

STATEMENT ON TEENAGE

PREGNANCIES IN NORTH DAYI DISTRICT

BY HON JOYCELYN TETTEH, MP FOR

NORTH DAYI

Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make a statement on the issue of teenage pregnancy in the North Dayi Constituency in particular and Ghana in general.

Mr Speaker, all around us in almost every constituency, we see a growing number of teenage girls getting pregnant and having to prematurely assume the role and responsibility of adults. Mr speaker, many factors account for the teenage

pregnancy; adolescent exuberance, exploitation of sexuality of the teenager, lack of parental control or parental guidance, drug abuse, peer pressure, absence of sex education or in worse, lack of it, etc.

In Ghana, teenage pregnancy is a major cause of maternal mortality, as the bodies of most teenage girls are not well developed and matured to accommodate a baby. Teenage pregnancy also results in most affected girls dropping out of school, becoming unskilled and unfit for the labour market, even as they prepare to become mothers. This double jeopardy of being an unskilled teenager with a responsibility of taking care of the

young is what demands that some immediate, relevant, national policy is crafted to halt the worrying trend of teenage pregnancy in North Dayi and beyond.

Mr Speaker, sex education in our basic schools must be prioritised and taught. Parents must know and ought to be interested in the extracurricular activities of their children, especially the teenage ones. We must begin as a country to teach safer sex practices amongst the youth instead of assuming that our children are ignorant of sex as an act and sexuality as a topic.

Condom use must be mentioned whiles preaching the abstinence we desire as parents and teachers.

The effort required to address this social problem of huge significance can only be effective if it is multi-faceted.

The approach to solving this problem must acknowledge the role of parents, teachers, community leaders, chiefs and Queen mothers, religious leaders as well as politicians, myself and every Member of Parliament included.

Mr Speaker. Ghana has over 60% of its population below 35 years. This feature of the population should be ordinarily an asset for Ghana but

unfortunately, the huge unemployment situation amongst the youth has made the statistic a curse rather than a blessing. If our young teenage girls find themselves getting pregnant in addition to their unemployed state, the social problem created culminates into a crisis with the potential to threaten social cohesion and stability of the state. This is how serious the teenage pregnancy phenomenon is getting.

Mr Speaker, as we discuss innovative ways to prevent our youth, particularly teenage girls from getting pregnant, we must concurrently find ways of integrating pregnant girls into our schools when they deliver the babies they carry. Every effort to

get girls back to school after delivery is as important as the effort made at preventing the pregnancy in the first place. The pregnant teenager is not the problem, the problem is the factors that lead to the pregnancy. That is why we must focus our energies on addressing those factors rather than isolating pregnant teenagers for condemnation.

Mr Speaker, I commend you for your long held position as an advocate for Gender Equality and a voice for the female sex.

Thank you for doing what you do always, allowing
the women to speak to critical matters such as
Teenage Pregnancy Most Grateful Mr Speaker.