

Speech by H.E. John Dramani Mahama President at the
Swearing in of newly appointed judges to the court of
appeal on Wednesday January 27, 2015 at 9.30am at the
Flagstaff House

WEDNESDAY 28 JANUARY 2015

Your ladyship the Chief Justice;
Our new justices of the Court of Appeal;
Members of the Bench & also the Bar;

Ladies and gentlemen;

I have the honour to swear-in these justices and to note that one of them Justice Suurbaareh was my mate in the University of Ghana.

So if a certain stroke of fate had not prevented me from doing law and I had taken the path of the bench I would probably be arriving on the bench at the Appeal Court at this time.

Let me welcome you to the seat of government, the Flagstaff House, and since we are meeting for the first time this year, let me take the opportunity to wish you a Happy New Year.

I must confess that, on entering the hall and seeing the Chief Justice and your good selves all dressed up and looking all-legalistic, my mind went to the precincts of the Supreme Court during the eight months of our petition hearings.

The live coverage of those proceedings was the first real insight into the works of the court for many Ghanaians. But thankfully, we are here this morning not for any hearing into any petition. We are here only for the swearing-in of more justices to help in the adjudication of cases, in our courts.

On behalf of the Government and People of Ghana, I congratulate My Lords for your elevation and appointment to the country's Court of Appeal.

As justices sitting on cases that will be coming before you after they

have been decided by lower courts, you have a huge responsibility in maintaining and preserving justice in our society.

I am told by one of my lawyer friends of a very popular story amongst you the judiciary about the reign of King Philip of Macedon, who was the father of Alexander the Great; he held supreme appellate authority over his people.

King Philip did not have a Privy Council so he advised himself. On one of his court days, a lady brought a petition for justice because she felt she had been unfairly found guilty.

King Philip, who had been drinking and was a bit inebriated while hearing the case, dismissed the petition.

Unhappy, the lady petitioner announced after the judgment that she will surely appeal against the judgment. King Philip then retorted asking her, whom will you appeal to?

In response, the lady said she will appeal to King Philip, but when he is sober. History has it, according to my friend, that the lady indeed re-submitted her petition and it succeeded this time.

What this means, My Lords, is that as justices of the Superior Courts, you are required to be sober not necessarily from inebriation but in terms of temperament and in terms of delivery of justice. Your first obligation is to dispense justice fairly to all persons no matter their ilk.

Ghana has become a leading destination for investment. One of the attractions for this is said to be the quality of our judicial system. Our judicial system is based on English jurisprudence, which is recognised to be one of the most established in the world.

While confidence in our judiciary is high, there are a few instances where foreign investors or business people have complained manipulation of our security and justice system by locals who have either defrauded them or have litigation with them.

This brings us especially to the area of gold scams and others where people are able to manipulate the system to be able to defraud the investors who come into our country. It is my hope that we will pay

attention to these in order that we continue to maintain Ghana as an attractive investment destination.

The executive arm of government has over the years provided its support to the judiciary in order to guarantee for all the rule of law and the right to fair hearing and justice.

We are not only going to continue providing physical infrastructure in the form of court buildings, but we will also expand on our e-Justice programme, which we have already rolled out.

From March this year, 2015, we will be injecting an additional \$5million into the e-Justice project and I am looking forward to the programme enhancing, expanding, and improving on our justice delivery system.

On my last drive through the Ministries, I saw the impressive sprouting of the new court building our late President cut sod for, and like the Chief Justice, I am looking forward very anxiously to its completion and commissioning for the use of our justices.

Let me once again congratulate you on your appointment and urge members of the bench to continue to work hard and to live beyond reproach to maintain the confidence of our people.

I thank you all, and God bless our homeland Ghana.