

A STATEMENT ON DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFICKING

BY HON. GEORGE KWAME ABOAGYE MP FOR ASENE AKROSO MANSO – 6TH JULY, 2017

Mr Speaker I am grateful for the opportunity to make this Statement.

Mr Speaker, the UN General Assembly instituted 26th June as an international day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an International Society free of drugs. The theme for 2017 “ Listening to Children and Youth is the first step to help them Grow Healthy and Safe”. The celebration in Ghana was marked in Birim Central and hosted in Akim Oda.

Mr Speaker, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary Drug abuse is defined as the “excessive use of a drug (such as alcohol, narcotics or cocaine) without medical justification”. Different types of illicit drugs include; marijuana, cocaine, heroin and many more. Drug abuse can affect a person’s physical and emotional health as well as social life.

Mr Speaker, statistics by the Narcotic Control Board has revealed there are 50,000 drug users in Ghana, 35,000 were students from Junior high, Senior high and Tertiary institutions aged between 12 and 35years, while the remaining 15,000 were adults, with 9000 males and 6000 females.

Mr Speaker, as a country we need to fight against this menace with all seriousness, to avoid the use of scanty resources in treating drug addicts. Most people do not have in-depth knowledge on the negative effects of these drugs on individuals, families and society at large, hence, the result of little effort in tackling this national threatening canker.

Mr Speaker, this year’s theme “Listening to Children and Youth is the first step to help them Grow Healthy and Safe” is the most appropriate, most parents are so engulfed in their work and leave their children in the care of maids, teachers and extended family. As parents,



guardians, teachers and responsible adults we need to pay close attention to our wards, share in their problems, attend to their needs both psychological, emotional, physical and social, we need to be familiar with their friends and the company they keep.

Causes of Drug Abuse

Mr Speaker, the most common reasons why people abuse drugs include; Negative Peer Pressure; that affect teens who do not want to be different from others in their group, depression, curiosity about the effects, high performance in school or at work, to escape emotional problems, wide availability of drugs, boredom, low self-esteem, financial worries, etc. The danger with experimenting is that the cravings for drugs can become a burdensome part of daily life.

Side Effects (Negative)

Mr Speaker these drugs increases the activity of the central nervous system. Side effect of these drugs include, anxiety, hallucination, feelings of persecution, depression, sensation of bugs under the skin, tiredness, hunger, damaged lining of the nose, respiratory failure, stroke, seizures, coma, heart attacks, weight loss, etc. Regular users stand the risk of contracting infectious diseases such as HIV / AIDS, Hepatitis B and other infectious diseases due to the use of unsterilized needles.

Mr Speaker, the Narcotic Control Board is seriously under resourced; they need more vehicles and logistics for operations and educational campaigns. Currently, the organization has just one vehicle to serve a whole region, this same vehicle is the one being used by the regional commander and all the various departments and units in the region.



Mr Speaker, if the regional commander travels it means no official duties can be carried out apart from administrative work. Mostly, money to fuel the vehicle for educational campaigns become a problem. Often times, officers in the various Regional Offices find it difficult traveling to other towns and villages in the regions to embark on campaigns due to lack of funds for fuel and accommodation. Unfortunately, this is the institution we are depending on, to fight illicit drug traffickers; how can we fight this war?.

Recommendations

Mr Speaker, drug abuse prevention should be a National Public Health goal, preventing drug abuse is one of the best investments we can make in our country's future, doing so is preferable to dealing with the consequences of drug abuse through law enforcement or drug treatment among others. I recommend the following Drug prevention programs; harness central role of parents, institute a National Youth Anti-Drug Campaign, Promote safe and Drug – Free schools and community Programs; provide funds for every district to support drug and violence prevention, initiate National mentoring programs to focus on some of the problems young people face. We need to establish public rehabilitation centres to cater for those already caught in the act, because the private ones cannot be assessed by the poor due to high cost of the facility. We are sitting on a time bomb, therefore, we the legislators should take a decision on drug abuse with utmost seriousness

Parliament should seriously consider making Narcotic Control Board a Commission to expand its power and resources to enable it discharge its duties efficiently and effectively.

Mr Speaker, this is the current state of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Ghana, thank you for granting me this opportunity. Most grateful!