OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

SECOND EDITION OF A CONFERENCE SERIES ON MICROBIAL GENOMICS AND DRUG RESISTANCE

THEME:

"PERSPECTIVES OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN THE ERA OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC"

ADDRESS BY:

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VICE - CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023

GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

Special Guests of Honour, Dr. Anthony Nsiah-Asare, Presidential Advisor on Health and

Professor Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng, Chairman, Presidential Committee on Vaccine Development and Production

Invited Guests,

Provost, Deans and Directors,

Faculty, Staff and Students,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to join you all today as Chair of the Second Edition of this conference series on microbial genomics and drug resistance, particularly because such conferences contribute purposefully towards the attainment of the University's vision of becoming a world-class research-intensive University.

Three years ago, the world was confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic which threatened global stability, and adversely affected countries around the world. Today, we can all confirm that the pandemic has gravely affected our lives, although its impact has been

significantly mitigated in recent times in several regions around the world. Since the onset of the pandemic, healthcare systems around the world, especially in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs), with limited resources at their disposal, have had to promptly put measures in place to avert catastrophe. We have all witnessed the aggressive and proactive responses of stakeholders such as governments, biotechnologists, pharmaceutical companies and institutions like ours, to the pandemic. However, there seems to be a bigger threat lurking behind the shadows of COVID-19, the possible antimicrobial resistance from antimicrobial (mis)use during the pandemic, that has not received adequate attention, and is the main reason we are all gathered here today. Although the AMR menace needed urgent global attention and prompt interventions before the Covid-19 pandemic, reports of the widespread use of antimicrobials in clinical care practice for hospitalized COVID-19 patients makes it even more crucial that we give the issue more attention and address contributory factors. It is also important that we discuss the potential worsening of AMR in our country following the pandemic response as we engage various stakeholders in tackling its root causes.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is a rapidly growing global health threat which exerts a negative impact on the health of people across the world but particularly those in low and middle income countries,

such as those in Africa and Asia. Reasons for the growing threat of AMR include poor enforcement of regulatory framework on antimicrobial use, limited diagnostic and research structures that encourage prescription policies based on observations rather than laboratory reports, and sub-optimal antibiotic supply chain policies.

Today we are gathered to consider the theme, ***'Perspectives of Antimicrobial Resistance in the Era of COVID-19 Pandemic'*** and I am hopeful that by the end of this conference, we would have meaningful evidence-based discussions and make a tremendous leap towards our quest to address critical issues pertaining to AMR in the era of COVID-19.

I would like to use this opportunity to congratulate the Department of Medical Microbiology, University of Ghana Medical School for an initiative such as this, which does not only update us on current trends relating to AMR and the COVID-19 Pandemic, but also contributes purposefully towards the attainment of my first Key Strategic Objective (KSO 1) as Vice Chancellor, which intends to reinvigorate impactful research in the (applied) sciences, and humanities thus resulting in increased research income coupled with an exponential growth of research outputs such as publications, improved citations, and vibrant community engagements.

I am very pleased to announce that today's conference will see the launch of a number of projects which, among other things, will address issues of ***Microbial Drug Resistance and Therapeutics'*** **and** ***'Targeted Removal of AMR Genes and Pathogenic Bacteria in Wastewater'***. With the launch of these projects, I believe that the Department of Medical Microbiology, and the University of Ghana Medical School will set the tone for collaborations between the University of Ghana and other institutions with an interest in AMR, while also providing training in the area of multi-drug resistance.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations at this conference.

Thank you.

Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo
Vice -Chancellor
January 25, 2022