

Statement by Hon Rev John Ntim Fordjour, MP for Assin South Constituency  
**On The Perennial Leakages of WAEC Examination Papers in Ghana**

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Rt. Hon Speaker,

Thank you for the opportunity afforded me to make this statement on The Perennial Leakages of Examination Papers of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) in Ghana.

Mr Speaker, permit me to foremost convey my best wishes to all candidates who are preparing in earnest towards the impending Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) across the country, while I congratulate the candidates who sat the just ended West African Secondary Schools Certificate Examination (WASSCE), and to state that my prayers are with them and believing God Almighty to reward their toil with excellent results.

The perennial leakages of the WAEC examination papers is an unfortunate phenomenon which grossly undermines the integrity of the education system of Ghana and potentially vitiates the sustenance of the international competitiveness of Ghanaian students. It also has implications for the image of Ghana on the international front.

WAEC is an independent international examinations body established in 1952 and mandated to conduct examinations and award credible and reliable certificates to candidates who participate in the examinations. The jurisdiction of WAEC exists in Anglophonic West African countries namely; Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, The Gambia and Sierra Leone. In Ghana, the operations of WAEC are regulated by the WAEC Law 2006 (Act 719). The two national examinations conducted by WAEC in Ghana are BECE and WASSCE for first and second cycle institutions respectively.

Mr Speaker, although WAEC has over the years battled with examination leaks, the overwhelming scale of mass leakages of examination papers characterising the past decade, calls for serious concern. Despite recurring assurances by WAEC of strict measures put in place to curb the menace, perennial examination leaks had been the bane of the examination body. It gives me no delight to recount on the grounds of massive leaks of examination papers, the cancellation of BECE papers in 2002; the cancellation of WASSCE papers in 2008; and recently in 2015, the cancellation of five (5) BECE papers.

The most embarrassing of the menace occurred in 2016 where amidst the viral transmission of examination questions on various social media platforms hours prior to the scheduled exams, WAEC failed to concede leakage but rather insisted on describing the incidence as “foreknowledge of the questions before commencement of examination”. Mr Speaker, the advent of social media does not exacerbate the menace of examination leaks, but rather exposes the extent of failures inherent in the examination system.

Although this perennial challenge has existed in our jurisdiction for decades, interventions by WAEC and relevant stakeholders are yet to prove sustainable, in the quest to put an end to it. It is rather pathetic to witness stakeholders playing the blame game, shifting goal posts and distancing themselves from responsibility instead of fostering effective collaboration to protect the integrity of examinations. Although the government is not expected to unduly interfere in the activities of WAEC, we cannot sit on the fence and look on unconcerned for the challenges on the part of WAEC to jeopardise the integrity of our educational system and the future prospects of Ghanaian students.

The grave repercussions exacted on our society by this perennial challenge of WAEC examination leakages, cannot be overemphasized. The credibility of certificates awarded by WAEC in Ghana is at stake. The psychological and financial strain that parents and innocent students are subjected to in preparations for re-sit in events of exam cancellation is traumatising.

Mr Speaker, as stakeholders, there is a lot to learn from other jurisdictions who have successfully and consistently upheld the integrity of examinations over the years. In contrast, the National Board for Professional and Technical Examinations (NABPTEX) has over the years, discharged conscientiously their mandate of administering schemes of technical, vocational and professional examinations across the country, with utmost integrity. If NABPTEX has consistently got it right in Ghana, then WAEC could also succeed in their mandate with optimum commitment to excellence and integrity.

Mr Speaker, Proverbs 22:6 says: *“Train up a child the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it”*. President Theodore Roosevelt also once remarked that *“To educate a person in mind and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society”*. As a country, we seem to have paid insufficient attention to moral values and the education thereof. We cannot end at lumping blames on WAEC and expect the resolution of the menace, without acknowledging the critical roles that rest on us all as citizens; parents, teachers, students, heads of educational institutions, traders, printing press operators and security officials, in exercising our most patriotic responsibility of safeguarding the integrity of exams undertaken in our country.

Mr Speaker, it is worth acknowledging that the just ended 2017 WASSCE was successfully conducted by WAEC without any reported incident of examination leakage. While I highly commend WAEC and other relevant stakeholders for this feat, I wish to remark nonetheless, that this accomplishment ought not be temporary, but rather, must be sustained through formidable reforms which would streamline major operational processes of printing, packaging and distribution of examination materials, from which lapses examination leakages emanate.

I conclude by appealing to WAEC, Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools, Proprietors of private schools and law enforcement agencies to be resolute in their commitment to sustain the integrity of examinations conducted in Ghana by the West African Examination Council (WAEC).

Thank you Mr Speaker.