

SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF MENINGITIS IN THE COUNTRY BY HONOURABLE DR MARK KURT NAWAANE, MP FOR NABDAM, BY DR SEBASTIAN NGMENENSO SANDAARE, MP FOR DAFFIAMA/BUSSIE/ISSA - 6 APRIL, 2017

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to contribute to the Statement made by my Hon Colleague on the current meningitis situation in the country.

Mr Speaker, indeed, meningitis, which is an inflammation of the meninges, the covering of the brain and spinal cord, is a disease of public health concern in this country. We have lost more than 62 people from the northern part of this country; Upper East, Upper West, Northern, Ashanti Regions, and other regions of this country due to this deadly disease.

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Colleague articulated, the causes could be bacterial, viral or even chemical. But what is most important to us as a country, is the bacterial cause. I know the health authorities are making very important strategies — They are doing their best to control this disease which normally comes during the dry season, from November through to April. And it is because as a country, we find ourselves in the meningitis belt, which spreads from Senegal, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, including Ghana.

Mr Speaker, there is a cure for meningitis, especially those caused by bacteria. But normally, what happens is that, people present cases of meningitis very late. So, we advise that if one experiences acute fever, headache and neck pains, the person should report early to the nearest health facility.

Mr Speaker, once the patient reports to the hospital early, he or she can be cured. This is because investigations would start early, and once the causative organism is identified, it would just be a matter of giving the patient drugs, and he or she would be cured. But if the patient reports to the hospital late, then it might be dangerous, because we always say that God has created the doctors and health personnel to cure the sick, but not to raise the dead.

Mr Speaker, if one reports late and almost dead, then with all the interventions that the health personnel would do, it might be too late to save the life of the person. That accounts for the reason many people die from this disease. Therefore, I take the opportunity to encourage anybody in any part of this country, if one is experiencing fever, headache and neck pains, the person should report to the nearest health facility, so that they would start investigations and make sure that the person is treated and be saved.

Mr Speaker, also to add that when we hear cases of meningitis being reported, of course, because it leads to death, it creates public anxiety, fear and panic. But just like I said, the disease can be treated. The message is to educate the public to report early to the nearest health facility so that attention and care can be given.

Mr Speaker, lastly, I would also take the opportunity to appeal to the Government, that sometimes when we are faced with challenges of epidemics, the way forward is to mobilise

resources as early as possible, for the health personnel in the health facilities to respond adequately to these conditions.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity.