

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**



**LAUNCH OF THE COVID-19 SYMPOSIUM SERIES BY THE NOGUCHI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE  
FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH (NMIMR)**

**THEME:**

***COVID-19 IN GHANA: THE NOGUCHI STORY***

**ADDRESS BY:**

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

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2021  
NMIMR CONFERENCE ROOM, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

The Honourable Deputy Minister of Information, Honourable Fatimatu Abubakar

The Chief Director of the Ministry of Health

The Ambassador, Japan Embassy in Ghana

The Chief Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

The Coordinator, COVID-19 National Trust Funds

The Country Representative, World Health Organization

Provosts, Deans and Directors

The Director of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, Professor Dorothy Yeboah-Manu

Staff of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research

Faculty, Staff and Students of the University of Ghana

The Media

Specially invited guests

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all

It is an honour to be here today as Chairperson of the launch of the COVID-19 Symposium Series organised by the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research at the University of Ghana under the theme “COVID-19 In Ghana: The Noguchi Story”.

Two years ago, the world was hit with the global spread of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2, which quickly became the most unprecedented pandemic of our time. It virtually halted social activities and led to varied levels of restrictions in all parts of the world. The impact of the pandemic has indeed been devastating. Despite this, the pandemic has given us an opportunity to advance in science and technology, as it emphasised the need to increase investment in science and biomedical research.

In Ghana, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research under the College of Health Sciences of the University of Ghana, has been instrumental in the fight against COVID-19. The institute is the first institution to establish diagnostic capacity in country and confirmed the first case in Ghana in March, 2020. I am therefore pleased to Chair this maiden edition of the COVID-19 Symposium Series that seeks to tell the Noguchi story by sharing the Institute's findings from the COVID-19 works at the NMIMR with our cherished stakeholders.

I would like to commend the Institute for your selfless efforts in providing the technical capacity and being the main COVID-19 testing laboratory during the onset of transmission in Ghana. Those times were hectic with many unknowns, but the Institute rose to the task, contributing your quota to the fight against the pandemic. In addition, your continuous efforts in researching into various aspects of the virus is a reminder that the Ghanaian research scientist is capable of contributing to our understanding and control of this pandemic in Ghana and on the African continent. I laud all Directors, past and present, and staff of the Institute for your relentless efforts and commitment to the success of the mission and vision of this Institute, including work done in curbing the spread of not only this pandemic in Ghana but other biosecurity concerns including the ongoing yellow fever epidemic in the Northern Ghana.

Given the investment made at the Institute and the returns we see from today's Symposium, Noguchi has indeed justified its ability to earn its place as a 'Centre of Excellence' in medical research. In line with the above, I solemnly commit myself, on the ticket of the University of Ghana, to function as the leading global biomedical research Institute in Ghana and among the best globally. It is of utmost importance to me that the University community and other stakeholders extend their support to the Institute. I therefore call on you, our esteemed

stakeholders, for increased collaboration as we work towards achieving this vision and mission of the Institute.

We are gathered here today to be briefed on the findings on the COVID-19 through the lens of the Institute, and to seek input on interventions that would help achieve the objectives of getting the virus under control. This is in line with the Institute's objective of working to bridge the science and policy divide. It is significant to note that building the platform to discuss shared values and ensure a sense of institutional ownership by all stakeholders of the Institute is key, and it is my fervent hope that this maiden edition of the Symposium series will yield the needed results in advancing medical research.

The Honorable Minister of Information, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is my belief that we can work together to make Noguchi Memorial Institute of Medical Research a world class research institution in line with the University of Ghana's strategy and I look forward to working with you to see this vision manifest.

I thank you for your attention