

**Address by the Vice President of the Republic, H.E. DR.
Mahamudu Bawumia at the Commissioning of the
Reconstructed Appiatse Community, held at APPIATSE, on
Thursday, 2nd May, 2024**

Western Regional Minister;

Minister for Lands and Natural Resources;

Hon. Ministers;

Deputy Ministers;

Chairman and Members of the Appiatse Reconstruction
Implementation Committee;

Chairman and Members of the Appiatse Support Fund;

Chief Executive Officer of the Minerals Commission;

Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives;

Directors and Staff of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources;

Nananom;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On Thursday, 20th January, 2022, we witnessed a very tragic incident at this community, at this same place where we are gathered today. A sudden explosion shook our foundations, shattered lives, and left scars etched deep into our collective

memory. It left the Appiatse community, and, indeed, the entire country in deep sorrow and distress.

The following day, on behalf of the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, I led a delegation, which included Ministers, heads of the security agencies, the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), and other officials of the Presidency, to commiserate with the victims of the incident.

I saw, at first hand, the devastation that the incident has caused to this once vibrant community, with some of our people unfortunately losing their lives, and others suffering various degrees of injuries, as well as the near-total collapse of the entire Appiatse community.

Yesterday, a candlelight vigil was held here to commemorate the souls that were lost on that fateful day. We stood together, hearts heavy, yet connected, as we remembered our departed family members—those souls who once graced our lives with laughter, wisdom, and love. Their absence leaves an ache, a void that time cannot fully heal. But in this gathering, we find solace—a shared space where our grief is not a burden in solace, but a testament to the depth of our bonds. May their souls continue to abide in the

bosom of the Almighty, till we meet again on the day of the resurrection.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today, we gather at this same venue, not just to commemorate the tragic event, but also to celebrate resilience, compassion, and the indomitable spirit of the people of Appiatse. While mourning those who lost their lives through this tragic incident, we stand in solidarity with the survivors who bear both physical and emotional wounds, and recognise the heroic efforts of our emergency responders, exemplified in the selflessness that defines our nation.

But adversity has a way of revealing our strength—the strength to rise, rebuild, and re-imagine. From this tragedy emerged resilience. The resilience to rebuild the community. The resilience to bring hope to the suffering, and the unwavering commitment to lift up the downtrodden.

As we can all attest, Government, through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, acted swiftly following the incident, and in collaboration with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies, relief was brought to the victims of the incident through the provision of relief items, the diversion of the road that was blown

away, and its eventual fixing, and the provision of temporary accommodation for all those displaced.

But were we going to end there? Not at all. Government took it upon itself to see to the reconstruction of the community to provide permanent place of abode for residents of this community, and to restore them to the dignity they deserve. And as we can all see, we have delivered on this commitment.

Today, we stand on the precipice of a new dawn, the rebirth of Appiatse, with the completion of one hundred and twenty-four (124) housing units, together with other social amenities, to replace what was damaged by the explosion. The explosion that razed down this community may have ravaged our homes, our property and our dreams, but it could, undoubtedly, not quench the fire of hope that burns in each one of us. We found strength, in the face of the devastation, hope amidst despair, and unity of purpose, despite the disintegration. These structures, once mere blueprints, now stand as symbols of hope, unearthing a brighter future from the ashes of our past.

We are grateful to all who offered support in our time of need, whether through words of comfort, a listening ear, provision of a need or a temporary place of abode or a contribution thereto; but

very importantly to all – both corporate and individual Ghanaians – who, out of the generosity of their hearts, contributed in cash and kind to support the rebuilding of the new Appiatse we commission today. It is my prayer that the Almighty God will, abundantly, replenish whatever you sacrificed.

We are, also, grateful to the various committees, the Appiatse Support Fund, the Appiatse Implementation Committee, the experts, consultants, contractors and many others whose selfless dedication has brought us this far.

Nananom, today, we officially commission these newly constructed community in memory and honour of those we lost through the tragic incident. These homes symbolise hope – a beacon of light rising from the ashes. Each brick laid, and each roof raised, represents our commitment to rebuilding a stronger, safer, and more resilient Appiatse than ever before. These homes are more than bricks and mortar; they represent safety, security, and a fresh start. We pledge to ensure that no family remains displaced, no child sleeps without shelter, and no elder faces uncertainty.

I am happy to learn about the new measures that have been put in place by the Ministry for Lands and Natural Resources, not only for the transportation of explosives, but to ensure health and safety

in the entire mining industry. These enhanced safety protocols must be our unwavering priority. We owe it to the victims of the incident, their families, and our entire nation to prevent such tragedies in the future. We must, therefore, continue to invest in robust infrastructure, stringent regulations, and comprehensive training for those handling explosives or any other hazardous materials, in all sectors of our socio-economic lives. Let us resolve to make the rebirth of Appiatse a testament to our determination to protect lives and safeguard our communities.

To the chiefs and people of this community, who had to endure these hardships for the past two years, I say thank you for your patience and your cooperation. Your strength and unity inspire us all. It is testament that when we pull our collective efforts together, we can overcome any obstacle that may come our way. I, therefore, urge you to continue to support one another, uplift our neighbours, and build a thriving community. As we hand over these new buildings to you today, it is my hope that you will take good care of them, and preserve them as a legacy for future generations.

Nananom, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I cannot end my speech without paying glowing tribute to the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, whose commitment and tenacity has led to the construction of this new

community. As we heard from the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, President Akufo-Addo was the first person to donate to the Appiatse Support Fund, a sign of his compassion and dedication towards the rebuilding of this community.

In addition to his donation, President Akufo-Addo directed that Five Million Dollars (US\$5,000,000.00) out of the Six Million Dollars (US\$6,000,000.00) administrative fine imposed on the company at the centre of the explosion, be paid to the Appiatse Support Fund to support victims of the incident and the rebuilding of this community. Such a selfless and compassionate gesture.

To the indefatigable Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Hon. Samuel A. Jinapor, who has led this project from the beginning to date, I say thank you for your exemplary leadership and dedication. Your commitment and relentless zeal in seeing to the completion of this project has been unwavering. This is why I refer to him as the "Bulldozer Minister." He just gets the work done. I am aware of the several visits you made to this community to assess progress of work and to ensure that the contractors execute the project on schedule. The people Appiatse are grateful for your services. I count on your dedication to see to the completion of Phase 3 of this consequential project.

Nananom, Ladies and Gentlemen, the pains of yesterday may linger through our minds. But this new community should bring us hope, and the strength to overcome our challenges.

On this note, I have the singular honour to declare the reconstructed Appiatse Community duly commissioned. As we hand over these keys, may they unlock not just doors but also opportunities. Let us continue to support each other, and build a community worthy of emulation.

Thank you and May God Bless us all!