

SPEECH BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

The Provost of the College of Health Sciences, Dean of the University of Ghana Dental School, Dean of the University of Ghana Medical school, all guests of honour, Faculty of the University of Ghana dental school, alumni of this great and eminent institution, staff and students, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

I send you greetings from the Honourable Kwaku Agyemang-Manu, minister of Health of the republic of Ghana, who wished and intended to be here, but unfortunately had to attend to some other matter of equal importance. Be it as it may, I hereby hope to deliver his thoughts as eloquently and clearly as possibly in solidarity of this august occasion, signifying your impressive achievements.

The Ministry of Health values the efforts of the University community, particularly the University of Ghana Dental school and its products. The school is noted as a premier institution for the training of Dental surgeons in Ghana, begun in recognition of the rising demands for improved oral healthcare by the good people of Ghana. The school started as a department of the University of Ghana Medical School in 1974, and got fully established in 1991. The Government of Ghana did play a crucial role in the evolution of this prestigious

school and even the initial sponsorship arrangement for trainees to complete their education either in the UK or Nigeria. Because of the Ministry of Health's proud role in your evolution, the MOH also takes huge pride in your evident success and dare I say, greater potential. We are witnesses to your initiatives as a school, and the works of your products, and to top it all, the establishment of an alumni association.

The institution of the UGDS alumni group has been long coming, I might say, considering the feats reached by many of you, both locally, in the sub-region and even other continents. We are aware of the many dental and maxillofacial specialists scattered around the globe contributing their efforts. Keep up the good work, and make all of us proud!

I assure you of the Ministry's open doors to discuss ways of improving strategies regarding oral healthcare, and collaborating for alumni group's projects if necessary. Indeed many world class institutions around the world have been made better because their alumni associations and connections, so things can only get better, pray.

As you spur on with the UGDS alumni group, explore the full potential of this association to touch even future generations. Alumni associations generally provide a platform for graduates to connect and network with each other. I

would think that you would have diverse dental sub-specialty backgrounds and experiences, which can be valuable for career development, mentorship, job opportunities, and professional growth even among yourselves. Do not lose sight of the opportunity to hold each other's hands.

Allow me to also advise that you consider greatly, structures to support current students through various initiatives such as scholarships, mentorship programs, career counseling, and internships. This support can help students navigate their academic and professional journeys more effectively, to reach where you are. In so doing, my ministry is willing to offer any assistance if required.

In addition, intentionally spread the name of your alma mater, and even Ghana and hold its flag high wherever you find yourselves. It would amaze you what this does for us a people and a society. Build a sense of community and pride among yourselves, and provide opportunities for engagement. Leverage your support and enthusiasm to enhance the UGDS's reputation, attract prospective students, and strengthen ties with the broader community. Your ambassadorial role with the community is essential, particularly in the dental specialty where even some educated people in Ghana may not be well informed to take the desired proper control of their oral health.

I am aware that the Alumni associations often play a crucial role in fundraising efforts for their alma mater. I can only encourage you to do your best to spur on your objectives. Alumni donations and contributions can support scholarships, research initiatives, infrastructure development, and other important projects that benefit the university and its students.

Dean of the University of Ghana Dental School, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, Government has always taken an interest in UGDS and the progress of Dentistry in Ghana as whole, and will continue to do so. It is to the benefit of the entire Ghanaian society and future generations that we have a robust oral health system. So the support of the Alumni association is definitely a welcomed venture. I will therefore wish you well, and pledge the support of my ministry in furthering the wellbeing of the people of Ghana.

Long live the University of Ghana Dental School Alumni.

Thank you!