

SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT TO CONGRATULATE H. E. PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDO AS AU GENDER CHAMPION FOR 2017 AND CO-CHAIR OF UNSDG BY HONOURABLE SARAH ADWOA SAFO, MP FOR DOME/ KWABENYA - 6 JULY, 2017

Mr Speaker, I would want to commend the Hon Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection for giving this insightful Statement. Mr Speaker, I would want to say that we are all proud of our President H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for lifting the flag of Ghana up and for making all the women in Ghana, in the sub-region and on the continent very proud by fighting and promoting the cause of gender empowerment and gender equality. Mr Speaker, Hon Members who contributed earlier alluded to the fact that this was a continuing process and for that matter, many Presidents in the past contributed also towards this award.

Mr Speaker, with your permission, I beg to quote the second paragraph of the Statement by the Hon Minister: "...the award was in recognition of President Akufo-Addo's efforts at deepening and strengthening gender equality in Ghana in particular and Africa in general." Mr Speaker, the citation which was read before His Excellency received the award is so clear. It is personal. Mr Speaker, I would want to emphasise; it says, and I beg to quote again: "...the award was in recognition of President Akufo-Addo's efforts at deepening and strengthening gender equality in Ghana in particular and Africa in general." Mr Speaker, it did not say the continuous efforts of previous Presidents — And so the record must be set straight. If we are acknowledging that, Ghana, led by His Excellency the President, has won an award because of his efforts, we have to acknowledge it when need be.

Arguments were made that this cannot be achieved in five months — Mr Speaker, there is a common adage in the Akan parlance that says, "wo fiti bro nsuo ntem a na wani ye kokoo" Mr Speaker, "agoro beso a efi anopa". Mr Speaker, if we want to start anything or a good cause, starting it on the first day or earlier is what is most important. So, whether one month or five months, the African Union (AU) has acknowledged the fact that H.E. the President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo is championing the cause of women and I believe the other side of the House must acknowledge — I see Hon Fiifi Kwetey smiling and nodding to it. The foundation determines the strength of the structure. So, we should acknowledge that. Mr Speaker, we thank the AU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) for giving our President the award of the AU Gender Champion. Indeed, he is the gender champion of our era.

Mr Speaker, the President is walking the talk. He is not just talking. In his recent appointments after assumption of office as the President of the Republic, he has appointed 20 women as Ministers and Deputy Ministers in his Government. What else can we say than to say kudos to the President? Mr Speaker, he has also appointed 36 women as Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives. I know that very soon, the number would come to 37 when the Ada District Chief Executive (DCE) is finally confirmed. But I would want to tell the Second Deputy Minority Whip that she should also be seen to be doing something about it.

Mr Speaker, she should look for those who are voting against this woman and which side they are on. She should be thankful to the President for nominating a woman for starters. That tells us that the President is committed to it. As a Member of Parliament, I know she champions the cause of women in her constituency. So, she should go down and talk to the Assembly members as well, so that they can confirm this woman and that would bring the number up from 36 to 37. Mr Speaker, Hon Yieleh Chireh read article 22 of the 1992 Constitution and I could not agree with him more. It is right on point and it is about time that this House passed many of the Bills into law to ensure that indeed, we are fighting for the cause of women. One of such legislations is the Affirmative Action Bill. I know that the Hon Minister in charge is really working together with the Committee on Gender and Children to come out with a proposal on how to proceed on this Bill.

Mr Speaker, this weekend, God willing, the Women Caucus would have a seminar in Koforidua to brainstorm on how the Caucus can also push and make sure that the Affirmative Action does not only exist in our minds and on our lips, but also exists in reality and applied accordingly. Mr Speaker, there are other Bills that came to this House and went back to the Attorney-General for further amendments, inclusions and deletions. We have the new Intestate Succession Bill — We need to work on it and improve upon it. The Intestate Succession Law has been in existence since 1981 and having applied it over a period of time, it cannot stand the test of time any longer. Its relevance is being challenged. So, I urge that this House works together, so that when this Bill, as well as the Property and Spousal Rights Bill come in, as this is something that would champion the cause of not only women, but spouses which include myself — I see Mr Speaker very happy because I know his take on this matter —

I had the privilege to have heard a few of his thoughts on it. Mr Speaker, on a more serious note, I believe that this House must take up its responsibility and make sure that we pass all these laws — The public is looking at us. The Supreme Court is making very serious decisions and judgement on the matter and in one such decision, it actually referred to us, that if Parliament is not acting, then the Supreme Court would make the laws. Mr Speaker, this is an indictment on our integrity as a Parliament. So, we have to be very proactive and make sure that, some of these Acts or Bills that would foster the promotion of gender parity and equality are actually hastened in terms of the passage of the law. Mr Speaker, on this note, I would want to once again congratulate H.E. the President, whose personal efforts have given him this recognition.

And again, to the Hon Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, for giving us this very, important Statement.