JOINT PRESS STATEMENT ON PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS AND UPDATES ON RECENT BUILDING COLLAPSES IN GHANA

Date: June 10, 2026 Time**:** 10:00 AM

Venue: Engineering Centre, Roman Ridge, Accra

Opening Statement

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the media, distinguished members of the press, and invited stakeholders.

We thank you for honouring our invitation to this important briefing.

We have convened this joint press conference to provide an update on the preliminary findings arising from ongoing investigations into recent building collapse incidents recorded across Ghana. These incidents include those reported in Adenta, Avenor and Ayawaso Central (Newtown Experimental School site), among others.

This statement is issued jointly by the Ghana Institution of Engineering (GhIE), Institution of Engineering and Technology, Ghana (IET-Gh), and the Local Government Service Engineers Association (LoGSEA

At the outset, we wish to extend our deepest condolences to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of these tragic incidents. We also wish a full and speedy recovery to all injured persons.

We must state clearly that every loss of life arising from preventable structural failure is one too many. These incidents reinforce the urgent need for stricter compliance with building regulations, stronger professional oversight, and improved enforcement of construction standards across the country.

1.0 Introduction to Our Investigations

As part of our national mandate and professional responsibility, we have undertaken preliminary engineering assessments and site inspections at the affected locations, including Avenor (7 June 2026), Adenta (5 June 2026), Newtown (29 March 2026), and other related sites.

We emphasise that these are preliminary findings. Laboratory analyses, material testing, and detailed structural simulations are still ongoing.

However, the patterns emerging from our field investigations are significant and demand urgent national attention.

2.0 Specific Findings from Recent Building Collapse Incidents

2.1 Unengineered and Abandoned Structures

We have found that some of the collapsed structures were erected without the involvement of qualified engineering professionals.

The collapse of an unengineered multi-storey residential building, as well as the incident involving the abandoned Newtown Experimental School structure, highlights a dangerous pattern of construction without proper design, supervision, or certification.

We are also concerned about abandoned and deteriorating buildings that remain accessible to the public. These structures pose severe safety risks, particularly to children and unsuspecting residents in surrounding communities.

2.2 Inadequate Foundations and Geotechnical Non-Compliance

Our investigations have identified serious deficiencies in foundation design and execution.

At the **Adenta site**, exposed foundations suggest that required embedment depths were not achieved, raising concerns about compliance with fundamental geotechnical standards.

At the **Avenor site**, we observed shallow foundations constructed in a high-water-table environment with significant fill material. The foundation system employed reinforcement and footing dimensions typical of minor perimeter structures rather than a multi-storey commercial building.

We must state unequivocally that such foundation systems are structurally inadequate to support the imposed loads.

Samples have been collected and submitted for laboratory testing to verify compliance with relevant engineering specifications.

2.3 Regulatory Non-Compliance

We have observed a recurring and deeply troubling trend: construction activities commencing without statutory approvals.

In several cases, projects proceeded without approved architectural drawings, structural designs, or valid building permits.

In addition, we noted instances where official stop-work orders issued by Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) were ignored.

We are of the strong view that enforcement mechanisms must be significantly strengthened. This includes prosecutions, demolition orders in extreme cases, court injunctions, and closer coordination with law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with regulatory directives.

We also call on citizens to play an active role. Public vigilance is essential. Communities must report suspicious or unauthorised construction activities to the appropriate authorities.

2.4 Unauthorised Vertical Extensions

At the Adenta site, we identified evidence of additional floors being constructed or previously added without professional assessment or regulatory approval.

These unauthorised vertical extensions introduced additional loads that the original structures were neither designed nor assessed to carry.

This significantly compromised structural integrity and contributed to the eventual collapse of the affected buildings.

2.5 Structural Deficiencies and Progressive Failure

Across multiple sites, we observed critical structural deficiencies including:

- Inadequately detailed reinforcement
- Poor-quality concrete
- Discontinuous load-bearing columns
- Insufficient structural support systems
- General construction malpractice

These deficiencies collectively created conditions that led to progressive structural failure. In some cases, we observed what is commonly referred to as pancake collapse, where floors fail sequentially under their own weight.

3.0 Systemic Deficiencies: Shared Responsibility of Citizens and State Institutions

Our investigations reveal that many of the collapsed buildings were constructed without adequate professional supervision.

A key challenge within the sector is the circumvention of established regulatory processes by some developers.

However, we must also be candid that these failures are not solely attributable to private actors.

By law, developers are required to obtain building permits supported by approved technical documentation and to await formal authorisation before commencing construction.

Once permits are issued, the Head of Works is expected to be notified so that a representative can be assigned to monitor construction at every stage.

In practice, however, developers often assume the role of project managers, engaging artisans(That is not to say Artisans are not crucial in our built environment) instead of licensed engineers and architects. At the same time, enforcement by some state institutions remains weak, with insufficient inspections and delayed responses to violations, including breaches of stop-work orders.

We therefore emphasise that building safety is a shared responsibility. Both developers and regulatory authorities must fully discharge their obligations.

4.0 Environmental Factors

We wish to clarify the role of environmental conditions in the recent incidents.

While heavy rainfall, rising groundwater levels, and strong winds have coincided with several collapses, these factors are not the root cause.

Rather, they act as triggering mechanisms that expose pre-existing structural weaknesses.

In particular, elevated water tables during the rainy season adversely affect shallow or poorly designed foundations, as observed at both the Adenta and Avenor sites. This often leads to differential settlement, instability, and eventual structural failure.

5.0 Unauthorised Modifications and Change of Use

We are observing an increasing trend of structural modifications without engineering approval.

These include:

- Addition of extra floors to existing buildings
- Conversion of residential buildings into churches, schools, warehouses, and commercial facilities

We are concerned that these changes are often carried out without assessing whether the existing structure can safely accommodate the increased loads.

Such practices significantly undermine structural integrity and pose serious risks to human life.

6.0 Material Quality in the Informal Sector

While much attention is often placed on concrete and reinforcement steel, we must highlight an equally important issue: the quality of masonry blocks.

Masonry blocks play a critical structural role, especially in low-rise buildings where they contribute significantly to load distribution and overall stability.

However, production in the informal sector remains largely unregulated, resulting in inconsistent quality, poor curing practices, and variable compressive strength.

These inconsistencies have direct implications for building safety and long-term structural performance.

7.0 Recommendations and Shared Responsibility

In light of our findings, we propose the following urgent interventions:

7.1 Lifelong Professional Responsibility

We emphasise that all building designs must be prepared and approved by recognised Built Environment Professionals.

We further stress that professional responsibility does not end at design approval. It extends throughout the lifecycle of a building, including compliance monitoring, maintenance oversight, and prevention of unauthorised alterations.

7.2 National Retroactive Structural Certification Programme

We propose a national directive introducing a 6–12 month compliance window. During this period, all owners of buildings of two storeys and above must submit:

- Architectural and structural drawings
- Structural assessment reports
- Structural analysis models (where applicable)
- Retrofitting or rehabilitation proposals

All documentation must be certified by licensed professionals. Buildings found to be structurally unsafe must be restricted, partially closed, or evacuated until remediation is completed. A final Habitation Certificate shall be issued only after successful inspection.

7.3 Stage-by-Stage Inspections

We call for strict enforcement of stage-by-stage inspections. No concrete works should proceed without verification of excavation and foundation stages by qualified assembly engineers.

7.4 Professional Supervision and Artisan Certification

We recommend continuous involvement of engineers and architects throughout construction.

We also propose formal certification of artisans, including masons and steel benders, given their critical role in construction delivery, particularly within the informal sector, which accounts for the majority of building activity in the country.

7.5 Periodic Structural Assessments

We recommend mandatory structural assessments for:

- Ageing buildings
- High-occupancy facilities
- Buildings undergoing change of use
- Abandoned structures
- Public and private infrastructure

7.6 Site Preservation

We recommend that NADMO secures all collapse sites to preserve evidence, allow safe investigation, and support laboratory testing of materials.

8.0 Closing Commitment

We, the Ghana Institution of Engineering (GhIE), Institution of Engineering and Technology, Ghana (IET-Gh), and Local Government Service Engineers Association (LoGSEA), reaffirm our collective commitment to supporting national authorities in strengthening enforcement, improving accountability, and promoting safer building practices across Ghana.

We further confirm that comprehensive final reports will be issued upon completion of laboratory testing and ongoing technical investigations.

Final Word

Building safety is not optional. It is a national responsibility. Protecting lives requires a shared commitment from professionals, developers, contractors, regulators, policymakers, and the general public.

We thank you for your attention.