

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**24<sup>th</sup> July, 2017**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **CSOs call for broad public consultation on OSP Bill**

On Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017, the Office of the Special Prosecutor Bill, 2017 was laid before Parliament. The Coalition of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) dedicated to fighting corruption in Ghana, considers this action by the government an important step in the process of establishing an independent and well functioning office to tackle the canker of corruption that has engulfed the country.

However, the Coalition is concerned with the manner in which the Bill was laid before Parliament: under a Certificate of Urgency, and the expectation that the Bill will be passed before Parliament rises in the first week of August 2017. While the Coalition shares the same desire with the President to see the Office established as soon as possible, that desire should not undermine the need for broad public consultation and thorough review of the Bill. Besides, a key objective of the Bill is to establish an independent office that will be able to deal with corruption involving political exposed persons and to avoid accusations of ‘witch hunting’. To accomplish that objective requires that opportunity is provided for groups and interested citizens to make inputs into the legislation. This will ensure the legitimacy of the office and needed public support.

Fortunately for Ghana, the creation of an office of special prosecutor is one subject matter that both the NDC and the NPP agree and ably captured in their 2016 manifestos. We also wish to commend the effort of the NDC led 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament for adopting the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP) in 2014 as well as the 7<sup>th</sup> Parliament led by the NPP for committing to implement the NACAP which provides for the establishment of an Independent Prosecution Authority under its Strategic Objective 4 (13). In this regard, the Coalition calls on the Speaker of Parliament and the Leadership of Parliament to reduce partisan bickering on an idea that both sides of Parliament have fully endorsed under the NACAP and focus on the serious challenge of tackling corruption in Ghana, an agenda that Ghanaians overwhelmingly support.

The Coalition is thus calling on the Chairman and Leadership of the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to positively exercise its discretion under Article 106 (13) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to allow for broad consultation and thorough review of the Office of the Special Prosecutor Bill, 2017. This should be the case even if the process continues during the parliamentary recess and the bill is passed during the next Meeting of Parliament. The Coalition will use the opportunity during the recess to engage with the Committee, Leadership of House and the general public to ensure a credible Bill is passed with the full support of the public.

God Bless Ghana!

SIGNED:

Nana Osei-Bonsu

Chairman

Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC)

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**Members of the Coalition of National CSOs**

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1. Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC)
  2. Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)
  3. Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII)
  4. Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)
  5. Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP)
  6. Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG)
  7. SEND-Ghana
  8. Penplusbytes
  9. Financial Accountability & Transparency-Accra (FAT-Africa)
  10. Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC)
  11. CSO Oil and Gas Platform
  12. Civic Forum Initiative (CFI)
  13. IMANI - Ghana
  14. Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)
  15. Legal Resources Centre (LRC)
  16. West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)
  17. ABANTU
  18. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)
  19. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)/ RTI Coalition
  20. Centre for Local Governance Advocacy (CLGA)
  21. Civil Society Platform on Ghana's IMF Programme
  22. Citizens Movement Against Corruption (CMaC)
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