

RESPONSE TO PARLIAMENTARY REQUEST ON BIRTHS AND DEATHS
REGISTRY

Mr Speaker I appear before this August House to respond to issues and questions raised about the registration of names by the Births and Deaths Registry which is a Department under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development.

On Wednesday 24th January, 2018 the Acting Registrar of the Births Deaths Registry granted an interview to the HERITAGE, a newspaper, on concerns raised by some parents regarding the registration of names, particularly names which begin with prefixes and titles.

The said interview and the publication by the Heritage newspaper on Thursday, 25th January 2018 generated controversies and major discussions about the registration of names by the Births and Deaths Registry.

Mr Speaker,

The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1965 (Act 301) provides for the registration of births, foetal deaths and deaths and makes provision for burial grounds. The registration of birth goes with the registration of name of the person.

Section 40(1) of the Act provides that the Minister by legislative Instrument make regulations for carrying into effect the provisions of the Act.

The Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations, 1970, L.I. 653 provides prescribed particulars for Birth Report Form in the schedule and also directs the Registrar of Births and Deaths to develop instruction manual to the staff of Registries for their guidance in making entries in the registers of Births and Deaths and in the completion of forms. Accordingly, the Registry developed Standard

Operating Procedure (SOP), which is a body of written instructions issued for guidance of staff and field workers of the Registry.

Indeed, in developing the SOP the Registry referred to previous manuals and other practices elsewhere and publications by some prominent Ghanaians e.g. Omanyen Aba (A. Amartey, 1996) and the African Heritage of the Akan *Republic of Ghana*; (Osafo K. Osei, 1979).

The current version of the SOP launched in July, 2009 provides under chapter 3 specific instructions on what to capture in the registration of the name of a child. Section 3.3 of the SOP deals with particulars of the child and states that **'Titles should not be added to the names eg. Reverend, Alhaji, Dr. Colonel, Nana, Jnr, Snr Etc'**, among other things.

Mr Speaker, considering that, the SOP serves as an operational guideline for the registration of Births and Deaths coupled with the sentiments expressed by the public, the Acting Registrar of Births and Deaths Registry has been directed to review the SOP and further directed that names such as Nana, Nii, Papa etc as given by the parents should be accepted for registration.

The Registry should be concerned with official titles and prefixes like President, Reverend, Doctor, Minister, Miss, Mrs, General, Honourable etc.

Mr Speaker the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development will very soon bring a bill to Parliament on Registration of Births and Deaths which will address some of these controversies and to reflect and accommodate present trends and societal developments.

Thank you