



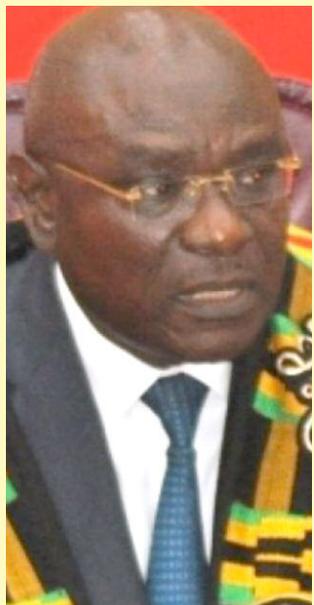
# DELAY IN GHANA'S e-PARLIAMENT PROJECT



Speaker of Parliament, Rt Hon Prof Michael Oquaye

Please turn to pages 3 & 13

**-Software Incompatibility, Inadequate IT Staff and Change Management stifle effort**



Former Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon Edward Korbly Doe Adjaho



Former Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Justice Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo



Former Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon Ebenezer Begyina Sekyi Hughes

## A Decade Of Neglect

**-As Parliamentary Resource Center rot away**

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IT'S OUR PARLIAMENT

# Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

## LAST WEEK IN PARLIAMENT

By: Benjamin Opoku Aryeh

**T**he President of the Republic of Ghana delivered a Statement on the State of the Nation in Parliament on Thursday, 20 February, during which occasion the Minority Caucus of the House walked out of Chamber.

### Bills

The Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana Bill, 2019 was read the second time in Parliament after it was debated for a while.

### Presentation of papers

The Deputy Minister for Finance laid a request for Waiver of Import Duty, Import VAT, NHIL Levy, GETFund Levy, ECOWAS Levy, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy and other taxes amounting to GH¢25,144,989.27 on vehicles to be procured for the Intercity STC Company Limited; another request for Waiver of Import Duty, Import VAT, NHIL Levy, GETFund Levy, ECOWAS Levy, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy and other taxes amounting to GH¢708,642.92 on vehicles to be procure for the Ministry of Regional Reorganisation and Development; a request for waiver of import duty, import VAT, NHIL Levy, GETFund levy, ECOWAS Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy

and other taxes amounting to GH¢14,785,658.77 on vehicles to be procured by the Metro Mass Transit Limited; and a request for waiver of Import duty, Import VAT, NHIL Levy, GETFund levy, ECOWAS Levy, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy and other taxes amounting to GH¢841,645.20 on weapons donated to the Ghana Immigration Service.

The Speaker referred all the papers to the Finance Committee for consideration and report.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Dr. Mark Assibey Yeboah, on the other hand laid a report of the committee on the request by government of Ghana for the issuance of Reports of the Joint Committee on Mines and Energy, and Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs on the EPC Turnkey contract agreement between the Government of Ghana and Power China International Group Limited for an amount of US\$55,379,808.67 for the engineering, procurement and construction of a 50MW Solar powered plant in Pualugu; and the Joint Committee on Food, Agriculture and Cocoa Affairs and Lands and Energy on the EPC Turnkey contract agreement between the Government of Ghana and Power China In-

ternational Group Limited for an amount of 474,200,142 for the engineering, procurement and construction of 84,000hectar irrigation scheme in Pualugu

clear those debts.

The Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture also answered a question from the Hon. MP for Wa West on when the Charter for African Culture Renaissance adopted by the African union in 2006 will be brought to Parliament for ratification. The Minister in her answer said that her minister will, as a matter of urgency, submit the charter the House in eight weeks' time for ratification.

MP for Adaklu, Hon. Kwame Govern Agbodza, asked what the current status of the Kotoka international Airport terminal one in terms of current and future operations is. The Minister for Aviation mentioned in his answer that several offices at the terminal and some agreements between the United States Military and McDan Company Limited.

The Hon Minister for Roads and Highways answered some questions; the Hon MP for Balsa South, Dr. Apaack on when work on some roads in the Balsa District will resume. The Minister in his answer said that completion of those roads will depend on the allocation and release of funds from the Department of Feeder Roads.

**The President of the Republic of Ghana delivered a Statement on the State of the Nation in Parliament on Thursday, 20 February, during which occasion the Minority Caucus of the House walked out of Chamber.**

### Statements

The Hon. Alhassan Suhuyini, MP, Tamale North made a statement on the devastating effect of galamsey on the environment and lives of Ghanaians.

The Hon. Zaneto Rawlings also made a statement on recognizing unsung heroes with special call on avoidance of discrimination against people with leprosy.

### The Week Ahead

In order for the House to have enough time to complete much work in relation to some legislations and debate on the President's State of the Nation Address

were laid before the House.

### Questions

The Minister for Youth and Sports answered a question asked by the Hon. MP for Kumbungu, Ras Mubarak asked whether the Ministry has paid all outstanding bonuses owed the black queens.

The Minister answered that indeed almost all the national teams, including the black queens, are owed some bonuses due them and that the ministry is doing everything possible to



Parliament House Of Ghana, Accra



# Editorial

## WALKOUTS, BOYCOTTS AND PARLIAMENT'S WORK

**T**he Cambridge English Dictionary defines a walkout as "the act of leaving an official meeting as a group in order to show disapproval, or of leaving a place of work to start a strike."

A look at the history of the revered UK House of Commons over the many centuries that this epitome of parliamentary democracy has been in session, in comparison to the barely three decades-old 4th Republican Parliament of Ghana, reveals that MPs in Ghana have a far more superior taste for walkouts than their UK counterparts.

Walkouts and boycotts have become regular features in Ghana's Parliament. The recent case happening when all MPs of the Minority NDC Caucus walked out on the President when he delivered his State of the Nation Address last week. This was similar to an action taken by NPP MPs while in the Minority during the State of the Nation Address of 2013.

**But what is the place of walkouts and boycotts in the work of parliaments?**

The word 'Parliament' finds its root from the French word 'Parler' which means to "to talk" or "to speak." This connotes an institution whose members must always resort to talking, discussions, meetings, negotiations etc to settle differences and to amplify objections.

**We are of the opinion that MPs betray their fundamental role of representing their constituents whenever they walkout of or boycott a parliamentary sitting.**

**Since 1993, walkouts and boycotts have not solved any problem in Ghana. And we think our MPs must come to terms with this fact.**

# Delay in Ghana's e-Parliament Project

## - Software Incompatibility, Inadequate IT Staff and Change Management stifle effort



Speaker of Parliament, Rt Hon Prof Michael Oquaye

By Clement Akoloh

**I**n pursuance of the global call for parliamentary openness, the Parliament of Ghana has since October 2016 been implementing an Integrated Electronic Parliament (e-Parliament) System, but software incompatibility, inadequate IT staff and the unwillingness of MPs to adapt to change is delaying the rollout of the project which should have been completed and handed over to Parliament this month.

The e-Parliament Project was commissioned by the Ministry of Communication through its National Information Technology Agency (NITA), the agency responsible for implementing Ghana's IT policies. It is a project funded by a World Bank facility to Ghana in support of all the e-Governance projects including the e-Justice, e-Executive as well as e-Parliament projects.

e-Parliament is the adoption of information and communication technologies to modernize every aspect of Parliamentary work, including the enhancement of its internal processes and the interactions of Members of Parliament (MPs) with their constituencies.

This initiative which is expected to transform how Ghana's Parliament conducts its business, is in tune with the advancement of the digital age with the adoption of digital tools by Parliaments all over the world to bring Parliament closer to the people in making transparency, accessibility and accountability a reality.

However, from our checks, it does not appear the intended ben-

efits to be derived from this noble project to enhance Parliamentary activities and to reduce the cost of printing materials will be handed over on time as scheduled.

From what we can glean from the information we are privy to, part of the problem is that Parliament is not yet fully in charge of the platform. The project is still within the domain of the Ministry of Communications with a Steering Committee playing an intermediary role between Parliament and the Ministry of Communications which is managing the World Bank sponsored eGovernance project.

With the new system, some of these requests by MPs which take quite some time before they are approved, will be taken care of within a short period. As soon as a question is put through to the Speaker, the approval process is followed through and then it is forwarded to the relevant Ministry through the same e-Governance platform for attention.

A Member of the Ghana eParliament Steering Committee, Mr. Emmanuel Kwesi Bedzra, observed that the Electronic Parliament Platform will eventually eliminate the use of paper in printing documents and will therefore reduce the cost of running Parliament.

The Hon. MP for Ho West Constituency explained to us that, the current process of having questions and statements written by MPs and sent to the Clerks at Table who then forward them to the Speaker for approval, will be transformed as the platform has been designed in such a way that the MPs can type these requests directly for the necessary attention.

When the e-Parliament project is in full flight, coupled with the

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### Software Incompatibility

We are reliably informed that the software which is supposed to enable Members of Parliament access the system through a Virtual Private Network (VPN) from remote locations was incompat-

### Inadequate IT Staff

When the e-Parliament project is in full flight, coupled with the

**Continued On Page 13**

## Finance

# MoPA To Help Parliament Undertake Fiscal Impact Analysis of Bills

**Gilbert Borketey Boyefio**

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) has been called upon to help Parliament to undertake Fiscal Impact Analysis of all Bills laid in Parliament for passage into law.

This call was made by Hon Mahama Ayariga, Member of Parliament for Bawku Central, during an engagement organized by the MoPA for members of the Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, and the Finance Committee of Parliament under the theme, “Interrogating Parliament’s Legislative Power: A Review of Employment Creation And Fiscal Impact Analysis of Legislations”.

To Hon Ayariga, MoPA can assist Parliament by engaging independent expert from academia, especially the University of Ghana, Legon, to do the Fiscal Impact Analysis on Bills. He insisted that Parliament must ensure that all Bills coming from the Executive is accompanied by a Fiscal Impact Analysis report, as required by the Public Financial Management Act (PFMA).

Section 100 (1) of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921) requires the Parliament of Ghana to ensure that: “Any legislation to be laid before Parliament or proposal submitted for the approval of Parliament shall be accompanied by fiscal impact analysis stating the estimated effect on revenues and expenditures for the fi-

nancial year in which the legislation or proposal is expected to come into effect”.

Regulation 12 of the PFM Regulations, 2019 stipulates; “Further to section 100 of Act 921, a covered entity which submits a new legislation to be laid before Parliament or a proposal for the approval of Parliament shall: (a) provide data on expected revenues to be realized from all identified funding sources under the legislation or proposal; and (b) provide data on expected expenditure to be incurred under the legislation or proposal including wages, salaries, allowances and pensions.”

Though the meeting acknowledged that the law puts the obligation of conducting a Fiscal Impact Analysis on the Executive, which is currently the initiator of Bills, it has become necessary for Parliament to have the capacity to independently scrutinize the Fiscal Impact Analysis report when it is laid together with the Bill before it.

Unfortunately, Parliament currently lacks the capacity to do so, hence the call on the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to support it.

Though the PFMA was passed in 2016, its requirements as it relate to the Fiscal Impact Analysis of Bills have not been strictly adhered to by government.

According to Hon. Rockson De-feamekpor, Member of Parliament for South Dayi, the only time that government complied with the

PFMA requirement on Fiscal Impact Analysis was during the passage of the Right To Information Act, 2019, Act 989, noting that, “This informed government’s decision to delay the implementation of the RTI Act to January 2020”.

Doing a presentation on the topic, “Optimizing Parliament’s Oversight Responsibility On Fiscal Discipline: Fiscal Impact Analysis,” Professor Godfred A. Bokpin, a lecturer at the University of Ghana Business School, noted that the importance of provisions of the PFMA is to “Strengthen key objectives of the

worsening inequality.

On his part, Hon Alhaji Inusah Fuseini, Member of Parliament for Tamale Central, noted that the non-compliance of the requirements of the PFMA and other legislations is a result of the imbalance of power between the Executive and the Legislature.

Speaking on the theme for the meeting: Interrogating Parliament’s Legislative Power: A Review of Employment Creation and Fiscal Impact Analysis of Legislations, Dr Evans Aggrey-Darkoh, Chief Director, MoPA, noted that Parliament exercises influence on how their countries are governed, especially in shaping legislation, monitoring and exercising oversight of the executive and serving as a debating chamber for the articulation of constituencies and national interests, a vibrant Parliament with powers, resources, capacity and the will to exercise its responsibilities is as in equanon for the advancement of both procedural and substantive democracy.

This engagement is to interrogate the legislative powers of Parliament by using fiscal impact assessment accompanying bills and the employment creating capacities of same as case studies, with the view to identifying both formal and informal factors that impact on Parliament in carrying out effective scrutiny of Legislative proposals.

“Our concentration is on two critical committees, the Finance Committee and the Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Committee of Parliament. The programme intends to achieve the following objectives: Examine the potency of the legislative powers of Parliament of Ghana; Discuss Parliament’s powers in relation to the examination of fiscal impact assessment of legislative proposals; Review Parliament’s responsibility in ensuring that legislative proposals give due consideration to employment creation; Outline both formal and informal influences that impact legislative powers of parliament; and Provide normative recommendations to improve the legislative functions of Parliament.”

**Our concentration is on two critical committees, the Finance Committee and the Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee of Parliament**

Act: Fiscal Policy Formulation and Implementation, Budgeting Efficiency, Prudent Debt Management, Transparency and Accountability, Improve Macro-Fiscal Policy Formulation and especially implementation.”

Economic Impact Analysis (EIA) Prof Bokpin proposed that best practices require that Ghana go beyond Fiscal Impact Analysis. Parliament should be interested in how the bills and proposals that come before it for approval, affect job gains or losses, wages and salaries of the populace.

EIA will address unemployment especially graduate unemployment and inequality; Unemployment remains a key threat to stability of the country. Again, how does such bills bridge the rising and-



Hon Mahama Ayariga, Member of Parliament for Bawku Central



Dr. Evans Aggrey Darko, Chief Director, MoPA



Finance Minister, Ken Ofori Atta

Legal & Human Rights

# Parliament to start admitting Private Members' Bill Soon

News Desk Report

All is set for the Parliament of Ghana to start admitting Private Members' Bill, hopefully, from the beginning of the First Meeting of the Fourth Session of the Seventh Parliament.

This welcome news was made possible by the current Speaker, Rt Hon Prof Michael Oquaye, who in his inaugural address to Parliament promised to put in place the necessary structures to admit Private Members' Bill.

True to his word, Speaker Oquaye established the Legislative Drafting Unit, as part of the Legal Department of Parliament in 2018, with the Late Justice VCRAC Crabbe as the founding Parliamentary Counsel. The unit commenced operations in February 2019, with the task to provide legislative drafting services to Parliament, including supporting Members of Parliament in drafting of Private Members' Bill.



Gloria Akuffo, Attorney General



Parliament House Of Ghana, Accra

By Article 93(2) of the Constitution, the legislative power of the Republic is vested in Parliament. Articles 106, 107, 108 and 109 of the Constitution set out the parameters within which Parliament may exercise the legislative power of the Republic.

However, a narrow interpretation of Article 108 (iii) over the years by subsequent Speakers of Parliament have prevented Parliament from initiating Bills or legislations, making the initiation and subsequent introduction of legislations in Parliament the reserve of the Executive.

Addressing participants at a one-day stakeholder conference on Private Members' Bill, held at the Speaker's Executive Lounge, Parliament House, the Speaker of Parliament, Rt Hon Prof Michael Oquaye, enumerated the numerous advantages of admitting Private Members' Bill.

He noted that the introduction

**The enactment of Private Members' Bill is critical to enhance democratic governance. It serves as a means by which Parliament may use law as a tool for social engineering**

of a Private Members' Bill will help build consensus in the House, as the initiator necessarily needs the cooperation of all Members to succeed.

He was of the view that Private Members' Bill will help Parlia-

ment to tighten the some of the loopholes in the country's governance structure.

Appreciatively all indications at the moment are to the effect that there is sufficient cooperation between the Executive and the Legislature for purposes of enacting Private Members' Bill. The prevailing view is that a Private Members' Bill should be allowed provided that the Bill does not affect the institution of chieftaincy, is not retroactive nor it is a Bill for purposes of the settlement of financial matters; in other words, it is not what is usually called financial Bills.

The enactment of Private Members' Bill is critical to enhance democratic governance. It serves as a means by which Parliament may use law as a tool for social engineering. Countries such as the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and Uganda have successfully enacted Private Members' Bill as tools for social engineering.

## Parliamentary Affairs

# A DECADE OF NEGLECT



Gilbert Borketey Boyefio

The Parliamentary Resource Centre, located at the Sekondi-Takoradi Regional Coordinating Council, in the Western Region, the brain child of Former Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon Ebenezer Begyina Sekyi Hughes, has been neglected and left in a very deplorable state.

The Resource Centre, which was established to provide research assistance to Members of Parliament, and also provide the platform for researchers on parliamentary affairs, was expected to be replicated in all the regions of the country. However, this dream has come to a standstill with two succeeding Speakers, Rt. Hon. Justice Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo (January 7, 2009-January 6, 2013) and Rt. Hon Edward K D Adjaho (January 7, 2013-January 6, 2017) not doing much about it.

A visit to the Resource Centre by the *Parliamentary News* revealed that



**The Resource Centre is under resourced and does not befit the status of the institution that it represents**

the place has gone from bad to worse from our first visit to the place three years ago.

The Resource Centre is under resourced and does not befit the status of the institution that it represents.

Our checks revealed that there have been several audits of the Resource Centre by delegations from the Par-

liamentary Service in Accra but nothing has come out of these audit reports. The recent audit was conducted some few weeks ago.

The Centre has two full time staff, who runs and keep the place alive and functioning despite the lack of resources and maintenance.

The Resource Centre currently runs



on the benevolence of the Ghana Education Service that collaborate and sponsor their activities and event.

The inability of Parliament to properly maintain the Resource Centre

and coupled with the failure to replicate it nationwide means that Ghanaians outside Accra that want to have a feel of parliamentary proceedings, get a closer look of the legislature and abreast themselves with the workings of parliament, have to compulsory travel to the nation's capital to do so.

### The Value of a Parliamentary Resource Centre

According to Martin Chungong, Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Well-resourced parliamentary research services are one of the building blocks of an effective parliament. They are of incalculable value as a source of independent, neutral and non-partisan analysis. They offer a safe space where parliamentarians from all political parties can ask questions and get answers they can trust. They contribute to a parliament's autonomy by providing a reality check on the perspectives put forward by the executive branch of government, lobby groups and the news media. Their analysis informs a parliament's legislative and oversight work and provides parliamentarians with the information they need to do their job well"

According to the Declaration of Parliamentary Openness, Parliamentary information belongs to the people. This means that much efforts needed to be put in place to ensure that all citizens have access to Parliamentary information, irrespective of where they stay.

Parliamentary News will continue to pursue this story to bring to our cherish readers the plans of the current Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon Prof Michael Oquaye on the Parliamentary Resource Centre.

## Developing A Framework Towards The Enactment Of Private Members' Bills In Ghana

By: Mrs. Sabina Ofori-Boateng, Former Director, legislative drafting division, Attorney-General's Office

### Introduction

Rt. Hon Speaker, Hon members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank the Rt.

Hon. Speaker for asking me to participate in this Stakeholders Conference and I am happy to be here.

The intention here is to set out for our consideration, the procedures to be employed by Parliament for enacting private members' Bills.

For the purpose of this topic there is set out this paper under four headings, a chronological order of the stages as follows:

1. Proposals for private members' bill.
2. Consultation with the legislative drafters and preparation of a draft bill.
3. Reference to the Rt. Hon Speaker and approval by the Rt. Hon. Speaker in consultation with the Leadership of the House; printing and gazetting.

4. Passage of the private members' bill and President Assent.

### 1 PROPOSAL AND FORMULATION FOR PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILL

Proposals or ideas for the formulation of private members' bills often come from civil society groups, private individual and also from back benchers in Parliament. The breath and width of issues in developing an equitable and fair society are

such that, although the Executive does its best, there is always the need for civil society and individuals outside government to help introduce laws in areas where the Executive, with its eyes on every area of nation building, cannot but miss.

An MP desiring to table a private member's bill, where ever the proposals come from, must set out in clear ordinary prose the purpose sought to be achieved by the proposal law, the intended

method for achieving the purpose and how it will enhance our development and well-being.

It might be helpful for the MP to have private consultation with colleagues to sound out possible support. May I point out here that in the UK, our source of Parliamentary democracy, only backbenchers are permitted to present private members' bills, an arrangement aimed

Continued On Page 12

Education

# Add the tenets of anti-corruption to School curriculum



Education Minister, Mathew Opoku Prempeh



Mrs. Linda Ofori-Kwafo, Executive Director, Ghana Integrity Initiative



Mr. Bernard Koku Avle, Host of The Citi Breakfast Show, Citi FM

News Desk Report

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Anti-Corruption Institutions have proposed the introduction of anti-corruption tenets in the country's educational curriculum as a way of imbuing discipline, good morale upbringing and patriotism among the youth.

Participants observed that the best way to fight corruption is to make it unattractive among the citizenry, especially the youth, in other to deter them from engaging in it.

Participants noted that presently people that are tainted with corruption practices are the same people that get high places at church, the mosque, social functions and events, sending the wrong signal out that society glorify their unpatriotic practices.

These observations were made

during the open forum at a roundtable meeting with anti-corruption partners organized by the African Parliamentarian' Network Against Corruption (APNAC), Ghana Chapter, with support from Star Ghana Foundation.

Making a short presentation on the topic: "Sustaining the gains in the fight against corruption—the roles and updates on state and non-state actor interventions and the way forward," Mrs. Linda Ofori-Kwafo, the Executive Director, Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), observed that despite the challenges in fighting corruption in Ghana, the country has made some gains in passing anti-corruption legislations and establishing the appropriate institutions to tackle the canker.

She acknowledged that more efforts are needed in the area of capacity building for the appropriate anti-corruption state agencies to effectively carry out their mandate.

Mrs. Ofori-Kwafo was very impressed with the continuous collaborations between CSOs, the media and anti-corruption state

actors in the fight against corruption. She recounted some of the successes chalked by CSOs in holding government accountable in the fight against corruption.

She noted that it is in the interest of government to take swift actions whenever matters of corruption comes up, noting that, "Ghanaians are hopeful and accommodating people, and therefore government needs to be up and doing to keep the people's hope alive. Because if we fail in this direction, the citizens will rise up one day and things will blow up in our face, as was the situation in the Arab Spring."

Taking his turn to make a short statement, Mr. Bernard Koku Avle, Host of the Citi FM Morning Show (The Citi Breakfast Show) and also host of the Point of View on Citi TV, advised CSOs to work closely with the media as partners and not as an appendage in their fight against corruption.

He noted that the media should be involved in the decision making and planning process of anti-corruption campaigns and not

at the implementation stage, observing that, "When you involved the media from the beginning of your campaign, they will help you to champion your cause."

He further advised CSOs to breakdown their research data into very user-friendly format for the media to be able to articulate it well to the citizenry.

Mr. Avle observed that if corruption is not made unpopular among Ghanaians, it will become very difficult to fight it, and therefore proposed that anti-corruption campaigns should not be limited to traditional media but also new media to unleash the anger of the people to demand accountability from decision makers.

The Chairman of APNAC-Ghana Chapter, Hon. Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzrah, disclosed that the group has adopted and launched the campaign Say No To Corruption Monday. He also disclosed that next year APNAC will embark on four regional awareness creation campaigns in schools, with traditional leaders and district assemblies.

# Special Report

# Cashew Production

**T**he agriculture sector in Ghana is made up of 5 sub-sectors namely: crops other than cocoa (49%), cocoa (22.5%), livestock (5.5%), fisheries (12.2%) and forestry (9.9%). The non-traditional crops such as pineapple, mango and cashew nuts are increasingly becoming important in the Ghanaian economy and are contributing immensely to the Agriculture Sector.

### Year-on-Year Production Trends

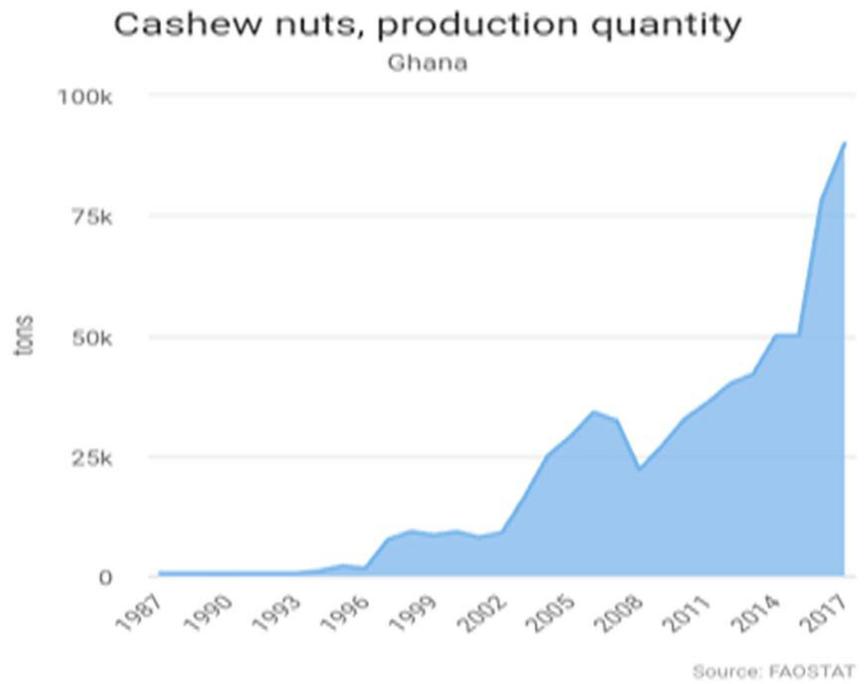
Cashew in Ghana has grown from a mere 4,000 metric tonnes (MT) per annum as recorded in 1997 to about 70,000 metric tonnes recorded in 2016.

The diagrams on this page show a constantly increasing trend in the country's production quantity of cashew over a 30 year period (1987 to 2017), as well as Ghana's place in the world of cashew production as at 2017.

Source  
FAOSTAT

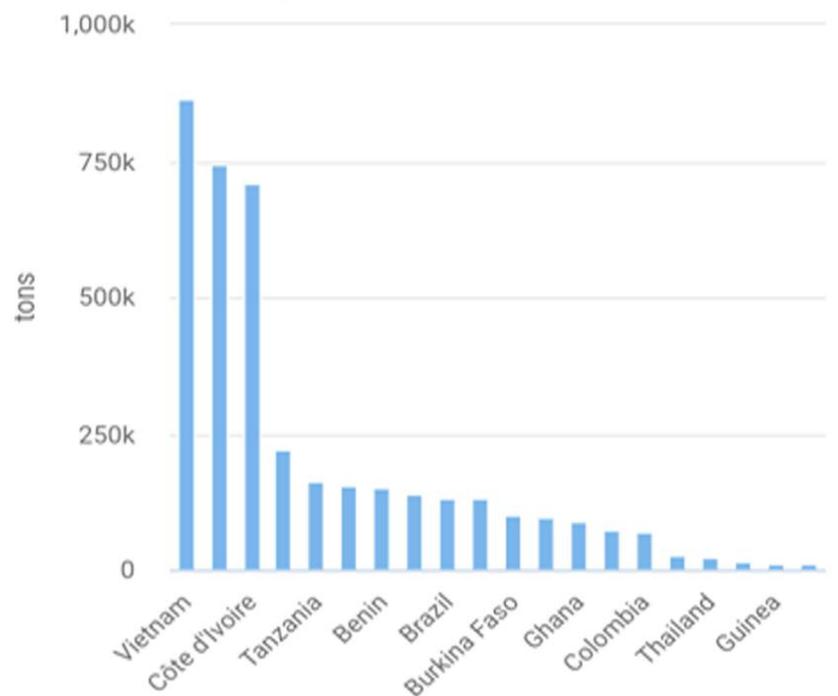
### Linechart

This section displays the historical data as line chart. Below the chart you can see the values in a table.



### Cashew nuts, production quantity

Top 20 countries for 2017



Special Report

# In Ghana



**Policies for the sub-sector –**

Over the years, there has not been any clear cut strategic policies for the cashew sub-sector in Ghana – a situation that has not allowed the sub-sector to reach its full potential. This situation is improving, as cashew and other tree crops have now been put together in a legislation recently passed by Parliament called the Tree Crop Development Authority law; while plans are far advanced on the cashew strategic policy documents, all with the aim of regulating and guiding activities and players within the sub-sector.

With the launch of the 10 year Cashew Development Plan by the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo, on 22nd February 2018 at Wenchi, it is expected that the total area under cashew cultivation and raw cashew nut production will increase from the current figures to 360,131Ha and 300,000MT respectively in ten years, if investment in the sub-sector is well targeted.

Cashew has been selected for promotion and development by the Government of Ghana due to its contribution to the country's economy. As the highest non-traditional export (NTE) earner for the country since 2014, cashew raked in USD 271 million in 2017, representing an increase of 27.4% from the 2016 figures provided by the Ghana Export Promotion Authority. In all, cashew has set a high bar of representing more than half of the total revenue received from the Ghana's entire agricultural NTE sub-sector.

**Job Creation –**

Undoubtedly, cashew production in Ghana shows an amazing potential for job creation. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) estimates that the sub-sector employs about 100,000 farmers and another 100,000 direct labourers involved in picking and harvesting of raw cashew nuts (RCN).

**From 2014, cashew has been the highest non-traditional export (NTE) earner for Ghana raking in USD 271 million in 2017, an increase of 27.4% from the 2016 figure of 196,783,774 (GEPA, 2018).**

There are more indirect seasonal employees along the cashew value chain such as aggregators, dryers, transporters among other, which accounts for about 5,000 plus indirect jobs. Although more and more employment can be generated in cashew processing, the figures from that side has declined consid-



erably since 11 out of the 14 processing plants which operated with total installed capacity of about 65,922 MT have shut down due to what MOFA describes as "difficulty in securing RCN and also technical non-competitiveness of the processing facilities."

With a metric ton of processed cashew kernels selling at more than three times the price of raw cashew nuts, it goes without saying that processing of RCN into kernels will add value to increase export revenues. Currently the cashew industry is focused more on purchasing RCNs for export rather than for local processing and/or consumption. Ghana sits in a Continent that produces more than half of the raw cashew nuts on the world market but only 5 per cent is processed on the continent.



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

german cooperation DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

ComCashew

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Federal Department of Economic Affairs FDEA State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

## General News

# PNAfrica and WACSI train CSOs on Parliamentary Advocacy and Engagements

Michael Kumordzi Tetteh

Advocates working with civil society organisations (CSOs) in four West African countries have been taken through a one week intensive training on Parliamentary Advocacy and Engagement in Accra.

The training forms part of a course developed by Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), which is aimed at responding to the gap identified in the ability of CSOs in the sub-region to effectively engage their national parliaments. Whereas PNAfrica is a civil society parliamentary monitoring organisation that specialises in building the capacities of various stakeholders on how parliaments work and opportunities to engage, WACSI is works on reinforcing the capacity of CSOs in the sub-region.

Advocacy is an essential tool used by civil society to achieve its mission to advance collective interests, solve shared problems and defend social causes. As institutions that facilitate communication between citizens and policymakers, parliaments constitute key stakeholders CSOs engage in the process of holding government accountable for providing services or promoting policy change.

Participants drawn from Ghana, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and The Gambia, were taken through a blend of lectures, group works, role play and experience sharing sessions, which gave them the opportunity to understudy cases of successful policy reform processes conducted by different CSOs in the region.

The Executive Director for PNAfrica, Sammy Obeng, who co-designed and facilitated the workshop noted that “understanding the processes and proceedings of the parliament and the legislative assembly is a key element civil society activists



Participants drawn from Ghana, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and The Gambia, were taken through a blend of lectures, group works, role play and experience sharing sessions

should consider in any approach of engagement.”

When asked how they were going to use the knowledge and skills gained at their training, a participant, Agbede Opeoluwa, Programme Officer of the Royal Heritage Health Foundations based in Nigeria said, his primary focus will

be to conduct a step down training to enable his colleagues to benefit from the valuable knowledge he acquired. In addition, Emmanuel Oluwafemi, Programme Assistant in WACSI’s Policy Influencing and Advocacy Unit, assured that this training empowered him to get more involved in the parliamentary process of his country.

## Parliament advised to work closely with the media

Mr. Ebenezer Ahumah Djietror, a Principal Assistant Clerk and Head of the Table Office of Parliament, has called on Parliament to closely work with the media to bring development to Ghanaians.

According to him, Parliament needs to collaborate with the

media to inform and educate Ghanaians on the work of Parliament and also encourage the people to hold Parliament accountable.

He noted that Parliament, as the representative of the people, gives true expression to the preamble and Article 1 of the 1992 Constitution that power belongs to the people.

Article 1 of the 1992 Constitution states that, “The Sovereignty of Ghana resides in the people of Ghana in whose name and for whose welfare the powers of government are to be exercised in the manner and within the limits laid down in this Constitution”.

Speaking at an engagement with members of the Parliamentary Press Corps (PPC), organised by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) on the theme: “Enhancing the visibility of Parliament: the role of the media”, Mr. Djietror observed that in order to ensure true collaboration with the media, Parliament should sparingly used the privileges of Parliament, which could be construed as gagging the media.

He recounted several instances in the past where media personnel had been dragged to the Privileges Committee for their perceived erroneous reportage on parliament or a Member of Parliament.

He observed that when there is mutual trust between Parlia-

ment and the media, the two can work together in harmony and address their differences without antagonising each other, noting that, “A good relationship between the media and Parliament is critical to the building of a legitimate Parliament and subsequently, a vibrant democracy.”

On her part, Prof Audrey Gadzekpo, Dean of the School of Information and Communications Studies, University of Ghana, stressed that the PPC should not be seen as doing public relations work for Parliament.

She noted that the media has the responsibility of reporting accurately and without fear or favour on what transpires in and out of parliament for the interest of Ghanaians. “It is the media’s role to ensure that the citizenry hold parliament accountable. They have to help the citizenry to actively participate in the governance of the country,” she stressed.

Earlier on, the Chief Director of the Ministry of Parliamentary

Affairs, Dr Evans Aggrey-Darkoh, in his welcome address, had pointed out that for Ghana’s democracy to be fully consolidated, high level of education by the media is imperative.

“We would expect the Media Commission, a regulatory body of the state as far as media practice is concern to continue to insist that standards are maintained and those who decide to undermine the profession and pursue other parochial interest at the expense of the public good, in words of Jean Jacques Rousseau, are forced to be free.

Part of the mandate of our Ministry is to support the operations of Independent Governance Institutions to function effectively hence this collaboration with the National Media Commission. Our commitment is that through these collaborations, issues of common interest especially those that have the capacity to support the development of our democracy are brought to the fore and possibly put on the public agenda,” he noted.



Prof Audrey Gadzekpo, Dean of the School of Information and Communications Studies, University of Ghana



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Osei Kyei Mensah Bonsu

## Political & Presidential Affairs

# The 22 NPP/NDC boycotts and walk-outs since 1992

Source: Edwin Appiah  
([theghanareport.com](http://theghanareport.com))

The Minority in Parliament, the National Democratic Congress, has sensationally boycotted the President's final State of the Nation Address, citing issues with plans to introduce a new voter's register.

The move created a buzz on social media, with several NPP MPs asking the NDC to apologise. The NDC insisted boycotts are part of democratic tools of protest.

TheGhanaReport.com goes back into history to chronicle the times when the NDC and NPP have found reasons to boycott, stage a walk-out or failed to show up at expected public events, functions or programmes, or simply left their seats in Parliament vacant.

Theghanareport.com does not claim the list is exhaustive.

**August 2003:** The NDC boycotted the debate on the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Bill. The NDC accused the government of deceiving Ghanaians. The party said the government was in haste to pass the Bill because of pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to fulfil the agreement it has reached with the Fund to include add a five per cent increase in the VAT in the 2003 budget.

**On 23 February 2005:** The NDC Minority in Parliament staged a walk-out in protest at the motion for a bill that seeks to impose taxes on petroleum products. The Customs and Excise (Petroleum Taxes and Petroleum-related levies) Bill was described by the Minority as illegality since, when passed, it would have a retroactive effect. The Minority argued it was an attempt to regularise the illegal collection of the petroleum tax since the hike in the prices of petroleum products on 18

**February 2006:** The NDC Minority announced an indefinite boycott of Parliament over the Representa-

tion of the People (Amendment) Bill. The boycott was over the "wanton and flagrant disrespect for Minority rights" and their opposition to the bill.

**On February 19, 2010,** the NPP Minority in Parliament boycotted proceedings in the House in protest against the arrest of Nana Darkwa, a communication officer of the party, while taking part in a morning show programme of an Accra radio station. "The Minority has decided not to participate in the proceedings of the House until further notice", Mr Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, the Minority Leader, told the Speaker, Justice Adeline Bamford Addo.

**In August 2010:** The NPP Minority in Parliament, save PC Appiah Ofori, who was the MP for Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa, staged a walk-out on the debate over the controversial STX Korean housing deal, after a prolonged sitting. The Minority contended that the NDC Majority had betrayed a trust they had in them after an initial agreement, in caucus, that the debate should be postponed for a week more, for more diligent work to be done on the agreements.

**In November 2013,** the NPP Minority in Parliament led by its Leader, Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, walked out on proceedings when a 2.5% increase in VAT was laid for approval.

**In January 2013,** NPP MPs, who were then the Minority, boycotted the State of the Nation Address delivered by the then President John Dramani Mahama. Their action was in line with their position not to engage in any activity that would appear to give legitimacy to Mr Mahama's presidency until the Supreme Court ruled on the petition brought before it, which was then challenging the results of the 2012 presidential election.

**In May 2014,** the opposition NPP boycotted the National Economic Forum, popularly known as the Senchi Forum, aimed at achieving consensus on policies, strategies and measures to accelerate Ghana's transition from a lower-middle-

income nation to an upper-middle-income economy.

**In November 2014,** the NPP Minority in Parliament staged a walkout from Parliament, while deliberations were ongoing on the controversial 17.5% Special Petroleum Tax. The Finance Minister, Seth Terkper, submitted the bill to Parliament after presenting the 2015 budget statement and requested for Parliamentary approval. But the Minority indicated it would not contribute to a bill that would impose hardships on Ghanaians.

**On February 18, 2015:** A majority of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) Parliamentarians boycotted sitting and joined the 'won gbo' demonstration. The party's 2016 Presidential candidate, Nana Akufo Addo, led the demonstration, with support from other NPP stalwarts; Dr Mahamadu Bawumia, Kwabena Agyepong, Alan Kyeremanten, Fred Oware, among others.

### NDC record of boycotts and walk-outs

**On August 1, 2017,** the NDC Minority in parliament staged a walk-out during deliberations on the controversial \$510 million AMERI power deal. The walkout followed concerns raised by Minority MPs that they were being gagged and prevented from making contributions on the floor. The Majority caucus 'booed', shooed and chanted 'away, away, away' as the NDC MPs filed out of the chamber in anger and frustration.

**October 2017:** The NDC Minority in Parliament boycotted Mines and Energy Committee meeting in Parliament considering a \$510 million AMERI deal which government said was "over-priced". Explaining their absence, Chairman of the Committee, Emmanuel Gyamfi, said the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Parliamentarians do not want to be associated with the decision to demand a \$150 million refund.

**On March 24, 2018,** the NDC Minority in Parliament staged a walkout from Parliament over the Ghana-US defence cooperation agreement before the House. The

joint-committee on Defence and Interior Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs of Parliament gave it a green light. This is despite massive public protest against the deal which many, including the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), described as "dangerous" and a sale of Ghana's sovereignty.

**June 2018:** The NDC Minority in Parliament announced a boycott of the registration exercise at Parliament for national ID cards, citing legal, procurement and cost concerns. In a statement, the Minority Leader and Tamale South MP, Haruna Iddrisu, said the National Identification Authority (NIA) had not been honest with the Ghanaians over the cost of the project with two figures – \$1.4billion and \$293 million, – according to reports.

**August 22, 2018,** The opposition NDC failed to attend an Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) meeting organised by the Electoral Commission. The NDC said it felt slighted by their late invitation, thus their boycott.

**On November 16, 2018,** the NDC Minority in Parliament boycotted proceedings in the chamber, accusing the Speaker of bias. The Opposition MPs said the Speaker Prof Mike Oquaye had time without number, been disrespectful to Minority members. The NDC MPs did not hesitate to register their protest during a debate on the proposed creation of new regions. According to them, the Speaker once again failed to acknowledge their leaders anytime they rose on the floor to put their arguments across.

**On January 31, 2019,** the opposition NDC pulled out of the Ayawaso by-elections. The National Chairman of the NDC, Samuel Ofose

*Continued On Page 13*



Hon. Haruna Iddrisu is currently the Minority Leader in Parliament

# Transparency & Parliamentary Openness

## CDD Champions The Formation Of West African PMOs Network

Benjamin Opoku Aryeh

Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs) have met in Accra to discuss the formation of a West Africa PMOs Network with the sole aim of working with West African Parliaments to make them more responsive to the needs of the citizenry.

The inception meeting was part of an ongoing project being implemented by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) with funding from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to build and develop the capacities of CSOs to enhance their engagement with parliaments in the West Africa sub-region.

The project is expected to provide a platform for PMOs to discuss how to strategize to enhance their engagements with parliaments in West Africa to make the legislature more transparent, responsive, accountable and open to citizens.

Civil society interaction and engagement with Parliament is very

critical and remains core to enhancing Parliament's ability to effectively fulfill its role of oversight, representation and legislation, and enhancing citizens' active participation in the lawmaking process.

The CSOs that attended the meeting included the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica), Odekro, Penplusbytes, Africa Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), STAR- Ghana and the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII).

The project seeks to strengthen West Africa and Ghana based PMOs through the sharing of experiences and best practices among

them on how to effectively engaged with parliaments in their respective countries. The proposed interventions will seek to build capacity of PMOs, set up a network of PMOs for the West African sub-region, and step it down to a Ghana-based network of PMOs.

The PMO networks will advocate for the adoption of the Declaration on Parliamentary Openness, advocate for inclusive social policies and programs that will affect the lives of marginalized groups. The West African network of PMOs will further advocate for strong, open parliaments that embody citizens' voices, especially marginalized groups, by enhancing their capacity to demand inclusive policies, transparency, responsiveness and accountability.

The project intends to form partnerships with marginalized groups, such as Persons with Disability, Persons living with HIV/AIDs, youth and women, for their interests to be represented through these networks of PMOs.

Through the West African PMO network, the project will seek to engage the Parliament of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on how they can collaborate to enhance the work of the respective parliaments, strengthen relationship between PMOs and the ECOWAS Parliament, and popularize the Declaration of Parliamentary Openness among the ECOWAS leadership and member parliaments.



The CSOs that attended the meeting included the Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica), Odekro, Penplusbytes, Africa Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA) Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), STAR- Ghana and the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII)



## Developing A Framework Towards The Enactment Of Private Members' Bills In Ghana

Continued From Page 6

at enabling backbenchers to also initiate legislation

### 2. CONSULTATION WITH THE LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING AND PREPARATION OF A DRAFT BILL

- The promoter of the bill with then take proposals and its purpose as mentioned earlier to the legislative drafting division of Parliament for a detailed discussion and consultation with the drafter.
- The discussion with the drafter should deal with the following;
  - the Constitutionality of the proposals,
  - whether an existing enactment adequately takes care of the issue,
  - whether an amendment

to an existing enactment would do,

- whether the proposal could be effectively dealt with by subsidiary legislation,
- whether the proposal could only be effected through a completely new bill.

After these constitution, where there is satisfactory conclusion, the legislative drafter will prepare the draft of the relevant bill for the consideration of the member. Here we may consider submitting the bill in draft to the civil society group that proposed it (where applicable), for comments.

- When a draft is eventually produced to the satisfaction of all concerned, particularly, the private member responsible for initiating the bill, it is suggested that the drafter should prepare the

Explanatory Memorandum that must accompany all bills with the name of the private Member at the end but not signed.

### 3. REFERENCE TO THE RT. HON SPEAKER AND APPROVAL OF THE RT. HON. SPEAKER IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOUSE; PRINTING AND GAZETTING

- The promoter of the bill should then arrange with the office of the Clerk to submit copies of the draft to the Rt. Hon. Speaker and the Leadership of the House asking in a formal letter for the approval of the Rt. Hon Speaker to have the bill printed for laying before the House.
- If and when approval is given, the Rt. Hon Speaker will then authorise the printing of the bill; the Explanatory Memorandum that goes

with the bill should then be signed and dated by the MP responsible ready for printing. After that, the printed bill will be gazetted for the statutory 14-day period.

### 4. PASSAGE OF THE BILL AND PRESIDENTIAL ASSENT

- From here forward, the bill is treated in the same way as a bill from the Executive. The MP responsible pilots it through all its stages in the House. Once it is passed the President signs it just the same as all bills enacted by Parliament.

A word of caution- if a member intends to initiate a private members bill and have it accepted, the member should;

- Avoid controversial topics that could or might generate dissention.
- Avoid political topics on

which there is not likely to be agreement,

- Go for topics that would appeal to both sides of the House, and
  - Lobbing of other members could be considerably helpful
- It is recommended that seeking to make an amendment to an existing law to make it work better, given changes in society, could prove a gold mine for private members' bill's.

It is also recommended that a backbencher who succeeds in having a law put on the Statue Book of the nation should be given a specified number of the enacted law free of charge.

I thank you.

SABINA OFORI-BOATENG  
(Mrs.)

## Parliamentary Affairs

# Delay in Ghana's e-Parliament Project

*Continued From Page 3*

promulgation of the new Standing Orders by Parliament, all Parliamentary Committee sittings are expected to go live at the same time. This will require the services of Information Technology personnel to handle the processes.

In addition to that, the Hansard Department of Parliament, the Library Department, the Clerk's Office, the Offices of the Speaker and his deputies, as well as the offices of the Leadership and MPs all need to have dedicated IT staff who will facilitate the integration of these offices into the system in order to ensure the effective integration of every aspect of Parliament into the e-Parliament system.

We reckon in this regard that, not only is the Parliamentary support staff inadequate in number in the face of the share volume of work to be done with the full rollout of the system, but some of them are not equipped with the right skill sets and technological expertise to implement the project successfully.

## Change Adaptability

All these measures being taken to modernise the workings of Parliament will not be beneficial to the nation if MPs who are supposed to be at the center of the implementation of the project do not show the needed interest in it.

Information we picked indicated that some MPs were reluctant to subject themselves to the training programme to help them understand and use the system. According to our sources, some

of them consider the new system to be too much of a bother since they are not technologically inclined because the usual excuse of a generational gap.

We are aware that the Parliament of Ghana is currently taking its Members through a training programme in readiness for the rollout of the e-Parliament system, but we are also privy to the fact that some MPs are not availing themselves to take full advantage of the training programme.

All the above mentioned challenges among others, we have learnt, have been stalling the smooth and quick rollout of the e-Parliament project.

## A look at the main features of the e-Parliament System

The e-Parliament platform, which was designed by Scytl in joint venture with Josanti, has the objective of looking at how Parliament primarily fit into the electronic governance structure. The consultant decided to look at what was available in order to adapt the new programme to it.

There are two components of the project which are Session Management and Electronic platform. The Session Management has to do with the management of the proceedings in the Chamber itself. These include the control of MPs microphones from the desk of the Speaker to allow for contributions on the Floor of the House, as well as enable electronic voting.

These features will allow the Speaker to exercise proper control and discipline in the House during debates, as he can

open and shut the microphone of an MP to make a contribution when the MP prompts him through the console on the desk of each MP and allot a specific time for their contribution.

## Electronic-Platform

This is an electronic platform where all the interactions between MPs, the leadership, the Speaker and the institution of Parliament are managed. It will be mainly transmitted and accessed through an electronic device in the make of a notebook which we understand will be distributed to each MP.

Through the device, MPs will be able to have access to the Floor of the House both in and outside the precincts of Parliament through a unique software known as Virtual Private Network (VPN). All the materials and timetable needed for the day-to-day activities and entire Sessions of Parliament will be uploaded on the platform which will be accessible to MPs at all times wherever they are, both home and abroad. For example, the daily Order Paper, the Hansard among other parliamentary journals will come in handy to MPs electronically.

These platform also aides in instantaneous development and correction of materials by the House, which will provide MPs the opportunity to immediately go through and make their corrections before it is read on the Floor of Parliament for corrections.

## Media and Public gallery

It is not yet clear how the accredited media personnel who reports from Parliament are going to get access to the documents they needs for their reports.

Members of the Parliamentary Press Corps and a section of the general public who visit parliament to observe proceedings as well as Civil Society Organizations and researchers may need to have access to the Order Paper for instance or Committee reports and statements. It appears that the media and the public will continue to use the printed versions of the materials until there is a clear way for the platform to be accessed by outsiders.

## Benefits

The benefits of this system include the elimination of the usage of paper; speeding up the Parliamentary process; enhance storage and readily making reading materials available to MPs and other interested parties within the Parliamentary governance structure.

With the Electronic platform, there would no longer be the need for the printing of Order paper, Votes and Proceedings, Committee reports and even the Hansard of Parliament. All these information would be uploaded electronically unto the platform almost seamlessly.

This will then speed up the parliamentary process and enhance the efficiency and time management in handling the business on the House. It will also make archiving of Parliamentary proceedings straight forward and readily available for reference just at the click of a button.

*This report is a collaborative work between Africa News Radio and Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica).*

# The 22 NPP/NDC boycotts and walk-outs since 1992

*Continued From Page 11*

Ampofo, said the party withdrew from the elections for security reasons.

**February 2019:** The Minority NDC said it will not cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry probing the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election violence. The Minority in a statement said it "would not be part of any scheme to cover up or create immunity for the perpetra-

tors." It would later make a U-turn.

**February 6, 2019:** The NDC MPs, led by the Minority Chief Whip, Mohammed Mubarak Muntaka, walked out of the chamber of Parliament before the new Ayawaso West Wuogon MP, Lydia Alhassan, was sworn into office. The Minority members, clad in black, displayed placards with the inscription "Bloody Widow" before walking out of the august house.

**On February 28, 2019,** the Minority National Democratic Congress, (NDC) in Parliament led by the Member of Parliament for Tamale South, Haruna Iddrisu, boycotted the second reading of the controversial Public Holiday (Amendment) Bill and other issues related to the Bill before Parliament. According to the Minority, the Bill was an attempt to change the long-held history of Ghana with the view that, globally, Dr Kwame Nkrumah was the founder of Ghana, hence

their decision to walk out, when the Bill was being debated.

**On April 9, 2019,** the Minority National Democratic Congress (NDC) 'boycotted' a commemorative statement made by the NPP MP for Ayawaso West Wuogon, Lydia Syram Alhassan, on World Health Day.

**In February 2020:** NDC boycotted signing of road map to end vigilantism.



# Congratulations

**MRS. LINDA OFORI-KWAFO**  
Executive Director, Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII)

We congratulate you on your appointment as a member of the  
Board of Transparency International.

PNAfrica, a partner to Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), is proud of you as the first  
African Woman to have been voted onto the Board.

We are also confident that your endeavours will merit the esteem of Transparency  
International and we wish you the very best in the global fight against corruption  
and the fight here in Ghana.

# IPU Publishes a Guide to the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments

By Aimee Lewis, CNN

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has just published a document titled Putting parliamentary self-development into practice: A Guide to the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments. As the global organization of national parliaments, one of the IPU's core functions is to strengthen parliaments.

The Common Principles set out a basis for support to parliaments by providing a development framework for the work of parliaments, support bodies and practitioners. The Principles have been widely accepted: they have been endorsed by 135 national parliaments, 7 parliamentary assemblies and 19 partner organizations worldwide.

The Principles are based on the premise that every parliament is unique and has different needs. The individual parliament is best placed to understand these needs. Partnerships with other organizations, such as the IPU, other parliaments and international organizations, can help to build its capacity.



Myanmar MPs engage with citizens. © Saw Bwe Doe Aye

The new Guide to the Principles provides practical suggestions to help parliaments devise their own, locally appropriate development programme. Topics covered include identifying and managing change, and how to work with external development partners. Rather than being prescriptive, the Guide uses a “show, don't

tell” structure, highlighting good practices that parliaments could adapt for their own situation.

The Guide is primarily intended for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, but also for people engaged in parliamentary development.

## Serbia steps up efforts for gender parity

The Serbian Parliament has announced an amendment to its electoral laws with a new minimum quota of 40 per cent of candidates on electoral lists for parliamentary and local elections from the less-represented gender. The Parliament adopted amend-

ments to two laws—the Law on the election of Members of Parliament and the Law on local elections—that aim to increase the representation of women in politics.

boost efforts towards greater gender equality in political representation.

The IPU 141st Assembly took place in Belgrade in October 2019 in partnership with the Serbian Parliament.

Many deliberations, including the IPU Forum for Women Parliamentarians, focused on the importance of a conducive legal framework for gender equality.

The IPU has been working to increase the number of women MPs worldwide since the 1970s.

In March, the IPU will publish its annual analysis of women's representation in politics.



The Forum of Women Parliamentarians at the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia. © IPU





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