

**OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**



**WACCI 3.0. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MEETING**

**ADDRESS BY:**

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

**FRI. APRIL 12, 2024**

**HOTEL SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND**

Hon. Minister for Education, Republic of Ghana

Founding Director of the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement  
(WACCI)

Our Distinguished Keynote Speaker and Ensuing Speakers

Special Envoy on Global Food Security, Department of State, USA

Chief Scientist of the Bureau of Resilience, Environment of Food  
Security, USAID

Representatives from the World Bank

President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) being  
represented by her Senior Advisor and the Deputy Chief of Staff

Director General, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture  
(IITA), Nigeria

Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa  
(FARA)

Representatives from Cornell University

Chair and Members of the International Scientific Advisory Board,  
WACCI

Associate Directors and Members of the WACCI Team

Representatives of other Partner Institutions

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

It is with great delight that I join you this morning to participate in this all-important round-table discussion with key stakeholders, actors, and policy makers to reflect on ways to accelerate our efforts towards agricultural transformation and resilient food systems in Africa.

As we gather here, we are reminded of the critical role that agriculture plays in the prosperity and well-being of humanity. Agriculture is the backbone of our economies, the source of livelihoods for millions of people, and the key to ensuring food security and nutrition for generations to come.

This unique forum created by the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI), underscores the importance of scientific innovation in agriculture, particularly through the advancement of genetic innovation within the Africa Centers of Excellence. Ultimately, it contributes directly to the achievement of SDG 2; Zero Hunger (achieving food security, improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture), which is closely linked to SDG 3: Good health and Wellbeing.

Since its established in 2007 with initial funding from AGRA, WACCI continues to stand as a beacon of agricultural innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa. As one of the flagship World Bank Centres of Excellence proudly hosted by the University of Ghana, WACCI has and continues to train top-notch scholars from across Africa in Plant Breeding, and Seed Science and Technology. The Centre has trained 111 PhD scholars in Plant Breeding and 40 MPhil graduates in Seed Science and Technology across 15 African countries. The impact of these scientists has been profound with groundbreaking research output resulting in improved varieties of staple crops. With an initial funding of \$11.5 million, WACCI and its alumni have secured over \$100 million for impact-driven projects across West and Central Africa. Undoubtedly, on the subject of Crop Improvement, WACCI has made significant strides through the development of high yielding seeds which is contributing to increased incomes of smallholder farmers in Ghana and beyond. The Kofi Annan Enterprise Hub for Agricultural Innovation (KAEHAI), hosted by the Centre, was established as a transformative force in agro-entrepreneurship particularly for the youth and women. Launched in October 2019, it has already

yielded 50 young entrepreneurs and 10 agribusiness startups. This is a feather in the cap of WACCI.

With the above proven track record, WACCI is set to launch even higher with a bigger dream to raise millions of dollars through strategic collaborations to spread its reach and impact. Strategic partnerships can accelerate agricultural transformation in several ways:

1. Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building
2. Multi-disciplinary research
3. Access to Finance and Markets
4. Infrastructure Development
5. Policy and Institutional Support

Shortly after I take my seat the convenor of this high-level stakeholder engagement meeting will come up to disclose this ambitious target and provide further details on how to make this happen. I am confident that with the carefully selected group of participants for this meeting, WACCI should be able to realize its target.

The University of Ghana is proud of the outstanding performance of WACCI and as Vice-Chancellor, I am determined to provide the

needed support to ensure that WACCI more than delivers on its mandate.

Before I take my seat, permit me to briefly acknowledge Dr. Eugene Terry, who is handing over Chairmanship of the International Scientific Advisory Board of WACCI. You have '*paid your dues*'. Thank you for elevating WACCI to this world-class level. I wish you every success in future endeavours. To the Incoming Chairman Emeritus Professor Ronnie Coffman, I wish you a fruitful tenure. You know the Centre inside out, and I am confident of the stellar leadership that you will provide.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am certain that this meeting will be fruitful and harvest great thoughts, ideas and resources which will serve as a catalyst for the much-needed transformation in Africa's Agricultural landscape and contribute to global food security.

With these remarks, I welcome you all warmly and declare the Stakeholder Engagement Meeting: WACCI 3.0, duly opened.

**Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo**

**Vice-Chancellor**

**April 12, 2024**