

A STATEMENT TO COMEMMORATE THE 2017 REPUBLIC DAY
CELEBRATION
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CONSTITUENCY

Rt. Hon. Speaker, thank you very much for granting me the opportunity to make a statement in commemoration of Ghana's 57th Republic Day which falls on Saturday, 1st July, this year.

Mr. Speaker, after decades of struggle by our founding fathers to liberate the then Gold Coast from British rule, Ghana finally gained independence on the 6th of March 1957. However, the liberation process was not complete until July 1st 1960 when the last Governor-General of the Gold Coast, Lord Listowel left the shores of our dear country and Her Majesty, the Queen of Britain, ceased to be the Head of State. Indeed, it was a day that affirmed our true independence and was a great joy and pride for all Ghanaians.

Mr. Speaker, our hopes and aspirations as a people, was to use the newly acquired self-determination to secure economic independence to the status of a modern state. It has been sixty (60) years now, and introspective reflection of whether or not our aspirations have been met still remains a doubt in the minds of many Ghanaians.



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In spite of this doubt, we have achieved some level of socio-economic and political development, amidst the mirage of challenges we are still confronted with as a country.

One of such achievements has been the strengthening of our democracy through the organisation of free and fair elections especially under this Fourth Republic Constitution. Our sitting here today as representatives of the people, is indeed a testimony of this feat. Ghana's economy since 1960 has certainly grown bigger and stronger over the years as manifested by the improvement in the standard of living of our people and increased infrastructural base.

Mr. Speaker, despite these achievements, it is also confirmed the journey has not always been smooth and definitely, the task of building our nation is still not over. We have faced numerous challenges along the way. Our democracy is still challenged by inefficiencies in public service delivery, extreme partisanship on public policy discourses, poverty, exclusion and deprivation among others.

Mr. Speaker, these notwithstanding, the enormous human and natural resources we are endowed with provide us great opportunity to tackle the challenges we face, and to attain the heights reached by our compatriots in South Korea, China, Japan and Thailand.

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But Mr. Speaker, this requires that we rekindle the spirit of self-determination, selflessness and patriotism that enabled our forebears to attain independence and subsequently got us completely free from the colonial rule. Mr. Speaker, let me re-echo that without these hallmarks the prosperous nation our founding fathers envisioned for us can never come into fruition.

Mr. Speaker, our developmental aspirations as a Republic could take much longer years to accomplish if majority of our women are left out in the decision-making process of this country. Whilst we celebrate appointments like Her Ladyship, Justice Theodora Georgina Wood as former Chief Justice, Marietta Brew Appiah-Opong and Betty Mould Iddrisu as former Ministers for Justice and Attorney Generals Department, Mrs. Charlotte Osei as current Chairperson of the Electoral Commission (EC) and recent appointment of Her Ladyship, Justice Sophia Akuffo as Chief Justice, I believe more of such key positions should be given to women.

Mr. Speaker, Ghana's Republic Day is also one of the exclusive days of the year which is observed as Senior Citizens' Day. It is a time when senior citizens who have contributed to the building of a strong republic, in the various disciplines of national development are honoured. I would like to join Ghanaians today to say Ayeko!! to our gallant senior citizens whose efforts have brought us this far, for it is said that "a nation that does not honour its heroes is not worth dying for".

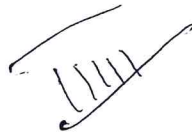


As we celebrate our dear senior citizens, Mr. Speaker, we must reflect on the need to continuously provide the requisite social infrastructure to support them. We need to urgently strengthen our social protection initiatives such as free health care for the aged among others.

The Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) should improve its operations to reduce the drudgery our retirees encounter to receive their pension allowances. Our dear retirees have served this great country immensely and therefore need to be acknowledged appropriately.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the up-and-coming generation, I urge that we protect and prepare them for the great task at hand. I plead that efforts at halting the canker of child labour are intensified to ensure that our children are out of the streets and other places other than the classroom where they can be trained to become responsible citizens.

Mr. Speaker, in fact many of the Youth do not know why we celebrate Republic Day. As a result, many of them use the occasion to go to beaches and indulge in some acts of immoral practices. I wish to use this opportunity to call on the media houses to dedicate enough airtime to educate the Youth on the rationale for the Republic Day and inculcate in them the spirit of selflessness and patriotism.



I wish my fellow Ghanaians a happy anniversary. Let us utilise the opportunity afforded us in observing this year's anniversary to rekindle our national spirit, believe in ourselves and resolve now, more than ever before, to build our nation free from poverty, illiteracy, ill health, crime, violence and conflict among others.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues for your attention.

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