



## Stop the Puffing: It is Leadership, Stupid!

We imagined there was no point in responding further to a charge by a Ghanaweb commentator (“First Citizens Second Citizens, A Fair Game?,” Ato Dadzie, Ghanaweb, 6 Sep 08). But then, we read another shameful story from Swaziland where a few days ago yet another useless king, Mswati, celebrated his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary by riding around in one of 20 brand new imported BMWs and burning over \$10 million on a huge party, with Mugabe in attendance. This, even as thousands of Mswati’s own people would stand in line for handouts of food. It reminded us of Mr. Kufour and the huge sums of money being spent on non-productive assets including executive jets, imported gold chains and trinkets, and global junkets, etc, while hospitals in Ghana languish without equipment or beds for patients, and schools wither under trees.

You see, if we remember correctly, in a previous discussion about the usefulness of “Chieftaincy” in Ghana, this Ghanaweber warned us that the Chieftancy institution would only end over her “dead body.” And so, Prof Lungu was reminded of this Ghanaweber upon reading that a chap in the front row at the obscene Swaziland affair reportedly told the BBC that Mswati is “...a good man. He believes in his country. He loves everybody. We are all like the royal family...”

Aha! I said to myself. This chap talks just like our Joy on Ghanaweb, and frankly, not unlike Mr. Manu Bernard who complained the other day that it was counter-intellectual for Mr. Okunka Bannerman to characterize Mr. Kufour as “irresponsible,” noting that Mr. Bannerman “...crossed the line of decency. It is, indeed, utterly acidic...”

Given what we all know of the records, wont the reader agree that it is getting crappy?

And so, in the latest swipe at Prof Lungu (and Black Hero – I stand corrected on this one), Joy made several false statements and unfounded assumptions, and then attempted to position us as having “a mentality of relying solely on the government...”

Here is Joy for you:

“...We give too much credence to our so-called "leadership" to turn things around in Ghana...I am of the contrary view that so long as the normal people are not empowered by their own bootstraps, we will never rise from the doldrums...What prevents you and Ato from setting up a Sanitation Company...to make money and at the same time clean up our towns and cities. Just visiting Ghana from your abode in Japan and coming back here with your sad observations on the ground...will never make the change we need in Ghana...Leadership in Ghana is the last place to look for solutions to our problems...How can you expect Mobutu or Idi Amin, or even Nkrumah to solve our problems which have accumulated over thousands of years?...”

Pray tell, Ms. Joy! Joy sure speaks like Mrs. Palin and Mr. McCain, creating and twisting events as they go! I am sure Joy recognizes that there is a difference in quality of leadership. Is it not totally out of order to conflate the achievements of Mobutu and Idi Amin with that of Ghana’s Nkrumah? And if we may ask, why do people elect leaders and allow them control of public resources? Is Joy telling us Ghanaian leaders do not need to serve the people, that Chiefs are not leaders, that the people must lead themselves, or that Ghanaians are dim-witted? Can Joy name any society in the world, in history, that pulled their people out of poverty and produced public goods (roads and bridges, schools,

airports, water treatment and distribution systems, sewer systems, hospitals, harbors, police, armies, food inspectorates, etc.), without leaders?

The way we see it, Joy spoke as if those in leadership positions do not have any bootstraps to pull on behalf of the people even if they are paid by the people, arguing as she did that "... so long as the normal people are not empowered by their own bootstraps, we will never rise from the doldrums and the dustbins..." The logical questions are, (1) is that bootstrap thing not at least a 2-way street given that Joy herself reports that "...the Ghanaian is ready and hungry to work..." (2) does Joy recognize that some people may only have tethered bootstraps or no bootstrap at all, and (3) does Joy believe in public goods or does she expect the normal and abnormal people to provide those for the nation? Besides, who really are the normal and abnormal Ghanaians?

We've concluded that Joy loves Ghana's chiefs and the current crop of leaders regardless of their performance. She wants us to cut them some slack. While she is asking us to leave those institutions alone, she is at the same time asking the people to pull themselves up. She is actually telling us that the person in the street can build the nation with their own hands even if they are "hungry." There is a contradiction. She assumes that the "ready" Ghanaian and Prof Lungu are looking for handouts? But if we may ask, who goes out begging more often? Shouldn't Joy be telling that to Mr. Kuffour in order to arrest all the boring stuff from Black Hero, Prof Lungu, and others? Or must we all love them, leave them alone, and shut up, like the Swazi chap seems to suggest?

But there is more. Joy says that "...people like Prof Lungu and Ato Kwanima, (should) come down and set examples with their productive entrepreneurship and efforts for growth rather than their big mouths and their little key boards..."

Haba! Why must Joy be so presumptuous? Does she know Prof Lungu at all? And why should two people who have never met each other and probably have very different interests team up to launch a "Sanitation Company" in Ghana? More important, is Joy telling us that everyone ought to go into private business in order to make a meaningful contribution? Is Joy saying that there are no significant roles for people who do not want to, or need to, set up their own businesses? Pray tell, what about public service and working for the people directly - professionally, competently, and accountably?

ITEM: Joy wants you to believe that Prof Lungu is doing nothing for Ghana because Prof Lungu critiques some people in power. That is not a logical proposition. We know that similar thought processes allow others to say that critic is NDC or Ashanti, that one here is Moslem and the other there is Ewe, and so on and so forth. They forget that principally, those critics (including Prof Lungu) are just being Ghana-centered. Prof Lungu for one is only interested in public policy and performance? But Joy seems to be saying that we should broadcast what we are doing in a private capacity in Ghana. And if we did, will Joy believe and tell us it is sufficient? But who, really, will set the bar for the critic?

Suffice to say that Prof Lungu is better than what Joy is casting - there is no detachment from Ghana. Fact is Prof Lungu is doing a fair share in numerous and important ways. And if Joy cares to know, that is one reason why we will visit Ghana early next year. In fact, we will propose that visiting Ghana means that you are doing your part, as Black Hero just did. It is commonsense. More important, when "we" visit, we bring cash and then some. But you must appreciate the significance of foreign currency, multipliers, and creation of jobs in local economies. There are multiple economic windows and linkages!

Therefore, I will caution Joy and other similarly-disposed persons. Do not allow your grudges and biases to coerce you into premature and untested conclusions and assumptions. Fact is, there is precious little Joy knows about Prof Lungu (and possibly about Black Hero). On the flip side, we recall those “over my dead body” comments and the like, and the biases are obvious. But truly, there is no use expiring over “thieving chiefs and leaders.” Hell, these people are part of the development-capacity deficit (albatross, really), hanging around the necks of those “hungry” Ghanaians. Yes, the people are “...ready and hungry to work...” However, we know that the vast majority are being frustrated by those same “leaders” with their mighty fat stomachs, Kilimanjaro-size ego and greed, and crass stupidity.

No! We will not stop taxing Ghana’s leaders to do better, even if all we do is write about that. That said, there is a range of issues Prof Lungu likes contributing on Ghanaweb and in Ghana. Four (4) of those items are (1) the quality of leadership, (2) opportunities being missed, (3) application of sustainable development principles to the community development agenda, and of course, (4) passage of a strong Freedom of Information (FOI) bill. Point is, no one needs to own a company in Ghana to know that Ghanaians require those central institutions, that those are values wise “leaders” ought to articulate to with all seriousness.

So yes, Prof Lungu is also doing it – as Hugh Masekela will say! However, we believe that in any society it is the leadership that must rally the people and empower them to do great things for themselves and their communities. We understand that there is a public interest and reason for public goods. We know that there is leadership that is synonymous with government in this case. We believe that with the blessings of history, geography, and abundance of resources, Ghanaians ought to get better service from the current crop of leaders. We believe that Ghanaians are doing their part. We believe that Ghanaians are not lazy, unlike Mr. Kufour who does not even work hard enough to pay his fair share of the public burden in income tax (and then some)!

Let’s stop all that puffing!

It’s leadership, stupid!

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NOTES:

1. Read about Prof Lungu’s philosophy. Read about the Freedom of Information Bill on [www.GhanaHero.com](http://www.GhanaHero.com). Ghana-centered to the core!
2. Visit [www.GhanaHero.com](http://www.GhanaHero.com) and send us your name and email address for a FREE copy of FOIB – Are You Pickable? Listen, read, learn, and reflect! Join the campaign. Tell your friends about FOIB.
3. Read Prof Lungu’s response to Ghana’s chief blabbermouth and shadow boxer, Kwame Okoampa-Ahoffee, at RSVP – You Asked For It: [http://ghanahero.com/GhanaHero\\_Downloads/RSVP\\_You\\_Asked\\_For\\_It/Meet\\_Ghanas\\_Blabbermouth\\_and\\_Shadow\\_Boxer\\_-\\_Kwame\\_Okoampa-Ahoofoe.pdf](http://ghanahero.com/GhanaHero_Downloads/RSVP_You_Asked_For_It/Meet_Ghanas_Blabbermouth_and_Shadow_Boxer_-_Kwame_Okoampa-Ahoofoe.pdf) .