

SPEECH BY PROFESSOR NANA ABA APPIAH AMFO, ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR,
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM, 6th AUGUST 2021

Your Excellency, Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia;

Representatives of Development Agencies;

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Development;

Registrar, Provosts, Deans, Directors, Heads of Department and University Officials,

Dear students, the media, distinguished ladies and gentlemen;

Good afternoon

I add my voice to that of the Director of the Institute of Advance Science and Technology to warmly welcome you all to the University of Ghana.

Today is an auspicious day for all of us at the University of Ghana and our partners.

It will be remembered as the day the University consolidated its internal innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives in a formal structure. The University of Ghana Innovation and Entrepreneurship programme (UGEIP) seeks to streamline and provide essential support services to students and alumni in cross-experiential settings to enhance their creativity and competitiveness in today's complex world.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, in seeking to be a world-class research-intensive university, we have strategically focused on enhancing student experiences by implementing modern coaching and mentoring programmes, strengthening the residential hall tutorial systems and resourcing units with activities that relate to students' development. The programme we are about to launch today seeks to give meaning to our second strategic priority which is to "promote academic excellence

using the highest international standards of teaching, learning and leadership development". This programme allows us to go beyond the classroom and the theories, cross disciplines and excite and spur on our young and even not so young minds to create, innovate and collaborate. The programme provides a formal avenue to help streamline activities of various departments, units and student groups as well as provide adequate financial, administrative and business support. We expect initiatives within the University such as University of Ghana Makerspace, Design Thinking Lab, Plastic Recycling Project and other student-led activities to be actively supported by this programme. Clearly, as a university we have gone beyond training highly skilled human resource for existing white-collar jobs (as these keep dwindling anyway), to venture into also creating entrepreneurial and creative spaces for our students and alumni.

His Excellency, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I would like to highly commend the Institute of Applied Science and Technology (IAST) of the University of Ghana for partnering with the Global Entrepreneurship Network - Ghana (GEN-G) to put this innovation and entrepreneurship programme together. Indeed, IAST has been at the forefront of industry engagement and has leveraged on industry-academia collaborations to bring countless positive experiences to our students and faculty. These include the design thinking workshop in collaboration with Nestle, Brussels Airlines and Grundfos to train, coach and mentor over 200 faculty and students; hackathon competitions with the likes of GIZ, Engen, SG-SSB, McHammah and training programmes for students and the public in greenhouse farming with funding from Skills Development Fund (SDF) among others. I would like to commend my predecessor, Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu for this dedication and commitment to this initiative. I would like to also congratulate the internal partners that IAST

have worked with and continue to work with. This is testament that when we break out of our pigeonholes, we can do amazing things together.

Your Excellency, this programme is here to stay. The University attaches utmost importance to it, and this is signalled by placing it under the auspices of the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. And with the government of Ghana's keen interest in technology, digitalization and entrepreneurship, I believe it is more than ready to partner with us to create opportunities for our burgeoning youth. Your presence here this afternoon is a testament to that and we are highly encouraged. I entreat all present and others linking up with us online to take advantage of the exciting opportunities this programme offers.

Your Excellency, while you are here and we are talking technology, I wish to acknowledge the Government of Ghana's assistance to expand WiFi connectivity on campus through the Electricity Company of Ghana. We have so far received about 41% of the expected support (which includes 270 access points, 50 boxes of UTP cables and some network accessories). I take this opportunity Mr. Vice President to express our utmost appreciation for this and request that the remaining work is expedited to improve teaching, learning and work experience for our students, staff and faculty. And perhaps more significantly allow us to create more physical and virtual spaces which fosters creativity and innovation,

As I end my speech, let me once again thank you Mr. Vice President, for honouring our invitation as the Guest of Honour on this propitious occasion, and on the occasion of my first public assignment as Acting Vice-Chancellor. It is our hope that you will continue to use your good Office to support this and other programmes of the University of Ghana.

Thank you all for your attention.