

ODENEHO KWAFO AKOTO III

SPEECH ON THE OCASSION OF THE VISIT OF QUEEN MARGARETHE II OF DENMARK TO AKWAMUFIE

Your Majesty Queen Margarethe II of Denmark, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Representatives of Danish and Ghanaian Governments, Nananom, my compatriots, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Although this is Her Majesty's first visit to Akwamufie, we have firmly established a close relationship with our Danish friends and therefore hope that this is only the first of many more visits.

With profound pride and great pleasure that I welcome you to Akwamufie. Akwaaba Ohemaa.

To begin with, may I render my appreciation for the opportunity to re-connect two histories and cultures. It is my hope that by the end of today's event, we would have set the stage for realising our common purpose.

Akwamu is undoubtedly a place that boasts some of the most picturesque, serene and strikingly beautiful landmarks in Ghana; a place indeed, with great development potential for tourism.

As a people, Akwamus are historically recognised as warriors, and you will find we are a people identifiable by our dignity and sense of pride in our history and culture. Indeed, I can state with confidence that Akwamu is the origin of much of the Akan traditions and cultural heritage that we witness in Ghana today.

Our rich history, characterised by our war prowess, alliances, fearsome reputation and recently, focus on sustainable development, is among some of the most powerful that forms the overall historical makeup of Ghana. It would be impossible however, to tell the history of Akwamu without mention of our interactions with the Danish. Notably the activities of Asomani and Basua; the former being instrumental in the seizure of Christiansburg Castle when in 1693 he led a group of 80 men in revolt to take over the castle.

The King retained the keys as evidence of the Akwamus' oversight of the Christiansburg Castle. Those keys remain with us to this day.

Our relationship with Denmark has been sustained for many years through the friendship of two outstanding adopted sons of our land and, at this juncture, I would like to take a few moments to pay homage to them.

Mr Kurt Frandsen otherwise known as Nana Amoako, – worked in Akwamu for over 20 years. His passion towards making the lives of our people better, led him to establish projects to provide better schools equipped with electricity, furniture and computers among others. Together with Principal Mogens Falk (Nana Afriyie) from Odense in Denmark, they built kindergartens and trained teachers to run them. Nana Amoako died a year ago aged 80 years old. May his soul find eternal rest.

Karl Peter Samuelsen – brother to Foreign Minister Anders Samuelsen, visits Ghana and Akwamufie each year with some of his students. Nana Afriyie and Karl Peter are both Board members of "Friends of Akwamu". Together they support able as well as disabled students in the Akwamu community. Currently, Nana Afriyie is working on Education, Agriculture, Health, Industrial and Infrastructure project here in Ghana set to be implemented in 2018. The Project is a partnership including that aims to utilise drone, robotic and automisation technology to improve productivity within these sectors.

Your Majesty, Akwamu is on the precipice of a re-emergence. In an attempt to redress our period of hiatus by exploring different approaches towards development of sustainable livelihoods in our land, I invite your good office and the Danish Government to partner with us in our efforts to preserve our common history through the expansion and completion of the 'Akwamu Arising Agenda Project' based on these main areas of focus:

1. TWINNING OF AKWAMUFIE AND COPENHAGEN

To build on our relationship with Denmark, we propose the linking of Copenhagen and Akwamufie as Twin Cities. This historic move will strengthen the cooperation between the two cities in terms of economic development, cultural exchange, research and innovation for sustainable development.

2. TOURISM

We are indeed proud custodians of incredible artefacts of extreme historical and educational significance, the preservation of which will undoubtedly benefit generations to come through tourism, exchange and other programmes. Recent events have highlighted the urgent need to establish a museum, not only to preserve and display but also educate the public about our historical treasures while promoting tourism and culture.

The potential economic impact of tourism cannot be underestimated, with the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), estimating that some \$1.73 billion dollars, was contributed to Ghana's economy in 2013 through spending and investment directly linked to tourism alone; with Ghana ranked 98th in the world's tourism industries. Subsequently, with some of the best known landmarks such as the Akosombo Dam and Volta Lake, Adomi Bridge situated in our backyard, Akwamu continues to play a strategic role in promoting Ghana. All that remains is to further develop our untapped potential.

3. CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES

An exchange programme that will encourage participants to engage in cultural dialogue in order to gain an understanding of cultural diversity, identity, social justice and community harmony while developing independence and leadership skills via a range of activities.

4. EDUCATION

Lack of access to quality education continues to be a major challenge. I believe that no child should be deprived of the opportunities that education affords and in 2017, I deem it a tragedy that there are still young people who are denied this opportunity. We seek partnership to help provide fundamental educational facilities for children aged between 6 to 15 years old from very low income families in our rural communities.

4. TRADE AND INVESTMENT

“In a report released in July, this year, FDI Intelligence, a unit of the Financial Times, found that Ghana was among the top ten favourable destinations for foreign direct investments in 2014 in Africa and the Middle East. FDI inflows into the country's economy totalled USD \$4 billion in 2014, according to the report, making Ghana the eighth top receiver of investments among its peers in the continent and the Middle East. The USD \$4 billion worth of FDIs in 2014 represent a modest improvement from the USD \$3.9 billion recorded in 2013 but came on the back of a general slowdown in FDI inflows, resulting mainly from dampened sentiments in the global economy”- (Macropolis.net)

During my tenure, I am determined to help develop our resources, provide employment and improve quality of life. In keeping with this agenda, I intend to negotiate with interested agencies to partner with us towards investment in the areas of:

- **Health** (Hospitals, Clinics, Laboratories, Medical Equipment, Pharmaceuticals, Research & Development facilities and many more).
- **Education** (Primary, Secondary & Tertiary school buildings, Libraries, Hostels, Cafes and Restaurants, Sports Facilities, Research Centres)
- **Agriculture** (Farming, Equipment, Factories, Warehouses, Shops)
- **Energy** (Clean Electricity and Gas Infrastructure and Supply Outlets, Meters, Solar Units, Renewable Energy exploration, Training Facilities)

- **Environment** (Natural Gas Plants, Water Treatment Plants, Waste Management and Conversion Factories, Recycling Facilities)

Your Majesty, Queen Margarethe II, I invite you to consider these proposals carefully and to kindly assist us in making them a mutually beneficial reality.

On behalf of the people of Akwamu, I express my sincerest gratitude for according us such honour by your visit here today. I would like to thank all members of your retinue, excellencies, my compatriots, Chiefs and Queenmothers, people and friends of Akwamu.

Long live Akwamu, Long live Ghana, Long Live Denmark

Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III

Akwamuhene

25th November 2017