the results of the survey show that non-state actors are indeed contributing appreciably across the entire spectrum of roles, which is commendable and in line with the UN advocacy that themed the celebrations on UN Day. Nevertheless, more participation, will ensure that contributions prescribed by the Paris Agreement will be met within the

specified time frames.

Prior to this very celebration, the nation has witnessed the participation of many Ghanaians increasing in the immediate past, in correlation with Ghana’s renewed objective for the SDGs. I recognize the efforts of the President, His Excellency Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo, who is also the Co-Chair of SDGs Advocates, Ghana’s Ministry of Energy, the efforts of Dr. Adolf Acquaye, Dr. Joseph Ekow Essandoh-Yeddu and Dr. Lawrence Agbemabiese who assumed positions in the working group III of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, among many other significant role-players who have elevated the relevance of climate action especially in the Africa region.

The just ended Climate Chance Summit Africa 2019, brought forth the Accra Declaration which has further defined the scope of Africa’s action in climate change to highlight; (a) a balance in funding for both adaptation and mitigation, (b) the evocation of the Green Climate Fund to establish finance accessibility through the Urban and Municipal Developments Fund, (c) the initiative of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) of Africa to elaborate Locally Determined Contributions through revision of the NDCs and also (d) “The Accra Climate Dialogue” representing an adoption of the annual African Climate Chance Summit, as “pre-COP” of non-state and local government actors, among other key issues. It is encouraging to see the steady increase in involvement of local governments and non-state organizations joining hands to advance the outcomes of Ghana’s NDCs.

The UN Climate Action Summit 2019 in New York also focused on four (4) interdependent tracks ahead of COP25 in Chile, and devised concrete plans in the areas of (i) Mitigation – that deals with emission reductions, (ii) social and political drivers –dealing with the well-being and gender issues, (iii) Youth and public mobilization – dealing with increasing their

participation in the dialogues, (iv) the energy transition – that addresses the need to accelerate the switch to clean energy production. Five other tracks were introduced for (a) climate finance & carbon pricing, (b) nature based solutions, (c) local action in city infrastructure, (d) industry transition and (e) resilience & adaptation. It is evident that this is an all-encompassing developmental agenda that invites all stakeholders to the climate change process at the same time spreading reformation into many sectors within states.

In all these action plans, the UN has managed to use its global reach to draw together all the categories of climate change actors into a unified force to take advantage in this critical period in our quest to address climate change, and I can suggest no better mechanism than strength-in-unity.

I am confident that a continuous advocacy for action will transmit the sense of responsibility to all levels of actors in their respective states, be it to groups or to individuals, and will ensure success in the climate change agenda.

As the upcoming Conference of Parties in Chile are most likely to conclude Article 6 of the Paris Rulebook, which is proposing the establishment of a policy framework for an emission trading system, Africa and Ghana for that matter cannot and should not lose out on this carbon trade concept.

An environmental conservation tax may also be in need as issues surrounding climate change develop. Climate finance for adaptation measures would also need to be prioritized in order to achieve the balance in climate expenditure, for a holistic solution to be realized.

In concluding, Ghana’s frontline actors should focus on simplifying our needed efforts as a nation and build the capacities of all stakeholders in their appreciation of climate change concerns. Humanity is in a race which we can win and these are the defining moments.



Hon. Frank Annoh-Dompreh (MP, Nsawam Adoagyiri)



We're a global **COMMUNITY OF ABUNDANCE** minded people...

We are Africa's first decentralized, people-driven real estate ecosystem, a game changer in the industry in Africa, with a unique twist designed to alleviate the tenancy challenge, bridging the vast gap between the people and their dream homes.

**Why we are unique**

1. We build preferred homes.
2. We give land title deeds without an extra cost.
3. We build according to the location of your choice.
4. We can get any unique property for you in any location of your choice.
5. We can build on your land.
6. We have a flexible payment plan.
7. We have a cash flow system to help your payment plan

**LAND**

Land varies with location.



**LOCATION A** — \$ —

3 bedroom duplex:	33,000
3 bedroom duplex:	45,000
5 bedroom duplex:	96,000
7 bedroom mansion:	334,000
9 bedroom mansion:	484,000

**LOCATION B** — \$ —

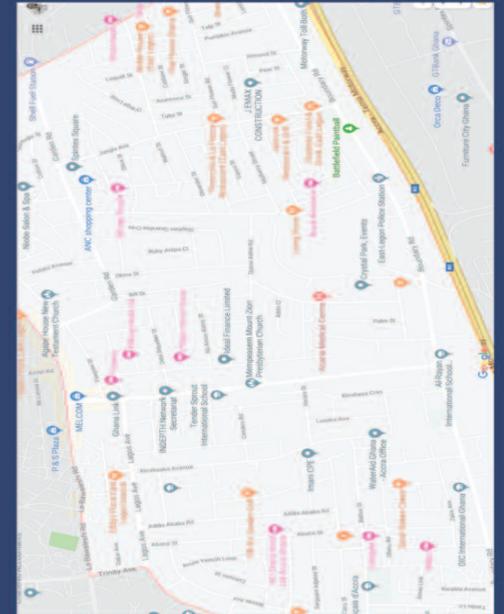
3 bedroom bungalow:	45,000
3 bedroom duplex:	69,000
5 bedroom duplex:	108,000
7 bedroom mansion:	484,000
9 bedroom mansion:	684,000

**LOCATION C** — \$ —

3 bedroom bungalow:	69,000
3 bedroom duplex:	96,000
5 bedroom duplex:	146,000
7 bedroom mansion:	684,000
9 bedroom mansion:	984,000

**RENT TO OWN**

	\$	\$
	COST PER UNIT	INITIAL PAYMENT
3 bedroom bungalow:	69,000	13,000
3 bedroom duplex:	96,000	17,000
5 bedroom duplex:	146,000	27,000
7 bedroom mansion:	684,000	123,000
9 bedroom mansion:	984,000	175,000



**Loc. 14 Pineapple street American house, East Legon**

0540610084 / 0240086174  
 0540397868 / 0244878999  
 info@doxatbcstates.com  
 14 Pineapple street American house, East Legon  
 www.doxatbcstates.com

**Our Vision**

Our Corporate Vision is to make the prestige of home ownership in Ghana to the middle-aged and upper-middle and higher income brackets a thing of the past.

Make The Most of your Real Estate Investments

**Our Mission**

Our Corporate Mission is to put as many people in a house of their own at a lower cost and with a much less degree of stress. Unlike the majority of real estate companies that are solely concerned with turning a profit is to drastically reduce the tenancy situation in Ghana.



Our shareholders, partners, home owners and tenants' satisfaction, safety, happiness, and comfort are our main goals.

We maintain competitive market prices, while working toward expanding the number of units owned



**Seven (7) ways to participate:**

1. Get started, register to own your house.
2. Get and help others to own some stable coin.
3. Active membership registration.
4. Stable coin sales partnership.
5. Become a shareholder.
6. Become and refer an agent.
7. Build your own community.



**Registration: 82 (gr)**

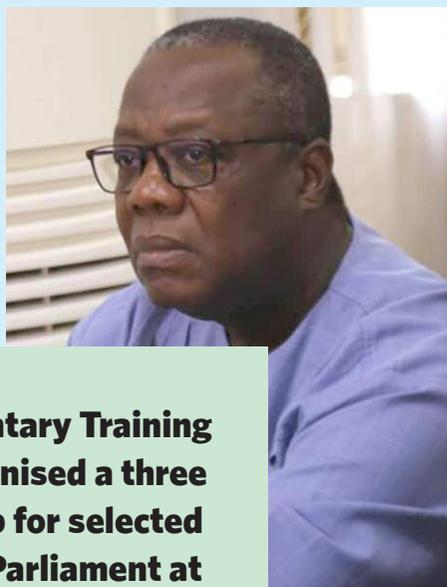


**This is how it works:**

1. Cash Buyers
2. Doxa Agency and Cashflow
3. Rent to own
4. As an investor for shares



# Parliamentary Affairs



**The Parliamentary Training Institute organised a three day workshop for selected Members of Parliament at Koforidua in the Eastern Region on Parliament's role in the review and approval of international business or economic transactions as per Article 181 (5) of the 1992 Constitution and matters relating to Article 22 (2) of the Constitution.**



## Photo Report: Parliament Events In Pictures



## Africa News

# IPU declares complaint regarding Sierra Leone as inadmissible

## - As new cases of persecuted parliamentarians in the world increases



Seham Sergiwa, a Libyan MP who was abducted from her house. © Courtesy the Sergiwa family

### News Desk Report

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) - the global organization of parliaments that promotes democracy and helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender balanced and more diverse - has examined complaints of persecution of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Sierra Leone, and has declared the complaint as inadmissible.

The IPU defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world. At this year's 141st IPU Assembly held in Belgrade, Serbia in October, IPU Member Parliaments condemned human rights violations against a record number of new cases of abused MPs. The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the only international body with an exclusive remit to support MPs in danger, examined the cases of 305 parliamentarians in 10 countries whose human rights had been allegedly violated. Over half the cases are new complaints - mainly from Venezuela, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya and that of Sierra Leone. Most of the cases concern opposition MPs (83%) and a fifth are women MPs (21%).

Twice a year, the IPU convenes over 1,500 parliamentary delegates and partners in a world assembly, bringing a parliamentary dimension to global governance, including the work of the United Nations and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### Libya

The Committee examined the case of a Libyan MP Ms. Seham Sergiwa, an independent member of the House of Representatives in Tobruk, and an outspoken critic of the current military offensive. To inform their deliberations, the IPU Committee met the first and second Deputy Speakers of the House of Representatives in Tobruk.

Ms. Sergiwa was abducted from her home in Benghazi in July 2019. Since the abduction, the IPU has pressed the Libyan authorities to take action. Without any sign of life three months later, there is growing concern about Ms Sergiwa's fate.

The IPU urges the Libyan authorities to do everything they can to locate Ms Sergiwa and secure her immediate release.

### Uganda

The Committee examined the human rights violations of five Ugandan MPs, four independent and one from the opposition party. The violations include torture, arbitrary detention, lack of fair trial and violations of freedom of expression.

One of the MPs, Mr. Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, better known as Bobi Wine - a popular singer - has been a vocal critic of the Government and subject to a campaign of intimidation.

The IPU has asked for a fact-finding mission to the country to meet with the executive and judicial branches. Ms Rebecca Kadaga, the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament, has expressed her support for the mission.

The IPU is waiting for formal authorization from the Ugandan authorities to be able to travel to Uganda for the mission.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The IPU Committee decided to postpone a decision on the admissibility of the complaint in the DRC, which is part of the new cases reported.

### Venezuela

The number of cases of Venezuelan MPs examined by the Committee rose to 96 parliamentarians since its last session in April. There are 32 new

cases, all from the coalition of Democratic Unity Roundtable Party (MUD) from the National Assembly of Venezuela.

The MUD coalition won a majority in the National Assembly following elections in 2015 and opposes the Government of Mr. Nicolas Maduro. The Government has not provided any funding to the National Assembly since August 2016.

The IPU is concerned about the widespread and systematic intimidation of MUD parliamentarians, which has reached new records, and urges the Government of Venezuela to stop these reprisals immediately.

The Committee met separately with MUD members from the National Assembly and members of the Bloque de la Patria parliamentary group that supports Mr. Nicolas Maduro to hear both sides.

The IPU calls on the Government of Venezuela to accept the IPU's long-standing request for a fact-finding mission to address the human rights concerns and to help find a solution to the current political impasse.

### Turkey

The Committee examined the cases of 57 current and former parliamentarians all from the opposition party, the People's Democratic Party (HDP). Since December 2015, hundreds of trial proceedings on criminal and terrorism charges are going on against current and former HDP parliamentarians throughout Turkey.

Since 2018, 29 current and former parliamentarians have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Eight current and former parliamentarians are either in pretrial detention or serving prison sentences, including the former HDP co-chairs, Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş and Ms. Figen Yükksekdağ.

In June 2019, an IPU delegation of parliamentarians, including the IPU President Gabriela Cuevas Barron, was in Turkey on a fact-finding mission to evaluate the situation on the ground. The mission concluded that the authorities systematically present HDP parliamentarians as terrorists and their parliamentary work as terrorism although the HDP is a legally authorized political party in Turkey. The delegation also highlighted violations of the HDP parliamentarians' right to free speech.

### Yemen

The Committee evaluated the cases of 69 members of parliament from Yemen, all elected in the last parliamentary elections in 2003. The allegations range from attempted murder, abduction, arbitrary detention to property destruction.

Since the beginning of the political crisis in 2011 and the outbreak of the war in 2015, two different factions claim to embody the Yemeni Parliament: the parliament in Sana'a in the territories under the control of the Houthi militia and the parliamentarians who fled Sana'a and who belong to the internationally recognized Government of Mr. Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi.

The cases examined by the Committee concern members of parliament who fled Sana'a and neighbouring governorates under the control of the Houthi militia. On 10 September 2019, the Sana'a-based House of Representatives reportedly lifted the parliamentary immunity of 35 of the 69 parliamentarians to allow criminal proceedings on treason charges to go ahead, which are punishable by death. The IPU is monitoring the situation closely and calls for all parties to come together to find a solution to the current impasse.

### Brazil

The Committee admitted the case of Mr. Jean Wyllys, a member of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies since 2010. He is the first openly gay Brazilian member of Congress and a well-known supporter of the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community.

Mr. Wyllys has been harassed and subject to intimidation since he was elected to parliament because of his sexual orientation and political views. In January 2019, Mr. Wyllys decided to give up his parliamentary seat and go into exile because of repeated threats and the alleged failure of the Brazilian authorities to offer him adequate protection.

Mr. Wyllys's decision to leave the country was also influenced by the assassination of Ms. Marielle Franco in March 2018, a local council member who was also a vocal supporter of LGBTI rights. Two ex-police officers were arrested in March 2019 over their alleged involvement in this murder.

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians has copies of threats and acts of intimidation made over the past three years as well as Mr. Wyllys's requests for protection made to the police and the parliamentary authorities.

# IPU Adopts Declaration on Strengthening International law

## IPU (Belgrade, Serbia)

The 141st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly has adopted the Belgrade Declaration, Strengthening international law: Parliamentary roles and mechanisms, and the contribution of regional cooperation. In the Declaration, IPU Member Parliaments underlined the importance of a peaceful world order based on the rule of law.

Over 1,800 parliamentarians, UN and civil society partners from around the world met in Belgrade in October at the Assembly to also express their support for strong and effective multilateral institutions, with the United Nations at their core, designed to find solutions to common challenges and settle disputes between States.

They also pledged their commitment to regional cooperation as a means to enhance the international legal order and work towards the full implementation of shared international commitments.

### Children and youth

One of those commitments – the Convention on the Rights of the Child – was the focus of a special 30th anniversary event organized in partnership with UNICEF in the presence of its regional ambassador, Goran Bregović.

In their declaration to mark the Convention’s anniversary, IPU Member Parliaments recognized that, in the 30 years since its adoption, the lives of millions of children had been improved through its implementation. However, with new challenges facing children in the twenty-first century, parliamentarians reaffirmed their commitment to upholding and protecting the rights and guiding principles enshrined in the Convention.

Youth empowerment was the theme of a special celebration of the 2019 Future Policy Award, the so-called “Oscars” for the best policies that advance youth access to decent jobs, including green jobs, and enhance civic and political participation for sustainable development and peace.

Selected from among 67 nominated policies from 36 countries, this year’s winners included eight inspiring and effective laws and policies that empower

young people from Rwanda, Estonia, Scotland (United Kingdom), Nepal, South Africa, the Council of Europe, Los Angeles (USA) and Senegal.

### Inter-parliamentary solidarity and cooperation

The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians met during the Assembly to consider the cases of over 300 MPs who are in danger.

At the Assembly, the IPU signed agreements with the National Council of Austria, which will host the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna in August 2020, and with the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda, the future hosts of the IPU’s 143rd Assembly in October 2020.

The IPU also signed an agreement with the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie, whose status was upgraded to Associate Member of the IPU.

### Background

The IPU is the global organization of parliaments. It was founded 130 years ago as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations. Today, the IPU comprises 179 national Member Parliaments and 12 regional parliamentary bodies. It promotes democracy and helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender-balanced and more diverse. It also defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world. Twice a year, the IPU convenes over 1,500 parliamentary delegates and partners in a world assembly, bringing a parliamentary dimension to global governance, including the work of the United Nations and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



IPU141 Assembly in Serbia sets out to strengthen international law

© SNEBARTO (CC BY-ND 2.0)





GHANA EXPORT PROMOTION AUTHORITY

**50** *Years of Facilitating  
Ghana's Exports*



**WTPO**

**2018 Award Winner  
2020 Conference Host**

***Export Ghana, Export More!***

GEPAGhana gepa\_ghana +233 30 274 0909