

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



73RD ANNUAL NEW YEAR SCHOOL AND CONFERENCE

THEME:

“COVID-19 AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS IN GHANA”

ADDRESS BY:

**PROFESSOR NANA ABA APPIAH AMFO
VICE – CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022
GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

His Excellency, President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa
Akufo-Addo;

The Honourable Minister of Finance, Mr. Ken Ofori AttaChancellor
of the University of Ghana;

Members of the University Council;Members
of the Council of State;

Ministers of State; Honourable Members of Parliament;

Distinguished Guest Speaker;

Pro Vice-Chancellors;

Registrar;

Provosts, Deans, Directors and other officers of the University; Your
Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Our Esteemed Traditional Rulers;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of Management of the University, I wish to warmly welcome you to the 73rd Annual New Year School and Conference.

The New Year School and Conference which is a major scholarly activity held at the beginning of the new year is a long-standing tradition here at the University of Ghana. The conference is an event of national significance, providing a unique platform for key stakeholders of various sectors of the economy to engage in objective discussions and reflect on issues of national and global concern.

I am intrigued by the profound patronage that the Annual New Year School and Conference continues to enjoy since its inception in 1948. For the New Year School and Conference to survive 73 years, from the colonial era through the various civilian and military dispensations to this present day, shows its resilience and relevance to national development.

Madam Chair, permit me to acknowledge the School of Continuing and Distance Education and its collaborators for sustaining this tradition that serves as a barometer for gauging public opinion for the promotion of good governance and socio-economic development in the country.

Madam Chair, Distinguished guests, this year's New Year School and Conference is taking place at a very difficult period in global economic history. The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has to a large extent exacerbated social and health inequalities at the global, regional, national, and local levels. The pandemic has had drastic impacts on jobs; small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as well as the formal and informal sectors. The World Bank aptly described this pandemic as a seismic shock, the likes of which have not been seen in living memory. In effect, no country in this world was prepared for the socio-economic crises generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, governments are taking steps to recover and rebuild their economies by creating sound policies and effective plans that will help to accelerate the pace of economic recovery of their respective countries.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the theme for this year's New Year School and Conference “**COVID-19 and Socio-economic Dynamics in Ghana**” is certainly timely, given the devastating effects of the pandemic on sectors of the economy of Ghana. This notwithstanding, Ghana's response to the social and economic effects of the pandemic has been creditable. Notably, the setting up of the COVID-19 Response Team, and the COVID-19 Fund, as well as the emergency relief response including the provision of food, electricity and water, among others during the heat of the pandemic. In recent times, the vaccination drive and the roll out of the GHS 100 billion Ghana COVID-19 Alleviation and Revitalisation of Enterprises Support (Ghana CARES) “Obaatan pa” programme, constitute giant steps in government's quest to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and to offer a robust strategy to foster a quicker post-pandemic economic recovery and transformation.

Ladies and gentlemen, at a recent Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes' (ReNAPRI) conference hosted by the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), I made the passionate call to the government to strengthen the Planting for Food and Jobs programme by equipping farmers with the needed skills to

boost growth in the sector and enhance its contribution to GDP. The agricultural sector, as we already know, accounts for one fifth of our country's GDP, for this reason, it is important that we boost the sector through continuous upgrade of the skills of farmers. And I reiterate this call.

Madam Chair, as institutions of higher learning, universities in Ghana have an important role to play in spurring on economic growth and resilience through innovation, knowledge transfer, and community engagement. This role has become even more crucial in view of the urgency to restore to normalcy the Ghanaian economy, after the crippling effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the premier University in Ghana, it is our anticipation that this year's New Year School and Conference will champion the identification of models that would boost economic growth and development, taking cognisance of the current and future pandemics.

As I conclude, let me once again extend a warm welcome to you all once again, for coming to the University of Ghana for the 73rd Annual New Year School and Conference. I wish all of you a happy and fruitful stay

here and urge you to use the opportunity to contribute meaningfully towards the realization of the goals of the School and Conference. And while you are here, enjoy our beautiful campus. I anticipate an exciting New Year School and Conference that will compel you to return next year for the 74th Annual New Year School and Conference.

I urge you all to continue to adhere to all the COVID-19 safety protocols and to take advantage of the ongoing vaccination exercise. To echo the words of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana; *“this too shall pass”!*

I wish you all a happy new year and may God bless us all!

Thank you for your attention.

***Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo
Vice-Chancellor***

January 25, 2022