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## Women's Bank will soon be ready for business

### -Mahama

**P**resident John Dramani Mahama has announced that plans are far advanced for the establishment of a Women's Bank.

He explained that Vice President Professor Jane Naana Opoku Agyemang, who has been leading the initiative, had informed him that significant progress had been made and that a presentation on the structure and objectives of the Bank would soon be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

President Mahama made this known when he officially launched the Sheapark Resource Hub Project at the Wa Naa's Palace in Wa, the Upper West Regional capital.

He said the Women's Bank would support women entrepreneurs, especially in the northern sector, where the shea industry remained a major source of livelihood

for many women.

"In the Upper West Region, the Women's Bank is going to target mothers who are in the shea nut industry," he stated.

The initiative is being championed by Speaker Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin and Professor Kwame Addo, as part of government's efforts to strengthen the shea industry through value addition.

President Mahama noted that during shea nut picking seasons, women would be provided with small credits to enable them to go into the bush to collect nuts.

He said the facility would allow cooperatives to hire tricycles to transport the women deeper into the bush and return with the shea nuts, relieving them of the burden of carrying heavy loads on their heads.

He emphasised that women were not merely beneficiaries but the foundation of the initiative, given their central role in the shea industry over the years.



President John Dramani Mahama

The President said government had already supplied 3,000 pairs of Wellington boots and 3,200 gloves to women in the shea industry in the Upper West Region.

These, he explained, would help protect them from snake and scorpion bites, a major hazard in shea nut picking.

President Mahama said the Sheapark Hub was envisioned as a world class phased agro industrial

ecosystem built on sustainability, innovation and inclusion.

It would host modern shea processing facilities for cosmetic, food, nutraceutical and pharmaceutical production.

The Hub would also accommodate quality control laboratories, training and capacity building centres, storage and logistics facilities, warehousing, direct market access services, solar powered energy so-

lutions, water treatment and recycling plants, business incubation, cooperative aggregation and export facilitation.

At full maturity, the Sheapark ecosystem is expected to empower more than 7,000 women in the Upper West region, while creating thousands of additional jobs for the youth.

He added that the Hub would anchor value chains not only for shea but also for associated products such as groundnuts, soya beans, sorghum, dawadawa, cotton and honey.

President Mahama explained that the Sheapark Resource Project aligns with the government's Reset Agenda, which focuses on adding value to products before export.

This value addition drive would extend to several commodities nationwide, including shea nuts, cashew, cotton, cassava, oil palm and minerals.