

**AN ADDRESS BY MRS MAWUNYO KUMAH YOAKOR-DAGBAH THE
NATIONAL PRESIDENT ELECT OF THE GHANA ASSOCIATION OF
PERSONS WITH ALBINISM (GAPA) - 20/09/14**

Friends, Colleagues, all present - It is, for me, a great honor to be here with you today, at this most seminal moment in the history of our organization, Ghana Association of Persons with Albinism (GAPA).

Through your hard work, dedication and a commitment to our goals as an organization, we are in the midst of a great transformation of GAPA into a fully functioning support and advocacy group for Persons With Albinism (PWA) all over Ghana. It is therefore an even greater honor for me to be elected to lead our association, in this particular time.

I wish to inform you all that, I humbly accept. Like all of you here, I grew up facing our unique struggles as a PWA. And ultimately, my vision at the helm is to lessen the struggle as far as possible for our community.

The key areas I intend to address over my tenure are as follows:

-Stimulating Public Awareness: We know certainly that the troubles we face from the general populace stem directly from ignorance, a lack of understanding of who PWAs are biologically speaking. This lack feeds the superstition and myth that characterizes people's relations with us. If this is to be arrested, public awareness is a must; and this will be one of the key projects I shall pursue.

-Organizational Capacity: It is not for nothing that over the last couple of months, we have endeavored to reorganize our association, to create an effective nimble structure that assures the successful deployment of our projects and programs. The vision over the next couple of months will be to replicate this in the regions and districts of Ghana. My specific goal is to have at a minimum, over the tenure of my first term, functioning branches in all 10 regions of the country.

-Hospital Connection: I believe that our impact upon the lives of our fellow PWA brothers and sisters must begin when they need it most - at birth. This is why one of the key project proposals I shall pursue in my tenure is to establish relationships with hospitals that will function even if as a mere contact to us,

anytime a child with albinism is born to ensure that we can offer proper counseling for parents and disabuse their minds of any myths and superstition. We shall provide guidance as to our peculiarities, and continuing support throughout the life of the PWA. We will assure them that their children will not amount to nothing.

These, in addition to administering the day to day functioning of our association shall define my presidency. I look to the future with much hope and optimism. I look forward to a time when the birth of child with albinism will no longer be a thing to be met with scorn, scandal and spectacle. I look forward to a time when we will no longer occupy the margins of society.

Above all, I look forward to working with you.

Thank you