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## **SPEECH BY NANA AKUFO-ADDO, 2016 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE NEW PATRIOTIC PARTY, AT THE 2<sup>ND</sup> ALIU MAHAMA MEMORIAL LECTURES AT THE BANQUET HALL, STATE HOUSE, ACCRA, ON 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2014**

### **ON** **"ONE GHANA: SECURING OUR FUTURE".**

It was with great pleasure, tinged with considerable sadness, that I accepted the invitation from my good friend, Kwasi Abeasi, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Aliu Mahama Foundation, to be the second speaker in the series of the Foundation's Annual Memorial Lectures. Pleasure, because, having missed last year's inaugural lecture delivered, according to my information, with panache and verve by Mahamudu Bawumia, I would be able, today, to bear testimony to the distinguished statesman in whose honour the Foundation and these Memorial Lectures have been instituted.

Shakespeare's inimitable language, in the mouth of Mark Anthony, during his celebrated funeral oration for Julius Ceasar, captures it best: "He was my friend, faithful and just to me." Dependable friend, faithful colleague, just leader – the attributes of Aliu Mahama. The first of his faith in our history to occupy the high office of Vice President of the Republic, his conduct in that office was a credit to all Moslems, and, indeed, to all Ghanaians. Proud Dagomba, he personified the best traits of the Ghanaian character – patriotic, responsible, tolerant.

I remember the first speech he made to the gathered ranks of the NPP at our Congress in Ho in 2000, soon after his nomination as running mate to then candidate J.A. Kufuor, with whom he partnered to give the Fourth Republic its best government so far. "Here I stand, a Zongo boy", he said, "and I am proof that our nation provides opportunities for all to aspire to and reach the highest ranks". The theme, "One Ghana: Securing Our Future" is one of which he would certainly have approved.

Our long-standing friendship survived the outcome of the epic 17-man competition for the 2008 presidential candidature of our Party, in which we both featured. It

was, in fact, a reflection of the man that he embraced with such evident sincerity the ambitions of his successor as the NPP's vice presidential candidate, Mahamudu Bawumia, to whom he became an invaluable mentor and guardian. I daresay that the relative success of our 2012 campaign in his home region of the North, which saw the number of our parliamentary seats go from 3 in 2008 to 10 in 2012, was in no small measure due to his active involvement in that campaign.

His departure to meet His Maker was all too soon, and I speak as a contemporary! Hence my sadness. It appears, though, that he is missed not just by us in the NPP, but also across the political divide. The recent gesture by the current NDC government of President John Dramani Mahama to dedicate our National Sanitation Day to him was one all right thinking Ghanaians appreciate. It reinforces the manner in which his dignified widow, Hajia Ramatu Mahama, and his children, led by his son Farouk, are keeping alight the flame of his memory. They are to be warmly commended. Aliu, may Almighty God continue to bless you and give your soul peaceful rest.

We have to put our nation into good shape. We have a hard working and eager people. Our land is blessed with riches. We need a leadership that has the competence and care to make these riches work for the people and reach every home and family. Our task is clear. We have to make Ghana work by ensuring that our nation works in a way that a nation serious about the welfare of its people, about its progress and about its place in the world should work. That is how we best secure our future.

Our topic, "One Ghana: Securing our Future", is apt for it reflects the spirit of the times: our concerns as a people, our aspirations as a nation. It is a theme that can be painted on a broad canvas, but for my purpose tonight, I want to concentrate on a few key elements.

These are (i) the establishment of good governance in our state which is respectful of the liberties and rights of our people, and which upholds the values of honesty and integrity in the discharge of the State's responsibilities (ii) the widespread acquisition and application of knowledge by the population through education, skills training, innovation and technology (iii) the transformation of the economy through the rapid expansion and modernisation of our agriculture and industry (iv) the vigorous promotion of enterprise and private sector investment, indigenous and foreign and (v) the central role Ghana must play in hastening the process of creating a genuine regional market out of ECOWAS.

Let us start with the concept of One Ghana. Of course, there is only one entity called Ghana, a political whole and within one geographical entity. This entity is made up of peoples from different ethnic backgrounds and cultural practices who

speak different languages. Not too long ago, you could tell what group someone belongs to from his clothes, his food or the music he plays at home. Today, it is a brave person that would conclude that a man wearing a smock is necessarily a Northerner or a family having banku and fetri soup are Anlos or the young lady dancing intricate Adowa steps is an Ashanti.

The things that differentiate us are no longer seen as obstacles to building a harmonious society. Every child in school in Ghana today knows he or she has to rely on gari to survive the hunger pangs of a growing child in between meals. We are getting comfortable with each other's backgrounds. In the past 22 years a consensus has emerged about how we should govern ourselves and in my view, multi party, constitutional rule is the most potent binding instrument to keep Ghana one. But as President Kufuor said on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ghana's independence, freedom, or if I might amend that saying, democratic rule, is not a monument to be saluted every once in a while, it is a living flame that should be constantly fuelled, or else the light goes out. We have come to terms with how we wish to govern ourselves, today and in the future.

We are also agreed that securing this safer and improved future is best done in the knowledge we have a shared destiny. The dreams and hopes of every individual and family are dependent on the freedom, opportunity and security of each other.

To ensure that we have the atmosphere that engenders the hard work that brings the prosperity we all aspire to, citizens must have confidence in the governance system and the rule of law. Let us start from the beginnings: what kind of future do we envisage for the children who are born today in this country?

According to the current statistics, less than half the number of children born in Ghana today are going to have their births registered. Therein lies the genesis of the lack of reliable data for all sectors of our society. It is manifested in dubious voting registers and in our Under-17 football team being disqualified for fielding overage players. No modern society functions effectively without reliable data and we should start with making sure every child born in Ghana is registered. Many aspects of our national life are not functioning properly and this undermines all the best laid plans.

Securing the future means planning. It begins with planning the size of our families to make sure we have the number of children we can look after. Between 1960 and 2010, a span of some 50 years, Ghana's population grew by nearly 400%, from 6.79 million to 24.6 million, faster than the regional and continental growth of 353% and 351%, respectively. Much as a young, fast expanding population can provide the fuel for rapid economic development, it can also generate potentially unbearable social pressures if not properly managed. Each one of us must accept

personal responsibility and make the individual hard choices that lead to the public good.

The foundation to the Ghana that we aspire to is an educated population. There is no shortcut or alternative route to building a prosperous nation without educating the people. It is time to ensure that every child born in this country attends school. The process starts from registering every birth and monitoring the progress of the children to ensure that no child falls through the net. Every child should go to school and start with kindergarten and stay in school until they finish senior high school.

We secure our future and build the prosperous Ghana we all want when every child goes to school and stays in school till he or she finishes senior high school. This is a subject on which I have had a lot to say in the past six to seven years. It is a subject on which the NPP has spent a lot of time and energy. It is a subject that a consensus appears to be emerging in the country: we must redefine basic education to mean kindergarten to Senior High School and it must be free and compulsory for all children.

I would reiterate the importance of teachers in making this possible. The Ghana that we envisage would place teachers in an important, respectable status. Teachers would be well trained and properly remunerated. After all, they play the front line role in moulding the workforce that would transform our economy. The secure future we envisage would mean that our education system would place the proper emphasis on the teaching of the sciences, mathematics, engineering, enterprise and innovation. Above all, it must move away from rote learning and stress the capacity to think, and so enhance our ability to solve problems. No longer should mathematics strike terror in the hearts of some children, but we shall as a people help build a happy atmosphere in schools for our children and for their teachers.

I understand that some people are curious to find out what I think of the recent announcement by the government of the adoption of a free SHS policy. I will say this: a lot of work was done on our free SHS policy. There are in this country today several people who are quite knowledgeable on the subject and who spent a lot of time anticipating the various difficulties that would confront the country in implementing the policy. They will be happy to share their knowledge if they are asked.

I need to state here one of my fundamental beliefs: the NPP's fortunes do not depend on the NDC failing. If President Mahama is, indeed, introducing free SHS in the 2015-2016 academic year, I would say alleluia and be thankful to the Almighty for this particular road to Damascus moment. It means that we all now agree that

it is both doable and necessary. Amen. We have at the same time to insist that technical and vocational education receive the attention that had been designated for it in the education reforms of 2007 and under the Education Act of 2008.

We must support and encourage tertiary level education to provide the intellectual muscle for our development. Much of what needs to be done in the educational front requires a lot of money and this must necessarily come from public resources, but a lot can be done by inspiring the people of Ghana to bring their ideas and enterprise.

Securing our future means our educational system, and especially the public schools must have a reputation for quality and for excellence across board. We cannot afford to have differing standards of education depending on how rich or poor a parent is. The tragedy for our education is that the middle classes have opted out of the public school system at the most critical stage, which is the basic school level. They put their children in private schools and the public schools are deprived of the inputs the articulate middle classes would otherwise contribute to the running of the public schools. It is in all our interests that the public schools are as well-equipped as possible so all our children get a fair chance at realizing their potential. It is in the circumstances for government to make a conscious effort to redress the balance. One Ghana is dependent on a sound education for all Ghana's children.

The burning subject of the economy is obviously something that has more of an immediate effect than education. On this subject too, I believe there is a consensus. The people of Ghana want their government to create an enabling atmosphere for entrepreneurs to go about their businesses and to make sure that the public service works efficiently and honestly. The people of Ghana expect their government to run the affairs of the country so that the weak and vulnerable will be protected and social services are managed for the public good.

According to the latest Global Competitiveness Report by the World Economic Forum, out of 144 countries studied worldwide, Ghana's budget deficit was better than only three other countries. We placed 141<sup>st</sup>. Ghana's annual rate of inflation was better than just four other countries. The Government's debt as a percentage of GDP has grown, putting us at 100 on the list. And yet significant portions of Ghana's debts were wiped out just a decade ago.

In manufacturing, we managed 107<sup>th</sup> place. On health, we were ranked better than only 22 other countries, even though a few years ago our National Health Insurance Scheme was hailed around the world. On primary education we were 116<sup>th</sup>. Ghana's infrastructure, including roads, electricity and internet, was deemed the 110<sup>th</sup> best out of 144 countries. It is clear that we are not doing very

well. We do not have very much to be proud of today, never mind not having very much to show that would secure our future. Some of us think that acceptance of criticism means we are running Ghana down. The truth is the very opposite. Facing reality can only help us charter a better course for our future and collective survival.

I was in Seoul, Korea last month, and came back home with mixed feelings. What I saw made me sad. I was sad to see how a nation, together with which we started the journey of freedom in 1957, transformed its economy to become a first world economy, while we struggle to keep our lights on. And yet at independence, Ghana was seen as the better bet to succeed. At the same time, I was hugely encouraged by what Korea had managed to do within a generation. This strengthened my belief that it is possible to turn Ghana round and transform our economy and society within a short period also.

But what has led to this vast disparity in fortunes between the two countries? The Koreans have had nearly as many coups d'état as Ghana. They succeeded because of competent, decisive, results-oriented, disciplined and principled national leadership; because systems were made to work. It's about obeying the rules of the game; it's about developing the people's pride in the national paradigm that is set; it's about applying and maintaining market-sustaining incentives; it's about giving workers the incentives to excel; it's about investing in human capital; it's about spending wisely and boldly on infrastructure, research and technical education; and it's about never shirking your patriotic responsibility as public servants to spend public funds strictly according to value for money.

That is why today, South Korea, with a population twice that of Ghana, has an economy 27 times the size of Ghana's. That is why the average person in Korea today is 14 times better off than the average Ghanaian. And this demonstrates the size of the task that we have to accomplish to secure our future.

In 2009, the NDC was handed the best economy inherited by any new government since the 1960s, with oil coming in and a debt-to-GDP ratio of just 29%. In the last few months to the 2012 election, we all saw the reckless spending the NDC government undertook in a desperate move to hold on to power. The budget deficit alone for that year was the same as the entire national budget for 2008. Today, we are all suffering the consequences of those irresponsible actions.

When I checked this morning, I was told that we have some \$1.5 billion in our net foreign reserves, just enough to cover two weeks of imports. And our debts are so big that we are using four times the money we expect from producing oil this year to service interest payments alone in 2014. I also learnt that for 2015, the rate of growth of our economy is expected to be much smaller than it has been this year.

The expected growth rate – 3.9% – would be the worst since the year 2000. This does not seem like the year of recovery the Government is telling us that 2015 will be and the new Budget is hardly the budget for transforming our economy.

The situation now is worse than we were in a year ago; 2013 was worse than 2012; and 2012 was worse than 2011. Yet, this was the Ghana that was so successful in managing its non-oil economy that, in 2009, the US President, Barack Obama, was able to call Ghana the poster child for a great story of “Africa Rising”. Five years later, on August 5 this year, the *Financial Times* carried the headline: “Ghana tarnishes ‘Africa Rising’ story”, as we were forced to run back to the IMF for a bailout. We had worked hard to wean ourselves off dependence on the IMF to enable us undertake the growth that would transform our nation. Now with oil, Ghana is on a downward slope. The sudden and calamitous decline has left many friends, many institutions, many investors, totally perplexed. How did it all go so spectacularly wrong?

If we are to succeed in securing our future, we must succeed in securing the public purse. Governments are elected to offer creative solutions to the problems that face a country. Corruption, or to call it by the name that we all understand, the naked theft of public funds, will destroy Ghana and her future if we do not take a firm stand against it. Corruption is undermining confidence in our governance system and that is dangerous for all of us.

We have to deal with it, and do so urgently. Our law enforcement agencies - Ministries of Justice and Interior, the Police Service, EOCO, CHRAJ, the Office of the Auditor General et al – have to be reformed and strengthened so that they can fulfil effectively their primary goals of ensuring the security of the nation and protecting our population from criminal activity, no matter its source. Above all, the leadership of the nation – the President, the Vice President, Ministers of State, District Chief Executives, Members of Parliament, Political Leaders, Judges and Magistrates – must demonstrate, by their example, that, indeed, they are up for the fight. Our people need to have that firm assurance now, not just by words or pious declarations, but by concrete deeds. Our future security as a peaceful, stable, democratic State depends on it.

In a recent speech in London, Mahamudu Bawumia produced a list of flagship projects from the past six years that the Government put in the 2015 Budget, and noted: **“All these signature projects sum up to some \$3.5 billion out of the increase in total debt by the equivalent, at the time of borrowing, of some \$27 billion . . . So, where is the rest of the money?”**

The issue becomes even clearer when the 21 projects are subjected to value-for-money scrutiny. Let’s pick just one: the eleventh project on the list: the Kasoa

Interchange, which is to be constructed at the cost of \$172 million. I have already made reference to this particular project and the cost on some other occasions.

I come back to it to make an example of the point I am making and also because those who know about these matters have expressed anxiety to me. I also take on board the explanation that government spokespersons have offered about why the cost appears bloated when compared to the cost of building the six-lane N1 Highway, with two interchanges, and the paying of compensation for those whose properties had to give way for the road. I accept that the government is not building an ordinary interchange. But as I have said, many have expressed deep anxieties about the cost and it is definitely one of the things leading to the perception of corruption in government.

I want to make a humble suggestion to His Excellency the President. Check the figures! Check them again! Invite others in an international open tender and let's see if we can't save the nation more than half of what you have signed us up to pay. The President certainly does not have to listen to me, he might very well think he is within his rights and he might even think to go back on a decision he has already made and subject the contract to a second look would be a truly unprecedented act. Yes, it would be unprecedented, but it would show strength rather than weakness on the part of the President and it could lead to a regeneration of trust in our governance process. Try it, Mr. President and let's see what happens. You have nothing to lose.

To make that breakthrough in our economy, we need to do more than fight corruption and manage our economy competently. We need to think big and we need to grow our economy. Fighting corruption and managing our economy competently will save us a lot of money to fund many of the things we need to do. But if we are truly to transform our economy to meet the needs of our population and project us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have no choice but to industrialize our economy and modernize its agriculture.

Agriculture is obviously an area with the most urgent need for attention. Throughout the ages, most nations have started their industrialization process through the modernization and diversification of agriculture. Our farmers are still depending on the rudimentary instruments that other nations now place in their museums. It is not likely that we can hope to feed ourselves when the farming methods are still rooted in the nineteenth century.

We have to look again at the bold attempt made in the Kufuor era to promote the diversification of our agriculture by the President's Special Initiatives, which concentrated on industrial starch (i.e. cassava), oil palm and industrial salt. To these, were also added garments and textiles. They were laudable initiatives.



We have been hearing the President urge all of us to patronize made in Ghana goods, including eating what we grow, and indeed, we should but it is more important that the Ministry of Agriculture and our extension officers help our farmers to modernize their methods, to package their products attractively and make their costs competitive to imported ones. In such circumstances, we would not need to coax anybody to patronize made in Ghana goods, or foodstuffs. We could then bring an end to the highly disturbing development that has seen our imported food-bill rise in the Mills-Mahama era from \$600 million to \$1.5 billion. Again, deeds, not words, are what are required.

The last Millennium Challenge Account had an agriculture sector programme. There are successful farm projects dotted around the country based on the programme. The original idea was for these farms to serve as learning centres for other farmers in the communities; strangely there has been no sign of anybody learning from these farms and their methods. It would be sad if the lessons from the Millennium Challenge Account were left to wither away without leaving any lasting effects. It is not too late to make these projects play the roles they were intended to play and serve as hubs for the modernization of agriculture.

Securing the future is about how rapidly we transform the economy to expand it and create jobs for our youth. The entrepreneurial quality of the Ghanaian people is not in doubt. It needs nurturing and support. We have to take the bull by the horns and create explicitly the conditions for enterprise in both the formal and informal sectors to succeed. We can no longer continue to mouth clichés about the private sector being the engine of growth and leaving the matter there. We need to match our words with our deeds. Fiscal, monetary and regulatory policies have to coincide to create an environment for enterprise to flourish, and thus hasten the industrial and economic development of our nation. Incentives must be given to enterprise just as incentives must be given to workers to excel. That is the twin-track to economic success. It has succeeded elsewhere. It can succeed here in Ghana.

Securing the future is about ensuring our workers a decent pension after retirement. It has been a sad spectacle watching the recent struggle over the Tier Two Pension between Government and the Unions. The National Pensions Act 2008 (Act 766) was introduced by the NPP because we saw the need to secure a better future for pensioners *and* get a critical mass of capital into the money market for long-term investment. It was enacted to complement the work of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust.

The way forward in the current impasse is self-evident: let Government take its hands off the pension till and allow the scheme to work as it was intended to do. Let the workers have the decisive say on how their privately managed funds are

run. If it means amending the law for greater clarity, let us do so. Let us thus demonstrate our confidence in the private sector and this is bound to send out positive signals to the money markets around the world that Ghana is indeed open for business.

Securing our future means taking care of our environment. The Almighty blessed our land and we have a responsibility to take care of the environment. Our forests, our trees, our rivers and lakes are not commodities we can abuse. We do not own the land; we hold it in trust for generations yet unborn.

Nor do we have the right to denude our lands or seas and rivers of the animals and fishes indiscriminately. Climate change is a reality that we live with, we can see for ourselves the southward march of the Sahara. There are young Ghanaians today who do not know that our country used to be covered with thick forests. Indeed today, we are importing timber. Securing our future means we have to learn to take care of our environment.

Take a look around us, and look at the number of places that have been allowed to disintegrate for lack of maintenance. The number of roads, which once constructed, are never repaired; the number of houses, which once built, never get a coat of paint or walls which have been left to collapse because no-one bothered to replace a block at the correct time. We seem to have developed a culture of building beautiful things and leaving them to deteriorate. From the personal to the national, we construct, but, we do not take care of what we have. We are more interested in building new things than in taking care of what we already have.

If we are to succeed as a nation, we must develop a culture of maintenance. Our public buildings, our private houses, once constructed, must not be left to the vagaries of the elements until they deteriorate to the point where they cannot be repaired.

We must learn to take care of what we do have, however little. The challenge is not only how many kilometers of new roads we are able to build this year, but also how well we maintain the ones already constructed.

At the 2012 presidential debate, the President said he already had programmes in place to make load shedding a thing of the past by the end of 2013. Recently on Paul Adom Otchere's "Good Evening Ghana" on Metro TV, the President gave us a new promise. What is this new promise? He is promising to stop giving us promises. Well, well, well.

To us in the NPP, reliable, affordable energy supply is the lifeline of our overall vision to transform the Ghanaian economy into a modern industrialised one. We

know we cannot secure the future without electricity to power our plans into that future. So solving once and for all, the culture of load shedding and mismanagement in the energy sector is a major priority for us. The recent extension of load shedding to industries puts the entire economy and its capacity to attract new investment into grave danger. We know we cannot speak of industrialisation when we cannot give hairdressers and barbers electricity to stay in business. The future of our children is threatened when they have no light in their schools to study. Ghana is currently experiencing one of her worst levels of economic growth, job losses and income losses, partly because of an energy crisis we could have avoided. Yes. The current energy crisis was avoidable and can be avoided in the future.

The energy crisis can be fixed and we intend to fix it with a long-term sustainable integrated energy plan that will start yielding results, if given the opportunity to win power to deliver power.

We are happy about the news that finally, Ghana's largest ever private sector-built power plant, the \$900m, 350MW plant by Cenpower in Kpone, which started nine years ago under President Kufuor, is taking off, bringing on board one of the major global players in the energy sector, the Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo. But, the challenges faced by the Kpone power project over the last few years is in itself a powerful reminder that we need to set the right market conditions to attract many more of such investments.

Ghanaians have shown that they are prepared to pay for electricity to go about their business. All they ask for is value for money; which means reasonably priced reliable supply. Investors, also, will put their money in our energy sector when they know that they will be paid and make profit, and that our currency will be stable and inflation will be tamed.

Beyond macro-economic issues and integrity of contract, another major challenge to growth posed by Ghana's power sector is not primarily a matter of limited generating capacity, but rather one of poor reliability. That is why, in spite of Ghana's installed capacity of 3000MW, we still cannot meet our peak demand of 2000MW. Again, this can be fixed. We will do so, first, by appointing people who can do the work, set them clear goals and give them the resources and independence to deliver. We will ensure value for money in all procurement contracts. We must bring to an end the situation where consumers are forced to subsidise corruption and inefficiency in the power sector.

Let me stress, we will pursue vigorously a policy of greater private sector participation in the ownership and management of power generation. We see

greater private sector investment and a strong, independent regulatory institution as necessary to securing Ghana's future energy needs. Securing power for our citizens and industries will require new and significant, competitive investments in a mix of power generation, (including hydro, gas, solar, etc.), distribution, and energy efficiency.

Securing the future requires us to appreciate that our economy must be competitive and that the project of regional and continental economic integration is the way to go. Intra-African trade currently stands at 12 percent of total trade, compared to 60 percent for Europe, 40 percent for North America, and 30 percent for ASEAN, according to statistics cited by the WTO. In 2012, the AU agreed to set up the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) in 2017. Interestingly, COMESA, the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intend to launch a tripartite Free Trade Area encompassing 26 member states from the three regional blocs, with a total population of 625 million people and an economy of \$1.2 trillion. West Africa risks being left behind! This FTA has half of the continent's countries being part, controlling 58% of Africa's GDP. West African leaders must wake up!

Ghana which seeks to transform and modernise its economy, has to take the lead in bringing about a genuine regional market of some 350 million people out of ECOWAS, which will provide a ready market for Ghanaian goods and services.

Securing the future is about how we keep our country together, peacefully. Securing the future means safeguarding our democracy by securing the integrity of our elections; that is why we must all support electoral reforms which even the majority on the Supreme Court advocated. We want to get to a situation where we can all readily accept the results of regular, fair elections and thereby bolster our stability. We do not need repetitions of narrow decisions in the Supreme Court after tortuous, delicate proceedings. Brinksmanship will ultimately destroy our democracy.

As I go round our country, what I see confirms me in my belief that we have to change the way we do things. I live in the faith that the sky is the limit for Ghana. What inspires me is that we are a nation of able, gifted people who are desperate to help our nation become great and strong. We need to nurture all our talents to build a new society of prosperity. That is the mission of the NPP, the party that I lead.

What is the tyranny that the majority of our people continue to strive against but have yet to vanquish? In a word: poverty. We must wage a relentless war on it. Joseph Boakye Danquah warned against our communities becoming ignorant "of the causes of the physical conditions which paralyse action". We must remember

our legacy; we must be guided by our past mistakes and the wisdom born of experience. We must stride into the future, confident that we will make it if we work at it.

And in order to do all this, we must believe in our capacity to achieve the greatness that others have achieved. We must believe in Ghana and do what is right by our nation, and thereby fulfil the dreams and aspirations of those far-sighted individuals, who assembled at Saltpond on that most seminal of days of 4<sup>th</sup> August 1947, to initiate the steps for our national freedom and independence. Their goal remains our goal – the creation of a free, democratic, prosperous nation governed under the rule of law, capable of making its own special contribution to the growth of world civilisation. With the guidance of the Almighty, we can make it and secure our future.

Thank you and may God bless Ghana and Africa.

