

**ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND NATURAL
RESOURCES, HON. SAMUEL A. JINAPOR, MP, AT THE
COMMISSIONING OF THE RECONSTRUCTED APPIATSE
COMMUNITY, HELD AT APPIATSE, ON THURSDAY, 2ND MAY,
2024**

Vice President of the Republic;

Western Regional Minister;

Minister for Works and Housing;

Hon. Ministers;

Minister-Designate for Information;

Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources;

Deputy Minister for Education;

Deputy Minister-Designate for Lands and Natural Resources;

Chairman and Members of the Appiatse Reconstruction
Implementation Committee;

Chairperson and Members of the Appiatse Support Fund;

Chairperson of the Minerals Commission;

Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission;

Chief Executive Officer and Members of the Ghana Chamber of
Mines;

Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives;

Clergymen and women;

Nananom;

Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources is grateful to the Vice President of the Republic, H.E. Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, for his dedication and continuous support to the Ministry, and for accepting to perform this consequential task of commissioning this modern and green reconstructed Appiatse Community.

Indeed, since the unfortunate incident of 20th January, 2022, the Vice President has been very instrumental in bringing relief to the people of Appiatse, including leading a Government delegation to this community in the immediate aftermath of the incident, and making a personal donation towards the initial relief efforts. It is, therefore, heartwarming to have the Vice President, who has been with the people of Appiatse from the very beginning, commission this edifice to restore hope to the victims of the incident.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, this tragic incident called for, at least, three (3) immediate actions. The first was the provision of emergency relief. That is why the Vice President led a delegation to commiserate with the victims of the incident, and made a personal contribution towards bringing relief to the people of Appiatse in those devastating times. On the instructions of the President of the Republic, all the security agencies and the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), mobilised to this town to provide the much-needed emergency relief.

With the support of the Catholic Church, victims who were rendered homeless were housed at the St. Michael's Parish Hall at Bogoso. Subsequently, in partnership with Future Global Resources (FGR), temporal accommodation, in the form of tents, were erected at the community for displaced families. FGR, again, gave us forty (40) uncompleted buildings at Dumase, which the Appiatse Support Fund later roofed and refurbished to house the affected victims as the rains begun to fall. Through these efforts, we have been able to provide decent temporary accommodation for all victims of the incident up to date.

The second immediate action that needed to be taken was investigations to determine what went wrong, punish wrongdoers, and take the necessary measures to avoid future occurrences. Thus, in addition to the investigations that were undertaken by the state security agencies, the Minerals Commission launched an investigation into the matter, to establish the causes of the incident from a regulatory perspective.

To safeguard the safety of the industry, the company at the centre of the incident was suspended from providing any form of mine support services. Upon receipt of the preliminary report of the Minerals Commission, the Ministry constituted a three-member committee, to undertake further investigations into the matter.

Following the report of this committee, an administrative fine and other penalties were imposed on Maxxam, which has since been discharged.

In addition to the investigations into this particular incident, we, also, constituted a Health and Safety Committee, chaired by the distinguished Vice Chancellor of George Grant University of Mines and Technology (UMat), Prof. Richard Amankwaa, to review the entire health and safety regime of the mining industry in our country. The work of this Committee has led to far-reaching reforms in health and safety standards in the mining industry, including the manufacturing, handling, importing, transporting and use of explosives, which gives us the impetus to prevent future occurrences of such incidents.

The final, but, also, very important action was the need to rebuild what had been lost, to, as much as possible, restore the victims to their previous positions, or even better. Thus, on 26th January, 2022, on the instructions of the President of the Republic, I led a Government delegation, which included officials from the Ministry of Works and Housing, Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority (LUSPA), Department of Rural Housing, State Housing Company, and the Ghana Chamber of Mines, to carry out preliminary assessment of the destruction and determine the right strategy to rebuild this community.

We, therefore, launched the Appiatse Support Fund to raise money to, among others, support the victims of the incident and reconstruct the community. A five-member Committee, chaired by an eminent stateswoman and former Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Chamber of Mines, Rev. Dr. Joyce Aryee, whose watchword for the Fund is accountability, was inaugurated to manage the Fund.

Two days after the launch of the Fund, the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, donated One Hundred Thousand Ghana Cedis (GHS100,000.00) to the Fund, becoming the first person to donate to the Fund. His generous action was followed by several other well-meaning Ghanaians, including our hardworking, visionary and outstanding Vice President, the man with bold solutions for the future, the First Lady, Ministers and Deputy Ministers of State, Members of Parliament, corporate Ghana, individuals, among others. We, also, received several donations in kind, including building materials, from various institutions, both public and private. The full list of all seventy-nine (79) contributors to the Fund have been published in the Monday 29th April, 2024 edition of the Daily Graphic. We thank you, sincerely, and the people of Appeatse are forever grateful for your generosity.

To effectively execute the commitment to rebuild the community, an Appiatse Reconstruction Implementation Committee (ARIC), under the able chairmanship of the then Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, and Member of Parliament for Atwima Nwabiagya North Constituency, Hon. Benito Owusu-Bio, with the strong assistance of the renowned architect, Mr. Charles Blankson-Hemans, and many others, was constituted to see to the design and construction of this beautiful reconstructed community into a modern, green and sustainable township, as a model for rural development, with the hope of replicating same plans and designs in other parts of the country.

Mr. Vice President, I am happy and proud to report to you, that under your close supervision, with the dedication of the Appiatse Reconstruction Implementation Committee, and with the support of several Ministries, Departments and Agencies, as well as all Ghanaians, the first phase of the reconstruction of the community has been completed, which you commission today. This phase is made up of one hundred and twenty-four (124) housing units, consisting of one to seven bedroom houses, a school block with sanitary facilities, construction of inner roads within the community, provision of market, electricity, water, extensive street lighting, and a green landscape.

This reconstructed Appiatse Community, meticulously crafted, embody our commitment to healing, and bringing solace to families who have endured displacement and pain. This is, truly, a gesture of a caring government.

Phase two of the Project, which is the repair and rehabilitation of buildings partially impacted by the incident, has, also, been completed, with payment to some fifty (50) affected individuals to carry out the repair and rehabilitation of their buildings, after the affected buildings had been assessed and valued by professionals. And this afternoon, right after the commissioning of these buildings, the Vice President will cut sod for the commencement of work on Phase three, consisting of the construction of sixty-seven (67) additional buildings together with other facilities at the peripheries of the new community.

Mr. Vice President, all these have been made possible through the benevolence of Ghanaians, and several other players, who responded to our call to donate to the Appiatse Support Fund. Not a pesewa of public funds has been expended on this Project. The entire cost of the Project was financed by the Appiatse Support Fund, and together, we have demonstrated that community resilience and compassion can build a brighter future, for, as they say, "***where there is a will, there is a way.***"

We are grateful to all those who supported us to achieve this remarkable feat, particularly, the President and Vice President of the Republic, whose unwavering support made this endeavour possible. We are, also, grateful to the Ministries of Roads and Highways, Works and Housing, Energy, Water and Sanitation, and Local Government, Decentralisation and Rural Development, the project consultants, Architectural and Engineering Services Limited (AESL), members of the Appiatse Support Fund, the Appiatse Reconstruction Implementation Committee, contractors, engineers, Nananom, and all those who in diverse ways supported this noble undertaking.

Let me, specifically, mention the former Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture, former Member of Parliament for Prestea Huni Valley, and now Chairperson of the Minerals Commission, Hon. Barbara Oteng Gyasi, for her extraordinary support and leadership, as well as the Municipal Chief Executive, Hon. Dr. Isaac Dasmani, and the chiefs and people of Appiatse, led by the Divisional Chief of Beppoh, Nana Atta Kwadwo Bremebi II, whose collective efforts have brought us this far.

To those who will be using this facility, we, respectfully, urge you to take very good care of them, and ensure that it becomes a lasting legacy to bring relief to the affected, joy to the community, hope for the children of Appiatse, and ease the pains of 20th January, 2022. We, at the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, pledge to rigorously enforce the enhanced safety protocols we have adopted, educate communities, and to hold accountable those entrusted with responsibility for explosives, as well as other hazardous materials, to prevent the recurrence of this unfortunate incident.

Your Excellency, Hon. Ministers, Members of Parliament, Nananom, Ladies and Gentlemen, if there was any doubt that Government is committed to the promises we make to our people, this reconstructed Appiatse Community should jettison that doubt. And if there was any doubt, also, that governments are capable of delivering, this is sufficient reason to believe otherwise. Today, we are giving hope to people once scarred by an unimaginable explosion, as a testament of the unflinching commitment of President Akufo-Addo and Vice President Dr. Bawumia, to leverage on the resources of our country to bring relief to our people, and unleash prosperity for the mass of our people. May the Appiatse story continue to inspire us to work together for our country, and our people.

I thank you for your attention.