

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROF FRED
NEWTON BINKA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMMISSIONING
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES,
SCHOOL OF BASIC AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AT SOKODE-
LOKOE NEAR HO, ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2015**

His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana,
His Royal Highness Togbe Afede XIV, President of the Volta Regional House
of Chiefs and Chairman for this august occasion,
Her Excellency the Chinese Ambassador,
Honorable Ministers of State
The Governor of the Bank of Ghana
Members of Parliament,
Hon. Municipal and District Chief Executives,
Chairman and Members of the University Council,
Togbewo, Mamawo,
All Heads of Institutions
Vice-Chancellors, Ghana
Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Registrar
Members of Convocation,
Staff and students,
Invited Guests, Members of the Press
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you all to the University of Health and Allied Sciences and to the commissioning of the School of Basic and Biomedical Sciences; as the nucleus and permanently identifiable location of the University. This School is the first of eight (8) Schools and three (3) Institutes expected to form the total set up of the whole of the University. It is worthy to note that work has started at the permanent site of the Hohoe campus with the construction of the School of Public Health.

Your Excellency, I wish on behalf of the University Council, Management and Staff of UHAS to express our deepest appreciation to you, Mr. President and the government and then to individuals and institutions, who have in diverse ways supported UHAS to come this far.

Your Excellency, the University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS), established by an Act of Parliament (Act 828 in December 2011), is still the youngest public university in Ghana, and very unique in the sense that it is wholly dedicated to the training of health professionals in the country. Mr. President, this University compared to none in this regard because we are already in the forefront in terms of undertaking community diagnosis, disease control, and addressing health misconceptions. We are also proud to say that UHAS is the first ever public university to be established in the Volta Region.

Your Excellency, we started operations in September 2012, with five schools namely, 1) School of Medicine, 2) School of Nursing and Midwifery, 3) School of Public Health, 4) School of Allied Health Sciences and 5) School of Basic and Biomedical Sciences, and admitted our first batch of 154 students. Currently the University has a total student population of 2,044, with 934 students admitted in 2015. We have 105 students in the School of Medicine undertaking the medical degree program. The faculty strength is currently 138 (44 female). We also have 49 part-time lecturers and are currently sponsoring 12 doctors at the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons.

As an academic institution, our vision is to be a pre-eminent research and practically oriented health educational institution dedicated to community service. And our mission is to provide quality educational opportunities to students and healthcare professionals, advance knowledge through scholarship

and research, and provide patient care and services that will improve health and quality of life.

The above vision, mission and strategic goals are clearly driving UHAS to remain dedicated to serious clinical research and driving us to strive to be internationally recognized and trusted to undertake research. This has already been demonstrated in being internationally adjudged capable of undertaking early stage clinical research such as the much talked about phase I Ebola clinical trials. Your Excellency, I am glad to note that, that, the Parliament of Ghana has now given its blessings to the Ebola clinical trials in Ghana. This is an opportunity to place Ghana in the annals of such an important and epic research to find a lasting solution to the spread of the deadly Ebola disease.

Mr. Chairman, Togbe Afede XIV, let me sincerely thank the Government of Ghana, the Asogli Traditional Area, the Sokode Traditional Area, the Hlefi Traditional Area, the Gbi Traditional area and the Fodome Traditional Area for their support since the establishment of this University. We also appreciate the contributions of the Volta Regional Co-ordinating Council, both former and current Regional Ministers and their deputies as well as other Regional Heads of Departments and State Agencies who have contributed diversely towards the establishment of UHAS.

As health oriented educational institution dedicated to community service, UHAS is implementing a well thought-through compulsory Vocational Training where our students spend eight weeks of each long vacation for internship in health facilities to transform the theoretical lessons into practical realities. We believe strongly that theory must meet practice, so this flagship programme has since 2013, been posting our students into the communities where they are intended to serve after their graduation. Many success stories have already been

recorded in the various communities in which our students find themselves in as change agents. We are proud of this innovation, Your Excellency.

Distinguished Invited Guests; I am very happy to report that, the support from the various communities, for our programmes is simply overwhelming. The Municipal / District Assemblies across the Region have pledged to build at least a bungalow each for the use of our medical consultants in the various communities. The Assemblies are at different stages of this project. In fact, the Hohoe Municipal Assembly is constructing two of such facilities and the Ho Municipal Assembly has almost completed one such project a (4-bedroom bungalow) right here on the campus. Your Excellency, I need to bring to your attention another dimension of the magnitude of overwhelming traditional and community support UHAS is enjoying. Your Excellency, the chiefs and people of Worawora, have willingly released a multi-purpose structure for the use of the University as a learning and vocational training centre, with a promise of more support. The Keta District Assembly has also released a beautiful office complex and accommodation facility at Vodza to UHAS. Your Excellency, it is this facility we intend to use for our School of Pharmacy. The biggest individual donation yet, Your Excellency, is from Dr. C. A. Botchway, a Ghanaian and renowned dentist, who has donated his property worth GHC1.5million situated within the Teshie–Nungua Estates (a former dental clinic and adjoining accommodation), to the University. With this donation the University can now conveniently have a guest and conference centre in Accra, something the university was badly in need of. Your Excellency, kindly assists us to extend our gratitude to all these donors. We are indeed grateful for all the support and those that are yet to come our way.

Your Excellences, though established just three years ago, UHAS is increasingly gaining grounds in terms of visibility and accessibility. We have

consciously decided to be visible because we are aware that, there are still a few who still think the University is one big political hype. We have established a vigorous ICT infrastructure that will soon get a boost with the eventual functioning of the fibre-optics connection, as well as a strong marketing campaign for some of the less known programmes we run, such as Health Information Studies, Nutrition and Dietetics.

Our catchment communities have variously benefitted immensely from a number of free medical screening programmes that will continue. It is heart-warming to say that a number of critical medical cases which otherwise would have passed without notice have been identified through our free health screening programmes and such people have subsequently been assisted with the needed medical attention.

Our students are rubbing shoulders with their counterparts in other sister universities and in most of the cases emerging champions. Currently, we are the champions of the maiden edition of National Health Students Association of Ghana (NAHSAG) "What Do You Know" Contest held in August 2015. UHAS placed 1st out of 27 institutions. Again, UHAS has consistently placed 1st in "What Do You Know" Contest of Federation of Ghana Medical Laboratory Science Students Association in 2014 and 2015 and finally in the "Knowing Africa Quiz" organised by TV Africa in February 2014, UHAS placed 2nd out of 32 schools. Indeed, your Excellency, The students have been making us proud whenever they step outside campus so we urge you to watch out for us. We will get better and bigger.

Your Excellency, The first batch of our four year regular students will complete their 4-year studies at the end of the 2015/2016 Academic year and by the grace of God would be ready to graduate in July, 2016. Plans are far advanced for the graduation of this very first batch of students.

Your Excellency, our major institutional challenge has been funding. We are still grappling with staff recruitment issues because of the lack of financial clearance to enable us to recruit pertinent staff. Togbe Chairman, this is our biggest headache. The School of Medicine for example thrives on medical experts and specialists to deliver training to our students. Without these experts the programme is as good as nothing. Your Excellency, we are pleading with the Government and for that matter the Ministry of Finance to grant a special dispensation to the newly established state university to recruit faculty and staff.

Your Excellency, a young University which is still at its formative stage is naturally expected to expand systematically in infrastructure, student population and faculty / staff capacity as the years roll by and as new programmes are introduced. We have been reliably informed that the Chinese Government has more aid where this came from, and that with a little bit of appeal from Ghana, it is possible for the University to secure such grants. Your Excellency, may I humbly request that we explore this opportunity. Your Excellency, Sun Baohyong, may we plead with you to consider this appeal in the first instance please. Thank you very much.

Your Excellency, the road to the campus is in a terrible state. We will have a hectic time with students and staff movements if it is not fixed before the end of the year. I am happy that you have committed to ensuring that the road networks within and external will be thoroughly done. I thank you for that promise. I want to use this opportunity to thank Messers First Sky Construction Ltd especially, and the Department of Urban Roads, for saving the situation in the interim.

Your Excellences, as hinted earlier, preparations are far advanced towards the establishment of the UHAS School of Pharmacy at Keta. The vision is to commence the six-year Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm D) and if possible to admit

the first batch of student in August once we are through with the accreditation processes. The Pharm D programme will guarantee a composite professional degree and will produce pharmacists with competencies needed in tackling existing challenges in delivering health service to our people. The School will comprise five(5) Academic Departments Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacognosy, Pharmacology and Pharmacy Practice.

Togbe Chairman, the Committee that advised the Government on the establishment of the University in its final report recommended the setting up of an Endowment Fund to sustain the University. UHAS employees have unanimously upheld this recommendation and have collectively donated about **GH¢ 20,000.00** towards the realization of the seed capital for the Endowment Fund, which will soon be launched. The University will like to use this opportunity to call on all stakeholders i.e. Government of Ghana, the international community, the business community, traditional leaders and individuals to be ready to donate generously to the UHAS Endowment Fund.

Togbe Chairman, we are pleased to announce that through the efforts of the VRCC, the GETFund has approved our request and wishes of parents, to build an 11unit classroom block (2, 6, 3) to commence the establishment of the University Model Practice School. May we humbly urge GETFund on this occasion, to kindly expedite action on the allocation process to enable the project to start.

Finally, Your Excellency, I wish to report that new site has no telephone and Internet access. This has subsequently impacted negatively on academic and administrative work. I wish to humbly appeal to the National Communication Authority to urgently come to the aid of the University. We also invite Internet

and communication service providers to come and explore the possibility of establishing their presence in the vicinity for our mutual benefit.

In conclusion, Your Excellency, Togbe Chairman, Distinguished invited guest, today's event is indeed a dream come true. I will like to thank every single individual who has made this possible. I thank the late Prof. John Evans Atta Mills who had faith and vision to establish this University. I thank the Government and people of Ghana for supporting this vision. I thank the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance for their support. Special Thanks goes Hon Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa for being there for us. I thank the members of the planning and implementation committees who tirelessly worked to set up the University against all odds. Special thanks to Professor Mahama Duweijua, former Executive Secretary of NCTE, I thank the Administrators of The GETFund, for believing in us and providing the financial support to develop infrastructure. I thank the Chinese Government and the China Yanjian Construction Company Ltd. for providing us with this beautiful edifice. I thank the University Council Chairman and Members for standing solidly behind us. I thank the founding Deans, and past faculty, staff and Principal Officers who have contributed to this University. I thank my colleague Vice Chancellors who provided sound advice during difficult times and stood by me and I thank all our traditional leaders who gave land both here and in Hohoe for the benefit of the younger generation. Finally, Your Excellency, I thank you for continuing the vision of your predecessor and for being here this afternoon to commission this project. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to serve my country as the first Vice Chancellor of this institution. UHAS will blaze the trail as one of the greatest Universities on the African continent and internationally. Your Excellency this is a promise to you and to the good people of Ghana.

Thank you for your attention.

