

Take-off Event Ashesi-ETH Master in Engineering Program – Statement of Ambassador Philipp STALDER, 13th October 2020

Ambassador of Ghana to Switzerland, H.E. Ramses Cleland,

Prof. Dr. Sarah M. Springman – Rector, ETH Zurich

Dr. Patrick Awuah – President, Ashesi University

Prof. Dr. Angela Owusu-Ansah – Provost, Ashesi University

Representatives of Swiss industry partners: ABB, Barry Callebaut, Bühler and Lafarge

Holcim, Nestlé

Distinguished ladies & gentlemen all gathered here today virtually,

I extend my warm greetings from the Swiss Embassy in Accra to you all.

It is a pleasure to participate in this important take-off event to mark the collaboration between Ashesi University in Ghana, ETH Zurich in Switzerland, and its industry partners who will start a Master's degree programme in engineering; jointly developed by the two universities.

My family and I have been in Ghana for a year and a half now, and this country has presented to me many varying good impressions. The most inspiring of these, is the ambitious attitude of so many Ghanaians to improve, the verve to succeed and the search to move a step further. Ghanaians, especially the youth, are always looking forward to new prospects of opportunities.

I believe it is in line with this, that Ashesi University, has found an excellent collaborative partner in the ETH Zurich. You find a good partner, because Switzerland enjoys a decade-long reputation on top of global innovation rankings. Switzerland has been ranked as the world's most innovative country for the 10th year in a row for example by the United Nations Global Innovation Index. The city of Zurich has been placed third worldwide in this year's Smart City Index. The report assesses the efforts and successes of cities in the introduction of smart technologies and measures the extent to which cities are investing in smart technologies.

The ETH Zurich is also noted for practical, industry focused and innovative research among its peers. The Ashesi University, although relatively new in Ghana, enjoys an enviable

reputation. I note that it was ranked first in Ghana, ninth in Africa, and among the world's top 400, in the 2020 Global Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings. Certainly, in this collaboration, none is coming from a position of weakness. From my visit to the beautiful campus of Ashesi and my exchange with Rector Patrick Awuah in November last year, I carry very good personal memories and often remarked to myself, *"these people at Ashesi are on to something!"*

The relevance of the path is profound, and will be seen much more clearly in the near future when it begins to answer the Ghanaian government's vision to create more and better jobs, especially skilled ones as it embarks on an infrastructure and industrialization drive. I am confident that with the youthful, innovative and energetic population Ghana has, this collaborative course would be taken full advantage of.

I must mention that this cooperative path taken by these two higher education institutions of excellence fits perfectly with the tradition of collaboration between our two countries – which began some 200 years ago with arrival of Basel Missionaries in Ghana – and which we recently honored with an invitation to Ghana's President H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo to execute a State Visit to Switzerland at the end of February this year: this was a first historic step in our relationship as it was the first State Visit of a leader of a sub-Saharan African country to Switzerland in more than 60 years.

I conclude my remarks by also noting how auspicious this collaboration is from another perspective. We celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations with Ghana this year, and while doing that, other new partnerships and new journeys, like this very one, are being started. I am hopeful it will reflect the mutually beneficial relations our two countries have had.

I wish you all the best and have high confidence in the prospects of this partnership between ETH Zurich and Ashesi University.
