

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**WELCOME ADDRESS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE XXIII
AETFAT CONGRESS**

ADDRESS BY:

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

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025

UGBS Amegashie Hall

University of Ghana

- *Honourable Ministers of State,*
- *President of AETFAT Congress,*
- *Prof. Gabriel Ameka, Secretary General of the Congress,*
- *Prof. Paul P. Bosu, Director General, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Chairman of the Congress*
- *Distinguished Delegates, Scientists and Researchers from across Africa and around the world,*
- *Pro-Vice-Chancellors,*
- *Provosts, Deans, Directors, and Heads of Department,*
- *Students,*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my singular honour and pleasure to welcome you all to the University of Ghana and to the city of Accra for the Opening Ceremony of the XXIII Congress of the Association for the Taxonomic Study of the Flora of Tropical Africa – AETFAT.

Let me begin by congratulating the organisers and partners of this landmark event. Hosting AETFAT in West Africa for the very first time – and on the occasion of the Association’s 75th anniversary – is a truly historic milestone. The University of Ghana is proud to serve as host institution for this momentous gathering.

We are especially pleased to welcome Honourable Ministers of State to this event. Your presence affirms the essential role of science-informed policy, and highlights the critical link between research, governance, and national development.

This congress – the largest and longest-running scientific meeting of its kind on the continent – provides a vital platform for deepening our understanding of biodiversity, strengthening collaboration, and shaping the future of plant science in Africa and beyond.

The theme for this year’s congress - ***“Diversity, conservation, and sustainable use of African and Madagascan algae, fungi plants, in a changing natural world”*** - is both timely and profound. It resonates with our University’s own strategic plan, especially our commitment to impactful research that transforms lives, informs policy, and contributes to sustainable development.

As we contend with the global challenges of environmental degradation, climate change, and biodiversity loss, the work of plant taxonomists, ecologists, and conservation scientists becomes ever more important. Your research, innovations, and insights are not only critical for preserving Africa's unique biological heritage; they are fundamental to the well-being of future generations.

I am especially heartened by the presence and participation of students and early-career researchers at this congress. You represent the future of African science, and your active participation is both inspiring and essential to the continuity of our continent's scientific community.

To our international guests, I say "Akwaaba" - a warm welcome to Ghana. I trust that your stay will be intellectually enriching, professionally rewarding, and personally memorable.

On behalf of the entire university community, I wish you all a successful congress and fruitful deliberations. Thank you.

Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Vice-Chancellor

5th August 2025