

SESSIONAL ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HON. ASARE DANSO, THE DISTRICT CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR THE BIRIM SOUTH DISTRICT ASSEMBLY ON THE OCCASSION OF THE SECOND (2ND) ORDINARY MEETING OF THE FOURTH (4TH) SESSION OF THE SECOND (2ND) ASSEMBLY HELD ON THURSDAY 31ST AUGUST, 2023 AT THE CONFERENCE HALL OF THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY, AKIM SWEDRU

Hon. Presiding Member,

Hon. Assembly Members,

The District Co-ordinating Director,

Heads of the various Security Agencies,

Heads of Departments/Units/Institutions,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

I stand before you once again today as the District Chief Executive of the Birim South District Assembly, humbled and honored to address this second General Assembly meeting for the year 2023.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to each and every one of you, as your presence here is a testament to our collective commitment towards progress and development of our district.

Firstly, I want to express my gratitude to the members of the House, Heads of Department and Units and the generality of staff of the District Assembly who have tirelessly worked alongside me to ensure the smooth functioning of our district. Your dedication and unwavering support have played a crucial role in steering our district towards greater heights and I appreciate all your efforts. Thank you so much.

Hon. Presiding Member, it is imperative that I remind the House that this address contains a message on the state of our District and the report from the Executive Committee of the Assembly which is in pursuance to Section 28 (1) and (2a) of the Local Governance Act, 2016, Act 936.

In view of the above Hon. Presiding Member, I would like to therefore reflect on our achievements thus far and present our plans for the future. It is essential that we acknowledge the progress we have made as a district, but also remain mindful of the challenges that lie ahead.

Over the period, we have witnessed notable advancements in various sectors, including Education, Healthcare, infrastructure, Agriculture, social welfare among others.

FINANCE

Hon. Presiding Member, you will all agree with me that revenue is the back bone of the operations of every institution and it is imperative that I firstly inform the House on our financial status. The Assembly's major sources of revenue are; Internally Generated Fund (IGF) and Grants from the Central Government in the form of DACF.

Hon. Presiding Member, as at 31st July, 2023, the IGF of the Assembly stood at GHC170,247.66 whilst the DACF receivables stood at GHC335,547.70 bringing the overall total Revenue to GHC505,795.36.

Hon. Presiding Member, similarly, the Assembly spent GHC177,979.97 from the IGF and GHC563,803.43 of the DACF bringing the total expenditure of the Assembly in the period at GHC741,783.4

Hon. Presiding Member, it is instructive to know that our expenses or expenditure is in excess of our earnings. It therefore suggests that we have to put in more efforts in our revenue mobilization since we still need to embark on more developmental projects across the district. I will therefore use this opportunity to call on Hon. Members to collaborate with our revenue mobilization officers to effectively mobilize revenue (IGF) to boost the financial muscles of the Assembly. This will enable the Assembly to carry out more developmental projects to the collective benefits of all in the district.

SECURITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Presiding Member, it is comforting to report that our District has been relatively peaceful and calm as members of the general public are able to freely move about and also engage in their economic activities without any hitches. However, there has been an ascendancy in theft cases in the district and that is worrying. I would therefore use this opportunity to call on all honorable members to collaborate with our dynamic police commander to fight this canker. I also call on all to ensure that the neighborhood watchdog committees are supported to make them effectively functional. Mr. Chairman, in this regard, I assure you all of the Assembly's commitment to the course.

EDUCATION

Hon. Presiding Member, In the field of education, we have been focused on enhancing access to quality education. There has been an ongoing construction of a 2- unit KG block with ancillary facilities at Aduasa which is about 95% completed. There is also an ongoing construction of a 6-unit classroom Block at Oforikrom D/A primary school and another 2- unit KG Block at Apoli, both of which are at 40% completion levels. All these are aimed at increasing access to education in the district.

Hon. Presiding Member, as you are aware, our district has participated in the just ended B.E.C.E. The district presented total of 677 candidates comprising 356 males and 321 females for this year's examination. Prior to the Exams, a mock- exams was organized for the candidates as a way of preparing their minds towards their first external examination. The district also has some students who are partaking in the ongoing West African Senior Secondary Schools Exams (WASSCE) We pray and hope that they all come out with flying colors when the results is released.

Hon. Presiding Member, the district through the education department also received a sum of GHC 18,948.50 as capitation grant to promote free basic school education for all enrolled public schools in the district. Over the period, the government flagship Free SHS initiative was tracked and implemented. About 2,676 are currently benefiting from the program. Also, the District has about 6229 pupils from 23 schools benefitting from the School Feeding Program.

Hon. Presiding Member, the Assembly has not reneged on her responsibility of fighting the "no furniture syndrome" in our schools. As you can see outside, we have just received 400 pieces of dual desks from the central government which will soon be distributed to the schools in the district. We are still expecting more within the shortest possible time. Aside the desk, the education department has received and distributed a number of teaching and learning materials including text books to schools.

Hon. Presiding Member, despite all these, there is still room to do more and I am giving you the assurance of the Assembly's commitment to continue supporting the education sector of our district.

HEALTH.

Hon. Presiding Member, in the area of Health, the district Administration has recognized that "a healthy nation (district) is a wealthy nation (district)". For the above reason, the Assembly

has collaborated with the District Health Administration to embark on a whole lot of activities geared towards ensuring a healthy district.

The District Assembly through the District Health Directorate also acknowledged the role of quality human resources in providing quality health care. Fifteen (15) staff of the District Health Directorate were trained on data management and Forty- two (42) staff were also trained on malaria case management in May this year.

Hon. Presiding Member, the Assembly through the District Health Directorate again observed the Child Health Promotion week in April. In the course of this, 105 children benefited from nutrition counselling and about 25 births registrations were undertaken.

Hon. Presiding Member, the Assembly through collaborative efforts with the District Health Directorate undertook community sensitization and screening of malaria to mark the World Malaria Day at Akortekrom on the 25th of April this year.

Similarly, **Hon. Presiding Member**, during the commemoration of African Immunization week between 24th to 28th of April this year, the Assembly through the Department of Health embarked on a campaign on vaccination and community sensitization on the importance of immunization across all the communities in the district.

Hon. Presiding Member, despite all these gains, we are aware of some challenges that the District Health Directorate is facing and we as an Assembly pledge our continuous support and collaboration with them as we thrive to overcome these challenges.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SANITATION.

Hon. Presiding Member, the Assembly has taken cognizance of the fact that prevention is better than cure and as such the Assembly through the department of Environmental Health and Sanitation has been engaging in a lot of activities geared towards ensuring environmental health. The Assembly through the Environmental Health Unit organized sensitization program on communicable diseases for school feeding caterers and food vendors in the district. The exercise was meant to prevent the spread of communicable diseases like cholera, TB among others.

The District Environmental Health Unit also embarked on school hygiene activities by interacting with schools on environmental hygiene issues. School authorities were encouraged to be inspecting the sanitary facilities in the various schools. The education was extended to

the public on the need to maintain environmental hygiene and also on the need to control the movement of their animals.

AGRICULTURE

Hon. Presiding Member, Agriculture as a fact has been the main stay and major source of support for livelihood of many of our compatriots. In view of this, Agriculture has always been part of the priority list on the Assembly's activities.

Honorable Members of the Assembly, the District Assembly through the Department of Agric has been making efforts to ascertain how to increase rice production in the district. The Assembly through the Department of Agric in collaboration with the Japanese International Development Agency (JICA) has therefore carried out a survey in which 20 farmers from Adenkyensu and Apoli were interviewed to ascertain the needs assessment in rice production in the district.

Hon. Presiding Member, in our quest to increase Agriculture Productivity in the District, the Assembly through the department of Agriculture has also engaged in transfer of technologies to the farmers using the Bosome Fm as the medium. Through this, Farmers were educated on Fertilizer application, Integrated Pest Management, Feeding and Housing of farm animals amongst many other activities. In addition to this, the Assembly through the district department of Agric embarked on vaccination of animals and birds. 200 birds were vaccinated against Newcastle disease virus and 100 birds were vaccinated against fowl pox disease.

Hon. Presiding Member, in our efforts to reduce post-harvest loses in maize and rice production, the District Department of Agric embarked on education on the use of grain storage bags or hematic bags and its merits over the use of insecticides and other traditional methods of storage. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to report that this education was successful as farmers have shown interest in the use of the grain bags and are patronizing same.

Hon. Presiding Member, the central government flagship programs; that is *Planting for Food and Jobs* and *Planting for Export and Rural Development* which aims at promoting rural economic growth, and improved incomes for rural farmers are being implemented in the district. The District through the Department of Agriculture in collaboration with the Minerals Commission implemented the Alternative Livelihood Project in the District. A total of 258,432 oil palm seedlings were received and distributed to 326 farmers. The department also received and distributed 4000 coconut seedlings to a total of 41 farmers.

Hon. Presiding Member, there was significant incidence of Fall Army worm infestation recorded. This was attributable to shortage in the distribution of Fall Army Worms (FAW) chemicals in the district. Farmers were however advised by our technical men from the Department of Agric to apply detergents like soklin on the affected maize plants in various operational areas in the district. This yielded positive results as we recorded no destruction of maize farmlands in the district. It should be noted that the recorded shortage of Fall Army Worm (FAW) chemicals was due to the fact that the district through the Agric Department did not receive any consignment for the second quarter.

Hon. Presiding Member, despite all these, we must not be oblivious of the fact that there are challenges facing the sector in the district and I on behalf of the Assembly is giving you the assurance that we will continue to collaborate with the District Department of Agric to address these challenges.

SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Hon. Presiding Member, we have not reneged on our responsibilities relative to welfare and community development. The Assembly through the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development monitored and inspected 14 daycare schools in the district. This was done to ensure that the children were kept in a dignified manner. Through the Department again, the Assembly sensitized the public using radio broadcasting as the medium, on Child Rights Promotion and Protection as well as the dangers associated with child labour.

Hon. Presiding Member, the District Social Welfare department also carried out 2 maintenance cases and one family welfare case. One homeless child was integrated and reunited with his biological parents at Yeboakrom.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS

Hon. Presiding Member, it is the quest of the Assembly to provide the necessary socio-economic infrastructure in the district. In view of this, the Assembly has awarded contracts for construction of physical structures. Some of which are completed whilst others are in the various levels of completion. Below are the lists of the projects.

1. There is an ongoing construction of 5 bed room bungalow for the district coordinating director which currently stands at 75% completion level. The source of funding is from DACF.

2. There is an ongoing construction of a 2-unit KG block with ancillary facilities and furniture at Akim Aduasa which is practically completed as it stands at 98% completion level and it is funded by DACF-RFG
3. The drilling and construction of 7 no mechanized boreholes at Aduasa, GES Office, New Salem, Disabled center- Adeitu, Asawase, and Mount Calvary Catholic Clinic has been completed and handed over.
4. A mechanized borehole for fire hydrant has been constructed for Akim Swedru.
5. There is an ongoing construction of 2- unit KG block at Apoli funded through GETFUND which is about 40% completed.
6. There is an ongoing construction of 6- seater WC toilet block with mechanized borehole and elevated tank support at Oforikrom which is at 40% completed and it is funded by GETFUND.
7. An ongoing construction of 6-unit class room block at Oforikrom being funded by GETFUND is at 40% completion level.
8. The agenda 111 Hospital construction is progressing steadily
9. The construction of the District Magistrate Court and the District Magistrate's bungalow at Akim Swedru are almost completed as both stand at 95% completion level.

Hon. Presiding Member, as you can witness, the contractor working on the Swedru- Aduasa road is actively on the site and work is progressing steadily. I have assurance from the contractor that the work would be completed very soon.

Hon. Presiding Member, before I present to you the recommendations of the Executive Committee, I will like to use this opportunity to inform and introduce to the house the new staff of the Assembly. So please, if you hear your name and around, kindly step out here for the Hon. Members to see you.

1. Dennis Wise Coffie, Senior Executive Officer
2. Obeng Lawrence, Executive Officer
3. Akomah Ebenezer, Driver
4. Yeboah Kwame, Assistant Security
5. Agyare Nipa Kwame, Assistant Dev't Planning Officer
6. Agbokey- Dosu Japheth, Assistant Dev't Planning Officer
7. Belinda Agyeiwaa Annor, Procurement Assistant
8. Prince Anum, Assistant Programmer

9. Eric Sakyamah, Assistant Information Officer

10. Frank Mensah Bonsu Assistant Director

Hon. Presiding Member, in the same period, we have two of our officers posted out of the district. They are;

1. Sara Obeng Robertson, Senior Social Dev't Assistant.
2. Janet Asante, Senior Social Dev't Assistant.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Hon. Presiding Member, in accordance with the Local Governance Act 2016, Act 936, and Orders (11) and (49) of the Model Standing Orders of MMDAs, it is required of the Executive Committee of the Assembly to collate and discuss reports from its Sub-Committees for which recommendations will be made and presented to the General Assembly for consideration.

Consequently, the Executive Committee of the Assembly met on Tuesday, 29th August, 2023 and considered reports from its Sub-Committees.

Hon. Presiding Member, with your indulgence, I present to the August House the report from the Executive Committee as follows;

- 1. That the Assembly should ensure that victims of emergencies are always supported.**

After extensive discussion on this, it was acknowledged by the Executive Committee that the Assembly do support victims when the need arises. It was further suggested that NADMO should be relying more on their Regional Office since whatever the Assembly does will just be a support and might not be sufficient.

- 2. That the District Disaster Management Committee should be made functional.**

The Committee deliberated on this issue and finally agreed that since the committee was already in existence, the NADMO director should do a follow up on a MEMO he had already given to the Assembly so that a maiden meeting of the Disaster Management Committee could be held.

- 3. That the Assembly should support the police to ensure that the neighborhood watchdog Committees function effectively.**

This matter came as a result of the fact that some of the watchdog committees don't function anymore. It was noted that the Swedru watchdog committee collapsed due to the unwillingness of traders to pay the 5ghc monthly fee as requested.

- 4. That the Assembly should support the Agric department to get veterinary clinic.**

5. **That the Assembly through the Environmental Health Unit should organize quarterly sanitation day to help in desilting all choked drains in the district.**
6. **That the Assembly should set up a committee to assess the functionality of markets in the district and make recommendations.**
7. **That the Assembly should set up a committee to assess the functionality and management of public toilets in the district and make recommendations.**
8. **That the Assembly should consider the construction of additional facilities like wash rooms, storehouses and other essential facilities to make the new market functional.**
9. **That the Assembly should take steps to acquire meters for the boreholes and the Aduasa Market stores to make the project functional and beneficial to the communities.**

Hon. Presiding Member, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I have to pause my presentation here and pave way for the discussion to begin.

I thank you all for your attention and kind cooperation.