SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 2017 BY HONOURABLE HARUNA IDDRISU, MP FOR TAMALE SOUTH - 8 MARCH, 2017

Mr Speaker, I would endeavour to keep it brief, appreciating that you would want to dedicate today to the beginning of the debate on the Budget Statement and Financial Policy.

Mr Speaker, in so doing, let me commend the Hon Member who made the Statement, Ghana’s Minister responsible for women and children affairs. Indeed, when she used the words “be bold”, I was minded to ask her to pay royalties to Her Excellency Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings who used this in launching her new political career in aspiring to lead the country as a proud woman. For whatever reason it was, whether she succeeded or not, she has given an indication that what men could do, women could do better.

However, Mr Speaker, in doing so, today must be a day dedicated to antisexism and it must be a day dedicated to anti-discrimination. In observing this day, let us as a country accept that there are conscious and unconscious actions of both men and women and there are biases that affect the development of men, women and girls in our society. Therefore, we should endeavour to work to improve it.

Mr Speaker, we must also make a pledge to pursue gender parity. Indeed, when the Hon Member mentioned that in the World Economic Forum, setting up a timetable of 2186 A.D. in the year of our Lord for the attainment of parity that was global. I am not even sure whether, with regard to Ghana, we might be able to achieve that particular request.

Mr Speaker, in recognising that Ghana has made significant strides and women have made our country proud, if however, we have a Parliament today of two hundred and seventy-five Members of Parliament and only thirty-seven are women, it means that we could do better in terms of improving the representations of women at this level. I know that since the Fourth Republican Constitution, our Presidents have endeavoured to allow women to serve at the level of Cabinet Ministers, and many of them have distinguished themselves very credibly.

Mr Speaker, what we require, which we would encourage the Hon Minister to do, is to come up with concrete, pragmatic action to improve the empowerment of rural women. We still have outstanding Domestic Workers Regulations to be done, which would deal with the problem that the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to; the abuse of Ghanaian women and Ghanaian girls abroad.

One of the surest ways to improve and ensure dignity for them is to see to a regulation of the domestic workers, which guarantees their employment, dignity and what they would be able to earn. Mr Speaker, we are encouraged and we encourage her to do same with the Affirmative Action Bill. Let us see the Spousal Action Bill and the Intestate Successional Bill. What enthuses the representation of women at all levels of government, we should all support it.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would particularly dedicate today to Her Ladyship, the Chief Justice of Ghana, who undoubtedly and hierarchically, is the most superior woman serving in the high
office of the Chief Justice of the Republic of Ghana, who has dedicated long service to our Republic in administering justice impartially and fairly to all manner of persons; since I heard her say that.

I believe we could dedicate today to her in order that we could mentor other young girls to look up to her type of person and many others, and to be inspired that there is a pride of place for the girl-child and women in our development.

Mr Speaker, so, with these few comments, I once again like to commend the Hon Minister and to encourage her. Whether women could be used as vehicle for change, if it is possible, would depend upon women and policy actions and policy interventions that we all pursue. We would support her in that particular enterprise.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.