

Guest of Honor Speech Delivered by Gabriel Ayum Teye (Prof), Vice Chancellor of the University for Development Studies (UDS) On March 23rd 2022

Theme: “Building a Formidable Security Front where Stakeholders Cooperate to Ensure Efficient Delivery of Justice”.

Delivered at The First Forensic Science Summit, Adani Andan Academic Chamber of the UDS Central administration

Mr Chairman, Registrar, Campus Principal, Deans and Directors, Librarian, Heads of Departments and Units, Regional Commanders of the various Security Services, guests, The Media, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning!

I welcome you all to the Forensic and Security Summit 2022 and especially to the University for Development Studies here in Tamale.

As we all know, Justice Delivery in Ghana faces a lot of challenges and research shows that the barriers to accessing justice have forced many people into uncomfortable situations today. There are many innocent remanded people in Ghanaian prisons today owing to poor justice delivery.

Ladies and gentlemen, as a country that promotes good moral and ethical standards, I dare say that poor justice delivery is a great sinful act and a heinous crime. Normally, the criminal justice system is designed to punish the criminals and as we always want to hold criminals accountable for their acts, the same energies should be channelled into the institutions responsible for efficient justice delivery. The fundamental human rights of people who go through this system must be adequately protected.

The world has evolved, and we have seen many advancements in all aspects of life because of science and technology. By all measures, we can say crime is evolving and perpetrators have leveraged many avenues to orchestrate their criminal activities.

Crime is being committed through sophisticated approaches nowadays and digital-enabled crimes which are the new areas of crime increasing rapidly. Today, burglary has evolved into sophisticated phishing schemes, fraud is being committed through the internet and the negative impact is on innocent and unsuspecting individuals who are being exploited for financial, sexual, or immigration purposes.

The anonymity and extraterritoriality that criminal networks possess today have rendered traditional investigative tactics null; therefore, the need for a more sophisticated approach to tackling crimes has become imperative. Thanks to the founding fathers of forensic science for the science that has to do with the recognition, identification, individualization, and evaluation of evidence for legal purposes.

Over the past decades, the relationship between justice delivery and solving crimes, such as burglary, cyber-crime, corruption, document fraud, murder, environmental crimes, food crimes, sexual assault, familial and litigious issues, and other civil issues has been poor. A typical

challenge has to do with criminals getting access to current and available technology at a low to no cost while law enforcement in Ghana relies on 19th or 20th -century approaches and technologies.

Security is a necessity and institutions such as the Ghana Police Service, Ghana Fire Service, Ghana Ambulance Service, The Environmental Protection Agency, National Disaster Management Organization, the public, and all other law enforcement bodies need to complement their tactics with enhanced and advanced forensic approaches. This change surely comes at a cost, but we must spend money as a nation to improve upon the science that will enable proper justice delivery and foster sustainable development.

Ghana needs to meet the impending challenge of poor justice delivery with technology to enable easy access to data by relevant institutions whenever it is necessary. I, therefore, advocate that both technological and legal tools should be updated for law enforcement in Ghana to keep the populace safe.

Distinguished guest, Ladies, and gentlemen, in the short history of forensic science in Ghana, research data identifies key challenges hindering the progress of this multidisciplinary field of science. These challenges include education and advocacy, unemployment of graduates, inadequate staff, and facilities to carry out forensic research, and poor collaboration between scientists in forensic science research.

Therefore, there is the need for more forensic science institutions and professionals and as a matter of national action, the University for Development Studies has established the Department of Forensic Sciences to train students who ultimately will become the next generation of professionals in the forensic discipline.

This, I believe will bridge the gap between crimes and justice delivery in Ghana and its transborder countries, the West Africa Sub-region, and the world at large. I advocate for the betterment of forensic science in Ghana and the University is open to collaborations that will go a long way to influence forensic policy action in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the time! Light needs to shine on the world of crime and social justice in Ghana. The perpetrators of crime must be aware that they are being watched, they can be found, and effective justice will be delivered based on the rigorousness of the laws of the state in the future.

Thank you