



**STATEMENT TO MARK RESEARCH AND INFORMATION WEEK
BY THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH AND INFORMATION
GROUP (IDRIG) AND THE ADOPTION OF EVIDENCE-BASED
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION IN PARLIAMENT**

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to make this statement

Mr. Speaker, in recent times, Parliaments around the world are confronted with increasing public demand that outcomes of policy deliberations or legislations by their Representatives be well informed and supported by time tested evidence. The essence of the observed demand by the public, Mr. Speaker, is to for legislations and State policies to be more aligned to the needs and aspirations of the populace.

Indeed, a survey by conducted the Institute for Government based in the United Kingdom in 2016, revealed that 85 per cent of the people in UK want politicians, and Members of Parliament in particular, to consult professionals and experts when making difficult decisions. Eighty-three percent also indicated that they wanted their government to make decisions based on objective evidence.

Mr. Speaker, the raging argument now is that the world is living in an era of 'post-factual' or 'post-truth' politics, where evidence has a limited role in debates and public policy. While I cannot vouch for the veracity of this argument, it is nevertheless, ^a wake up call on us to reflect upon the demand and supply side of the use of evidence in the performance ~~support of the discharge~~ of our constitutional mandate.

Mr. Speaker, fortunately for us it is the turn of the Parliamentary Service in the celebration of our Silver Jubilee^{and} the Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group (IDRIG) is leading the charge in a week long Programme from 17th July to ~~20th~~ July, 2018, under the theme: **“25 Years of Parliamentary Democracy: the Role of Research and Information”**.

Established in 2016, Mr. Speaker, IDRIG is an institutional structure composed of Departments of the Parliamentary Service responsible for information services delivery. The Departments include Library, Hansard, Research, Public Affairs, Committees and ICT. IDRIG’s mission is to ensure the adoption of evidenced-based research and quality information by Parliamentarians to pass laws that meet the aspirations of the people and also deepen Ghana’s democracy.

Mr. Speaker, it is instructive to mention that, every Report that is presented to this House has a very familiar line, **“I would ask that the Hansard Department captures the entirety of the Report while I read certain salient points...”** – Reports are often prepared by Committee Chairs with inputs from the information services departments. It goes to tell us how essential these research and information departments are in ensuring that evidence-based research is at the core of the delivery of the mandate of this institution.

Evidence is a crucial ingredient for effective delivery of parliament’s core function. Members of the legislature require research support in a form that is appropriate for their work. They need access to timely, up-to-date, accurate and well-researched information in

order to properly perform their constitutionally mandated duties. As Keith Cunningham, a Former Senior Manager in the United Kingdom's House of Commons Library once put it, "The lifeblood of parliaments is information, so parliaments need information services to help them to manage the information flows that sustain democracy across the world".

Access to credible information and reliable research can help empower legislatures to formulate and pass effective legislation and perform effective oversight of government. Political arguments become richer and better ^{if} ~~because~~ Members of Parliament ^{have} ~~receive~~ up-to-date information through these Departments.

The Parliamentary Service Board should therefore seek to enhance the capacity of these departments to continue to support ^{the} ~~our~~ work. ^{9 10;}
The Groups collaborations with think tanks and academia should also be deepened, so as to continuously feed members with up-to-date information.

Mr. Speaker, permit me, ~~I would like~~ to use this opportunity to tell our friends in Academia and Policy think-tanks in Ghana that we MPs are "lovers" of scientific works and research publications. I encourage them to come closer to Parliament and understand our legislative environment, so that we can together develop synergies to enable them to contribute to key policy debates.

I am informed that, some ~~of~~ think-tanks and State institutions that generate data and produce research publications are participating in the Week long Celebrations.

I urge these institutions to use the opportunity to engage Members and find ways to continuously share with members ~~with~~ their researched information. They must not wait for Parliament to conclude its work only to criticize the policy outcomes as some of them sometimes do.

I also urge ~~the~~ Colleagues Members of Parliament to patronise the Research and Information Week Celebrations. We should visit the Exhibition Stands, participate in the Seminar Series to be abreast ~~ourselves~~ with the various research and information products available to support our work as Parliamentarians, and to enrich our debate and outcomes of legislative deliberations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker for the opportunity granted me.

