

**IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE
FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

**FIFTEENTH REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENTS
COMMITTEE ON H.E THE PRESIDENT'S
NOMINATIONS FOR MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

His Excellency President, J.E.A. Mills communicated to Parliament for prior approval of the nomination of the following persons for appointment as Ministers pursuant to article 78(1) of the Constitution. They are:

1. Dr. Benjamin Kumbuor - Minister-Designate of Health
2. Hon. Joseph Nii Laryea Afotey Agbo - Minister- of- State Designate at the Presidency

In accordance with Order 172(2) of the Standing Orders of the House, the nominations were on Tuesday 27th October 2009 referred to the Appointments Committee for consideration and report.

The nominations were subsequently published in the media in accordance with Order 172(3) and memoranda were invited from the public on the nominees.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The following served as reference documents to the Committee during deliberations and public hearings of the nominees:

1. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana
2. Standing Orders of the Parliament of Ghana
3. Curricular Vitae of nominees

2.0 **PROCEDURE**

On appearing before the Committee, nominees subscribed to the oath of a witness and answered questions relating to their records of office, the positions to which they have been nominated and issues of general national concern.

4.0 **OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 **DR. BENJAMIN KUMBUOR - MINISTER- DESIGNATE OF HEALTH**

Background

Dr. Benjamin Bewa-nyog Kumbuor, a Barrister-at-Law, was born on 15th July 1957. He holds a PhD in Law from the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom. He was a Member of Parliament (MP) between January 2001 and January 2009 and served as the Ranking Member of the Committee on Finance and Committee on Defence and Interior. He was also a Member of the Committees on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Subsidiary Legislation, Judiciary and Standing Orders. Between 2002 and 2008, he was a part-time lecturer at the Ghana School of Law. He was appointed Deputy Minister for Health in April 2009.

Experience at the Ministry

Dr. Kumbuor informed the Committee that so far his experience at the Ministry has been very exciting. He observed that the job of a Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Health is very challenging.

Vision for the Ministry

On his vision for the ministry and the health of the people of Ghana, the nominee explained that his idea was to team up with leadership at the Ministry to ensure the delivery of quality and affordable healthcare to Ghanaians nationwide.

Wa Regional Hospital, Manhyia Hospital, Bremang Community Clinic etc

The nominee, in a response to a question, indicated to the Committee that the Wa Regional Hospital project was still very much a priority for the Ministry. He informed the Committee that the Capital Investment Unit of the Ministry was working assiduously to ensure the successful implementation of that project. In respect of the Manhyia Hospital, Bremang Community Clinic and others, the Minister-Designate assured that the Ministry would work very hard to upgrade facilities and ensure the completion of those others not completed in the shortest possible time.

Maternal Mortality

Dr. Kumbuor informed the Committee that the issue of maternal mortality was also a priority on the Ministry's agenda. He opined that maternal mortality was usually caused by three different "delays". The first was the delay in deciding whether the expectant mother was to have the delivery at the health facility in the first place. The second was the delay in transporting the expectant mother to the health facility in time; and finally, the delay that occurs at the health facility itself once the patient arrived.

He added that only 35% of pregnant women were able to have access to the services of qualified midwives for delivery.

National Health Insurance Reforms

The nominee considered the National Health Insurance scheme as a huge national project which most Ghanaians were passionate about. He identified the transfer of funds and the payment systems as areas that posed challenges to the administration of the scheme. He called for national support and public confidence in the scheme.

Dr. Kumbuor reaffirmed his belief in the possibility of the *one-time premium payment* saying it is "attainable and sustainable". He observed that only 5% of premiums collected from the insured actually went into the provision of healthcare to clients and therefore called for the plucking of loopholes in the system for the sustainability of the scheme.

Millennium Development Goals

On the bearing of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on the health of the populace, Dr. Kumbuor indicated that MDGs 4 and 5 were the ones that directly impacted on the health sector. He however acknowledged that due to poverty implications on health status, the MDGs 1,4,5 and 6 were all critical to the health sector.

On HIV/AIDS, Dr. Kumbuor considered vertical transmission, ie from mother to child as the major problem which the Ministry would tackle with all seriousness if given the nod. He also pledged his commitment to deal with malaria at all levels of treatment to the level of prevention by use of insecticide treated mosquito nets.

Fees at Nursing Training Schools

Regarding the above matter, the nominee informed the Committee of his receipt of a very strong worded letter from some Members of Parliament expressing dissatisfaction with the exorbitant fees charged by some health training

institutions in the country. He informed the Committee that he had personally issued letters to all the health training institutions instructing them to reduce the fees to previous levels. He therefore assured members that the issue is being addressed with all seriousness.

Mental Health

The nominee informed the Committee that work has been concluded on a draft Mental Health Bill which the Attorney-General's Office was currently studying and assured the Committee that government would make every effort at its passage by the House in due course.

Recommendation

The Committee took note of the nominee's excellent performance and clarity of thought.

The Committee therefore *by unanimous decision* recommends that the House approves of the nomination of Dr. Benjamin Kumbuor as the Minister for Health by consensus.

4.2 HON. JOSEPH NII LARYEA AFOTEY-AGBO - MINISTER-OF-STATE DESIGNATE AT THE PRESIDENCY

Background

Hon. Joseph Nii Laryea Afotey-Agbo was born on 31st July 1967. He had his primary education at the Katamansu Presby Primary School between 1974 and 1979. He attended the Anlo Secondary School from 1981 but left in 1982 to Datus Commercial College in 1983 to 1987.

Hon. Afotey-Agbo has held several positions including serving as the production manager of Ericdai Enterprise Limited and the Public Relations Officer of the Katamansu Divisional

Council between 1996 and 2000. He founded the JNL Afotey-Agbo Farming Ventures in 2001 where he worked until he became a Member of Parliament in January 2005.

He is a Christian and is married with six children.

Earlier Comments on the Minister for Information

Responding to earlier comments he made in the media about the Information Minister, Mrs Saba Zita Okaikoi, Hon Afotey-Agbo informed the Committee that the position he expressed in the media on the Information Minister was very clear and that as a politician, he had to listen to the people on the ground in order to come out with comments. He explained that he took a "principled position" to ask for the resignation of the Information Minister and that he "still stood by it". He stressed before the Committee that "it was nothing personal" and assured that he remains a good friend of the Minister and bore her no grudge.

Schedule as a Minister-of-State

The nominee indicated that he was yet to be assigned and therefore could not tell what his specific schedule at the Presidency would be. He however stated that he understood that a Minister-of-State with no portfolio is required to be very versatile.

Pressed for his area of competence and interest, he indicated his interest in "conflict management" where he believed he had some practical experience and expertise.

Appointment to "tame the Lion"

Responding to the perception that the President was appointing him a Minister-of-State to stop him from his outbursts and frank expressions about the government, the nominee indicated that he could not proffer any opinion on the matter since he was not the appointing authority. He however

added that if the intention of the appointment was to tame and prevent him from "roaring", then he "could not take it well".

Recommendation

The nominee was advised to bear in mind that the country operates a *presidential system* and that the President has the final say in all executive matters.

The Committee recommends Hon. Joseph Nii Laryea Afotey-Agbo by *consensus* to the House for approval as a Minister-of-State at the Presidency.

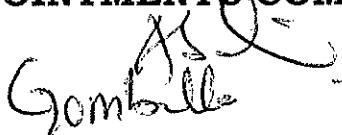
5.0 CONCLUSION

The Appointments Committee has carried out its duty faithfully in accordance with the 1992 Constitution and the Standing Orders of the House with respect to the nomination of Dr. Benjamin Kunbuor and Hon. Joseph Nii Laryea Afotey-Agbo as Minister of Health and Minister-of-State at the Presidency respectively.

The Committee is satisfied that the nominees have fully met the requirements of the Constitution and therefore respectfully recommends their nomination to the House for approval by consensus.

Respectfully submitted.


HON. E. K. D. ADJAHO
FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER AND CHAIRMAN
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE


ALHAJI IBRAHIM GOMBILLA
DEPUTY CLERK TO PARLIAMENT
16TH NOVEMBER, 2009