



**University of Ghana Congregation Ceremony for Bsc
Administration Class of 2023
The College of Humanities**

Remarks by Guest Speaker

Dr. Maxwell Opoku-Afari

First Deputy Governor, Bank of Ghana

&

Chair, Advisory Board, College of Humanities

University of Ghana

Great Hall, University of Ghana, Legon

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1. Madam Chancellor, Lady Chair and Members of Council, Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for Academic and Student Affairs, Registrar, Members of the Advisory Board of the College of Humanities, Provost, Deans and Directors, Members of Convocation, Staff and Students, Alumni, Invited Guests, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, and most especially the Bsc Administration Class of 2023 to whom I offer my sincerest congratulations.
2. It is an honour and a great privilege to have been invited to share this important occasion with you all. I see the beaming smiles and pride on your faces as you anticipate receiving your degrees any moment from now with a huge sigh of relief of having endured the journey. I know that feeling of accomplishment when you smartly dress up and put on the "Acapees" to pick the certificate. Back in the days, that was how we called it, and I later learnt that it stood for 'Academic Pomposity'. I am not sure whether you still refer to it by that name.
3. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am grateful for the opportunity to return to my Alma Mater, which always brings back fond memories, walking from the Commonwealth Hall to the Economics, Statistics and Mathematics Departments, sometimes to 'N' block for lectures, and to the Balme Library to search for relevant textbooks and journals.
4. The last time I was at this Great Hall, it was at the invitation of The University of Ghana Business School to deliver a Public Lecture on the topic "Macroeconomic Management in

Ghana—When the Love is Gone”. That lecture focused on where we have traversed as a country in terms of macroeconomic management and the paradigm shifts required to sustain the gains made so far.

5. Today, I will be doing something different. I will be focusing on how I see the world economy evolving and how we need to re-think the relationship between academia and industry and create a place for graduands like you to immerse yourself after school. But you see, in a free-market-economy, policymakers need to do one thing, and that is, create an enabling environment that allows for innovation to take place.
6. Innovation allows for job creation and we should strive towards that. We need to dream and DREAM BIG. As a matter of fact, talking about linkages between academia and industry, my current employer, the Bank of Ghana has forged and continues to forge strong links with the University of Ghana Fraternity, and that relationship will continue to strengthen.
7. We have gathered here for one purpose only, and that is to send you off into the world to do exploits with the knowledge acquired. I can tell by the expectant looks on your faces that today is an important milestone in your journey to the future. As usual some of you may be apprehensive at the mention of the word 'future', with thoughts running wild about what exactly that future holds. I have walked this graduation path, and let me assure you that the future has something for

everyone here. As with all such moments of transition, the uncertainty is palpable, but with the right choices and attitude, you can walk into the future you desire with optimism.

8. Recent developments show that, academic training and the global economy, including that in Ghana, is undergoing a profound technological “revolution”. Among others, this “revolution” is facilitating the on-going exchange of ideas, skills, and perspectives needed by the youth to drive the Ghanaian economy to the next level. It is no wonder that your generation is now referred to as ‘Gen Z’, that is, Internet Zoomers.
9. In other words, you are the torchbearers to the next level of the Ghana that we are all seeking to build. So as you walk out of here and join the workforce, you must gird your loins and prepare for the challenges ahead. The world out there is also changing and changing very fast, with technology driving everything, from banking, manufacturing, services, as well as the supportive social structures.
10. The message here is that you need not be stuck in your educational ideology. You must seize the moment and exploit all the technological experiences around you and try as much as possible to infuse that in your discipline to achieve your goals.
11. I therefore challenge you to go out there with passion to make a difference and impact your generation. In doing this,

I want to encourage you to be guided by the principles of hard work, perseverance, and integrity. These should underpin your journey as you head out, and I will explain why.

12. First, let me say that your presence here today provides strong evidence that you have each worked very hard and sacrificed a lot to reach this point in your life. The hard work has certainly paid off, but you must learn to be magnanimous in the celebration of that success. Do well to remember the shoulders that have carried you through this journey, including your parents, lecturers, family, and colleagues. So, while you rejoice in your achievement from the hard work today, count yourselves privileged and be grateful to those who contributed along the way, and say thank you.
13. In working hard towards earning your degree, you must have also learnt a thing or two about perseverance. The world out there is harsh and the road to success would not always be smooth; you all have different stories to tell on how you pulled through your university education with perseverance. Hard work and perseverance must remain your guide and hallmark as you move towards the next stage in life. Do not relax, always strive for greater heights, and know that as graduates, there are more miles ahead of you on the “learning ladder”. Stretch yourself beyond this level, and with hard work and perseverance, you can make it well beyond your expectations.

14. Let me share some personal experiences to buttress this point. Growing up, my parents instilled in me the need to work hard in every situation, despite the challenges along the way. This thinking greatly influenced my academic pursuits and work life. During my time as a student, I dreamt of working at the Central Bank. Though just a dream, I persevered and with God's guidance, I got in. As ingrained in my mind, I worked diligently at the Bank, seeing every challenge as a learning opportunity and a stepping stone to the next level.
15. The hard work, focus, dedication, and drive for results yielded dividends, and I got the opportunity to pursue my Doctorate degree. When I returned to the Bank, the enhanced academic qualifications and skills acquired, propelled me to the next level of performance, and I can confidently say that the hard work and perseverance paid off. Today, I find myself invited back here to serve as an inspiration to you, graduands, that whatever your dreams and aspirations are, with hard work and perseverance, you can achieve them.
16. The other core value that I want to touch on is integrity of character, the lack of which has become critical in the world we live in today. As you progress in life, you need to cultivate the habit of walking the talk. Generally, character is observed by the complex mental and ethical traits marking and often individualizing a person or group of people. To quote Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, "A man's character is his fate." To say it in another way, your character will determine your fate in life. The Bible also puts it so aptly in **Romans**

5:3-5, which states that “*not only that, but we must rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame....*”.

17. The greatest obstacle towards achieving and sustaining success is and has continued to be character. In this modern society, future leadership is under siege and moral decadence appears to be on the ascendancy, but do not allow yourselves to get caught in this trap. Let integrity be your core guiding principle.
18. As noted by Warren Buffet, the American Business Magnate, “In looking for people to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if the people don't have the first, the other two will kill you.” That is, if a potential employee, which I believe you all currently are, has intelligence and enthusiasm/energy, without integrity, they are likely to become liabilities to the employer. So, having integrity as a core value is critical in any environment, it helps build trust and dependability, and in this age of social media and quick fixes, you must be ready to stay true to your word, no matter what. That will certainly help you attain higher heights in society.
19. Ladies and Gentlemen, you are the emerging leaders that Ghana is waiting for, and leadership is about confidence, trust, and character. You cannot conquer the current

challenges with yesterday's attitude and character. So, as you graduate today and embark on the journey to the future, let hard work guide the path you will take, persevere no matter what, and finally, let integrity be your core value. Climbing the ladder in life will require these three core values and I urge you to take it as the CURRENCY OF LIFE. You will need it as you move through the next phase of your life.

20. I challenge you to utilize the skills acquired during your years of study to good use and keep stretching yourself to the maximum limit. Go out from this place with passion; with a driven determination to use your knowledge and skills as fresh minds to make a difference in the world.

21. I know you are all in a hurry to walk out of here, throw those hats off, and go celebrate with friends and family. I will not keep you much longer, but if there is something from this brief remarks to take home, it is this catchphrase, **'Work hard, persevere at all times, and always maintain your integrity'**.

22. At this point let me congratulate you all, the Bsc Administration class of 2023.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL AND GOD BLESS OUR HOMELAND GHANA.

Thank you very much for your attention.