A STATEMENT ON INTERVENTIONS TO CATER FOR THE AGED IN GHANA
BY HON. GEORGE KWAME ABOAGYE, MP FOR ASENE AKROSO MANSO
CONSTITUENCY

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Speaker I took advantage of the festive Christmas season to visit and
deliver gifts to over 300 elderly people in my constituency. The visit left
me worried seeing the state most of our elderly people have been
reduced to. Knowing the role that the elderly play in the development of
every society and the service they have rendered through their lifetime,
it is only wise for a nation to put proper measures to secure the health
of its citizen in their old age.

Mr. Speaker, According to Dr. Ayete-Nyampong, the increasing
population of the elderly in Africa and the notion that families in Africa
cared for their ageing family members was no longer tenable. As a result
of modernization, education, migration, and globalization it is the
responsibility of families, communities, civil society groups, religious
groups, non-governmental and governmental organizations to care for the aged.

Mr. Speaker, the rapid increase in the number of the elderly population means that Ghana, much like other African countries, must make extra efforts to adjust to the population shift and provide social safety nets and other effective support systems for the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, although the population of Ghana is young and generally youthful, there is evidence of rapid increases in the size of the elderly cohort. The proportion of the population older than 60 is estimated to reach 12% in 2050, from close to 7% in 2010.

**CHALLENGES**

Mr. Speaker, In Ghana today, and perhaps in most African countries, there are almost no structured, institutional programs that cater to the needs of the aging population. Senior citizens in the past, found avenues for meaningful engagement in their families and societies.
The main challenges faced by the elderly are loss of economic or financial independence, physical independence, undiagnosed and untreated hypertension difficulties in carrying out everyday tasks, poor utilization of health services, inadequate preparedness of the health workforce to care for older people, undetected and/or unmanaged problems with eyesight and hearing loss, social exclusion; with assumption that someone is actually taking care of them. The predicament that the aged go through in Ghana mostly leads to their untimely death.

RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Speaker, the elderly in every community and especially Ghana play a major role in the development of the country. They serve as repositories of information and beneficiaries of research conducted across the country (and continent at large) to help governments, business and non-profit organizations as well as individuals to understand issues regarding senior citizenship.
Their advisory role in matters of peace and human security and national development cannot be understated. A healthy, happy older population, forms a repository of social capital that we can tap into for national development.

Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of every country to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the aged, to empower them to effectively participate in economic, social and political activities and enablement to lead fulfilled lives. This could be achieved by empowering them financially, providing better health conditions and providing them with a safe and sound environment.

I congratulate the New Patriotic Party (NPP) for introducing the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Programme (LEAP) which has contributed immensely to the lives of the elderly and vulnerable across the country. However I propose;
• The premium given to the elderly should be extended to cover a larger number of people and increased to a minimum of Five Hundred Ghana Cedis (GH₵500.00). As a country we need to go beyond the LEAP to develop a comprehensive welfare system that would guarantee well-being and quality of life, such a welfare system would ensure that the aged do not suffer poverty after retirement.

• The aged who are 75 years and above should be given access to free quality health care to encourage regular checkups for the elderly, which will increase the lifespan of most of the people in this country.

• Provision of recreational facilities could be established as games and sporting activities which were popular with the elderly introduced at such centers.

• Health care and communities should be educated on good caregiving techniques and some illnesses associated with ageing so that they could gain better understanding of the process of ageing and
develop tolerance and good care practices for the aged. 

community sensitization and improving health workers’ ability to 
deal with the needs of the elderly, to broadening coverage of 
national health insurance schemes and making hearing devices and 
eye glasses available to people who need them.

- Mr. Speaker, finally Ghana has In line with the United Nation’s 
International Plan of Action on the Aged, government has 
developed and adopted a National Ageing Policy entitled: “Ghana 
National Ageing Policy: Ageing with Security and Dignity”, we need 
to implement the necessary actions stated in the policy.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of providing maximum care for the old in this 
country is very relevant, because each of us here will grow old and will 
either benefit from the fantastic policies we implemented in this room 
or suffer the consequence of doing little or nothing.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity.