

**SESSIONAL ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HON. EVANS ADDISON
COLEMAN, MUNICIPAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR AGONA WEST
MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AT THE 3rd ORDINARY MEETING OF THE
2ND SESSION OF THE 8TH ASSEMBLY OF THE AGONA WEST
MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY HELD ON TUESDAY, 26TH OCTOBER, 2021
AT THE CATHOLIC PARISH HALL, AGONA SWEDRU.**

HON. PRESIDING MEMBER,

HON. MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,

HON. ASSEMBLY MEMBERS,

NANANOM,

HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND UNIT,

FRIENDS FROM THE MEDIA,

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I deem it a great honour and privilege to address this August House. I wish to respectfully welcome all Hon. Assembly Members, Nananom, Heads of Department as well as distinguished members of the general public present for this important meeting.

Hon. Presiding Member, permit me to express my profound gratitude to His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for nominating me for this prestigious position. I

also wish to express my felicitation to Hon. Members for the massive endorsement that I received during my confirmation held on 5th October, 2021. I am very grateful for the confidence reposed in me to serve the good people of our Municipality. Similarly, I would like to thank our revered Chiefs, Heads of Department, Security Agencies, the Clergy and all those who contributed in diverse ways to make my confirmation as the Municipal Chief Executive a success.

Let me also applaud my immediate predecessor who has been elevated to the position of the Central Regional Minister, Hon. Justina Marigold Assan. Her legacy will serve as a guide and inspiration for us to continue from where she left off. I wish to assure you all that, I am ready to work with each and every stakeholder and I am also prepared to welcome constructive ideas that will push the development agenda of the Municipality to the highest pedestal. I would like to also use this occasion to call on all indigenes of Agonaman, both within and outside the Municipality as well as in the diaspora to support our vision to develop the Municipality.

Hon. Presiding Member, being my maiden meeting since my assumption of office, it will be appropriate to lay before this House the state of our Municipality with regards to its administrative set-up, finances, development projects, sectoral briefs and my vision for the Assembly.

1.0 ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP AND HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY

Hon. Presiding Member, the Assembly has in place its key departments and units. In addition, the Assembly has a good working relationship with other government departments and agencies operating within the Municipality. An intersectoral committee has been formed to create the opportunity for continuous engagements amongst these institutions.

The Assembly has a total staff strength of 237, made up of 149 males and 88 females. Out of this number, 191 are mechanized staff with 46 casual workers.

2.0 SECURITY SITUATION

Hon. Presiding Member, the security situation in the Municipality is generally calm and under effective control. For instance, the Divisional Police Command has been coordinating routine swoops at hide-outs of criminals and also embarking on confidence building patrols. The Municipal Immigration Service is also in the process of implementing measures to monitor the activities of foreigners in the Municipality.

However, the use of narcotics at some drinking spots, pubs and secluded places is noted to be gaining currency. Another disturbing phenomenon is the incidents of minors who ride motorbikes and tricycles without licenses as well as general indiscipline amongst commercial drivers. The good news is that, the Municipal Security Council (MUSEC) had deliberated on these matters and fashioned out strategies to nib them in the bud. The fight against crime in this day and age relies heavily on information and cooperation from the general public. I wish therefore to appeal to all and sundry to provide our Security Agencies with the necessary information in our concerted efforts to curb crime.

I would like to use this opportunity to commend our Security Agencies for their commitment and dedication in ensuring law and order over the years and to also encourage them to do even more.

3.0 FINANCES

Hon. Presiding Member, the Assembly's revenue accrue from three (3) key sources, which are Internally Generated Fund (IGF), District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), grants from donor programmes and interventions such as District Development Fund (DDF), Secondary Cities Support Programme among others. We can all attest to the fact that the COIVD -19 pandemic had a huge impact on revenue mobilization in the country of which our Municipality was not exempted. Coupled with the late release of funds from the central government and development partners, the Assembly has not been able to fully discharge its financial commitments.

3.1 REVENUE

INTERNALLY GENERATED FUND (IGF)

Hon. Presiding Member, the Assembly was able to rake in a total of GHs 1,512,193.60 as at October, 2021 out of an estimated revenue target of GHs 1,834,069.00. This represents 82.45% of our target for the year 2021.

I would like to assure Hon. Members that, the Assembly has put in place productive measures to achieve its revenue targets and possibly exceed them going forward.

4.0 AGRICULTURE

Hon. Presiding Member, in a bid to increase food production for local consumption and export and to also create employment, the government's flagship programmes such as Planting for Food and Jobs, Planting for Export and Rural Development and Rearing for Food and Jobs are still being implemented.

The Assembly, through the Department of Agriculture has distributed fall army worm chemicals to more than 2,073 farmers in the Municipality to help contain the disease. These chemicals were received from Government as part of

measures to increase food production in all parts of the country. Under the Planting for Export and Rural Development Programme (PERD), 833 farmers in the Municipality benefited from the distribution of 50,000 improved oil palm seedlings whilst 80 farmers also received 4,500 improved coconut seedlings. I would like to urge the beneficiaries to adhere to the directions from the Extension Officers in relation to proper farming practices so as to derive the maximum benefit from the programme. Relatedly, over 5,893 farmers in the Municipality were beneficiaries of sensitization on these flagship programmes. A total of 20 livestock farmers who were registered with the Department of Agriculture received 50 pigs under the Rearing for Food and Jobs programme.

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, farmers in the Municipality were sensitized on the COVID-19 safety protocols and given P.P.E's to prevent our gallant farmers whom our livelihoods depended on from contracting the virus.

Furthermore, due to seasonal changes globally, some selected farmers in the Municipality were educated on climate change and its effects on modern day agriculture so as to enable them adapt appropriately.

Hon. Presiding Member, in adherence to His Excellency the President's tree planting exercise dubbed "Green Ghana Project" a total of 8,865 coconut, cidrella, cedar and mahogany tree seedlings were distributed to residents for planting. The Assembly kick-started the project in the Municipality with a tree planting exercise on Friday, 11th June, 2021 with the involvement of key stakeholders such as Nananom, the Clergy and other identifiable groups.

I wish to entreat Hon. Assembly members to help sustain the project by monitoring the growth of these seedlings in their electoral areas.

The Assembly commemorated this year's Farmers' Day Celebration at Agona Nyakrom where a total of 12 farmers were awarded under different categories. The overall best farmer award in the Municipality went to Thirty-one (31) year old Mr. Joseph Atile of Agona Nkum. The relatively young age

of the overall winner should inspire our youth to venture into farming. The Assembly is ever ready to facilitate and support such youth who would like to make a career out of farming.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SANITATION

Hon. Presiding Member, although a lot has been done with regards to sanitation, the exponential increase in population requires a lot more effort and investment in this sector.

The large volume of refuse generated daily has led to a situation where our final refuse disposal site requires frequent clearing. There are plans in place to increase the number of communal refuse containers in the various communities to prevent the spillage of refuse at the container sites.

In a relatively short period, the Assembly has been able to support over 1,150 households to construct latrines all in an effort to eradicate open defecation. The Assembly will continue to conduct health screening for food vendors to ensure that foods and drinks are prepared and sold under hygienic condition in order to safeguard the health of our people.

5.0 EDUCATION

Hon. Presiding Member, it is the right of each child to have access to quality education for personal development and to be able to contribute to nation building. This can be achieved through improving educational infrastructure, academic supervision, enhancing the capacity of teachers, proper parenting among others. I am much aware that a lot was done by my predecessor to ensure improvement in the quality of education in the Municipality, however, I believe we need to do more by synergizing our efforts.

As part of our commitment towards the course of education, the Assembly recently sponsored the B.E.C.E Mock Examination for all candidates in the Municipality. It is our hope that this gesture will culminate into improved results.

Hon. Presiding Member the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on our educational system was such that our children had to stay at home for almost a year. The Assembly played its part in mitigating the challenge by fumigating the schools several

times before they were re-opened. Additionally, about 9,583 nose masks, 4,792 hand sanitizers and 44 thermometer guns were supplied to schools to help prevent the contraction of the disease by our future leaders.

6.0 TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Hon. Presiding Member, the establishment of the Business Resource Centre (BRC) in Swedru has provided our small and medium scale enterprises with the opportunity to incorporate standardization and modern methods of commerce into their operations through skills training and technical assistance provided by the centre. The centre also collaborates with other agencies such as DVLA to facilitate easy access to the services provided by those agencies. Another intervention being undertaken by the centre is credit facilitation. Businesses can be assisted to access credit from partner financial institutions to expand their operations. So far the centre has been able to assist over Thirty (30) enterprises to secure credit. Also, the centre has the capacity to link businesses with prospective clients and export platforms. I will therefore urge businesses operating in our Municipality to

take advantage of these services to enhance their operations.

7.0 SOCIAL WELFARE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Presiding Member, the following are some activities carried out by the Assembly to ensure social inclusion and to provide the needed assistance to our less fortunate compatriots;

- ✓ A total of 701 households with more than 2,222 persons benefited from the payment of LEAP grant (social grant) in the Municipality.
- ✓ About 801 Persons With Disability (PWDs) benefited from the disbursement of funds during the period under review.
- ✓ Organization of skills training for persons with disability to enable them start income generating activities.

- ✓ More than 432 NHIS cards including 235 new registrations and 197 renewals were issued for LEAP beneficiaries in the Municipality.
- ✓ Over 339 new PWD's in the Municipality were registered and their specific needs identified and taken care of by the Assembly.
- ✓ A total of 26 cases involving child maintenance and family reconciliation were resolved in the Municipality.
- ✓ To reduce streetism, 11 children were picked from the streets in the Municipality and taken to orphanage homes whilst others were assisted to re-unite with their families.

8.0 HEALTH

Hon. Presiding Member, the sudden emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic had put a lot of strain on our way of life. Records available to us indicate that 83 COVID-19 positive cases were recorded since the onset of the pandemic with

82 recoveries. Unfortunately, one (1) life has been lost to the pandemic in our Municipality.

Several measures were put in place by the Assembly in collaboration with the Municipal Health Directorate and various stakeholders to mitigate the spread of the virus in the Municipality. Among the measures put in place to ensure that residents adhere to His Excellency the President's directives on

COVID -19 are outlined below;

- ✓ Establishment of Isolation Centres in various Senior High Schools and Health centres.
- ✓ Intensification of Sensitization on the COVID-19 safety protocols.
- ✓ Establishment of COVID-19 Task Force to enforce the COVID-19 directives at restaurants, pubs, churches, mosques, drinking spots, schools, markets, lorry parks, and other public places.
- ✓ Vaccination exercise. A total of 15,947 residents have so far been vaccinated against the disease.

I would like to appeal to Hon. Assembly Members to entreat their electorates to ignore the misconceptions surrounding

the COVID-19 vaccines and avail themselves at the designated centres in the Municipality to take their vaccines. This is particularly important due to the upcoming Christmas festivities where large gatherings will be taking place.

On behalf of the people of the Municipality, I wish to express our gratitude to our gallant health workers for the relentless efforts displayed during the peak of the pandemic. Also, I wish to express the Assembly's gratitude to Hon. Assembly Members and all stakeholders for their cooperation during this difficult moment.

On other health related matters, the Municipal Health Directorate distributed a total of 75,718 treated insecticide mosquito nets in a bid to reduce malaria cases. Also, 50 nurses were supported by the Assembly to undergo capacity building training on HIV/AIDS to enable them effectively provide HIV/AIDS testing and counseling services to our people.

9.0 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Hon. Presiding Member, the following are updates of key development projects ongoing in the Municipality.

A. DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES COMMON FUND (DACF)				
PROJECTS				
NO	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	CONTRACT SUM	STATUS OF COMPLETION
1.	Construction of 1No. 2-Unit Kindergarten Classroom Block with Furniture	Swedru Urban B' AMA	250,871.83	ON-GOING
2.	Construction of Police Station	Agona Nyakrom	465,043.42	PLUMBING/TILINGG /PAINTING
3	Construction of Teachers quarters	Afumkwa	205,758.50	PAINTING
B. INTERNALLY GENERATED FUND (IGF)				
PROJECTS				
4.	Rehabilitation of Swedru Town Hall	Agona Swedru	197,887.00	ON-GOING
C. URBAN DEVELOPMENT GRANT (UDG)				
PROJECTS				
5.	Bitumen Surfacing on Falcon street and Eduful street in Agona West Municipality.	Agona Swedru	1,157,206.37	ON-GOING
D. SECONDARY CITIES PROJECTS				
6.	Bitumen Surfacing of Greenland street in the Agona West Municipality-PH.II (0.70-1.40)	Agona Swedru	2,257,557.02	ON-GOING
7.	Bitumen Surfacing of Greenland street in the Agona West Municipality PH.I(KM 00-070)	Agona Swedru	2,284,693.65	ON-GOING
8.	Bitumen surfacing of Otabilkrom link (402m) and agyabusua street (644m) in Agona West Municipality	Agona Swedru	2,430,480.83	96% COMPLETED

9.	Bitumen surfacing on Esukontsen street (0.70km) and pavement of Agona Swedru town hall fore court in Agona swedru	Agona Swedru	2,399,473.25	92% COMPLETED
E. DACF/RFG PROJECTS				
10.	Construction of 3bedroom semidetached apartment for Medical Doctors	Agona Swedru	539,922.60	ON-GOING
11.	Ino 3 Unit classroom block with furniture for Girls Model school	Agona Swedru	3,494,597.74	ON-GOING
12.	Construction of 4-Unit 18no. Market Stalls	Lower Bobikuma	135,000.00	ON-GOING
F. DUR/GOG PROJECTS				
15.	Emergency asphaltic Overlay on selected Arterial and Collectors in Agona Swedru	Agona Swedru	40,011,358.85	85% COMPLETED

MUNICIPAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S VISION

Hon. presiding Member, although my overall vision for the Municipality is the total and comprehensive development of its various sectors, priority attention would be given to the following;

ROADS

The importance of road to the socio-economic development of a society cannot be overemphasized. It is for this reason that we have decided to commit the necessary resources to improving the road network within the Municipality. This will translate into reduced travel time, especially in our urban centres, thereby enhancing economic activities. Our farmers will also be able to transport their produce at a lower cost and with much ease. A significant amount of work has gone into grading works over the past two (2) months to ensure easy access to underserved communities. Furthermore, we have intensified our lobbying efforts for more of our roads to be asphalted or tarred. We will also ensure that the Nyakrom bridge is reconstructed as soon as possible. We have also planned to construct a lot more culverts as well as to open up more roads in new communities. Efforts are also being made to decongest the central business area of Swedru in a bid to facilitate commercial activities.

SANITATION AND HEALTH

Rapid urbanization and increased population growth bring in their wake challenges associated with sanitation. There is therefore the need for an effective and efficient mechanism for managing our waste. The current method for disposing our waste at the final disposal site is unsustainable in the long run. As such, we have initiated moves to attract investors for the establishment of a recycling plant to address our sanitation challenges. This will not only create jobs but also generate revenue for the Assembly. The road network leading to the final refuse disposal site is being improved to reduce refuse disposal time. There are also plans to increase the number of refuse containers at the communal container sites and to support Hon. Assembly Members to revive the monthly sanitation exercise. The Assembly will continue to support the Ghana Health Service in its activities to ensure access to quality health care for our people.

EDUCATION

Undoubtedly, the greatest asset of any society is its human resource. However, the ability of this resource to improve its well-being will largely depend on the form and quality of

education given. I can assure you that the Assembly will not depart from its long-standing commitment to the provision of infrastructure, furniture and other auxiliary support to enhance the level of education in the Municipality. It is worthy to inform the House that the Municipality is privileged to benefit from the construction of a state of the art Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Center. The Assembly has written to the Department of Social Welfare to release about twenty (20) acres of the NAFCO land for this important project.

AGRICULTURE

A sizeable number of our people are involved in farming and the broader agriculture value chain, which also forms a large chunk of our economy. It is therefore imperative for us to support this segment of our society. The Assembly will see to the full implementation of the various policies and programmes in the Agric sector such as the planting for food and jobs, planting for export and rural development and rearing for food and jobs.

EMPLOYMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Youth unemployment is one of the biggest challenges our nation has to grapple with and its security implication is not far-fetched. Due to the limited avenues in the public sector, the needed support should be given to entrepreneurs to enable them scale up their operations to facilitate the creation of more jobs. Since my assumption of office, I have had the opportunity to interact with identifiable trade associations to better understand their challenges so that together we can help to transform the economy of the Municipality. We will also create opportunities for the youth to acquire skills which will enable them set up their own businesses.

STREETLIGHTS

The use of streetlights have been found to be an effective way of reducing criminal activities and as a way of beautifying our communities. In furtherance of this therefore, we have made urgent request to the Hon. Regional Minister

and the Ministry of Energy for the provision of streetlights. We have so far received the first consignment of One Hundred (100) pieces of streetlights for onward distribution to the communities.

REVENUE MOBILIZATION

The aforementioned lofty ideas and plans will be extremely difficult to implement without the required financial resources. Whilst efforts will be made to lobby for more external support, we can also look within to mobilize a lot more revenue. We have therefore put in place a number of measures to help increase our Internally Generated Fund (IGF). These include setting up of monitoring mechanisms to curb revenue leakages, sanctioning and/or reshuffling of non-performing revenue collectors, engagement of residents on the use of IGF, regular meetings with our revenue collectors to assess their performance, strengthening of sub-structures, involvement of Hon Assembly Members in revenue mobilization and the use of modern technology. It is my conviction that with these and other strategies as well as support from Hon. Members, we should be able to meet our I.G.F. targets for the subsequent years.

Hon Presiding Member, before concluding my address, permit me to acknowledge the efforts of the following Hon. Members in initiating projects and programmes in their electoral areas for the benefit of their people;

Hon Shaban Salisu led his community to construct a drainage of a sizeable proportion and cost to help check erosion in his electoral area.

Hon. Ebenezer Bimpong on his part organised a one-day workshop for BECE candidates in his electoral area to help prepare them adequately for their exams. He also organised fundraising project dubbed “**ketewa bia nswa**” to mobilise funds for development activities.

Hon Samuel Eyison also organised a graduation programme for BECE candidates in his elected area and distributed a total of 245 math sets to aid them in their examination.

Hon Samuel Ametepe Assipounou in his bid to encourage and motivate BECE candidates in his electoral area, organised a workshop for them.

I believe strongly that other Hon Members are equally doing their bit to improve the well-being of their electorates. It is in

this light that I wish to encourage us all to initiate such projects and programmes in our communities and I wish to assure you that the Assembly is ever prepared to support such initiatives.

In conclusion, Hon. Presiding Member, even though I have outlined my vision towards transforming the Municipality, it is only through our collective efforts that we can achieve the objectives that we have set for ourselves. I have made a personal commitment in the interest of our Municipality to work with all stakeholders. In the same vein, I hereby respectfully entreat us all to work in unity for the progress of Agona West Municipality.

I thank you all sincerely for your kind attention