

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**FIFTH SESSION OF THE PROF. ALEXANDER ADUM KWAPONG'S NATURE
SPEAKS LECTURES (VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OCCASIONAL LECTURE)**

ADDRESS BY:

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

**THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2023
CENTRE FOR AFRICAN WETLANDS, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



His Excellency Daniel Krull, German Ambassador to Ghana,

Hon. Dr. Kwaku Afriyie, Minister in charge of Environment, Science,
Technology and Innovation (MESTI)

Our Distinguished Lecturer and Newly Appointed Rector of United Nations
University, Prof. Tshilidzi Marwala,

Dr. Yemi Katerere, UNU-INRA Board

Dr. Fatima Denton, Director, UNU-INRA,

Pro Vice-Chancellors,

Registrar,

Provosts,

Prof. Christopher Gordon, former Director of the Institute for Environment and
Sanitation Studies,

Other Deans and Directors present,

Faculty, Staff and Members of Convocation,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Representatives of Civil Society,

Stakeholders from the Private Sector,

Representatives from Development Agencies,

Alumni and Students,

The Press,

Invited Guests,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols duly observed.

I am excited to welcome you all warmly to the University of Ghana and particularly to the fifth session of the Professor Alexander Adum Kwapong's Lecture Series titled "*Nature Speaks*".

The University of Ghana is excited to co-host this lecture with the United Nations University's Institute of Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA). The United Nations University is a global research and postgraduate training organization headquartered in Japan. It has 13 research institutes based in 12 countries around the world. Through the University of Ghana, which is currently ranked as the leading university in Ghana, second-best in West Africa and among highly ranked universities in the world, the Republic of Ghana proudly hosts the only United Nations Institute operating in Africa, the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa.

The Professor Alexander Adum Kwapong lectures has been instituted to immortalize the legacies and contributions of the first Ghanaian Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana and the first African Vice-Rector of the United Nations University.

This high-level lecture series provides the platform for fostering independent thought on critical issues pertaining to nature and challenges conventional wisdom and narratives with the aim of discovering innovative ideas and more robust solutions. The lecture attracts a number of influential decision makers, stakeholders, policy influencers, the diplomatic community, civil society, private and public sectors, development agencies and medial representatives with interest in natural resources and related sectors.

Today's lecture features Professor Tshildzi Marwala recently appointed as Rector of the United Nations University and Under-Secretary of the United Nation. He happens to be the first Rector to be so appointed from the global south. Only today, I got information that he is one of two winners of the 2023 African Genuis Awards (AGA) African Geniuses.

Prof. Marwala will speak to us on the topic “***Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Economic Development***”. In this lecture, we will examine the relationship between AI and economic growth in Africa, exploring exciting as well as worrying technological innovations and the unique opportunities and challenges, these offer us. The lecture will also highlight how African countries are using AI

to drive growth in various sectors including healthcare, agriculture, and financial systems among others. The lecture will also touch on the downside of AI and how to mitigate it to enhance its efficiency and productivity.

In light of rapidly evolution within the technology space, this lecture is considered very timely to keep us abreast with the changing times and more importantly how these technologies, particularly AI can be employed as a game-changer for Africa's development.

This lecture is part of a series of events that places natural resources at the centre of Africa's sustainable and inclusive development as a catalyst for social transformation and shared prosperity. It is also aimed to provide informed insights into the complex issue of natural resource management and to create knowledge spaces where proactive ideas can be shared, debated and contested to prompt necessary actions in the sector.

The University of Ghana, which has a mission of remaining relevant to national and global development through cutting edge research as well as high quality teaching and learning, will continue to promote these collaborations which contribute to advocacy on pertinent issues of national development and global concern.

I look forward to an exciting and insightful discussion on how AI can contribute to economic growth in Africa and how we can ensure that this growth benefits all especially underserved communities and marginalized groups.

Thank you for your attention.

Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Vice-Chancellor, UG

May 25, 2023