

Parliament Is Committing Gender Atrocities -KT

By Maxwell Ofori

The Member of Parliament for Adansi-Asokwa, Kobina Tahir Hammond, has observed that the Legislature is committing what he described as gender atrocities.

According to him, the Speaker might have glossed over what he described as a fundamental concept and that other members should have drawn his attention to the error.

The fire-brand MP, cum Minister for Trade and Industry, raised the concern on the floor of the House on Wednesday, February 21, 2024.

He was commenting on the report of the Select Committee on the composition of the Appointments Committee to vet the President's new nominees.

The composition of the Appointments Committee and the other Committees has become necessary to conform with the new standing orders, which became effective on January 2, this year, and also deal with non-performing Committees.

In his usual commanding posture, KT Hammond argued strongly that the error of excluding women could not be overlooked. He had the support of both

sides of the house.

"Mr. Speaker, I think in the process of rushing through this thing [the composition of the Appointment Committee], we are committing gender atrocities. The House is committing gender atrocities," he opined.

He continued that, "We are talking about the age of the affirmative action; we are talking... and the horror of horrors I have been looking at this document; there is not a single woman in the names; they are all here (he mentions all the names) ... Somehow it may happen that the Speaker glossed over this fundamental concept and so the other members should have drawn his attention to it. Now everybody, Mr. Speaker, is shouting because they say this is Mr. Speaker's Committee. So, when there is an issue, don't we bring it to the attention of Mr. Speaker?"

MUNTAKA

The MP for Asawase, Muntaka Mohammed Mubarak, argued in support of the position of KT Hammond. He reminded the House that in the old Standing Orders, Committees were formed on the basis of regional balance, gender and other different opinions in the House.

Muntaka explained that in forming Committees, they decided to create the

three additions, just so that if the leadership on both sides failed to have balance in their selections, the additions would suffice.

He insisted that the provision in the standing order, with regards to the composition of the appointments committee should stand, adding that "but the additional members that are coming should necessarily be women."

The eighth parliament consists of 40 women and the former deputy minority leader, Muntaka Mubarak said it would not be right to present a permit committee of nine with no females.

FEMALE MP

The MP for Awutu Senya West constituency, Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui, sided with the submission. She said that composing the Appointment Committee with no females meant "a very great mistake that was going to be made in this House."

She recalled that the previous Appointments Committee had about four women from both sides, of which she was part, arguing that women deserved "much better representation," as well as the backbenchers.

In expressing further disappointment, Gizella said that for the first time in her professional life and in the House,

she was "beginning to feel that I am an afterthought. And I am sure the other 40 women are feeling the same in this."

SPEAKER

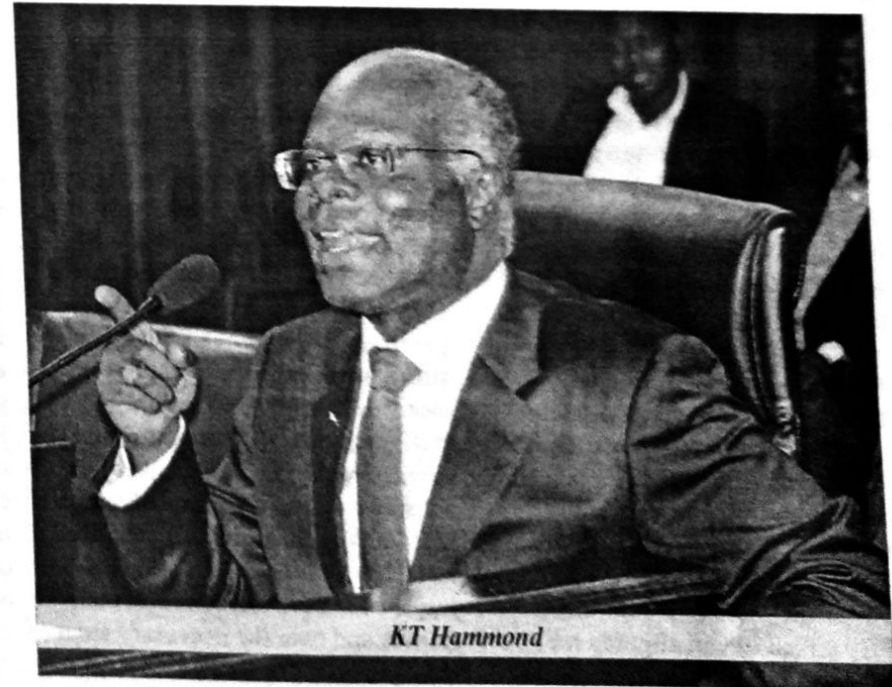
In his response, the Speaker of Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin agreed with the position espoused.

"And to what KT Hammond is submitting, the leadership should have considered the gender matter... that has not been done. And it is not too late in the

day," he remarked.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Majority Leader, Afenyo-Markin and the Minority Leader, Dr. Cassiel Ato Forson admitted there was an error in the composition.

Subsequently, Mahama Ayariga was substituted with Elizabeth Ofosu-Adjare for the minority side and the majority also replaced Johnson Kwaku Adu with Gifty Twum-Ampofo.



KT Hammond