

**IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE SIXTH  
PARLIAMENT OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC  
OF GHANA**



**THIRTEENTH REPORT OF THE  
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

*ON*

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE  
PRESIDENT'S NOMINATION FOR  
APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER  
FOR THE MINISTRY OF TRADE  
AND INDUSTRY**

*AUGUST, 2014*



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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama in furtherance of Article 78 of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 communicated to Parliament for prior approval the nomination of Mr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah as Minister-Designate for the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The nomination was subsequently referred by the Rt. Hon. Speaker to the Appointments Committee for consideration and report pursuant to Order 172 of the Standing Orders of the House.

**2.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

The Committee referred to the following documents during its Public Hearing and subsequent deliberations:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;
- ii. The Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana; and
- iii. The Curriculum Vitae of the Nominee.

**3.0 PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 As part of its procedures and in line with the provisions of the Standing Orders of the House, the Committee caused to be published the name of the nominee in the national dailies for three consecutive times to request memoranda from the general public. The publication also carried the Programme of the Public Hearing for the attention of the general public.
- 3.2 Additionally, the Committee obtained Confidential Reports with respect to the nominee from the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) and the Ghana Police Service. The Tax Status of the nominee was also obtained from the Ghana Revenue Authority to guide its deliberations.

#### **4.0 PUBLIC HEARING**

The Committee held a Public Hearing on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 to consider the qualification, eligibility and capability of the nominee for the position to which he has been nominated. At the commencement of proceedings, the nominee subscribed to the Oath of a Witness. The Committee then proceeded to ask questions relating to the nominee's citizenship, records of his office and issues connected with the position to which he had been nominated. The nominee also answered questions relating to general issues of national interest.

#### **5.0 THE NOMINEE'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Mr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah informed the Committee that he was born on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1953 in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. He attended the Achimota Secondary School where he obtained the Advanced Level Certificate in July, 1970. He proceeded to the University of Ghana, Legon where he graduated with Bachelor's Degree in English in 1973. He continued his tertiary education at the same University and received a Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Communication in 1975. He again attended the Ohio University and graduated with Master of Arts in International Affairs from September, 1978 to 1979. He further attended the New York University where he obtained a Graduate Certificate in International Banking and Finance.

In May, 2001, the nominee was awarded Doctor of Laws (Honoris Causa) by the Middlebury University, USA in recognition of his exemplary services rendered to Ghana and the international community.

The nominee discharged his national service obligation at the Adisadel College in Cape Coast where he taught English Language between 1973 and 1974. He then worked at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation in Accra as TV Talk Show Host and Radio Current Affairs Analyst between 1976 and 1978. He also acted as the Manager and Accounts Supervisor for the Ghana Advertising and Marketing Limited within the same period.

From August, 1979 to January, 1985, the nominee worked with the Hill and Knowlton Incorporated in New York, London, Paris and Geneva as the



Chairman and Accounts Supervisor for the Middle East and Africa Group. He then moved to the South Western Bell Publications in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania as the Advertising Sales Executive from February, 1985 to August, 1987 from where he proceeded to the City Federal Savings and Loans in New Jersey in the United States of America from 1987 to 1988.

The nominee was also engaged as the Corporate Relations Officer by the International Finance Company in Washington, USA from August, 1988 to July, 1991. Between August, 1991 and June, 1994, he was appointed as the Head of Communications for the African Development Bank in Cote D'Ivoire.

In June, 1994, the nominee was appointed as Ghana's Ambassador to the USA and Mexico and held the position until June, 1997. He was thereafter appointed as Chairman for the Public Education Committee for the Re-introduction of the Value Added Tax from July, 1997 to December, 1998 and also doubled as the Acting Chairman for the National Communications Authority within the same period.

The nominee was the Minister for Communications from July, 1997 to December, 1998 and also acted as the Minister for Mines and Energy in 1999. Between January, 1999 and January, 2001, he was again appointed as the Minister for Education.

He moved on to private practice and held the position of the Chief Executive Officer for the Spio-Garbrah & Associates in Accra from January, 2001 to August, 2003. From September, 2003 to September, 2011, he was appointed to the position of the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization in the United Kingdom. He was also appointed the President of the Dominion University College from January, 2012 to August, 2013 and again as the Chief Executive Officer of the Action Chapel International, Accra from October, 2011 to August, 2013.

Mr. Spio-Garbrah has served in several positions in different capacities on boards of public and private sector entities. He is currently a member of the AngloGold Ashanti and also holds chairmanship positions in the

African Business Media, the Cape Coast ICT Park Company, the Centre on e-Governance and the African Cancer Organization in London.

The nominee is also the current Coordinating Consultant for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the African Development Bank, Tunisia and has held the position since September, 2013.

## **6.0 NOMINEE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS**

The following answers were given by the nominee in response to questions posed to him by Hon. Members of the Committee at the Public Hearing:

### **6.1 Promoting Trade and Industry in Ghana**

On the question of what policies he would introduce to promote the country's trade and industry, the nominee stated that he did not intend to introduce any new policy but rather focus his attention on the many policies and initiatives designed in the past 15 years to improve the sector. In doing so, he will examine the status of implementation of the existing policies and initiatives in order to chart the best way forward. He also further stated that he will rely on existing commitments, the 2012 Manifesto of the NDC, assurances given by the President during his State of the Nation Address as well as those determined by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to drive his agenda. He promised to do his best within the shortest possible time by insisting on performance delivery which in his view is an essential element that is usually lacking in policy implementation in the country.

### **6.2 Performance as Minister of Education**

On how he performed as Minister of Education where he superintended for one year, the nominee pointed to working closely with the University lecturers and teachers in general to ensure the stability and development in the educational sector and the institution of the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND). The nominee stated he had an excellent working relationship with the leadership of the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) and asserted that he was the first Minister to have donated a pick-up vehicle to the organization. To this, his attention was drawn to the fact



that Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings was the first Government official to have donated a Peugeot 504 Station Wagon to the cause of the NUGS through the then Secretary of Education in 1979. In other words, Mr. Spio Garbrah could not have been the first Minister of State to have donated a vehicle, a pick-up, to the NUGS. The nominee stated that, that was what he was told at the time of the donation.

### **6.3 Measures to Curb Invasion of Retail Sector by Foreigners**

On how he will address the invasion of retail sector by foreigners, the nominee stated that though Ghana is a signatory to the ECOWAS Treaty on Free Movement of People and Goods that did not mean that nationals of Member States could just enter the country and commence any economic activity. He noted that the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, 2003 (Act 865) has reserved some enterprises such as petty trading for the exclusive participation by Ghanaians and that must be respected by all foreigners. He added that foreigners had to study the laws of Ghana before venturing into any economic activities in Ghana but also cautioned that the country should act reasonably in that regard to avoid possible retaliatory measures that may have adverse effects on the activities of Ghanaian nationals abroad. He cited the efforts of the Presidential Task Force constituted to handle aspects of the issue but stressed that we should try to live peaceably with neighbours at all times. He further noted the perceived connivance of some Ghanaians who registered companies with the ostensible object to carry out a reserved activity and afterwards hand them over to foreigners to operate. He suggested the adoption of an inter-agency approach to tackle the issue. He finally promised to fully support the Presidential Task Force to do its work.

### **6.4 Comments on the Controversial “Team B” Article**

Commenting on his article published in September, 2009 in which he referred to some of the then Ministers of State as “Team B” players, the nominee at the outset stated that he had only intended to bring to the attention of his Government what he had heard people say on public radios. Further he stated that, the statement had been twisted by propagandists and other political activists thereby generating controversy. He also refuted the assertion that he intended the publication as a means to secure ministerial appointment since at the time he made the statement

he was the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization and hence his compensation package was far higher than any Minister in Ghana. After the Committee had directed him to read the relevant portion of the article, he admitted that the relevant constructions in the article did not make it appear that he was just reflecting what majority of Ghanaians were saying. He also admitted that it was unscientific for any critical analysis to conclude from radio discussions and phone-ins that whatever represented the majority opinion was reflective of that of the general populace. He disclosed to the Committee that he had since then apologized on various platforms to people who felt denigrated by the publication. He further seized the opportunity of the Public Hearing and rendered unqualified apology to persons who felt offended by his remarks.

#### **6.5 Transitional Arrangements Regarding his Contract with the African Development Bank**

In his response to the question regarding transitional arrangements to end his contract with the African Development Bank (AfDB) as Coordinator for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the AFDB, Mr. Spio-Garbrah informed the Committee that his contract with the Bank was due to end in December, 2014 and also disclosed that H.E. the President had already held discussions with the President of the Bank concerning his nomination to ensure a smooth transition. He also assured the Committee that he had made arrangements to terminate the contract if he was found worthy by the House. Questioned about whether he had a legal contract with AfDB and whether he could produce same to the Committee, the nominee insisted that he has a legitimate contract but added that he thought the burden would lie on the Committee to request same from the Bank and not him to produce it.

#### **6.6 Views on the Youth Entrepreneurial Support (YES Fund)**

Responding to a question to solicit his views on the YES Fund recently launched by the President, the nominee stated that he endorsed the GH¢10 Million Fund as it would support the youth to start their own businesses by providing them with the much needed financial support. He observed that a major challenge facing the youth in starting their own businesses was



how to write bankable proposals in accessing Funds of this nature. In order to address this challenge to enable the youth secure the Fund, he will offer the necessary support to the various agencies under the Ministry of Trade and Industry to provide adequate business and technical assistance to the youth. He cited the Business Advisory Centres and the National Board for Small Scale Industries established as some of the agencies he would engage to achieve his objectives. He also promised to encourage the youth to venture into agri-businesses under the Fund as well as support them to run efficient enterprises. In addition, he indicated his commitment to bring to bear his international experiences to source additional funds from international sources such as Equity Funds to complement this initiative of the State if given the nod by the august House.

### **6.7 Attracting Young People into Agribusiness**

When asked about his strategies to assist the youth into agribusiness, the nominee noted that agriculture is the mainstay of the economy and for that reason adequate measures should be put in place to promote growth in the sector. He said that the excessive importation of food products especially rice and chicken into the country put pressure on the Ghanaian currency and therefore contribute partly to economic difficulties. He was of the view that the difficulty in attracting the necessary investments into the sector was due to the fact that most people did not know about the immense potential of the agricultural sector. He therefore promised that he would devise appropriate strategies to attract people engaged in short term ventures to move to long term investments in the agricultural sectors. He referred to the successful story of the “Operation Feed Yourself” policy but wondered why successive Governments had failed to continue the policy to sustain interest in agriculture. He however recognized efforts being made by Government in tasking Districts to select agricultural products of comparative advantage for promotion as a way of promoting rural industrialization.

With respect to revamping the poultry industry, he lauded the decision by Government to select the poultry industry for revitalization and stated that such an initiative would help create jobs. Due to the high risk involved in the poultry industry, the nominee further suggested that day old chicks be supplied by Government to farmers at subsidized rates as part of measures to revamp the industry.

## **6.8 Views on the Economic Partnership Agreement**

In answering the question on his views on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) which may be signed between Ghana and the European Union, the nominee alluded to the concerns expressed by many groups including civil society groups. He also agreed with a suggestion that if Ghana signs the Agreement, the country stands to benefit from capacity building programmes. As to whether he would support the idea that Ghana should sign the Agreement, he stated that he would support any external Agreement which had favourable terms to help the country to industrialize, provide knowledge and the technical skills and enhance product quality. He stated that such criteria would guide the consideration of the EPA when it comes up signing. He paid homage to the Ministers of Trade and Industry across the Sub region, Chief Negotiators and International Experts who played various roles negotiating the Agreement. To ensure that Ghana benefited fully when the EPA is signed, he was of the view that we should critically scrutinize the EPA to ascertain the terms that would inure to the country's benefit and take full advantage of such terms. He further disclosed that about 60,000 Chinese companies were due to go out of business in China by September, 2014 and Ghana could take advantage of the situation by attracting such investors to boost domestic production in order to benefit under the EPA when signed.

## **6.9 Measures to Promote Rural Industrialization**

In response to strategies he would adopt to promote rural industrialization when given the nod, the nominee noted that a lot of work had already been done but also admitted that much more work remained to be done. He cited for example the efforts being made by Government to extend the free zones policy to Kumasi and Sekondi and other areas yet to be identified in other parts of the country for possible expansion of the policy. He disclosed that the Free Zones in the Greater Accra Region employed about 8,000 persons apart from their contribution to the growth of the economy. In this regard, he hinted that he would encourage industries to take advantage of the 25% rebate available to companies situated outside district capitals as provided under the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act.



In addition to these measures, he would harness the technical expertise of the over hundred Business Centres in the various Districts across the nation to develop bankable proposals on specific products of comparative advantage to them in the bid to establish cottage industry to create jobs for the rural folks.

#### **6.10 Promoting Made in Ghana Products**

The nominee stated he would promote made-in-Ghana products and in that regard repeatedly challenged the House to set the example by procuring made-in-Ghana furniture to furnish the JOB 600 Office Complex to which suggestion his attention was drawn to the fact that the procurement process has just commenced. The nominee was informed that it was almost impossible for any local producer to have the quality of the same hardwood to furnish the entire block. Mr. Spio Garbrah commended Government's efforts in promoting made-in-Ghana products by conscientizing Ghanaians to buy local products. He referred to the sacrifice made by the people of Japan to patronize their own rice which propelled the development of Japan. He explained that by buying local products, the Ghanaian currency will be strengthened.

#### **6.11 Initiatives to address Trade Deficits**

The nominee stressed that he was not going to re-invent the wheel but will seek to implement existing commitments and assurances through teamwork. He promised to offer ideas and experiences acquired through his international endeavours to assist in attracting foreign investors into the country. He explained that when the country is able to boost its domestic production especially in the area of food processing, excessive food imports into the country would cease. He emphasized that it was not bad for a country to import goods into its country but what mattered was the kind of products that the country imports. He therefore advised that imports should be limited to equipment and machinery to run industries to produce food products for local consumption and for export.

The nominee further mentioned the high demand for foreign goods as one of the major challenges affecting the balance of trade deficits. In the light of this, he would intensify public education on the need to patronize 'Made in

Ghana Goods' and also ensure that procurement policies compel public institutions to purchase local products for their consumption. According to the nominee, this could also provide a guaranteed market for local industries to expand production and create more jobs for the teeming youth of this country.

### **6.12 Addressing Piracy of Textile Designs**

In addressing the challenge of piracy of textile designs threatening the existence of the country's textile industries, the nominee told the Committee of his intention, if approved, of reviewing existing policies and legislations of the intellectual property rights in order to identify their implementation and enforcement challenges so as to effectively tackle it. In addition, he would study reports of the Taskforce put in place by the outgoing Minister to deal with the challenge to inform his discussions with the Attorney-General's Department on possible reviews of the existing legislations. As part of his intended policy measures, he would deploy appropriate information technology infrastructure to the various border posts and ports to aid identification of pirated designs and where necessary ensure that appropriate sanctions are meted out to perpetrators to discourage the practice.

### **6.13 Curbing Corruption at the Country's Ports**

The nominee indicated to the Committee that the high level of corruption among Officials at the country's ports was a shared concern. He said corruption issues were hydra-headed that need to be tackled in collaborative manner. In his view, the several institutions with unclear and overlapping responsibilities; the discretionary regime of fees charged and low level of adoption of IT infrastructure at the Ports are among the factors aiding corruption at the Ports. He assured the Committee of his commitment to address the corruption issues with policy interventions of previous Ministers of the Trade and Industry by automating all processes at the Port to reduce human interfacing which is a veritable conduit for the perpetuation of corrupt practices.



## 6.14 Addressing Challenges Bedeviling the Manufacturing Sector

In response to a question on measures to tackle the challenges confronting the manufacturing sector, the nominee acknowledged that the high cost of borrowing, erratic supply of power, forex losses and utility price hikes are threatening the competitiveness of our local industries. According to the nominee, one of his approaches to solve the challenges would be to encourage Ghanaian firms to team up in pooling their respective resources together to compete favourably. He would also encourage local industries to venture into products that make them remain competitive. Quite apart from these, he would also study reports by the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) on the manufacturing sector and hold discussions with the AGI and other stakeholder to ascertain the nature of their challenges to aid his policy decisions for the sector.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Having duly carried out its duty diligently in accordance with the 1992 Constitution and the Standing Orders of the House, the Appointments Committee is satisfied that the nominee is suitable to be appointed to the position to which he has been nominated.

The Committee therefore recommends to the House to adopt its Report and to approve by consensus the nomination of Mr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah for appointment as Minister for Trade and Industry.

Respectfully submitted.



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**HON. EBO BARTON-ODRO**  
**(FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER AND**  
**CHAIRMAN, APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE)**



.....  
**PEACE FLAWOYIFE (MS.)**  
**(CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE)**

