

SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF ROAD TRAFFIC CRASHES IN GHANA BY HONOURABLE SARAH ADWOA SAFO, MP FOR DOME/ KWABENYA - 3 MARCH, 2017

Mr Speaker, I thank you. I would want to commend the Hon Member who made the Statement, the Member for Shai-Osudoku, and to also invite all of us and the whole nation to actually celebrate a woman of such courage, especially when the International Women's Day is just around the corner.

Not many women can put themselves together within a short period after the demise of their husbands to ably and courageously step in the shoes of their late spouse to carry out the same duties that the husband performed and the contribution he made to this country. Mr Speaker, I celebrate her today. Even the courage to pull herself together to put a Statement of this sort on the floor is very much admirable. I am rather saddened that the young pupils who usually sit in the Gallery have all left. This is a woman that they can always emulate and learn from.

Mr Speaker, road safety and the avoidable accidents that occur on our roads, continuously become a huge problem for our country. If we would want a country of rich human resource to build our nation, to help Governments to initiate their policies, to be there to support families and to form communities and societies, then we would need to have a second look at our road safety issues in this country.

Mr Speaker, legislation definitely is not the issue here. There is no vacuum when it comes to legislation. We have all the legislations sitting on the shelves. Our major issue as a country, in all aspects of our governance process, has been implementation or enforcement. I believe a week ago, the Hon Member for Kwabre East made a similar Statement on the floor on the issue of pedestrian crossing highways and the use of motorcycles on commercial basis and the effect on a nation. All these matters that we have talked about today, emerged on that same day.

I believe that as law-makers and as representatives of our people, we should be the ones to step up our action and make sure that indeed, at our various constituencies, we also help in the education process.

Mr Speaker, there are so many indiscipline acts that go on on our roads. When the trotro or the taxi drivers even cross a person and the person is in fear and panic and they see the fear and panic on the person's face, they add insults to it. They would insult the person to the extent that the person would even wonder whether these people know what road safety regulations are. They are at fault and you have not complained. They nearly caused your death but the mere fact that you stopped, they would insult you and move on.

Mr Speaker, I believe that, campaign on indiscipline should be relaunched in this country. It should be seriously relaunched. Attitudes must change and we have to walk the talk. We talk a lot and do very little when it comes to provision of solutions. Mr Speaker, I would not want to bore this House, but the Police need to step up in enforcing law, order and discipline on our

roads. I believe that we have to have a relook at the issuance of driver's licences. I always share my experience in the United States where I schooled. I had to take the driver licensing test five times and in certain situations, I wanted to dodge the system. I thought this State had very rigid rules, so, if I moved on to the neighbouring State and get the driver's licence, then I would be able to drive.

I moved from Washington DC to Virginia not knowing Virginia was even worse and I had to actually re-take it. It is a mental exercise for one. So, before one comes out of that process, the whole system is rest assured that, indeed, one is worthy to drive on their roads with care and caution and not recklessness and indiscipline. Mr Speaker, drunk driving — Many of our youth today drink and drive and they do so with no regard to any authority or older persons. On Friday, it is even worse. If you stay out late in the night and you see what happens on our roads, you would marvel. You wonder if these young people really have value for their own lives.

Mr Speaker, we should watch drinking and driving at the same time. Do we have the mechanisms to test instantly whether one is drunk? We need to equip our Police with all these gadgets, like breath testing gadgets, so that they do not just guess whether one is drunk, but they have real evidence on their hands that indeed, one is drunk and driving, so and the sanctions or the punitive actions must be meted out accordingly.

Mr Speaker, I would not want to bore you so much. On this note, I would want to urge all of us to relaunch the indiscipline campaign on our roads and make it a national agenda like we had the National Sanitation Day. There should be a day dedicated for that because, we are losing many lives; we are losing our future leaders; we are losing our mothers and many are losing their limbs.

Mr Speaker, you made this statement a week ago with your enormous experience you have on this issue. You gave statistics on how many limbs are lost – many of our mothers, brothers and sisters through road accidents. Mr Speaker, it is only in Ghana that you find people drive slowly in a fast lane. People do not even know the speed lane. They will be in that lane and — Mr Speaker, if somebody chooses to be in that speed lane within that speed limit, the person decides to drive slowly, Mr Speaker, you can imagine what would happen. But in the Western world, we know the fast lane and the —

Mr Speaker, maybe the argument did not come out well. It is not to suggest that the one speeding on the speed lane is going above the speed limit. Mr Speaker, but indeed, if the speed limits is for instance, 60 kph and someone decides to go 10 kph on that lane, where it is meant for speeding or overtaking, we can imagine what would happen on that road. So, we need to have our basics in some of these things.

Mr Speaker, I believe that adult education ought to be organised for our drivers, Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) and all the unions and associations of drivers. We should also volunteer to go out there to talk to them and teach them about some of these basic things in the language that they understand. If we go and speak English and the people there do not

understand — One goes there in suits, and believes that he or she has worked, indeed, they have not trickled down the information to the needed people.

Mr Speaker, on this note, I want to commend the Hon Member again. I really admire her courage, and believe that the Media should not end it here. They should please go and take more when she steps out, and showcase such a woman. This is because, I do not believe that, with the courage that I have, within that shortest period, when one loses a loved one, a breadwinner, a father to one's children and a father to a constituency, to easily and quickly pull herself together to be part of this House today. We celebrate her and give her all the condolences that is required.