

**ADDRESS BY MR. AUGUSTINE YAW BOAMAH, THE PRESIDENT OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS ON THE
OCCASION OF THE ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT THE NEW CAPITAL VIEW HOTEL –KOFORIDUA FROM 16TH-
19TH DECEMBER, 2007**

*Nana Chairman, Professor Emeritus Daasebre Oti Boateng, Omanhene
of the New Juabeng Traditional Area,
Hon. Regional Minister, Eastern Region,
Director General, Ghana Health Service,
Regional Director of Health Services, Eastern Region,
Invited Guests
Colleagues,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen*

Once again we are meeting as a family to retrospectively appraise our performance and chart a new course as we take an in-depth assessment of our role over the last 50 years. I on behalf of the NEC welcome you all to this meeting.

It is always gratifying when we meet at a bigger forum like this to share ideas and best practices that impact positively on our output and consequently the health of the people of Ghana.

Nana Chairman, the past year was full of many opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, training and developing young Administrators to meet current challenges in the health sector was seen as paramount. Consequently, for the first time in many years, some young Administrators as a group benefited from a training workshop organized by the Directorate of HASS in conjunction with the NEC on 'Administrative Procedures' in Kumasi. Due to inadequate funding, we could not cover as many Administrators as we would have wished. Nonetheless the Directorate intends to organize another session for those who could not benefit.

Nana Chairman, one of the highlights of the year was the grand installation of the Deputy Director - Administration for Central Region, Mr. Owusu Boampong as the Nifahene of the Ofinso Traditional Area with the stool name Nana Kwaku Dua II. Members of the National Executive Council were at Ofinso to support and grace the occasion.

As a first step to foster collaboration with our sister association in the United States of America, Mr. Brobbey Mpiani, Deputy Director – Administration at the Headquarters was sponsored by General Electric to participate in the conference of the American Association of Health Services Administrators. We hope that the GHS/MOH will secure sponsorship for more Administrators to participate in such sister conferences in future. The American Association of Health Services Administrators has also expressed the desire to participate in our conferences in future if they are invited.

On the flip side, Nana Chairman the Association was plunged into one of its darkest moments when one of its promising members was grotesquely murdered by the people of Atronie in the Brong Ahafo Region, on Easter Sunday. The Association received the news with great shock and the spontaneous reaction from NEC coupled with the massive attendance at the funeral demonstrated the love members had for the late Hon. Yeboah Boateng. Your participation and contributions at the funeral was overwhelming and indeed unprecedented.

Nana chairman, one of the most pertinent issues that is having a negative impact on young Administrators in their quest to give off their best on the job after their internship is the delay in formally appointing them. Some of our junior colleagues have worked for the past 2 years and yet have not had their names mechanized even though they are working as full time Administrators in hospitals.

The situation where the Health Services Administrator who has been trained solely for the health sector as a manager is put in the category of general paramedical staff who are trained not for the health sector specific but for the entire labour market needs to be looked at again and the Health Services Administrator placed in his rightful place.

Again, it takes the blend of the clinical and non-clinical staff to manage a hospital and therefore the apparent discrimination against non-clinical staff when recruitments are made should be carefully examined to reflect the realities on the ground.

Nana Chairman, the theme for this year's conference is '50 years of Health Administration and Management in Ghana; Achievements, Challenges and Prospects'. I hope you will all agree with me that the role and contribution of the Health Services Administrators in the delivery of health services from pre- and post-independence as well as contemporary times cannot be overemphasized.

Health Administration and Management especially in our hospitals has undergone tremendous changes from the era of one man Doctor/Administrator through the Doctor and Matron/Administrator to the era of the Tripartite Committee comprising the Doctor, the Matron and the Hospital Secretary as he was then known. In fact since the days of the Hospital Secretary, he has been in-charge of the day-to-day administration of the hospital and in the performance of his job; most decisions had to be consented to by his boss, the Medical Superintendent.

Nana Chairman, the Health Services Administrator of today is a highly skilled and well motivated health professional who does not only administer but also helps in the development and shaping of policies at the level at which he finds himself. Indeed a well skilled and qualified Administrator is an indispensable asset to his organisation.

The contemporary Health Services Administrator should be able to provide leadership to manage his office in a manner that will move the hospital or his office from a state of inertia to a state of bounty using the scarce resources at his disposal. He should be seen to be fair, compassionate, disciplined and firm. He should be able to motivate his staff and exact the best from them.

While this is the case, Nana Chairman, I must admit that not all of us are living up to the expectation. How many of us, for instance, go on round to inspect the facilities in

our institutions? It is not uncommon to find cobwebs in the corners of most hospital wards. Yet there are Orderlies who have been paid to clean our facilities to ensure that quality standards are maintained. Supervision generally has been relaxed and we need to sit up. The increasing workload, coupled with the shortage of staff and the need to improvise at certain times in our hospitals call for creativity and innovation to stand up to the challenges.

As I always jokingly say, “You don’t need foreign exchange to remove a cobweb”. We should not be seen as armchair Administrators but as Administrators who have absolute control of whatever goes on in our organisations. I implore you to eschew selfishness, graft and corrupt practices as well as get-rich-quick attitude which would eventually send you to the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament. In deed, issues of transparency, accountability, responsibility and sound management should be our guiding principles.

Nana Chairman, permit me to touch on a looming reality which Administrators in the hospitals would have to face in the not too distant future. At the last conference I implored all Administrators especially those in the hospitals to lend their unflinching support to the National Health Insurance Scheme which is one of the good things ever to happen to Ghanaians. The time has come for Hospital Managers to apply themselves diligently to the management of their Health Insurance Funds in the face of dwindling government subvention to hospital. Our ability to prudently manage our internally generated funds (IGF) and our ability to inspire confidence in our patients would measure, to a large extent, our efficiency and competitiveness in the business of providing health care.

I wish, Nana Chairman, to emphasize the need for Health Services Administrators to continue seeking knowledge by exploring the use of Information, Communication and Technology in the day-to-day running of their hospitals and offices especially with the increasing workload associated with the NHIS. In this way, we will be able to contribute effectively toward the vision of moving the country into the middle-income status by 2015.

Nana Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me conclude by stating that we shall be electing new officers to take over from the current leadership. I would like to appeal to my colleagues to elect new officers who are capable, committed and have the association at heart since the office demands a lot of sacrifices. I wish to thank you all for the support you gave me during my tenure and hope that the same support would be given to the new officers who would be elected.

Colleagues, as we endear ourselves to these aforementioned issues at this conference, I will urge you to comport yourselves and listen attentively to our facilitators so that at the end of the conference we would have enriched our knowledge and experience

Nana Chairman, our meeting has been made possible by the support and contributions of the Director General of Ghana Health Service, Anest Printing Press, the Eastern Regional Director of Health Services and his able lieutenants and of course, the Management and Staff of New Capital View Hotel for accepting to host us. We really appreciate their contributions and wish to extend our appreciation to them.

Once again, I wish to thank our Chairman, Daasebre Oti Boateng, the Eastern Regional Minister, Hon. Kwadwo Afram Asiedu, the Director General, GHS, Dr. Elias Sory, the Eastern Regional Health Director and his team, the press and all invited guests for honouring our invitation and gracing the conference.

Thank you and May God bless us all.