

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE LAUNCH OF 25 YEARS OF PARLIAMENTARY WORK AND 60TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN HONOUR OF HON A.S. K. BAGBIN BY HONOURABLE AHMED IBRAHIM, MP FOR BANDA - 12 JULY, 2017**

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to make a few comments on the Statement that was ably and timely presented to this House by the Hon MP for Ho West. Mr Speaker, 25 years in Ghana's Parliament, I believe, everybody here would agree with me that it is a great achievement. Looking through 275 Members of Parliament, there is only one without a classmate — the lone ranger. Mr Speaker, since 1993, he is the only surviving Hon Member of Parliament in the Fourth Republican dispensation. Mr Speaker, it is not a mere achievement.

This reminds me of the Parliament of 1993, which was the First Parliament of the Fourth Republic. We were told that there were only two former Members of Parliament in that Parliament. Therefore, to put the institution of Parliament together and fall on the institutional memory of previous Parliaments, there were only two Hon Members of Parliament. Mr Speaker, this reminds me of the high rate of attrition, and the way we tag our outstanding Hon Members of Parliament as old. We say some people have been in this House for about 20 years and they must, therefore, go for others to come.

Mr Speaker, we would agree that this is not how it is done in matured democracies. I would reinstate the above five points my Hon Brother enumerated in making sure that the new or young ones that come must feed on the institutional memory of our Hon Seniors who have been here for a long time. I suggest that as a nation, if we say we are practising a hybrid system — we have taken an aspect of the presidential system of Government, which are the systems of the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), and we must take the positive aspects of their parliamentary democracies. Mr Speaker, we would agree that when we go to the UK system, the Rt Hon Speakers and some of the Leaders in their Parliament are not allowed to go into competitive elections. It is the same in the USA system.

Therefore, if Ghana is taking aspects of the UK and USA systems, we must take their positive aspects. Mr Speaker, to reaffirm that, I agree and suggest that, and I know you would agree with me, the Hon First and Second Deputy Speakers of this House should be given some special protection. It should not be only that; the Hon Majority and Minority Leaders of this House must also be given that special protection. I do not say this for anything, but it is in such a way that whenever there is a high rate of attrition, we could, at least, count on four outstanding senior Hon Members with institutional memory, who could serve as trainer of trainers. Mr Speaker, we know that people do not just get to these positions by accident. Your good self —

Hon Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, Hon Haruna Iddrisu and Hon Alban Kingsford Sumana Bagbin, the sole surviving Hon Member of the 1993 Parliament, are household names. Wherever people see Hon Alban Bagbin and Hon Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, they symbolise Parliament. Mr Speaker, but are these things known in the constituencies? They raise a serious question. I was part of the delegation that went to the Upper West Region. We proceeded to Wechiaw. It would interest us

to know, and it was very sad that a student stood before us and asked us, that we said this man was a very good Hon Member of Parliament; we should tell him who a good Hon Member of Parliament is. Mr Speaker, when we allow people not to appreciate experience, institutional memory and the effort others put in place to make sure that the whole nation benefits, this Parliament would have done a great disservice to itself.

Mr Speaker, at a point, we were asked that we said this man is a very good Hon MP; why is it that they do not have certain things? Parties must put structures in place to make sure that when the Hon Majority Leader is always in his office and represents Ghana both within and outside the country, we develop their constituencies in such a way that they would have ample time to concentrate on the work of Parliament. Mr Speaker, as an Hon Majority Leader, Hon Minority Leader and Hon First and Second Deputy Speakers, we can imagine the kind of administrative work done, aside that of an Hon Member of Parliament and that of the constituency. Mr Speaker, they do three in one.

If they are allowed to go into competitive elections like all of us who only do the work of a Hon Member of Parliament, we can imagine the difficulties that await them. Mr Speaker, besides that, a Parliamentary Training Institute (PTI) has been established. When we always bring academia to train Hon Members of Parliament on parliamentary work we would agree that some of them do not even appreciate parliamentary democracy and the work of an Hon Member of Parliament. Therefore, when we allow academia to train Hon Members of Parliament, it is like allowing an English language tutor to mark a chemistry paper; he would not appreciate anything. All he understands is the English language.

Therefore, he would not appreciate the chemistry itself. That is why people sometimes talk anyhow to Hon Members of Parliament. Mr Speaker, I know Hon Alban Bagbin has gone through a lot. I would just give a last testimony about him and resume my seat. We went to the Regional National Democratic Congress (NDC) Chairman of the Upper West Region in Wa. We went to give testimonies about Hon Alban Bagbin, so that the regional executives in the constituency would allow him to come to the House again. The Regional NDC Chairman said that Hon Bagbin was a different creature — Hon Bagbin was with him the day before, and the Chairman insulted Hon Bagbin, and wanted Hon Bagbin to fight him, so that the Chairman would have the opportunity to do other things.

At 4.00 a.m. on the day in question, Hon Bagbin was the first person to knock on his door. When the Chairman opened his door, Hon Bagbin thanked him for his correction the day before. It was because of that the Chairman said he would support him. Mr Speaker, we, the young Hon MPs, must take a cue from that. When somebody tries to insult, fight or pick a bone with us, we should not fight them. We should take a cue from the strategy of Hon Alban Kingsford Sumana Bagbin, and make peace with them. By so doing, we would end up with a win. This is how Hon Bagbin has been able to make it for seven good terms. I believe that if he is 60 years now and he has spent 25 five years in Parliament, it means that he entered here at that age of 35.

Mr Speaker, I strongly believe in the suggestion that we should create a space for them, so that they would work at the PTI — they should design some curriculum on how Hon Members of Parliament should be trained, assessed and the code of ethics. I believe Hon Bagbin played a pivotal role in drafting the Code of Ethics for Hon Members of Parliament. It should not end there. There is now the opportunity for him to serve Ghana. He is just 60 years; he still has about 12 more years. I appeal to the people of Nadowli/Kaleo to appreciate Hon Bagbin just as they do and make sure we would still have him in the next Parliament. Some were not able to even make four, eight or twelve years. Some people say — I do not even know how to put it, but he has made it for 25 years and would go on to make it to 28 years.

I believe he would make it to 32 years, just like Hon Jeremy Corbyn, who made it for 32 years in the UK and he is now the leader of the Labour Party. Mr Speaker, thank you once again for the opportunity given, and I congratulate Hon Alban Bagbin.