

STATEMENT BY THE RT. HON. SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT
BEFORE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF
THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE
FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA
WEDNESDAY, 7TH AUGUST, 1996

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Hon. Members, this statement concludes our business for today. It also brings us to the end of the Second Meeting of the Fourth Session of the First Parliament of the Fourth Republic. All told, there have been fifty-one Sittings from Tuesday, 14th May, to Wednesday, 7th August, 1996.

2. During the Meeting Parliament has had a varied agenda as itemised by the Majority Leader in terms of Bills, Instruments, Loan Agreements, International Agreements, Treaties, Visits to and from Foreign countries, International business transactions that we have considered. Among the Bills enacted were the Disaster Management Organisation Bill, the Non-Performing Assets (Loan, Investments) Recovery Bill and the Public Elections (Presidential and Parliamentary Elections Date) Bill. A number of Loans Agreements were approved by Resolutions to provide Investment funds for projects on the environment, utilities privatisation, import facility, education and also for adjustments. Treaties ratified include these on Patent Co-operation, International Convention on Desertification and International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation.

3. During the Meeting Hon. Members were called upon to give due attention to the performance of their current parliamentary functions and their participation in the preparation for the impending elections which started through the organisation of primaries. The elections are indeed the first experience of its kind in many years and I am happy to note that inspite of their active involvement in the primaries Hon. Members did demonstrate a commendable

commitment to the execution of their onerous parliamentary functions. I trust that Hon. Members would so plan their activities during the recess to enable them to take some time to have enough rest to freshen themselves for the activities of the next Meeting. It is also my pleasant duty to highly commend ^{you} Hon. Members for the growing confidence with which you have tackled the various assignments entrusted to you during the Second Meeting. In the handling of such assignments, you all showed remarkable maturity, concern and sense of urgency.

4. Some significant developments in international parliamentary relations took place during the Second Meeting. A sub-regional conference comprising Parliamentarians from both Anglophone and Francophone countries was held in Accra to enable them to share their experiences. The conference was held between 6th and 9th June, 1996 and was attended by delegates from Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast. This is the first gathering of its kind in the Parliamentary history of the various countries of the West African sub-regions and it was followed shortly afterwards by a similar seminar hosted by Benin. I am indeed happy to note that such interactions among the people of the sub-region are in line with the basic tenets in Ghana's foreign policy since independence, namely, that of fostering the closest possible co-operation and collaboration with neighbouring states which share ties of blood, history and culture among others.

5. Hon. Members may also have observed that democracy as a system of governance has re-asserted its primacy in Ghana over the past four years. This new thrust of democratisation has reinforced the relevance of parliamentary institutions as effective promoters of representative democracy. Such conscious efforts by Ghana to promote the process of democratisation have

attracted the attention of governmental and non-governmental organisations in the old democracies which have now determined to offer every assistance that will quicken the pace for the achievement of our democratic aspirations. To this end, I was privileged to participate as a Guest Speaker at a conference in Federal Republic of Germany between 24th and 25th June, 1996 on the subject "Promoting Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa". This conference was organised by the Fredrich Ebert Foundation of Ghana and attended by delegates from Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Benin and Togo. I was also afforded the opportunity, during the visit to exchange views with the Rt. Hon. President (Speaker) and officials of the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany and those of the State of Westphalia in Dusseldorf. This conference was followed shortly afterwards by a return visit by Rt. Hon. Speaker of the German Parliament and his officials to Ghana. These visits, among others, have strengthened Ghana's resolve to consolidate the gains already made in the democratisation process. I am also happy to note that a number of the old democratic countries have indicated their intention to give assistance to the process once it remains on course.

6. As already referred to, the next Presidential and Parliamentary Elections are just around the corner.. It is only natural that you should get yourselves directly involved in feverish preparations in the ardent hope that you might be given fresh mandates to continue to serve your nation as Parliamentarians. I wish, again to remind you that your involvement in the electioneering processes should not be at the expense of your current duties as Parliamentarians and representatives of your constituents. The high record of attendance attained since the first Sitting of this Meeting should therefore be maintained during the relatively brief spell that Parliament will sit during the next and last Meeting of this Session.

7. It is now my pleasure to convey to you, Hon. Members, my most hearty congratulations for your continued hard work and dedication to duty during the period of this Meeting. To the Leadership of the House, I sincerely offer my thanks for the able and satisfactory manner you assisted me to conduct the business of the House during the Meeting. My congratulations also go to my First and Second Deputy Speakers for the unstinted support they gave me and hope to count on same in the period ahead of us. To the Clerk of Parliament and his team of able Assistants and supporting staff, I wish to record my high commendation for their tireless devotion to duty that enabled us to keep to our planned schedules of activity. We shall continue to count on their support at all times. The appreciation of the House is also extended to the Executive, the Parliamentary ^{Press} ~~Service~~ Corps and various public and private institutions and individuals, who in diverse ways supported the House in its assignments.

8. Finally, I am happy to observe that all Hon. Members have been hale and hearty throughout the Meeting and are now eager to brief their constituents on what has transpired in Parliament during the Meeting, seek once again their mandate to represent them in the next Parliament and also bring back their reactions to Government's policies and measures. I wish you all excellent health during your period of rest, a safe journey home and back and may the Almighty God richly bless you. Thank you very much.

9. I now have the honour to adjourn the House "Sine die".

