

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION,  
DR. MATTHEW OPOKU PREMPEH AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE  
70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

Chairman and Members of the University Council

Ministers of State;

Vice-Chancellor;

Pro Vice-Chancellors, Registrar, Provosts and other officials of the University;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of Convocation;

Staff and Students;

Alumni and Past Employees of the University of Ghana;

Members of the Press Corps

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen:

It is a pleasure to be at the Launch of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of Ghana's premier University, the University of Ghana.

Mr. Chairman, on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University, I bring you warm felicitations from H. E. the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, (himself a proud alumnus of this great institution) the government and people of Ghana.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of my Ministry, to also congratulate the University for achieving this milestone. Seventy years in the life of an institution is no mean achievement. It is the expectation of government and my Ministry that the managers of this great institution will continue to work hard to improve on the laurels that have so far been achieved.

Over these 70 years, the University of Ghana has lived up to its responsibilities as the premier University in the nation. Indeed, over the years, the University

of Ghana has distinguished itself as the leader in all aspects of higher education in Ghana and beyond. I am reliably informed that the University of Ghana is currently ranked first in West Africa and indeed rose to become the seventh ranked University in Africa a couple of years ago. These are by any stretch of imagination, no mean achievements. Not only has the University of Ghana been a leader in academia, it also continues to mentor and nurture several other tertiary institutions in the country. The University has been at the forefront of Ghana's development agenda with its alumni all over the world, successful in every endeavour; further attesting to the enviable status and stature of our premier University.

As you celebrate 70 years to take stock of what has been achieved and look ahead to shape the future of the nation and the individuals within it, I wish to reiterate the commitment of government to continue to partner the University to find solutions to the many challenges that confront the educational sector and indeed, the entire nation.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me also state that the commitment of the government of H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo towards education and finding solutions to the myriad of problems confronting the country, is not in doubt. We are committed to ensuring that all higher education institutions in the country get their fair share of development projects to enable them all meet their obligations more effectively. To this end, government is committed to providing the needed infrastructure and equipment to enable the universities absorb the expected increase in the number of potential students that will be graduating from the government's flagship free SHS programme.

Mr. Chairman, government has started the necessary stakeholder consultations to ensure that we prepare adequately to receive the products of the free SHS programme into our tertiary institutions, in a couple of years. I urge managers of our tertiary educational institutions to indicate to my Ministry their plans on

how the expected increase in student numbers will be handled, as well as what government is expected to do to enable the institutions cope with the expected increase in admissions. It is imperative that together, we do all in our power to make this free SHS programme succeed and yield the intended results.

Ladies and Gentlemen, one sure way of fighting ignorance, poverty, disease and other such challenges confronting our nation, is through education and the free SHS programme is geared towards reducing the high rate of School drop-outs and to offer secondary education to a lot more of our people. Financial barriers must never be a reason for a child not to access senior high school education in this country.

One other way of finding solutions to our problems, which also falls squarely at the doorstep of our higher educational institutions, is by research. I note here with a lot of interest that it is the vision of the University of Ghana “to become a research-intensive university”.

Mr. Chairman, the NPP government fully supports and shares in this vision of yours and will do all in our power to help the University to achieve this vision.

I urge the University and indeed, all tertiary institutions in the country to take the call to research seriously and also find innovative and effective ways of linking up with industry and the corporate world - to engage in quality, strategic research, targeted at finding practical solutions to real life problems in our society and thereby actualize research findings to develop our society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I further wish to encourage our tertiary institutions to endeavour to modify their respective curricula to meet current trends and the demands of our time. Let our training be focused on producing students who are practically oriented in finding practical solutions to the myriad of problems the country is faced with.

I note with a lot of satisfaction that unemployment was the subject for discussion at the recently ended New Year School and Conference of the University of Ghana. I sincerely hope that it will not remain at the discussion and recommendation levels, but we will together develop practical ways of reducing unemployment in the country, bearing in mind that job creation is key and remains high on the agenda of the NPP government.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, on that note, I wish to once again, on behalf of H. E. the President, Nana Akufo-Addo and on my own behalf, to warmly congratulate the University of Ghana on the occasion of the launch of its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

I now have the singular honour to declare the year-long 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the University of Ghana, duly launched.

Long live the University of Ghana! Long live Ghana!!

Thank you.