

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE ECOWAS INTERVENTION IN THE GAMBIA  
BY HONOURABLE ALEXANDER K. AFENYO-MARKIN MP FOR EFFUTU BY HON SARAH ADWOA  
SAFO, MP FOR DOME / KWABENYA - 25 JANUARY, 2017**

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to comment on the Statement ably made by the Hon Member for Effutu, and also to commend him for such an insightful Statement. Mr Speaker, in commenting on the Statement, I would like to put on record that, what happened in The Gambia internationally does not paint a good picture of our sub-region and our continent as a whole.

Mr Speaker, as many have gone through the hands of our colonial masters and have fought for independence, we would have expected that we lead ourselves in a very honourable manner to the admiration of even our people and the outside world as well.

Mr Speaker, unfortunately, every now and then, the sub-region and the whole of Africa gets into this area where many get so comfortable with the power that has been given to them by the people they represent.

Mr Speaker, what we fail to acknowledge is that, we are not put in power by ourselves but by the people who we seek to govern or rule. So, reasonably, when your mandate given to you expires, you would be expected to bow in dignity and transfer power peacefully to the next person given the nod by the people.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first time we are hearing this in our sub-region or in Africa as a whole. We can all remember what happened recently in Burkina Faso, when the then President, Blaise Compaoré served his constitutional tenure and sought to go to Parliament to extend his tenure of office to allow him to rule the people again, and we are all witnesses to what happened.

Mr Speaker, again, we can speak about what happened in la Cote d'Ivoire, between Alassane Ouattara and Laurent Gbagbo. These are all experiences in the sub-region or the continent that I believe we should speak out and say, it does not auger well for Africa or West Africa. Mr Speaker, we are now being told that although the ex-President of The Gambia has left the jurisdiction or the territory of The Gambia, there are many reports on international networks that he has actually left with about US\$11 million.

Mr Speaker, I believe that, even as we exit, we owe transparency and accountability to the people that we seek to govern. So, I would say that if our leaders should go to the roundtable, at the ECOWAS, the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) and accede to certain international treaties of which the ECOWAS treaty is part, then every member State is required by such international treaty to live up to its obligation and responsibilities under such treaty.

Mr Speaker, when it is time for members to bow out honourably, it would be expected to be done. War and conflict do not auger well for our continent. It is one of the reasons our continent is faced with many social and economic hardships today.

We could talk about Sudan, Rwanda and many other civil wars that we have experienced on this continent, and I believe that, together, we should not allow conflict situations to occur. But when we keep on wrestling for power and wrestling to change the constitutional framework to enable us to stay in power, these are some of the actions that could breed conflict situations.

Mr Speaker, in conflict situations, it is mostly women and children who suffer a lot. Our neighbours in Liberia have sought refuge in Ghana and many have lost their families because of civil war.

Mr Speaker, many women are raped and children are killed during war or conflict situations. So, as a woman, and I believe it is the voice of many women across the continent, we do not want to suffer. We do not want to die! We do not want to be raped! We do not want to lose our husbands, children and families. Therefore, we should make sure that this continent, indeed, is a safe place for all of us to live in and prosper for the betterment and promotion of the democracy to which we have all acceded.

Mr Speaker, on this note, I associate myself with the Statement and I thank you for the opportunity.