

FUNDRAISER FOR KATH PROJECT - MAY 4 2017

SPEECH BY THE FIRST LADY

Your Excellency the Second Lady Mrs Samira Bawumia,

Honourable Members of Parliament

Honourable Deputy Minister

Your Excellences, Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Nananom

Distinguished members of the Clergy

Business Executives

Management and staff of Multi-media Ghana Ltd

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am touched to see so many of you at this fundraising event. God bless you for coming.

The cry of a healthy new born baby pierces the air. The smile of a mother radiates happiness, gratitude and wonder. This is a picture we are all familiar with. But this is a picture that eludes or very quickly fades for some families in our dear Ghana.

A few weeks ago Joy News began to air a very disturbing documentary, on the awful conditions at the Komfo Anokye maternity block. Not soon after that, Joy News' Seth Kwame Boateng and his colleagues came to my office and presented the documentary to me and Mrs Samira Bawumia. (Thank you Seth and your team for bringing this to the attention of Ghanaians.) What we saw simply horrified us. New-borns were dying and mothers were dying. The reason? Lack of space.

The result is that, we have a very congested maternity ward, packed with expectant mothers. The documentary showed two heavily pregnant women sharing a single bed and in other cases two beds had been joined to accommodate three. We saw mothers lying on the floor and on hard benches. There is so little space that some women in labour have to hold on until the labour rooms are free. This is what our pregnant women endure. This deplorable situation leads to about 200 maternal deaths every year, at Komfo Anokye.

We also saw the mother and baby unit. Built to take about 60 babies, the unit is forced to take between 100 and 120 babies. This unit is highly congested with 3 to 4 babies in a cot. What happens then is that on a bad day 6, to 7 babies die. Some days as many as 10 babies die. At the preterm unit, several babies occupy an incubator, meant for one baby, making it so easy for cross infection. It was simply heart-breaking to watch.

We immediately decided something must be done. Not only because we are mothers, but because fate has put us in positions where we simply had to act. Like Esther in the bible we felt that God had put us in our positions for a time like this. We were a bit apprehensive though. How were we going to find the money to do what we had to do? We knew then that, we needed the support of generous, compassionate individuals and organizations like you.

The authorities at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, have made it clear that having some additional space would greatly improve the situation. This is a facility that serves Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, the three regions of the North and even parts of central and Western regions. Simply put we decided to find the money to build a single story, maternity ward. Acting now will save so many lives.

This new unit, will make a real difference. This may sound like a lot of figures, but please bear with me. I need to tell you the exact difference your contribution will make. Currently the maternity centre has two [2] delivery beds and two [2] operating rooms with only one functional. The new unit would have five [5] delivery beds, three [3] operating rooms and four [4] emergency delivery beds. At present we only have three [3] working incubators, and four [4] phototherapy units. The new unit would be equipped with twenty [20] incubators and twenty [20] phototherapy units. The current facility uses natural ventilation which makes the place really hot. The new unit would be an insulated building with forced cooling. (By the way please don't ask me. That's a technical term)

The new unit will allow KATH to take in four times the current number of infants and mothers. Ultimately the projection is that this new unit would reduce the avoidable deaths by 60-80%. I believe we would all be happy with this outcome.

So far we have had some pledges, and some donations, but we are far from what is needed. Let me at this stage thank the Japanese government through their embassy in Ghana and others who wish to remain anonymous, for their kind donation to the project. We need the support of all of you here to build this facility. No mother should lose her life giving life to another. No child should lose their life, before they have a shot at life.

I'm here to ask you to make a pledge or donation in cash or in kind to the Komfo Anokye maternity unit project, and other similar projects across the country. We did some research and discovered a lot more of our health facilities need help. The plan is to finish the KATH project and move on, to other health facilities. Our goal here today is to raise a minimum of ten million cedis for starters.

Please think carefully about the stories you've heard today and help save our mothers and children. The cry of a healthy new born baby pierces the air. The smile of a mother radiates happiness, gratitude and wonder. This is the picture we all want.

I hereby launch the Save a child, save a mother project and call on all individuals, organizations, institutions, businesses, religious groups and other groups and associations to contribute to the fund to improve facilities at our health institutions.

At this point I would like to call the contractor Eric, to give us a brief description of the project. Trust me, when you see what we intend to do, you will give more than you planned to.

God richly bless you for your generosity. Have a good evening.

Thank you so much .