

**REMARKS BY THE
MINORITY LEADER OF PARLIAMENT, HON. OSEI KYEI-MENSAH-
BONSU
ON THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT OF GHANA IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN GHANA**

International Conference Centre, Accra
12th February 2016

Your Excellency, The President of the Republic of Ghana

The UN Under-Secretary General & UNFPA

The UN Resident Coordinator

The Ambassador of Norway

Hon. Majority Leader

Hon. Ministers of States

Hon. Members of Parliament

The Director General, NDPC

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me commence my brief remarks by expressing my profound happiness to being part of the launching of the Sustainable Development Goals in Ghana.

I would also like to use this occasion to congratulate H.E. John Dramani Mahama on his appointment as the Co-Chair of the group of 16 eminent persons who would assist in the campaign to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

By the close of 2015, Ghana had made significant strides toward the achievement of the MDGs. Admittedly, however, our progress towards the achievements of the MDGs has been mixed.

Quite a number of targets set under the MDGs have been achieved and these include halving extreme poverty as well as landmark improvements in the

proportion of people with access to potable water, universal basic education and gender parity in primary school. Substantial progress has also been made in reducing HIV prevalence, access to ICT and reducing the proportion of people suffering from hunger.

However, slow progress has been made on full and productive employment, women's involvement in governance, reducing under-5 and child mortality, reducing maternal mortality, reversing environmental resource loss and improving sanitation.

Today the world has congregated on the principle of sustainable development. Recognisably, Ghana had since 1992 agreed on this. The preamble of Ghana's constitution provides: "In the name of the Almighty God, We the People of Ghana, In exercise of our national and inalienable right to establish a framework of government which shall secure for ourselves and posterity the blessings of liberty, equity of opportunity and prosperity.....". The recognition is that whatever resort we undertake today should benefit today's generation as well as generations unborn. That is the bedrock of sustainable development. Sustainable development should lead to the realisation of basic human rights, a healthy economy, the right to work, the right to good health care and the right to education as well as, generally, for the establishment of a just and free society as prescribed by Article 34 under the Directive Principles of State Policy.

Now that we have agreed on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is my belief that we would use this opportunity to tackle the "unfinished business" of the MDGs, in addition to the new issues in development.

We can do this if we are guided by experiences gathered in the execution of policies and programmes within the MDG framework.

Good governance and, in particular, effective, open and accountable institutions are necessary to achieve the SDGs. This includes strong and effective parliament

that can live up to expectations; contribute credibly to the equal distribution of public goods and services; and hold governments to account for budgetary allocation and policy implementation.

Your Excellencies, Parliament was part of the success story under MDG. To maintain this momentum and provide the necessary oversight and accountability for the implementation of SDGs, Parliament must continue its role in creating awareness, by ensuring that government policies and programmes are SDGs-compliant, ensure effective and efficient oversight of these policies, programmes, projects and budgets by establishing appropriate linkages among these policies, programmes, projects and budgets as well as promoting legislative reforms for effective implementation of the SDGs. In addition, ensuring public participation, as well as displaying and exercising political will are also imperative for achieving the SDGs.

To enhance the implementation of SDGs, availability of development data/information is crucial for effective accountability. This is because good data is vital to monitoring progress and to ensuring that the poorest and most marginalised communities can be identified and lifted from poverty. Availability of relevant information at relevant times helps the State to eradicate corrupt practices and the abuse of power as Article 35(8) enjoins us all to pursue. It is in this regard that I see the national identification project to be a very useful one and all efforts should be made to ensure that it becomes a success.

To further close the current data gap, there is also the need for Parliament to ensure through the budgetary process that institutions involved in data collection are well resourced in terms of human capacity and financial resource availability. The effect of the combined effort is the production of data in a timely fashion and this will make the monitoring of progress more meaningful.

There is also the need for parliament to strengthen state revenue mobilization institutions to enhance their ability to effectively raise the needed resources by enhancing their human, technical and financial capacities. This would enable us as Ghanaians to fund programmes under the SDGs timeously thereby creating a sense of ownership for the smooth implementation of the SDGS.

As Parliamentarians, we are aware of the role of the private sector in achieving the SDGs. This is against the background of the growing recognition that without the sector's involvement, in leveraging finance and delivering sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the SDGs will not be achieved. It is also appropriate to recognise the role of civil society and the media in holding government to account. In deepening good democratic governance we should develop mechanisms to partner civil society and the media to ensure that we work together to provide sunshine to governance in or order to ensure transparency, Freedom, Justice, Probity and Accountability.

Parliament would have to ensure that sound macroeconomic policies that would create the enabling environment for businesses to flourish are pursued. In other words, Parliament should not be rising in raucous applause to every policy, programme, project or bill that emanates from the Executive. We must position ourselves as the prime institution to scrutinise and sanitise whatever comes from the executive just so that good dividends may ensue for the generality of our citizenry. This is a sure way of not only absorbing the teeming youth who are unemployed but giving them a decent work as well.

In concluding, I would like to assure you that as Parliament, we would continue to make our activities, deliberations, debates, hearings, committees and other oversight functions more transparent and responsive to the needs of our citizens. We would do this effectively by broadening the engagement of various stakeholders so that together we can facilitate the achievement of SDGs in record time.

Thank you.