SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF ROAD TRAFFIC AND MOTOR REGULATIONS BY HONOURABLE MAVIS NKANSAH-BOADU, MP FOR AFIGYA SEKYE EAST, BY HON JOSEPH OSEI-OWUSU, MP FOR BEKWAI - 10 FEBRUARY, 2017

Mr Speaker, my position on issues of road safety is quite well known in the House. The records would bear me out.

Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Hon Member who made the Statement, and in particular, Hon Dr Okoe Boye, who contributed and brought out the main issues on road safety — The loss of lives, property and limbs, and how our planning and implementations are contributing to the experiences we are getting.

Mr Speaker, in this intervention, I would just want to focus on the so-called “okada” discussion. Our rules or laws do not know anything called “Okada”.

Mr Speaker, I wish the Hon Majority Leader had asked other Hon Members who referred to “okada”.

Mr Speaker, however, what Ghana does not permit is the use of motorcycles for commercial purposes. Ghana does not stop anybody from riding on a motorcycle.

If one takes a lift from a friend on the motorcycle, one decides the risk one carries, weighs it and determines whether it is safe to travel from here to Agbogbloshie on a motorcycle. It is one’s choice.

The issue has been that, we should follow other countries and license the motorcycle operators as commercial operators. That has been a challenge which Ghana as a country —

This Parliament has refused to assent to that. They were proposed in the Regulations. I recall that, the former Hon Deputy Attorney-General, Hon Osei Prempeh, and I, fought against that and it was removed from the law.

Mr Speaker, to Hon Members who argued and justified it, it may be a lifesaver at some point; but would we like that to be a main means of transport? How are we ensuring the safety of those who would pay money to be carried to the next point on these vehicles?

Mr Speaker, so, I believe we should move away from saying that Ghana has banned “okada.”

Ghana has refused to license motorcycles for commercial purposes. Every motorcycle that is operating is licensed for private purposes. So, if you are going to pay money for somebody to carry you at the back of a motorcycle, you should know that it is not covered by any contractual relationship. This is because the person riding the motorcycle has no power to engage in commercial activities with it. However, those who cite other countries, I wish they would also cite the statistics of limbs and deaths as a result of motorcycles.
We have had the occasion to compare with countries like Togo, Benin and others. The statistics of the limbs that have been lost as a result of motorcycle accidents are staggering. Mr Speaker, I understand that, sometime last week or the week before, a motorcycle run into your motorcade and there was an accident. That is the challenge; the belief that because they are motorcycles, they should not obey road traffic regulations. That is the major challenge we have to deal with.

My experiences on the Tamale High Street are serious. In places like Tamale, they have actually made motorcycle lanes so that they could be removed from the main road. There is no conflict with the other vehicles. However, when you get to traffic intersections and you are waiting, 15 to 30 motorcycles come and crowd in front of you. If you lose focus for one second, you would run over a motorcycle.

The real challenge is how to ensure that whether they are using it for private or commercial purposes, they obey the road traffic regulations and assure safety for themselves and other road users.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I thank the Hon Member who made the Statement and wish that we would do better for ourselves in road safety management.