



Press Statement

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GHANA FEDERATION OF DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS UNHAPPY WITH THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ABOUT THE BLIND AND DEAF

The attention of the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations has been drawn to some recent statements made by the President, His excellency Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo, which has the potential to portray the blind and deaf people in a negative light. The President has been reported in sections of the Ghanaian media to have said at the New Patriotic Party's final rally ahead of the by-election in the Ayawaso West Wuogon Constituency that *"We came to fix Ghana, and in these two years, it is only those who are blind or deaf who are not aware that indeed we have done something"*. Indeed, this is about the second time in less than three months that a statement such as this has come from the president. In November last year, the president was also reported in various media to have said *"the things my opponents say sometimes make me wonder if they are blind or deaf. They rain insults on me for doing nothing"*.

The Federation wishes to remind the president and all well-meaning Ghanaians to refrain from such language which has a negative connotation for people with disabilities and therefore affect their emotional and psychological wellbeing. As a matter of fact, people with hearing and visual impairments do not need to see or hear, but can feel, experience and contribute to the developments taking place in our country because they affect us all.

As a Federation, we acknowledge the positive work of the government and the President for certain interventions made to promote and protect the rights

and welfare of persons with disabilities in Ghana. These include, increasing the District Assemblies' Common Fund for persons with disabilities from 2% to 3%, initiating an inclusive procurement policy that would promote the economic well-being of persons with disabilities and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Nation Builders Corps (NABCO) scheme to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities among other. The Federation is appreciative of the level of consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities in Ghana's development process.

However, the disability movement is not much pleased with the president's speech, as quoted above, which has the effect of presenting persons with disabilities especially the deaf and the blind in a negative light.

SIGNED

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