

CONTRIBUTION BY HON. STANLEY SIMATAA, DEPUTY MINISTER OF
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY: 2017/18
BUDGET

1. Hon. Speaker, I take the floor to in advance, sound my unreserved support for the budget as tabled and to also make a few measured observations. One good measure of a responsive and effective leadership is its ability to detect and acknowledge inadequacies, and the commensurate agility to launch a compendium of corrective action to address such inadequacies.
2. The just tabled budget, whose revenue projections and spending priorities are firmly grounded in the tenets of last year's mid-term budget review, is a clear demonstration of three things: government's unbridled appetite, government's unparalleled robustness and government's unfettered fidelity in driving and managing the economic, social and developmental affairs of our country. It therefore suffices Hon. Speaker, to acknowledge the able stewardship of the Hon Minister of Finance and the Hon. Minister of Economic Planning and Director General of the National Planning Commission and their respective teams, for crafting a budget whose spending priorities are closely woven with the nation's developmental agenda!

3. The serene approach embraced in developing the budget, will greatly assist in calming the stormy economic clouds hovering over our nation and will undoubtedly deflate the vicarious pleasure of those who rejoice in the enormity of the challenges facing our nation.

4. Hon. Speaker, Hon. Members, examining the budget presented, should not be about how miniscule or how gluttonous the budget is, but should be more about determining the elasticity of the budget as an instrument placed at our disposal to advance the nation's hopes and aspirations as envisioned! A cursory perusal of the budget reveals an instrument where spending priorities in all sectors, have been carefully calibrated and expertly geared towards guaranteeing the sustainability of our developmental initiatives.

5. That notwithstanding, in order to derive maximum mileage out of this budget, three imperatives need to be addressed. These are: (a) the seemingly laggard projects implementation and monitoring (b) constant pilferage of allocated resources; and (c) the obsession we should cultivate as individuals, as institutions and as a nation for timely and quality deliverables that yield desired dividends on our national investments. To this end, I fully align myself with the observation made by the Hon. Minister when in his presentation of the budget, candidly remarked that "we

need to remove the snakes from the dancing floor”. Corruption and unabated pilferage severely haemorrhages the already constrained resource base of our country. Hopefully, the passing of the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Bills, will add to the existing legal arsenal designed to effectively close the gapping theater of misdeeds. To avoid missed opportunities and to curtail unnecessary opportunity costs, we must inject a sense of urgency in project/program implementation. We must adopt zero tolerance to administrative and management malfeasance! We must not show mercy to individuals or organizations both in the public and private sector who fail to deliver on time and to the desired standards. Unaccomplished programs, delayed/abandoned projects save those induced by the act of God as well as poor quality products or services, must be expunged from the public service repertoire of doing business.

6. In concluding, I have noted that laudable gains made in our poverty eradication initiatives, risk being eroded if we do not move swiftly to re-assert the seemingly dwindling culture of work in some of our communities. While the sanctity of government’s obligation to assist its citizens when need arises is affirmed, prospects of deliverance from poverty are better assured in communities endowed with resilience and uncontaminated work ethos! Nevertheless, members of our society who are better privileged should be conscious of the fact that a life lived in opulence while the

rest of society wallows in poverty, is often a life less revered! As such, we should be ready to extend a helping hand to fellow citizens in distress.

On that note, I once again affirm my support of the Appropriation Bill.

I THANK YOU!