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PRESS STATEMENT

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ENFORCE BUILDING LAWS AND MODERNISE CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES FOR A SAFER GHANA IN 2026

Ghana stands at a critical crossroads. The recurring tragedies of building collapses, devastating fire outbreaks, and flood disasters aggravated by reckless construction practices are not isolated incidents. They are clear and damning symptoms of a systemic failure: **the persistent non-enforcement of our building laws**. This is no longer a technical or professional concern but it is an urgent **national safety crisis** that demands decisive action now.

Every collapsed structure, every preventable fire, and every flood intensified by unlawful development carries the same painful message: **laws exist, but enforcement is weak**. Lives and property are being lost not because Ghana lacks regulations, but because those regulations are routinely ignored.

The Laws Exist; Enforcement Is What Is Missing

Ghana is not short of legal and regulatory frameworks governing the built environment. The Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), the Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority Act, 2016 (Act 925), the National Building Regulations, 2022 (LI 2465), and the Ghana Building Code (GS 1207:2018), among others, provide a comprehensive foundation for safe, orderly, and resilient development.

What the nation urgently requires is **consistent, firm, and uncompromising enforcement** of these laws. Regulations without enforcement offer false security and place lives at risk.

Enforcement Is a Statutory Duty, Not a Matter of Choice

The enforcement of building regulations is not discretionary. It is a **legal obligation**. The Ministry of Works and Housing and the Ministry of Local Government play a pivotal role in policy direction, coordination, and oversight of Ghana's built environment. At the operational level, Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are mandated by law to regulate development, issue permits, conduct inspections, and halt illegal construction.

Yet, across the country, unapproved developments continue to emerge openly—often in waterways, flood-prone zones, and without the involvement of qualified professionals. Stop-work notices are ignored. Inspections are delayed or compromised. Health and safety protocols are routinely violated. Demolitions occur only **after disaster strikes**, when lives have already been lost. **This reactive approach must end.**

The Human and Economic Cost of Weak Enforcement

The consequences of inaction are severe and deadly. Buildings erected without approved designs, proper supervision, or compliant materials are ticking time bombs. When failure occurs, the victims are rarely the perpetrators. They are tenants, schoolchildren, worshippers, workers, and innocent passers-by.

Beyond the tragic loss of life, entire communities are displaced, livelihoods are disrupted, and families are left traumatized. Government resources are repeatedly diverted to emergency response and disaster relief—funds that could and should have been invested in prevention. This cycle of negligence is both **costly and unacceptable**.

Institutional Accountability Must Be Non-Negotiable

The Ministry of Works and Housing must strengthen coordination among regulatory agencies and ensure that national policies translate into measurable action at the local level. Updated standards, modern building codes, and continuous professional training must be backed by enforcement systems that function effectively.

Equally, local government authorities and District Assemblies must be both **empowered and compelled** to perform their development control functions without fear or favour. Political interference, personal influence, and administrative inertia must never supersede public safety. Where officials fail to act in accordance with the law, **accountability must follow**.

Modernizing Construction Practices for a Resilient Future

Enforcement alone is not enough. Ghana must deliberately modernize its construction practices to meet contemporary safety, environmental, and efficiency standards. Stakeholders across the built environment must embrace innovation, technology, and sustainability.

The adoption of digital tools, advanced construction methods, and sustainable materials will improve quality, enhance resilience, reduce costs, and ensure safer outcomes. Modernization is essential if the industry is to respond effectively to climate risks, urban growth, and evolving regulatory demands.

Digitization of Building Permit Processes Is Imperative

Building permit acquisition must be fully digitized. A transparent, efficient digital system will significantly reduce delays, curb bureaucratic bottlenecks, enhance compliance, and minimize human interference.

Digitization will also improve record-keeping, strengthen inter-agency coordination, enable real-time monitoring, and restore public confidence in the development control process. **A modern regulatory system is central to effective enforcement.**

Professional Integrity and Public Vigilance

Built environment professionals, architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, and allied practitioners—must uphold the highest ethical standards. Participation in illegal or unsafe developments for personal gain puts lives at risk and erodes public trust in the profession.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes is equally critical. As construction technologies and global practices evolve particularly in an era of trade liberalization and cross-border services, professionals must continually update their skills to remain competent, credible, and relevant.

The public also has a vital role to play. Citizens must question unsafe developments, demand compliance, and report violations. **Silence enables negligence; vigilance saves lives.**

A Call for Decisive Leadership and Collective Action

The enforcement of building laws is not anti-development. On the contrary, it is the **foundation of sustainable, inclusive, and resilient growth**. A nation cannot claim progress when its buildings pose a threat to the very people they are meant to protect.



The Architecture Alliance calls on the Ministry of Works and Housing, Local Government authorities, and District Assemblies to act decisively:

- Enforce the laws without compromise
- Stop illegal developments early
- Sanction offenders consistently
- Prioritize public safety above all else

The Architecture Alliance commits to initiating practical steps and collaborative actions with regulatory authorities, built environment professionals, and the public to strengthen enforcement and drive continuous modernization of building practices.

A safe country begins with safe buildings and safety begins with enforcement.

Signed,

**Arc. Patience Ewurama Ocran
President**