

**JOINT STATEMENT BY HON. EMMANUEL KWASI BEDZRAH, MP HO
WEST AND HON. AMA POMAA-BOATENG TO BE DELIVERED ON
NOVEMBER 24TH, 2017 AS PART OF THE ON CELEBRATION OF GLOBAL
LEGISLATIVE OPENNESS WEEK (GLOW)**

NOVEMBER 20TH – 30TH, 2017

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**JOINT STATEMENT ON THE CELEBRATION OF GLOBAL LEGISLATIVE
OPENNESS WEEK (GLOW), NOVEMBER, 20-30, 2017**

**HON. EMMANUEL KWASI BEDZRAH, MP HO WEST AND HON. AMA POMAA-
BOATENG, MP JUABEN**

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to present a statement on this day in commemoration of Global Legislative Openness Week throughout the world.

The Global Legislative Openness Week (GLOW) this year falls on the week of November 20th – 30th 2017. This week is set aside for all Legislatures globally to celebrate the strenuous efforts by Parliaments all over and Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs) to make legislatures more transparent, open, accountable and responsive to citizens. It is also an occasion to take sober reflections on what could be done to advance parliamentary openness, transparency, accountability for the benefit of citizens.

We are pleased on this occasion and want to congratulate the leadership and all Members of Parliament and commend the House for the great efforts in strengthening the openness of Parliament and making Parliament close to its citizens. As a member of the Open Government Partnership's (OGP) Legislative Openness Working Group and the open parliament community, we commend the House for the remarkable efforts put in place to strengthen parliament to be more open, transparent and accountable to the people of Ghana. Already, Parliament of Ghana has rules and procedures that foster an enabling environment guaranteeing Ghanaians the right to parliament to observe proceedings and acquire parliamentary information. In Parliament, no law is passed without input from the public, particularly PMOs and individual citizens; committees regularly conduct public hearings on issues and some committee meetings are open to the public as in the case of Public Accounts, Appointments and Government Assurance. Furthermore, the leadership do regularly interact with the citizens on the business of the House before and after each session through events such as Crystal Ball Series, media and the Speaker's breakfast forum. Another great milestone is the E-Parliament that the House is embarking on to transform how the House perform its business to bring parliament closer to the people.

Mr. Speaker, despite this phenomenal progress in making parliament more open, transparent and accountable, there is room for improvement and other progressive issues for Parliament to consider to strengthen parliamentary openness. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the OGP community and the

Legislative Openness Working Group, I will implore the House to consider the adoption of the 'Global Declaration on Parliamentary Openness' which has been endorsed by the Inter Parliamentary Union and develop a roadmap for its implementation to enhance the culture of openness.

Mr. Speaker, research conducted by CDD-Ghana on "*Enhancing Transparency in African Parliaments: The African Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs)*" in 2015, has shown that with the onset of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and especially for countries like ours (Ghana) which have signed on to the OGP, the public is demanding greater accountability and responsiveness from us (parliamentarians). There is therefore the need to explore ways to reach out to citizens and engage them in parliamentary work. This is an arena that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs) have the opportunity and ability to enhance parliamentary efforts to inform citizens and engage them in parliamentary processes. Mr. Speaker, with our few years' experience in parliament, we can say that PMOs are potentially a valuable ally in the process of strengthening and promoting parliament. The monitoring work performed by PMOs helps to put parliament on track and equip the institution to provide the necessary oversight over the executive.

Mr. Speaker, it is our humble appeal that Parliament institute regular engagements with PMOs in the country to strengthen our relationship and to see how best Parliament can rely on PMOs for readily available information for our work. At this point, I would like to commend some of the PMOs that have supported Parliament to strengthen the culture of openness. The Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), STAR-Ghana, Penplusbyte, African Parliamentary Centre, Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG), Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) among others.

To conclude Mr. Speaker, let us be mindful that if we do not open up Parliament, the citizens will find a way to open up parliament for us. We will therefore encourage all of us not to relent in our efforts to make parliament more transparent, open, accountable and responsive to the people of Ghana.

Once again, we are grateful for the opportunity.

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