



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

# SESSIONAL ADDRESS

delivered by

**BRIGADIER A. A. AFRIFA, C.V., D.S.O.**  
*Chairman of the Presidential Commission*

at

**THE STATE OPENING OF THE SECOND  
SESSION OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT  
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC  
IN ACCRA**

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**28th July, 1970**

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A. A. AFRIFA, C.V., D.S.O., CHAIRMAN OF THE  
PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION, AT THE STATE  
OPENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF  
THE FIRST PARLIAMENT OF THE  
SECOND REPUBLIC IN ACCRA  
ON TUESDAY, 28th JULY, 1970**

Mr. Speaker,

Barely ten months ago, we participated in the opening of the First Session. It was a great occasion, marking the return to civilian rule. We were all happy at that event, for it signified a great national achievement which did credit to us all.

But not only the Government, but the whole country was aware of the economic problems that faced us. The problem of a huge debt still plagues the economy, the balance of payment position remains fundamentally weak, unemployment continues to be serious, the rate of savings and the levels of investment and productivity are still low, the cost of production and the price of goods are considerably high, and the rural areas continue to suffer from basic social amenities.

The Government and people of Ghana are not daunted by these problems. We shall overcome them. The Government is committed to the task of maximising the rate of Ghana's economic growth, and regards development planning as an important tool for achieving this objective. Accordingly, with immediate effect, work will begin on the preparation of a multi-annual development plan which will put our problems and strategy in a better perspective. This plan will be ready for launching during the present financial year. Our principal objective will be to improve our earning capacity.

Meanwhile, a one-year plan has been prepared as an interim measure, to prepare the ground and to make a beginning with the task of accelerating growth. The plan provides the scientific basis for the 1970-71 budget; it sets specific budgetary activities in the broader economic context and shows how the many projects in the budget can be expected to promote the economic and social development of the country. The operational content of the plan largely concentrates on the work of the Central Government and other public agencies.

Both the one-year plan and the development budget for 1970-71 give quantitative expression to the economic policies of the Government. Account is taken of the high hopes and aspirations the ordinary men and women of this country had in this Government in consequence of which they voted it into power. The Government is sure to justify those hopes. Consequently, as indicated in the first Sessional Address, the areas of the highest priority are, first, rural development and in particular the expansion of agricultural production; second, the launching of a systematic attack on the problem of unemployment, and third the reduction of the imbalances that have hitherto existed in the levels of development of the different regions of the country.

In the one-year plan and the budget the highest priority is accorded to developing the agricultural sector. The Government will take steps during the 1970-71 fiscal year to encourage farmers in producing more food, by increased financial assistance, the extension of agricultural services, an increase in the supply of fertilizers and of improved seeds, as well as of agricultural machinery and equipment. Though the whole agricultural sector will benefit from these programmes, it is the Government's intention to emphasize the expansion of food crops such as rice, maize and sugar-cane, and of livestock. On cocoa, Government policy will be to intensify efforts to assist farmers to increase yields per acre. Particular attention will be given to the control of diseases and pests and to the expanded use of high yielding varieties.

In furtherance of Government policy to diversify our agriculture, the cultivation of other cash crops and raw materials to feed our factories will be given a boost during the year. Efforts will be concentrated on cotton and bast fibre, oil seeds, rubber and citrus. The details of activities in the agricultural sector will be given in the course of the present meeting.

Immediate steps will be taken side by side with the efforts to encourage production, to set up appropriate marketing systems to support the production programmes. Without them, the enthusiasm of farmers will be destroyed, and the several years' work that has gone into stimulating interest in the production of these crops will have gone to waste. During the plan year, therefore, schemes will be launched to improve the marketing of locally produced foodstuffs.

The Government continues to attach very high priority to the feeder roads programme in view of its importance for rural development and for increasing agricultural production. To ensure rapid progress, the Government has established a Feeder Roads Board charged with the responsibility of drawing up a comprehensive feeder roads master plan, to establish priorities relative to agricultural and other rural development programmes, to phase out expenditure, and to evaluate annual performance.

Mr. Speaker, improvement of agriculture and roads must be considered along with the provision of other facilities like water, electricity, and health centres to improve the conditions of life in the rural areas. On water supplies, the projects that will be undertaken during the year will take the form of wells, pipe-borne water based on boreholes, supplies based on surface resources, as well as urban or city supplies.

It is also proposed to start implementing a rural electrification scheme during the year. The first phase will cover eleven widely spread towns. Another scheme to provide water and electricity simultaneously to rural areas under the joint management of the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation and the Electricity Corporation will cover 63 localities.

A network of health centres, clusters of health posts and basic health services embracing all aspects of curative and preventive medical work has been planned to cover selected towns and villages throughout the whole country. Emphasis will be given to the health of mothers and children, and effective transportation will be provided to make staff and services available to people in the remote areas. The Ministry of Youth and Rural Development and the National Service Corps will play an important role in the projects of water supplies, health posts, roads, and agriculture.

Mounting unemployment continues as a most serious problem, especially in the urban centres. The large pool of unemployed which was created in the period of economic stabilization has since been rapidly enlarged annually by new entrants, mostly middle school leavers, to the labour force. The Government is fully aware of the social, economic and political dangers posed by the improper utilization and massive unemployment of the country's resources. It is the policy of the Government to tackle this problem by seeking the full and proper utilization of the nation's human resources, in order

to achieve economic progress, and enhance the well-being of the individual. The attack will be made on several fronts, through the job opportunities to be offered through the implementation of our agricultural and industrial projects; the effective and co-ordinated application of our educational systems and facilities for training, employment and learning on the job, and in generating the skills, expertise and the motivations needed for development.

To this end, the Ghana Manpower Board which was established in 1968 is being reorganized and will be adequately staffed to enable it to co-ordinate the functions and activities of all agencies involved in the development and utilization of the country's human resources, and also to undertake such other functions as are consistent with the achievement of the Government's manpower plans and policies. The Government means to get the country working; it is determined to help to put everyone to work. Its firm aim is to complete the process of independence by getting Ghanaians doing everything for themselves in all the production sectors. Ultimately, Ghana must develop itself for the benefit of its own people. The Business Promotion Act is intended to accelerate the achievement of this aim. It is the determination of Government to assist Ghanaians to increase our share in the country's trade and economic enterprises. This is no xenophobia, but a requisite and logical development of independence. The Government recognises that for a long time to come external assistance will be needed, particularly in jobs which require special skills and capital beyond our present means. We shall encourage and welcome this, and give it due incentives and rewards. But it will be generally appreciated that the major criterion for us to apply for accepting investments must be that they serve primarily, the interest of the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is convinced that the expansion of our Industrial and Commercial capacities will constitute an important means of absorbing our unemployed. To aid this, it is proposed to introduce in this session of Parliament the Establishment or Expansion of Manufacturing Bill which will make it obligatory on all manufacturers to apply to the Ministry of Trade, Industries and Tourism for permission to expand existing industry. This will enable the country's industrial development to be better co-ordinated, and ensure the establishment of industries in rural and depressed areas, so as to achieve the much needed balance of development throughout the Regions.

In this connection, Mr. Speaker, Government will see to it that the Timber and Mining Industries are expanded and modernised. A Forestry Bill will be introduced in Parliament during the present Assembly to give effect to a new policy aimed at a systematic reduction in log export in favour of increased production in Veneer plywood and lumber, to the greater advantage of the country's foreign exchange earning capacity. Government welcomes the formation of the Timber Produce Union as a means of promoting the interests of the industry. It is proposed to set up a Forest Trust which will have sufficient powers to revive and improve the timber trade.

Mr. Speaker, new schemes and legislation designed to increase the traditional sources of gold and diamond, to check large-scale smuggling, to encourage foreign companies to exploit the country's bauxite resources, and the establishment of a cement factory in the Western Region will be placed before the Assembly during the Session.

The recent discovery of oil in the Central Region has raised expectations. It is proposed to expand the Petroleum Division of the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources to cope with the rapidly increasing responsibilities in respect of the oil industry.

Mr. Speaker, in the promotion of the commercial interests of the country, efforts will be made, as far as our foreign exchange position will allow, to liberalize import controls. At the same time the issue of import licence will be rationalised to ensure that a smooth flow of essential commodities is maintained.

The Export Promotion Council, established by National Liberation Council Decree No. 396, was inaugurated a few weeks ago. Every encouragement will be given to the Council in its quest for overseas markets for Ghanaian produce and manufactures. Ghana's overseas missions will place special emphasis on their task to help in this regard. The Government will also seek to promote trade with neighbouring African countries and gain from regularising and legalising the large volume of trade that now goes on through illicit channels.

Preparations have been underway during the past few months for staging the Second Ghana International Trade Fair in February 1971. It is hoped that businessmen operating in Ghana will take advantage of the opportunities the fair will offer to improve our export trade and our foreign exchange

earning capacity. The Government fully recognises the aspirations of the People of Ghana for improved conditions of living, despite the severe restraints imposed on our economic growth by our huge foreign debts. There are persistent demands for price controls to curb inflation and the rising cost of living. Attempts made in the past to control prices and incomes have not been successful. The Government nevertheless recognises the important role that an appropriate prices and incomes policy could play in the guidance of the country's economy. In this respect, the Incomes Commission which was set up to formulate a national incomes policy and advise the Government on all aspects of policy relating to wage and salary rates is being reorganized with a view to bringing prices of essential commodities under its control. Legislation will be introduced requiring all bodies concerned with the determination and regulation of pay to work within the framework of the national incomes policy which will be recommended by the new Prices and Incomes Board.

Basically, from the point of view of the wage-earner, the problem is less the take-home pay than the cost of living. It is how far his wage can go that really concerns him. Relevant to this are the measures we have indicated for increasing agricultural production and for fair and even distribution of essential commodities. To this must be added the problem of housing. It is the aim of the Government to provide houses within the means of the largest number of people both in the urban centres and the rural areas. The starting point is the formulation of a comprehensive and realistic housing policy such as the Government has prepared. The relevant legislation will be laid before Parliament during this session when the details of the policy will be given. Emphasis will be laid on low-cost housing for the lower and middle income groups.

Mr. Speaker, the provision of adequate public transportation for workers in the big urban centres is a serious economic problem. The Government has given serious attention to it, and plans have been formulated for ameliorating the situation. The measures to be taken, including the establishment of a Transport Planning and Budget Control Unit, and the revision of existing legislation, will be brought before Parliament during the Session.

Mr. Speaker, measures for improving our industrial and commercial capacities have slight chance of success without the effective use of our human resources. In this regard, the

Government itself must improve its own administrative processes. Measures will be taken to improve the effectiveness of the public services, rationalize procedures, and achieve better co-operation and integration of the activities of the various departments of the Government.

The decentralization exercise also proceeds apace. For effective Local and Regional Administration, a bill will be introduced in Parliament for the creation of Local, District and Regional Councils in accordance with Article 156 (1) of the Constitution. This will become the principal law governing Local Government in the country. An important administrative exercise in this connection will be the integration of the Local Government Service and the Public Services.

In order to implement the Constitution, various Bills will be placed before Parliament for enactment during the present Session. These include the Police Service Bill; the Prison Service Bill; the Fire Service Bill; the Courts Bill; the National House of Chiefs Bill; Regulations governing the Public Services Commission; the Audit Service Board; the Ombudsman; Commissions of Enquiry and the use of the Public and Presidential Seals.

Mr. Speaker, it will be recalled that in order to effect a smooth transition from military to civilian rule, certain transitional provisions were made in the Constitution which included the appointment of a Presidential Commission. The Government, after consultation with the Presidential Commission, will introduce a motion during the present Session to enable steps to be taken for a President to be elected. It will be observed that by the end of the present Session, most of the institutions provided under the Constitution would have been established.

Mr. Speaker, the Government will continue to campaign for the co-operation of every member of the Public Services and for every citizen in the achievement of our goal of prosperity and progress in unity and freedom. This co-operation can be given in many forms: in hardwork; in helpfulness; in courtesy; in honesty; in concern for State property; in avoiding waste and pilfering; in economic nationalism; patronising Ghanaian-made goods; in the practice of thrift, for example, through co-operatives, which the Government plans to assist and in self-discipline.



Mr. Speaker, if Ghana is to be saved and rebuilt, it can only be done through the self-discipline, the self-sacrifice and the individual and co-operative efforts of Ghanaians ourselves. The Government appeals for this for the realization of our common objective of the betterment and uplift of our country.

Mr. Speaker, this has not been an attempt to cover the whole of the Government's programme for the whole year. It has only been meant as a short address, albeit even too long for an occasion such as this, to highlight some of the main features of Government policies and programmes. A Budget Session such as this will afford the Government to present its detailed programme as the budget for each department comes before Parliament, and this the Government will do. At best, this address can only give indications of the lines of action Government intends to pursue. The rest will be filled in during your debates.

Whatever we try to achieve, we need peace within our borders, among our various tribes, as well as peace with the entire world, especially with our near neighbours. The links we have forged with our neighbours over the last few months will be strengthened, and new links will be sought with others. Our pursuit of the principles of the O.A.U. Charter, and of the establishment of a West African Political and Economic Community will continue. We shall also continue our membership of the Commonwealth, continue to support the United Nations and participate in the programmes of its agencies. True to our policy of non-alignment, we shall endeavour to live in peace and friendship with all countries and co-operate with them to our mutual benefit.

Mr. Speaker, you have a busy time ahead, and I must leave you to start your work. But before I do so, please permit me on behalf of my colleagues of the Presidential Commission and myself to wish you and members of the National Assembly a very successful Second Session of this First Parliament of the Second Republic of Ghana.

Thank you.