

## Exploring Cohesiveness in President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's 7th State of The Nation Address



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**ABSTRACT:** This study explored the semantic influence of the cohesive devices used in President Akufo-Addo's 7th State of the Nation Address. The aim was to examine the communication implications of the cohesive devices in the text. The study adopted the content analytical method which involved qualitative method of data presentation and analysis. Applying concepts from Halliday & Hasan's (1976) Cohesive Theory, the study revealed that there was an apt use of cohesiveness in the discourse. It was equally discovered that the address featured both grammatical and lexical cohesive devices such as reference, substitution and conjunction. Collocation and reiteration were also used in the discourse. Significantly, there was no evidence of ellipsis in the text. It was evidenced that there was the appropriate use of cohesive devices in this political discourse and the paper concluded that through the analysis of cohesive devices in speeches, especially political speeches, thematic focus of a speech can be discerned.

**KEYWORDS:** Cohesive devices, Political speech, State of the nation address, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A text, either in a spoken or written form, needs to cohere to form a unified whole. Inasmuch as a speaker aims to pass information across and wishes to be clearly understood in any speech event, the relatedness of all the words, phrases and sentences in the text must be central to achieving unity of the text. The unity of the text means focusing on the main idea and staying on track to avoid deviation. Therefore in written discourse, unity is achieved when all sentences relate to the topic sentence whereas all the paragraphs relate to the thesis statement.

Cohesiveness is at the centre of communication. Speeches given by politicians aimed at achieving a particular goal. Halliday & Hasan (2013) believe that meaning comes from function. The semantic tie or unity depends on the writer's/speaker's ability to use cohesive devices appropriately and the greatest achievement of an orator is the understanding of the message just as intended.

The president of the Republic of Ghana has the constitutional obligation to address the nation on the state of affairs of the nation and the economy at the beginning and close of every parliamentary session. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's (PNADA-A) 7th State of the Nation Address (SONA) touched mainly on the Covid pandemic, strategies put in place to revitalise the economy and some achievements of his government. The address also cleared the air on allegations of reckless management of public finances and overborrowing levelled him and his government. A political speech such as SONA is an interesting area of study and cohesiveness is central to its understanding. Therefore, there are numeral studies across the world on cohesion in political speeches. For instance, Saefudin (2020) investigated the roles of lexical cohesion in the 2016 U.S presidential debate between Trump and Clinton. Ghofar (2018) explored the use of cohesive devices in Soekarno's speech: *Only a Nation with Self-reliance Can Become a Great Nation*. Emilinda et al (2022) conducted a study to identify the use of cohesive devices in Donald Trump's Concession Speech Transcript and Olajoke (2015) also conducted a study which aimed at exploring the use of lexical cohesive devices in the inaugural speech of the Benue State Assembly Speaker in Nigeria. While studies have been conducted on SONA in Ghana, there are limited studies on the cohesiveness of PNADA-A's 7th SONA. It is very significant to explore cohesiveness in this text because reader can relate to a text, understand the structure and interpret it better if cohesive devices are used effectively in a discourse (Asiamah & Israel 2022).

### 2. RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What type of cohesive devices are present in PNADA-A 7th SONA?
2. What is the semantic influence of the cohesive devices on the SONA?
3. What are the communication implications of the cohesive devices in the SONA?

### 3. THE CONCEPT OF COHESION

Cohesion is best discussed in terms of text and texture. According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), a text is used in linguistics to refer to any passage, spoken or written of whatever length, that does form a unified whole. A text can also be a unit of language in use. It is not a grammatical unit like a clause or a sentence and it is not defined by its size. A text is best regarded as a semantic unit that is a unit not of form but of meaning. This implies that the meaning of text has nothing to do with its length. Halliday & Hasan (1976) put forward that a text is not related to a clause or sentence, not by size, but by realisation which is the coding of one symbolic system in another. They add that a text does not consist of sentences but it is encoded in sentences. A text must have texture which distinguishes it from something that is not a text. It therefore means that the concept of texture is appropriate to express the property of "being a text". The text derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unit with respect to its environment and one linguistic element that gives a text its texture is Cohesion. Cohesion is the relations of meaning that exist within a text. It is a semantic relation between one element in a text and another one which is important to the interpretation of it. Cohesion provides the continuity in the text. In other words, cohesion expresses the continuity of meaning that exists between one part of the text and another and this consists of certain explicit linguistic features that contribute to the overall unity of a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Halliday & Hassan's position is in agreement with Foltz (2007) who acknowledged that the relationship of each sentence in a text to the preceding one should be explicit and unmistakable. He went further to state that a paragraph is not a string of random or detached utterances, but a connected whole, and the nature of the connections must be made apparent. Thus, a cohesive text must satisfy two requirements: First, the meaning of one part of it must have a relationship with another. Second, this connection must be overt. As a matter of fact, it is not just a collection of sentences that makes up a text, but sentences which hang together by means of explicit signals.

To Moe (1979), cohesion links one sentence with another. It is used to account for a systematic description of the relationships which exist within a text. Moe is of the opinion that cohesion should be seen as something which exists within a text but not within the mind of a reader; he clearly supports the argument put forward by Halliday & Hassan (1976) that cohesion needs to be explicit in a text.

Grabe & Kaplan (1996) and Hardy & Leuchtmann (1996) agree that cohesion is the item available on the surface of the text which signals relationships that exist between sentences or clausal units in the text. It is evident from the above definitions that many linguists believe that cohesion is signalled by some explicit linguistic features. Lovejoy & Lance (1991) state that cohesion can be achieved through the operation of "theme-rheme". They explained that "theme" which represents initial information given and "rheme" which gives new information about the theme can form a connected text if they are presented alternatively in a discourse. To Connor & Johns (1990), a coherent text must meet expectations of the reader and the reader uses his/her knowledge of the world to interpret a text, expecting that his/her knowledge will correspond to the organisation and argument of a text. Abusaeedi (2010) describes coherence as a feature of the entire communication process and involves the writer, the subject, the text and the reader. According to Baker (2007), reference is traditionally used in semantics for the relationship which holds between a word and what it points to in the real world. Exophoric, anaphoric and cataphoric reference help language users to achieve this.

### 4. POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The study of political discourse covers a broad range of subject matter and draws on a wide range of analytic methods. It is suggestive of at least two possibilities: a political discourse; and an analysis of political discourse. Tsareva (2010) asserts that analyses of discourse are potentially political, and, therefore, on one level, all discourse analysis is political discourse. Graber (1981) cited in Gastil (1992) opines that political discourse takes place when political activists in and out the government, communicate about political matters, for political purposes. This definition aligns with Chilton (2004) sees politics as a struggle for power between two who either want to maintain power or resist it; or as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like. Again, Chilton (2004) is of the view that politics cannot be conducted without language. Human interaction to a large extent involves language, and linguistic interaction is embedded in and determined by socio-cultural, historical, ideological and institutional conditions. In relation to politics, it is obvious that discourse organisation and textual structure of a variety of discourse types are greatly affected by the specific political situations and processes. The importance of the analysis of political discourse to the new cross-discipline of discourse studies is paramount. Indeed, most scholars conducting political discourse analysis are linguists and discourse analysts (Chilton 2004). Politicians play a critical role in national development and international politics. With all the responsibilities entrusted in their hands, politicians are expected to from time to time communicate to those they lead on the state of affairs. They often rely on language (discourse) to convey their messages.

In Ghana, the office of the president is the highest political office of the land. Hence the occupant of the office of the president has the oversight responsibility of governance and as part of his/her responsibilities, he delivers a State of the Nation Address (SONA) to parliament and the people of Ghana in fulfillment of Article 67 of the constitution. Adukpo (2017) explains that leadership over

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human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilise, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers.

### 5. METHODOLOGY

The study is anchored on the interpretivist perspective research paradigm hence adopts qualitative research approach and descriptive content analytical method. The study explored the types of cohesive devices in PNADA-A's 7th SONA delivered on 8 March, 2023 and their communication implications. The text was downloaded from [www.Myjoyonline.com](http://www.Myjoyonline.com), a renowned media outlet in Ghana. All the sentences were coded thus DS1, DS2, DS3 etc (Data Sentence Number 1, 2, 3 etc) for easy identification and referencing. One hundred and fifty sentences containing various cohesive devices were sampled purposively for the analysis. Antconc 4.2.0 was used to verify the concordance of the cohesive devices. The theory that underpins this study is Halliday & Hasan's (1976) Theory of Cohesion. This theory considers cohesion as the semantic relations of meaning that exist within the text which qualifies it to be a text. In their view, cohesion occurs when the interpretation and the meaning of some part of the text depend on another part of the text; a relationship which implies that the meaning of a portion of the text presupposes the interpretation assigned to the related part of the text. This interdependence establishes a cohesive bond within the text.

### 6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data for this analysis were the cohesive devices found in President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo – Addo's 7th SONA. The study accounted for both grammatical and lexical cohesion in the speech.

#### (A) Grammatical Cohesion in SONA 7

**1. Reference:** PNADA-A makes use of reference as a cohesive device in his address. Below are some examples:

DS1. Mr Speaker, I am glad to be here in this august House to perform, once again, one of the most pleasant duties on the calendar of the President of the Republic .... (paragraph 1)

'I' a personal reference, as used in sentence 1, refers to 'the president of the Republic'.

DS2. In accordance with protocol and convention, it is good to see that my wife, the First Lady Rebecca Akufo-Addo.... (paragraph 2)

The adjective determiner 'my' and the noun it modifies 'wife' makes personal reference to 'the first lady Rebecca Akuffo-Addo.

DS3. Mr. Speaker, the House is also duly honoured by the welcome attendance of the former Presidents of the Republic, their Excellencies John Agyekum Kufuor and John Dramani Mahama, former First Lady, Her Excellency Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, and the Dean and Members of the Diplomatic Corps. (paragraph 3)

The article 'the' is used in this sentence cohesively to link the minds of the listeners to the honourable guests. 'Her' and 'their' are other personal references expressed in this part of the discourse where they make direct references to John Agyekum Kuffour and John Dramani Mahama, former presidents.

DS4. Mr. Speaker, it is the 8th of March today, and that means it is International Women's Day, the day set aside globally to honour all women. (paragraph 3)

The use of the personal pronoun 'it' indicates the use of a personal reference. 'It' is used as an expletive pronoun to occupy the subject position in this sentence. "It" refers to the date, the 8th of March, 2023 and the day in question, International Women's Day. Another reference in this sentence is the use of the article 'the' to indicate a common knowledge shared by the speaker and the audience. 'The day set aside globally to honour women' makes reference to International Women's Day.

DS5. Please allow me to acknowledge and appreciate the significance of the day, and heartily congratulate women all over the world, and especially women in Ghana, for the role they play in realising the dreams, cares and aspirations of humankind and of this great nation. (paragraph 3)

"Me" a personal pronoun, refers to the noun phrase "the president of the republic of Ghana" in DS1. The use of the definite article "the" to modify the noun "day" that is "the day" refers to International Women's Day.

DS8. Mr Speaker, apart from my own personal fond memories as a member of this House, Parliament stands as a symbol of our democracy and its values. (paragraph 4)

"My" in this context refers to the president of the Republic of Ghana. The expression creates a direct link to no other's personal experience but that of the president. "This", parliament a demonstrative pronoun is used in "**this house**" to refer to 'parliament' in the same sentence. "Our" is a determiner and as a cohesive device, it is a personal reference used to refer to refer to "the people of Ghana" in S1. "Our" democracy here refers to the democracy of the Ghanaian people. "Its" refers to "democracy" in the same sentence. The link here is "its values" refers to the value of democracy but the personal pronoun "its" is used to avoid the repetition of democracy which has already been mentioned.

DS9. Mr. Speaker, it is important that we stress this point because after thirty years of democratic practice, we may be tempted to take it for granted. "This" makes demonstrative reference to 'a symbol of our democracy and its values.' (paragraph 5)

"We" makes a personal reference to "parliament" in DS8 and "It" makes a personal reference to "democracy" in DS8.

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DS10. We need to remind ourselves that our compatriots, the majority of whom are in their early adulthood, have no personal recollection of the struggles that got us to this point in our development. (*paragraph 5*)

“We” makes a personal reference to “Honourable Members” in S1. ‘Our’ also, makes a personal reference to “the people of Ghana” in DS1.

DS12. However, because Parliament directly represents the citizens of our nation in this hallowed chamber, it will always be the reminder of those struggles. (*paragraph 6*)

“However” is a transitional device which connects one part of a piece of writing to the other. It is used to establish the link between parliament and the citizens. That is parliament being the representation and decision-making body of the nation. There is a personal reference in this excerpt, “our”. “It” makes a personal reference to “parliament” in the same sentence.

DS13. It is important we never forget that democracy is not a static achievement, but a process that needs continuous nurturing. (*paragraph 6*)

“We” makes a personal reference to “Honourable members” in S1.

### 2. Determiners and adverbs which are used for demonstrative reference featured in the speech

“The”, occurred 627 times in the discourse. Examples of the use of the determiner “the”: DS1. ‘.... one of the most...’, ‘...**the President** of the Republic...’, ‘...the Ghanaian people...’ (*paragraph 1*)

“This” is another determiner used for reference in the discourse. It has a total concordance of fifty- eight (58).

Examples of the use of “this” in the discourse for reference are presented here.

Cohesion antconc.txt	our individual points of view. Mr. Speaker, to come before	this	House to deliver a Message on the State of ... ( <i>paragraph 10</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	like back at the beginning of 2020, when I came to	this	House to give an account on the state of ... ( <i>paragraph 15</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	mean achievement. Given the way the numbers shaped up in	this	House after the 2020 elections, many cynics and sceptics predicted ... ( <i>paragraph 8</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	sector. Roads constitute the largest number of questions asked in	this	House by Members of Parliament; a large amount of ... ( <i>paragraph 39</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	other arms of government continue to operate. Thirty years ago,	this	House convened for the first time to mark the ... ( <i>paragraph 7</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	single child has died as a result of the outbreak.	This	House has already passed into law the National Vaccine ... ( <i>paragraph 86</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	the state of our nation. This is what I told	this	House on 20th February 2020, and I quote ... ( <i>paragraph 16</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	the COVID funds to be audited, and I can assure	this	House that nothing dishonourable was done with the COVID... ( <i>paragraph 31</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	have been procured from Brazil to boost mechanisation. Government will,	this	year, commence preparatory works for establishing a Tractor ... ( <i>paragraph 88</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	three living survivors of the Tulsa Massacre of 1921. In May	this	year, I will be chairing a Tourism Stakeholder Retreat ... ( <i>paragraph 100</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	are already changing lives and changing the narrative. As of	this	year, nearly two million young people have benefitted from ... ( <i>paragraph 68</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	the people. Mr. Speaker, it is important that we(1) stress	this	point because after thirty years of democratic practice ... ( <i>paragraph 5</i> )
(m) Cohesion antconc.txt	no personal recollection of the struggles that got us to	this	point in our development. In the same way that ... ( <i>paragraph 5</i> )
(n) Cohesion antconc.txt	and caregivers to ensure that eligible children are vaccinated, once	this	programme begins. No child should be denied access to ... ( <i>paragraph 85</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	the needs of the youth and women, the YouStart programme.	This	programme seeks to support young entrepreneurs to gain ... ( <i>paragraph 73</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	government's disposal. Mr Speaker, I would like, at	this	stage, to brief the House on how the talks ... ( <i>paragraph 43</i> )
Cohesion	series of initiatives to implement the policy. I	this	stage, to make mention of one particular programme that

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antconc.txt	want, at		... (paragraph 73)
Cohesion antconc.txt	of all concerned, including that of men. The theme for	this	year recognises and celebrates women who are championing ... (paragraph 3)
Cohesion antconc.txt	Mr Speaker, Monday was 6th March, our Independence Day, and	this	year we had the main celebrations in the Volta ... (paragraph 101)
Cohesion antconc.txt	with three more to be commissioned by the end of	this	year. All these Schemes are supported with Gold Katchas, ... (paragraph 94)
Cohesion antconc.txt	monthly revenues of ECG by some 40% before the end of	this	year. I firmly believe that the initiatives, which have ... (paragraph 93)
Cohesion antconc.txt	and I(2) have always treated the occasion with utmost respect.	This	address offers us as usual, the opportunity to provide ... (paragraph 10)
Cohesion antconc.txt	Mr Speaker, it is a well-known fact that, in	this	administration, TVET and STEM feature frequently ... (paragraph 67)
Cohesion antconc.txt	are servicing were not only contracted during the period of	this	administration. Mr Speaker, we have spent money on ... (paragraph 36)
Cohesion antconc.txt	Ghana Card holders to self-enrol in the scheme and	this	application enables registration and renewal for oneself and... (paragraph 80)
Cohesion antconc.txt	am Mr Speaker, I am glad to be here in	this	august House to perform, once again, one of the ... (paragraph 1)
Cohesion antconc.txt	these statements from the Health and Finance Ministries would justify	this	conclusion. We provided five hundred ... (paragraph 32)
Cohesion antconc.txt	in nearly three decades. The international investor community has recognised	this	development, resulting in Ghana, today, being the ... (paragraph 18)
Cohesion antconc.txt	highest in the history of TVET in Ghana, to accommodate	this	development. I was told last week about one young ... (paragraph 67)
Cohesion antconc.txt	In accordance with our desire not to become part of	this	global trend, Government has taken steps to ensure that ... (paragraph 84)
Cohesion antconc.txt	roads? Mr Speaker, I would like to state categorically that	this	Government has built more roads than any government ... (paragraph 40)
Cohesion antconc.txt	realising the dreams, cares and aspirations of humankind and of	this	great nation. The presence of women leaders, at both ... (paragraph 3)
Cohesion antconc.txt	because Parliament directly represents the citizens of our nation in	this	hallowed chamber, it will always be the reminder of ... (paragraph 6)
Cohesion antconc.txt	from my own personal fond memories as a member of	this	House, Parliament stands as a symbol of our democracy ... (paragraph 4)
Cohesion antconc.txt	have been in a hurry to get things done, and	this	includes massive developments in agriculture, education, health, irrigation, roads, ... (paragraph 38)
Cohesion antconc.txt	to be brought for my assent. In the near future,	this	Institute will ensure that, no matter what happens to ... (paragraph 86)
Cohesion antconc.txt	warehouses, with the remaining 15 at the advanced stages of completion.	This	intervention is adding some 80,000 metric tonnes to the ... (paragraph 88)
Cohesion antconc.txt	of all these roads are attached in the annex to	this	Message. I have done so because, last year, when ... (paragraph 40)
Cohesion antconc.txt	part of Hansard. Beyond the construction of roads, Mr Speaker,	this	NPP administration has implemented successfully a ... (paragraph 41)
Cohesion antconc.txt	been expressly exempted from the DDEP. I want to take	this	opportunity to thank organised labour, pensioners, pension ... (paragraph 50)
Cohesion antconc.txt	elections, many cynics and sceptics predicted a doomsday scenario for	this	Parliament, but instead of a meltdown, we have witnessed ... (paragraph 8)

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Cohesion antconc.txt	am glad to inform the House that we are resolving	this	problem. Through the Ministry of Local Government and the ... (paragraph 63)
Cohesion antconc.txt	Mr Speaker, I thank the House for its support throughout	this	process, including the passage of key revenue laws. However, (paragraph 46)

### 3. The use of 'these' for reference effect is also evidenced in the discourse. 'These' occurred ten (10) times in the speech.

Cohesion antconc.txt	to be commissioned by the end of this year. All	these	Schemes are supported with Gold Katchas, pieces of equipment ... (paragraph 94)
Cohesion antconc.txt	small-scale mining through Community Mining Schemes. So far, 16 of	these	Schemes have been commissioned, with three more to be ... (paragraph 94)
Cohesion antconc.txt	and the digital tagging of all metres.	these	initiatives should increase the monthly revenues of ECG by ... (paragraph 93)
Cohesion antconc.txt	passage of key revenue laws. However, a few more of	these	measures, namely the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, Excise Duty ... (paragraph 46)
Cohesion antconc.txt	implementation modalities to enhance domestic productive capacity in	these	products has been prepared and, once ... (paragraph P72)
Cohesion antconc.txt	the 4th Republic, and Mr. Speaker, the details of all	these	roads are attached in the annex to this ... (paragraph 40)

### 4. 'Those' was also used as a form of reference in the discourse and occurred five times.

Cohesion antconc.txt	North East, Oti, and Savannah have been completed and commissioned.	those	in Ahafo, Bono East and Western North Regions ... (paragraph 64)
Cohesion antconc.txt	Savannah and Western North. Three of the courts, that is	those	in North East, Oti, and Savannah ... (paragraph 64)
Cohesion antconc.txt	saw the wisdom in helping each other, and I thank	those	who contributed their expertise, time and energy to the ... (paragraph 28)
Cohesion antconc.txt	energy to the fight against the virus, and I thank	those	who contributed to the COVID-19 fund that was set ... (paragraph 28)
Cohesion antconc.txt	this hallowed chamber, it will always be the reminder of	those	struggles. It is important we... (paragraph 6)

### 5. Some adverbs were also employed in the text for cohesive effects. There are "here", "now" and "then"

#### Here

Cohesion antconc.txt	Mr Speaker, I am glad to be	here	in this august House to perform, once ... (paragraph 1)
Cohesion antconc.txt	already yielding results. Mr. Speaker, I am able to cite	here	some of the equipment we have provided the military ... (paragraph 60)

#### Now

Cohesion antconc.txt	of religion and political affiliation. Indeed, freedom of speech has	now	reached such heights that even members of the diplomatic ... (paragraph 9)
Cohesion antconc.txt	long-awaited four-tier Suame Interchange. Mr. Speaker, we have	now	reached the point where we ... (paragraph 75)
Cohesion antconc.txt	III of the project at 57% completion. Mr Speaker, we are	now	at the most difficult stage of electricity provision around ... (paragraph 90)
Cohesion antconc.txt	and safe, in much the same way as some might	now	choose to forget the vitriol that came ... (paragraph 34)
Cohesion antconc.txt	GHC23.70 a litre, in the middle of December 2022, is	now	GHC 13.80 a litre. The price of diesel had ... (paragraph 57)
Cohesion	Speaker, our drone delivery service is firmly		has six centres for Zipline drone services, making ...

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antconc.txt	established and Ghana	now	( <i>parargraph 82</i> )
Cohesion antconc.tx	continue to pay attention to the Police Service.We can	Now	see more of the police on our streets in ... ( <i>paragraph 62</i> )
Cohesion antconc.txt	risen to more than GH\xA223.70 a litre and is	now	selling on average at Ghc13.80 a litre, ... ( <i>paragraph 57</i> )

### Then

Cohesion antconc.txt	we took the brave decision to open the institutions. Even	it is worth pointing out that the school ... then, ( <i>paragraph 34</i> )
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## 6. CONJUNCTION

Conjunction which is a type of grammatical cohesive device links the various parts of the text. Conjunctions are linguistic elements that connect words of equal importance, clauses and sentences. Unrelated items, expressions and clauses can be linked through the use of conjunctions. This cohesive device was found in the address. Here as some examples:

In DS1, the coordinating conjunction “and” is used to connect two nouns “Honourable members and the people of Ghana” to establish the close association of the former to the latter. ... (*paragraph 1*)

In DS4, The coordinator, “and” links the independent clause and the subordinating clause: “Mr. Speaker, it is the **8th of March** today”, and “that means it is **International Women’s Day**, the day set aside globally to honour all women...” (*paragraph 3*)

In DS6. “Who” is a subordinating conjunction which joins the clauses to form a complex sentence: ‘The theme for this year recognises and celebrates **women**’ who “are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education...” (*paragraph 3*)

In DS10, The subordinator “that” connects the subordinate clause to the main clause: “**that** got us to this point in our development ...” (*paragraph 5*)

## 7. SUBSTITUTION

Substitution is another cohesive device that is present in the discourse. Substitution in discourse basically means replacing a word or a group of word with another. This is done to avoid repetition of a word, a phrase or a clause. There are a few words that are used to replicate substitution when considering cohesion. These words are used to express substitution in three ways: nominal substitution, verbal substitution and clausal substitution. The words “one”, “ones” and “same” are used to show nominal substitution. Verbal substitution is normally expressed by the use of these words: do, does, did, do not, does not, did not, has, has not, has done and have done. Clausal substitution uses the words “so” and “not”.

PNADA-A employed substitution in the SONA. Below are some instances:

DS14. We need to remind ourselves that our compatriots, the majority of whom are in their early adulthood, have no personal recollection of the struggles that got us to this point in our development. In the same way that only a small percentage of our population can recall life under colonial rule, similarly the memory of dictatorship, one party rule and military rule is receding into the dim past, and the struggles that have brought us so far are disappearing into the recesses of history. (*paragraph 5*)

DS15. Mr Speaker, the government took a deliberate decision to try and keep the inevitable disruptions across all our lives down to a minimum in the education sector, by opening schools and education institutions as soon as it was made safe to do so. “So” substituted the entire expression ‘It was safe to open school and educational institutions...’ (*paragraph 34*)

DS16. After the event, some might be tempted to forget the volumes of sanitizer and other logistics it took to keep the schools open and safe, in much the same way as some might now choose to forget the vitriol that came from some who should have known better, threatening hell and damnation when, according to them, the children start dying in the schools. (*paragraph 34*)

DS17. As I go around the country, I hear the pleas for roads, schools, hospitals, ... I wish, as every other Ghanaian does, that we would have built more drains than we have. (*paragraph 35*)

DS18. And I wish we had the resources to do more. (*paragraph 35*)

“do more” here refers to construct more roads, build more schools, hospitals and other developmental projects.

DS19. A US President, for the first time, in the person of President Joe Biden, and the French President, Emmanuel Macron, have both embraced the Reform process. We hope that the leaders of the three other P5 Members of the Security Council will soon do the same... (*paragraph 96*)

### (B). Lexical Cohesion in SONA 7

Lexical Cohesion is the cohesion effect employed by the choice of vocabulary. There are two types of lexical cohesive elements: collocation and reiteration. Collocation refers to the co-occurrence of words and permissible word order while reiteration focuses

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on how words are used to lay emphasis in a discourse. There are cooccurrences of words that exist in a particular formulaic sequence in the discourse which suggest meaning outside the lexical meaning of the individual words.

### 1. Collocation

Evidence from the discourse to establish the presence of collocation in the discourse can be found in the following excerpts from the address:

- i. ...the dim past" and "the recesses of history (*paragraph 5*)
- ii. ...fraught with challenges... (*paragraph 7*)
- iii. This is no mean achievement... (*paragraph 8*)
- iv. ...a doomsday scenario, the numbers shaped up, a meltdown... (*paragraph 8*)
- v. ... down memory lane (*paragraph 17*)
- vi. ... fit for purpose ... (*paragraph 63*)
- vii. ...roll out ... (*paragraph 72*)
- viii. ...breathtakingly beautiful ... (*paragraph 102*)
- ix. ...every fibre of my being... (*paragraph 105*)

### 2. Reiteration

To reiterate means to emphasise. Reiteration as a lexical cohesive device can manifest in three ways, namely, nominal, verbal and clausal. Halliday & Hasan (1976) suggest that it can be sub-grouped into repetition, synonyms or near synonyms, antonymy, superordinate or a general word and hyponymy.

The following excerpts from the discourse indicate the presence of reiteration and its effect on the discourse:

#### a. Repetition

DS20. Today, we live in a country in which we enjoy complete freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and political affiliation. (*paragraph 9*)

DS21. Mr Speaker, when we make an assessment of what the state of our nation is, it would necessarily have to include what state it was in yesterday, the state it is in today and what state it would be in tomorrow, based on reasonable grounds of expectations. (*paragraph 10*)

DS22. Maybe because of the severity of the present difficulties, or maybe because it suits their preconceived agenda, some people are unwilling to accept that we were on a good trajectory until the arrival of COVID-19. (*paragraph 14*)

DS23. We took many decisions, we did many things which, according to the science, were the most reliable and trusted ways to save lives and livelihoods at the time, which may look strange and unnecessary today, but that is from the safe perspective of not waking up to check on the COVID-19 infection or death rate. (*paragraph 22*)

DS24. I would like to suggest that, with the best will in the world, Mr Speaker, no auditor can put a figure on the cost of keeping the children in school safely during that crisis, nor the continuing cost of the effect of ... our young people; not the financial cost, not the emotional cost, and certainly not the social cost. (*paragraph 34*)

#### b. Superordinate

DS25. Considering the amount of work that still needs to be done on the state of our roads, the bridges that have to be built, considering the number of classrooms that need to be built, the furniture and equipment needs at all stages of education, considering the number of children who should be in school and are not, considering the number of towns and villages that still do not have access to potable water, I daresay no one can suggest we have over borrowed or spent recklessly.' ... (*paragraph 37*)

DS26. The Barracks Regeneration Project Phases I and II, the Military Housing Project Phases I and II and the Ghana Military Academy Infrastructure project are expected to be completed and handed over by the end of May this ... (*paragraph 60*)

#### c. Synonym and near synonyms

DS27. We provided five hundred and eighteen million cedis (GH¢518 million) of grants and loans to micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) through the NBSSI, now the Ghana Enterprise Agency, in which three hundred and two thousand, five hundred and fifteen (302,515) enterprises benefitted, of which sixty percent (60%) were women-owned. (*paragraph 31*)

DS28. The presence of women leaders, at both the local and national fronts, have advanced rights, enhanced equality, and, in general, improved the living standards and quality of lives of all concerned, including that of men.'S6 ... (*paragraph 3*)

#### d. Antonym

DS29. The presence of women leaders, at both the local and national fronts, have advanced rights, enhanced equality, and, in general, improved the living standards and quality of lives of all concerned, including that of men.'S6 ... (*paragraph 3*)

DS30. For some traders, the receipt of one thousand cedis (GH¢1,000) made the difference between the ruin of the household and survival. ... (*paragraph 32*)



### 7.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Research Question 1: What types of cohesive devices are present in PNADA-A 7th SONA?

The study discovered that the address makes use of both grammatical and lexical cohesion. Based on Halliday & Hasan's (1976) classification, the types of cohesive devices found in the address are grammatical: reference, conjunction, substitution; and lexical: collocation and reiteration.

#### Research Question 2: What semantic influence do the cohesive devices have on the discourse?

The study revealed that the cohesive devices were used to establish logical relations as well as semantic influence in the text. Reference dominated the cohesive devices used in the discourse. The use of anaphoric reference dominates all other pronoun references to logically coordinate the listeners to the discourse. Reiteration (repetition) is the least used cohesive device. The limited presence of reiteration ensures communicative effectiveness and prevents boredom which is one of the attributes of excessive use of reiteration (repetition). On the other hand, the presence of reiteration brings about grace/elegance and somewhat rhythm to the speech. This is a political discourse where the speaker needs to use language to catch the attention of the audience and to persuade them to accept his views. Therefore, the use of reiteration and collocation were needful to emphasize the achievements and imminent plans of the government towards economic sustainability.

#### 3. Research Question 2: What are the communication implications of the cohesive devices in the 7th SONA?

The study relayed the fact that the president used cohesive devices effectively to persuade his audience. Ellipsis was absent in the address because PNADA-A needs to vividly account for all the achievements he and his government have attained so far and to assure the Ghanaians of his commitments and resolved towards future plans without omitting any salient point. Political speeches are motivated by the desire to persuade and convince the people and familiarize the audience with the socio-economic policies, plans and actions (Kyei et al 2020). Thus, use of the identified grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in the text makes 7th SONA very special and indeed, of interest to language researchers. The interpretation of a discourse goes beyond the wordings of the text so the use of linguistic devices such as cohesion aids the audience to interpret the text holistically. Effective communication as exhibited in the discourse through the use of cohesive devices, builds trust, provides clarity and direction, fosters better relationship, increases engagement and promotes teamwork. Meaning would have been eluded were the devices not used appropriately. A cohesive text as 7th SONA enhances the reader's expectation of sequential logical ideas and contributing to the reader's comprehension.

### 8.0. CONCLUSION

This paper explored cohesiveness in PNADA-A 7th SONA. It considered the types of cohesive devices in the text, the semantic influence of the devices on the text and the communication implications of the use of the cohesive devices. It has become necessary for the fact that appropriate use of cohesive devices increases the chance of appropriate interpretation of the text. Political discourse aimed at persuading and convincing the audience to embrace the speaker's ideology hence there is the need to use all linguistic elements to make text understandable and to sustain the interest of the audience. The findings revealed that cohesive devices were appropriately employed in the discourse with reference dominating. It was equally noted that cohesive devices have been used to avoid redundancy and to connect the audience logically to the speech. In sum, the use of cohesive devices makes the text more communicative hence the motive of the speaker can be accomplished.

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### Appendix A: SONA 7

Myjoyonline

8 March 2023 11:51am

Mr Speaker, I am glad to be here in this august House to perform, once again, one of the most pleasant duties on the calendar of the President of the Republic, that is, to give Honourable Members and the Ghanaian people a Message on the State of the Nation, in fulfilment of article 67 of the Constitution. P1

In accordance with protocol and convention, it is good to see that my wife, the First Lady Rebecca Akufo-Addo, Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia, Spouse of Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Alice Adjua Yornas Bagbin, Chief Justice Kwasi Anin-Yeboah, and Justices of the Supreme Court, Chairperson Nana Otuo Siriboe II and Members of the Council of State, Chief of Staff of the Office of the President, Hon. Akosua Frema Osei Opare, and officials of the presidency, Chief of Defence Staff, Vice Admiral Seth Amoama, the Inspector General of Police, Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, and the various Service Chiefs, are all present. Mr. Speaker, the House is also duly honoured by the welcome attendance of the former Presidents of the Republic, their Excellencies John Agyekum Kufuor and John Dramani Mahama, former First Lady, Her Excellency Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, and the Dean and Members of the Diplomatic Corps. P2

Mr. Speaker, it is the 8th of March today, and that means it is International Women's Day, the day set aside globally to honour all women. Please allow me to acknowledge and appreciate the significance of the day, and heartily congratulate women all over the world, and especially women in Ghana, for the role they play in realising the dreams, cares and aspirations of humankind and of this great nation. The presence of women leaders, at both the local and national fronts, have advanced rights, enhanced equality, and, in general, improved the living standards and quality of lives of all concerned, including that of men. The theme for this year recognises and celebrates women who are championing the advancement of transformative technology and digital education. P3

Mr Speaker, apart from my own personal fond memories as a member of this House, Parliament stands as a symbol of our democracy and its values. It stands as a reminder to all of us that our country has chosen to travel on the path of democracy, and at the heart of that journey is the idea that the government can only govern with the consent of the people. P4

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we stress this point because after thirty years of democratic practice, we may be tempted to take it for granted. We need to remind ourselves that our compatriots, the majority of whom are in their early adulthood, have no personal recollection of the struggles that got us to this point in our development. In the same way that only a small percentage of our population can recall life under colonial rule, similarly the memory of dictatorship, one party rule and military rule is receding into the dim past, and the struggles that have brought us so far are disappearing into the recesses of history. P 5

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However, because Parliament directly represents the citizens of our nation in this hallowed chamber, it will always be the reminder of those struggles. It is important we never forget that democracy is not a static achievement, but a process that needs continuous nurturing. Indeed, Mr Speaker, we must remind ourselves that, in our country's political history, it is the restoration of Parliament to its proper place that has always symbolised the restoration of power to the people. And dare I say that when constitutional rule is interrupted, it is Parliament that is shut down, the other arms of government continue to operate. P 6

Thirty years ago, this House convened for the first time to mark the commencement of the Fourth Republic. The early years of the return to democracy were fraught with challenges, but the years have seen the deepening of our democratic culture to a point where a candidate of the minority side in Parliament, today, presides as the Speaker. P 7

This is no mean achievement. Given the way the numbers shaped up in this House after the 2020 elections, many cynics and sceptics predicted a doomsday scenario for this Parliament, but instead of a meltdown, we have witnessed considerable cooperation and unity of purpose among all parties and factions. This is to a large extent a measure of the maturity of our political culture and democracy. We will need even more of such bipartisan maturity to meet the challenges confronting us at this time. P8

Today, we live in a country in which we enjoy complete freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and political affiliation. Indeed, freedom of speech has now reached such heights that even members of the diplomatic corps feel able to join in our national discourse, and pronounce on matters that would be problematic for Ghanaian diplomats in their countries of origin. Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, it seems to me the important thing in our free speech environment is actually to try and hear each other, instead of raising the decibel level of our individual points of view. P9

Mr. Speaker, to come before this House to deliver a Message on the State of the Nation is a symbol and practical demonstration of accountability, and I have always treated the occasion with utmost respect. This address offers us, as usual, the opportunity to provide an honest assessment of our country's situation, and seek the support of all in addressing it with hope and confidence. P 10

Mr Speaker, when we make an assessment of what the state of our nation is, it would necessarily have to include what state it was in yesterday, the state it is in today and what state it would be in tomorrow, based on reasonable grounds of expectations. P11

How far back should we be looking to make a judgement on the state of affairs today? P12

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the issue, above all, that is, quite properly, dominating the concerns of all Ghanaians is the gravity of the economic situation of our country, and how we can quickly stabilise the economy, and work our way back to the period of rapid economic growth. Our currency has been buffeted, our inflation rate has been very high, and, for the first time in our lives, debt exchanges have become the language of everyday conversation. P 13

As such, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a departure from the usual format of Messages on the State of the Nation, and concentrate, predominantly, on the economy, which will enable me, nonetheless, also to make some statements about the state of our agriculture, education, energy, health, infrastructure, mining, tourism and security. This is not to belittle the contribution of the other sectors to the growth of our country, but I believe the exigencies of the moment justify the position I am taking, particularly as all sector Ministers continue to provide official updates on happenings in their respective sectors. P 14

I have said, and many others, including the Managing Director of the IMF, have said that our economy was doing well until COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine took us off course. P 15

Maybe, because of the severity of the present difficulties, or maybe because it suits their preconceived agenda, some people are unwilling to accept that we were on a good trajectory until the arrival of COVID-19. The Ghanaian people, however, accepted this proposition, as evidenced in the results of the 2020 presidential election, which were unanimously endorsed and upheld by the seven-member panel of the Supreme Court. P16

Mr Speaker, allow me to go back on a short trip down memory lane, and remind ourselves what things looked like back at the beginning of 2020, when I came to this House to give an account on the state of our nation. P17

This is what I told this House on 20th February 2020, and I quote: "Mr. Speaker, in three years we have reduced inflation to its lowest level (7.8% in January 2020) since 1992. For the first time in over forty (40) years, we have had a fiscal deficit below five percent (5%) of GDP for three years in a row. For the first time in over twenty (20) years, the balance of trade (that is the difference between our exports and imports) has been in surplus for three (3) consecutive years. Our current account deficit is shrinking, interest rates are declining, and the average annual rate of depreciation of the cedi is at its lowest for any first term government in the Fourth Republic. Our economic growth has rebounded to place Ghana among the fastest growing economies in the world for three years in a row at an annual average of 7%, up from 3.4% in 2016, the lowest in nearly three decades. The international investor community has recognised this development, resulting in Ghana, today, being the largest recipient of foreign direct investment in West Africa. The sovereign credit ratings agencies have upgraded our ratings, and also improved the outlook for this year, notwithstanding the fact that it is an election year." P 18

Mr Speaker, that was where we were at the end of February 2020. P 19

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Three weeks after this speech, in which I expressed our sympathies and solidarity with China on the difficulties they were having with a new virus, our world changed. The virus, I referred to, arrived in our country and in the rest of the world with a vengeance. P20

Within weeks, we were in the middle of a lockdown, our airports and land borders were closed. Schools and factories and even markets were closed. The hospitality industry was brought to its knees. Our economy, like much of the rest of the world, went into a tailspin. P21

We took many decisions, we did many things which, according to the science, were the most reliable and trusted ways to save lives and livelihoods at the time, which may look strange and unnecessary today, but that is from the safe perspective of not waking up to check on the COVID-19 infection or death rate. P22

Indeed, there were some who suggested that we cancel the national identification registration exercise, and even postpone the 2020 general elections. P23

Who would have thought that, today, anybody will be questioning the fumigation of schools and markets? I recall, vividly, the straight talking I received from a group of our most eminent physicians and other scientists on the urgency of fumigating all public spaces, including offices, schools, hospitals, markets, churches and mosques. The few who could afford it fumigated their homes. P24

Today, the science might be that such measures make no difference to the spread of the virus, but criminality or reckless spending cannot be ascribed to the decision to undertake such measures. P25

Mr Speaker, you might remember that we could not produce veronica buckets fast enough. Today, it is not an obligatory item on anyone's list of purchases. P26

In dealing with the crisis generally, I did not meet anyone brave enough to suggest that considerations of money should be a hindrance to anything we needed to do in the fight against the virus. P27

I was and I am grateful that the people of Ghana rose to the occasion and, together, we went through the crisis and came out well by defying the doomsday predictions about the inevitability of dead bodies on our streets. I am grateful that we saw the wisdom in helping each other, and I thank those who contributed their expertise, time and energy to the fight against the virus, and I thank those who contributed to the COVID-19 fund that was set up to help us meet some of the expenditures. P28

The economic consequences from the pandemic have been devastating. P29

Mr Speaker, it is precisely because the economic fallout from the pandemic is so widespread and long lasting that it is important to show clearly that the COVID funds were not misused. It is critical that we do not lose the confidence of the people that a crisis that they were led to believe we were all in together was abused for personal gain. P30

Mr Speaker, it was Government that asked for the COVID funds to be audited, and I can assure this House that nothing dishonourable was done with the COVID funds. The responses from the Ministers for Health and Finance, on January 23 and 25, 2023, respectively, have sufficiently laid to rest the queries from the Auditor General's report, and I believe any objective scrutiny of these statements from the Health and Finance Ministries would justify this conclusion. P31

We provided five hundred and eighteen million cedis (GH¢518 million) of grants and loans to micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) through the NBSSI, now the Ghana Enterprise Agency, in which three hundred and two thousand, five hundred and fifteen (302,515) enterprises benefitted, of which sixty percent (60%) were women-owned. These were MSMEs that were in distress as a result of the pandemic. For some traders, the receipt of one thousand cedis (GH¢1,000) made the difference between the ruin of the household and survival. P32

In addition, fifty-eight thousand and forty-one (58,041) health workers were employed to supplement the existing health sector workforce. Subsequently, all of them have been absorbed as permanent workers in the health sector. Frontline health workers were also granted fifty percent (50%) tax relief for the period. Was that something to regret? We should be forever grateful for the work that so many people did to keep all of us safe. All households enjoyed free water supply and huge discounts on electricity bills, because access to water was a necessity to ensure people adhered to hygiene practices, and access to electricity was important as everybody was encouraged to stay at home. It also provided an economic cushion to protect lives and livelihoods at a time of difficulty. Today, the government support for utility bills is being projected by some as a waste or to use that word, so beloved of some commentators, profligate. P33

Mr Speaker, the government took a deliberate decision to try and keep the inevitable disruptions across all our lives down to a minimum in the education sector, by opening schools and education institutions as soon as it was made safe to do so. It was an expensive undertaking and not universally popular. But faced with the prospect of a whole generation of our children losing irreplaceable years of education, and the real likelihood of many of them dropping out of school forever, we took the brave decision to open the institutions. Even then, it is worth pointing out that the school year has not fully returned to the predictable pre-covid calendar. After the event, some might be tempted to forget the volumes of sanitizer and other logistics it took to keep the schools open and safe, in much the same way as some might now choose to forget the vitriol that came from some who should have known better, threatening hell and damnation when, according to them, the children start dying in the schools. Mercifully, we did not lose a single child to COVID in school. I would like to suggest that, with the best will in the world, Mr Speaker, no

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auditor can put a figure on the cost of keeping the children in school safely during that crisis, nor the continuing cost of the effect of the pandemic on our young people; not the financial cost, not the emotional cost, and certainly not the social cost. But we must thank the Almighty that we have survived to repair the damage, and begin to rebuild our economy. P34

Beyond the use of COVID funds, there are legitimate questions being asked about how the country's debt situation got where it is. P35

Mr Speaker, let me state emphatically that we have not been reckless in borrowing and in spending. It is worth noting that the debts we are servicing were not only contracted during the period of this administration. P36

Mr Speaker, we have spent money on things that are urgent, to build roads and bridges and schools, to train our young people and equip them to face a competitive world. Considering the amount of work that still needs to be done on the state of our roads, the bridges that have to be built, considering the number of classrooms that need to be built, the furniture and equipment needs at all stages of education, considering the number of children who should be in school and are not, considering the number of towns and villages that still do not have access to potable water, I daresay no one can suggest we have over borrowed or spent recklessly. P37

Yes, I have been in a hurry to get things done, and this includes massive developments in agriculture, education, health, irrigation, roads, rails, ports, airports, sea defence, digitisation, social protection programmes, industrialisation and tourism. We can be justifiably proud of the many things we have managed to do in the past six (6) years. As I go around the country, I hear the pleas for roads, schools, hospitals, and, as the rainy season comes, I wish, as every other Ghanaian does, that we would have built more drains than we have. And I wish we had the resources to do more. P38

But, Mr Speaker, I am proud of the amount of work that we have done, especially in the road sector. Roads constitute the largest number of questions asked in this House by Members of Parliament; a large amount of the monies we borrow are for road construction. Shall we dare stop constructing roads? P39

Mr Speaker, I would like to state categorically that this Government has built more roads than any government in the history of the 4th Republic, and Mr. Speaker, the details of all these roads are attached in the annex to this Message. I have done so because, last year, when I made a similar pronouncement, I was met with howls and gasps of incredulity from the Minority benches, and so I thought it appropriate, this time, to present it as an annex to the Statement, which will be part of Hansard. P40

Beyond the construction of roads, Mr Speaker, this NPP administration has:

- implemented successfully a National Identification System with the Ghanacard;
- constructed more railways than any other government in the Fourth Republic;
- established the Zongo Development Fund to address the needs of Zongo and inner-city communities; and under their auspices, we have constructed more infrastructure in the Zongo Communities than any other government in the Fourth Republic;
- constructed more NCA licensed fibre optic cable than any other government in the fourth republic (93% of total);
- increased the proportion of the population with access to toilet facilities from 33% to 59%;
- increased the number of public libraries from 61 from independence until 2017 to 115 in 2022;
- provided more equipment (vehicles, ammunition, etc) to security services than any other government in the Fourth Republic;
- we have successfully implemented the digital address system;
- improved significantly the financing of governance and anti-corruption MDAs like the Ministry of Justice and Office of the Attorney General, NCCE, CHRAJ, EOCO etc.;
- implemented One District, One Factory Initiative. In four years, 106 companies are in operation under 1D1F. 148 factories under construction. This is the largest expansion of that sector since independence;
- constructed more fish landing sites than any other government in the Fourth Republic;
- established Africa's first national scale electronic pharmacy platform;
- provided free Wifi to 700 senior high schools, the 46 Colleges of Education, 260 district education offices, and an initial successful pilot of 13 public universities;
- introduced drones in the delivery of critical medicine, vaccines and blood to people in remote parts of the country and today, Ghana has the largest medical drone delivery service in the world with six Zipline Distribution Centres in Omenako, Mpanya, Vobsi, Sefwi Wiawso, Kete Krachi and Anum; and
- overseen an improvement in revenue collection, with the introduction of an e-VAT and e-Invoicing System. For example, figures from nineteen (19) taxpaying companies onboarded onto the e-Vat system revealed total recorded monthly sales increasing from two hundred and twenty-two million cedis (GH¢222 million) in November 2021 to seven hundred and twenty million cedis (GH¢720 million) in November 2022. Again, in December 2021, total monthly sales of two hundred and eighty-four million cedis (GH¢284 million) also saw a huge increase to one billion cedis (GH¢1 billion) in December 2022. P41

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Indeed, the evidence of how state funds have been used to improve our society is all over the country. No district or constituency has been left out. And I believe there are many Ghanaians who will vehemently disagree when some say there is nothing to show for all the funds that have been at my government's disposal. P42

Mr Speaker, I would like, at this stage, to brief the House on how the talks with the International Monetary Fund have been going since the announcement on July 1, 2022 of our intention to engage the IMF for a funded Programme. P43

Mr Speaker, having reached the Staff Level Agreement on December 12, 2022, after five months of intense negotiations, and completion of most of the prior actions required under the Agreement, we are on course for the IMF Staff to present to the IMF Executive Board Ghana's Programme request for a three billion dollar (US\$3 billion) Extended Credit Facility by the end of the month. P44

Mr Speaker, the three-year IMF Programme, anchored on Government's Post COVID-19 Programme for Economic Growth (PC-PEG), aims at restoring macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability, whilst protecting the vulnerable. It is a strong reform programme, which relies on frontloaded fiscal measures to increase domestic resource mobilisation and streamline public expenditures to support inclusive growth and enhance social protection. P45

Mr Speaker, I thank the House for its support throughout this process, including the passage of key revenue laws. However, a few more of these measures, namely the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, Excise Duty and Excise Tax Stamp (Amendment) Bills, as well as the Growth and Sustainability Levy Bill, are outstanding and need the urgent attention of the House and passage to complete the prior actions. This will put us in readiness for our presentation to the Fund Board, and, more importantly, bolster our domestic revenue mobilisation efforts. P46

Mr Speaker, it is clear that, given the extent of the fiscal and debt sustainability issue we are addressing, fiscal adjustment and structural reforms are not sufficient for the restoration of debt sustainability. A critical component of the measures we are implementing to address the current economic crisis is the debt operation, involving both domestic debt and external debt. The debt operation is aimed at returning the country to debt sustainable path by 2028, by reducing the debt-to-GDP ratio on a general classification basis and, in present value terms, from 103% in 2022 to 55% by 2028; and reducing the external debt service-to-revenue ratio from 29% in 2022 to 18% by 2028. P47

Mr Speaker, in order to achieve these goals, the decision was taken to execute a Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP), in addition to fiscal adjustment, external debt operation and structural reforms. P48

The participation rate of 85%, representing tendered bonds of GH¢83 billion out of the total eligible bonds of GH¢97,749,624,691, constitutes significant success for the DDE Programme. The GH¢83 billion bonds that were successfully tendered, also, represent 64% of the outstanding domestic debt stock of GH¢130 billion at the end of December 2022, as pension funds have been expressly exempted from the DDEP. P49

I want to take this opportunity to thank organised labour, pensioners, pension fund managers, the Ghana Association of Banks (GAB), Ghana Securities Industry Association (GSIA), Ghana Insurers Association (GIA), the Individual Bond Holders and Retirees Forum, and all others who have contributed to make the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme a success. P50

Mr. Speaker, I know it has been said over and over again in the past few weeks, but the voluntary nature of the DDE Programme bears repeating, as is the fact that the Government is committed to honouring all coupon payments and maturities in respect of both old bonds and the new bonds in line with Government fiscal commitments. P51

Mr. Speaker, we are also making progress on the external debt negotiations since the Government announced an external debt service suspension on 19th December 2022 for certain categories of external debt, to ensure an orderly restructuring. This suspension is an interim emergency measure toward a comprehensive external debt operation which will contribute to the restoration of our debt sustainability in line with our request for a debt treatment under the G20 Common Framework. I want to express our appreciation to the members of the Paris Club and to the Peoples' Republic of China for the co-operation they have so far exhibited to us in attempting to reach an agreement, and in their attempt to establish an Official Credit Committee. We look forward to their fast-tracking the needed financing assurances for IMF approval. We are confident that, with their co-operation, we will reach our March deadline for going to the Fund. P52

Mr. Speaker, we remain resolute in our vision to restore macroeconomic stability and promote inclusive growth. P53

Mr Speaker, Government recognises that sustained growth must be deliberate, especially in a global landscape marked by forces of technology, trade, and intense competition. It requires a combination of leadership, social cohesion, and deep investments in core capabilities of people, firms, and institutions to harness our opportunities. This is why together with our private sector counterparts, we are anchoring Ghana's medium-term growth drivers on competitiveness, integration, adaptation and digital innovation, all aimed at raising per capita GDP from the current two thousand, five hundred dollars (US\$2,500) to four thousand, five hundred dollars (US\$4,500) (aligning with the Ghana Beyond Aid Charter) by 2030. P54

Mr Speaker, concluding the arrangements with the Fund will not restore our fortunes overnight, but it will set us on the road to recovery. With fiscal discipline, we will regain the trust and confidence of our business partners and the investor community, which will give us space to continue our productive plans and policies. P55

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However, in addition to our engagement with the Fund, we are also seeking and implementing some original and innovative ideas to try to solve our problems. For example, the Gold Purchase Programme by the Bank of Ghana and the Gold for Oil Policy are creative uses of our resources, which are already bearing fruit. These policies are aimed at achieving two results that are critical to the health of our economy. Firstly, they will help us preserve foreign exchange, especially the US dollar, and secondly, they will enable us to stabilise the price of oil products such as petrol and diesel on the domestic market. We have already seen some success on both fronts with the price of US dollars and petroleum products falling since we announced the policy and began to implement it. P56

The average price of petrol at the pump, which had risen to GH¢20 a litre, in the middle of December 2022, is now GH¢13.80 a litre. The price of diesel had risen to more than GH¢23.70 a litre and is now selling on average at GH¢13.80 a litre, which is a reduction of almost GH¢10 a litre. We expect this trend of falling fuel prices to reflect soon in our daily lives since transport fares affect the price of everything. I hope the trend of prices going up and coming down becomes a regular feature of our retail economy as is being demonstrated in the fuel prices. Because, as we all know, prices, especially of petroleum products, used only to go up in our country. P57

I do worry about the extraordinary expenditure on security at our borders but we do not have a choice but to spend resources to keep our borders safe. We dare not compromise on the safety and security of our nation, and my first responsibility as your Commander-In-Chief is to keep all of us safe. The foundation for all development is the safety and security of our nation and its people. P58

The reality of the state of affairs in our neighbourhood demands that the government goes to great lengths to ensure the security, safety and stability of our nation. The threats of terrorism and violent extremism surrounding us require that we pay maximum attention to protecting our borders, and working in collaboration with our neighbours to keep our country and the Region safe. This is the prime motive for the Accra Initiative, which is already yielding results. P59

Mr. Speaker, I am able to cite here some of the equipment we have provided the military to help them protect us all. Allow me to list a few. The Army has received 104 armoured personnel carriers; seventy (70) utility troop carrying vehicles; twenty (20) armoured vehicles; 85 assorted Toyota vehicles; 50 Anka buses; 40 Jeep J8 vehicles; some Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) equipment; large quantities of communication/surveillance equipment; varying quantities of weapons and four un-manned aerial vehicle systems; and the Ghana Navy has taken delivery of four offshore security vessels and four Zodiac boats. P60

We have also continued the process of upgrading the housing needs of the security services. The Barracks Regeneration Project Phases I and II, the Military Housing Project Phases I and II and the Ghana Military Academy Infrastructure project are expected to be completed and handed over by the end of May this year. P61

Mr Speaker, we continue to pay attention to the Police Service. We can now see more of the police on our streets in the urban areas. Ever so gradually, driving on our roads is becoming more orderly. I note that even motorbike riders now stop at traffic lights. Things are improving. Five hundred and four (504) housing units, comprising 72; one bedroom and 432 self-contained units have been completed for the Police Service. Recently, I delivered 100 pickups, 600 motorbikes and six armoured personnel carriers to the Police Service to boost operational capacity. For the first time in our nation's history, the Police Service has dedicated helicopters to help with their operations. P62

Mr Speaker, I must share some good news with the House. I am particularly proud of the dramatic intervention government has made to tackle the long-lasting and utterly disgraceful problem of dilapidated and inadequate number of courts in our country. Many of the courts have not been fit for purpose, and do not provide suitable facilities for the efficient administration of justice. The inadequacy means that people have to travel long distances to gain access to courts. As someone who for years earned my living as a practising lawyer, I have first-hand experience of the unacceptable state of courthouses around the country and I am glad to inform the House that we are resolving this problem. Through the Ministry of Local Government and the District Assembly Common Fund, Government has embarked on the construction of 120 courthouses with accompanying accommodations for judges across the country. Indeed, 60 have been completed, and the others are at various stages of completion. For the first time ever, we have the happy situation of purpose-built courthouses with accommodations that are waiting for judges to be appointed to put them to use. P63

Six new Regional High Courts, fitted with judges' residences, are also being constructed in the new regions, i.e., Ahafo, Bono East, North East, Oti, Savannah and Western North. Three of the courts, that is those in North East, Oti, and Savannah have been completed and commissioned. Those in Ahafo, Bono East and Western North Regions will be completed by April. P64

Mr Speaker, I had the pleasant duty on October 17, 2022, to commission a new, modern Court of Appeal complex in Kumasi, together with 20 townhouses and a guesthouse to serve as permanent residences for Court of Appeal Judges based in Kumasi, who are mandated to handle appeals from the northern part of the country. The Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, who generously gave the land, was present at the ceremony. It is a truly magnificent site and I recommend it to Honourable Members who go to Kumasi to pay a visit and see it for themselves. P65

In addition, 210 vehicles were, earlier in 2022, distributed to all judges in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court and Lower Courts. P66

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Mr Speaker, it is a well-known fact that, in this administration, TVET and STEM feature frequently in all conversations about education. Technical and vocational education is being given the place of honour they deserve. Since the re-alignment and introduction of free TVET, enrolment in TVET schools have increased from 13,000 in 2021 to 47,000, and all the indications are that this is a trend that will continue. In 2022, the TVET service recruited 3,400 staff, the highest in the history of TVET in Ghana, to accommodate this development. P67

I was told last week about one young person who was placed in Achimota School in the current school placement exercise and has turned it down to go to a STEM school. I think we are making progress. The strides we are making in education are already changing lives and changing the narrative. As of this year, nearly two million young people have benefitted from the free SHS policy. Predictions that the policy would lead to a lowering of standards proved wide of the mark. On the contrary, the results under the free SHS have shown a systematic improvement and as a result, 2 million young people have either found a pathway to further education, training, apprenticeships or employment because of the free SHS policy. P68

I am proud of the additional infrastructure in education, especially the provision of ultra-modern classroom blocks for several schools, which are equipped with laboratories, ICT centres and libraries; the establishment of ten 10 STEM centres across the country including one in Accra to aid the study of engineering and robotics. Construction has started at the University of Agricultural Science in Bunso in the Eastern Region. P69

Mr Speaker, apart from the enhancement of revenue and the judicious use of resources, we are all agreed that we need to do something about our huge import bill. Last year, I set up a five-member ad hoc Cabinet committee to work on a policy to enhance domestic production and export development with a four-fold strategy to: (1) reduce the country's import bill in the short-, medium- and long-term; (2) enhance domestic productive capacity in selected products; (3) generate widespread employment opportunities; and (4) diversify and expand our export capacity to Africa and beyond, especially through the vehicle of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). P70

In 2021, Ghana's total import bill was put at US\$13.7 billion, according to GRA/ICUMS. On the evidence of existing local productive capacity, we have identified a list of twenty (20) priority products in the categories of primary agricultural products, processed foods, and manufactured goods, where we can confidently enhance domestic production. Amongst these are rice, fish, poultry, fruit juice, sugar, tomatoes, vegetable oils, oil palm, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, soaps and detergents, insulated wire, ceramic products, corrugated paper and paper board, cement/clinker, and motor vehicles. P71

The report on the implementation modalities to enhance domestic productive capacity in these products has been prepared and, once confirmed, the new Minister for Trade & Industry will roll out urgently a series of initiatives to implement the policy. P72

I want, at this stage, to make mention of one particular programme that has been introduced by the Government to address the needs of the youth and women, the YouStart programme. This programme seeks to support young entrepreneurs to gain access to capital, market, training and technical skills, compliance and quality assurance support and business development support services that will enable them start, build and grow their own businesses. P73

Mr. Speaker, the YouStart programme was successfully piloted in 2022 with seventy (70) youth-led businesses benefiting from the initial GH¢1.98 million. Subsequently, a total of two hundred and eighty-eight thousand, eight hundred (288,800) applications have been received and are being processed by the Ghana Enterprise Agency for full operation. P74

Mr. Speaker, Government remains committed to infrastructure development. Working with the private sector, we continue to explore the use of Public-Private Partnership arrangements as a financing alternative to the delivery of critical public infrastructure, such as the Accra-Tema Motorway Extensions, Accra-Takoradi Motorway, and Sogakope-Lome Transboundary Water Supply Projects. P75

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the seven hundred- and fifty-million-dollar (\$750 million) AFRExim Bank facility, which has been secured, will make it possible for us to construct many other roads and interchanges, including the long-awaited four-tier Suame Interchange. P76

Mr. Speaker, we have now reached the point where we feel the impact of technology as an irreversible way of life. We have digitised many processes; the Ghana Card has become a one-stop shop for Ghanaian identity and its usages. P77

We are fully convinced that our embrace of, and investment in information technology and the digital infrastructure will help us to redefine our traditional concepts of time, space, speed and nature of conducting business within our society, economy and culture. Information technology helps all segments of society to be integrated and transformed through connectivity, in facilitating the production, distribution, and consumption of information within the whole economy and society. P78

We have integrated many processes within the digital environment, and for this we have to recognise the efforts of many component parts of the government, such as the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation, the National Identification Authority, and especially the Vice President, Dr. Alhaji Mahamudu Bawumia, who, I understand, has been nicknamed E-Bawumia. Our need for technological reinforcement within all our structures and spaces is unending, and we will continue to push the frontiers of our engagement with the technologies of information, economic development and human transformation. P79

We must be cheered by the improvements being made in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) to make access easier. The scheme is currently one of the better-digitalised institutions, and I hope they get the public support that they need. I note, in



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particular, with satisfaction, that they have developed a self-enrolment mobile application (My NHIS App) that allows Ghana Card holders to self-enrol in the scheme and this application enables registration and renewal for oneself and others by linking NHIS cards to Ghana cards. In 2022, over 5 million members' data was linked to their Ghana card to enable them to access healthcare using the card. P80

The National Health Insurance Authority has also improved its claims management processes with an emphasis on e-claims and paperless systems at all four Claims Processing Centres. In the year under review, electronic claims processing was about seventy per cent (70%) of all claims submissions. As of 31st December 2022, the scheme paid a total claim of GH¢1.014 billion to health service providers. P81

Mr Speaker, our drone delivery service is firmly established and Ghana now has six centres for Zipline drone services, making Ghana the largest aerial logistics distribution network in the world. Zipline, through the national-scale drone delivery services, has delivered some 14.8 million (14,809,463) units of life-saving medicals, vaccines, and blood products to health facilities in Ghana by the end of 2022. Childhood vaccines top the list with the delivery of 8.3 million doses, followed by 2.05 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. P82

Mr. Speaker, I must say, however, that the current shortage of some childhood vaccines in the country has concerned me greatly. This shortage, if prolonged, will affect negatively Ghana's Childhood Immunisation Programme, which has been recognised as one of the most successful in the world. The WHO has only recently expressed worry about a steady decline in measles vaccination coverage globally, because of the concentration on the fight against COVID-19. P83

In accordance with our desire not to become part of this global trend, Government has taken steps to ensure that stocks of these vaccines are procured and supplied, as a matter of emergency. The Ghana Health Service has developed an elaborate programme to catch up on children who have missed their vaccinations immediately stocks arrive. P84

Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage all parents and caregivers to ensure that eligible children are vaccinated, once this programme begins. No child should be denied access to vaccination. Mercifully, so far, not a single child has died as a result of the outbreak. P85

This House has already passed into law the National Vaccine Institute Bill, which is yet to be brought for my assent. In the near future, this Institute will ensure that, no matter what happens to the global vaccine supply chain, we can produce our own vaccines locally. P86

Mr. Speaker, government continues to prioritise agriculture as one of the driving forces for economic transformation. The experiences and lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict justify sufficiently our increased investment in the agricultural sector. Indeed, the sector recorded significant successes, with an average growth rate of 6.28% from 2017 to 2021. The consistent growth over the period has translated into improved food security, job opportunities along agricultural value chains and availability of raw materials for industry. P87

To address the vexed issue of post-harvest losses, we have constructed some 65 warehouses, with the remaining 15 at the advanced stages of completion. This intervention is adding some 80,000 metric tonnes to the national grain storage capacity. US\$29.9 million worth of machinery and equipment have been procured from Brazil to boost mechanisation. Government will, this year, commence preparatory works for establishing a Tractor and Backhoe Loader Assembly Plant in the Ashanti Region, and continue the capacity building of operators to ensure effective management and prolong the lifespan of agricultural machinery. P88

Mr Speaker, the impact of climate change and variability on global agricultural activities is a call to us, and, indeed, all countries, to adopt appropriate technologies and other innovative practices for sustainable agriculture and resilience against food insecurity. Government's response has been to continue to invest in irrigation infrastructure on both large and small scales across the country. In 2022, government completed the rehabilitation and modernisation of large-scale irrigation schemes at Tono, Kpong and Kpong Left Bank projects. The three schemes are expected to provide 6,766 hectares of irrigable land for all-year-round crop production. Phases I and II of the Tamne Irrigation Project have also been completed, with Phase III of the project at 57% completion. P89

Mr Speaker, we are now at the most difficult stage of electricity provision around the country. The parts that are left are the very difficult-to-access areas. The National Electricity Access rate increased from 79.3% in 2016 to 88.54% in 2022, making us among the top six in Africa, and we are still expecting to achieve a 90% universal electricity access rate by 2024. To reduce transmission system losses and voltage fluctuations and to improve the overall quality of the power supply, old lines are being replaced on the Western, Eastern, Coastal and Middle corridors. It is worth noting that three new sub-stations have been commissioned between 2021 and 2022 thereby improving reliability and efficiency. P90

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the Electricity Company of Ghana, has since the last quarter of 2022, embarked on an aggressive digital transformation programme. P91

In the first phase of this programme, set to be completed by end of April 2023, the focus is on creating a cashless and efficient payment system. I am pleased to announce that, on 1st March 2023, all ECG District Offices became cashless. This is a major achievement by all standards. Since the start of this transformational programme, we have so far seen a 25% increase in monthly revenues. The second phase of the programme will see the digitisation of postpaid bills and the digital tagging of all metres. P92

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In our estimation, these initiatives should increase the monthly revenues of ECG by some 40% before the end of this year. I firmly believe that the initiatives, which have been so boldly rolled out by ECG, will make revenue leakage a thing of the past, and address consumer pain points in their interactions with ECG. P93

Mr Speaker, we continue the fight against galamsey with the support of the security agencies, in the short term. However, we are determined to promote responsible small-scale mining through Community Mining Schemes. So far, 16 of these Schemes have been commissioned, with three more to be commissioned by the end of this year. All these Schemes are supported with Gold Katchas, pieces of equipment designed to help small-scale miners extract gold from the ore without the use of mercury. P94

In 2021, I launched the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programme. The Programme employs several youth in the production of seedlings and reclamation of degraded mined lands. Currently, reclamation is ongoing over one thousand hectares (1,000ha) of degraded lands in Ashanti, Eastern and Western North Regions. P95

Mr. Speaker, on the international front, I should state that having gained a seat as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the years 2022 and 2023, Ghana, as one of three Non-Permanent African Members, is working vigorously to push the Africa agenda, which includes the fight against terrorism, and the reform of the UN Security Council. I am pleased to state that good progress is being made on the reform of the UN Security Council. A US President, for the first time, in the person of President Joe Biden, and the French President, Emmanuel Macron, have both embraced the Reform process. It is our hope that the leaders of the three other P5 Members of the Security Council will soon do the same, and help bring about this much needed reform that will bring greater effectiveness to the work of the United Nations and the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. P96

We continue to be active members of the African Union and ECOWAS, and support strongly measures both bodies have taken against unconstitutional changes in government in our Region. We are working with our partners in the Region to strengthen regional co-operation in the fight against the terrorist menace in West Africa, hence our commitment to the Accra Initiative. P97

Mr Speaker, our decision to prioritise tourism, as a key policy for economic diversification, job creation and growth, is clearly paying off. The World Economic Forum Report 2021 Travel Index ranks Ghana as the number one tourism destination in West Africa. The potential contribution of tourism and the arts to GDP is, therefore, one that we must nurture and emphasise. P98

Both domestic and international tourism are rebounding significantly from the severely disruptive impact of COVID on the travel and tour industry. International arrivals nearly trebled last year, from a low of three hundred and fifty-five thousand, one hundred and eight (355,108) in 2020, to over nine hundred and fifteen thousand (915,000). Domestic visits to tourist sites are also up by over 55.7% during the period. All these have been made possible by deliberate marketing initiatives and upgrades of tourist infrastructure by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and its Agency, the Ghana Tourism Authority. P 99

“Beyond The Return” initiative, which I launched in 2019 as a sequel to the Year of Return, has re-ignited excitement about Ghana as the hub and a Mecca for the Global pan-African, a home every person of African descent must visit at least once in their lifetime. A few days ago, at a historic ceremony in Washington DC, we conferred Ghanaian citizenship on Mother Viola Fletcher (108 years) and her brother Uncle Red (102 years), two of the only three living survivors of the Tulsa Massacre of 1921. In May this year, I will be chairing a Tourism Stakeholder Retreat on “Rethinking Tourism for National Development & Job Creation”. I have tasked the Ministry and its Agency, the Ghana Tourism Authority, to work on the modalities to bring together all the stakeholders within the industry. Over the next couple of years, my government will deepen even further our efforts to make tourism a strong primary source of growth for the economy. P100

Mr Speaker, Monday was 6th March, our Independence Day, and this year we had the main celebrations in the Volta Region. I made the decision to rotate the Independence Day anniversary celebrations in order to enhance the cohesion and unity of our nation, and to make it clear to all segments of our population that we are all part of the “One Ghana Project”. I am glad to inform the House that it was a happy and grand event, set against the breathtakingly beautiful background of the Adaklu mountains. P101

Mr. Speaker, sixty-six (66) years since our independence, Ghana has taken steady strides to becoming a more developed country. The Ghana of 1957 is not the Ghana of 2023. We have come a long way since the days of our six million population, with very few modern amenities for its people, to today's population of thirty-two million, with a growing stock of modern infrastructure, spanning drones to supply our medicines, to the Ghanacard which identifies each of us as proudly Ghanaian. As President, I have championed the innovation of policies and the execution of projects that have helped improve the quality of life of the Ghanaian people. And, God willing, I will continue on a path that brings the most benefit to the people of Ghana. P102

Things may be dire today, nonetheless, we must count our blessings. Our petrol stations have fuel, and we have been spared long, winding queues to fuel our vehicles. Our markets and shops are, by the Grace of God, well-stocked, and we have not been faced with the prospect of the rationing of basic necessities such as fruits and vegetables. Our children's schooling has not been interrupted. We have continued to provide Free SHS, Free TVET and pay teacher and nursing training allowances. Our electricity supply has been consistent, and we have been spared the hardship of Dumsor during such a trying time. Our country continues to be stable and at peace. P103

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Throughout history, there are many instances of nations going through periods where dark clouds create shadows that momentarily shield the yearned-for vision from sight. Such moments should not be ones in which despair takes over. Such moments call for strength of character, sense of purpose and an abiding commitment to the general good. P104

Fellow Ghanaians, let us believe in ourselves, and in our capacity to overcome the problems that are before us. This is a phase, and, with every fibre of my being, I am certain that this too shall pass. We have done it before, and we will do it again. P105

May God bless us all, and our homeland Ghana, and make her great and strong. P106

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your attention. P107



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