



CHAIR'S REMARKS & DECLARATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DAY AND EXERCISE MEDICINE MONTH: MINISTER OF HEALTH

Hon. Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, MP

The theme of this year's conference is *Growing a Community of Holistic Wellness*. My Ministry recognizes the negative impact of physical *inactivity* on our wellbeing. Thus, I truly welcome the additional focus on *curricula* for fitness and exercise medicine in this conference. This is another way to heighten preventive care measures/approaches to supplement the curative, and to relieve the burden on Ghana's medical care system. The diversity of activities and stakeholders here show that the nations' wellbeing is not a one-sector responsibility. [There is a comprehensive list of stakeholders elsewhere in the conference program.]

I am encouraged by this assembly of government, non-governmental and international well-wishers concerned about preventive health. My Ministry's paradigm shift to Regenerative Health and Nutrition is consistent with GPEStt-EMG advocacy agenda for preventive health to grow a society of holistic wellness. We are privileged to be a partner of your advocacy agenda. We shall continue to support your advocacies to heighten awareness and to facilitate programmes and practices in RHN to grow a community that relies on preventive lifestyle behaviours.

As a critical sector in growing a holistic wellness community, the Ministry of Health seeks to partner up with other sectors to improve the health status of all people in Ghana thereby contributing to Government's vision of transforming Ghana into a healthy and productive country by 2015. In this regard, my Ministry and the Ghana Physical Education and Sport Thinktank, working together, aim at enriching the human capital of the nation through holistic wellness, which includes regenerative health, nutrition and fitness. It is a proactive advocacy designed to accelerate my Ministry's efforts to ensure improved health and vitality of all citizens.

Physical activity as we are all aware is good and should be encouraged in our daily lives due to the health-related benefits derived from it. Enhancing ones cardiovascular

endurance, flexibility, bone and muscle strength and endurance are all essential to an individual's health. The display of "ampe", as a useful physical activity, is enlightening. It is traditional and requires nothing but persons to play. A careful analysis of ampe reveals aerobic endurance development, bone strength as well as muscle strength and endurance benefits. In addition, the choreography of movements in carefully coordinated rhythms is such a beautiful sight to observe. So, why is ampe not a big feature in our physical activity life as a nation? I am optimistic that the GPEStt and EMG's "Ampe-Skip for Heart" advocacy will foster the needed national awareness of the benefits derivable from ampe-skip.

My hope is that, by the end of the conference, stakeholders will not only better appreciate their formative role to nurture a community of holistic wellness; they will also declare a renewed collective allegiance to that end. Above all, they will strengthen the bridges amongst and between sectors and stakeholders.

Fighting physical inactivity is a must thing to do. Today, 6 June 2012, I wish to declare publicly my Ministry's support to join the global fight against physical inactivity. I further declare 1 June each year as Physical Activity Day and to call on all sectors assembled here to support the efforts of collaborating agencies (such as GPEStt-EMG) to reinforce regular engagement in physical activity to reduce healthcare cost in the nation. Let us be reminded each year on 1st June that physical activity is important for the health and productivity of our nation.

Furthermore, I declare the month of May as **Exercise Medicine Month** in Ghana to heighten awareness and to **regenerate** consciousness for healthy lifestyle and holistic wellness. During MAY each year, there will be carefully coordinated and planned activities (between MOH and allied sectors- government and private) to include but not limited to, nutrition and fitness workshops, seminars, and professional development activities for personnel in the physical activity industry... and many more. Let us observe MAY each year with purpose-driven activities ahead of the annual GPEStt-and the Exercise Medicine-Ghana Congress.

Now my challenge to the academicians- The RHN construct consists of sound concepts that need manipulation and treatment to generate scientific knowledge base in

RHN. Let us hear and see quality research at the subsequent GPEStt-EMG yearly meetings.
That is my challenge to this body of intellects and researchers.