

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**CHAIRPERSON'S OPENING REMARKS AT THE SYMPOSIUM HELD IN HONOUR OF
EMERITUS PROFESSOR ERNEST ARYEETAY**

ADDRESS BY:

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

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2025

ISSER CONFERENCE CENTRE

UG-LEGON

- *Our distinguished celebrant, Emeritus Prof. Ernest Aryeetey,*
- *Secretary-General, African Research Universities Alliance,*
Prof. John Gyapong
- *Prof. Elizabeth Asiedu from the Howard University,*
Washington DC
- *Prof. Victor Murinde, Executive Director, African Economic*
Research Consortium, Nairobi
- *Prof. Peter Quartey, Former Director, ISSER, University of*
Ghana
- *Esteemed colleagues and specially guests,*
- *Ladies and gentlemen*

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome you all to this symposium in honour of Emeritus Professor Ernest Aryeetey. On behalf of the University of Ghana, I thank you for joining us to celebrate a scholar par excellence, leader, and institution-builder whose career has left an indelible mark on higher education in Africa.

The team could not have chosen a better theme, ***“Placing Research at the Centre of Higher Education in Africa”***, as it captures both the essence of Professor Aryeetey’s work life and

challenges universities faced on this continent. His career exemplifies how rigorous, policy-relevant, and globally-engaged research can become the heartbeat of institutional transformation.

Professor Aryeetey's journey began here in Ghana, where he studied Economics with Statistics at this very university, before advancing for postgraduate studies at the University of Science and Technology now KNUST. He later pursued his doctorate studies in Germany. From those early beginnings, his intellectual curiosity was matched by a deep sense of responsibility - to use scholarship as a tool not only to advance knowledge, but to shape policy, institutions, and ultimately society.

As a researcher, his work on financial systems, informal finance, and economic development has informed both academic debates and policy decisions across Africa. His scholarship demonstrates the power of research to bridge the gap between theory and practice, reminding us that universities exist to advance humanity.

Professor Aryeetey has always been more than an outstanding scholar. He has been an architect of institutions. At the Institute

of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), he strengthened the Institute's capacity for policy-relevant research. As Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana from 2010 to 2016, he spearheaded the transformation of this university into a research-intensive institution. He improved the operational systems and structures, championed graduate education, and created an environment for innovation to thrive. His leadership embodied the conviction that research is not a peripheral activity- it is central to who we are as a university.

His vision also extended far beyond our borders. Recognising the need for African universities to work collaboratively, he convened colleagues from across the continent to establish the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) in 2015. As its founding Secretary-General, he nurtured the Alliance from an idea into a vibrant network of leading research universities. Today, ARUA is a testament to his foresight, providing platforms for collaboration, capacity-building, and collective action on Africa's research agenda.

Professor Aryeetey has also been a global citizen. He brought Africa's voice into international research and policy circles

through his leadership roles with United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) and the African Economic Research Consortium, among others. In each of these spaces, he reminded the world that African scholarship matters, and that African universities must be partners, not mere recipients, in the global knowledge enterprise.

Aside the aforementioned accolades, one of Prof. Aryeetey's most enduring legacies is found in the people he has mentored and inspired. Generations of economists, researchers, and academic leaders trace their professional growth to his partnership, encouragement, guidance and example. In celebrating him today, we are also celebrating the many who continue to carry forward his vision.

His remarkable achievements have been recognised worldwide through fellowships, honorary doctorates, and awards. Yet, I believe the greatest recognition is what we see around us today: a community of scholars, institutions, and networks that continue to thrive because of his vision and contribution.

This afternoon's programme reflects the richness of his career.

Our panel of speakers will highlight his contributions to institution-building, engaging the African diaspora, shaping economic policy, and mentoring the next generation. We will also hear tributes from colleagues and partners whose lives and institutions have been touched by his work.

As Vice-Chancellor and a linguist, I am mindful of the power of words. But Professor Aryeetey's life reminds us that words alone are not enough. It is through research, through institutions, and through people that our words become action, and our aspirations take form. His works challenge us, as universities in Africa, to place research at the very centre of our mission, so that higher education may truly serve as a driver of transformation.

It is my hope that this symposium and Prof. Aryeetey's professional journey, will continue to inspire many for years to come. May it encourage today's scholars to pursue excellence and to mentor the next generation of impactful academics for the development of Africa and the world.

Thank you.

Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Vice-Chancellor

October 15, 2025