

OPEN LETTER TO HIS EXCELLENCY, NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

His Excellency  
President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo  
Jubilee House  
ACCRA

Your Excellency,

May the grace and peace of Christ be with you!

I am writing to you today as a citizen of Ghana in connection with three statements that you have made as President of the Republic of Ghana concerning the issue of LGBTQI+. I find inconsistencies in them and I would be most grateful if you could clarify them for me.

On 6 December 2017, Jane Dutton of Aljazeera granted you an interview on the subject of homosexuality. In response to the question as to why homosexuality remained a criminal offence in Ghana, you were reported to have said the following:

“I don’t believe that in Ghana, so far a sufficiently strong coalition has emerged which is having that impact on public opinion that would say change it and let’s now have a new paradigm in Ghana. I grew up in England and I grew up in a time where homosexuality was banned there, and then suddenly the activities of individuals and groups, a certain awareness, a certain development grew stronger and it forced in changing [the] law. I believe that those are the same processes that will bring about changes in our situation. At the moment I don’t feel, I don’t see that in Ghana there is that strong current of opinion that is saying this is something that we need you to deal with”.

Your Excellency, in my view, you did not answer the question posed by the journalist. You should have admitted that homosexuality indeed remains a criminal offence in Ghana, making reference to Section 104 of the Ghanaian Criminal Code of 1960 which criminalises consensual same-sex sexual acts between persons of the same gender. You should have used the occasion to instruct the journalist about why homosexuality is not accepted in Ghana for religious, cultural and health reasons. Instead, you chose to describe the situation in the United Kingdom while you were growing up there when homosexuality was proscribed and at this time when it has been legalized. Your answer gives the impression that it is a matter of time before “the same processes” will “bring about changes in our situation” here in Ghana. Do you have any plans, as the President of Ghana and as a staunch Anglican, to deal with “the same processes” that have indeed already brought changes in our country as far as homosexuality is concerned?

In contrast to the scenario described above, I was very happy when Your Excellency in 2021 stated your position on same-sex marriage unambiguously. Speaking on Saturday, 27 February 2021, at the induction in Asante Mampong of the Archbishop of the Internal Province of Ghana in the Church of the Province of West Africa (CPWA), Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith, you indicated, in what could be described as your strongest position yet, that you were not considering the legalisation of same-sex marriages. Indeed, you gave the assurance, to the excitement of many at the ceremony (including my good self!), that it would not be under your presidency that

same-sex marriages would be legalised. You said emphatically and unequivocally, to much applause from the congregation, “I have said it before, and let me stress it again, that it will not be under the presidency of Nana Addo Dankwah Akufo-Addo that same-sex marriage will be legalised”.

In the light of what I may term “the Mampong Declaration”, I was baffled by what Your Excellency said when you had a press conference with the Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris. Responding to a question by a New York Times journalist in Accra on Monday, 27 March 2023 on the issue of LGBTQ+, Kamala Harris said that for her, the LGBTQ+ issue was one that bordered on human rights. She said,

“Let me be clear about where we stand. First of all, for the American press who are here, you know that a great deal of work in my career has been to address human rights issues, equality issues across the board including those related to the LGBT community. And I feel very strongly about the importance of supporting the freedom and supporting and fighting for equality among all people and that all people be treated equally. I will also say that this is an issue that we consider and I consider to be a human rights issue and that will not change”.

In your response, Your Excellency, you spoke about the draft bill on the “Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values 2021” that is before parliament. You said that the Bill had been modified to take into account the protection of human rights and the feelings of the population. You added that government had through the Attorney General made significant input into the legislation. You added, “My understanding ... is that substantial elements of the bill have already been modified as a result of the intervention of the attorney general”, a statement that has subsequently been debunked by the Member of Parliament for Ningo-Prampram Constituency, Hon. Samuel Nartey George. You also claimed that the Bill had been championed by “only a handful of MPs”. You added that even if the Bill was passed, it would still have to be ratified by you.

Mr. President, your statement that the Bill had been championed by “only a handful of MPs” is unfortunate. I would like you to realize that the “handful of MPs” spoke for over 80 percent of Ghanaians who abhor homosexuality. A survey conducted by the Africa Centre for International Law and Accounting (ACILA) revealed that over 80 per cent of Ghanaians are against the normalization of homosexuality in the country. According to the survey, “A significant number of Ghanaians (87%) are against allowing LGBTI persons holding public meetings to discuss LGBTI issues. Ninety-one per cent of Moslems are against allowing LGBTIs to hold public meetings, Christians (87%), Traditionalists (73.1) and Atheists (33.3)”. The same abhorrence for homosexuality holds true for our traditional rulers, the adherents of other World Religions like Eckankar, Hinduism, Hare Krshna, etc.

Your Excellency, you also added that if the Bill was passed, it still had to be ratified by you. That is correct, but I hope that you are not entertaining any idea of not approving it. If you do, you and your government will incur the wrath of at least 80 per cent of Ghanaians.

Mr. President, I also think that you missed a fine opportunity to correct Kamala Harris on her understanding of human rights. She said that the LGBTQ+ question is “an issue that we consider and I consider to be a human rights issue and that will not change”. You should have

let her know that in dealing with this Bill, the Parliament of Ghana is not violating any human rights but affirming what is consistent with natural law and order.

The question that necessarily arises is: What are human rights? By human rights we mean the universal, inviolable and inalienable rights that are due to the human person as a rational being possessing a free will. Human rights protect, or are intended to protect, the dignity of the human person against State and Society. Specific human rights include the right to life, personal liberty and due process of law; to freedom of thought, expression, religion, organization, and movement; to freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, religion, age, language, and sex (gender); to basic education; to employment; and to property.

Both heterosexuals and homosexuals are entitled to all the above-mentioned human rights. Nevertheless, the rights of homosexuals as persons *do not include the right of a man to marry a man or of a woman to marry a woman*. We need to stress that LGBTQ+ activities are not part of what are described as fundamental human rights and cannot be included in the list of human rights. Again, such an act goes against natural law and order. Every human right must be founded on fundamental needs to support human nature and survival. Same-sex marriages and activities rather work against this principle of human life and existence.

For us Christians, and that includes you, Your Excellency, same-sex marriage is morally wrong and goes against God's purpose for marriage. Homosexual activity is not a complementary union that is able to transmit life. In this connection, the European Court for Human Rights has ruled that same-sex "marriages" are not considered a human right, making it clear that homosexual partnerships do not in fact equal marriages between a man and a woman. The ruling, as I am sure you are aware of, Mr. President, was announced on 9 June 2016 in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France.

Your Excellency, please let Kamala Harris know that the "gospel" of homosexuality that she and others in America are preaching to us in Africa is not accepted by all Americans. Let her finish converting those in America who do not accept that "gospel" before she comes to preach it here.

What are the dangers of propagating this doctrine of same-sex marriage? If a man marrying a man can be justified by appealing to human rights, then the following can also be justified on the same basis: a man choosing to marry his daughter, a mother choosing to marry her son, a brother choosing to marry his sister, an uncle wanting to marry his niece, etc. What kind of a world shall we have? The admission of these sexual preferences, which cannot be said to be human rights, will bring intolerable damage to the culture and religious way of life of our people.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would also be most grateful if you could bring to the attention of the Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, that her understanding of human rights is inconsistent with the general understanding of human rights as indicated in the definition above. I would also be most grateful if you could state unequivocally what your position on LGBTQ+ is. I request this because many Ghanaians are not sure of your position on this matter, while they are clear about the position of some of your predecessors who have made their positions clear and unambiguous.

In the case of the late former President Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, I have not come across any definite public reference to what he said on the subject. With regard to President John Agyekum Kufuor, in his meeting in 2019 with members of the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, the former President urged the world to fight against same-sex marriages. He stated that no amount of argument could change the fact that without man and woman, there would be no human race. He said,

“No one was born gay, people just want to convince us to accept this blatant lie, but let us show them that we are real Africans, we cannot fight against nature and win. We will not conform to such disgraceful activities. Even in Europe, majority of the people do not encourage homosexuality. As long as they remain in the minority, let us keep pushing till they accept that LGBTQ+ is not right and persons who identify as such, rather need some kind of help instead of forcing it on Africans”.

Earlier, during his presidency, President John Agyekum Kufuor had opposed a gay conference that was supposed to be held in Ghana.

For President Prof. John Evans Atta Mills, his was an emphatic “No” statement on the subject of LGBTQ+. In an interaction with the media during his presidency, and in reaction to comments by then British Premier David Cameron that they may consider cutting aid to Ghana should the country not legalise gay rights, the late former president was forthright, ruling out any possibility of the legalisation of same. He added that Cameron was entitled to his opinions, stressing that laws must take into account the cultures and histories of a given people. He added, “I, as president of this nation, will never initiate or support any attempts to legalize homosexuality in Ghana”.

President John Dramani Mahama had similar comments as his predecessor and former boss, President Prof. John Evans Atta Mills. Speaking through his Information Minister at the time, Mahama Ayariga, the former president indicated that the act is criminal and punishable under the laws of Ghana.

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, my question is: what is your position on the question of LGBTQ+?

Your Excellency, I thank you for your attention and forbearance.

With sentiments of high esteem and prayerful best wishes.

Respectfully yours,



Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu  
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Mampong, 3 April 2023