

IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA

TWENTY-NINTH REPORT OF THE
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

ON

**HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT'S NOMINATIONS
FOR APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER AND DEPUTY
MINISTER TO THE MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN
AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

DECEMBER, 2022

REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE ON HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT'S NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER AND DEPUTY MINISTER TO THE MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article 144(2) of the 1992 Constitution, H.E. the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, on Tuesday 25th October, 2022 communicated to Parliament, the nomination of the following persons for appointment as Minister and Deputy Minister to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection:

- i. **Ms Lariba Zuweira Abudu** - MP and Minister Designate for Gender, Children and Social Protection
- ii. **Ms Francisca Ofeng Mensah** - MP and Deputy Minister Designate for Gender, Children and Social Protection

The Rt Hon Speaker of the House in accordance with Standing Order 172 referred the nominations to the Appointments Committee for consideration and report.

2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Committee referred to the under-listed documents during the consideration of the Nominees:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;

- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament;
- iii. The Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the Nominees.

3.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE REFERRAL

Pursuant to Order 172(3) of the Standing Orders of Parliament, the names of the Minister and Deputy Minister designates were published in the newspapers for the attention of the public. The publication also requested for Memoranda from the public in respect of the Nominees.

The Committee subsequently sought and obtained Confidential Reports on the Nominees from the Ghana Police Service and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). Again, the Committee requested and obtained Tax Status Reports on the Nominees from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

The Committee thereafter, held a Public Hearing on 15th December, 2022, to consider the nominations. The Nominees subscribed to the Witness Oath and proceeded to answer questions posed by Honourable Members. The Nominees were asked questions relating to their Curriculum Vitae, matters relating to Social Welfare, witch camps, women participation in politics and the Affirmative Action. Further enquiries were made about their eligibility, issues pertaining to the office to which they have been nominated and other issues of national concern.

The Committee after its deliberations reports on the Nominees as follows:

4.0 HON LARIBA ZUWEIRA ABUDU

(MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION)

4.1 BACKGROUND

Hon Lariba Zuweira Abudu was born on 12th May, 1966, in Walewale. She had her Middle School Education at the Walewale Middle School in 1974. The Nominee upon completion of her Middle School Education in 1979, taught as a pupil teacher in Walewale. After obtaining the Teachers Certificate 'A' from the Tamale Training College in 1991, she was employed as a trained teacher at the Nuriya Primary School in Tamale. Progressing through her educational ranks, the Nominee was elevated to the position of an Assistant Head Teacher at Darul-Islam Nursery in Tamale in 2000.

The Nominee then proceeded to the University of Education, Winneba, to read Bachelor of Arts in Social Studies and Special Education from 2000 to 2004. The Nominee obtained a Master of Arts Degree in Leadership and Development from the University for Development Studies, Tamale in 2015.

She represented the people of Fungu Electoral Area as an Assembly Woman from 2004 to 2016 and also served as a Presiding Member at the West Mamprusi Municipal Assembly from 2006 to 2017. In 2018, the Nominee worked as a Coordinator with the Special Needs Education at the Ghana Education Service in the Northern Region. The Nominee became the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Corporate Affairs & Social Development) at the Northern Development Authority from 2018 to 2021.

The Nominee has been the Member of Parliament for the Walewale Constituency since 7th January, 2021. Currently, she is the Deputy Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection. In 2013, she was appointed the Chairperson for the National Literacy Acceleration Programme.

The Nominee has been a member of many professional bodies including: the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the Savanna Women Empowerment Group Ghana (SWEKG), the Queen Mothers' Association and Women in Peace Building in the Northern Region.

Hon Lariba Zuweira Abudu attended a number of conferences and capacity-building programmes including the Parallel Session of the United Nations General Assembly of Obstetric

Fistula, New York, USA in June 2022; the Security Council, Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security Agenda, Security Council Chamber, United Nations in September, 2022 and the 3rd African Girls Summit in Niamey, Niger.

The Nominee received awards including the 2021 Passion for Good Governance Award for Impactful Women Award Initiative and the Northern Excellence Award, Pride of North East Women. Her hobbies include reading, sharing ideas and listening to music.

5.0 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

5.1 ON SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMME

When the Nominee was asked if she was aware of how much is provided for the feeding of a child under the School Feeding Programme, she said the Government provides GH¢0.79 per child for feeding per day. According to her, the amount is insufficient but Government is taking steps to ensure an increase in the amount. She intimated that the Committee on Gender and Children is currently deliberating on the matter and envisaged a recommendation for an increase in the feeding fee by the Committee.

The Nominee expressed concern about the quality of food provided to the children because it has direct impact on their cognitive development, physical health and overall performance in school.

She advocated for an increase in the number of schools covered under the School Feeding Programme since it is one of the major reasons most children stay enrolled in school.

The Nominee again indicated that when she is approved, she would hasten the digitalisation of the School Feeding Programme with the creation of a software application that will assist the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to monitor closely the activities and payments of caterers under the School Feeding Programme.

5.2 GIRLS IN ICT PROGRAMME

In response to the question of whether she would ensure full participation of all girls in the "Girls in ICT" programme, she answered in the affirmative. The Nominee called for collaboration between the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in the promotion of the programme. She said *Kayayei* between the ages of 9-16 could be trained under the "Girls in ICT" programme to equip them with the necessary skills in ICT that will invariably remove them from the markets.

5.3 SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

When asked how the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection would deal with issues of children with special needs, the Nominee indicated that with her expertise in training persons

with special needs, she would look at policies concerning such persons and implement them fully to ensure that such children are protected.

She called for all schools to be made disability-friendly and parents with such children sensitised to send their children to mainstream schools. She further asked for education of communities that frown on such children to accept them. Lastly, she believes early screening, early detection and early solution would help the children immensely, since it would ensure their easy integration into schools and the society.

5.4 EFFECT OF OBSTETRIC FISTULA ON WOMEN

Commenting on how her Ministry will help women who suffer from the complications of obstetric fistula, the Nominee stated that when she becomes a minister, she will ensure women receive the needed help to repair their fistula. According to her, most women of child bearing age suffer this predicament and are mostly marginalised because of their condition and the ignorance of the community concerning the disease.

She said that the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection has been educating and sensitising most communities on the causes of fistula. She added that because such women are stigmatised in their communities, they seek accommodation outside their communities after treatment. The Ministry normally provides skill training to the women who opt to

be isolated from their communities. The Ministry also provides them with accommodation and some capital to start their own businesses away from the prying eyes of the members of their communities. The Nominee thanked the UNDP for sponsoring the Ministry to support the women.

5.5 NOMINEE'S VIEWS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION BILL

In her answer to what she would do to ensure an early introduction and passage of the Affirmative Action Bill, she stated that the Bill is very key in the promotion of women in politics. According to her, the Bill is currently at Cabinet, but there is the need for further stakeholder consultations to fine tune it for presentation to Parliament.

5.6 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

On measures taken by the Ministry to help curb Gender Based Violence, she stated that her Ministry has collaborated with Stakeholders to provide a coordinated timely response to the victims. According to her, a lot of women and children have been sensitised on the use of a toll-free line at the Ministry. Victims who call the toll-free line are readily assisted by the police and provided with the needed support. The Ministry, together with the Ghana Police Service, provide early intervention and protection and that has helped save the lives of most women and children.

5.7 EARLY CHILD MARRIAGES

According to the Minister designate, even though there are around 80,000 child marriages in Ghana, the Ministry has always taken an interest in helping provide protection for these child-brides when it is brought to its attention. When confirmed, she will liaise with the Ghana Statistical Service to obtain data on communities where the situation is prevalent. It would help the Ministry target the prevalent areas and provide education and sensitisation to those communities.

5.8 SOCIAL WELFARE

With regard to the deplorable state of the Social Welfare Service, she indicated that most of the activities in the Social Welfare Department of the Ministry are supported by Donor Funding. According to her, when confirmed as Minister, she will consult with stakeholders to bring up new ideas and innovations to help improve on the operations of the Social Welfare Department to make it more functional and productive. She indicated that the Ministry is currently running the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme to help alleviate poverty in the society. She would, however, consider other social care services in addition to the LEAP when her nomination is approved.

5.9 OLD AGE HOMES

When asked of her knowledge of the only Old Age Home in Ghana and the support the Ministry can extend to the Home, she stated that she was very much aware of the Home but there has not been any budget allocation to the Home by Government. She assured the Committee that she would collaborate with stakeholders to help raise funds to support activities of the Home. The Ministry would also in future consider support to the Home.

5.10 SOCIAL VICES AT AGBOGBLOSHIE (OLD FADAMA)

When asked about what observation she has made of the situation of people at Agbogbloshie (Old Fadama) in the Odododiodioo Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, she stated that she had made some keen observation concerning the lack of accommodation and places of convenience for the youth, especially, the vulnerable girl child. She stated that the prevalence of child prostitution in the community will be addressed by sensitisation and education of the people in the community. Furthermore, her Ministry would educate the community on children's rights and the need to enroll them in schools.

The Committee expressed concern about the regular burning of e-waste at Agbogbloshie which has earned Ghana the title "the World's largest e-waste dumping site", and its effect on the

environment, health and safety of the people. She stated that she will collaborate with the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) to protect the children by educating them on the dangers of the hazardous fumes.

5.11 PLIGHT OF HEAD PORTERS (KAYAYEI)

On the topic of Kayayei, she stated that several efforts have been made by individuals, NGOs and the Ministry to provide the girls and women with employable skills. The girls or women after training have been sent home only for them to Accra.

She opined that perhaps the girls who are above the age of 18 years can be sensitised on their activities as *kayayei*. The operation of *kayayei* can also be dignified by enacting a law to regulate it. This in her opinion will help eliminate persons below the age of 18 years from the practice and also ensure their enrollments in school.

5.12 NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

When asked if she was aware of the disappearance of some 400 tricycles from the yard of Northern Development Authority in December, 2019, the Nominee answered in the negative.

She stressed that she had not been invited by the Police and was not the officer in charge of the tricycles. She however confirmed that she was the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Corporate

and Social Development at the Northern Development Authority.

In response to the question of whether she had seen the Auditor General's Report which indicts her as having received the tricycles without payment, the Nominee said that she was not aware of the Report and has neither been invited by the Police nor the Auditor-General for any interrogation.

5.16 NOMINEE'S CONTRIBUTION TO SPECIAL NEEDS' EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN REGION

The Nominee in enumerating her contribution and experience as a Special Needs coordinator at the Ghana Education Service in the Northern Region, stated that she visited families who had children with special needs and sensitised them on the need to enroll their children in schools. According to her, she did community engagements all year round and helped to increase the enrollment of children with special needs in schools in the Northern Region.

5.17 WITCHES CAMPS

The Honourable Minister designate stated that even though the accusation of witchcraft is targeted at poor elderly women in the community, her Ministry has given some education and sensitisation in most of these communities for a very long time. She believes that the introduction of a Bill to criminalise the

activities surrounding witchcraft will benefit the country immensely when passed. She also said that the practice is dehumanising and she would engage stakeholders to find solution to the menace.

5.18 VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

When asked about what she will do about fees charged for medical examination of rape victims, the Nominee informed the Committee that the Ministry already had measures in place for addressing such cases. She stated that, when such cases are brought to the notice of the Ministry refunds are made to the victims.

She assured the Committee that the Ministry will further sensitise rape victims and the public to report these cases to the police to ensure that the perpetrators are prosecuted and punished accordingly.

5.19 ROLE AS MEMBER OF NPP MANIFESTO COMMITTEE ON GENDER

When asked about the role she played as a member of the NPP Manifesto Committee on Gender, she stated that together with the Members, they focused on ways to include women in the decision-making processes in the country. They also considered processes for increasing the quota of women representation at the District Assemblies to 30 per cent, free maternal care,

enrolment onto the LEAP and the increase in the number of schools under the School Feeding Programmes.

5.20 INCREASING NUMBER OF STREET CHILDREN

The Committee expressed concern about the increasing number of street children with medical conditions soliciting funds at traffic intersections in the city. The Nominee stated that when the Committee approves of her nomination, she will ensure that all such children are enrolled on the National Health Insurance Scheme.

She also stated that the Ministry would conduct research into the phenomenon and strategise to get the children off the streets.

5.22 SHEA NUT BUSINESS

When asked if she was engaged in shea nut business, she answered in the affirmative and stated that she has been in that business for a long while. She however, emphasised that she was not involved in the scandal concerning an Honorable Member of Parliament and two other business men. She acknowledged that she has had a number of business transactions with the two businessmen involved in the scandal and was aware of an outstanding payment. She stated that she was also aware that the matter has been resolved by the court.

When confronted with a promissory note which indicated an amount of GH¢1,500,000 presented by her agent for payment

of shea nut purchased on her behalf, she denied knowledge of the promissory note nor the person who sent it.

5.23 NOMINEE'S VIEWS ON LGBTQI+

Responding to a question about her stand on the recent topical issue about the LGBTQI+ and whether it should be criminalised, she stated that, as far as the country's culture and values frown on it, she cannot have an opinion about it.

5.24 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends to the House by **Consensus**, the approval of the nomination of Ms Lariba Zuweira Abudu as Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection.

6.0 HON FRANCISCA OTENG MENSAH

(DEPUTY MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION)

6.1 BACKGROUND

Hon Francisca Oteng Mensah was born on 14th February, 1993, at Mampong in the Ashanti Region. She started her basic education from Revival International School and completed at Angel Educational Complex obtaining her Basic Education Certificate (B.E.C.E) in 2009. She proceeded to St. Roses Senior High School for her secondary education and obtained the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate in 2013. The Nominee had her tertiary education at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology from the year 2013 to 2017, and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Law (LLB).

Hon Francisca Oteng Mensah undertook national service at Angel Group of Companies from 2017 to 2018. She is currently the Member of Parliament for Kwabre East Constituency in the Ashanti Region. She is also the Board Chairperson of the National Youth Authority and Board Member of Angel Group of Companies, Atwima Rural Bank, and Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority.

The Nominee has attended numerous workshops including the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) programme on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Bali, Indonesia, in 2017; the 75th Executive Session, African Parliamentary Union in Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti, in 2019; the 17th Conference of Speaker and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association - Africa Region in Kigali, Rwanda, in November, 2021; Women in Public and Corporate Governance Leadership in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in 2021; the 8th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Cairo, Egypt, in 2022 and Impact of Gender Awareness, Equality and Diversity on National Development in New York, United States of America, in 2022.

Hon Francisca Oteng Mensah has received awards including the Ghana Peace Award in 2017, the Trailblazer Award by Glitz Africa in 2017, the Young Professional Role Model Award in Politics and the Africa Inspiring Law Maker of the Year Award in 2022. The Nominee's hobbies are swimming and reading.

6.2 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

6.3 IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF ORPHANAGES

On the measures to employ to improve the management of orphanages in Ghana, the Nominee stated that there are only three government owned orphanages in the country with all the

others being privately owned. She stated there is the need for the introduction of the foster care system to provide family-based setting for orphans and children whose biological families are unable or unwilling to care for them.

6.4 WITCHES CAMPS

Detailing her thoughts on how to address the phenomenon where women alleged to be witches and banished from their communities seek solace at 'witch camps', Hon Francisca Oteng Mensah described the situation as very unfortunate and advocated for partial abolition of such camps.

According to her, women who are branded witches find these camps as safe havens. In her opinion, such actions are based on hasty decisions taken by the members of the community. She mentioned that when the Committee approves her nomination, she would assist her Minister to entreat corporate Ghana to assist the women in the witch camps. She continued that where it becomes difficult to integrate the women back into their families and communities there is the need to educate the communities against their actions and encourage the families to accept them back into the community.

She also suggested that the State should intervene by enforcing the laws against those who classify old women as witches. She

recognised that the State of Ghana can help relocate those women to other parts of the country to enable them have a complete and fulfilling lives.

6.5 OLD AGE HOMES

The Nominee in an answer to the question whether she is aware of an old age home located at Bekwai in the Ashanti region, stated that she became aware of the old age home by reason of her membership of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Gender and Children. She also stated that the Parliamentary Select Committee on Gender and Children of which she is a member is yet to visit the facility. She assured the Committee that she would impress upon the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection to visit the facility when her nomination is approved.

6.6 ACHIEVEMENTS AS CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH AUTHORITY

Answering a question on her achievements as Chairperson of the National Youth Authority, she stated that during her tenure the Authority established ten (10) Youth Recreational Centres across the country. She added that the Authority created an online training portal for youth entrepreneurs to equip them with knowledge on electronic marketing. The Youth Parliament programme was also created as a mentorship programme to train the youth in leadership and public speaking.

6.7 THE YOUTH AND BETTING

When the Committee inquired about the strategies that she intends to put in place to curb the astronomical increase in betting among the youth, she stated that it is of huge concern to her.

She recalled an incident during her campaign for the position of Member of Parliament where she entered a barbering shop and was surprised by the number of young people engaged in betting. She assured the Committee that when confirmed, she will collaborate with her sector Minister to have a stakeholder engagement on the matter, and sensitise the youth on the negative implications of sports betting in her Constituency and the country at large.

6.8 CLASH OF IDEAS BETWEEN DEPUTY MINISTER AND MINISTER

The Nominee, when asked how she intends to manage ideological differences between her and the substantive Minister, reiterated her commitment to maintain good working relations with the sector Minister.

She further indicated that her duty as a Deputy Minister is essentially to assist the Minister in the discharge of her duties at the Ministry. However, in instances where they disagree on issues,

she would use her lobbying skills to appeal to the sector minister to arrive at a middle ground.

6.9 THE NOMINEE'S OPINION ON THE KAYAYEI (HEAD POTTERS) PHENOMENON

In expressing her opinion on the *kayayei* phenomenon, the Nominee said she considers the phenomenon very demeaning and expressed concern about the inclusion of children between the ages of 10 and 12 years in such an activity.

She promised her Ministry would collaborate with the Ministry of Trade and Industry to employ the *kayayei* in the factories established under the 1D1F programme.

She also reiterated that because all efforts to curb the phenomenon have failed, she would collaborate with the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection to conduct research for better understanding of the phenomenon to help bring out pragmatic solutions to end the phenomenon.

6.10 ALLEGATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST AT THE NATIONAL YOUTH AUTHORITY

In her response to a question whether she was not in a conflict-of-interest position as the Board Chairperson of National Youth Authority (NYA) when Adonko Bitters was awarded a contract to

supply sanitisers to the Authority, she indicated that she was not directly involved in the award of contracts and was therefore not aware of the contract awarded Adonko Bitters until her attention was drawn to the petition forwarded to CHRAJ on the award of the contract.

According to her, the Board of the NYA only approved an amount of Three Million (**GHC3,000,000.00**) Ghana Cedis for COVID-19 campaign and related activities.

The Nominee again stated that she was not a member of the Entity Tender Committee and as such there was no way she could influence the decision to award the contract to Adonko Bitters.

She opined that the shortage of hand sanitisers in the country necessitated its purchase from all available companies that had the capacity to produce same. The Nominee confirmed the purchase of Three Million Ghana Cedis (**GHC3,000,000.00**) worth of hand sanitisers from other Ghanaian companies including GIHOC Distilleries by the Authority.

6.11 RECOMMENDATION

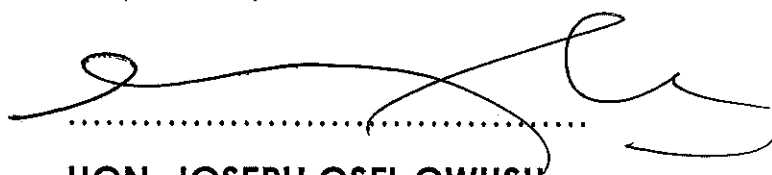
The Committee recommends to the House by **Consensus**, the approval of the nomination of Ms Francisca Oteng Mensah as Deputy Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection.

6.12 CONCLUSION AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

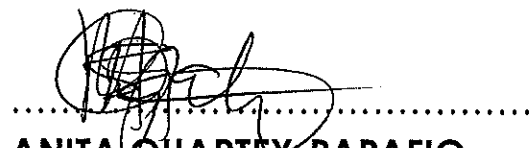
The Committee in the light of the provisions in Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 172 considered the two Nominees of H.E. the President as Minister and Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The Nominees demonstrated very good knowledge in issues of social welfare and human rights. They also showed competence in the management of issues concerning social security, social care services, livelihood, and employment support for women, children and the vulnerable.

The Committee, therefore, recommends to the House to adopt its report and approve by **consensus Ms Lariba Zuweira Abudu and Ms Francisca Oteng Mensah** as Minister and Deputy Minister respectively for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

Respectfully submitted.



HON. JOSEPH OSEI-OWUSU
(FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE)



ANITA QUARTEY-PAPAFIO
(HEAD, GOVERNANCE CLUSTER OF COMMITTEES AND CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE)

