

## WITS GRADUATION CITATION: ERNEST ARYEETEEY

Professor Ernest Aryeetey, an outstanding African economist, is also one of the continent's most prominent leaders in higher education. Over an academic career spanning some 40 years, Professor Aryeetey has, among other achievements, led the establishment and consolidation of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), a network of African research-intensive universities, served with great distinction as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, led one of Ghana's most accomplished research institutions, - the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) - and been one of the continent's leading academic economists.

Ernest Aryeetey was born on 19 October 1955 in Kumasi, Ghana. He studied economics with statistics at the University of Ghana (1975–1978). Later, he qualified for a master's degree in regional planning at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi (1979–1981). He obtained a PhD (*Doktor-Ingenieur*) from the Technical University Dortmund, Germany, in 1985. In July 2017, the University of Sussex, UK, awarded him an honorary degree for significant contribution to the study of African economies and to higher education transformation in Africa. After teaching briefly at the Technical University Dortmund, Ernest Aryeetey returned to Ghana in 1986 to start work as a research fellow at the University of Ghana's Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER). He was Director of ISSER for the period February 2003 to January 2010, a period over which ISSER grew to be among the leading economic and social research centres in the African continent.

He was appointed as the ninth Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana and led that institution from 2010 to 2016. Under his leadership the University made significant changes in academic performance – both in research and teaching – its governance, and its physical infrastructure. Research at the University became a lot more prominent and he is credited with playing an instrumental role in the University now being recognised as a research-intensive university. Among others, he led the creation of four Centres of Excellence for Malaria Research, Food Production and Processing, Climate Change Adaptation and Development Policy and Poverty. Professor Aryeetey is generally credited with being a “visionary Vice-Chancellor”.

Professor Aryeetey's research work focuses on the economics of development with interest in institutions and their role in development, regional integration, economic reforms, financial systems in support of development and small enterprise development. He is well known for his work on informal finance and microfinance in Africa. He has consulted for various international agencies on several development and political economy subjects.

He has fulfilled various scholarly roles such as being the managing editor of the *Journal of African Economies*, a member of the editorial board of *Development Southern Africa* and of *African Development Review*, and the editor of the *New Legon Observer*.

Ernest Aryeetey has held many other influential positions during his career, including being a Member of the Board of the Global Development Network (GDN) New Delhi (2004–2009), Chairman of the Board of the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) (2009–2015), Non-Executive Director of Barclays Bank Ghana Ltd in 2004-2007 and he has been a non-Executive Director of Stanbic Bank Ghana Ltd since 2010. He is currently the board chair of the Bank. He has been associated with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) since its establishment in 1988 and currently serves as Chair of the Board of the AERC.

Arguably his most influential position was his appointment as the first Secretary-General of the African Research University Alliance (ARUA) in 2015. The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) was inaugurated in Dakar in March 2015, bringing together sixteen of the continent's leading research focused universities. This initiative recognised the fact that partnerships and networking have become essential arrangements for universities' success.

Under Ernest Aryeetey's leadership, the Alliance has not only stabilised it has enjoyed a 25% growth. It now consists of twenty universities: six in South Africa, five in east Africa, eight in west Africa and recently one in north Africa. There are also three associate members from three countries in the southern African region.

With Ernest Aryeetey's leadership and standing in the broader international community, ARUA has developed international partnerships with funding foundations, for example the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Open Societies Foundation, and the Andrew Mellon Foundation; and with funding agencies, for example the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Fund, an umbrella body for UK funding agencies; the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa; and with other university groupings such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the Guild an alliance of research intensive universities in Europe. Over nearly ten years, Ernest Aryeetey has consistently built the Alliance, and it now has a well-defined and fully supported strategy to use the Alliance's research capacity to contribute to Africa's development.

It is therefore befitting that for his contributions to research in Africa, his leadership of the higher education sector, and his contributions as an economist that the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg bestows an Honorary Doctorate Degree on Professor Ernest Aryeetey.