

Madina MP proposes Private Member's Bill for maternal leave extension

BY NORMAN COOPER

THE Member of Parliament for Madina in the Greater Accra Region,

Francis-Xavier Sosu, is proposing a Private Member's Bill for the extension of maternity leave from three to four months, and also the introduction of paternal leave for

men.

The Bill which is being drafted at the Legislative Drafting Office of Parliament for subsequent submission to the Speaker after a thorough stakeholders' engagement to other maternity related issues that would also seek to abolish taxes on sanitary pads.

In all, 35 per cent tax made up of import duty and Valued Added Tax has been charged on sanitary pads.

Speaking to the *Ghanaian Times* in an exclusive interview in Accra yesterday, Mr Sosu said the new bill sought to amend the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) in order to extend the period of maternity leave for women from three months to four months with option of additional two weeks in the case of caesarean, stillbirth(s) and to introduce paid paternity for men for a minimum of period of seven days and maximum period

of four weeks with option for additional 14 days in the case of caesarean, stillbirth(s) or multiple delivery of spouse and also provide for related matters.

The Madina MP said his Private Members' bill would also ensure that men who were left behind during childbirth had the right to a parental leave in such difficult moments.

According to him, the proposed bill was to ensure that women were better protected against being laid off under the new rules.

"Workers have limited protection against being dismissed when they are on maternity leave, which is also not enough for the wellbeing of women and the newborn child. This protection will begin when a woman gives birth and continue until the child is four months old, with the possibility of men also taking a paternal leave between from seven days to four

weeks," the Madina MP said.

Unlike our "organic society," where they used to have support from immediate family members, the truth of the matter was that things were gradually changing.

He also said "fighting for just, free and fair societies do not just happen. You must have a determined number of people who were willing to sacrifice and keep pushing the limits until it happens."

He further disclosed that the proposed bill on parental leave was started on October 23, 2023 saying it had since received a lot of support from almost all the major stakeholders, including institutions that believe in gender parity, pointing out that there had been several amendments and proposals since it was initiated.



• Mr Francis-Xavier Sosu