



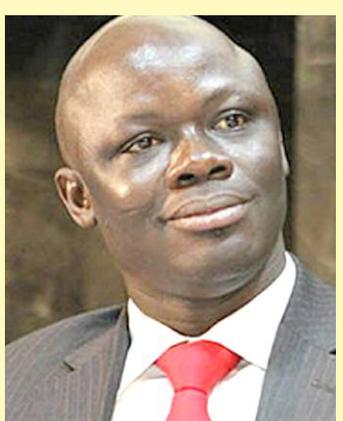
CSPOG Calls For Collective Efforts

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Chairman of Civil Society Platform on Oil and Ghana (CSPOG), Dr. Steven Manteaw

To Fight Corruption In Extractive Sector



Samson Lardy Anyenini

Top lawmakers at GETFund for constitution studies

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- Samson's Take



Women protest in front of the Swiss Parliament during a nationwide women's strike for gender equality. © Stefan Wermuth/AFP

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25 years after Beijing, IPU analysis shows that gender parity is possible



IT'S OUR PARLIAMENT

Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

LAST WEEK IN PARLIAMENT

By: Benjamin Opoku Aryeh

The week after Members of Parliament (MPs) from the Majority Caucus took turns to debate the President's message on the State of the Nation. The Minority in Parliament had taken the decision to abstain from taking part in the debate which ended on Tuesday, 3 March, after the Majority Leader and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu concluded the debate. The Minister of Health, Mr. Kwaku Agyeman-Manu appeared before the House to brief MPs on the country's preparedness and response to any potential outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

Bills

The Narcotics Control Commission Bill, 2019 was taking through the Consideration stage on the Floor, while the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was taken for second reading on the Floor of Parliament.

Committee sittings

Among the committee sittings were the Committee on Mines and Technology that met to consider the 2019 Operation and Financial Performance and Proposed Work plan for the 2020 Financial Year of Tema Oil Refinery (TOR); to consider the 2019 Operation and Financial Performance and Proposed Work plan for the 2020 Financial Year of GOIL; and also to consider the 2019 Operation and Financial Performance and Proposed Workplan for the 2020 Financial Year of the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (PURC).

The Business Committee met and determined business of the House for the Seventh Week ending Friday, 13th March, 2020.

Papers presented

A number of papers were laid on the floor during the week. The Chairman of the Finance Committee laid the committee's Report of on the Request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL Levy, ECOWAS Levy, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy and other taxes amounting to Twenty-Five Million, One Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand, Nine

Hundred and Eighty-Nine Ghana Cedis and Twenty-Seven Pesewas (GH¢25,144,989.27) on vehicles to be procured for the Inter-City STC Company Limited; Report on the Request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL Levy, ECOWAS Levy, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy and other taxes amounting to Seven Hundred and Eight Thousand, Six Hundred and Fifty-Two Ghana Cedis and Ninety-Two Pesewas (GH¢708,652.92) on vehicles to be procured for the Ministry of Regional Reorganisation and Development; and a Report on the Request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL Levy, ECOWAS Levy, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy and other taxes amounting to Fourteen Million, Seven Hundred and Eighty-Five Thousand, Six Hundred and Fifty-Eight Ghana Cedis and Seventy-Seven Pesewas (GH¢14,785,658.77) on vehicles to be procured for the Metro Mass Transit Limited

The Chairman again laid a Report of the Finance Committee on the Request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL Levy, ECOWAS Levy, EXIM Levy, Special Import Levy, AU Levy and other taxes amounting to Eight Hundred and Forty-One Thousand, Six Hundred and Forty-Five Ghana Cedis and Twenty Pesewas (GH¢841,645.20) on weapons donated to the Ghana Immigration Service.

The Majority Leader and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, laid the Local Government (Jasikan District Assembly) (Establishment) Instrument, 2020 which was referred by the Speaker of Parliament to the Subsidiary Legislation Committee for consideration and report.

The Majority Leader again laid a Report of the Auditor-General on the Statement of Foreign Exchange Receipts and Payments of the Bank of Ghana for the half year ended 30th June 2019; the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General on Preparedness and Response of Veterinary Services Directorate to Animal

The Minister of Health, Mr. Kwaku Agyeman-Manu appeared before the House to brief MPs on the country's preparedness and response to any potential outbreak of the novel coronavirus.

Diseases Outbreaks in Ghana; the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General on Selected Road Works in Ghana—(1) Tetteh Quarshie to Madina Road; (2) Ayamfuri to New Obuase Road; and (3) Bolgatanga to Bawku to Polimakom Road; Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General on Selected Road Works in Ghana—(1) East Legon to Spintex Road Underpass; (2) Eastern Corridor Road Project, Lots 5 & 6; and (3) The Oil and Gas Enclave Roads; and the Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General on the Administration of Scholarships by GETFund.

The Speaker referred all the reports to the Public Accounts Committee for consideration and report.

Questions

Dr. (Mrs.) Bernice Adiku Heloo (Hohoe) asked the Minister for

Local Government and Rural Development the status of Santrokofi, Akpafu, Lolobi and Likpe Traditional Areas with regards to Ghana's administrative sub-divisions. The Minister answered that steps have been taken to develop new Legislative Instruments (L.Is) for both Jasikan District Assembly and the Hohoe Municipal Assembly to reflect the current status of the two Assemblies.

A second question came from the Hon. Kwame Govers Agbodza to the Minister for Special Development Initiatives on how much of the One Million Dollars per Constituency has been disbursed in Adaklu so far. The Minister answered that the Adaklu Constituency has been allocated some projects under the initiative within the constituency.

The Hon. Andrew Dari Chiwitey (Sawla/Tuna/Kalba) asked the Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources what urgent steps are being taken to clear Accra of filth? In her answer the Minister mentioned that her Ministry is undertaking several projects to ensure timely collection of waste, revision of Sanitation Byelaws, and educate the public to maintain clean environment within the City.

Statements

The Hon. Minister responsible for Health, Mr. Kwaku Agyeman-Manu, made a statement in which he apprised the House on the country's preparedness and response to any potential outbreak of the novel coronavirus which the World Health Organisation on the 30th of January, 2020 declared as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

The Week Ahead

Ten Ministers of State are expected to appear before the House to answer some questions. The proposed formulas for the distribution of the District Assemblies' Common Fund, the disbursement of the National Health Insurance Fund for the year 2020, and for the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) are expected to be presented in Parliament during the week.



Editorial

TIME TO RETHINK PARLIAMENT-MEDIA RELATIONS

For about two decades, the Parliament of Ghana has sought to put in place measures to better manage its information flow to the general public through the media. This gave birth to the establishment of the Public Affairs Directorate of the Parliamentary Service.

With a Parliamentary Press Corp (PPC) that has been in existence since the 90s, Parliament has enjoyed a pronounced working relationship with the media. Drawing its membership from all major media houses in Ghana, the PPC has carved a niche for itself as a wing of the inky fraternity that has come to stay.

Considering the recent declarations on the floor of Parliament by the Rt. Hon. Speaker, Prof. Aaron Mike Oquaye, which received significant backlash from the rank and file of the Ghanaian society (rightly so), we at the *Parliamentary Newspaper* believe it is time for Parliament to take a second look at its relationship with the PPC, and to consider ways of better improving that relationship for mutual benefit.

It is not enough for the PPC to be seen as a mere appendage of the Public Affairs Directorate, and for this body of journalists to be considered as under the direction and authority of the handlers of Parliament's public relations. It is also not enough for the PPC itself to neglect putting in place intuitional structures that will make it win the respect and admiration of the Parliamentary Service.

Examples abound globally on how Parliament's that take media relations seriously, have worked with their fourth estates of the realm to agree on the parameters of engagement, and we in Ghana can learn from these. We believe it is about time the Public Affairs Directorate, the PPC, notable parliamentary monitoring civil society organisations and media rights campaigners work together to ensure that we put in place the right systems to reap the full benefits of parliament-media relations.

If Parliamentary information truly belong to the people, then it goes without saying that the conveyers of these information must be given their proper place in the parliamentary space of our Country.

Top lawmakers at GETFund for constitution studies - Samson's Take

A favourite English jurist, Lord Denning cautions that "silence is not an option when things are ill done." It shouldn't be difficult to tell Speaker of Parliament that it was a serious gaffe threatening to withdraw accreditation if journalists did not obey his directives on how they should conduct their profession in the house. It is equally easy to tell managers of GETFund that they do not have power to grant any form of scholarship, and I do this next week. I shall point to the plain law and the expressio unius est exclusio alterius rule manifest in it, prohibiting GETFund from dealing with scholarships.

The Speaker and leaders of the house who supported him are terribly wrong! Journalists do not go to the legislative assembly at his pleasure or as his "guests" as he told them and the world last month. Those helping him project this dangerous unconstitutionality must stop, or get GETFund scholarship for just a minute's lecture at GJA or by phone call to Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo, even though one of her first year students can handle this job. Citizens, by articles 21 and 162, have both constitutional and fundamental human rights to information and to know through the media what their elected representatives do, and what goes on in that house. Now, to say fundamental human right is to say birthright. The Constitution only guarantees these rights, it does not give them. The preamble of the Constitution talks about "natural" and "inalienable rights" - that's

exactly what they are! Again, the preamble notes and it is re-emphasised in article 1 that "[sovereignty ... resides in the people]" and that it is in their "name and for [their] welfare [that] the powers of Government are to be exercised".

They elect the MPs, give them offices, homes, pay them, buy them cars, fuel them and those who care to, drive to that place to work. Then article 162 while prohibiting censorship and any attempt to direct editorial discretion, mandates, in a compelling fashion, that the media must

Citizens, by articles 21 and 162, have both constitutional and fundamental human rights to information and to know through the media what their elected representatives do, and what goes on in that house.

hold them (the MPs and Parliament) responsible and accountable to the people.

First, never forget the people put you MPs in Parliament. The way to monitor how you exercise the power they have given you is through the media, without which, a free media, there can be no democracy. Mr. Speaker, let them make their own editorial decisions covering opposition MPs. You, Professor of political science, know far better than I do, that there is no meaning to this democracy without the opposition.

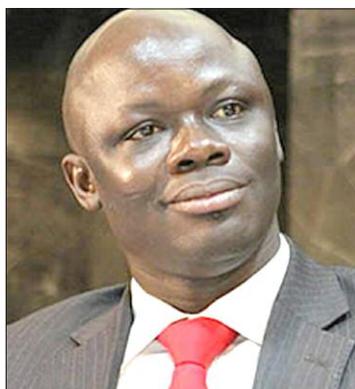
Some of your MPs don't go to

that house and that's why it has had difficulty raising the quorum of only 92 of the 275 members to conduct business. Speaker after Speaker has wept and yelled without results. Yes, even budget debates have been postponed because of this. June 12, 2015 only 83 MPs were in the house. In 2017, 27 MP-ministers and 21 MP-deputy ministers absented themselves more than 15 times during some 80 sittings, and they do so without permission. It is scandalous to find that opposition MPs are equally guilty. The Constitution in article 97 and Order 16 of the Standing Orders of Parliament prohibit this conduct. No Speaker has ever declared vacant the seat of an offending MP despite being empowered to, and to discipline through the Privileges Committee for sanctions like a reprimand, admonition, suspension and suspension of salary. Prof. Kwaku Asare sued over this conduct and nothing has happened. Mr. Speaker, you have power over MPs not journalists. If MPs are arranging media interviews while work is going on in the chamber and you don't like that, you know what to do.

The last thing we should ever encourage is any act that chips away the independence of a free vibrant media.

In 2011, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights reminded us that "[t]oo many nations around the world know that, like democracy, freedom of the media and freedom of speech do not come naturally, and cannot be taken for granted. They must be constantly justified, reaffirmed and strengthened." In The Law And The Media In Ghana, Prof. Henrietta Mensah-Bonsu finds it critical to stress that "[t]he need to uphold the freedom of speech and expression is considered fundamental to democratic governance and the operations of a democratic society. Such protection ensures the nurturing and growth of a market in ideas which guarantees the free flow of information from the governors to the governed and vice versa."

The writer, Samson Lardy ANYENINI, is a private legal practitioner, broadcast journalist and right to information activist.



Samson Lardy Anyenini

Transparency & Parliamentary Openness

CSPOG Calls For Collective Efforts To Fight Corruption In Extractive Sector



Chairman of Civil Society Platform on Oil and Ghana (CSPOG), Dr. Steven Manteaw

Emmanuella Dadugblor

The Chairman of Civil Society Platform on Oil and Ghana (CSPOG), Dr. Steven Manteaw has called for a united front among the Ghanaian public to fight against corruption in the extractive industry. According to him, this can only be achieved if power players open up on issues and make available accurate data on the happenings in the sector.

Speaking at the media campaign launch against the menace, Dr Manteaw said parliamentarians are but a fraction of the entire population of the country therefore their decisions on behalf of the entire populace should be embraced by everyone during implementation. "We are about 30million Ghanaians and because all cannot go to Parliament, we elect people to go and take decisions on our behalf. This is the principle of the Principal Agent Relationship." He added that since this does not happen, it tends to weaken the democratic accountability to a very large extent, which in turn affects the ability to make a transition from trans-

parency to accountability.

Dr. Manteaw also drew attention to excessive greed in individuals especially the youth as the cause of corruption in the country which he says can be controlled, if individuals control their greed. He said in an attempt to fight the menace, the public always pays much attention to "white-colour corruption" which include bribery, influence peddling especially in the financial sector, Police Service and other public institutions ignoring the types that go on in the extractive sector. "But the kinds of corruption, we are talking about here are the 'big ticket ones'. 1% marker on one oil contract could be amounting to about \$100,000 and so if you pay your attention to the GHc1, GHc2 that the Policemen collecting or the 'Sheep' and 'Goats', the Judges are 'supposed' to be collecting, we will be losing so much money which could actually have gone to finance our national development," he revealed.

Dr. Manteaw intimated that it has become necessary for Ghanaians to look beyond these "white colour corruption" and ensure that it pays attention to the bigger corruption that often gets ignored.

"Individuals, who negotiate resource contracts on behalf of the country, must identify that as citizens, they owe us clarifications for what they do with the power we have entrusted in them, to do so and when we question their engagements, they must again recognize that we do so because we are the owners on whose behalf these contracts were negotiated."

The CSPOG boss also indicated his outfit's preparedness to compile all revelations of corruption in various reports to get to the root cause of corruption in the country as well as find a solution to it. "We have to look at the policy legislative institutional gaps that are exploited to perpetrate these acts of corruption in the sector and pull these together to one document could serve as a guide for any future policy legislative and institutional reforms. But this reforms we know can come about only as a result of citizen's advocacy and demand. That is why we are bringing this issue in our report," he

intimated.

He also called for more openness from individuals who negotiate contracts and agreements on behalf of the country regarding the contracts they sign.

"Individuals, who negotiate resource contracts on behalf of the country, must identify that as citizens, they owe us clarifications for what they do with the power we have entrusted in them, to do so and when we question their engagements, they must again recognize that we do so because we are the owners on whose behalf these contracts were negotiated."

Making referencing to the words of Bob Marley, Dr. Manteaw drew attention to the plight of citizens that in spite of the abundant mineral resources available, Ghanaians are still undeveloped. He pointed out the country's inability to leverage on its natural resources and blamed this on corruption.

Economist and Member of CSPOG, Samuel Bekoe in a presentation on the typologies and nature of corruption risks in Ghana's extractive sector, noted that the weaknesses in Ghana's anti-corruption legal framework bars government from effectively prosecuting those found culpable of corruption in the sector. "Our main objective is how to win our Civil Society Platform and other stakeholder campaigns against some of these findings and also advocate for the loopholes, vulnerability of the sector has to be reduced and the risk of also being reduced," he indicated.

Mr. Bekoe advised citizens to fight for the next generation by fighting against ministerial discretion and political interference. He added that CSPOG will be reviewing suggestions and work with partners in the anti-corruption fight to fashion out a sector specific initiative. He also noted that CSPOG will be pushing for legislative and institutional reforms to remove the identical potential enablers of corruption in the sector.

News Feature

Celebrating IMANI at 16

By: Franklin Cudjoe

Created 16 years ago on March 9, 2014, the original name was IMANI Centre for Humane Education. I changed it to IMANI Centre for Policy & Education for two reasons: First, the abbreviation for the first name was CHE, phonetically synonymous with the celebrated communist, Che Guevara (I and IMANI aren't communist!). The second and perhaps the more pressing reason was after I received many enquiries from Americans, especially on whether IMANI was a branch of the Humane Society, an animal welfare body in the USA.

IMANI is a Swahili word for faith, from the Arabic word, IMAM (remember 70% of Swahili emanates from Arabic). I chose IMANI because I needed an African name that resonated with my aspirations and faith in Africa. By the way, do remember that by end 2005, IMANI had had so much global media foot print, thanks to Linda Whetstone, Julian Morris, Kendra Okonski, Jo Kwong, Brad Lips and Colleen Dyble, Nick Slepko, Alejandro Antonio Chafuen. Tom Palmer!

So on the 16th anniversary of IMANI, I'd walk you through some of the exciting moments in the formative years, 2004-2007. Later I will feature the contributions of Bright Simons, Kofi Bentil and Selorm Branttie.

Here are two....

1. 2005 saw Imani's profile on world centre stage with respectable presentations, campaigns and research work on four continents.

Ahead of the G8 summit, Imani's Director, Franklin Cudjoe, spoke at the Global Development Summit in the UK and challenged the flawed and dangerous premises of debt cancellation, doubling aid and protectionist policies.

Imani Director, Franklin Cudjoe, spoke on how the West should help Africa during two services at St. Dunstan's Anglican Church in Staplehurst, UK. Incidentally, Franklin met with the daughter of Sir Charles Noble Arden Clarke, the last governor of Ghana. She still has fond memories of how Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah used to pay them visits and how they were amazed at his about turn in ideas.

Franklin also made a presenta-

tion on trade, debt and aid to MBA students at Writtle University in the UK.

Imani carried this campaign throughout Europe, in Italy at the Instituto Bruno Leoni in July and with fellow Kenyan academic, June Akinyi Arunga, discussing African development issues at the 2005 World Freedom Summit in Germany. Imani later took part in a think tank panel discussion on practical ways to spread free ideas around the world.

In September 2005, Imani Director spoke on drug patents and access to essential drugs in Africa at the Nigerian think tank, Institute for Public Policy.

Imani took the campaign to the United States of America in October through November. Numerous presentations were made at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Washington Policy Center, the Discovery Institute, The Emerald City Rotary Club and the Garfield High School, all in Seattle.

Bill Gates Sr hosted Franklin Cudjoe who spoke on the foundation's global health initiatives and the need to pay attention to the DDT debate in Malaria prevention in Africa.

Franklin Cudjoe gave the keynote speech at the 2005 Bastiat Prize for Journalism in New York. The other speaker was Bill Emmot, Editor of the Economist Magazine.

Franklin's speech generated a debate over globalization with the President of Tanzania after the former's adapted speech was published by the Independent Institute. President Benjamin Mkapa personally wrote a rejoinder and Franklin rebutted. The debate can be read at www.independent.org.

Franklin spoke on Human Rights and Property Rights at the Atlas Economic Research Foundation in New York as well as gave a

toast to freedom at Atlas' 25th Anniversary Celebrations in New York. The other speakers were Anwar Ibrahim, former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Maat Laar, former Prime Minister of Estonia.

Franklin also spoke at the Americans for Tax Reform, a meeting of movers and shakers in Washington.

Finally, Imani teamed with the Freedom to Trade Coalition (IPN, Liberty Institute in India, The Evian Group, The Lion Rock Institute, Cato, the Fredriech Ebert Foundation) at the WTO meeting in Hong Kong to campaign against trade barriers. Imani interacted with African government delegates and the media which included, the BBC, Daily Telegraph (Hong Kong), The Standard (Hong Kong), Bloomberg News (HK), Apple Daily, Reuters, Caijing Magazine (China), Le Figaro, Sing Tao Newspaper, Fortune Newspaper (Addis Ababa) and Tanzanian Standard.

2. U.K House of Commons cites Imani Ghana in debate on corruption, aid and debt relief (June 16, 2006, House of Commons Debate Aid & Corruption, United Kingdom)

Imani Director, Franklin Cudjoe was cited in United Kingdom's House of Commons Parliamentary Debate on Corruption - A member of the House, Mr. Chope, asked, "Does my Hon. Friend accept that it cannot be that difficult to get hard data on the extent of corruption when Franklin Cudjoe, the Ghanaian Director of the Imani think tank, has asserted that \$4,700 is stolen by African Governments from their people every second?"

Read the entire Hansard (verbatim report) debate on <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/cm060616/debtext/60616-0533.htm>



Franklin Cudjoe is President of IMANI Africa

Water Resources, Works & Housing

Parliament Okays \$895 Million Dam Project at Pwalugu



The Pwalugu Multipurpose Dam is projected to transform the north economically

Emmanuella Dadugblor

Parliament has approved the contract agreement between the Ministry of Energy and Powerchina International Group Limited for the construction of a multipurpose Dam Project pegged

at over \$895 Million at Pwalugu. The three-in-one agreement will see the construction of a 60 MW hydropower dam, a 24,000-hectare irrigation scheme as well as a 50 MW solar power plant. This project is expected to help “store water for hydropower, the irrigation scheme downstream, as well as flood protection for people living in the White Volta Basin” according to the Finance Committee Report.

This project is in support of government's flagship planting for foods and jobs project and will create a reservoir with an elevation of 165m above sea level and will cover about 265km² area in six (6) districts in the Upper East and North East regions.

This project is in support of government's flagship planting for foods and jobs project and will create a reservoir with an elevation of 165m above sea level and will cover about 265km² area in six (6) districts in the Upper East and North East regions. The 24,000-hectare Irrigation component which will be implemented at Mamprusi will also reduce the environmental impact of power supply, and promote socio-economic development.

EPC/Turnkey Contract Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and Powerchina International Group Limited for an amount of Three Hundred and Sixty-Six Million, Eleven Thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety-One United States Dollars and Thirty-Eight Cents (US\$366,011,991.38) for the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) of a 50MW Hydro-Power Plant in Pwalugu EPC/Turnkey Contract Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Energy) and Powerchina International Group Limited for an amount of Fifty-Five Million, Three Hundred and Seventy-Nine Thousand, Eight Hundred and Eight United States Dollars and Sixty-Seven Cents (US\$55,379,808.67) for the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) of a SOMWac Solar Power Plant in Pwalugu EPC/Turnkey Contract Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Food and agriculture) and Powerchina International Group Limited for an amount of Four Hundred and Seventy-Four Million, Forty-Two Thousand, One Hundred and Forty-Two United States Dollars (US\$474,042,142.00) for the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) of a 24,000-Hectare Irrigation Scheme in Pwalugu. Objective of the Projects are to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country through an improved, efficient and cost-effective irrigated year-long agricultural production and hydropower generation.

Parliament Approves Loan Facility For Keta Water Supply System

Emmanuella Dadugblor

Residents in Keta and its environs can now heave a sigh of relief regarding the supply of water following the approval of a loan facility for the expansion and rehabilitation of the Keta Water supply system. The €97.184 million credit facility agreement between the Government of Ghana and the Deutsche Bank, supported by the Italian Export Credit Agency.

The project is aimed at reha-

bilitating the age old Keta Water supply system of Agordome-Sogakope which cannot meet the current water demand of about 190,000 people within its catchment area.

The credit facility is made up of a Buyer Credit facility amounting to €84,417,649.82 which has a tenure of 13 years, 10 years repayment period, three years grace period at an interest rate of six months Euribor benchmark + 2 percent per annum. The other component, a commercial facility of €12.766 million has a tenure of five years, four years repayment period, grace period of one year and

a-six month Euribor + 4.9percent per annum.

This rehabilitation project will see the construction of an intake facility with a capacity of 9.3 million gallons per day, construction of 7.7 million gallons conventional water treatment plant, construction of 62km transmission pipeline from Agordome to Keta via Anloga, the construction of a buster station and storage tanks.

Other aspects of the project include the rehabilitation and extension of the distribution network, approximately 80km of pipes varying from 100mm

to 450mm, the supply of 8,000 domestic metres and spare parts as well as the rehabilitation of existing water treatment plant to its installed capacity of 78,200 3/day.

The Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources caused an assessment of the Keta Water supply system. Recommendations from that exercise suggested the need for a major rehabilitation and expansion of works to be carried out.

This would include; rehabilitating the existing water system to its installed capacity and constructing new water systems to help expand pro-

duction of water to meet growing demand of the catchment area up to the years 2030 and beyond.

Information Minister and Member of Parliament (MP) for Ofoase-Ayirebi, Hon Kojo Oppong Nkrumah moved the motion on the floor of the House, which was seconded by Dr Mark Asibey-Yeboah, Chairman of the Finance Committee.

This water project is in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 which seeks to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Feature

How 'Natures Call' Hanged the Debate over the \$23 Million Tax Waiver for the Pullman Airport City Hotel

By Clement Akoloh

There was a stir in the atmosphere of Parliament in the afternoon of Tuesday, February 18, 2020 which led to a hold up of the matter under discussion in the request for a waiver of taxes to the tune of \$23,983,033 to subsidize the financing of a hotel project in Accra.

The Akufo Addo government was having a hard time with the Minority in seeking the approval of Parliament to grant this tax waiver to Platinum Properties Limited for the sourcing of materials, plants, machinery and equipment for the construction of the Pullman Accra Airport City Hotel and Serviced Apartments in one of Ghana's most iconic real estate developments situated at Plot 15, Airport city.

The debate on the Finance Committee's Report for the approval or otherwise of the request would be put on hold until further notice by Speaker Mike Oquaye following the alleged association of the name of the President to the ownership of the hotel during the heated moments of the debate on the Floor.

The Speaker deemed the allegation offensive and un-parliamentary, but before he could call for the withdrawal of the offensive claim, the offender, the MP for Yapei/Kusawgu, John Abdulai Jinapor had already exited the Chamber, leaving

the old Professor bemused and perhaps uncertain about which step to take next.

The whole scenario which played out on that day was as though it was a carefully rehearsed drama made for the Oscars. Though a showdown was expected between the two main political parties in Parliament at the debate, little did the media expect such a drama. The Minority NDC had already served notice not to support the move by the government to grant the tax waiver, but it was taken for granted.

Two weeks before this day, the Minority had held a mini-press conference to give a hint about the proposed request for a tax waiver for a private company for the construction of a hotel in Accra which they felt was improper. They spoke about how the tax payers' money was being syphoned to enrich the friends and families of the President and members of his government. That very afternoon when the motion for the report was supposed to be taken, the Mace which is the symbol of authority of the Institution of Parliament was still in an upright position, signifying the formal nature of the work in the House at the time.

The Chairman of the Committee on Finance, Dr. Mark Assibey-Yeboah, sprang up to his feet with leave of the Speaker to move the motion to present his Committee's report. He begun by giving the background to the project where

he canvased that, "the dual hospitality project was positioned to become Ghana's largest and most distinguished hotel facility."

He also informed the House about the ownership structure of the hotel facility where he said, "The project is being promoted by Platinum Properties Limited (PPL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) owned and controlled by Inter-Afrique Holdings Limited (IAH) and the Ghana Infrastructure Fund (GIIF)." The Committee's report in its conclusion, had already passed the company with a clean bill of health to justify its qualification for the tax waiver being requested for and had recommended to the House to adopt the report and approve of the request by resolution in accordance with the Article 174(2) of the 19192 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana.

The motion moved by the Chairman was seconded by the Minister for Information, Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, in his capacity as the Member of Parliament for the Ofoase/Ayirebi constituency. He further canvased a justification for the waiver and reiterated a point in the committee's report which alluded to the fact that similar tax waivers were doled out to some companies in the past by the previous government under the ticket of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the largest opposition group in Parliament, whose members were refusing to see any good in the move by government.

Messrs. Ghacem, Messrs. Dream Reality Ltd, Messrs. Garden City Mall Ltd, Messrs. Boston Investments Ltd, Messrs. Shoprite Ghana Pty Ltd, Messrs. Vincien Sugar Refinery Ghana Ltd, Messrs. Dzata Cement Ltd, Messrs. Ecobank Ghana Ltd, and Messrs. Ciments De L'Afrique Ghana Ltd were mentioned as beneficiaries of the strategic Investor Status and tax incentives in the year 2015.

Further, in the year 2016, Messrs. Wilmar Africa Limited, Messrs. West Hills Mall Limited, Messrs. Tang Palace Hotel Ltd, Messrs. Mabani Seven Company, Messrs. Sunon Asogli Power Project (Phase II), and Messrs. Quantum Power Ghana Gas Ltd were also said to

have benefited from similar treatments by this same group that are giving the President a hard time now.

However, the logic being put forward in putting out the names of other companies who may have benefited in similar manner in the past to justify an anomaly would seem a bit warped elsewhere but a measure very commonly used by political opponents in this part of the world to cow each other into submission whenever an argument arises. This time it seemed it was basically being deployed to silence the Minority.

It was now the turn of the Minority to advance their part of the argument and their opposition to the waiver of taxes even in the face of the committee's discovery that they were equally as guilty of the same offence they were busily complaining about. The first person to speak on behalf of the Minority was the MP for Yapei/Kusawgu, John Abdulai Jinapor.

He begun on a very punchy note by sparing no punches at all. He painted the government of President Akufo Addo as insensitive to the plight of the tax payer by dolling out a whopping amount of "134 million Ghana Cedis into a private venture" and they failed to do a proper investment appraisal of the project. It kind of summed up the Minority's point.

He now sought to dismantle the equalization theory which has been an old arsenal in the political game in Ghana before the inception of democracy and the theory of accountability.

"Mr. Speaker, the Chairman in page 8, clearly listed companies that have been granted tax waiver status. Shangrila was not granted a tax waiver status. And so to say that because Shangrila was granted strategic investor status it amounts to granting tax waiver status; it is not here, it is not there, it is not everywhere Mr. Speaker. Therefore, this attempt to use the tax payers 134 million Cedis to grant a tax status to Pullman fails the test of time Mr. Speaker."

He then went on unto the second



An artist impression of the Sky-Scrapper- Airport City-Pullman-hotel in Accra

Special Report



Promoting Competitiveness of the Cashew Value Chain

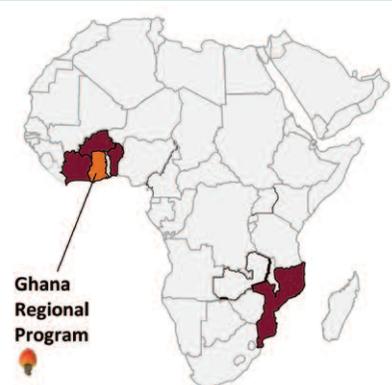
The Competitive Cashew Initiative (ComCashew)

The Competitive Cashew initiative (ComCashew), formerly known as the African Cashew initiative (ACi), presents a new and innovative model of broad-based multi-stakeholder

partnership in development cooperation. ComCashew is a private-public partnership project under the implementation of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

GmbH, with funding for its third phase from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In collaboration with private companies and public sector partners, significant impact

has been made for over 400,000 farmers and about 40 processing companies. Since its inception in 2009, around 440,000 new jobs have been created in the five project countries; Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Mozambique; 75 percent in production, 20 percent in trade and 5 percent in processing. They have increased their family income by over \$600 and thereby achieve a sustainable reduction in rural poverty. Ghana's agricultural sector currently employs about 45% of the country's labour force. Cashew production in Ghana is mostly carried out by smallholder farmers.



Actors Overview

Cashew contribution to GDP	196 Mio USD; 53% of the overall value of non traditional export of Ghana (overall 371 Mio USD)
No of cashew farmers	Approximately 75,000
No of Processors in country	13 (7 supported by ComCashew)
Cashew growing regions	Brong Ahafo (50+%), Ashanti, Volta, Upper West, Eastern, Northern, Central Regions
Matching Fund partners	OLAM, Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG)
Policy and Regulation	No tax No regulation Trading license required
Lead Ministry	Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Food and Agriculture
Regional Network	Consultative International Cashew Council (CICC), Research Network (REDAA)
NGOs active on Cashew Sector	Fair Match Support, Self Help Africa
Private Sector	African Cashew Alliance, CIAG

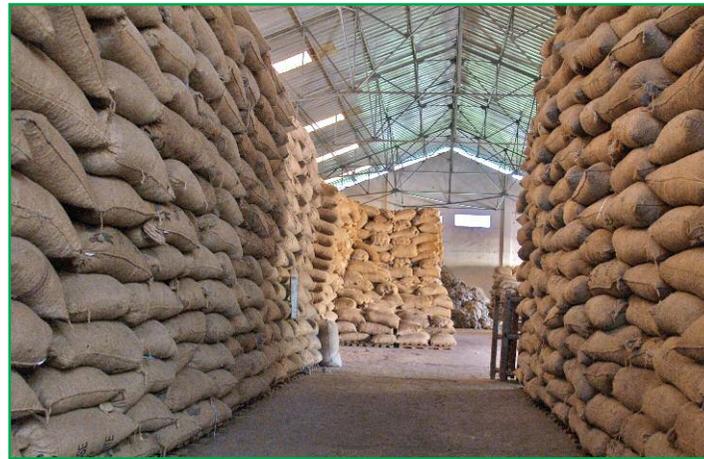
Facts and Figures

	2010	2012	2016	2017	2018
National production volume of RCN – estimate (metric tons)	27,000	40,000	75,000	75,000	110,000
National processing capacity – installed (metric tons)	6,600	29,000	65,000	65,000	45,750
National processing capacity – utilized (metric tons)	1,980	8,990	14,500	10,700	25,300
Productivity (kg/ha)	530 ¹	958 ¹	638 ²	600	750
Number of ComCashew trained farmers (cumulative)	10,785	37,609	40,409	40,409	40,800

¹ Only for project intervention area

² Total Ghana

Special Report



ACHIEVEMENTS

- Over **40,000** farmers received two and more trainings
- Over **46,500** jobs created in production
- **61** master trainers trained – 14 women
- **ATVET:** Development of 20 Curricula to be adopted by

COTVET

- **30,000** farmers directly linked to OLAM (**60 %** of RCN sourced)
- Over **10,000** ha new plantation cultivated with more **than 1 Mio** seedlings in 35 districts between 2018 and 2020 through MOFA DCS
- Capacity development of 125 grafters - 90 women, 60 AEA and

more than 20 private nursery operators

- Technical support to **14 processors** in access to finance, food safety, business development skills development, improvement in processing efficiency, branding
- Approximately **4,500** new Jobs created

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

ComCashew supports the development of a conducive business environment for all actors of the cashew value chain. Some activities currently ongoing in Ghana include:

- A trilateral cooperation between Ghana, Germany and Brazil on improved planting material development and cashew apple processing, estimated at €700,000
- Regional collaboration with Togo on improved planting material development and the establishment of cashew nurseries.
- Collection of data on production volumes from traders and Economic Case Study in collaboration with MOFA.

CASHEW GROWING DISTRICTS IN GHANA

CASHEW GROWING DISTRICTS IN GHANA

ASHANTI REGION	BONO REGION	BONO EAST REGION	EASTERN REGION	SAVANNAH REGION	NORTHERN REGION	NORTH EAST REGION	UPPER EAST REGION	UPPER WEST REGION	VOLTA REGION	OTI REGION
Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts	Districts
1 Asanti Akyem North	1 Asutifi North	1 Atebubu-Amantin	1 Kwahu Afram Plains North	1 Bole	1 Karaga	1 Bunkpurugu	1 Bawku Municipal	1 Daffiama-Bussie-Issa	1 Adaklu	1 Krachi East
2 Ejura Sekyeredumase	2 Asutifi South	2 Jaman North	2 Kwahu Afram Plains South	2 Gonja Central	2 Kpandai	2 Chereponi	2 Bawku West	2 Jirapa	2 Akatsi North	2 Krachi West
3 Kumawu	3 Banda	3 Jaman South		3 Gonja East	3 Mion	3 Mamprusi East	3 Bolga Municipal	3 Lambussie	3 Biakoye	3 Krachi Nchumuru
4 Offinso North	4 Berekum	4 Kintampo North		4 Gonja North	4 Nanton	4 Mamprusi West	4 Bongo	4 Lawra	4 Kpando	4 Nkwanta North
5 Sekyere Afram Plains	5 Berekum West	5 Kintampo South		5 Gonja West	5 Nanumba North		5 Builsa North	5 Nadowli-Kaleo	5 Tongu Central	5 Nkwanta South
6 Sekyere Central	6 Dormaa Central	6 Nkoranza North		6 Sawla-Tuna-Kalba	6 Nanumba South		6 Builsa South	6 Nandom	6 Tongu North	6 Biakoye
7 Sekyere Kumawu	7 Dormaa East	7 Nkoranza South			7 Saboba		7 Garu	7 Sissala East	7 Tongu South	
	8 Dormaa West	8 Pru East			8 Savelugu-Nanton		8 Gushiegu	8 Sissala West	8 Ketu North	
	9 wenchi	9 Pru West			9 Tatala Sanguli		9 Kassena-Nankana	9 WA East	9 Ketu South	
		10 Sene East			10 Tolon		10 Kassena-Nankana West	10 Wa Municipal	10 Ho West	
		11 Sene West			11 Yendi		11 Nabdram	11 Wa West	11 Dayi North	
		12 Tain			12 Yunyoo		12 Pusiga			
		13 Techiman			13 Zabzugu		13 Talensi			
		14 Techiman North					14 Tempene			

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



Feature

How 'Natures Call' Hanged the Debate over the \$23 Million Tax Waiver for the Pullman Airport City Hotel

Continued From Page 7

leg of his argument by associating the ownership of the hotel to the President which got him into trouble.

"This very hotel which is being constructed under President Akufo Addo, this (so, so, and so [expunged from the records] hotel) does not meet the standard and now I want to serve notice that this side of the House will not be part of an illegality. We will not support it. This is unfortunate; this an abuse; this is a misuse; it's tantamount to misusing the tax payers money as far as we are concerned," he stated loudly on the top of his voice with a lot of gears from his colleagues in the Minority.

His forbidden sin initially escaped the attention of Mr. Speaker until his attention was drawn to it by the Minister for Information, Kojo Oppong Nkrumah who was listening to the debate with rapt attention, almost as if his whole life depended on it.

It was too bad for Minister Kojo Oppong Nkrumah who didn't catch the Speaker's eye the very moment he stood up on a point of correction to have his colleague MP on the other side withdraw his allegation against the President the very minute it was made.

"Honorable Members", the Speaker blurted out, "the expression (so, so and so hotel) because I don't want to repeat it; Honorable Members, let us be serious, it is unacceptable. The appropriate corrections must be made. The Honorable Member must withdraw it and it must be expunged from the records of this Honorable House. Honorable proceed and make your withdrawal," he said after his attention was

drawn to it.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker, Professor Mike Oquaye raised his head, rolled his mini-sized eyes nicely fitted behind a thick rounded pair of goggles, tilted his neck to the left to locate the seat of the Yapei/Kusawgu MP. But it was empty.

The MP had exited the Chamber on his blind side and the MPs colleagues who were sitting close to him were looking on with a grin of mischief written all over on their faces while whispering among themselves something which could not be heard from afar let alone comprehend, just as the silent whispers of the market place.

Then the House became very quiet for a moment and suddenly, there was a piercing voice heard coming from among the Minority side of the House; more audible than the multitude of whispers which had earlier filled the House. It just blurted out the most unconventional announcement in the House of legislature, "Natures call".

The sound of the voice, the message it carried and the circumstances in which it was made, provoked some diplomatic smiles and measured giggles from the Members who were trying to avoid making eye contacts with the Speaker under the circumstances.

Apparently, the announcement was to wittingly send out a coded message to the Speaker in reference to an incident which had happened earlier in the day in the House where the MP for Tamale North, Alhassan Suhini was supposed to have made a statement on Environmental Degradation but the MP had stepped out of the Chamber.

While, the Minority Leader, Haruna Idrissu was trying to buy time for the MP's return, the Rt. Hon. Speaker Mike Oquaye interjected playfully and said, "Nature's call happens sometimes". To wit, "let's wait for him while he may be using the wash room". This was enough to keep the House calm until the MP returned to the Chamber.

However, on this occasion there was no time for such amusement and expensive jokes at all because

the House will later learn that the MPs absence was not just stalling the debate but also an affront to the Mace of Parliament which is the symbol of authority of Parliament and therefore a potential case for contempt of Parliament.

Seeing that the MP who had made the alleged offensive statement was not in his seat, the Speaker panned through the House and finally rested his eyes on the Minority Leadership Bench for a solution. His eyes met that of the Minority Chief Whip, in the person of Alhaji Muntaka Mubarak, who was the available leader at the time.

In the circumstances, the Speaker had no choice but to quickly task him to ensure the MP returns to the House to withdraw the offensive statement otherwise the debate would be held in abeyance until his return.

With a stern voice like that of a head teacher seeking instill fear in his students, Mr. Speaker issued the command, "Honorable members, I order that the minority Chief whip should convey to the Honorable Member immediately. That the Honorable Member's presence is required in the House now. And Honorable Members, I must repeat that it is contempt of Parliament to turn your back against the Mace the moment you finish making your contribution.

"When the House gives you the privilege to make a contribution, you don't leave the House immediately thereafter. Those who have not acquainted themselves with this should go and have a conversation with their Eskimay immediately after business."

This warning did not shake many of them, it was rather the response by the Minority Chief Whip to the Speaker's orders which threw the whole House into uncontrollable laughter. Afterwards, the Rt. Honorable Speaker was left with no other choice at that moment but to use the tools available to him to deal with the issue at hand.

The Chief Whip said, "Mr. Speaker, my colleague drew my attention that he wanted to use the wash room. Mr. Speaker, he is going to come back. Mr. Speaker even

though it is not in our standing Orders, I have always insisted that you don't go out immediately after your statement so when I saw him going out, I drew his attention and he informed me that he wanted to use the wash room. Mr. Speaker I am going to tell him to get back." According to the Minority Chief Whip, his colleague whispered to him that he was going to answer "natures call", adding that he will ensure he returns to the Chamber to do the needful.

Initially, after hearing the answer from the Chief Whip, the Speaker said, "the debate will stand down." But when he was told the House was going to break for a Committee of the Whole meeting for the MPs to discuss welfare matters among others, the Rt. Hon. Professor Mike Oquaye came again with another ruling.

"Before we conclude the business, I order that all references of any name whatsoever to this hotel other than that which has been well and truly advertised before this Honorable House should be expunged from the records."

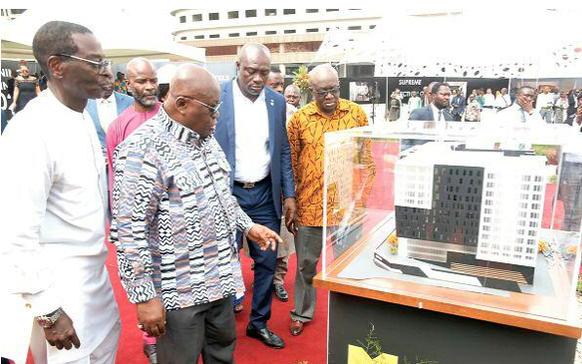
This ruling did not go down well with the Minority Chief Whip, Alhaji Mohammed Muntaka, who challenged the Speaker to prove which portion of the Standing Orders gave him the authority to order that a statement made by a Member of Parliament on the Floor to be expunged from the records. "Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect,

Without wasting time at all, the consummate politician, the experienced legislator and Speaker, Professor Mike Oquaye, with many years to his credit as a distinguished Lecturer of Political Science, just asked the Chief Whip to avert his mind to Order 6 of the Standing Orders of Parliament. That closed the chapter of that argument.

The Order 6 states, "In all cases not provided for in these Orders, Mr. Speaker shall make provisions as he deems fit."

The debate was rescheduled for another day.

Source: Clement Akoloh | africanewsradio.com



President Akufo Addo at the sod cutting ceremony in Accra

Parliamentary Affairs

Who Elects The Speaker of Parliament?

- Prof. H. Kwasi Prempeh Quizzes



Executive Director of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) Prof Henry Kwasi Prempeh

By Clement Akoloh

The Executive Director of the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD), Professor Henry Kwasi Prempeh, has questioned the appropriateness of the election process and powers of the Speaker of Ghana's Parliament grunted under the current Standing Orders, given the fact that the Speaker of Parliament is a major gate keeper clothed with such authorities that could neutralize the voice of Members of Parliament legitimately elected by the people.

According to him, under the Current arrangement the Speaker is hurriedly elected by a group of MPs elect and sworn into office immediately.

However the Legal Policy and Governance consultant wants to see some level of competition injected into the election process as it's done everywhere else.

Professor Prempeh in his presentation quizzed whether the method of election and the powers of the Speaker as enshrined in the Standing Orders of Parliament and the Constitution of Ghana will pass the test when it is weighed on democratic scale.

Order 8 of the current Standing Orders of Parliament only states that, "There shall be a Speaker of Parliament who shall be elected by the Members of Parliament from among persons who are Members of Parliament or who are qualified to be elected as such under the Constitution."

Meanwhile, Order 6 grants

the Speaker unmeasured powers that gives him a wide range of control over what happens in Parliament.

It states for instance that, "In all cases not provided for in these Orders, Mr. Speaker shall make provisions as he deems fit."

According to him, this whimsical and capricious powers put at the disposal of the

representative parliamentary democracy.

The learned Professor made the observation during a presentation on the draft Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana at the CSO Roundtable Discussion on Parliamentary Openness and the Draft Standing Orders of Parliament organized by the Parliamentary Monitoring Organization, Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) with funding from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD).

The CSO Roundtable discussion was used to develop a baseline for the assessment of the compliance level of Ghana's Parliament to the Declaration of Parliamentary Openness.

The Declaration of Parliamentary Openness which draws on a variety of background documents endorsed by the international Parliamentary Community is one of the globally recognized documents for determining the extent of openness of a nation's Parliament.

Parliamentary Network Africa (PNAfrica) through the support of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, gathered empirical information on the perspective of Civil Society Organizations including the media on how transparent and socially inclusive the Parliament of Ghana is.

The meeting was also used to provide the platform for participants to discuss and interrogate the draft Standing Orders of Parliament to determine how to engage Parliament on the review process to make it open, transparent and inclusive.

Order 8 of the current Standing Orders of Parliament only states that, "There shall be a Speaker of Parliament who shall be elected by the Members of Parliament from among persons who are Members of Parliament or who are qualified to be elected as such under the Constitution."

Speaker who is largely an appointee of the President and his party, may lead to the neutralization of the voice of the representatives of the people and therefore injurious to the desired outcome of repre-

Foreign Affairs

Matters of Youth Paramount To The Commonwealth -Philip Parham

Gilbert Borketey Boyefio

The UK Government's Envoy to the Commonwealth, Philip Parham, has emphasized the commitments of the Commonwealth to matters relating to the Youth.

According to him, "16percent of the 2.4 billion Commonwealth population are under thirty years (30). And therefore, young people are at the heart of any Commonwealth programme. The Commonwealth had a meeting in Kigali this year and youth was one of the headline topics."

Addressing the Students Parliament during its Third Mock Sitting, Mr. Parham noted that the education of the youth, especially the girl child, is one of the ways to tackle youth unemployment, observing that, "The child of a mother who can read is 50 percent more likely to live past the age of five and three

The Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme brings students around the Commonwealth to study in the UK for a graduate study. There is also alongside that the Queen's Scholarship Scheme, which helps students not only to study in the UK but elsewhere within the Commonwealth to build up network between Commonwealth countries.

times likely to go to school and more likely to have 20 percent earning power."

He pointed out that there is great work being done in the Commonwealth on education. At the Commonwealth heads of government meeting in London in 2018, the Commonwealth made a commitment that by 2030 every child within

the Commonwealth should receive quality education. And the UK is following up on this commitment with a programme across a number of Commonwealth countries, including Ghana, to promote in particular education for girls.

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The Student Parliament Mock Sittings is an annual event organized by the Public Affairs Directorate of Parliament with support from the Westminster Foundation For Democracy (WFD) to commemorate Commonwealth Day. The occasion was heralded by a debate on the effect of climate change in Ghana.

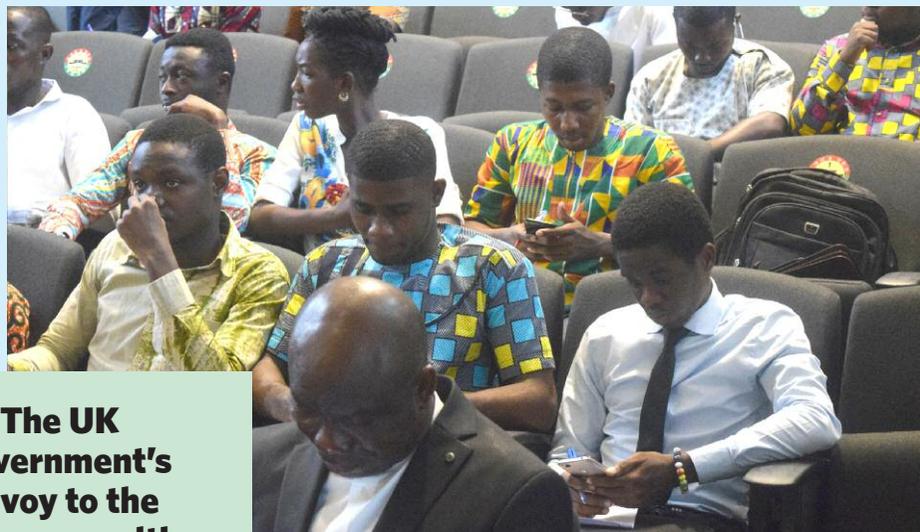
The Student Parliament Mock Sitting mirrored that of the National Parliamentary Sitting.

In attendance were the First Deputy Speaker of Ghana's Parliament, Hon Joseph Osei-Owusu, MP for Bekwai; the Second Deputy Speaker, Hon Alban Bagbin, MP for Nadowli/Kaleo; the Country Director of WFD, Dr David Appiah; the Acting Director of Public Affairs, Ms. Kate Addo; and some Members of Parliament.

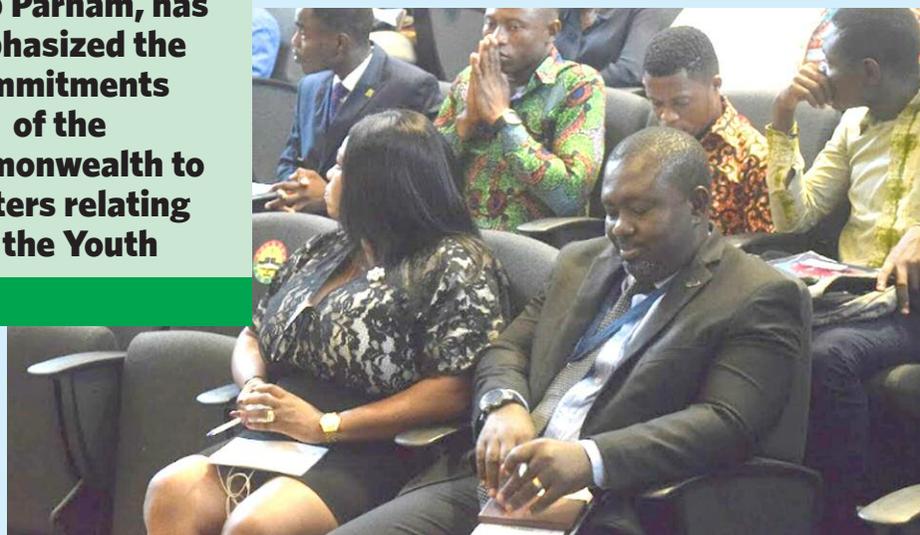


UK Government's Envoy to the Commonwealth, Philip Parham

Photo Report



The UK Government's Envoy to the Commonwealth, Philip Parham, has emphasized the commitments of the Commonwealth to matters relating to the Youth



16 percent of the 2.4 billion Commonwealth population are under thirty years (30). And therefore, young people are at the heart of any Commonwealth programme



Gender, Children & Social Welfare

25 years after Beijing, IPU analysis shows that gender parity is possible

Geneva, Switzerland, 6 March 2020, for immediate release.

A quarter of a century after the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the overall percentage of women in parliaments has reached 24.9 per cent in 2020, up from 11.3 per cent in 1995. In four countries (Rwanda, Cuba, Bolivia and the United Arab Emirates) women now account for 50 per cent or more MPs in their lower or single chambers compared with 1995 when no parliament had reached gender parity. Gender quotas remain critical success factors for women to be better represented in parliament, especially young women.

The IPU has tracked women's participation in parliament for decades, allowing it to monitor historical trends, progress and setbacks. This year's IPU report looks back at 25 years of women in parliament on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing conference and its groundbreaking action plan for gender equality.

More than 25 years to reach 25 per cent

The last 25 years have seen a significant increase in the proportion of women in parliaments around the world, with the share of women in national parliaments reaching almost 25 per cent globally. Rwanda, the United Arab Emirates and Andorra have made the greatest progress with +57, +50 and +42.8 percentage points gained respectively in their lower or single chambers between 1995 and 2020.

Twenty-five years ago, eight out of the top ten parliaments with the highest representation of

women were European, mostly in the Nordic countries. Today, the ranking has changed considerably, with more regions represented.

IPU President and Mexican MP Gabriela Cuevas, said: "As only the second woman presiding the IPU and the youngest in 130 years, I am convinced of the urgent need to have more women in parliament. It is not enough to have only one in four seats in parliaments; it is not fair that some countries are leaving women behind because of the absence of institutional changes to give them real opportunities to participate in politics; and it is not democratic to pretend that a parliament is truly inclusive if women are not fully represented."

President of the IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians and Kenyan MP, Susan Kihika said: "Our objective is full gender parity in parliament for all countries in the world. With so few parliaments reaching gender parity in 2020, we still have a long way to go. It will take stronger political will and concrete action by both women and men to speed up progress. More women in parliament leads to better decision-making, more peaceful societies, and more representative democracies that work for everyone."

IPU Secretary General, Martin Chungong said: "Men and women have a joint responsibility to achieve gender equality. Parliamentary leadership has become increasingly aware of this imperative. Around the world we see that male politicians, particularly male Speakers of parliament, are key allies in supporting women MPs and in

shaping more gender-sensitive institutions that help women get ahead in politics."

Quotas make the difference

Of the 20 countries with the largest share of women in parliament, 16 apply some form of quota. The IPU also notes that 81 countries now hold elections that include legislated gender quotas. The two leading regions – the Americas and Europe – were pioneers in the introduction of quotas for women. These quotas have grown in ambition and efficiency: they are no longer designed as a means to reach a minimum threshold of women candidates or members of parliament, but rather as a strategy to ultimately reach gender parity.

On the flip side, the share of women in parliamentary chambers without quotas is considerably lower. In parliamentary elections held in 68 chambers in 2019, women gained 30.3 per cent of seats on average in the 40 chambers that applied quotas – either legislated or applied voluntarily by political parties. This compares with only 17.9 per cent of seats that were won by women in the 28 chambers that still do not have quota systems.

Other key factors that help accelerate and sustain progress towards gender equality include policies to promote women's recruitment by political parties, strong women's movements – particularly those that support new generations of younger women politicians – and a more holistic, gender-sensitive political culture free from sexism, harassment and violence.

Progress has slowed in 2019 compared with 2018

The IPU's analysis of the 68 parliamentary chambers renewed in 2019 shows that progress has slowed, with an increase of only 0.6 percentage points to reach 24.9 per cent of female MPs compared with 24.3 per cent in 2018. In 2018, progress was more significant, with a 0.9 percentage point increase compared with 2017.

In the 2019 parliamentary elections, the biggest increases in women MPs were in the United Arab Emirates, Dominica and Uzbekistan. Unfortunately, some

countries went backwards, with decreases in women MPs notably in Spain, Madagascar and Tunisia.

Progress in all regions of the world over 25 years

1. Americas: Long-standing equality measures have yielded sustainable results, with women's representation in parliament increasing at a faster pace in the region than elsewhere. The Americas are the first region to go above the 30-per-cent threshold, with 31.3 per cent of MPs who are female.

2. Europe has made sustained progress but is no longer the leader despite the Nordic countries being the only sub-region to have women holding over 40 per cent of parliamentary seats. Women MPs in Europe are now just 0.1 percentage points short of the 30-per-cent threshold prescribed in Beijing 25 years ago.

3. Sub-Saharan Africa is the third region in terms of representation of women in parliament, largely thanks to quotas. At the beginning of 2020, 24.4 per cent of the region's parliamentarians were women.

4. Middle East and North Africa: The region has made great strides since the removal of restrictions to women's right to vote or stand for elections, and the introduction of quotas as part of political reforms after the Arab Spring. The share of women MPs in the region stands at 16.6 per cent.

5. Asia: The region recorded the slowest growth rate of any region, having gained only 6.8 percentage points over the past 25 years. With 20 per cent of parliamentary seats held by women, Asia dropped from second place in 1995 to fourth in 2020.

6. Pacific: Women's parliamentary representation in the Pacific region is the lowest, coming in at 19.4 per cent in 2020. Despite substantial gains in a number of countries over the past 25 years, notably Australia and New Zealand, the region still counts the only three parliaments in the world with no women members (Federated

States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu).

Empowering women MPs at the IPU

Women have played a key role at the IPU since the first women MPs attended an IPU conference in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1921. In the 1980s, the IPU created a dedicated structure, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, to give women MPs a stronger voice in the Organization.

The IPU was also an early adopter of quotas in the 1980s, leading to a steady increase of women representatives in its governing bodies and meetings. Today, around 30 per cent of MPs who attend IPU Assemblies are women thanks to quotas as well as sanctions for less gender-equal delegations.

The IPU has had two women Presidents: Najma Heptulla (India) was elected in 1999 followed by the current President, Gabriela Cuevas (Mexico), in 2017. IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong was also recently elected Chair of the Global Board of the International Gender Champions, a leadership network that works to break down gender barriers.

The IPU is the global organization of national 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 13 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.

For more information about the IPU, contact Thomas Fitzsimons at email: press@ipu.org or tf@ipu.org or tel: +41(0) 79 854 31

1995		2020	
Country	% women	Country	% women
Sweden	40.4	Rwanda	61.3
Norway	39.4	Cuba	53.2
Denmark	33.5	Bolivia	53.1
Finland	33.5	United Arab Emirates	50.0
Netherlands	32.7	Mexico	48.2
Seychelles	27.3	Nicaragua	47.3
Austria	26.8	Sweden	47.0
Germany	26.3	Grenada	46.7
Iceland	25.4	Andorra	46.4
Argentina	25.3	South Africa	46.4

Parliamentary Clerks from the CPA Africa Region's Society of Clerks-at-the-Table meet in Tanzania

Parliamentary Clerks from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Africa Region have met for the Steering Committee of the Africa Region Society of Clerks-at-the-Table (So-CATT) in Arusha, Tanzania.

This is the first Steering Committee meeting this year and was convened by the Chairperson of the So-CATT CPA Africa Region, Mrs Cecilia N. Mbeve, and Clerk of the National Assembly of Zambia. This year's meeting was from 21 to 24 February 2020.

Parliamentary Clerks attending the meeting included: Mr Stephen Kagaigai, Clerk of the Parliament of Tanzania and CPA Africa Regional Secretary; Mr

Michael Sialai, Clerk of the Parliament of Kenya and Vice-Chairperson of the CPA Africa Region SoCATT; Mrs Lydia Kandetu, Clerk of the National Council of Namibia; Mrs Barbara N Dithapo, Clerk of Parliament of Botswana; and Ambassador Jeanine Kambanda, Clerk of the Chamber of Deputies of Rwanda.

The purpose of the meeting was to plan for the Society's activities for 2020 and to track progress and report on various recent activities of the Society.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), now in its 109th year, exists to develop, promote and support Parliamentarians and their staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and to implement the

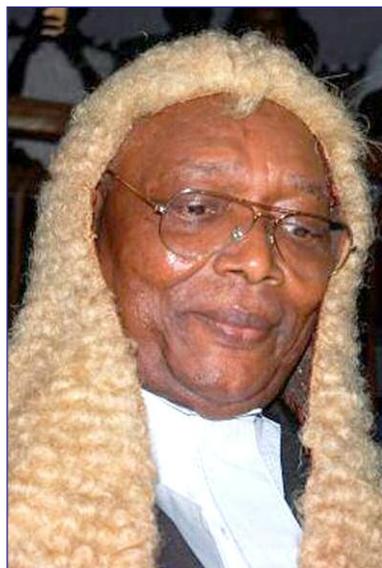


enduring values of the Commonwealth. The CPA is an international community of over 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. The Common-

wealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Executive Committee is the principal governing body of the Association and includes Commonwealth Speakers and Members of Parliament. Visit the CPA Headquarters Secretariat website at www.cpahq.org.

Sierra Leone Parliament Presents Certificate Of Solidarity To China On Coronavirus Fight

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 5th March 2020, presented a Certificate of Solidarity to the Chinese Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Hu Zhangliang, for the National People's Congress and the in-



Rt. Hon Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu, Speaker of Parliament, Sierra Leone

habitants of the People's Republic of China in their fight against the coronavirus.

The National People's Congress is the highest organ of state power and the National Legislature of the People's Republic of China.

Presenting the Certificate, the Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu said "the Parliament of Sierra Leone does not have material support to give to the people of China in order to defeat the coronavirus, but it has a responsibility as a representative body to express solidarity through the award of a certificate to the Government and People of China", adding it is the best the Parliament of Sierra Leone could offer at the moment.

"On behalf of myself, Members of Parliament and the Administration of Parliament, we express our solidarity with the

National People's Congress and the People of the People's Republic of China in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic". He also said that "during this difficult period, Sierra Leone Parliament stands in full solidarity with China and support China's efforts to combat COVID-19".

Receiving the Certificate, the Chinese Ambassador expressed sincere thanks and appreciation to the Speaker of Parliament and the entire membership of the House. "This is a kind gesture demonstrated by the Parliament of Sierra Leone". He was beaming with gratification when he said "on behalf of the National People's Congress and People of the People's Republic of China, I thank you".

His Excellency, the Ambassador went on to say that the Government and People of China have taken robust measures to contain the coronavirus in light of disease preventions and con-

trols. The Ambassador told the Parliament of Sierra Leone that through a huge sacrifice, they are getting the desired results relative to the containment of the pandemic.

He also said that their Government and People are concerned with the well-being of foreigners including Sierra Leoneans and as of today no Sierra Leonean has contacted the disease. "This difficult time will soon be over and China will emerge stronger and prosperous than before", he reassured.

He finally assured that the Chinese Government will require all Chinese travelling to Sierra Leone to follow the prevention and control measures being instituted such as tracking or isolation to combat a further spread of the coronavirus.

"I believe that Chinese People will not face discrimination in Sierra Leone", he concluded.





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