

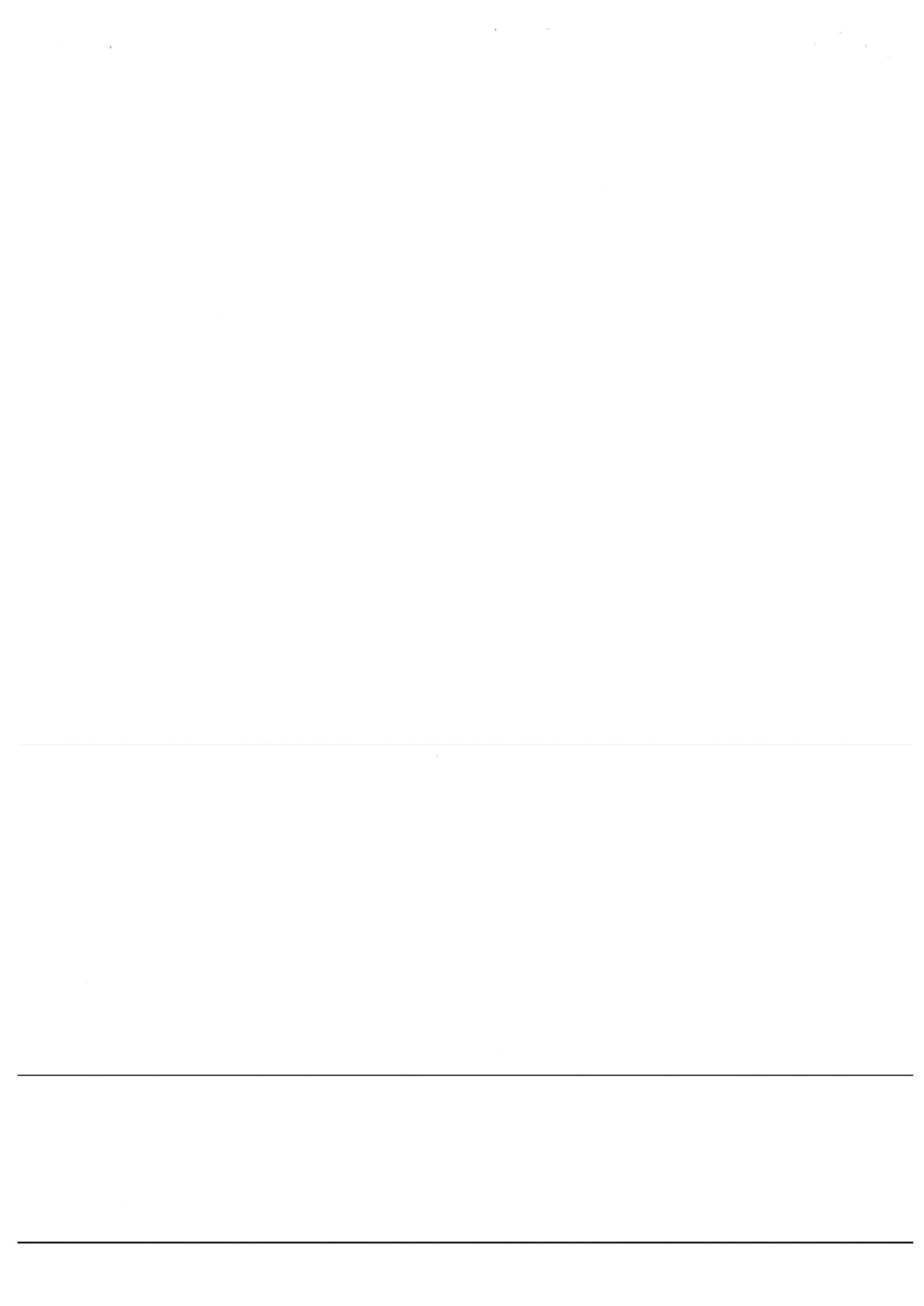
STATEMENT PRESENTED BY HON. RAS MUBARAK, MP FOR
KUMBUNGU ON REFORMS IN RESPECT OF MPS VOTING RECORD

THEME: MPS VOTING RECORD

Mr. Speaker, Members of Parliament in the House of Commons, the UK's lower chamber, yesterday voted in favor of the U.K. government's Brexit Bill, by a majority of 498 votes versus 114 votes.

What is of interest to me in that historic vote is reports about front and back bench dissent from all the parties in the UK parliament who defied the strict three line whip and voted in a way that reflected local sentiments.

Member of Parliament for Rushcliffe, Ken Clarke, who's a member of the governing party voted against the government's bill. On the side of the opposition Labour Party, sixteen frontbenchers and scores of other Labour backbenchers defied the Labour leader's strict three line whip to back Brexit and revolted.



Speaking to reporters, Meg Hillier, a Labour MP explained that she voted against the bill because majority of her constituents, the very people who sent her to parliament, in the UK referendum on Brexit voted to remain in the EU. She therefore didn't see why she should betray their trust and vote in parliament for a bill that will see Britain leaving the European Union.

In your inaugural address, Mr. Speaker, you touched on a lot of exciting things that need urgent follow up. Among these are your commitment to (I) completing the work on revising the standing orders of parliament; (ii) Private Members Bills (III) your call for improving the laws on elections and (IV) Record Keeping *among others.*

Mr. Speaker, I take comfort in your encouraging inaugural address when you entreated "new entrants to prepare and present statements on any issue of interest." Making public Voting record of MPs is one that

I'm passionate about.

Mr. Speaker we live in a country where there's a collapse of trust in public institutions, especially parliament. Interestingly we've been here before. And we must be guided by history.

In the 60s, 70s and 80s, whenever the public showed signs of losing trust in politicians, the military stepped in. But that was the 20th century.

Mr. Speaker, when Musah Kalamu in Ablekuma North,

or Iddrisu Agaaga in Kumbungu, begin to feel parliament has become a rubber stamp, we ought to do think anew.

Rt. Honourable Speaker, making public the voting record of MPs as you aptly stated in your inaugural address, sharpens not just the responsibilities of individual MPs, but it also give constituents an opportunity to know how individual MPs voted on key legislations.



It will expose MPs who ran away when their constituents needed their votes on crucial matters.

The argument of those who do not wish for the kind of changes you intend to bring to parliament in respect of voting record is that, if whips allow MPs to vote the way they want, it will weaken government programs.

It is true that MPs are in parliament on the ticket of their

party, but it is also true that MPs will have to balance what is in party interest and what is in the interest of the people they are representing in parliament.

It can't be business as usual, we have to cede ground and give the people what they want. How do we restore public confidence in parliament? How do we ensure that we regain the trust of the very people who send us here to represent them? We have to be accountable and allow transparency.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, in this 2017, and in this 7th parliament of the 4th Republic, we have a chance to make history, to turn this House into a parliament that responds to the needs of the people.

May I propose, that on the website of the parliament of Ghana, there should be a column titled "How did my MP vote". This should give constituents, the media and the

Ghanaian people a chance to key in the name of their MP and see how they voted on issues of relevance.

As Frantz Fanon famously put it, "each generation must discover its mission, to fulfill that mission or betray it." This 7th parliament of the 4th Republic has a mission. And I trust, Rt. Hon. Speaker, that with your dedication and commitment to seeing positive reforms in parliament, and the dedication and commitment of colleague MPs, we shall live up to the call. Let's not miss the opportunity.

I thank you very much indeed Mr. Speaker.

