

Kenaf project to create 1,500 jobs in South Tongu

By Alberto Mario Noretti, HO



MALAYSIA has pledged to support Ghana in developing the full value chain of the Kenaf plant to boost economic returns and job creation in both countries.

The move follows the government's efforts, through the Volta Regional Coordinating Council (VRCC), to launch a major Kenaf cultivation and processing project in the South Tongu District.

Kenaf, also known as the 'Miracle Crop', is a plant with multiple industrial applications.

It is used in producing more than 30 products, including jute bags, paper products, absorbents, animal feed, cosmetics, glue, building materials and edible and medicinal oils.

It is also being explored as a source of traditional medicine.

Officials say a 1,000-hectare Kenaf model farm could yield an annual income of \$200 million and create about 1,500 jobs across plantations and processing factories.

According to the VRCC, over 5,000 hectares of land in South Tongu have already been secured and prepared for trial planting.

Activities will begin ahead of a visit by a team of experts from Malaysia in August.

The preparations are part of a collaboration between Ghanaian officials and Malaysia's Kenaf industry players, aimed at transferring knowledge and technology to support the project's success.

Malaysia delegation

An eight-member delegation made up of private entrepreneurs and VRCC officials recently visited Malaysia to hold discussions with stakeholders in the Kenaf industry.

The team met with the Kenaf Industry Association of Malaysia and officials of the Ministry of Commodities and Plantations to learn about best practices and secure partnerships.

Kenaf delivery

Project Coordinator, George Sika, who was part of the delegation, disclosed these developments during a media briefing in Ho on Monday, July 14.

He said the Malaysian Ministry of Commodities and Plantations has already shipped a consignment of Kenaf seeds to Ghana to be used for trial planting and seed multiplication.

"We are setting up a project coordinating

unit and management board to ensure smooth implementation of the project," he said.

Agreements signed

Mr Sika also revealed that a Non-Disclosure Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding have been signed between the Ghanaian and Malaysian teams.

In addition, a respected researcher from Malaysia, whose work has led to the development of Kenaf-based products, including car and aircraft interiors, has been appointed as Ghana's Kenaf Ambassador by the Malaysian Ministry.

"The terms of the MoU are being fulfilled by both sides," he said.

VRCC support

Mr Sika revealed that the VRCC was committed to delivering the Kenaf project to benefit the people of the Volta Region and the country as a whole.

"The VRCC is on the path to delivering this important initiative to its people and Ghana in general," he said.

He encouraged Ghanaians interested in investing in the Kenaf industry to engage with the VRCC.

"We call on well-meaning Ghanaians



George Sika, Coordinator, Kenaf development project, Volta Region

interested in doing business with this crop to get in touch with the VRCC to make this project by the budding Volta Kenaf Development Company a success," he said.

The project is expected to begin full-scale operations after the trial phase.