

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
GHANA AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 10TH WACCBIP RESEARCH
CONFERENCE (WRC 2026)**

ADDRESS BY:

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

**SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2026
WEST AFRICAN CENTRE FOR CELL
BIOLOGY OF INFECTIOUS PATHOGENS
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

- *Distinguished Guest of Honour*
- *Pro VC (ASA) and WACCBIP Director, Prof. Gordon Awandare*
- *Pro VC (RID), Prof. Felix Asante*
- *Provost, CBAS, Prof. Sandow Mark Yidana*
- *Other Provosts present*
- *Members of the WACCBIP Advisory Board*
- *Representative of the Sciences Section of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, Prof. James Ephraim*
- *Deans, Directors and Heads of Department*
- *Members of the WACCBIP International Advisory Board*
- *WACCBIP funding partners and collaborators from across the world, here present and joining us online*
- *A special welcome to the officials from Wellcome, UK*
- *Invited Speakers and Conference Participants*
- *Faculty, staff and students*
- *Friends from the media*
- *Ladies and gentlemen*

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of pride that I welcome you all to the 10th edition of the WACCBIP Research Conference

2026 here at the University of Ghana. I am particularly delighted to join you this morning as Chairperson of this opening ceremony for what has become one of Africa's leading scientific convenings dedicated to advancing bioscience research and innovation on the continent.

Reaching this remarkable milestone of ten consecutive conferences is a testament to WACCBIP's unwavering commitment to scientific excellence, knowledge exchange, and capacity building. It reflects a decade of consistency, resilience, and remarkable resourcefulness in sustaining a platform that has continually brought together researchers, policymakers, industry leaders, development partners, and students to address some of Africa's most pressing health and development challenges. This achievement is not merely a celebration of longevity; it is a demonstration of the Centre's enduring vision, the dedication of its leadership and staff, the invaluable support of its partners, and the collective efforts of the scientific community that has nurtured this conference into a globally respected forum for research, innovation, and collaboration.

On behalf of the University of Ghana, I warmly welcome our distinguished local and international guests, scientists, policymakers, industry partners, students, and all participants joining us both physically here at the WACCBIP Conference Hall and virtually from across the globe. Your presence affirms the growing importance of African-led science and the collective commitment to addressing the pressing health and environmental challenges confronting our world today.

This year's conference theme, ***“African Bioscience at the Interface of Health, Disease, and Environment,”*** is apt and visionary. It reflects the reality that the challenges of our time are increasingly interconnected. Human health can no longer be discussed in isolation from environmental sustainability, climate change, emerging infectious diseases, food systems, and technological innovation. The theme also speaks directly to WACCBIP's strategic vision of promoting interdisciplinary, impact-oriented bioscience research that translates scientific discoveries into solutions that improve lives and strengthen societies. The theme also resonates strongly with the second strategic priority of this University which focuses on impactful research.

Over the past decade, WACCBIP has distinguished itself as a centre of excellence in scientific research, training, and innovation. Since its establishment, WACCBIP has made remarkable contributions to genomics, infectious disease research, molecular biology, bioinformatics, diagnostics, and capacity development across Africa. Beyond its impressive research output, the Centre has become a beacon for nurturing the next generation of African scientists and positioning the continent as a critical contributor to global scientific advancement.

The University of Ghana is immensely proud of WACCBIP's achievements and the transformative role it continues to play in strengthening Africa's scientific ecosystem. The Centre's work demonstrates what is possible when African institutions are empowered to lead cutting-edge research, forge strategic partnerships, and invest in young talent. Indeed, WACCBIP embodies our University's commitment to research excellence, innovation, and societal impact.

Beyond its continental and global contributions, WACCBIP has fundamentally transformed the research ecosystem within the University of Ghana. The Centre has set the benchmark for

excellence in scientific research through its world-class research infrastructure, culture of scientific rigor, and consistent production of high-impact research. It has also established an enviable reputation for outstanding grantsmanship, successfully attracting substantial international research funding while building institutional capacity in competitive grant development and management. WACCBIP has trained and mentored hundreds of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and early-career researchers, creating a vibrant pipeline of scientific talent. Furthermore, by attracting accomplished African scientists from the diaspora to return and contribute their expertise, the Centre has strengthened the University's human capital and fostered an environment of excellence, innovation, and collaboration.

The Centre's institutional impact extends well beyond its own programmes. WACCBIP's highly regarded grants development machinery played a pivotal role in supporting the preparation and refinement of the University of Ghana's successful proposal to the Mastercard Foundation, culminating in the award of the USD 28.4 million Africa Climate Collaborative grant. Following the award, WACCBIP's robust grants management systems and administrative

structures were leveraged to establish and operationalize the project, ensuring seamless implementation during its critical start-up phase before the recruitment of dedicated project staff. This is evidence not only of WACCBIP's scientific excellence but also to the strength of the institutional systems it has built, which continue to serve as strategic assets for the wider University community.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this year's conference will focus on several highly significant thematic areas that reflect both current scientific priorities and Africa's emerging research needs. The selected thematic areas are not only scientifically relevant; they are also deeply connected to Africa's development agenda. They speak to the urgent need for evidence-based policies, resilient healthcare systems, sustainable environmental management, and innovation-driven economic growth.

More importantly, they demonstrate the power of interdisciplinary collaboration in generating solutions that are locally relevant and globally impactful. These themes also enhance the University's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and align strongly with the University's Research Strategy which promotes high-impact, multidisciplinary research that translates

scientific discoveries into practical solutions, informs policy, drives innovation, and improves the wellbeing of society. In this regard, the WACCBIP Research Conference serves not only as a platform for scientific exchange but also as a strategic vehicle for advancing the University's vision to achieve global impact through innovative research, teaching and learning, using a technology-driven and people-centred approach.

To all researchers and presenters, I encourage you to use this conference not only as a platform to share findings, but also as an opportunity to build meaningful collaborations, inspire innovation, mentor emerging scientists, and shape policy conversations that will advance science and development in Africa. Scientific breakthroughs thrive in environments where ideas are freely exchanged, and partnerships are cultivated across disciplines and borders.

I also wish to acknowledge the many partners, sponsors, collaborators, and stakeholders whose continued support has contributed to the success and growth of WACCBIP over the years. Your investments in African science are investments in global progress, resilience, and sustainable development.

As we celebrate the 10th edition of the WACCBIP Research Conference, let us also reflect on the journey ahead. The future of Africa's development will increasingly depend on knowledge, innovation, and scientific leadership. Institutions such as WACCBIP are helping to ensure that Africa is not merely a consumer of scientific solutions but actively engaged in knowledge production and innovation that shapes the future of global health and environmental sustainability.

It is therefore my hope that the discussions, presentations, and engagements over the next few days will generate new ideas, deepen collaborations, and inspire bold scientific solutions to the challenges facing our continent and the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these remarks, it is my singular honour and privilege to officially declare the 10th WACCBIP Research Conference 2026 duly opened.

I wish you all a fruitful, engaging, and impactful conference.

Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Vice-Chancellor

July 25, 2026

