

Statement by Hon Rev John Ntim Fordjour, MP for Assin South Constituency
**In Commemoration of the 152nd Canadian Independence and Lessons from
 Her Economic Progression**

Rt. Hon Speaker,

Thank you for the opportunity afforded me to make this statement in commemoration of the 152nd Canadian Independence and lessons from her economic success.

Mr Speaker, permit me to foremost convey my best wishes and congratulatory message to the people of Canada for attaining 152 years of its founding. Mr Speaker, Canada, just like Ghana, has a history of colonial dominance. Colonized by the French at the beginning of the 1600's, Canada was conquered by England during the Seven Years' War (1756-63). The Treaty of Paris, which was signed after the war, gave England control until the British North America Act of 1867 provided for the unification of the Canadian provinces and served as the country's first constitution.

On July 1, 1867, with the passage of the British North America Act, the Dominion of Canada was officially established as a self-governing jurisdiction within the British Empire. Two years later, Canada acquired the vast possessions of the Hudson's Bay Company, and within a decade the provinces of Manitoba and Prince Edward Island had joined the Canadian federation.

Mr Speaker, I deem it very relevant to outline that Canada has a history of a unique and outstanding relations with Ghana and interactions between these two countries even date back to the pre-independence era of the Gold Coast when in 1906, Quebec missionaries established a church in Navrongo in northern Ghana, thus marking the arrival of the first Canadian presence in the country.

Since then, bilateral relations between Ghana and Canada has been strong and cordial, and has been further enhanced by the more than sixty years of cooperation on the global scene, particularly in the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

One of such relations is evidenced in trade and investments. Mr Speaker, Canada's commercial involvement in Ghana includes significant gold mining and infrastructure development. Through Canada's Enhanced Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy to Strengthen Canada's Extractive Sector Abroad, the Government of Canada helps Canadian companies strengthen their CSR practices and maximize the benefits their investments can provide to those in host countries. In 2016, trade between Ghana and Canada reached \$265.3 million. Canadian exports totalled more than \$252.3 million, while imports from Ghana reached \$67.2 million.

Export Development Canada has designated Ghana as one of its 4 key markets in Sub-Saharan Africa. Other elements of interest are the presence of the Canadian Commercial Corporation and the existence of a Canada-Ghana Chamber of Commerce. Mr Speaker, Ghanaian and Canadian officials have met on many occasions in recent years to exchange and discuss proposals for bilateral Air Transport Agreement. In October 2011 for example, both countries concluded an MOU allowing for Canadian carriers to offer code-share services into Ghana. It is worth mentioning that on Parliamentary Diplomacy, Ghana-Canada Parliamentary

Friendship Association was the first in the 7th Parliament of Ghana to host counterpart Parliamentarians and Senators in the Parliament of Ghana in August 2017, where best legislative practices were benchmarked and shared. In exchange, the leadership of Ghana's Parliament and other Parliamentary Committees have on separate occasions visited Canada's Federal Parliament and Senate in Ottawa as well as the Provincial Legislative Assembly of Ontario to further deepen the already cordial diplomatic relations between the two Parliaments.

Mr Speaker, Canadian relations with Africa and Ghana in particular, have resulted in significant development and humanitarian assistance. As a matter of fact, Ghana was the first country in Africa to receive development assistance from Canada in 1957 and remains an eminent development country of focus. Canada is among the top five bilateral donors to Ghana. In 2015–2016, the Government of Canada contributed more than \$135 million in official development assistance to Ghana.

Mr Speaker, Canada's bilateral development program has focused more on supporting climate-smart agriculture as an engine for inclusive and sustainable economic growth; improving access to and use of affordable and nutritious foods; increasing access to sanitation and hygiene services in under-served areas thereby stimulating sustainable economic growth through improving public financial management and reducing barriers to doing business, while promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Effectively, all these interventions serve as credible examples for Ghana, of which when taken seriously, would greatly inure to our benefit.

Mr Speaker, on the occasion of Canada's 152nd Independence, it is instructive to note that the remarkable narrative of Canada as a nation-state, offers a great deal of hope and distinguished example for the people of Ghana, especially in the area of enhancing the agro-industry as well as the utilization of our natural resources for economic gain.

At the Confederation stage, Canada was regarded as rural and underdeveloped country of approximately 3.6 million people with agriculture comprising 40 per cent of the country's GDP, a total output of \$388 million as at 1870 and real per capita GDP at \$2,700. From this humble beginning nonetheless, Canada has grown to become one of the most successful countries in the world with a creditably high standard of living. By 2015 for example, Canada's GDP was nearly \$2 trillion and its per capita GDP was approximately \$55,000. Presently, Canada's population of some 37 million people is 85 per cent urban while major cities regularly top international rankings for livability and quality of life.

Mr Speaker, Canada's 9.984 million square kilometer land coupled with its 202,080-kilometer coastline make it the second largest country in the world after Russia, with considerable endowment of natural resources and population density of four people per square kilometer. Unrelentingly, Canada's economy has grown over the years to become the 11th largest economy in the world, and has the 19th highest per capita GDP, the 10th largest exporter in the world, and ranked 9th on the Human Development Index.

Mr Speaker, I conclude by stating that the above-mentioned impressive facts attributed to Canada were not achieved overnight, but as of July 1st 2019, this country had chalked 152 years since its founding, which only points out that economic success is a process and it is achieved over time. Therefore, I believe that with hard work, able-leadership and the

adoption of ingenious and novel flagship programs like free and compulsory education, One district- One Factory and Planting for Food and Jobs among others, are the sure way to go as a country as we make strides to transform our dear nation into one that is economically viable and sustainable. On this note Mr Speaker, I sincerely wish all Canadians, particularly those living in Ghana, a Happy Independence anniversary. God bless Ghana, God bless Canada, God bless us all.

Thank you Mr Speaker, I am indeed grateful.