

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II, ASANTEHENE AND
CHANCELLOR AT THE INVESTITURE OF PROFESSOR (MRS) RITA A. DICKSON
AS THE 11TH VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY ON SATURDAY 1ST
AUGUST, 2020 AT 10:00 A.M. IN THE GREAT HALL- KNUST**

SALUTATION

Your Excellency the President of the Republic,
The Honourable Minister of Education and Other Ministers Present,
The Honourable Regional Minister,
Chairman and members of the Governing Council of the University,
Immediate and Past Vice-Chancellors,
Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities Present,
Past Pro Vice-Chancellors,
Registrar,
Nananom,
Provosts,
Deans and Directors,
Heads of Departments,
Staff and Students of the University,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen joining us via online platforms across the globe,

I have the honour once again to warmly welcome you all to this investiture ceremony. This is the fourth of such ceremony that I am presiding over as the Chancellor of this noble institution. You all agree with me that today's ceremony is historic in a number of respects. It is historic by the way we are all dressed this morning- in nose masks and face shields. It is historic by the limited number of people seated in this auditorium due to social distancing and all the other restrictions and protocols resulting from the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic which has compelled the whole world to modify and find new ways of doing things. To borrow the words of His Excellency the President “we are not in normal times” and so this ceremony will be brief and consequently so will my address.

What is peculiarly historic today is that, KNUST as an institution has taken a giant step by appointing the first female Vice-Chancellor after 69 years of existence. Today's ceremony is to induct Professor (Mrs) Rita Akosua Dickson into office as the 11th Vice-Chancellor and the first female to ascend to the highest office of Vice-Chancellor of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. This is indeed historic and will go down in the annals of this University, the Nation, and the world at large.

An Investiture is an occasion of hope and promise to the future. For you, as Vice-Chancellor, the ceremony is to instil the daunting realization that you are the first among equals of over 4000 members of staff; the leader of this university community who collectively has the duty of nurturing over 64000 students of this great institution into responsible adults and future leaders of our beloved nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the process of appointing a Vice-Chancellor was initiated by the Council on 2nd March 2020 through an announcement of the vacancy in the Media. Applications were

received and interviews conducted. The University Council at its 258th (Special) Meeting held on Thursday, 25th June, 2020 considered the report of the Search Committee and appointed my own grand-daughter, Full Professor of Pharmacognosy, Rita Akosua Dickson as the 11th Vice-Chancellor. Akosua, you have made me proud. You are indeed a pace setter for the women of KNUST. You were the first female Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences - KNUST; the first female Pro Vice-Chancellor of this noble University and the crowning glory, the first female Vice-Chancellor of KNUST. You have put meaning in the African proverb which says “The seeds of success in every nation are best planted in women.” Accept my warm congratulations! I am indeed proud of you.

Your Excellency, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, as you may know, even though I get briefings about all the happenings in the University, I also pay periodic working visits to the campus to ascertain things for myself. I must say I have been very much impressed with the strategic developments on this campus. This notwithstanding, the KNUST Teaching Hospital project, which on completion will accelerate the education and training of medical and allied health professionals for health service delivery in the country, has been abandoned over the last twelve (12) years due to lack of funds. I remember writing to you, through the Minister of Finance for a special budget for this project, and I do hope that it is a priority on His Excellency’s healthcare agenda.

Your Excellency, KNUST has been very fortunate to have had visionary leaders who led this great Institution through periods of significant development. Kindly, permit me to acknowledge the great contribution of all the past Vice-Chancellors, some of whom are here with us today as a sign of support and solidarity. I would like to mention specially Professor Kwasi Obiri-Danso, the immediate past Vice-Chancellor of this University who saw the potential in our current Vice-Chancellor and offered her the unique opportunity to partner him as the Pro Vice-Chancellor during his term.

As one of the most development-oriented Vice-Chancellors of our time, Kwasi, I say to you *ayekoo* for a job well done. You have paid your due to KNUST and the evidence is glaring for all to see.

Your Excellency, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we are all aware that technology has greatly influenced teaching and learning practices, offering new ways to perform, mediate and provide education, and to obtain information. The challenge that it brings, therefore, requires a special set of skills and knowledge to provide the best practice available. Added to this challenge is the dreaded COVID-19 Pandemic which has also resulted in an unprecedented need for reforms and new ways to the conduct of human affairs. It has thus, created significant challenges for the global higher education community and KNUST is no exception.

It is in the midst of these daunting challenges that our first female Vice-Chancellor takes office. The immediate questions that beg for answers from you as the Vice-Chancellor, include: How is teaching and learning going to be? Is the University planning only a virtual teaching or a combination of virtual and face-to-face teaching? And how will your 64,000 students be accommodated on and off campus with all the restrictions that and with the COVID-19 protocols when school is finally reopened? I am aware the Academic Board and the University Council are thinking through all these with a lot of propositions. But whatever outcomes or decisions that are

taken, you will be at the core of implementation and so a lot depends on you. “*Akosua, gyataba muro aboa biara ewo nwiram*”. To wit, I urge you not to be faint-hearted or afraid of what the future holds. Akosua, you cannot forget your great-great-grandmother, the famous Yaa Asantewaa. The woman who led the Asante Kingdom against British colonisation to defend the Golden Stool. Always remember; you share the same ancestral blood and I see in you, the Yaa Asantewaa of KNUST.

Think deeply about KNUST as it is today and as it should be in the near future. The defining aspiration of the KNUST is to excel in its core business of teaching, research and service. Deeply embedded in this aspiration are heavy obligations which require judgments as to what constitutes excellence in teaching, research as well as community service, which is by no means, a simple task. It requires you to make choices influenced by the present interests and future opportunities of the University. With the help of God whom you diligently serve, and who has brought you thus far, you will surely excel.

At this juncture, let me also take the opportunity to congratulate the three new Provosts who also assume office from today, 1st August, 2020 on their well-deserved appointment. They are Professor Christian Agyare for the College of Health Sciences; Professor Ben Kwaku Branoh Banful for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources; and Professor Charles Ofosu Marfo for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Can they stand to be acknowledged?

Throughout my tenure as Chancellor of this University, I have had several encounters with some of you and I have no doubt about your managerial capabilities. Most of you have gathered a wealth of experience in administering this University in various capacities over a long period of time and as such, are fully aware of the road map this University has carved for itself, dearly stipulated in the University's Strategic Plan (PLAN2K25). You are not oblivious of the various challenges that confront the University.

In like manner, you are also aware of the various opportunities and great potential of this University that can be explored to our advantage. My call to you is to do your utmost best for your College and together as a team we shall move this University to unimaginable heights.

Finally, to my new Vice-Chancellor, Akosua; you have been very much involved in all the recent developments in our University, having been the second in command over the past two years. With our recent most unpleasant history in mind, you need not be reminded of the focus of this University on certain pertinent issues. I trust you will build bridges and not walls and involve all stakeholders in all your activities. Do not side-line or sidestep the interest of any group. As you already know, my doors are fully opened. Go on; set the pace and let posterity judge you. Be constantly reminded that many young men and women in this country look up to you as a mentor. You are indeed a trailblazer; you dare not fail them.

I wish you the very best in your tenure as Vice-Chancellor of this great University, your alma mater. May the countenance of God light your path.

**OTUMFUO OSEI-TUTU II, ASANTEHENE
CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI
AUGUST 1, 2020**

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON DURING HER INVESTITURE AS THE 11TH VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY ON SATURDAY, 1ST AUGUST 2020 AT THE GREAT HALL AT 10: 00 A. M.

SALUTATION

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo
Danquah Akufo Addo
The Chancellor, His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei-Tutu II
The Honourable Minister of Education and other Ministers of State
Chairman and Members of Council
Immediate and Past Vice-Chancellors
Vice-Chancellor s from Sister Universities
Past Pro Vice-Chancellors
Registrar
Nananom
Provosts of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Representatives from our Affiliate Institutions
Alumni of the University
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Colleague Convocation Members
Senior and Junior Staff
Junior Members in Statu Populari
Distinguished Invited Guests
Members of the Media
And all our distinguished guests joining us via the virtual space this morning
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning.

INTRODUCTION

It is with a deep sense of gratitude, appreciation and humility that I stand before you today as the new Vice-Chancellor of no less an institution than the prestigious Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi. When I first stepped foot on this campus in 1990 to commence my undergraduate studies, it never crossed my mind that a day like this will come when I, Akosua, will stand before this august gathering in this Hall and the many more who have joined us via various virtual platforms, as the Vice-Chancellor of this University. It is, indeed, very true that with God, all things are possible. I thank the Good Lord who has ordered my steps in this journey and has brought me thus far.

GRATITUDE

I humbly express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to His Royal Majesty, Otumfuo Osei-Tutu II, the Asantehene and the Chancellor of our noble University for his invaluable fatherly love and wise counsel. I am happy and proud to be working under his tutelage and guidance. Otumfuo has always been a source of encouragement to me. It is indeed, true that *“wonni panin a, due!”* Nana Chancellor, thank you for your support, encouragement and words of wisdom you freely give me.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes to the President of the Republic of Ghana for the massive support his Government has provided to the University.

The Chairman of Council, Ambassador Nana Effah Apenteng and Members of the Governing Council, I am extremely overwhelmed by the confidence you have reposed in me by this unique opportunity to serve my alma mater.

I do, undeniably, feel a great sense of responsibility as I follow in the footsteps of ten gallant men, each of whom skillfully steered this noble institution through different epochs and circumstances. There is no doubt that the current status and standing of our University is, to a large extent, a consequence of their visionary leadership and commitment. I can only seek to emulate them as I lead this University through its next stage of development.

It is indeed an honour to have four of them - Professors Ayim, Adarkwa, Ellis and Obiri-Danso with us today and I know that I can always count on these Great men as I continue in the pursuit of realizing the vision of KNUST. My COVENANT is to lead KNUST in dignity, respect and humility. At this moment, Your Excellency, Nana Chancellor; permit me to single out my Boss and my immediate predecessor, Professor Kwasi Obiri-Danso and say a special thank you; and I believe this is the right opportunity. Prof, you recognized something in me and selected me to partner you as the Pro Vice Chancellor. By this, you sowed a seed which has blossomed today. I particular admire the courage and the tenacity of purpose with which you have discharged your duties these past 4 years; tirelessly putting your shoulders to the wheel to bring us to where we are today. Sir, I salute you, Ayekoo.

I would like to say a big thank you to Maame Ama Serwaah and Paapa Owusu-Mensah, my parents of blessed memory for the opportunities they gave me. My special appreciation goes to the many distinguished members of the clergy including the Rev. Ministers of the Ghana Baptist Convention, Bishops of the Holy Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches and the Moslem fraternity who have supported me with their prayers all these years.

I recognize my extended family and wonderful friends who have travelled from far and near to grace this event as well as those joining via online platforms. You have all helped to provide a strong support system for me and I am indeed grateful. Very special recognition goes to my incredible husband, Nana Sarkodie Dickson who has provided enormous assistance to my admiration; My dearest daughters - Akosua, Abena, Akua and Afua who have been more than friends to me through it all; and all my sons and daughters from the different spheres of my life, for being there for me.

Members of PSGH, My Pharmacy classmates, LAPAG, WiStem, Fellow Royals, Club B, C, Biology and Engineering Tea Rooms and others. Colleague lecturers, Administrators, staff of FPPS, other staff, PPAG and all Invited guests, I thank you all. My very special appreciation goes to the Global Alumni President and his entourage who have graced the occasion with their presence.

To the ever supported sisterhood of Wesley Girls High School and of St Monica's (Weygeyhey and Munche), thanks for being part of my journey. Let us continue to "Live pure, speak true, Right wrong and follow the King" and remain "Each for All and All for God" in our service to mankind.

Let me at this point congratulate Professors Charles Marfo, Christian Agyare, and Ben B. K. Banful for assuming the position of Provost of three of our Colleges.

To all the Faculty and staff of KNUST, I say thank you for your continued support, dedication and commitment to our students and to our larger vision and mission. KNUST is definitely poised to continue to achieve greater heights of recognition and impact due to the enormous work and energy you constantly devote to making our University the best. Indeed, your enduring selflessness is evident for all to see. To our precious students, it is an absolute delight to have you here and others via online platforms on this special occasion. Keep working and striving hard, for the future, belongs to you.

I say a big thank you to our sister universities for joining in to celebrate this auspicious occasion with us. Thank you to government officials, our traditional rulers, community leaders, industrial partners & the business community, the pharmacy fraternity and various stakeholders for being part of this event.

I would like to thank my many fathers, mothers, aunties, uncles and mentors including Sir Professor Emeritus Kwame Sarpong and his wife Mrs. Margaret Sarpong (Mummy) and Mr. Kobby Yebo-Okrah of blessed memory, a former Registrar of KNUST. Indeed, the list is endless! I am truly grateful to you all.

As we prepare to envision our future, may I kindly request that we take a moment to reflect on our current challenges and the accompanying opportunities.

THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we are all fully aware of the challenges that lie ahead of us in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, which has unexpectedly changed the entire global order. Consequently, the global higher education community including our own KNUST is required to pursue new strategies to deliver on their mandates. But as our motto clearly says, “*Nyansapo wosane no badwemma*”, as an institution, we share the responsibility of thinking deep to provide innovative solutions and to harness the opportunities inherent in the pandemic. To begin with, we have been able to successfully utilize virtual platforms to bring the 2019/2020 academic year to a close. We are quick to admit that the virtual teaching and examination has its own challenges, but with resilience and commitment, we shall definitely get to where we want to go. If there was ever a time that our mandate as a university was more relevant, then it is now. With the same spirit, we look ahead into the future with greater commitment and responsibility towards our society, our country and the global community.

Indeed, our prestigious University has a great reputation for excellence both locally and internationally, and we would stick to our resolve, even in the midst of the challenges of the current pandemic, to improve our ranking among the best and soar higher into the future.

Together, we will continue to deploy our strengths and strategic initiatives to enable our cherished faculty and staff to continue to embark on relevant research and activities, that would not only imbibe in our students the requisite skills for the transformation and socio-economic development of Ghana, but also enhance the international visibility of our noble institution.

KNUST stands for relevant research, quality teaching, entrepreneurship training and provision of service to our stakeholders with or without COVID-19. This is a charge we will continue to keep without complacency. We will maintain our focus as Leaders in Change in the training of highly skilled 21st century entrepreneurial graduates for social, economic and technological advancements.

Your Excellency, Your Royal Majesty, by the grace of God, next year 2021, our great University will be 70 years. It will be a happy and a joyous occasion, worthy of celebration. We have produced great professionals contributing significantly to improving the quality of life in our country, the continent and indeed the whole world. But as we plan to celebrate this wonderful occasion, I invite all of us to pause for a moment and begin to think and dream of a rebirth at 70, where we will begin to do things in different ways that respond to the needs of the world of today, the ways of life of today, the people of today and the environment of today, so as to maintain our relevance and leadership as a research institution of great repute. Kindly therefore permit me to introduce to you the highlights of the envisioned ‘KNUST beyond 70’

MY VISION

Your Excellency, the President, Nana Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen, as I announce my vision today, I earnestly pray that it becomes our collective vision as an institution so that together, we can work towards its realization.

My vision is “to position KNUST as a competitive global research-intensive institution for advancement in science and technology for industrial and social uptake towards sustainable national and global development”.

This would be achieved by "creating strategic opportunities using inspired leadership, active stakeholder participation, highly qualified and motivated human resources, research and entrepreneurship-oriented academic training".

Your Excellency, Nana Chancellor, I will like to use this opportunity to focus a bit on the main pillars of my vision and I want to reiterate that our collective desire as a community to continuously seek the growth, prosperity, and excellence for our university should drive all of us to this common goal.

How do we begin? We need to start by developing a culture of ‘growth mindedness’ where growth of the University permeates our thinking and actions on a daily basis.

Your Excellency, Your Royal Majesty, the purpose of a vision is to set a destination. As we envision KNUST to become a preeminent research- intensive institution on the globe; we also see KNUST as a destination for research innovations and inventions to solve societal problems. I look forward to realizing a University where if Ghana, Africa or the world questions, **KNUST WILL BE READY WITH THE ANSWERS!**

As a prelude to the highlights of my vision, it is critically essential that we engage in frank conversations about where we should be heading with our research, teaching and other relevant operations. There is no better time than now for this conversation, as the University works to

complete the timescale of our Strategic Plan -PLAN2K25, that has guided our operations over the recent past, as we commence a mid-term review of this Plan.

EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION

Your Excellency, presently, we have over 64,000 students as an institution. These are big numbers that require creativity in our approach to instruction delivery. Very soon, we will celebrate our finalists via virtual congregation and also warm up to receive the first batch of the Free SHS graduands. As we seek to provide high-quality all-inclusive education that produces globally competitive graduates in terms of knowledge, skills and information technology, we will also work to improve our teaching and learning environments by enhancing curricula, pedagogy, culture, infrastructure and digital technologies.

We are not only content with being an academic powerhouse in Ghana and West Africa, but also to have a global focus to equip our graduates with top-notch competencies including critical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, innovations and problem-solving abilities.

A DIGITAL VISION FOR KNUST

Your Excellency, Nana Chancellor, the need for ICT in teaching and instruction is now more relevant than ever before. The lessons under the COVID-19 experience is abundantly clear to all of us. Consequently, significant initiatives involving e-strategies will be rolled out in the coming days to facilitate our teaching and learning experience. There will be the establishment of a more resilient and robust e-learning system that ensures seamless academic work all year round.

As a science and technology university, we must be seen to be setting the pace in the use of digital technologies to prosecute our agenda and we are poised to doing this to the admiration of all, and in tandem with the Government's "Transformational Digitization of Institutions Agenda".

We will upscale the use of Smart Technologies for both synchronous and asynchronous teaching, learning, assessments, research & University operations, as well as setting up Virtual & Augmented Reality Lab for 3D- aided learning. Beside these, infrastructure for Virtual & Dry Labs for simulations & experiments will be expanded. We will also set up mobile app for staff, students, alumni, prospective students for easy interaction & provision of essential University services. A KNUST Feedback App (KFA) will be developed to enhance feedback provision from all staff, students and other stakeholders, in addition to one for Students' Support Services (SSS). Prospects of Telemedicine to improve healthcare delivery for staff and students will be harnessed. We will also develop Lectures & Examinations Time Table Software to increase efficiency in the utilization of academic facilities. Teaching staff will continue to receive training in e- pedagogies to humanize the virtual classroom experience for our students.

Let me however, be quick to add that online learning is not a panacea for delivering instructions and the need for a blended approach to instruction delivery cannot be overemphasized. Most certainly, a merger of on line and brick and mortar learning will provide an opportunity to reimagine education in the 21st century and this, we shall vigorously pursue.

With the advent of COVID-19 it has become imperatively clear that a greater majority of our needy students are unable to access online resources because they do not have the requisite electronic gadgets. We would therefore roll out a project dubbed **“Support One Needy Student**

with One Laptop (SONSOL PROJECT)” in the coming days in collaboration with our philanthropists and key stake holders. This project requires the support of all stakeholders to succeed and we hope you will welcome us warmly when we knock on your doors for help. Thank you.

WELFARE OF EMPLOYEES: OUR HUMAN RESOURCE OUR STRENGTH

Your Excellency, Your Royal Majesty, a major stakeholder to achieving excellent impact of our mandate of teaching, research and service is dedicated and talented faculty and staff. It is critical that the contributions of faculty the staff are recognized to get them motivated in order to evoke their innovative and creative abilities in the discharge of their duties. We plan to achieve our diverse human resource milestones through the creation of supportive work environments with flexible and interactive training opportunities. We will work collectively with all interest groups - UTAG, GAUA, SAK and TEWU and ensure that their welfare is paramount at all times so they can continue to give off their best. In essence, our human resource goals will focus on employee success through the following strategies:

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for staff
- Skills Development Programmes (soft and hard) through mentorship and sponsored training
- Structured Leadership and Excellence Development Programmes (SLED)
- Staff Creativity and Innovations Recognition Programme (SCIRP)
- Staff Health and Wellness Initiatives (SWI) will also be embarked on.

In the midst of all the ramifications of COVID-19, one key attribute required of our staff and students to enable them maintain and increase their work output is resilience and mental toughness. The KNUST Counselling Centre will therefore be strengthened with expanded support services including e-counselling to enable staff and students cope with the new normal.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DRIVE FOR STUDENTS

Another priority area would be **‘Entrepreneurship Training and Enhanced Employability of Quality Graduates’** - As one of the major stakeholders in the nation’s development, KNUST must be seen actively participating in finding solutions to the graduate unemployment menace. In this respect, we would provide new and revise existing curricula to include substantial entrepreneurship content, as well as offer student - centred, problem- based learning opportunities.

We would in this direction, set up Career Development & Skills Centres in the Colleges, establish an **“Entrepreneurship Support Fund”, Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge**, Exhibitions, Bootcamps or Clinics in line with the Government’s policy on the “Students Entrepreneurship Initiative”. We would also continue to drive Industry - based internship programmes to foster relevant work experience for our students. We will continue to champion the **“STEM FOR GIRLS”** initiative of my predecessor by instituting **STEM Competitions**. Our hardworking ladies of

Women in Science, **WiSTEM** will lead this charge. My simple admonition to all the ladies and young girls is this: "Please keep going" It is very possible.

Indeed, we owe it to ourselves and country to train graduates who emerge as renowned entrepreneurs, leaders in innovation and technology, leaders in the community, leaders in business, leaders in their chosen fields, leaders in change and leaders in the broader society.

IMPACTFUL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Your Excellency, Nana Chancellor, Research advancement is the highest status any institution of higher learning could aspire to attain. Although KNUST has received significant accolades as a foremost research institution, I believe there is still a great opportunity for us to improve our research capacity and culture.

We would align research to national priorities, support and offer incentives to researchers to provide innovative industry-ready solutions. This would be achieved through empowering our Office of Grants and Research (OGR) to spearhead donor engagements and staff training with the aim of improving grants attraction and management. We would also establish an Enterprise Development Unit (EDU) in collaboration with the KNUST Centre for Business Development (CBD) and the Kumasi Business Incubator (KBI) to help commercialise our research outputs. We would increase the budget for the KNUST Research Fund, promote Sustainable Development Goal-oriented research initiatives through North-South co-operation, increase the number of female researchers in STEM disciplines through mentorship and attractive fellowships and create a **Young Researchers Forum (YRF)** to improve skills development in teaching, grantsmanship and publications to enhance their research portfolio. Further strategies would be, to establish and facilitate Academia-Industry Co-operation Units and Uptake desks at the Colleges as we" as promote Annual Technology and Innovation Fairs. We will strengthen the Quality Assurance and Planning Unit to promote high standards in our research and innovation activities and a" University operations.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

As the University continues to expand, there is the need to continue to provide excellent amenities to enhance training of holistic graduates in a conducive working and learning environment. In this direction, we will continue to modernize and retool our laboratories, studios, workshops and lecture halls to acceptable standards; fit for their intended purpose and build a central multi-purpose laboratory for undergraduate studies. We would also build a Library Mall with digital online resources where different floors could host different learning activities to provide a 24hour service to students whose accommodation are off-campus and would want to utilise the free Wi-Fi services on campus to study deep into the night. We will also seek to improve on-campus accommodation for students through collaboration with the private sector using the BOT model. We will continue to work with Government and other stakeholders to build our Teaching Hospital which has been on the drawing board for twelve years now. We will ensure that a" our infrastructure development will be energy efficient and disability friendly.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Your Excellency, the President, Nana Chancellor; distinguished guests, **we will at all times continue to engage in constructive partnerships with all** stakeholders. Indeed, no institution is an island on its own. We will therefore continue to build on our win-win relationships with our

stakeholders. Thankfully, as an institution, we are blessed with many such constructive partnerships both locally and internationally and we will leverage on these enduring relationships to place our university on the right pedestal in the globally competitive Educational environment

We will partner government, industry and business to identify critical areas of need to focus our research. We will engage community leadership and stakeholders to define pressing challenges and look for solutions to address them.

We must spend some time brain storming on the innovative programs and partnerships of the future that can continue to work for us as we actively take part in regional and global conversations that address nagging problems to improve the quality of life for our citizens.

RESOURCE GENERATION AND MANAGEMENT

As the Akan saying goes, “*nkwankyen adee eye fe a, yede sika na eye*”. All these brilliant ideas would be driven by funds and so financial mobilisation and prudent application of same cannot be left out of the dialogue.

Your Excellency, Nana Chancellor; indeed, it is very obvious that funding from the central government sources to us, is severely constrained, particularly as the number of public higher educational institutions increase. We will therefore need smarter strategies to generate and to improve the quantum of our internally generated funds (IGF). How are we going to do this? We will:

- Institute structures that will help us earn more from our patented technologies and intellectual properties.
- Establish strategic production units that will include water and tissue manufacturing plants
- Set up an Enterprise Development Unit (EDU) to commercialize our research findings to ensure increase in our research uptake by society.
- Empower the KNUST Centre for Business Development to champion start-ups as we drive ‘**One Department- One Start-Up (1D-1S)**’ agenda.
- Leverage on Public Private Partnerships to develop our properties in both Accra and Kumasi

As we improve our relations with our large pool of Alumni, we will court their generosity for support that will include funding targeted projects.

As we march on, prudent use of financial and material resources through adherence to national and university procurement and financial regulations will be strictly observed. In addition, we will realign and increase IGFs through recruitment of diversified international students, pursue PPP towards campus development, strengthen the KNUST Endowment Fund, and re-energise income generating units such as the Printing Press, Photocopy Unit, the Hale and Hearty Sports Complex, the Transport Department and our Moree facility among others.

INCREASING VISIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY

Your Excellency, Nana Chancellor, our visibility as a University would be further enhanced through research, innovations, inventions, publications in high impact factor journals as well as promoting delivery of inaugural lectures by our Eminent Professors on our research findings.

We would further enhance internationalization, nurture strong niche areas of research and innovation, institute Science and Technology Innovations segment on our own TEK TV and enhance our presence on the digital space as well as institute periodic University-Media Interaction as part of measures to shore up our visibility as a University.

ALUMNI AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

As major stakeholders, we would seek to actively engage Alumni and Government Agencies to drive University business. For this purpose, we would build a formidable Alumni Database and leverage on their networks and resources to support the University. I am aware of several initiatives in this direction by the Global Alumni Association and we would actively support them in this drive. We would also encourage the Alumni to establish Chairs, Scholarship Schemes, Endowment Funds as well as specific Alumni-funded projects, with their names inscribed in GOLD on them. By all means, there has to be something in it for the Alumni. We will therefore strengthen Alumni visits, support Alumni Homecoming events as well as build a “**KNUST CONNECT**” **Alumni App** that keeps the University and Alumni talking all the time, and recognise deserving Alumni during Congregations. As the major financier of the University, Management would actively engage Government and its Agencies on the future of this University and their role in it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic, Nana Chancellor, distinguished ladies and gentlemen joining us all over the world, I have no doubt about the future of our University and seek the concerted effort of all to be on board. In fact, the number of congratulatory messages I have, and continue to receive from members of staff, unions, corporate organizations and individuals are enough to show the level of enthusiasm and solidarity available to us. The words in these messages would never be lost on me for a moment.

I am deeply grateful to you The Chancellor, Otumfuo Osei-Tutu II, the Asantehene, the University Council, my dear family of convocation members and all staff of the University for this unique opportunity and for the confidence reposed in me to serve our great University. On behalf of all of us, I am taking a solemn pledge to assure the President of the Republic and the Chancellor that with your support, we are absolutely poised and well able to take this University to its next stage of **eminence, development and prominence**, as we imagine huge possibilities for a brighter future.

We can, and we will. God be our Helper.

Your Excellency, Nana Chancellor, I am very excited that the focus of all our activities will be towards our students who are the primary reason why we exist. Whilst being guided by that fact, it will not be lost on us that a well-trained, well-motivated, happy and professionally led teaching and non-teaching staff will ensure that that globally competitive graduate is produced. Words fail me in trying to adequately express how deeply humbled, honoured and inordinately privileged I am in being given this great opportunity to serve our august University as the 11th Vice Chancellor at this time. It is with a profound sense of honour and humility that I accept the appointment to serve in this capacity. I hereby solemnly promise to do my very best to sustain the good image of KNUST and to contribute significantly to the growth and development of our dear University. I am very positive I speak for the faculty and staff at KNUST when I say, despite, the challenges we face,

we love what we do and recognize our work is important and essential to the success and advancement of our students, their families, and our society. I therefore, respectfully ask each of you to join me in this all hands-on deck journey, leaving no one behind, as we stay on our solid mandate of producing only the best for this country and the beyond.

All I ask for is oneness of purpose, discipline, hard work, selflessness, strength and guidance as we labour on. Elbert Hubbard, one of the most prolific writers in American history hit the nail on the head on discipline when he said **“Self-discipline is the ability to do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not”** end of quote.

Let us remember that we can achieve almost any goal we set for ourselves if we have the discipline to pay the price to do what we need to do, and never give up.

Indeed, at the core of who we are, and what we continue to achieve is the grace of God on us which remains sufficient. Grace has brought us this far and grace will take us there!

As I conclude may we all be admonished by what the wise King Solomon had to say in Proverbs 3:5-6.

May we continue to Trust in the Lord with all our hearts

May we not lean on our own understanding

May we acknowledge Him in all our ways

And may He direct our path always.

Thank you all for your kind attention and may God bless our University and bless our dear Country, Ghana.

**PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON
VICE-CHANCELLOR, KNUST, KUMASI
AUGUST 1, 2020**

REMARKS BY PROFESSOR KWASI OBIRI-DANSO, OUT-GOING VICE-CHANCELLOR AT THE INVESTITURE OF PROFESSOR (MRS.) RITA AKOSUA DICKSON AS THE 11TH VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 2020 AT 10.00 A. M. AT THE GREAT HALL, KNUST, KUMASI

SALUTATION

The Chancellor of the University His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II
Chairman and Members of Council
Honourable Ministers of State
The Regional Minister
Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives
In-Coming Vice-Chancellor
Past Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Colleague Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors from Sister Institutions
Registrar and Registrars from Sister Institutions
Provosts of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Members of Convocation
Nananom
Alumni of the University
Senior and Junior Staff of the University
Distinguished Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure and honour that I wish to add my voice to that of the Chancellor, to congratulate Prof. (Mrs.) Rita Akosua Dickson and to warmly welcome you all on behalf of management, teaching and non-teaching staff, to the investiture of Prof. (Mrs.) Rita Akosua Dickson as the 11th Vice-Chancellor of our great institution.

A popular African proverb goes “if you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together”. My achievements are hinged on the enormous support I got from various individuals who played key roles in my administration.

Firstly, I wish to thank the Almighty God, without whom we can do nothing, for His guidance and protection during these four (4) years of my tenure. The Lord has been with us during both challenging and exciting times, and to him be all praise and glory.

Again, my sincerest gratitude goes to our Chancellor, His Royal Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, for the enormous support I enjoyed from him during my tenure. Nana, I am indeed indebted and very honoured for having a strong pillar like you during these past years.

To the Chairman and members of the University Council, it was great working with you. Your advice and guidance made my tenure a success. As the good book says in the Proverbs 11:14b “In the multitude of counsellors there is safety”.

Nana Chancellor, at this juncture, my heartfelt thanks goes to my predecessors, management team, Provosts of the various Colleges, Members of Convocation, Senior and Junior Staff and our Students. It is through our collective efforts that we are the best university in West Africa today. I wish to entreat you to accord our new Vice-Chancellor, who happens to be the first female to hold this mantle, the same support I enjoyed from you.

To my family, in the words of Michael Fox I say to you, you are not only an important thing, but you are my everything.

Now to all of us seated here this morning, may the good Lord bless you for your prayers and well wishes which kept me during my tenure.

Prof. Dickson, I wish you well in all your endeavours, once again Congratulations.

PROFESSOR KWASI OBIRI-DANSO
OUTGOING VICE-CHANCELLOR
KNUST, KUMASI
AUGUST 1, 2020