

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF
THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**TENTH REPORT OF THE APPOINTMENTS
COMMITTEE**

ON

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT'S NOMINATIONS
FOR APPOINTMENTS AS MINISTERS**

JANUARY 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

On the 14th and 21st of January 2025, H.E. the President, John Dramani Mahama, per Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution, communicated to Parliament the nomination of the following persons for appointment as Ministers:

- i. Hon Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo as Minister Designate, Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment;
- ii. Hon Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed as Minister Designate, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology;
- iii. Hon Samuel Nartey George as Minister Designate, Ministry of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations;
- iv. Hon Kofi Iddie Adams as Minister Designate, Ministry of Sports and Recreation;
- v. Hon Joseph Bukari Nikpe as Minister Designate, Ministry of Transport;

The Rt Hon Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 217, referred the nominees to the Appointments Committee for consideration and report.

2.0 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

The Committee referred to the under-listed documents during the consideration of the nominees:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana;

- ii. The Standing Orders of Parliament;
- iii. The Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of the Nominees

3.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE REFERRAL

According to Standing Order 217(10), the names of the nominees were published in newspapers for the public's attention. The publication also requested memoranda from the public regarding the nominees. The Committee subsequently sought and obtained Confidential Reports on the nominees from the Ghana Police Service and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB). The Committee also requested the nominees submit Tax Status Reports from the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA).

The Committee held a public hearing on Thursday, 30th January 2025, to consider the nominations. The nominees subscribed to the Oath of a Witness before a Committee and answered questions from Hon Members. The nominees were asked questions relating to their curriculum vitae, eligibility, competencies, issues of national concern, and those pertaining to the office to which they had been nominated.

The Committee, after its deliberations, reports on the nominees as follows:

4.0 HON ABDUL-RASHID HASSAN PELPUO

MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR MINISTRY OF LABOUR, JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT

4.1 BACKGROUND

Hon Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo was born on May 5, 1964, in Wa, in the Upper West Region. He had his secondary education at Wa Secondary School, obtaining the General Certificate of Education – Ordinary Level in 1983 and the Advanced Level Certificate in 1986. He continued his studies at the University of Cape Coast, where he earned a Diploma in Economics and a Bachelor of Education in Psychology in 1994. He later proceeded to the University of Ghana, obtaining a Master of Arts in International Affairs in 1998 and a PhD in African Studies (Development Policy) in 2013.

At the beginning of his career, he held several leadership positions, including serving as President of the Democratic Youth League of Ghana from 1987 to 1990, the Northern Students Union from 1991 to 1993, the Current Affairs Club at the University of Cape Coast from 1992 to 1994, and the Tertiary Education Institutions Network (TEIN) from 1992 to 1994.

He has worked in various capacities, including as Director of Administration and Finance in charge of Research and Policy Planning at the National Youth Council from 1999 to 2002. He also served as Director of the Youth Leadership Training Institute in the Upper West Region from 1994 to 1999, District Youth Coordinator at Wa District from 1988 to 1999, and Acting Regional Youth Coordinator in the Upper West Region from 1990 to 1994.

With over twenty years of experience in research planning, development program design and implementation, local government capacity building, and youth development, he has been involved in policy formulation at the highest levels in Ghana.

He has been a Member of Parliament for Wa Central and has served in various ministerial and parliamentary leadership roles. He was Minister of State at the Office of the President and Minister of Youth and Sports from 2009 to 2010, Minister of State in Charge of Private Sector Development and Public-Private Partnership from 2013 to 2016, and a member of the Government's Economic Management Team. Within Parliament, he has served as Deputy Majority Leader from 2010 to 2012, Ranking Member on Government Assurances from 2018 to 2020, Ranking Member on Lands and Forestry from 2021 to 2023, and Deputy Ranking Member on Youth, Sports, and Culture from 2006 to 2008.

Internationally, he has held positions including Chairman of the Ministers of Sports for West African Countries from 2009 to 2010, a member of the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa, from 2010 to 2012, President of the Africa Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development since 2022, and Envoy on Africa for the Clover Climate Change Alliance.

He has published works, including *True Meaning of Life* (JereJude Publications) and *A Review of George Orwell's Animal Farm and Chinua Achebe's Man of the People*, which appeared in the *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics* (Vol. 6, No. 2, March 2018, pp. 34-57).

QUESTIONS POSED TO THE NOMINEE AND HIS RESPONSES

4.2 Nominee's Perspective on the 24-Hour Economy Policy

The Committee inquired about the nominee's opinion on the concept of the 24-hour economy proposed by the current government. In response, the nominee explained that the 24-hour economy is a policy initiative of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) administration and represents a commitment to ensuring that Ghanaian workers are effectively engaged around the clock.

He elaborated that the policy would introduce three work shifts within a 24-hour period, with each shift lasting eight hours. This structure aims to optimize productivity and enhance economic output by ensuring that businesses, industries, and key sectors operate continuously.

The nominee further stated that the policy is designed to help reset the country's economy by increasing production, promoting self-sufficiency in essential goods and services, and stimulating economic growth. He emphasised that the initiative is intended to empower the working class by providing employment opportunities and ensuring that both public and private sector employees receive fair compensation for their labor.

He concluded by highlighting that many institutions and organizations across various industries stand to benefit from this policy, as it fosters economic resilience, job creation, and enhanced national productivity.

4.3 Justification and Economic Impact of the 24-Hour Economy Policy

The nominee was asked to elaborate on what makes the 24-hour economy policy special and how it could reset the economy, particularly considering

the current economic challenges and the fact that some sectors, such as breweries, already operate around the clock.

In response, the nominee explained that the key distinction of the 24-hour economy policy is that it would be a deliberate policy decision by the state rather than an optional choice by businesses or workers. This government-led initiative would provide targeted support to businesses that are not currently operating 24-hour shifts, enabling them to transition into round-the-clock operations.

He acknowledged that some organizations in the country already run 24-hour operations. However, the policy aims to extend this model to more sectors and businesses, ensuring a broader economic transformation. The nominee outlined key challenges faced by businesses operating 24-hour shifts, including security concerns, operational capacity, and electricity costs. He assured the Committee that the government is committed to addressing these challenges by:

- Enhancing security to protect businesses and workers operating at night.
- Providing financial and logistical support to businesses to strengthen their operational capacity.
- Assisting businesses with electricity costs to ensure sustainable and affordable power supply for uninterrupted production.

The nominee emphasized that the initiative is designed to boost production, create employment opportunities, and drive economic growth. By making the economy more work-based and production-focused, the policy aims to

restructure Ghana's economic framework in a way that maximises output and enhances national development.

4.4 Implementation and Scope of the 24-Hour Economy Policy

The nominee was asked whether the 24-hour economy policy, if established, would be mandatory for businesses, considering that demand and supply dictate the need for extended work hours. The Committee sought clarification on how a policy could be developed to drive the initiative when there might not be sufficient demand for goods and services to justify continuous operations.

In response, the nominee acknowledged the Committee's concern and agreed that demand plays a significant role in determining the viability of a 24-hour economy. However, he emphasised that the government believes many organisations would benefit from the policy but currently lack the capacity, support, and clear government direction to transition into round-the-clock operations.

He explained that the policy is primarily designed for businesses and organisations that have the potential to expand their operations but are constrained by financial, logistical, or infrastructural limitations. The government intends to provide the necessary support to such businesses to enable them to scale up their production, increase employment, and engage the youth in sustainable economic activities.

The nominee further clarified that while certain state-owned enterprises and public institutions may be required to operate within the 24-hour framework, participation for private sector organizations would remain voluntary. The policy aims to create an enabling environment where businesses that see value

in continuous operations can seamlessly integrate into the 24-hour model with government support.

4.5 Extension of Maternity Leave

The nominee was asked about his stance on increasing the duration of maternity leave, considering concerns raised by women about the need for an extension. In response, he acknowledged that this is an important issue that requires serious consideration and national discussion.

He expressed his personal support for extending maternity leave for women, emphasizing that such a policy would contribute positively to maternal and child health, workplace productivity, and overall well-being. He also referenced the recently passed Affirmative Action Law, highlighting that it provides a strong foundation for advancing gender-inclusive policies.

The nominee further stated that he believes the proposal to extend maternity leave would receive broad support from the Ghanaian public. He assured the Committee that, if given the nod, he would engage relevant stakeholders, including women's advocacy groups, labor unions, and policymakers, to explore feasible ways to implement an extended maternity leave policy that balances the needs of working mothers with the operational requirements of businesses and public institutions.

4.6 Ensuring Safer Working Conditions for Indigenous Employees

The nominee was questioned on the measures he would implement to safeguard the rights of indigenous employees working for foreign entities, particularly in cases of harassment, underpayment, and other forms of maltreatment.

In response, he emphasised his strong interest in preventing human rights abuses in the workplace. He assured the Committee that, if given the nod, he would prioritise enforcing employee rights to ensure that all workers operate within a safe and dignified environment, free from abuse.

He further reiterated his commitment to eliminating workplace maltreatment by strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing labor inspections, and promoting strict adherence to labor laws. The nominee stressed that creating a better workplace environment for all employees is essential for national development and that he would collaborate with relevant agencies to ensure compliance with labor standards.

4.7 Support for the Establishment of the National Employment Trust Fund

In addressing the Committee's reference to the National Democratic Congress (NDC)'s manifesto pledge to establish a National Employment Trust Fund aimed at supporting the operationalization of the 24-hour economy, the nominee expressed his enthusiasm for the initiative.

He conveyed his readiness and eagerness to assist His Excellency the President in realizing this vision, emphasizing the importance of the Trust Fund in creating employment opportunities and fostering economic growth.

The nominee acknowledged that the Fund would be instrumental in providing financial support to various sectors, enabling them to adapt to the 24-hour economy model. He affirmed his commitment to collaborating with relevant stakeholders to ensure the successful establishment and operationalization of the National Employment Trust Fund, thereby contributing to the nation's economic transformation and enhancing job creation for Ghanaians.

4.8 Policy Measures to Address Exploitative Overseas Job Recruitment

The nominee was asked about policies he would initiate to curb the growing issue of individuals being misled by fraudulent job advertisements promising lucrative opportunities abroad. Many unsuspecting job seekers have fallen victim to such schemes, losing significant sums of money, while others endure inhumane working conditions, including the confiscation of their passports under the guise of labour agreements.

In response, the nominee referenced the Labour Act, 2023, affirming that child labour and exploitative labour practices are unacceptable. He emphasized that any policy addressing this issue would be developed in strict alignment with existing legal provisions and rigorously enforced.

Furthermore, the nominee assured the Committee that perpetrators of such fraudulent recruitment schemes would face severe legal consequences. He underscored the need for stringent enforcement mechanisms to deter such activities and protect job seekers from exploitation.

4.9 Addressing Labour Unrest Through Labour Law Reforms

The nominee was asked to share his views on specific aspects of the Labour Law, 2003 (Act 651) that could be considered to address labour unrest and resolve agitations from Organised Labour.

In his response, the nominee acknowledged that labour agitations are inevitable due to the dynamic nature of society. He explained that economic factors, such as the depreciation of the cedi and the perception that wages are not commensurate with labour input, often trigger such disputes.

He assured the Committee of his commitment to addressing these concerns as they arise. He emphasized the importance of maintaining open dialogue with Organized Labour to ensure that grievances are resolved in a manner that upholds fairness and industrial harmony.

4.10 Ensuring Effective Regulation of Pension Schemes by NPRA

The Committee raised concerns regarding the role of the National Pensions Regulatory Authority (NPRA) in supervising all pension schemes, including the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). Reference was made to recent developments, particularly SSNIT's attempt to offload some of its assets, which suggested that the regulator may not have been fully exercising its oversight responsibilities.

In response, the nominee affirmed that the NPRA is legally empowered to regulate all pension schemes in the country. He assured the Committee that, if given the nod, he would conduct a thorough review to assess whether the NPRA is effectively executing its mandate. Should any gaps or inefficiencies be identified, he pledged to take necessary steps to strengthen the Authority and empower it to fully perform its regulatory role.

4.11 Enhancing the National Service Scheme: Allowances and Job Content

The Committee inquired about the nominee's plans to improve the National Service Scheme (NSS) under the National Service Authority, particularly in terms of increasing allowances and enhancing job content for service personnel.

In response, the nominee clarified that the National Service Scheme does not fall directly under the Ministry of Labour, Jobs, and Employment. However,

he acknowledged his broader responsibility of ensuring that all Ghanaian workers, including national service personnel, operate under fair conditions as outlined in Article 24(1) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. This provision emphasizes the need for safe, healthy, and equitable working conditions for all.

He further expressed his support for any initiative aimed at increasing the allowances of National Service Personnel. While he may not have direct oversight of the scheme, he assured the Committee of his commitment to advocating for better conditions for service personnel in alignment with his overarching mandate to protect and promote the welfare of workers in the country.

4.12 Ensuring Fair and Equitable Wages in the Public Sector

In response to a question on how the nominee would ensure fair and equitable wages in the public sector despite concerns about low productivity, he acknowledged the significance of the issue and emphasised that addressing it would be a priority. He admitted that the current levels of output and expenditure in relation to production raise concerns, necessitating a comprehensive policy direction to enhance productivity. He further recognised the hard work of the Ghanaian workforce, stressing the importance of aligning remuneration with output to ensure that payments reflect performance and efficiency.

On how he would personally contribute to making Ghanaian workers satisfied and motivated to work at an optimal level, the nominee expressed his full confidence in the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC). He

described the FWSC as a key institution capable of harmonizing wage policies to ensure fairness and productivity across the public sector.

He assured the Committee of his commitment to collaborating closely with the FWSC to develop effective strategies to address wage disparities and improve productivity. Acknowledging the complexity of the issue, given the large number of workers and organizations involved, he emphasized the need for innovative thinking and policy adjustments. He pledged to work diligently with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that fair and equitable wages are maintained while optimizing productivity within the public sector.

4.3 **Enhancing Private Sector Employment Opportunities**

In response to the question on how he would ensure that the private sector absorbs more workers, given the total number of employees within Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), the nominee outlined a structured approach aimed at bridging the gap between job seekers and employment opportunities.

He disclosed that a system has been developed to record and track all job vacancies across both the public and private sectors. This initiative, known as the **Labour Market Information System**, would serve as a central platform for collating and publishing job openings across different institutions. He emphasized that this system would facilitate direct engagement with the private sector, making it easier to identify and match available job opportunities with job seekers in Ghana.

Furthermore, the nominee stated that he would actively encourage private sector participation in this system by ensuring that vacancies within their institutions are properly recorded and advertised. This, he believed, would

create a harmonized job market, improving access to employment for job seekers and helping businesses fill critical positions with skilled individuals.

He also expressed his commitment to advocating for government support to enhance private sector contributions to the economy. He proposed policies aimed at providing credit facilities to businesses, enabling them to invest and expand their operations, ultimately creating more job opportunities. He underscored that by supporting the private sector, the government would not only boost employment but also generate revenue through taxes, contributing to national economic growth.

4.14 Promoting Gender Balance in Employment

When asked how he would address gender disparity within his outfit, where males constitute 65% and females 35% of the 5,647 employees, the nominee reaffirmed the government's commitment to achieving gender balance in the workforce.

He cited the "Levelling Up" policy outlined in the government's manifesto, which is designed to promote equity in job creation and employment opportunities. This initiative aims to ensure that employment policies are inclusive, providing equal opportunities for both men and women, as well as for youth and adults.

The nominee emphasized that the policy seeks to remove systemic barriers to female participation in the workforce, creating an enabling environment where women can access and thrive in various professional roles. He expressed his commitment to implementing deliberate strategies to close the gender gap by fostering recruitment, retention, and career advancement opportunities for women in his sector.

4.15 Unification of Pension Schemes

The Committee inquired whether the nominee would consider unifying all pension schemes, including CAP 30, to ensure fairness and justice for all employees. They highlighted concerns that workers in sectors such as the Civil Service, Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health Service, Parliamentary Service, and Judicial Service contribute to their pensions but do not receive the same benefits as security service personnel, who do not contribute to pensions yet enjoy CAP 30 benefits.

In response, the nominee acknowledged the injustice created by the existing system and stated that he would work towards the unification of all pension schemes. He emphasised the importance of finding a balanced approach that minimises controversy and ensures fairness across all sectors.

He expressed his preference for a unified framework that prevents individual institutions from negotiating pension benefits separately, thereby fostering a harmonised and equitable pension system for all Ghanaian workers.

4.16 Review of the Single Spine Salary Structure and CLOGSAG's Demands

The Committee sought the nominee's views on the new salary structure demanded by the Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana (CLOGSAG) and whether the NDC government would consider granting it. They also raised concerns over the agitations caused by low salaries, leading to some public service institutions, such as the Judicial Service of Ghana, Audit Service, and the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA), opting out of the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS).

In response, the nominee acknowledged that the issue was a key area of concern and was currently under negotiation. He recognized the discontent among public sector workers regarding salary disparities and assured the Committee that the NDC government is committed to addressing the concerns of CLOGSAG and other affected institutions.

He emphasised the need for a broad consultation process involving the Committee, labour unions, and relevant stakeholders to reach an amicable resolution. Additionally, he expressed openness to reviewing the Single Spine Salary Structure Scheme to ensure that it fairly compensates workers and maintains stability within the public sector.

4.17 Consideration of Extending the Retirement Age in the Civil and Public Service

The Committee inquired whether the nominee would consider extending the retirement age in the civil service and public service.

In response, the nominee acknowledged the ongoing discussions surrounding the possibility of increasing the retirement age from 60 years to 65 years, and, in some cases, up to 70 years. He noted that while there have been various arguments for and against the proposal, any decision regarding an extension should be harmonious and reflect national consensus.

He emphasized that the final decision on whether to adjust the retirement age should be based on broad stakeholder engagements and should align with Ghana's socio-economic realities, workforce sustainability, and the overall needs of the labour market. He added that the matter should be carefully reconsidered to determine whether the country is ready for such a transition or if the current system should remain unchanged.

4.18 Recruitment of Nurses and Doctors Under the 24-Hour Economy

The Committee sought clarification from the nominee on whether, under the proposed 24-hour economy policy, all nurses and doctors awaiting posting would be recruited.

In response, the nominee expressed his strong commitment to ensuring that all qualified nurses and doctors are recruited and posted. He emphasized that both he and the government bear the responsibility of creating jobs and providing employment opportunities for the youth, particularly in the health sector.

He reiterated that the health sector is a critical area that requires an adequate workforce to improve service delivery, especially in underserved communities. As such, he assured the Committee that efforts would be made to engage all waiting nurses and doctors, ensuring they are absorbed into the system in line with the government's employment agenda under the 24-hour economy framework.

4.19 Addressing Child Labour in Fishing Communities

The Committee inquired about the nominee's strategy for addressing child labour, particularly in fishing communities, where children often abandon their education to engage in fishing activities.

In response, the nominee affirmed that child labour is illegal under Ghana's Labour Laws and reiterated his commitment to eradicating it. He emphasized that children must not be engaged in work meant for adults, and their right to education and childhood must be protected.

Further questioning sought to understand the root causes of child labour and the nominee's practical approach to solving the issue. He acknowledged that the Labour Law, 2003 (Act 651) clearly supports the elimination of child labour in the workforce. He advocated for stricter enforcement of the law, including making child labour a criminal offense to ensure that perpetrators face punishment, thereby serving as a deterrent to others.

The nominee pledged to prioritise child labour as a key issue within the Ministry. He assured the Committee that his leadership would focus on implementing policies that protect children, prevent their exploitation, and create a safer environment where they can pursue education and personal development instead of being forced into labour.

4.20 Ensuring Compliance with the Minimum Wage

The Committee inquired about the nominee's plans to ensure that all employees receive at least the minimum wage, highlighting concerns about private security companies where workers are often paid below the legally mandated rate.

In response, the nominee reaffirmed the government's stance that once the minimum wage is set, it applies universally to both public and private sector employees. He stressed that no employer is legally permitted to pay below the minimum wage, and any such violation constitutes a breach of the law.

The nominee emphasized that employers who fail to comply would be held accountable, facing legal consequences for underpaying their workers. He underscored the need for strict enforcement of wage laws to protect Ghanaian workers from exploitation.

Additionally, he stated that workers and stakeholders must actively report cases where organisations fail to adhere to the law, ensuring that corrective actions are taken swiftly. He concluded by stating that if a company cannot afford to pay its workers the minimum wage, it raises serious concerns about its viability.

4.21 Consideration for Public Sector Salary Increments in 2025

The Committee inquired whether the nominee would consider increasing the salaries of public sector workers in 2025, given the economic challenges faced by many employees.

In response, the nominee acknowledged that public sector wages are a critical issue and currently under negotiation. He stated that salary adjustments require extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders, including labour unions, government agencies, and the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission.

He assured the Committee that once he assumes office, he would review ongoing discussions and assess the financial implications of any proposed salary increments. He emphasised that his priority would be to ensure fair and sustainable wages that align with economic realities while protecting the interests of Ghanaian workers.

The nominee concluded by stating that he would provide a more definitive response once he gains deeper insights into the Ministry's financial position and ongoing wage negotiations.

4.22 Addressing Agitations Within Organised Labour

The Committee inquired about the nominee's perspective on the frequent agitations within Organised Labour and the measures he would consider in addressing them.

In response, the nominee acknowledged that labour unrest is a natural occurrence in any dynamic society where economic, social, and political changes impact the workforce. He noted that it is not unusual for workers to demand better conditions, especially when circumstances evolve over time.

He assured the Committee of his commitment to engaging Organized Labour in continuous dialogue, stressing that understanding the root causes of agitations is essential for developing long-term solutions. He emphasized that listening to workers' concerns, analysing trends, and proactively addressing grievances would form the foundation of his approach.

The nominee concluded by stating that he would tackle labour-related issues as they arise, ensuring that negotiations remain fair and balanced, with the ultimate goal of maintaining industrial harmony and protecting workers' rights while ensuring productivity in the economy.

4.23 Implementation of the Affirmative Action Act, 2024

The Committee sought assurance from the nominee on the effective implementation of the Affirmative Action Act, 2024, given its importance in promoting gender balance in employment and his critical role as Minister for Labour, Jobs, and Employment.

In response, the nominee affirmed his commitment to equity, non-discrimination, and fair treatment in the labour sector. He emphasized that the

Labour Law explicitly mandates the elimination of discrimination in employment, and he pledged to uphold these provisions to ensure fairness in the workplace.

The nominee assured the Committee that he would work diligently to promote equity in employment opportunities, ensuring that gender representation in the workforce is improved in line with the law. He further pledged to collaborate effectively with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection to guarantee the successful and widespread implementation of the Affirmative Action Act.

He concluded by reiterating that ensuring gender balance in employment is a priority and that he would leverage his position to advance policies and programs that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all.

4.24 Implementation of the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023-2027)

The Committee inquired whether the nominee was aware of the Ghana Accelerated Action Plan Against Child Labour (2023-2027) and sought to understand the strategies he would implement to ensure the achievement of its objectives.

In response, the nominee acknowledged the existence of the Action Plan and noted that the Ministry already has a policy framework for addressing child labour. He emphasised that the plan aligns with the broader national strategy to combat child labour and protect children's rights.

The nominee committed to a thorough review of the existing policy to assess its effectiveness and determine areas that require improvement. He assured

the Committee that necessary adjustments would be made to strengthen the implementation process and ensure strict enforcement of child labour laws.

Furthermore, he stressed the importance of inter-agency collaboration, particularly with the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, law enforcement agencies, and civil society organisations to effectively eliminate child labour in Ghana.

The nominee concluded by reaffirming his dedication to implementing the Action Plan to its full extent, ensuring that children are protected, their rights are upheld, and they are given the opportunity to pursue education and a better future.

4.25 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Hon Abdul-Rashid H. Pelpuo** as Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment.

5.0 HON SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE

MINISTER DESIGNATE, COMMUNICATIONS, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIONS

5.1 BACKGROUND

Hon Samuel Nartey George was born on 22nd January 1985 in Somanya and hails from Ahwiam, Old Ningo in the Greater Accra Region. He is married with three children and is fluent in English, Ga, Dangme, and Twi.

The nominee holds a Basic Education Certificate from Grace High School, Lagos (1993-1996) and furthered his secondary education at Command Day Secondary School, Lagos (1996-2000). Additionally, he obtained an International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) from Corona School, Agbara (1999-2000).

Hon. Samuel Nartey George pursued higher education at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Engineering (2001-2005). He later obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from the University of London (2010-2014). He also holds a Certification in International & Managerial Skills Development (2007) and an Advanced Certificate in Organizational Communication (2011) from the Graduate School of Governance and Leadership. Furthermore, he completed an Executive Master's in Conflict, Peace & Security from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (2018-2020) and an Executive Master's in International Strategy & Diplomacy from the London School of Economics and Political Science (2021-2022).

Throughout his career, the nominee has held several distinguished positions, demonstrating leadership and expertise across multiple fields. At KNUST, he served as a Member of the Information Technology Committee at the College of Engineering and held key leadership roles within the University Hall Cadet, including Quarter-Master, Staff Sergeant, and Lieutenant.

From August 2007 to June 2008, he undertook his national service as an Information Technology Aide in the Office of the Vice President. He later served as Assistant Director IIB at the Office of the Head of Civil Service (April 2011 – January 2013). Additionally, he was appointed as Lead Communicator for the Government Communication Team (April 2010 – December 2016) and worked as a Communication Specialist (October 2014 – December 2016).

The nominee has also played a role in national policymaking as a Board Member of the National Information Technology Agency. Since January 2017, he has served as the Member of Parliament for the Ningo Prampram Constituency.

Hon Samuel Nartey George has participated in several international conferences, including the 2017 AFROSAI International Conference on Tackling Illicit Financial Flows, 2018 APNAC Biennial General Meeting, 2018 Council of Europe OCTOPUS Conference, 2019 14th Annual General Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, 2020 Cyber Security Study Tour of the UK, 2022 9th Annual Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa, 2023 Political Network for Values Transatlantic Summit, 2024 AI & Disinformation: Democracy in the Age of Deepfakes, and the 2024 Fourth Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Incheon.

His additional professional interests include New and Emerging Technologies, Counter-Terrorism Studies, International Conflict Resolution, Arms Proliferation, and Global Warming and Carbon Footprint Monitoring. His extra-curricular activities focus on Cyber Security, Counter-Terrorism Trends, Artificial Intelligence (AI), FinTech, Data Protection, and Internet Governance.

Hon. Samuel Nartey George has a strong interest in technology, national security, computers, cars, shooting, and football.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

5.2 Reducing the Cost of Voice Calls in Ghana

In response to inquiries about high voice call costs in Ghana compared to other jurisdictions, the nominee acknowledged that traditional voice calls are becoming less significant due to the increasing reliance on data-based communication services. He highlighted the need to contextualize pricing comparisons with more developed markets, particularly in Europe, where mature telecommunications infrastructure helps reduce operational costs for Mobile Network Operators (MNOs).

The nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to working with stakeholders and regulators to explore regulatory interventions aimed at reducing the cost of voice calls and enhancing the overall affordability of communication services in Ghana.

5.3 Improving Network Accessibility and Mobile Subscription Costs

Addressing concerns about network accessibility and mobile subscription costs, the nominee emphasized that the primary issue with voice calls is not just cost but service quality. He acknowledged that significant policy interventions are needed at the Ministry level, working in collaboration with the National Communications Authority (NCA) as the regulator to enhance service delivery.

The nominee highlighted the Government's role in facilitating an improved communication landscape and assured the Committee of his commitment to ensuring additional spectrum availability for Mobile Network Operators (MNOs). He also pledged to raise Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure compliance with service quality standards. To enforce these standards, the nominee committed to imposing penalties on MNOs that fail to meet the prescribed benchmarks, while also supporting operators in their efforts to deliver high-quality services to consumers.

5.4 Cybersecurity Threats and Funding Cybersecurity Initiatives

Addressing concerns regarding cybersecurity threats and funding mechanisms, the Minister-designate emphasized Ghana's preparedness to tackle cyber threats. He referenced the Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038) and highlighted his instrumental role in incorporating a funding provision within the legislation.

The nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to operationalizing the Cybersecurity Fund as outlined in the Act. He indicated that efforts would be made to explore multiple funding sources, including government allocations, grants, and private-sector donations from organizations such as

the MasterCard Foundation. He stressed that establishing the Cybersecurity Fund would provide crucial financial support for beneficiaries and enhance Ghana's resilience against cyber threats.

5.5 Strategies for Building and Protecting Capacity in the Fintech Industry

Responding to questions on strategies to build and protect capacity in the Fintech industry, as well as the disbursement of the US\$50 million fund earmarked for its support, the Minister-designate outlined the Government's broader target of mobilizing a US\$300 million seed fund. This initiative aims to attract investments from both local and international investors to enhance the Fintech sector's growth and competitiveness.

The nominee assured the Committee of plans to establish business advisory support services and regulatory sandboxes to facilitate the growth and sustainability of young start-ups. Additionally, he committed to redefining the regulatory framework for the Fintech industry by establishing an independent subsidiary under the Bank of Ghana. This specialized entity would foster innovation and provide tailored support for advancements in Agri-Tech, Edu-Tech, and Insure-Tech, strengthening the overall Fintech ecosystem.

5.6 Institutional Placement of the Cyber Security Authority

In response to a question on whether the Cyber Security Authority should be placed under the National Security apparatus or the Ministry of Communications, the Minister-designate emphasized that a holistic approach and international best practices, including models from India and Singapore, suggest that it would be more effective under the Ministry of Communications.

Addressing concerns about synergy between the two institutions, he highlighted that cybersecurity governance involves both protecting citizens from state overreach and combating malicious cyber threats. He outlined five key interfaces of cybersecurity: public policy, international relations and partnerships, industry collaboration, policy formulation, and security & intelligence. He noted that four of these are civilian-led, reinforcing the Ministry of Communications' role in overseeing cybersecurity governance, while only one aspect falls under security and intelligence. The Minister-designate stressed the importance of continuous collaboration between the Ministry of Communications and the National Security apparatus to ensure a cohesive, effective, and well-coordinated cybersecurity framework.

5.7 Synergy Between the Ministry of Communications and National Security

In response to questions on how to foster better synergy between the Ministry of Communications and the National Security Authority, the Minister-designate reiterated that cybersecurity governance inherently encompasses two critical dimensions: national security and communications. He emphasized that placing cybersecurity under National Security would lead to a more combat-oriented, military-driven approach, whereas a civilian-led governance model under the Ministry of Communications allows for a broader, policy-driven strategy that includes public protection, regulatory oversight, and industry collaboration.

To highlight the collaborative nature of cybersecurity, he referenced the establishment of the Joint Cybersecurity Council, which comprises Ministers for Defence, the Interior, and Communications. This council, he explained, ensures cross-ministerial coordination while maintaining civilian oversight. The Minister-designate concluded by reaffirming that, given its broader

mandate and multi-sectoral approach, cybersecurity governance is best situated under the Ministry of Communications, ensuring that it remains a national priority with robust inter-agency collaboration.

5.8 Addressing Impersonation and Cyber Fraud on Social Media

In response to concerns regarding the persistent issue of impersonation of Members of Parliament (MPs) on social media platforms, particularly Facebook, and the fraudulent solicitation of money through mobile money transactions, the Minister-designate expressed his commitment to tackling the problem. He assured the Committee that measures would be introduced to verify MPs' official social media accounts, thereby helping to prevent impersonation and protect the public from online scams.

The nominee also took the opportunity to caution the public, emphasizing that no MP would directly message individuals online to offer jobs or request money. To combat rising cybercrime, he pledged to introduce Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor and reduce online fraud. Acknowledging the growing challenges of internet fraud, mobile money scams, and cybercrime, the nominee recognized the need to enhance the capacity of the Cybersecurity Authority. He assured the Committee that, if confirmed, he would prioritize securing funding to ensure the successful implementation of cybersecurity policies from the previous administration, reinforcing Ghana's resilience against cyber threats.

5.9 Harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) for National Development

In response to inquiries about how Ghana could leverage artificial intelligence (AI) to drive development, the nominee referenced the broader AI vision set by the President. He cited global AI advancements, particularly mentioning

China's DeepSeek and its influence on industries such as the silicon value sector, as examples of how AI is transforming economies. He stressed the importance of positioning Ghana as a leader in AI technology within Africa, ensuring that the country benefits from the growing potential of AI-driven industries.

The nominee pledged to review and refine Ghana's AI Policy, initially developed under the previous administration, to ensure its relevance in addressing both current and future challenges. He emphasized that the revised policy would focus on establishing Ghana as a central hub for AI, machine learning, cybersecurity, data analytics, and data processing on the African continent. By integrating AI technologies with big data initiatives, he envisioned creating a thriving innovation ecosystem, fostering technological advancements, and enhancing national development through AI-driven solutions.

5.10 Passage of the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill

In response to inquiries regarding the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill (commonly referred to as the anti-LGBTQ+ Bill), the nominee reaffirmed the strong commitment of both the President and his party to the people of Ghana on this matter. He referenced the President's recent statement, which indicated that the Bill is effectively "dead" and "expired", and noted that the President remains uncertain about the intentions of the Bill's sponsors. However, the nominee emphasized that the importance of the Bill to national discourse remains, and as such, there is a

strong belief that it will be reintroduced in the future, either as a private member's Bill or through government sponsorship.

Addressing allegations that he had previously made statements suggesting the Chief Justice's involvement in supporting LGBTQ+ rights, the nominee clarified that, as an elder in his church, he holds his personal integrity in the highest regard. He stated that his opinion of the Chief Justice remains unchanged, reaffirming that he still stands by his previous comments regarding the matter.

5.11 Review of Educational Materials for Pupils

When asked whether the Minister-designate would consider collaborating with the Minister for Education to review educational materials for pupils before distribution, the nominee assured the Committee of his unwavering commitment to safeguarding the innocence of Ghanaian children. He emphasized that protecting the welfare of children is paramount and a top priority for the government.

In this regard, the nominee pledged to instruct the Cybersecurity Authority, specifically under its Child Online Protection Programme, to work closely with the Ministry of Education. He assured that this collaboration would ensure that schoolchildren are protected from exposure to any materials that promote anti-Ghanaian values, including content found in e-learning books or digital educational modules introduced into the country.

5.12 Re-Registration of SIM Cards

In response to previous remarks in which the Nominee described the SIM registration process as a form of fraud and called for a re-registration of SIM cards, the nominee expressed his dissatisfaction with the actions of the

previous Government. He emphasized that the time spent by Ghanaians waiting in long queues to register their SIM cards was a waste of productive hours. The nominee assured the Committee that there would be a re-registration process, but this time, it would be streamlined to avoid the long queues and inefficiencies experienced previously.

The nominee explained that the new re-registration process would be a collaborative effort involving the National Communications Authority (NCA), Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), and the National Identification Authority (NIA). As a result, Ghanaians would no longer be required to visit service providers in person, except in cases where an individual registration issue arises, necessitating a visit to the MNOs' office for clarification. The nominee further guaranteed that no Ghanaian would lose their SIM card or funds during the re-registration process.

When asked about the potential cost of the re-registration to the taxpayer, the nominee clarified that the expenses would be covered by the MNOs, not by public funds.

5.13 Launch of 5G Network and Mobile Accessibility

In response to questions regarding the launch of the 5G network by the previous NPP Government and its potential to improve mobile accessibility, particularly for rural areas, the Nominee outlined a comprehensive approach to the issue. He assured the Committee that before moving ahead with the rollout of 5G, efforts would be focused on addressing existing challenges with the 3G and 4G networks to ensure stability and efficiency in the current mobile infrastructure.

The Nominee emphasized that the 5G rollout would be implemented with the right skill sets in place to guarantee a seamless transition and optimal service delivery. Furthermore, he expressed a commitment to enhancing mobile accessibility across all regions, including rural areas, by improving network infrastructure and ensuring equitable coverage.

5.14 National and ECOWAS Roaming Policy

When queried about his views on the national roaming policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Nominee expressed strong support for the policy, emphasizing its importance for regional integration and connectivity.

He clarified that there are two distinct roaming policies:

1. **The ECOWAS Roaming Policy** – which facilitates roaming between Ghana and other ECOWAS member states.
2. **The National Roaming Policy** – which governs roaming among Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) within Ghana.

The Nominee noted that agreements have already been signed with three ECOWAS countries under the regional roaming policy. He further committed to enhancing both the ECOWAS and national roaming policies, ensuring improved service quality and seamless connectivity for consumers across the region.

5.15 Reconsideration of MTN Ghana's Significant Market Power (SMP) Status

In response to whether he would reconsider the declaration of MTN Ghana as a Significant Market Power (SMP) under the Electronic Communications Act,

2008 (Act 775), the Nominee clarified that being designated as an SMP is not inherently detrimental, but rather depends on how it is utilized.

He explained that the SMP designation serves as a corrective tool rather than a punitive measure against investors such as MTN. The Nominee assured the Committee that his approach would focus on fostering a fair and competitive environment for all market players. He pledged to create an equitable space for all stakeholders, ensuring that customers have access to a broad range of options and benefit from improved services and choices.

5.16 Addressing High Taxes in the Communications Sector

In response to concerns about the high number of taxes in the communications sector and the measures he intends to take, the Nominee acknowledged the significant fiscal challenges currently being addressed by the Honorable Minister for Finance, particularly in closing gaps in the national budget.

He agreed that the tax burden on Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) is substantial, citing power tariffs as one of the primary contributing factors. The Nominee expressed his commitment to collaborating with the Honorable Minister for Energy to explore viable solutions to reduce these costs and alleviate the financial pressures on MNOs.

5.17 Combating Social Media Impersonation and Mobile Money Fraud

In response to concerns regarding the increasing incidence of social media impersonation, where individuals hack into the accounts of Members of Parliament to defraud citizens, the Honorable Nominee assured the Committee that the Ministry would collaborate with Members of Parliament to authenticate and verify their social media accounts. He emphasized the importance of cybersecurity awareness for Members of Parliament,

acknowledging that this is a critical aspect of mitigating such fraudulent activities.

On the issue of mobile money fraud, the Nominee outlined the Ministry's plan to address the challenge through the re-registration of SIM cards. He highlighted that this initiative would be carried out in collaboration with mobile network operators (MNOs) and other key stakeholders, aiming to sanitize the sector and ensure compliance with established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for reducing mobile money fraud. The Nominee further urged the public to remain vigilant and cautious to safeguard themselves against such fraudulent activities.

5.18 Addressing Unethical Data Mining Practices

In response to concerns about unethical data mining practices by certain companies and the steps he would take to address this issue upon approval, the Nominee emphasized the importance of strengthening the capacity of the Data Management Commission to safeguard citizens' data. He outlined that retooling and adequately resourcing the Commission would be critical in tackling the challenge of unethical data mining.

The Nominee further noted that the Ministry, in collaboration with the National Communications Authority (NCA) and mobile network operators (MNOs), would take decisive action to curtail the prevalence of unsolicited messages, which often stem from such practices. He assured the Committee that the directives issued by the President to the NCA on this matter would be fully adhered to, ensuring a robust approach to protecting citizens' personal information.

5.19 Emergency Preparedness for Telecommunications Disruptions

In reference to the disruption of telecommunication services in 2024, which affected both Ghana and other African countries due to a severed underwater telecom cable, the Nominee was asked about the country's emergency plan and preparedness to address similar challenges impacting telecommunication and meteorological data.

The Nominee assured the Committee that the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC), which is responsible for managing such crises, would be given the necessary support and attention to ensure its operations are fully optimized. He emphasized that the NEOC would be equipped to implement a national recovery plan to effectively address and mitigate the impact of such disruptions should they occur in the future.

5.20 Review of Data Pricing and Quantity Provided by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)

When asked about his opinion on the cost and quantity of data currently provided by Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in the country, the Nominee expressed the belief that citizens should receive more data for the value they pay. He emphasized his intention to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that Ghanaians obtain greater value from their data plans. This could involve either offering more data for the same price or reducing the cost for the current data allocation.

The Nominee assured the Committee that the Ministry is committed to evaluating and reviewing the cost components of data services. He highlighted plans to work closely with the Ministry of Finance to achieve a reduction in

data prices by the end of the year, ensuring a more favorable pricing model for Ghanaians.

5.21 Plans to Improve Rural Telephony and Internet Accessibility

In response to a question regarding plans to improve rural telephony across the country, the Nominee highlighted the President's commitment to ensuring universal access to electricity and the internet across Africa. In line with this vision, the Ministry, under the Nominee's leadership, would work toward extending internet access to all parts of the country, particularly in rural areas.

The Nominee further emphasized the role of the Ghana Investment Fund for Electronic Communications (GIFEC), which he proposed to expand and restructure as the Digital Economy Investment Fund to serve as the foundational framework for rural telephony. He also stressed the importance of a digital switchover to facilitate access to a broader spectrum, which would be essential for enhancing telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas. To achieve this, the Nominee assured the Committee that the necessary equipment and resources would be acquired to support the rollout and expansion of digital services across rural communities.

5.22 Revitalization of AT Telecommunications Company

When asked about measures to revamp AT, a telecommunications company fully owned by the Government of Ghana, the Nominee acknowledged the challenges faced by the company, including its reliance on a 3G network and outdated equipment. He attributed AT's current state to mismanagement by the previous administration, which contributed to its operational inefficiencies and financial struggles.

Despite these challenges, the Nominee assured the Committee that a clear roadmap is being developed by the government to revitalize AT. This plan seeks to address the company's significant debt, estimated at GHC 500 million, while ensuring its long-term sustainability. The roadmap will focus on consolidating government shares in AT, avoiding job losses, and positioning the company as a viable player within the telecommunications sector. Through these efforts, the Nominee expressed confidence that AT can overcome its current difficulties and contribute positively to the sector's growth.

5.23 Enhancing the Efficiency of Ghana Post Services

In response to the importance of technology in enhancing the efficiency of national institutions, the Nominee was asked to outline his plans to improve the operational efficiency of Ghana Post Services. He revealed that prior to his vetting, he had engaged with the management of Ghana Post and challenged them to develop strategies to enhance the Service's operational effectiveness.

He emphasized that a key approach to improving efficiency would be leveraging the existing infrastructure of Information Communication Centers (ICCs) built across the country. By collaborating with these centers and utilizing their advanced systems, the Nominee believes Ghana Post Services can expand its role beyond just a courier service. This collaboration will enable Ghana Post to provide more diverse and value-added services, ultimately enhancing its contribution to the country's economic development and improving customer satisfaction.

5.24 Measures to Curb Cybercrime Activities

When asked about the measures he would implement to curb cybercrime activities, including cyber fraud, the Nominee acknowledged that the Cybersecurity Authority currently lacks the necessary resources to effectively carry out its mandate.

He informed the Committee that the Ministry is committed to continuing an ongoing project aimed at retooling and adequately resourcing the Cybersecurity Authority. The goal of this initiative is to ensure that the Authority is equipped to fulfill its mandate in securing the nation's digital space and addressing emerging cyber threats.

Through these efforts, the Ministry aims to enhance the Authority's capacity to safeguard the public from cybercrime, promoting a safer and more secure online environment for all Ghanaians.

5.25 Independence of the National Communications Authority (NCA)

In response to a question regarding the independence of the National Communications Authority (NCA) and whether it should be supported to gain full autonomy, the Nominee acknowledged that the legislation establishing and regulating the Authority, the National Communications Authority Act, is now over seventeen (17) years old. He emphasized that the Act is long overdue for review to align it with evolving global best practices.

The Nominee assured the Committee that during the review process, the issue of the NCA's autonomy would be thoroughly considered. He stressed that any proposed changes would seek to enhance the effectiveness and independence of the Authority, ensuring that it operates in line with international standards

while maintaining its ability to regulate and oversee the communications sector efficiently.

5.26 Commitment to Spectrum Allocation and Service Improvement

In response to a question regarding his commitment to providing network operators in the communications sector with the necessary spectrum and resources to improve the quality of service—particularly for data, voice, and digital services—within his first 120 days in office, the Nominee highlighted the critical role of spectrum management. He emphasized that, given the finite nature of spectrum, its careful and strategic management is essential to maintaining the strength and balance of the sector.

The nominee assured the Committee of his dedication to the effective management of spectrum resources. He pledged to ensure that the spectrum is allocated appropriately, thereby supporting the sustainability of businesses within the sector while simultaneously enhancing customer experience across the country.

5.27 Regulating Starlink's Operations to Protect Local Communication Companies

When asked about plans to ensure that the full deployment of operations by Starlink, an international communication company, does not adversely affect local communication companies, the Nominee clarified that his primary responsibility as Minister is to businesses domiciled within the country. He emphasized that international companies that do not contribute value to the local economy would not be entitled to benefits or special consideration from his office.

The Nominee further assured the Committee that any policy implemented by the Ministry would prioritize the protection of local investments, businesses, and jobs. He reiterated his commitment to fostering a sustainable and competitive telecommunications environment that benefits Ghanaian citizens and enterprises while ensuring that the presence of international players like Starlink does not undermine local industry growth.

5.28 Addressing Past Comments on Public Figures and National Issues

In response to a question regarding the fairness of his past comments against the Chief Justice, the Nominee maintained that his remarks were made in good faith and were intended as constructive criticism, without any malice. He emphasized that his comments were aimed at fostering positive discourse and accountability within Ghana's governance system.

Regarding his previous statements urging his supporters to patrol land borders to safeguard them from suspected criminal activities, the Nominee clarified that his comments were made in the exercise of his constitutional right under Article 41(f) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. He explained that this provision obliges every citizen to protect and preserve public property and to expose and combat the misuse of public funds, which guided his actions and public statements.

On the matter of his alleged comments about former President H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's involvement in illegal mining (Galamsey) activities, the nominee explained that his post was a result of his personal frustration as a concerned citizen regarding the actions of state agencies, such as the Minerals Commission, which were under the former President's

purview. He clarified that his remarks were based on his views on the actions of these state institutions and not a personal attack on the former President.

The nominee also reaffirmed his position on previous comments he made regarding the former Minister for Communications and Digitization, Hon. Ursula Owusu-Ekufu, asserting that he stood by the language and content used in his statements about her.

Lastly, on his statement regarding the Supreme Court and former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, where he suggested the Court saw the former President as a “dummy god,” the Nominee explained that his comment was directed at the Court’s decision to delay its judgment on a matter until after the elections, despite having the power to deliver a ruling beforehand.

The Nominee concluded by reaffirming his stance and ownership of several other public comments he had made regarding public figures, standing by the substance and intention behind his statements.

5.29 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **MAJORITY DECISION** the approval of the nomination of **HON SAMUEL NARTEY GEORGE** as Minister for the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovation.

6.0 HON IBRAHIM MURTALA MUHAMMED

MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

6.1 BACKGROUND

Hon Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed was born on 14th December 1974. He completed his secondary education at Ghana Senior High School, Tamale, in 1993, where he obtained the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) in General Arts. He later pursued a Teacher's Certificate 'A' at Tamale College of Education (TACE), formerly known as Tamale Training College (TATCO), in 1999.

The nominee continued his education at the University of Ghana, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 2003. He furthered his studies at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), obtaining a Master of Science in Planning in 2008. In 2011, he acquired a Master of Arts in International Relations and Diplomacy from the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), University of Ghana. He subsequently obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Mountcrest University College, Accra, in 2016. Hon Murtala is currently pursuing a PhD in Political Science at the University of Ghana and is awaiting graduation.

The nominee has undertaken several training courses and workshops to enhance his expertise. These include the Training of Trainers Programme for Infant Sexual Behavior at ISER, Legon (2004); Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Role of the Youth, Khartoum, Sudan (2005); and The Renaissance of the Africa Youth and Development, Tripoli, Libya (2005). Other training programs he participated in include Leadership for Change Workshop at the

Pan African Institute for Leadership and Governance Studies, Abuja, Nigeria (2007); Validation Workshop on African Youth, Democracy, and Development, Pretoria, South Africa (2007); and Pan African Youth Summit on Democratic Development, University of Lagos, Nigeria (2008). Additionally, he attended a workshop on Labour Market and Job Creation, organized by the World Bank in May 2018.

Hon Murtala has held several leadership roles in both governmental and parliamentary capacities. He served as Deputy National Coordinator for the National Youth Employment Programme from 2009 to 2012. He later held ministerial positions, serving as Deputy Minister for Information and Media Relations from 2013 to 2014, and as Deputy Minister for Trade and Industry from 2014 to 2017. In Parliament, he was elected as Member of Parliament for Nanton Constituency from 2013 to 2017, and later as Member of Parliament for Tamale Central Constituency from 2021 to date. He has served on various committees, including the Committee on Environment and Finance from 2013 to 2017, and the Committee on Trade and Industry and Public Accounts Committee from 2021 to 2025.

Beyond politics, the nominee has been actively involved in advocacy, volunteerism, and leadership roles. He served as Chairman of the Medium-Term Development Plan for the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) in 2008, and Chairman of the Executive Committee Meeting of the All-Africa Students Union (AASU) in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2007. He was also a General Assembly Member at the University of Ghana from 2002 to 2003.

Hon Murtala has represented Ghana in various international conferences, including the International Conference on Fighting HIV/AIDS, Pretoria, South Africa (2006); UNESCO 34th NGO Conference on Education, Paris,

France (2007); and Pan African Youth Summit, Tripoli, Libya (2007). He has also delivered papers at different forums on topics such as Strengthening Democracy in Africa: The Role of the Youth, Funding Tertiary Education in Ghana: The Partnership Between Government and Other Stakeholders, and Islam and Terrorism.

The nominee is fluent in English, Dagbani, Gonja, Hausa, and Twi. His areas of interest include research and community mobilization, while his hobbies are debating, writing, reading, research, and advocacy.

QUESTIONS POSED TO THE NOMINEE AND HIS RESPONSES

6.2 Nominee's Position on the Bio-Safety Act and GMOs in Ghana

The nominee was asked whether he is familiar with the Bio-Safety Act of Ghana, 2011, to which he responded in the affirmative. Regarding his stance on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in Ghana as a matter of policy, he acknowledged the ongoing global debate on the subject. He noted that the continued consumption of GMOs is driven largely by food scarcity, particularly in many developing countries. However, he also recognized the contending view that calls for a ban on GMOs due to concerns about their potential effects on health and the economy.

The nominee expressed confidence in the Biosafety Act and the National Biosafety Authority (NBA), emphasising that these institutions have the mandate and capacity to regulate and determine the processes through which certain GMOs can be introduced into the domestic market. He assured the Committee that the National Biosafety Authority, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and his Ministry, would be

able to advise the government on certifying which particular GMO products are safe and healthy for consumption in Ghana.

6.3 Nominee's Understanding of Environmental Trends

The nominee was asked to share his understanding of environmental trends, to which he responded that the concept encompasses a wide range of issues. He explained that environmental trends refer to both direct and indirect challenges that impact the environment, as well as their consequences on human survival and natural ecosystems.

He further elaborated that human activities and natural occurrences play significant roles in shaping environmental conditions. He emphasized that protecting and sustaining the environment is crucial for ensuring a conducive habitat for survival. Conversely, failing to do so could lead to adverse consequences that threaten both human well-being and biodiversity.

6.4 Ensuring Enforcement of Environmental Regulations in Cement Bagging

The Committee raised concerns regarding the continued use of polypropylene bags by some Nigerian industries to package cement imported into Ghana, despite a ban by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Committee inquired whether the nominee would enforce the ban to promote local industry, create jobs, and increase tax revenues for the government.

In response, the nominee assured the Committee that he would take all necessary legal steps to ensure that businesses operate in full compliance with the law, regardless of who might be affected. He emphasized his commitment to engaging with key industry stakeholders, including business players and

regulatory agencies in the environmental sector, to find a lasting solution to the issue.

Furthermore, he acknowledged that import regulations intersect with multiple ministries, including the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Agribusiness agencies. He assured the Committee that, if given the nod, he would collaborate with these ministries and agencies to ensure that environmental regulations are strictly enforced while promoting sustainable industrial practices.

6.5 Impact of U.S. Withdrawal from the Climate Change Treaty

The nominee was questioned about the potential impact of the United States' withdrawal from the climate change treaty, to which Ghana is a signatory. He acknowledged that this development is concerning, given that the U.S. is the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases and has been a significant financial contributor to Ghana's environmental sustainability efforts.

Despite this challenge, the nominee expressed optimism that Ghana's funding sources from the U.S. would not be entirely affected. He highlighted Ghana's longstanding diplomatic relationship with the United States, emphasizing that through diplomatic engagements, Ghana could negotiate bilateral arrangements to ensure continued financial support for environmental sustainability initiatives.

The nominee further noted that if the U.S. government maintains its withdrawal stance, Ghana must explore innovative financing mechanisms to compensate for the potential funding gap. He expressed hope that President Donald Trump might reconsider his decision, but stressed the need for

proactive measures to sustain environmental programs in the absence of U.S. support.

6.6 Ensuring Proper Solid Waste Disposal

In response to a question on how he would ensure the proper disposal of solid waste, the nominee referenced a previous initiative by a former Deputy Minister for Local Government, which introduced monthly environmental cleanliness exercises. He described this initiative as a novelty that should have been sustained, emphasizing its importance in promoting cleanliness and waste management.

The nominee stressed that environmental and solid waste disposal is not solely the responsibility of the state but also that of the citizenry. He noted that achieving effective waste management requires public sensitization and education, ensuring that individuals actively participate in keeping their surroundings clean.

To enhance waste disposal practices, the nominee advocated for inter-ministerial collaboration and the implementation of a household waste segregation system. He proposed that the state should provide two separate waste bins—one for solid waste and the other for liquid waste—to encourage proper waste management at the household level. This, he believes, would significantly improve sanitation and contribute to a more sustainable waste disposal system in the country.

6.7 Facilitating the Adoption of Renewable Energy

In response to a question on how he would facilitate the adoption of renewable energy in Ghana, the nominee emphasised that the country has abundant solar energy resources that should be effectively harnessed. He suggested that a

strategic starting point would be to encourage ministries and government agencies to transition to solar energy, given the high capital investment required for large-scale adoption.

The nominee highlighted the financial challenges faced by the Ministry of Finance in dealing with Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) over the indebtedness of some state institutions. He indicated that transitioning to renewable energy sources such as solar and tidal energy would help reduce the financial burden on the government while promoting energy sustainability.

Additionally, he pointed out that tidal waves from the sea could be harnessed as a renewable energy source, offering another viable option for diversifying Ghana's energy mix. He further referenced the solar projects in Kaleo and Lawra in the Upper West Region, which were intended to generate 10% of the country's renewable energy needs but are currently operating at below 4% capacity. The nominee expressed his commitment to ensuring that these projects reach their full potential, contributing to the national energy supply and reducing reliance on non-renewable sources.

6.8 Position on Shutting Down Coal Plants and the Clean Energy Transition

When asked whether Ghana should shut down its coal plants to align with the global clean energy movement, similar to Germany's decision, the nominee expressed reservations about such an approach. He argued that Ghana's coal emissions are insignificant compared to major industrialized nations, and shutting down its coal plants could hinder economic growth rather than contribute meaningfully to global emission reductions.

The nominee emphasised that industrialised nations, such as China, the United States, European countries, Russia, Brazil, and India, have benefited from unrestricted industrialisation over the years, allowing them to develop strong economies. He suggested that Ghana should focus on its industrialisation efforts rather than prematurely eliminating energy sources that could support economic expansion.

However, he acknowledged that while Ghana should prioritize industrial growth, it must also consider sustainable development strategies. He cautioned that an abrupt shift away from coal without viable alternatives could negatively impact industrial productivity and economic development. He reiterated that any transition must be gradual and well-planned, ensuring that clean energy adoption does not compromise economic progress.

6.9 Enhancing Ghana's Participation in Carbon Trading

When asked about how he would enhance Ghana's ability to participate in carbon trading, the nominee emphasized the financial benefits that carbon trading offers to the state. He acknowledged that carbon markets present an opportunity for Ghana to generate revenue while promoting environmentally sustainable practices.

To maximize Ghana's gains from carbon trading, he stressed the need to deepen existing relationships with international partners, climate financing institutions, and developed nations that are already engaged in carbon offset programs. He further indicated that Ghana must proactively engage more countries and institutions to secure favorable agreements and expand its presence in global carbon markets.

6.10 Legacy as Minister

When asked about the legacy he hopes to leave as Minister, the nominee emphasised his commitment to being resource-oriented and ensuring discipline within the Ministry and its agencies. He stated that his goal is to instill a strong culture of accountability, efficiency, and integrity in all operations under his purview.

He further stressed his determination to clamp down on corruption, ensuring that public resources are utilized effectively and transparently for the benefit of Ghanaians. He noted that corruption undermines environmental sustainability efforts, and as such, he would implement strict measures to prevent waste, enforce compliance with environmental regulations, and promote ethical conduct within the Ministry.

6.11 Recommendations From Nominee's Thesis

When asked to share some of the key observations and recommendations from his thesis, the nominee highlighted one of his significant recommendations—the election of district assemblies. He noted that his research had long advocated for this policy even before the Constitutional Commission's review adopted a similar position.

6.12 Promotion of Natural Resource Use and Environmental Sustainability

The nominee addressed questions regarding the promotion and sustainable use of natural resources, including minerals, forests, and water bodies, if given the nod. He acknowledged that while there are challenges in balancing resource utilization with environmental conservation, Ghana has existing laws aimed at preserving and sustaining the environment. He cited the Hazardous and Electronic Waste Control and Management Act as a key regulatory

framework to ensure responsible waste disposal and environmental protection.

He highlighted ongoing efforts such as e-waste recycling at Agbogbloshie and the reclamation of degraded lands as crucial steps in conserving natural resources. Additionally, he emphasized the role of agricultural smart technology in mitigating the environmental impact of farming methods. However, he stressed that achieving significant progress in environmental sustainability requires adequate funding for research institutions to support innovation in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

On the issue of illegal mining (galamsey), the nominee noted that combating galamsey is another major strategy for preserving Ghana's natural resources, as it directly affects water bodies, forests, and arable lands.

The nominee also underscored the moral responsibility of protecting the environment, referencing Genesis 2:15 and Quran 2:30, where humanity is entrusted with the duty of stewardship over the earth. He proposed that religious leaders should incorporate environmental conservation messages into their sermons, as faith-based advocacy could be a powerful tool in changing public attitudes toward sustainable practices.

In response to a question on specific policies to address climate change and environmental sustainability, especially concerning women, the nominee reaffirmed the importance of gender inclusivity in environmental policies. He acknowledged the historic nomination of a female Vice President by His Excellency the President and emphasized that women play a critical role in climate action, agriculture, and resource management.

He assured the Committee that if given the nod, he would prioritize women's involvement in environmental decision-making and ensure that they take lead roles in programs under the Ministry's jurisdiction.

6.13 Ensuring Responsible Waste Disposal at Abattoirs in Accra and Kumasi

The nominee was asked how he would ensure that abattoirs in Accra and Kumasi adhere to responsible waste disposal practices. He emphasized that self-discipline is essential in all spheres of life, including environmental management. He pointed out that laws and regulations exist to govern waste disposal practices, and it is imperative that abattoir operators comply with these standards to maintain public health and environmental safety.

The nominee stated that he would engage key stakeholders within the sector to design a comprehensive roadmap aimed at improving waste management at abattoirs. He noted that technology-driven solutions could play a crucial role in addressing the existing challenges, and he would work towards leveraging modern waste treatment technologies to ensure sustainable waste disposal practices at abattoir sites.

6.14 Promoting Women's Participation in Science and STEM Education

In response to a question on the involvement of women in science, the nominee emphasized the importance of integrating STEM education at all levels of the educational curriculum. He noted that while girl-child enrollment at the lower primary level is often higher than boys, this trend reverses as they progress, especially in communities where sociocultural norms discourage female education.

The nominee highlighted that deep-rooted societal beliefs hinder the advancement of girls in education, particularly in science-related fields. To bridge the gender gap in STEM subjects—such as mathematics, engineering, and technology—he stressed the need for targeted interventions that promote and support girls' participation in STEM.

He further pointed out that Ghana has an Affirmative Action Law, which, if properly enforced, would help increase female representation in STEM fields and create equal opportunities for girls to excel in scientific disciplines.

When asked whether he was aware of UNESCO's special project aimed at enhancing women's participation in science, the nominee affirmed his awareness. He noted that UNESCO's initiatives extend beyond science to cultural education, further underscoring the need for a holistic approach to empowering women in education and professional fields.

6.16 Implementing Carbon Pricing to Raise Revenue

The nominee was asked about his strategy for ensuring that individuals and institutions pay for their carbon footprints as a means of raising revenue for the Ministry of Finance. In response, he emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement, particularly with Parliament, which plays a critical role in enacting the necessary legislative frameworks to support such initiatives.

He further highlighted that achieving this goal would require collaboration among various agencies and ministries, ensuring that policies on carbon pricing, emissions reduction, and environmental accountability are effectively implemented. The nominee underscored the need for institutional alignment

to enforce measures that would not only generate revenue but also promote sustainable environmental practices across industries and sectors.

6.17 Ghana's Commitment to the Paris Agreement

In response to a question on whether Ghana should continue honoring its commitments under the Paris Agreement despite the withdrawal of the United States, a major emitter of carbon emissions, the nominee emphasized the importance of consulting stakeholders and technocrats to determine the best course of action.

Sharing his personal view, he suggested that Ghana should continue to uphold its obligations under the agreement, as global emissions will persist regardless of the U.S. decision. He further pointed out that some donor funding is contingent on Ghana's commitment to the agreement, and failure to comply could result in the loss of crucial financial support for environmental and climate-related initiatives.

6.18 Feasibility of Banning Plastic Bags in Ghana

Addressing the issue of banning the importation and use of plastic bags while promoting the production of non-plastic reusable alternatives, the Minister-designate emphasized the need for a comprehensive feasibility study. He stated that such a study would assess the socioeconomic impact of an outright ban on citizens and evaluate the availability of cost-effective alternatives.

The nominee cautioned against an immediate ban, citing potential adverse consequences. Instead, he advocated for supporting domestic businesses and investors to explore biodiversity-friendly options such as reusable containers and biodegradable packaging. He stressed that until Ghana can produce viable alternatives, he would not endorse a complete ban on plastics.

6.19 Waste Segregation as a Strategy for Waste Management

When questioned about his views on waste segregation as a strategy for effective waste management, the nominee highlighted that in other jurisdictions, segregation begins at home and within communities, unlike the current situation in Ghana. He emphasized the need for proper education and sensitisation of domestic users on waste disposal before any large-scale state intervention.

The nominee further noted the importance of providing designated dustbins for waste segregation once the necessary awareness has been created. He also suggested that private entities could play a significant role in supporting the initiative by investing in waste management infrastructure and promoting sustainable practices.

6.20 Measures to Combat Noise Pollution

In response to a question on strategies to address pollution, particularly noise pollution, the nominee emphasized the need for strengthened collaboration among relevant Ministries to regulate excessive noise levels in communities. He highlighted the importance of engaging traditional and local government authorities to implement effective measures to curb the growing issue of noise pollution.

The nominee further pointed out that the current Environmental Protection Act lacks specific provisions on noise pollution. He, therefore, expressed the need for legislative amendments to incorporate noise pollution regulations into the new environmental laws to ensure stricter enforcement and improved management of the situation.

6.21 Major Environmental Challenges in Ghana

When asked about the main environmental challenges facing Ghana, the nominee cited illegal mining (galamsey) as a significant issue. He explained

that galamsey has a far-reaching impact, as it leads to deforestation, the destruction of water bodies, the displacement of aquatic life, and the loss of livelihoods for many communities.

The nominee emphasized that environmental protection is not only a legal and policy-driven responsibility but also a moral and religious obligation. He referenced teachings from the Bible, the Quran, and African traditional religions, all of which advocate for the preservation and sustainability of the natural environment.

6.22 Addressing Deforestation and Environmental Degradation

The nominee admitted that he did not have the exact percentage of Ghana's forest cover from 50 years ago but acknowledged that significant deforestation has occurred over the decades. He highlighted findings from a World Bank-financed project undertaken by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Ministry, which revealed alarming levels of environmental destruction. He noted that when the degradation of water bodies and forests was quantified, it amounted to approximately 10 percent of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

To address the issue, the nominee expressed his commitment to conducting a national audit of environmental degradation to establish the full extent of the destruction. He emphasized the need for data-driven decision-making and referenced the NDC's vision of "Every Man Per Tree." However, he suggested a more sustainable approach by advocating for "Every Child Should Plant a Tree and Nurture It," ensuring long-term environmental responsibility. He also criticized the previous government's approach to the "Green Ghana Day" initiative, arguing that the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) should have taken charge of

the program. Additionally, he proposed working closely with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture to reclaim degraded lands for productive use.

6.23 Utilising Science and Technology to Reduce Post-Harvest Losses

The nominee outlined his commitment to leveraging science and technology to minimize post-harvest losses in Ghana's agricultural sector. He emphasized the importance of increasing funding for key state institutions such as the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC), the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He stated that enhancing the financial capacity of these institutions would enable them to develop innovative solutions to protect the environment and improve agricultural productivity. He further assured that he would advocate for increased budgetary allocations to these agencies to strengthen their research and technological capabilities.

Additionally, the nominee revealed that he had requested the heads of agencies under his Ministry to submit reports outlining the challenges that hinder their efficiency. He stressed that post-harvest losses are not solely an environmental issue but are also linked to infrastructure deficits, particularly poor road networks. He pointed out that many farmers struggle to transport their produce to market centers due to inaccessible roads, leading to significant waste. He, therefore, proposed a collaborative approach with the Ministry of Roads and Highways to improve road infrastructure, ensuring that agricultural produce reaches consumers efficiently and reducing losses in the supply chain.

6.24 Bridging the Gap Between MESTI and the STEM Policy

The nominee emphasised the critical role of STEM education in driving innovation and industrialisation in Ghana. He underscored the need for close

collaboration between the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) and the Ministry of Education to integrate STEM education more effectively into the national curriculum at all levels. He asserted that equipping students with fundamental knowledge in science, mathematics, and technology is essential for fostering a culture of innovation and problem-solving in the country.

To further enhance STEM education and technological advancement, the nominee proposed the development of a comprehensive policy aimed at building the capacity of young people, particularly in the area of digital technology. He expressed his intention to work closely with the Ministry of Communication, Digital Technologies, and Innovations, which is focused on expanding internet accessibility through the provision of fiber optic cables nationwide. Additionally, he mentioned the importance of securing donor funding to support STEM initiatives, enhance technological literacy, and provide young Ghanaians with the tools needed to drive national development.

6.25 Budgetary Allocation and Funding for Research Institutions

During the vetting, concerns were raised about the inadequate budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI), which has hindered agencies under the Ministry from operating at full capacity. The Minister-designate expressed deep concern over the low percentage of Ghana's GDP allocated to research, emphasizing the need for increased investment in scientific and technological advancements.

To address funding constraints, the nominee proposed an internal arrangement within the Ministry, where financially stable agencies could take on research

projects on behalf of weaker agencies, allowing resources to be redistributed effectively. He strongly advocated for making a case to the President to increase the budgetary allocation for research institutions. Additionally, he stressed the importance of fostering collaboration between research institutions and the private sector. He noted that private sector stakeholders need to recognize the value of research in driving their success, and such partnerships would enhance the financial sustainability of research institutions, enabling them to execute projects more effectively.

6.26 Capping of Internally-Generated Funds and Research Commercialisation

Addressing concerns about the capping of internally-generated funds (IGF) by research agencies, the Minister-designate assured the Committee that he would leverage his personal relationship with the Minister for Finance to resolve the issue. He acknowledged that research institutions rely on these funds to undertake critical projects, and restricting access to their IGF limits their capacity to contribute meaningfully to national development.

To address funding challenges, the nominee expressed his commitment to engaging the private sector to foster interest in research and innovation. He emphasized the need for research commercialization, where research outputs could be transformed into viable products and services to generate revenue for the agencies. By aligning research with industry needs, he believes that institutions under the Ministry can become more financially sustainable while making significant contributions to economic growth.

6.27 Commercialisation of Research Institutions

In response to a question on the commercialisation of research institutions, the nominee clarified that the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Act already provides for a commercial aspect to the work of CSIR.

However, he emphasized that he was not advocating for the full commercialization of research institutions but rather the commercialization of their research outputs.

He assured the Committee that these institutions would continue to perform their core functions as state entities while simultaneously engaging in research activities that could generate revenue. This, he explained, would enhance their financial sustainability and improve their ability to execute their mandates. The nominee also pointed out that some scientists and experts within the Ministry conduct private research using state facilities and resources without any financial benefit accruing to the state. He stated that while researchers could engage in private research, it should not be at the expense of the state, and there should be a mechanism in place to ensure that the state benefits when its resources are utilised.

6.28 Encroachment of Lands Belonging to Research Institutions

In response to a question regarding the encroachment of lands belonging to research institutions, the nominee highlighted the critical issue affecting institutions such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), where land originally measuring 81 acres has now been reduced to 51 acres due to encroachment.

He assured the Committee that he would work closely with the Minister for the Interior to develop strategies to protect and reclaim lands that were legally acquired for research institutions. He proposed the establishment of a fast-track court dedicated to handling environmental and land encroachment issues efficiently. The nominee lamented that some agencies spend almost 50% of their time in legal battles over land disputes instead of focusing on their core research mandates. He committed to ensuring that institutions regain control over their lands to safeguard their long-term operations.

6.29 Addressing Delays in Climate Collaboration Under the Paris Agreement

The nominee acknowledged that the Paris Agreement allows countries to collaborate in meeting their climate targets. In line with this, Ghana has entered into bilateral agreements with several countries, which are expected to generate millions of dollars in climate financing. However, he expressed concern over the slow progress of these agreements.

To address this challenge, the nominee stated that he would investigate the reasons behind the delays and take necessary steps to expedite the process. He assured the Committee that he would engage the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explore diplomatic solutions to ensure that Ghana benefits fully from these international agreements and receives the expected climate funding without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

6.30 Funding for the Ghana National Research Fund

The nominee addressed concerns regarding the Ghana National Research Fund, which was intended to receive GHC50 million as seed money and one per cent of total national revenue. He acknowledged that the Fund had not received the necessary attention due to a long-standing conflict between MESTI and the Ministry of Education over its management.

He informed the Committee that the issue had finally been resolved, with the Fund being assigned to the Ministry of Education. The nominee assured that he would collaborate closely with the Minister for Education to ensure that the funding aligns with the vision and policy direction of His Excellency the President. His goal is to operationalize the Fund effectively and ensure that it serves its purpose of supporting research and innovation in Ghana.

6.31 Managing a Ministry with a Large Number of Technocrats

When questioned about his approach to leading a Ministry with a large number of technocrats, the Minister-designate assured the Committee that he

would grant them absolute freedom to operate, provided their work aligns with the vision and policy direction of President Mahama.

He emphasized that he trusts the expertise of the technocrats and intends to empower them to execute their responsibilities efficiently. He further revealed that he had already communicated this stance to the professionals within the Ministry, assuring them of his commitment to fostering an environment where they can contribute meaningfully to national development.

6.32 Engaging Women in Plastic Waste Collection and Waste Management

When questioned about engaging women in plastic waste collection as a means to earn income and improve solid waste management, the Minister-designate outlined his vision for a competitive and value-driven waste management system.

He emphasized his intention to de-monopolize waste management in Ghana, ensuring that multiple players, including women and other marginalized groups, can participate actively. He highlighted the importance of collaboration with local government authorities to facilitate this initiative, as it would not only enhance waste management efficiency but also create employment opportunities for Ghanaians.

6.33 Environmental Impact Assessment Permits and Their Abuse

Addressing concerns about the granting and abuse of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) permits, the Minister-designate expressed concern over how discussions on this issue only arise when disasters occur. He emphasized that under the new EPA law, an EPA permit or certificate is now a mandatory precondition for any other permit.

The nominee explained that while the new EPA law grants significant authority to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Ministry retains

a supervisory role to ensure that these powers are exercised efficiently, transparently, and without bias. He highlighted that EIA permits are issued for a two-year period, allowing the Ministry to periodically assess compliance and determine whether renewals should be granted or denied.

Regarding revoking permits for non-compliance, the Minister-designate assured that all legal processes would be followed to ensure that permit holders adhere strictly to environmental regulations and standards.

6.33 Restore Ghana Initiative and the Fight Against Galamsey

Expounding on the Restore Ghana Initiative outlined in the NDC Manifesto, the Minister-designate emphasised its core focus on land reclamation. He reiterated that illegal mining (galamsey) is at the heart of Ghana's environmental crisis, as it destroys water bodies, farmlands, and livelihoods.

The nominee opined that the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) should lead the fight against galamsey rather than the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, which he claimed has been accused of complicity in the menace. He stressed the need for a scientific and environmentally sustainable approach to reclaiming degraded lands and restoring ecosystems, ensuring that affected communities can rebuild their livelihoods.

6.34 Managing Electronic Waste and Public Safety

The nominee was asked about his approach to addressing the growing threat of electronic waste (e-waste) in Ghana. He referenced the Hazardous and Electronic Waste Control Management Act, 2016 (Act 917), which provides a legal framework for managing e-waste. He expressed concern over the return of individuals to the e-waste recycling center at Agbogbloshie after

their relocation, questioning whether insufficient compensation had led to their return. He promised to investigate the matter to determine whether financial support was inadequate and, if necessary, review the amount provided.

The nominee emphasized the health hazards associated with improper e-waste disposal, particularly the burning of waste. He assured the Committee of his commitment to engage stakeholders and explore funding opportunities to encourage the safe collection and recycling of electronic waste. Regarding the closure of an e-waste site near the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, he stated that he would consult with the Minister for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs, the Greater Accra Regional Minister, and the local Member of Parliament to understand the situation before taking any action.

6.35 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Hon Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed** as Minister of Environment, Science and Technology.

7.0 HON KOFI IDDIE ADAMS

MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR THE MINISTRY OF SPORTS AND RECREATION

7.1 BACKGROUND

Hon Kofi Iddie Adams was born on 2nd May 1975 in Kumasi, Ashanti Region. He hails from Teteman Buem, a town in the Jasikan District of the Oti Region. He is married with three children and speaks Fante, Hausa, Ewe, and Lelemi. His hobbies include reading and storytelling, and he is an active member of a local reading club that organizes reading sessions for young pupils.

The nominee began his education at Roman Catholic Primary and Junior Secondary School (JSS) in Teteman Buem, where he obtained his Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in September 1990. He proceeded to Bishop Herman College in Kpando, obtaining his Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) in June 1993. Hon. Kofi Adams earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Ghana, Legon, in September 1999, followed by a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Secondary Education) from the University of Cape Coast in September 2003. In 2013, he obtained a Master of Science Degree in Science Education from the University of Cape Coast.

The nominee holds distinguished certifications in Youth Leadership and has several global affiliations. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated strong leadership, teamwork, and collaboration skills, particularly within the National Democratic Congress (NDC). His tenure in Parliament has

showcased his ability to multitask and engage with communities effectively, ensuring improvements in community engagement and event management.

Hon. Kofi Adams possesses versatile skills in project management, problem-solving, and collaboration. He is recognized for his adaptability, proactive approach, and commitment to delivering effective solutions. His professional strengths include being dependable, responsible, calm under pressure, and an excellent communicator and organizer.

Hon. Kofi Adams has amassed extensive career experience over the years. His political journey began as Constituency Youth Organiser for the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa Constituency of the NDC (July 1996 – June 1998). He served his National Service at Breman Asikuma Secondary School (October 1999 – July 2000) and later became Asikuma Odoben Brakwa Constituency Secretary for the NDC (July 1998 – August 2001).

From July 2000 to September 2001, he worked as a Science Resource Centre Coordinator at Breman Asikuma Secondary School and later as a Tutor at the same institution from September 2000 to September 2001. Hon. Kofi Adams then advanced to become the Central Regional Youth Organiser of the NDC (November 2001 – June 2006).

His teaching career continued at Adisadel College in Cape Coast, where he served as a Tutor (September 2001 – June 2007), Head of the Biology Department (June 2004 – June 2007), and Assistant Housemaster of Lemaire House (March 2005 – June 2007).

In politics, he was Deputy National Youth Organiser of the NDC (December 2005 – January 2010) and later served as Director of Public Affairs at the Office of former President Jerry John Rawlings (June 2007 – July 2010). He

subsequently became Deputy General Secretary of the NDC (January 2010 – December 2014) and Special Aide/Spokesperson to former President Rawlings (July 2007 – March 2015).

He played a crucial role in national political campaigns, serving as National Campaign Coordinator for the NDC (April 2016 – December 2016). From 2014 to 2017, he was a Board Member of Bulk Oil Storage and Transportation (BOST) Company. He later became the National Organiser of the NDC (December 2014 – November 2018).

Currently, Hon. Kofi Iddie Adams serves as the Member of Parliament for the Buem Constituency in the Oti Region, a position he has held since January 2021.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF THE NOMINEE AND HIS RESPONSE

7.2 Strategies for Expanding Sporting Activities in the Country

The nominee acknowledged that sports development in Ghana has been heavily focused on football, often to the detriment of other sporting disciplines. He noted that this imbalance has limited the growth and support for other sports, despite the country's potential in multiple disciplines.

In response to how he would expand sporting activities, the nominee highlighted the rationale behind the President's decision to decouple the Youth Ministry from the Sports Ministry. He explained that this move was designed to ensure that sports receive the necessary attention and investment required for its development.

The nominee assured the Committee of his commitment to implementing all necessary modalities to ensure the realisation of this vision. He pledged to

work towards fulfilling the National Democratic Congress (NDC) manifesto promises regarding sports, ensuring equal development across various sporting disciplines and fostering greater participation and competitiveness in the sector.

7.3 Ensuring the Maintenance of Existing Sporting Facilities

In response to concerns about the maintenance of sporting facilities constructed by the previous New Patriotic Party (NPP) government, the nominee emphasised that improving maintenance culture would be a key priority under his leadership. He assured the Committee that no facility would be allowed to deteriorate to the point where it risks being banned from use by international sporting bodies.

The nominee further stated that Ghana's limited resources must be utilized efficiently, ensuring that existing facilities are well-maintained before constructing new ones. He reiterated his commitment to a sustainable approach, where sporting infrastructure is preserved and enhanced for long-term use, thereby maximising the country's investment in sports development.

7.4 Enhancing Ghana's Performance in International Competitions

Addressing concerns on how Ghana can secure more medals in international sporting events, the nominee emphasized that diversifying investment beyond football to other sporting disciplines such as boxing, athletics, and other individual sports would be a top priority. He noted that while football remains popular, other sports hold great potential for success on the international stage.

Expressing disappointment over the Black Stars' failure to qualify for the upcoming Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), the nominee stressed the need for long-term strategic planning to improve Ghana's performance in all sports.

To enhance athlete preparation for international competitions, the nominee underscored the importance of grassroots sports development, particularly through inter-college competitions. He explained that rejuvenating school-based and community-level competitions would provide a structured pathway for identifying and nurturing young talents.

The nominee further assured the Committee that investing in the potential of young athletes through structured training programs, enhanced coaching, and international exposure would position Ghana to achieve greater success on the global stage.

7.5 Funding and Financial Management in Sports Development

In addressing the state of funding for sporting activities, the nominee acknowledged that there is an outstanding debt that needs to be settled. He recognised that financial constraints have hindered the progress of various sporting disciplines and committed to implementing pragmatic measures to enhance financial sustainability in the sector.

The nominee further pointed out that the National Sports Council (NSC), as an intermediary, has not been allowed to deal directly with the Ghana Football Association (GFA), particularly in matters related to funding for the Black Stars. He indicated that this situation has created inefficiencies in financial management and pledged to restore the original mandate of the NSC to ensure that it operates effectively within its framework.

To promote financial accountability and equity in sports funding, the nominee committed to enhancing transparency in budget allocations for all sports federations. He assured the Committee that no sporting discipline would be sidelined and that funding allocations would be based on clear and equitable criteria to ensure that all sports receive the necessary financial support for development and participation in international competitions.

7.6 Support for Retired Footballers

When asked about his plans for retired footballers, the nominee stated that this policy is already captured in the NDC manifesto and forms part of the broader strategy to improve the welfare of sportsmen and women in the country.

He emphasized that he intends to encourage active sportsmen to contribute to a pension scheme, ensuring that they have financial security after retirement. This initiative, he noted, would instill a culture of financial planning among professional athletes and safeguard their well-being beyond their active sporting years.

Additionally, the nominee assured the Committee that, if given the nod, he would implement other modalities to collect data on retired sports personalities to identify those in need of assistance. He stressed that Ghana must honor its sports heroes and heroines by giving them the necessary attention and support in recognition of their contributions to national pride and sports development.

7.6 Revitalising the Ghana Premier League

When asked about his plans to make the Ghana Premier League more attractive, the nominee acknowledged that the League faces numerous

challenges, including a lack of trained technical staff to manage its affairs effectively.

To address this issue, he assured the Committee that he would work towards modernizing the Winneba Sports College into a fully-fledged university. The aim of this transformation, he explained, is to train professionals who would be equipped to handle club management, coaching, and technical operations in the country's football ecosystem.

Additionally, the nominee pledged to introduce allowances for sportsmen, particularly those in the local league, to curb brain drain. He noted that many talented Ghanaian footballers leave the country for war-torn nations due to low earnings from local clubs. By improving incentives and ensuring better career prospects within Ghana, he hopes to retain top talent and enhance the competitiveness of the Ghana Premier League.

7.7 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Hon Kofi Iddie Adams** as Minister of Environment, Science and Technology.

8.0 HON JOSEPH BUKARI NIKPE

MINISTER DESIGNATE FOR TRANSPORT

8.1 BACKGROUND

Hon Joseph Bukari Nikpe was born on October 3, 1969, and hails from Saboba in the Northern Region of Ghana.

He began his early education at Saboba L/A Primary School before proceeding to St. Joseph's Technical Institute in Saboba, where he obtained his Intermediate City and Guilds Craft Certificate (B/C) in 1991. He later attended Tamale Polytechnic, earning an Advanced City and Guilds Craft Certificate (B/C) in 1995. In 2000, he obtained a Certificate in Education from the University of Education, Winneba, and further pursued a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in Technical Education from the same university in 2006. He later acquired a Master of Arts in Gender, Peace, and Security from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping and Training Centre, Ghana, in 2018.

Hon. Nikpe began his professional career as a National Service Personnel at St. Joseph's Technical Institute from 1995 to 1996. He later worked as an Instructor at St. Joseph's Technical Institute from 1996 to 2005, imparting technical skills to students. Between 2006 and 2008, he served as a District Training Officer and Technical Coordinator with the Ghana Education Service (GES), contributing to education and skills development in the district.

His political career began with his election as Youth Organizer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in the Saboba Constituency (1997–2001). He later became the Financial Secretary of the NDC in Saboba Constituency

(2001–2005). His dedication to local governance led to his election as Assembly Member for Nalongni Electoral Area in Saboba District (2002–2006).

In 2005, he was elected Northern Regional Vice Chairman of the NDC, a position he held until 2008. His political influence extended beyond Ghana, as he served as a Member of the ECOWAS Parliament, where he advocated for peace and solidarity among member states.

Hon. Joseph Bukari Nikpe has been elected Member of Parliament for Saboba Constituency in the Northern Region of Ghana and continues to serve in this capacity to date.

QUESTIONS POSED TO THE NOMINEE AND HIS RESPONSES

8.2 Ensuring Decency in Public Transport

In response to a question regarding his plans for ensuring decency in Ghana's public transport system, the nominee highlighted the pivotal role of transport owners and transport associations in facilitating the movement of people and goods across the country.

He stressed the importance of comprehensive and continuous education programs for transport owners and operators. These programs, he explained, would aim to enhance operational efficiency, improve safety standards, and elevate customer service within the sector.

The nominee underscored that such educational initiatives would not only lead to more efficient transport services but also contribute to the overall growth and modernization of the sector. By equipping transport operators with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to evolving regulations and

customer expectations, Ghana's public transport system would see significant improvements in professionalism and service delivery.

8.3 Passenger Service

In response to a question on how to enhance customer experience in Ghana's airline industry, the nominee emphasized the importance of collaboration between airline operators, state institutions, and air service providers. He noted that such partnerships are crucial for identifying customer needs and effectively addressing complaints to improve service delivery.

The nominee called for the development and periodic review of policies and regulatory frameworks that would ensure airline operators prioritize passenger comfort, safety, and overall satisfaction. He stressed that maintaining high and consistent service quality across the industry is essential for improving the experience of passengers and positioning Ghana's airline sector competitively on both regional and global levels.

8.4 Unifying Transport Groups for a Safer and More Peaceful Transport System

When asked about his plans to unite the various transport groups across the country and create a safer and more peaceful transport system, the nominee reaffirmed the crucial role of transport unions in ensuring the smooth movement of goods and people. He assured the Committee that, if approved, he would actively collaborate with transport operators and unions to address pressing issues in the sector.

He emphasized the need for regular engagements with stakeholders, which would serve as a platform to discuss current challenges, anticipate potential issues, and develop solutions that benefit all parties. The nominee highlighted

that fostering a cooperative environment among transport unions and operators would help ensure safety, efficiency, and harmony within the transport sector.

8.5 Reducing Traffic Congestion and Enhancing Transportation Alternatives

When asked about his strategies to reduce traffic congestion and mitigate its adverse effects on livelihoods and the economy, the nominee expressed concern over Ghana's heavy reliance on road transport for the movement of goods and services. He lamented that other modes of transportation, such as rail, water, and air transport, have been significantly underutilized, resulting in excessive pressure on the country's road networks.

To ease congestion and improve traffic flow, the nominee suggested expanding and modernising these underutilised transport systems to provide viable alternatives to road travel. He emphasised that diversifying the transportation sector would not only reduce road congestion but also enhance efficiency and economic productivity.

He assured the Committee that, if approved, he would engage relevant stakeholders to attract private investment for the development of rail, water, and air transport infrastructure. This, he believes, would create a more balanced and sustainable transport system in the country.

8.6 Improving Aircraft Quality and Reducing Airfares in Ghana

In response to a question regarding the quality of aircraft and the high cost of airfares in Ghana, the nominee expressed dissatisfaction with the poor

condition of some aircraft operated by airlines in the country. He noted that many of these airlines use outdated and substandard aircraft, which compromises passenger comfort and safety.

He attributed the high cost of air travel to the significant operational expenses incurred by airlines in Ghana, which are then passed on to consumers in the form of high ticket prices. The nominee stressed the need for constant engagement with airline operators, air service providers, and other stakeholders in the aviation sector to identify and implement cost-reduction measures.

He pledged to collaborate with industry players to develop policies and initiatives aimed at lowering operational costs while ensuring that airline companies upgrade their fleet to meet international safety and quality standards. This, he believes, will result in affordable and improved air travel experiences for Ghanaians.

8.7 Use Electric Vehicle

When asked about his stance on continuing the previous government's initiative to introduce electric vehicles (EVs) into Ghana's public transport system, the nominee assured the Committee that, if approved, he would conduct a thorough assessment of the program's feasibility and effectiveness.

He emphasized the importance of sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation, noting that the adoption of electric vehicles could help reduce carbon emissions, lower fuel dependency, and modernize Ghana's transport sector. However, he stated that a careful evaluation would be necessary to determine the suitability and practicality of integrating EVs into the existing public transport system.

8.8 Boankra Inland Port

The nominee informed the Committee that the briefing he received from officials at the Ministry is that the project is about 75% complete. However, he indicated that the project is likely to face severe operational challenges due to the absence of a rail link to the port for the transportation of cargo.

He assured the Committee that if given the opportunity, he will engage the private sector to raise the needed capital for the development and operation of a railway system to connect the port to Kumasi. This, he stated, would facilitate the movement of cargo and improve the efficiency of the port.

8.9 Recommendation

The Committee recommends to the House by **CONSENSUS** the approval of the nomination of **Hon Joseph Bukari Nikpe** as Minister for Transport.

9.0 CONCLUSION


In accordance with Article 78(1) of the 1992 Constitution and Standing Order 217, the Committee considered the nominations submitted by His Excellency the President.

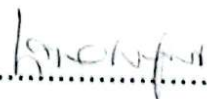
After thorough deliberation, the Committee finds the nominees competent, knowledgeable and well-suited for their respective ministerial roles.

The Committee, therefore, recommends to the House, by **CONSENSUS**, the adoption of its report and the approval of the nominations of:

- i. Hon Abdul-Rashid Hassan Pelpuo as Minister for Labour, Jobs and Employment;
- ii. Hon Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed as Minister for Environment, Science and Technology;
- iii. Hon Samuel Nartey George as Minister for Communications, Digital Technology and Innovations;
- iv. Hon Kofi Iddie Adams as Minister for Sports and Recreation; and
- v. Hon Joseph Bukari Nikpe as Minister for Transport.

Respectfully submitted.


.....
GIFTY JIAGGE-GOBAH (MRS)
CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE


.....
MR BERNARD AHIAFOR
FIRST DEPUTY SPEAKER AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE