

**SPEECH BY Ms DOMINIQUE OUATTARA FIRST LADY OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE CELEBRATION OF
MOTHERS' DAY IN THE ME REGION**

My dear sisters,

My dear daughters,

It is an immense joy to be with you this morning in Adzopé, on the occasion of this Mother's Day celebration for the year 2023.

First of all, I would like to convey the warmest greetings of my dear husband, President Alassane Ouattara, to all the people of Mé region. To all the mothers of the region, he asked me to give you a big hug, and to wish you a very happy holiday.

I would now like to thank all the people of the cities of Adzopé, Akoupé, Yakassé Attobrou and Alépé, who came out in large numbers to give us a wonderful welcome. I'm very happy about this and thank you for all the affection you've shown me today, as on each of my previous visits. This goes straight to my heart.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend a very special welcome to our brother, Prime Minister Patrick Achi, and his wife, our sister Florence, who have warmly welcomed us into their home, as part of the organization of this ceremony.

Thank you both for the kind attention we have received since our arrival in Adzopé. Thank you also for your personal involvement in the successful organization of this beautiful celebration in honor of our mothers.

I would now like to greet my dear sister Ms Maimouna Koné, wife of the Vice-President, as well as my sisters, the wives of the Presidents of the Institutions present here today: Ms Fatou Bictogo, Patricia Ahoussou, Mayélé Coulibaly, Amy Toungara and Béatrice Diby. Thank you all for your support, my dear sisters.

My warmest greetings also go to all Government officials here present, especially female Ministers who are at our side. I thank them all for their much-appreciated presence.

My warmest greetings go to my little sister Mrs. Nassénéba Touré, Minister for Women, the Family and Children, whom I thank for her kind words to me.

I also greet all our sisters, the wives of Ministers, who are with us for this beautiful ceremony, and whom I thank most warmly.

I would now like to extend my greetings and thanks to the Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps, who have kindly joined us this morning, as on every occasion.

I would also like to salute our sisters in the Ambassadors' group, headed by Ms Suhad Belliard, Ambassador of France, whose support for all our actions goes straight to my heart.

I would like to greet the members of my delegation, especially my dear sister-in-law Sita Ouattara, and to all the personalities accompanying us today.

I would now like to greet all the administrative and political authorities of the Mé region, who have come to celebrate mother's day with us, led by the Prefect of the region, Mr. Gueu Zroh Simplicie, whom I thank for his involvement in the organization of this beautiful event.

My greetings and thanks also go to Madame Dadié Sylvie, Regional Councillor, whom I thank for her warm welcome.

I would also like to extend my greetings to all the elected representatives and executives of the region, who turned out in force for this ceremony, and thank them warmly for their presence.

I would also like to thank our distinguished canton chiefs and traditional chiefs, as well as our religious guides present this morning, for their prayers and blessings.

Finally, I'd like to extend my warmest greetings to all the mothers who have come in such large numbers this morning from the four departments of the Mé region.

I congratulate you on your beautiful parade and thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the gifts you have given me. You all look so beautiful, and I'm delighted to be able to share these moments with you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My dear sisters,

Mother's Day is a time of joy and festivity that I'm particularly fond of.

It's always with great pleasure that I celebrate it every year with my sisters in the various regions of Côte d'Ivoire.

This year, I came to Adzopé at the invitation of my dear sister, Ms Florence Achi. I really wanted to be here, to share this moment of communion with the women of the Mé region. It was important for me to come back here to show you all my affection and tell you how proud I am of you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest congratulations to my brother, Mr Patrick Achi, for all the good work he is doing at the head of the Government and more particularly at the Regional Council, to promote the influence of this magnificent region.

My sincere congratulations also go to my dear sister, Florence Achi, for her leadership and for all the actions she carries out for the benefit of the people, especially the women of Adzopé.

Congratulations to Patrick and Florence, ... Let's give them a big round of applause!

My dear sisters of the Mé region,

You are in the limelight today. We celebrate you not only for the life you have given, but above all for all your efforts to ensure the well-being and education of your children. You make great sacrifices to give them the best possible future. You work hard to support your spouses and contribute to the balance of your families. And it's for this self-sacrifice and commitment to love that you deserve to be celebrated every year.

Dear Mothers of the Mé, I would like to solemnly thank you for all your efforts and your contribution to the construction of our beautiful country. On this day, I would like to pay you a vibrant tribute. Please give them a big round of applause!

I would also like to congratulate all my sisters who have been distinguished today, and whose merit has been recognized. You have my full support.

My dear sisters,

The celebration of Mother's Day in Adzopé also gives me the pleasant opportunity to strengthen your empowerment and promote the well-being of a greater number of families in the region.

Indeed, I have always trusted ivoirian women's potential, and I have always believed in their strength, their courage and their capacity to be productive.

That's why I initiated the Support Fund for Women of Côte d'Ivoire in 2012, with the help of my dear husband, President Alassane Ouattara, to support the empowerment of my sisters.

Today, thanks to the President of the Republic, the FAFCI has reached a capital of 26 billion CFA francs, for over 71 billion CFA francs of activities financed thanks to an excellent national repayment rate of 98%.

This amount has enabled more than 360,000 women to carry out income-generating activities, lifting nearly 2 million people out of poverty.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our sincere thanks to President Alassane Ouattara, women's first advocate, for the confidence and support he has shown in all the women of Côte d'Ivoire. Let's hear it for him!

My dear sisters,

For the Mé region, a capital of 2,075,530,000 CFA francs has already been made available to our sisters in the four departments, with an excellent repayment rate of 97.58%, for which I would like to congratulate you.

I have therefore decided to encourage you to continue along this path, by granting you additional funding of 500,000 million FCFA, which will bring the total amount of the FAFCI fund for the Mé region to 2,575,530,000 FCFA. I hope that this additional funding will enable many more of our sisters to start up income-generating activities.

I also wanted to show you my support and affection by bringing you food and non-food donations, worth a total of 500 million FCFA, which have just been listed. These include agricultural equipment, tricycles, sewing and hairdressing equipment, as well as a number of gifts for our trading sisters. I remain convinced that you will make good use of them.

I'm also offering you 5,000 Uniwax loincloths, which I know will give you great pleasure.

My dear sisters,

Before I close my speech I wish to express a desire that is dear to my heart, which is peace in our communities, towns and villages. Indeed, we know what is at stake in the forthcoming elections, which will arouse a great deal of enthusiasm on everyone's part.

And I would like to urge you, my sisters, to show moderation and talk about peace to all those close to you.

Be, at all times and in all places, agents of social cohesion and promoters of living together. I know I can count on each and every one of you to preserve what is most precious to us.

This is how we will continue to develop our beautiful country together, in fraternity, love and peace.

Happy Mother's Day to all of you.

Thank you very much.