

Speech by Dr Prince Hamid Armah, Executive Director of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on 6th February, 2020, after picking nomination forms to contest the New Patriotic Party Primaries in Kwesimintsim Constituency

Fellow members, elders, sympathisers and the delegates of the great New Patriotic Party,

Invited guests,

Friends from the media,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to address you all here today. Let me begin by thanking you all for coming and for the warm welcome I have been given back to this community where I was born.

My earliest memories are of growing up here, guided by my parents, Philomena Hammond (popularly known as Auntie Naa) and the late Hamidu Yakubu (popularly known as Sighari). Together with my uncles and aunties and the close-knit community that we had here, they taught me the virtues of hard work, humility and generosity. In Kwesimintsim, we learned that it did not matter whether you were Christian or Muslim, Fante or Ahanta; it only mattered what was in your heart.

These lessons have stayed with me throughout my life. From my studies at St John's School, the University of Education, Winneba and all the way to the University of Aberdeen where I gained my doctorate degree, the values of Kwesimintsim were my ever faithful guide.

It was those values that led me to reject a comfortable future in the United Kingdom and to return to Ghana. I believed that Ghana needed me and others like me to also build a better nation. So I chose to serve Ghana. I placed my knowledge and my expertise at the disposal of my countrymen. I spent my energy making sure that the next generation of Ghanaians would have the same opportunities that children on other parts of the world took for granted. I chose public service.

Since becoming the Executive Director of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, I have become more convinced about the inherent virtue of the calling. Having been involved in high level policy discussions with both local and international partners, I understand more than ever before, the pressing need to have competent and knowledgeable people around the table when decisions are taken. And I am resolved that I must place my own humble talents at the disposal of this constituency and this country.

Ghana needs its very best to lead it now if it is to thrive. We need a new group of dedicated, exposed, innovative and above all patriotic leaders who can help us navigate towards a brave new future. Kwesimintsim and the Western Region must not be left behind. We must put our best foot forward and guided by competent and inspiring leadership, claim our place in the new Ghana that His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo's government is building.

To do this, we must all work together with common purpose towards a shared vision. It means that we must utilise all talents regardless of who they are, where they come from and what they believe. It means that we must demand our share of the national cake with one voice. It means that all opinions must be respected and consensus sought with relentless focus. And just as importantly, we must have a new, modern and progressive leadership to cap all these.

This leadership must be respond to the needs and voices of the grassroots. They must be willing and able to communicate with the party, the constituency and the nation with equal levels of comfort. They must be a persuasive advocate for the constituency and the party both in parliament and outside it. They must be connected to a social and professional network that can be harnessed for the good of the constituency. They must not be focussed on blame games but on

solutions; not on settling scores but on uniting the party. They must be willing to rely on the wise counsel of others, because no one person knows everything. In sum, the leader we have must embody the very best of Kwesimintsim, exemplify its excellence and personify its aspirations; a leader we can trust.

I am here to submit, in all humility, that I am ready, willing and able to be that leader. And that is why today, I have picked up the forms to contest the primaries of the New Patriotic Party with the ultimate intention of becoming the next Member of Parliament for Kwesimintsim, come January 2021.

I am running because Kwesimintsim deserves more competent and capable leadership. The surest indicator of progress in any initiative is the quality of leadership available. Good leadership will bring us together, unify and inspire us to reach for our common goals. I have done this before. As an assembly member, I worked to bring all sides around our shared aspirations, delivering on projects that had previously seemed. In the very contentious arena of curriculum reform, I am proud to say that we have been able to achieve all the milestones set for us and with all our stakeholders on board with us. I am running because I can do the job.

I am running because Kwesimintsim constituency needs a plan for economic growth that will provide jobs for its people, opportunities for budding entrepreneurs and improved social infrastructure. These are, at the bare minimum, the benefits of living in a free democratic society. This is why we queue for long hours in the sun and in rain to exercise our franchise. Looking around the constituency today, we see little of these benefits of democracy. As a private citizen, I have done the little I can to support our schools and police; our young people in search of skills and our entrepreneurs in need of small loans. I am running because with the weight of office, I can do more for this constituency that has done so much for me.

I am running because Kwesimintsim constituency needs the most compelling advocate it can get to make its case on both the national and international stages. In the frankly competitive pursuit of development, silence or a badly made case can mean that resources go to constituencies that make a more convincing pitch for them. This constituency cannot afford to be silent while others

get what we deserve. We must make use of the networks that our sons and daughters have built to procure funds, skills and infrastructure that will boost the quality of life in the community and bring opportunity and success to our hardworking young men and women. I am running because I believe my voice and network can be put to no better use than to make the case for our community.

I am running because we need to keep the government of Nana Akufo Addo and the New Patriotic Party in office for another term and beyond so that this constituency, this country can develop. Since coming into office, the NPP government has made several interventions that have seen our economy get back on track, access to health and education expanded and jobs created. This momentum must not be stalled. We must retain this government. And Kwesimintsim must play its part. A demoralised constituency party and an unpopular candidate can lose us critical votes that may affect the party in a closely fought election. I am running because we have to keep Nana Addo and the NPP in government and we can't afford mistakes.

To be certain, I would not be standing here before you if it was not absolutely necessary. I am a member of this party and I have been for ever. I observed some of the earliest party meetings in this constituency which were held at Obrisco, near my family home then. I have served this party as schools coordinator, as TESCON secretary, as constituency youth secretary and as member of the regional communications team. I have seen the party at its best and I can tell when things are not as they should be. Over the last couple of years, I have seen and felt the enthusiasm in us weaken; I have seen the divisions open up; I have heard voters in this constituency who say that unless we change course, we can no longer count on their support. This state of affairs cannot be anything but alarming to any true party member.

Before arriving at my decision to contest, I consulted with members and elders of our party, youth groups, traders and members of the community. I heard time and again that a change of course was badly needed. Today, I offer myself to lead this change. And I am appealing to all members of this party to join our growing movement to put hope and faith back into this party. Let us rise together as one and move Kwesimintsim forward. Let there be no one left behind. Let there be no spectators in this movement for the development of this constituency. Let us create a

new and progressive movement right here in Kwesimintsim. Let us work together to overcome the challenges that confront us. Let us collaborate in a search for solutions. Let us create for the next generation, hope, opportunity and a chance for greatness.

I am here because I am ready to serve. And I am convinced that together, we can achieve great things. We are in this together. And we are in it to win. And with the help of God, we will.

Long live Kwesimintsim

Long live the NPP

Long live Ghana

Thank you and may God bless you all.