

Ghana secures \$30m UAE grant

...under Resilient Ghana Package to achieve biodiversity and climate objectives

BY TIMES REPORTER

THE Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, on behalf of the Forestry Commission, has signed a Letter of Intent with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government for the grant of \$30,000,000.00 to provide additional/alternative livelihood support to forest fringe communities.

It is meant as an incentive for them to engage in enhanced forest protection, forest restoration and reforestation and forms part of efforts by the government to achieve biodiversity and climate objectives under the Resilient Ghana Package launched at COP28 in Dubai, last year.

In 2022, at COP 27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Ado, and the then British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, launched the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) as a new political forum that brings together governments and partners to work together to implement solutions that reduce forest loss, increase restoration, and support sustainable development.

Subsequently, at COP 28 in Dubai, Ghana launched her Resilient Ghana Package for nature, climate, and people, under the FCLP.

The Resilient Ghana package includes an integrated system-wide suite of interventions to help halt and reverse forest loss while delivering sustainable development and promoting inclusive rural transformation.

It is underpinned by three key pillars, namely nature-based industrialisation and rural development; future-fit green jobs and livelihoods; and scaling climate ambition.

At the launch of the package in Dubai, several countries pledged their support to the Resilient Ghana Package. UAE, the COP28 Presidency, as part of its commitment to contribute funds to target deforestation and biodiversity loss, committed to invest \$30,000,000.00 to enhance Ghana's efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030.

This was followed by several engagements between the two countries to unlock the necessary funding to support the Package.

And last Friday, on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Week in New York, the Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel A. Jinapor, MP, on behalf of Ghana, and the UAE Minister for Climate Change and Environment, Dr Amna Al Dahak Al Shamsi, in the presence of the UAE Climate Change High-Level Champion for COP28 and President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, on behalf of the Government of

UAE, signed a Letter of Intent to provide up to \$30,000,000.00 to implement the biodiversity and climate objectives of the Resilient Ghana Package and REDD+ Strategies.

Speaking after the signing ceremony, Mr Jinapor reiterated the government's commitment to developing strategies to restore habitats, protect endangered species, and promote resilient ecosystems.

He noted that though the challenges were daunting, through collaboration and a shared vision, Ghana can pave the way towards sustainable solutions that benefit not only the country, but the entire global community.

He expressed his deep appreciation to the government of the UAE and all those who have been involved in the negotiations and discussions that led to the signing of the agreement, adding that Ghana would develop the necessary strategies to achieve the objectives of the Resilient Ghana Package.

On her part, Dr Al Dahak lauded Ghana for her leadership on forest and nature-based solutions to

climate change.

Commenting on the partnership, she said "Our partnership with Ghana is a testament to the UAE's focus on global biodiversity, climate, and development goals. It underscores our commitment to the UAE consensus which calls for the ending and reversal of deforestation by 2030 and highlights the importance of protection and preservation of biodiversity.

Our investment in Ghana will not only bolster the country's afforestation efforts but will also create a broader positive impact on local communities. By backing a comprehensive set of initiatives aimed at forest protection and enhancement, we aim to strengthen local livelihoods and foster greater community engagement," she said.

Deforestation remains one of the major drivers of climate change. Between 2001 and 2015, Ghana lost some 209,034 ha of forests, representing a deforestation rate of about 0.19 per cent per annum.

This was driven primarily by agricultural expansion, illegal logging, and small-scale mining. As Ghana is one of the world's forest-rich countries and 2nd largest producer of (forest-dependent) cocoa, the deforestation rate represented a major challenge for achievement of the Paris Agreement, as well as global supply chains. Ghana's efforts to tackle deforestation have resulted in a 48 per cent improvement in the high forest zone since 2017.

Through strategies such as the Resilient Ghana Package and REDD+ Programme, Government seeks to scale up efforts to halt and reverse forest loss and forest degradation by 2030, in accordance with the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration of Forest Loss and Land Use.



• Mr Samuel A. Jinapor and Dr Al Dahak interacting at the programme