

STATEMENT BY HON. RICHARD MAWULI QUASHIGAH ON
COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR ERADICATION OF
POVERTY

17/10/17

Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to make this statement to commemorate the UN International Day for Eradication of Poverty. Today, ^{This year} marks the 25th anniversary of the declaration of the UN General Assembly through Resolution 47/196 of 22 December 1992, making 17 October the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. It calls for global, national, institutional, local and individual actions for reducing extreme poverty.

Mr Speaker, It is also a day to remember the selfless sacrifice of Father Joseph Wresinski whose call thirty years ago inspired the whole world to make conscious effort in eradicating poverty.

Mr Speaker, in the words of Father Joseph Wresinski "Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty."

Mr Speaker, the theme for this year commemoration is "Answering the call of October 17 to end poverty: A path towards peaceful and inclusive societies. The theme reiterates the significance of the values of dignity in the fight to end poverty everywhere.

Mr Speaker, these tenets are clear in the United Nations' Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development which has poverty eradication as the main objective to end poverty in all forms, through ways that assure the fulfilment of all human rights.

Mr Speaker, in Ghana, successive governments have pursued several measures to grow the economy and raise the living standards of the people and in the process somewhat reduced poverty levels.

Mr Speaker, for instance, in 1995 according to the Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda document, the first Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies, Ghana: Vision 2020, aimed at making Ghana a middle-income country in 25 years was introduced.

Closely at its heels was the First Medium-Term Development Plan (1997-2000) based on Vision 2020 which focused on Human Development, Economic Growth, Rural Development, Urban Development, Infrastructure Development, and an Enabling Environment.

Mr Speaker, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I, 2003-2005) and the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II, 2006-2009) demonstrate a commitment to reducing poverty in the country. They sought to restore macroeconomic stability and reduce the incidence of poverty as captured in the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II, 2006-2009) document; which focused on these themes: Production and Gainful Employment, Human Resource Development and Basic Services, Special Programmes for the Poor and Vulnerables. Across these themes, five areas were selected for priority action: Infrastructure, Rural Development based on Modernized Agriculture, Enhanced Social Services, Good Governance, and Private Sector Development. The GPRS II placed emphasis on growth as the basis for sustained poverty reduction “so that Ghana can achieve middle-income status within a measurable planning period”. Its thematic areas were: Continued Macroeconomic Stability, Private Sector Competitiveness, Human Resource Development, and Good Governance and Civic Responsibility. Both GPRS I and GPRS II contributed significantly to guiding the allocation of resources and also provided a platform for dialogue between the Government of Ghana and the Development Partners, and mainstreamed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international commitments relevant to poverty reduction into the national development agenda (Source Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda, 2010-2013).

Mr Speaker, undeniably successive governments in their quests to eradicate poverty rolled out several social intervention policies aimed at addressing the poverty situation in the country. This include the following:

1. Free Basic Education
2. Free health care policy
3. Progressively free Senior High School Policy
4. Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
5. Free Maternal Health Care
6. School feeding Programme
7. Free Sandals for Basic Schools Pupils\
8. Free School Uniform

9. Free exercise books
10. Eban Elderly Welfare ID Card
11. ~~Free Senior High Policy~~
12. Mass Cocoa Spraying Exercise
13. Free Fertilizer Distribution

Mr Speaker, according to the Ghana Living Standard Survey 6 report conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), the several interventions have reduced poverty levels to 24.2 percent from the 51 percent recorded in 1991.

This means about 24.2 percent of Ghanaians representing about 6.4 million people cannot afford to spend GHS3.60 on food a day as revealed by the report. The people below the poverty line according to the report were about 7 million in 2005. Also about 8.4 percent of the population live in extreme poverty.

United Workers Childrens Fund

Mr Speaker, according to a report release by UNICEF, Ghana has been able to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty, however, general poverty in rural Ghana still remains a challenge. The report whose scope covered 2006 to 2013 revealed that rural poverty is four times higher than urban poverty eradication, thus making it two times higher than it was in the 1990s. The report further revealed that households in the rural settings of the country have much higher average rates of poverty than their counterparts in the urban geographical areas.

It is therefore in this respect it is considered apt that the current government intends to create development authorities with the focus of reducing poverty in especially the rural areas where poverty is extreme.

It is in the same spirit that one considers it commendable the deepening of free education by government as a follow up to earlier interventions.

It is also the expectation of many that the one district one factory and planting for food and job policies of government will help create jobs thus reducing the frightening unemployment levels in our country which in itself an incidence of poverty.

To achieve these and help reduce poverty in our country Mr. Speaker, will require dedicated men and women of integrity with requisite expertise to superintend over the various institutions, programmes and projects targeted at alleviating poverty.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity