



• President Akufo-Addo (middle) inspecting the guard of honour at Parliament yesterday Photo: Ebo Gorman

Govt committed to ending external debt restructuring process to stop economic challenges

BY KINGSLEY ASARE

THE President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, has said the government is committed to concluding the external debt restructuring process as soon as possible to enable the country move past its current economic challenges.

That, he also said, would enable the government to complete projects that had been constrained due to financial challenges.

He mentioned some of the project as Kumasi International Airport, which is 98 per cent complete, the Komfo Anokye

Teaching Hospital (KATH) Maternity Block in Kumasi, the Takoradi Interchange, the Obetsebi-Lamprey Interchange in Accra, the University of Environment and Sustainable Development Project at Bunso in the Eastern Region, phase two of the construction of roads in Tamale, and the construction of the eighty-four kilometre (84km) railway line between Tema and Akosombo.

President Akufo-Addo disclosed this during the State of the Nation Address (SONA) he delivered to Parliament in Accra yesterday.

The exercise was in line with the Article 67 of the 1992 Constitution, which enjoins the President

to do so to provide an overview of the country's current state at the beginning of each session of Parliament.

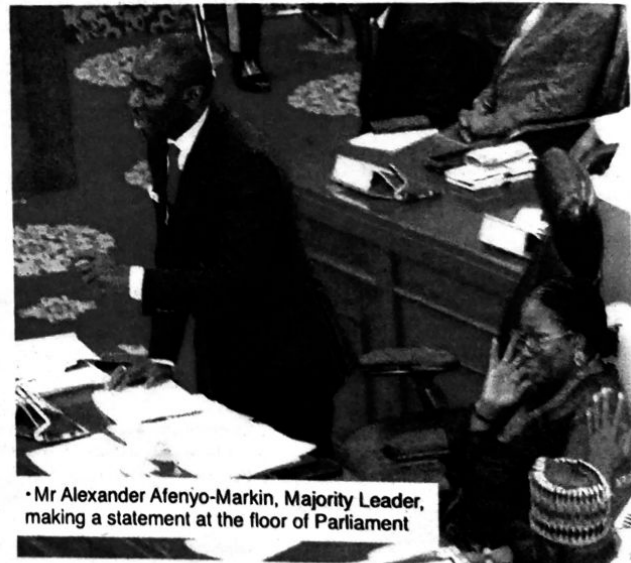
President Akufo-Addo said for the meantime, some of the priority projects which had been suspended had been transferred onto the government budget to ensure their completion.

He said the government opted for the International Monetary Fund programme because of the difficult situation the country was going through, and the government had to take a lot of unpleasant, but unavoidable measures, including tax measures to bring stability and confidence back to the economy.

The President said the decision to undertake a comprehensive debt restructuring of domestic and external debt was to ensure the country remained resolute as part of measures to restore macroeconomic stability and sustainable growth.

"The decision was not an easy one, considering the complex and diverse domestic debt landscape. We had to consider safeguarding the financial sector, preserving social and economic conditions, and protecting our domestic debt market. A year on, I am happy to inform you, Mr Speaker, that we have made significant progress," President Akufo-Addo stated.

He urged Parliament to consider and approve all the outstanding exemption applications as a matter of urgency to send positive signals to the business community. The



• Mr Alexander Afenyo-Markin, Majority Leader, making a statement at the floor of Parliament

exemptions law that you have passed provides for such exemptions under existing laws.

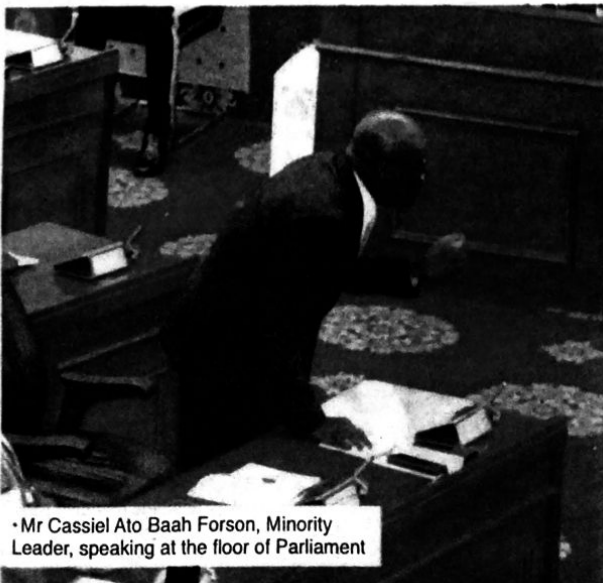
President Nana Akufo-Addo, highlighting on the performance of the economy, said the economy is on the path of strong growth.

He said all the macroeconomic indicators were currently pointing to the positive, and the economy was stronger than it was at the end of 2022.

"Indeed, the macro economy was much stronger at the end of 2023 than in 2022. Inflation, which peaked at 54.1 per cent in December 2022 has reduced to 23.5 per cent in January 2024. Real GDP Growth for the first three quarters of 2023 averaged 2.8 per cent, higher than the targeted

growth rate of 1.5 per cent for 2023. The cedi has been largely stable since February 2023, with a cumulative depreciation of nine per cent between February and December 2023," President Akufo-Addo stated.

He emphasised, "Gross International Reserves reflected a significant build-up of US\$5.9 billion, enough to cover 2.7 months of imports of goods and services. The current account turned positive at 1.4 per cent of GDP at the end of September 2023, from -2.1 per cent at the end of December 2022. Generally, the macroeconomic indicators are, once again, pointing in the right direction."



• Mr Cassiel Ato Baah Forson, Minority Leader, speaking at the floor of Parliament