

STATEMENT ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND A CALL ON
PARLIAMENT TO SET UP AN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON THE SDGS TO
ADVOCATE GREATER ACTION

BY

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Minority Leader

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make a Statement on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the need for the 7th Parliament to constitute an Ad Hoc Committee to oversight and monitor the implementation of the programmes aimed at attaining the SDGs.

Mr. Speaker, in the year 2015, all the 93 Members of the United Nations (UN) unanimously adopted 17 goals towards attaining sustainable development in the World. The SDGs is the UN's agenda to tackle global challenges such as poverty, climate change, environmental degradation, inequality, prosperity, peace and justice. The 17 Goals, represents a call to action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity and protect the environment by 2030. As noted by the then Secretary-General of the UN, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, *"The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are our shared vision of humanity and a social contract between the world's leaders and the people...They are a to-do list for people and planet, and a blueprint for success."*

Mr. Speaker, former President John Dramani Mahama was appointed by the Secretary-General of the UN as co-chair of the Group of Eminent Advocates for the 2030 Agenda and was succeeded in September 2017 by the current President, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. Our President co-chairs the Group with the Prime Minister of Norway, H.E. Erna Solberg. The appointment

of the President of the Republic to co-chair the Group reflects the continued trust the UN has in Ghana to play a lead role in the attainment of the SDGs.

Mr. Speaker, member countries are enjoined to reduce the SDGs into their respective National Plans and make adequate provision in annual budgets for their implementation.

The SDGs are the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which Ghana implemented between 2001 and 2015. According to the *Ghana Millennium Development Goals 2015 Report*, Ghana's progress on the MDGs had been mixed. While some of the targets such as halving extreme poverty, halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water, universal primary education and gender parity in primary school have been attained, we missed targets such as full and productive employment, equal share of women in non-agriculture wage employment, women's involvement in governance, reducing under-5 and child mortality, reducing maternal mortality, reversing environmental resource loss and improving sanitation.

It is therefore imperative that Parliament exercise effective oversight of the implementation of the SDGs to avoid the pitfalls encountered in the implementation of the MDGs and to ensure that we do not miss the SDG targets. This should include ensuring adequate budget provision and review of progress Reports on implementation of the Goals.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that H.E. The President has appointed a High-Level Ministerial Committee to oversee the progress of the SDGs implementation in Ghana with the Ministers of Planning; Trade and Industry; Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration; Finance; Food and Agriculture; Justice; Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation; Monitoring & Evaluation; Education; Health; Sanitation and Water Resources; Local Government and Rural Development; Gender, Children and Social Protection; Employment and Labour Relations; and Fisheries and Aquaculture Development, as Members.

This good intention remains largely an Executive action. What can Parliament do as the law making body and the representatives of the people to shape and strengthen the oversight and implementation of plans and programmes geared towards the attainment of Agenda 2030.

Mr. Speaker, I accordingly propose that Parliament establish a Seven-Member Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee (or any number and howsoever described, acceptable to Mr. Speaker and the House) tasked with the responsibility to monitor Ghana's progress on the implementation of the SDGs, consider progress reports from implementing MDAs and advise Parliament on budgetary allocations and other appropriate interventions to ensure that we are on track in the implementation of the Goals. The Committee will work closely with the Minister for Planning, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), the UNDP, Civil Society and other relevant MDAs and stakeholders in pursuit of this mandate. The above proposal is in accord with the practice in other jurisdictions where a Special Committee or Body has been established for the said purpose.

Mr. Speaker, the SDGs are people centred and we are the representatives of the people. We cannot therefore afford to stand on the offence; we must play a lead role in ensuring that Government delivers on the SDGs for the benefit of our citizens and humanity in general. I therefore urge this Hon. House to heed this call and establish a Committee on the SDGs.

Once again I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.