

**V\SPEECH BY H.E. DR. MAHAMUDU BAWUMIA, NEWLY-ELECTED
FLAGBEARER OF THE NEW PATRIOTIC PARTY ON SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 4, 2023, AT THE ACCRA SPORTS STADIUM**

Your Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic,

Your Excellency Former President J.A. Kufuor (who I am sure is watching from home)

Our National Chairman, Stephen Ntim,

General Secretary, Lawyer Justin Kodua

Chairman of the Council of Elders, Hon. Hackman Owusu Agyemang,

National Council Members,

Members of the National Executive Committee,

Chairman and Members of the Elections Committee,

Ministers of State,

Hon. Members of Parliament,

Constituency Chairmen and Executives,

Members of our great party,

Our friends from the media fraternity,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Moments ago, the Electoral Commission of Ghana declared the outcome of the 2023 NPP Presidential Primary. From the certified results, I was pronounced the clear winner with 61% of the valid votes cast and I won in 14 out of 16 regions.

I therefore stand here with profound gratitude and humility, having received the greatest honor of my life. The victory is not mine but ours, from Bogoso to Bolga, from Axim to Zarantinga, as the party has united and chosen a path to walk in unison. As a wise man once said, "a leader without any followers is just a man out for a walk", and I can proudly say that I feel the support from each and every

one of our members today as the poll results show that these are the highest percentage numbers for any first time presidential candidate in the history of our party. We said it was possible.

I thank the Almighty God for making this emphatic victory possible and for His unending blessings on me, the NPP, and Ghana. It is a victory for the rank and file of our great party; particularly to you, our hardworking grassroots members at the constituency, electoral area and polling station levels. You enthusiastically came out in your numbers when I visited you throughout the country, and you rallied support for me, amongst yourselves, at your respective electoral areas. I am immensely grateful to all of you.

The significance of this victory is not lost on me. I am humbled and overwhelmed. I attended Sakasaka primary school in Tamale, Tamale Secondary School, Buckingham University in the UK, Oxford University and Simon Fraser University in Canada. However, it has not been an easy journey. My work experience includes a stint as a farm by- day worker (with my good friend Dr. Abass Awolu (who is now in the civil service) during holidays in my secondary school years, to driving a minicab (taxi) in London and cleaning dormitories in Canada with friends like Richard Oppong of Vancouver (as I studied for my PhD) to make ends meet. God has brought me this far. I have always worked very hard; as a student, a lecturer, a deputy Governor, a running mate and a Vice President. And on this historic day, I have been elected as Presidential Candidate and Leader of the Great New Patriotic Party! That is just surreal. I thank God for how far he has brought me. I have always believed that with hard work, honesty, discipline and faith in God, one can fulfil one's potential. It is possible!

I congratulate the Electoral Commission of Ghana and the Presidential Election Committee of the NPP, chaired by the venerable Prof. Mike Ocquaye, for an

excellent job done. I also thank and congratulate the security services for an excellent job done.

I also congratulate my fellow aspirants for participating in the process and deepening the democratic credentials of the NPP. Their energies, time, engagements, and resources have contributed to energizing the base of the party and prepared us all for the crucial battle of 2024.

Now let us join together. I am determined to work with all of them and all our supporters to achieve the Party's ambition of "Breaking the 8". That ambition requires the participation of all the aspirants including Hon. Kennedy Ohene Agyapong, Dr. Akoto Afriyie, Boakye Agyarko, Kwabena Agyei Agyepong, Hon. Joe Ghartey, Dr. Kofi Konadu Apraku, Addai Nimo and Kojo Poku.

There are those who would say we are divided as a party, but I am here to tell them that it couldn't be less true. The NPP is a thriving democracy, where leaders are elected, not anointed, and I salute my fellow competitors in this race for partaking in this crucial process. While our plans may differ at times, our visions are aligned – we share a passion for Ghana and a firm conviction that the NPP is the only party that can transform her. The New Patriotic Party will enter 2024 united and energised. We are ready to make a strong and convincing case for another term in office with a fresh mandate and a new leader.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the journey towards today has been exciting and at the same time fraught with challenges. I remember the auspicious day on the 14th of August, 2008, when, through the visionary leadership of candidate Nana Akufo-Addo, as he then was, and the NPP, I was outdoored unto the uncertain political terrain of our nation.

I owe endless gratitude to President Akufo-Addo for his decision in 2008 and his undying confidence in me in the periods of 2012, 2016, and 2020. That singular,

consistent decision birthed this historic moment we are witnessing tonight. I thank you, Mr. President, for believing in me.

When I left Takoradi in 2008 that fateful day, after my outdooing as running mate to commence my journey in politics, I had the difficult task of convincing a large part of our country to accept the inclusive and truly national character of the New Patriotic Party. I faced challenges in communities that accepted the decades of propaganda that the NPP was unwelcoming to them.

I persevered. I kept going back to those communities election after election and with the same message that the NPP is inclusive and ready to work with every Ghanaian, irrespective of tribe and religion.

By the election of 2020, we made significant inroads into the North, taking a majority of the seats in the old Northern Region. We also saw increased support throughout the Zongos in the country. In the Volta Region, we continued to grow in numbers.

It has been a remarkable but difficult journey of preaching the inclusive nature of the New Patriotic Party to those who have always viewed our great party with suspicion.

The doubts regarding the inclusive character of the NPP dominated the discussion when I took the bold decision on 16th June this year, to file my nomination papers at the NPP headquarters, to contest to be elected as the Presidential Candidate of the party.

Some analysts were sceptical about my chances and others confidently dismissed the possibility of the NPP electing a candidate from the Northern part

of the country. They clearly misconstrued the party's conservatism to mean tribalism or regionalism. I was certain that they misunderstood this great party and its values because I knew our values of rewarding hard work and dedication would triumph. I knew it was possible.

Today's emphatic decision by the over 200,000 delegates of the NPP, the grassroots of the party, reaffirms my knowledge and belief that the NPP is truly an inclusive national party.

For a boy, born in the heartland of Tamale, with a hometown in Walewale, to be elected as a Presidential Candidate of Ghana's largest political party, speaks to the character of the party. The NPP is a party that is all-embracing, a party that rewards hard work, loyalty, and commitment to its values!

The delegates, by today's decision have resoundingly dismissed any doubts that the NPP is inclusive and rewards hard work. From virtually every constituency in the country, the message has been the same: In the NPP we do not care about where you hail from. We are tolerant of Ghana's religious diversity. We elect those deserving of leadership, those who are capable of governing, and those with proven traits of integrity, incorruptibility, and hard work.

With this resounding victory, the NPP is sending an invitation to the men and women in Ga Mashie to join me in this journey of possibilities. The NPP has a place for you.

To our men and women in the Zongos scattered across the 16 regions of Ghana, I say to you that in the NPP, it is possible to rise to the top. I invite you to join me in this journey of possibilities. The NPP has a place for you.

To the people of the Volta and Oti Regions, who may have long doubted if you will have a place in the NPP. You have been answered today. I invite you to join me in this journey of possibilities. The NPP has a place for you.

To the people of the North, we have often been told that the NPP is not our political home. Today, the delegates have demonstrated absolute confidence in us. I invite you to join me in this journey of possibilities. The NPP has a place for you.

In the Ashanti Region, the citadel of NPP politics, I have been shown unbelievable love and support. In the Eastern Region, a fortress of our party, the support has been remarkable. In Greater Accra, Western, Western North, Central, as well as the three Bono and Ahafo Regions, I have received tremendous support and love from the rank and file of the NPP. In the Volta Region, where our party's fortunes continue to grow considerably, the support was massive. And the five northern regions (Northern, Savannah, Northeast, upper east and upper west), as they have always done in past elections, joined the rest of the country, to emphatically vote for the winning candidate.

I have won convincingly in each of these regions, and this clearly demonstrates an energised party, with absolute confidence in me. I thank each and everyone of you for this massive support, which is also a reflection of the diversely harmonious nature of the NPP. I do not take this support for granted. I will work diligently everyday to justify your decision.

While on the campaign, I became aware of a 3-day demonstration staged by the young people of our country. They had a simple message for the political class: they needed more opportunities for work, they needed improved living conditions, and they wanted improved public services. These are legitimate

demands and we cannot ignore them. We will continue to work hard for the people of Ghana.

I have spent the last seven years assisting the President to deliver on many of these demands to: *create more opportunities for the youth, improve the well-being of our people, create inclusive access to secondary education and healthcare, develop and expand the road infrastructure of our country, create great convenience in accessing public services wherever one finds himself or herself, and to leverage technology to fast-track development.*

Notwithstanding these achievements, the unforeseen global economic downturn of the past three years, which derailed the significant economic gains and impact we made between 2017 and 2021, has had a devastating effect on our economy in the past two years, just as it has, on many other economies in the world. This has affected many, including government itself, the private sector and our households. The cost of living has increased dramatically and Ghanaians are feeling the pinch. I have seen the sacrifices Ghanaians are making and the hardships many Ghanaians are going through and I am as concerned as my fellow countrymen and women.

By the grace of the Almighty God, together with the remarkable sacrifices, patience and optimism of Ghanaians, the work of economic recovery is underway: GDP growth has picked up, consumer price inflation is on the decline, exchange rate depreciation has dramatically slowed down and the budget deficit as a % of GDP is on the decline). I will continue to support the President to sustain these gains.

As a party, we must loudly and consistently tell the public about our achievements, as well as our ongoing efforts. We are ALL communicators, each

one of us an NPP ambassador, and we should be telling the NPP story in our daily lives as well as on the public stage, every opportunity we get.

I am convinced that the NPP is the best option for the progress and prosperity of the Ghanaian people. My own core values – integrity, honesty, discipline, hard work and inclusivity. My can-do attitude, my rejection of the tag of impossibility, my passion to unleash the creative energies of the youth, my compassion for the poor and vulnerable – all of these align perfectly with the values with which our forbears created this political tradition. So to the NPP rank and file, I wish to say to you, today you have place your trust in me. I shall not disappoint you.

Ghana has given me everything, every opportunity and grace. I have dedicated my life to give back, and to serve this wonderful country to the best of my ability, with every breath in my body.

I have my own vision and my own priorities. Given the opportunity by you the people of Ghana to lead, I shall govern as my own man with guidance from God Almighty. My vision is to build an inclusive, food self-sufficient, data-driven and systems based nation that will fully participate in the global digital revolution to solve our problems and also usher in a golden age of benefits from our natural resources. I want to lead a nation that improves and unleashes the talents of our youth and offers good jobs with good pay, and sustainable growth with macroeconomic discipline.

As the Presidential candidate of the NPP, it would be my commitment to the youth of Ghana. The talent of our youth in various sectors such as information technology, robotics, entrepreneurship, creative arts, sports, etc. is just amazing. When we bring the talents of the youth together, we will surely build a mighty nation. Together, we can transform this nation and do even more, *in many areas*.

I therefore invite the youth, particularly the 'GenZs to join me in this journey of great possibilities. I have a place for you.

As a technocrat, it was doubted if I would gain space in a politics long dominated by career politicians. This victory is an invitation to technocrats and professionals to join me in this journey of possibilities. The NPP has a place for you. I have a place for you.

With open arms I invite everyone watching or listening to me tonight to join us on this journey of possibilities. Together we can build this nation.

I am encouraged by the ingenuity and the can-do spirit of the Ghanaian youth, the tireless efforts of our farmers, the bravery of our fishermen and women, the business acumen of our mothers and sisters in the markets, the passion of our drivers, the dedication to service by our security personnel, the sacrifices of our teachers, as well as the commitment of our doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers.

I am encouraged by the literate Ghanaian society we are creating, through our free access to secondary education and expanded support for tertiary education. Our country's future is really bright with a highly educated and skilled youthful population, leveraging technology for our economic transformation.

My brothers and sisters, I am encouraged by the beautiful diversity of our country, our peaceful co-existence which respects each other's faith, which unites us and brings all of us together for a common goal of seeing a transformed Ghana.

We stand here today in celebration, but the real work starts now, and I have no intention of slowing down. I will get right back to work, sit down with Ghanaians from all walks of life, from civil society and student organizations to young professionals, stakeholders in the business community and religious leadership. The position I seek needs to be earned, and I intend to show every single voter, from the farmer to the financial head, that I am the right man for the job. I will

listen to your concerns and answer your questions, because we are partners in this process and any worthwhile gain comes from a communal investment.

We speak about breaking the 8, but it's important to remember that that's more than just a slogan. By breaking the 8 we break with a culture of complacency, we reject the tacit agreement that power is handed over every 8 years, thereby relinquishing responsibility for the growth of this nation. This 8-year cycle stands in the way of a long-term vision for Ghana, therefore breaking it is not about NPP bragging rights, it is about being able to successfully implement long term visions and policies under a consistent leadership. Breaking the 8 is not about partisanship but about patriotism, and knowing that Ghana deserves consistency, focus and follow-through, not political bickering and division. We will break the 8 in unity, and we will govern in unity, because regardless of the margin of our victory, we govern forward in the interest of 100% of Ghanaians.

We have two tasks ahead of us: (1) to lead the New Patriotic Party to Victory in 2024; (2) to steward this nation from recovery to prosperity. Given the chance, I am determined to serve as a leader for a united Ghana, for all Ghanaians, regardless of background, circumstance, or socio-economic status. Ghana is a haven for peace and co-existence, and one of the many strengths of our nation is that we, while we may differ and debate, come together in unity for the good of Mother Ghana. I have felt that hope and unity as I have traveled through our country over these past months and I feel it here today, as we prepare to build

back better for us all. So we celebrate today, but tomorrow, we get back to work. For you, for Ghana and for us all.

I cannot end my speech without my deepest appreciation to certain personalities in our party and country.

As an believer in, and practitioner of, the liberal democratic values and principles of the Danquah-Busia-Dombo tradition (like all of you here), I have been inspired, throughout my life, by the thinking, deeds, sacrifices and accomplishments of such great political icons of our country and Party such as Dr. J.B. Danquah, S.D. Dombo, Prof. K.A. Busia, Edward Akufo-Addo, Obetsebi Lamptey, Alhaji Yakubu Tali, Tolon Naa, Jato Kaleo, Naa Abayifa Karbo, C.K. Tedam, S.G. Antor, Albert Adu-Boahen, R.R. Amponsah, J.B. Da Rocha, J.H. Mensah, and J.A. Kufuor. I express my profound gratitude to the founders of our tradition, without whose sacrifices I would not be here to today. I am also indebted to so many men and women who have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice for our party and country on a daily basis without outward recognition.

I extend my sincere thanks to President Akufo-Addo and his beautiful Rebecca (by any measure, a first class first lady) for their support and confidence in me over the years. I am truly grateful.

I thank former President Kufour, who first allowed me to serve as a Deputy Central Bank Governor from where I was noticed and subsequently poached into politics. I truly appreciate his wise counsel and guidance over the years. May the beautiful soul of his departed wife, Mama Theresa rest in peace.

I also thank former Vice President, Alhaji Aliu Mahama, and his wife, Hajia Ramatu Aliu Mahama for their inspiration. May the Almighty God continue to bless their souls.

To my beautiful wife Samira and our children, I thank you for your sacrifices and love in the journey so far.

I thank the polling station executives, the electoral area coordinators, constituency executives, regional executives, the council of elders, patrons, founding members, past officers, external branches, and the national executives for their massive support of my bid to lead the NPP. I will not disappoint you and I promise *to work hard with all*, for victory in 2024, by the grace of God.

I thank our distinguished Members of Parliament for their unflinching support for my candidature. They have been immeasurable in their support. I thank the thousands of volunteers and groups, who worked day and night to secure this historic victory for me *and the party*. I am indebted to all of you.

To the energetic youth of the NPP and Ghana, I shall lead the NPP to deliver on your aspirations. I thank you for your support so far and I pray for your continuous support.

I thank my campaign team for their dedication and commitment to executing the mandate assigned to them. They delivered a victory that the nation will never forget. *I also thank my office staff for their hardwork and commitment throughout the years.*

To my father, Alhaji Mumuni Bawumia and my mum, Hajia Mariama Bawumia I wish you were here to witness the dreams you had for me. I thank you for raising me to be the person I am today. May God continue to bless your beautiful souls.

To my late press aide, Kwabena Boadu, I know you are excited about this victory wherever you are. We made it! Thank you and God bless you.

I thank our friends in the media for their massive coverage of the entire process. The NPP and I are grateful for your partnership.

I am also immensely grateful to traditional rulers, the Clergy and the Ulamas, for their prayers, encouragement and wise counsel over the years.

I thank all of you, who have gathered here and those who are listening and watching from afar.

It is indeed possible!

God bless you!

God bless the NPP!

God bless our homeland Ghana and make our nation great and strong!