

Remarks by Dr Prince Hamid Armah, Member of Parliament for Kwesimintsim And Vice Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education at the Handing Over and Freshers' Orientation Ceremony of the Accra Technical University Chapter of the Tertiary Students Confederacy (TESCON)

Prince Hamid Armah, PhD | 29th July 2021

Good evening.

I am very grateful for the invitation to join you this evening for this very important event. Thank you. A few years ago, I was in a position similar to yours. Back in 2004, I was the secretary at the University of Education, Winneba chapter of TESCON. I am glad to see that TESCON remains strong and the spirit that animated us in the relatively early years remains strong nearly two decades later.

Let me first congratulate the newly elected leaders on the assumption of office. I also commend the outgoing leaders for their year of service. It is my hope that the new leaders will remain true to the vision and mission of this organisation and leave it in an even stronger position than they find it.

It is important to remember that TESCON was founded at a time when the New Patriotic Party and its ideology were under threat. Our tradition had been out of power for over three decades. We had lost two elections in a row under the fourth republic. The National Democratic Congress government under the late President Rawlings was using every tool, including state power and largess to intimate and coerce members away from the tradition. Opposing the government took guts. And yet, a number of young people, took on the duty of mobilising to bring about the defeat of the NDC government as we approached the 2000 elections. It was a significant intervention that had a positive effect on the party's fortunes in the 2000 elections. Without ubiquitous media at the time, the outreach programmes that TESCON members undertook in the nooks and crannies of the country took our party's message where it needed to be taken. And on election day, TESCON members were instrumental in protecting the vote and securing the victory.

Since then, TESCON has continued to be an invaluable part of the party's set up, mobilising, spreading our message, providing feedback and working in various ways to keep the party's mission of winning elections and changing Ghana for the better on course. When the party needed to challenge the 2012 election result, TESCON members joined other volunteers to conduct a thorough audit of the elections. The result of these efforts was the compelling case that was presented in court. Even though the court decided differently, the Ghanaian people were told the truth and when 2016 came, they were ready to right the wrongs of 2012. In 2020, TESCON members stepped up again to preach the party's gospel, organise at every level and protect the vote, including in my own Kwesimintsim, where I worked closely with current and former TESCON members and leaders to achieve our compelling victory.

It must be noted that TESCON is also key as an avenue to create and nurture leaders of the party. Currently, in parliament and other arms of government are several TESCON alumni, including its first president, who is now MP for Bantama, Minister of Works and Housing and previously Deputy Chief of Staff, Honourable Francis Asenso-Boakye. I am also privileged and proud to be among former TESCON leaders serving the party and our nation. There can be no doubt that the TESCON's mission is indistinguishable from that of the NPP. Every opportunity that the NPP has is an opportunity for TESCON. Every challenge the NPP faces is one for TESCON as well. This means that TESCON and the party must act in concert and with common purpose. TESCON must speak with a clearer voice and participate vigorously in the debates about the party and its vision. As tertiary students, TESCON members are well placed to supply ideas and proposals to support the aims of the party. The purpose of the party now, as it was then, is to gain and maintain power and with that power, shape the nation into a haven of opportunity. The NPP believes that private enterprise matched with an innovative state, can bring benefits to everyone. In both its tenures under the fourth republic, the NPP has brought about key economic and social interventions that have improved lives and boosted incomes. This is a legacy we must be proud of and one that we must work extremely hard to extend.

This is why the theme of the event is important as well as timely. Our progress as a nation has been interrupted by the NDC's tenures in office. The gains under Kufour were ruined by the Mills-Mahama administrations. Now we have returned to do even better. If we succumb to the myth of the 8-year cycle, we will fail the Ghanaian people, ourselves and jeopardise our future as a nation. Between now and December 2024, all we do must be geared towards breaking the 8. It won't be easy but it can be done. For those of us in leadership, it means not getting invested prematurely in leadership battles, supporting the President to deliver on his mandate and to manage the change of baton maturely when the time comes to do it. For TESCON members, it means committing to this mission now and not in 2024. Elections are not only lost in election years. It can be seen that mere months after the election victory, opposition elements are keen to derail the government's agenda. So TESCON members must work extra work to protect and project the government's achievements and reassure our more restless colleagues who do not see what we are doing to fix the country.

Right now, the party is reorganising from the ground up. TESCON members must take a keen interest in the process, participate and where possible, take up positions themselves to make the party stronger. Whether as elected executives or observers, TESCON members must closely follow the process to elect the party's next batch of leaders – local, regional and national executives, parliamentary candidates and ultimately, the presidential candidate. You must help ensure that the party is represented by its best. And after the party elects its leaders, you must support who the party chooses, sell the party's message in every corner of the country, defend its elected candidates from attacks and support constituency parties in the 2024 campaign. The TESCON of today must show the same resolve and courage that its founders did. While the circumstances differ, we require the same amount of energy and commitment for the party to

succeed. TESCON's success will be the party's success and the party's success will be the success of the country. That is the scale of the task ahead of us and we must not fail. If we work together, we will succeed.

I wish you all very well in your studies and in your activism for the party. To the new leaders, especially, I wish you success in your tenure. I hope that we will have more opportunities to interact. If there is any way in which I can assist you, be assured that I will.

Thank you all once again for the opportunity to be here. God bless you and may he continue to bless our party and our nation.

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