

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES, HON. SAMUEL A. JINAPOR, ON THE 2022 EDITION OF GREEN GHANA DAY WHICH IS SLATED FOR FRIDAY JUNE 10, 2022, MADE ON THE FLOOR OF PARLIAMENT WEDNESDAY JUNE 7, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Speaker for the opportunity to make this Statement, as we approach the 2022 edition of the Green Ghana Day.

Mr. Speaker, in two days (2) time, specifically on Friday, June 10, 2022, the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, will be leading the entire nation to plant, at least, twenty million (20,000,000) trees across the country, as part of our aggressive afforestation and reforestation programme, to restore our lost forest cover, and contribute to global climate action.

Let me, at the outset, thank you, Rt. Hon. Speaker, and Honourable Members of this august House, for your enthusiasm and support during the maiden edition of the Green Ghana Day, held on June 11, 2021, which contributed immensely to the success of the day.



I am informed, Mr. Speaker, that, just like last year, the Business Committee and the House have agreed for sitting to be adjourned on Thursday, June 9, to enable Honourable Members lead their constituents on Friday June 10, in this national tree planting exercise. I am extremely grateful for this kind consideration.

Mr. Speaker, let me also thank this august House, for its continuous support to my modest self, and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in our quest to ensure the efficient and responsible management and exploitation of our lands and natural resources. Undoubtedly, the fiduciary duty of managing the lands and natural resources of our country is an onerous one, but this House has continued to lend me its support in the discharge this arduous duty.

Mr. Speaker, the climate crisis is reaching a tipping point. According to the experts, greenhouse gas emissions are at their highest levels in two million (2,000,000) years, and they continue to rise. The Earth is now 1.1 degrees Celsius warmer than it was in the late 1800s, with the last decade being the warmest period. Ice in the Antarctic and glaciers are melting, rain patterns are changing, rivers and streams are drying up, and sea temperatures are rising.

Mr. Speaker, here in our own country, the Ghana Meteorological Agency reports that Ghana has experienced more than One Degree Celsius (1⁰C) increase in temperature in the last three decades. The effect of this on our daily lives are obvious, tidal waves sweeping over coastal communities, frequent droughts, perennial floods, temperature rise, erratic rainfall patterns, food insecurity and poverty, among others.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, is necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and maintain a livable climate. But, at the current rate, global warming is projected to reach 3.2 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that we have solution which is within our reach, forests. Also referred to as the "Lungs of the Earth," forests play a crucial role in the sustainability of our planet and our survival, by absorbing carbon dioxide and contributing to emission reduction. Regrettably, however, the world's forests are being depleted at an alarming rate.

Globally, it is estimated that the world loses one hundred and fifty (150) acres of rainforest every single minute. That translates to over two hundred thousand (200,000) acres a day, and almost seventy-nine million (79,000,000) acres a year. The Amazon, is said to be vanishing at a rate of twenty-thousand square miles (20,000 sq. mi.) a year, and could be lost in the next fifty (50) years if nothing is done. Here, in our country, we have lost over eight million hectares (8,000,000ha) of our forest cover since 1900.

It is to reverse this disturbing situation that, in 2021, the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, launched the Green Ghana Project, as part of an aggressive afforestation and reforestation programme. The key objectives of the Project are to create enhanced national awareness of the necessity for collective action towards restoration of degraded landscapes in the country, inculcate values of planting and nurturing of trees in the youth, mitigate climate change and beautify our communities and environment.

Mr. Speaker, on the maiden edition of the Green Ghana Day, last year, with the support of Honourable Members and all Ghanaians, as well as residents in Ghana, we planted over seven million (7,000,000) trees, exceeding our target of five million (5,000,000). Reports from the Forestry Commission indicates that about eighty

percent (80%) of these trees have survived, and are doing very well.

This year, Mr. Speaker, our commitment is to plant, at least, twenty million (20,000,000) trees across the country, on **June 10, 2022**, the Green Ghana Day. Based on lessons from the maiden edition, we have adopted a two-pronged Strategy to achieve this target. The first is to plant ten million (10,000,000) seedlings in degraded forest reserves in compartments. We encourage corporate Ghana and other organisations to adopt forest compartments for planting, and we will brand these compartments in the names of these organisations, and same can be reported, either as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility or as offset for their carbon footprints.

The remaining ten million (10,000,000) seedlings will be planted outside forest reserves, particularly around farms, degraded watershed areas, boundaries, office compounds, and sites within communities, including, parks, roadsides, homes, churches, mosques and schools.

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We have allocated to each of the sixteen (16) regions planting targets. And seedlings have been made available, free of charge, at the District Offices of the Forestry Commission, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, as well as other public places.

Mr. Speaker, on that day, the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, will kick start the nationwide exercise by planting at the Efua Sutherland Park, here in Accra, at 8am. The Vice President will plant in Tamale. Mr. Speaker, your good self, as Second Deputy Speaker, will, on behalf the Rt. Hon. Speaker, plant within the precincts of Parliament. And my Lord the Chief Justice will plant within the precincts of the Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, other eminent Ghanaians will be planting across the country, including former President John Agyekum Kufour, who will be planting in Gomoa Nsuaem, and former President John Dramani Mahama, who will be planting in Accra. The Asantehene will plant in Kumasi, and the Ya-Na will plant in Yendi. His Eminence the National Chief Imam, and other eminent clergy, will also be planting across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I will witness Mr. President's planting at the Efua Sutherland Park, and later join the British High Commissioner, H.E. Harriet Thompson, and other British nationals, to plant in the Achimota Forest, in commemoration of the Platinum Jubilee of the ascension of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Mr. Speaker, let me use this opportunity to call on Honourable Members, corporate Ghana, traditional leaders, entrepreneurs, teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, judges, students, religious leaders, traders, civil servants, public servants, members of the diplomatic corps, and indeed, every person living in Ghana, as well as those visiting Ghana on Green Ghana Day, to join hands with us to plant, at least, twenty million trees.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage everyone to pick seedlings from the nearest point, plant it, take a picture, post it on social media with the hashtag "Green Ghana," and nurture the tree to maturity.

Mr. Speaker, the rate of deforestation and forest degradation remains alarming, and there is the urgent need to continue the vigorous interventions to reverse this trend of depletion. Deforestation and forest degradation continue to be the greatest threat to sustainable natural resources management, and its dire consequences on lives and livelihoods.

As we count down to the **Green Ghana Day – June 10, 2022**, I, respectfully, call on all and sundry to rally behind government, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Forestry Commission and other partners and stakeholders to make the Green Ghana Day a resounding success. We have a collective responsibility, as a people, to leave future generations and their communities with richer, better and more valuable forests and wildlife endowment than we inherited.

Mr. Speaker, the forest sector offers us fast, reliable and empirical evidence-based actions to mitigate the effects of Climate Change. We must, therefore, make concerted efforts to safeguard our forests. The world has no time, and Ghana has none either. Let all citizens of the world, and those of our beloved country, be reminded of the prophetic words of the celebrated and far-sighted American patriot, Martin Luther King Jnr., and be called upon to act with, what he referred to as, **“the fierce urgency of now.”**

TOGETHER LET US BUILD A GREENER FUTURE.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.