



## European Union Roundtable

4th of June 2021

**Trees: Source of Life**  
The importance of Regreening Ghana



### REPORT

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#### SUMMARY

The participants of Environment Roundtable organised by the European Union, to mark the Environment Day in June 2021, analysed the following areas: awareness and education, communities' involvement and engagement, coastal erosion and oceans, forest reserves and concessions, sustainability of tree planting, plastics and tree planting and collaboration and cooperation.

- To improve the awareness creation and education on the need of tree planting and reforestation among communities and schools, to be able to promote a behavioural change and protect the environment and biodiversity
- To engage and involve communities, in particular women and traditional leaders in reforestation
- To identify and plan proper places for tree planting and reforestation together with the district assemblies
- To promote and communicate all over Ghana the Green Ghana Project
- To assess the impact of the 5 million trees initiatives and to guarantee the sustainability of the project
- To plant trees close to the sea to avoid coastal erosion and protect the beaches
- To nurture and maintain the trees after planting, to increase the survival rate
- To promote the tree planting as a business opportunity and a possibility to increase the income of the households
- To have a market oriented approach and combine the tree planting with agriculture practices
- To avoid to wrap the seedlings in plastic bags: identify a more sustainable way to protect them
- To collaborate and to partner with other entities to achieve better results and promote a collective effort towards a behavioural change

## BACKGROUND

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To mark the Environment Day, the European Union Delegation to Ghana organised an after work round table to discuss available options to regreen Ghana and to identify and propose ideas and solutions to involve communities and increase the sustainability of the processes.

The event counted with the participation of EU financed projects, Government of Ghana, International Organisations and NGO's working in the field. The idea was to have a reduced number of specialised participants to foster the discussion and propose recommendations at the end.

## PROGRAMME

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The event was moderated by Kafui Dey, journalist, and counted with the participation of the EU Ambassador Diana Acconcia. As speakers, the EU Delegation invited:

- Dr Joyce Rosalind Aryee, co-chair of the 5 Million Green Ghana Project
- Ms Rita Weidinger Director of ComCashew programme and coordinator of the EU REACH project
- Mr Edward Anaba Akunyagra from World vision and project manager of the EU Reversing Land Degradation project
- Mr Michael O. Misbah, Director from GreenWay International
- Mr Richmond Quarcoo, Director from Plastic Punch

The guideline questions were the following:

- What is your organisation doing to regreen Ghana and promote the planting of trees?
- What kind of support do you have to implement your actions?
- How do you ensure the sustainability?
- How are the communities and target groups involved?
- What are the main problems that you face in the implementation of your initiatives?
- What can be done in the future to promote Ghana greener?

The event was shared live on Facebook, and besides the active participation of the guests, it also had comments from the Facebook followers.

<https://fb.watch/68gMkdzxbZ/>

<https://fb.watch/68gNsNe4Rj/>

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

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***IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF PLANTING:***



***IT IS A QUESTION OF NURTURING THE TREES TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY WILL SURVIVE***

*The cost of a tree might be 3 Ghana cedi's, but to make a tree survive costs 200 Ghana cedi's*

## Awareness and Education

1. **Awareness activities** can use the **entertainment** concept and mix **education**. This will allow a better perception and appropriation of the message. The development of workshops where people **learn while playing** can promote a **behavioural change**.
2. There are many doubts regarding tree planting: it is necessary to **reply to questions and educate people** on how to plant, where to plant, how to keep trees alive.
3. **Youth** needs to be involved in all the reforestation actions: this can be done with **educative and awareness programmes** in schools. Schools and children need to be an **active part of the change**.
4. The implementation of **Botanical gardens** in Schools can be a way to support and understand the importance of trees in our life.
5. It is necessary to **change the education curricula** and integrate the tree planting and the protection of the environment.

## Community's involvement and engagement

6. Communities are the core of the reforestation and all the activities related with the tree planting. It is crucial to **involve and engage the local communities** in all the activities conducted to protect the environment and the biodiversity.
7. It is necessary to **change the behaviour** and make sure that communities and people are involved and engaged in reforestation.
8. **Women, chiefs and traditional leaders** need to be involved from the beginning in reforestation and in the planting of trees in their communities.
9. District Assemblies and management planning teams need to be involved in the **identification of areas for the tree planting**, ensuring that there will be no conflicts and trees planted in areas that are not beneficial for the communities and for the existing infrastructures.
10. Tree planting must be done not only in public spaces but also in private places and households. As an example, EU REACH project gives to beneficiary communities in Upper West, 5 **trees to plant to each household**. They need to take care of the trees, fence them with their own materials, protect them and make sure that trees will survive.

## 5 million trees initiative

11. This is a Presidential Initiative called **Green Ghana Project** that has by main objective to encourage Ghanaians and friends of Ghana to plant trees to **preserve and protect the country forest and vegetation**.
12. There is a need to **communicate more** on the **5 million trees initiative**, through the district officers and make sure that they will be able to support the citizens with the implementation and follow up of the initiative.
13. The initiative needs go beyond the day of planting: the initiative needs to be **sustainable** and guarantee the survival rate of the trees.
14. **Education to the public** needs to be constant during all the project duration.

## Trees planting and sustainability

15. It is necessary to promote the plant **endogenous species** of trees and avoid other species like eucalyptus.

16. Tree planting is an opportunity to **increase the income** of the households. It can be combined with **farm and agriculture friendly approaches** and Farm Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) practices that will support the **restoration of the soil**.
17. It is possible to **track the planted trees** and reforestation through technology.
18. It is necessary to **assess the impact** of the tree planting exercise and monitor and evaluate the action.
19. There is a need to change from **tree planting to tree growing** to maintain the trees.
20. Tree planting and reforestation is **business opportunity**. Ghana is in a good position because trees grow faster than in other countries, such as in Northern Europe.
21. The trees planted can be **market oriented**: communities can have **economic benefits** from the trees and **increase their income**.

### Coastal Erosion and Oceans

22. **Coastal erosion** is real: there is a need to plant coconut trees at the beaches to protect the coast and biodiversity and avoid coastal erosion. Planting trees at the beaches demand **extra care** to increase their survival rate. It is necessary to add compost and give the trees fresh water.

### Forest reserves and concessions

23. There is a need to **protect the existing forest reserves**. The planted trees should be protected and nurtured: the trees planted should be preserved and protected.
24. Concession companies that are authorised for mining, for instance, need to make sure that trees will be planted after the mining to promote reforestation.
25. Agreements could be made by organisations working in the field to make sure that the reforestation is done properly and in a sustainable way.

### Plastics and tree planting

26. We cannot be green with the plastics; we need to **avoid the single use plastics** to protect the environment and biodiversity.
27. The **seedlings are involved in plastic bags**: there is a need to have the seedlings wrapped in alternative and more **sustainable package**.
28. Cashew fruit can be used to make **degradable plastics**. This is an opportunity that protects the environment.
29. **Circular Economy** approaches and initiatives need to be promoted to avoid waste, to keep the products for as long as possible in the circuit and produce more sustainable services and products.

### Collaboration and Cooperation

30. Public and private entities, profit and non-profit organisations need to **collaborate and partner** to achieve better results.



**COLLECTIVE MINDS CAN MAKE THE CHANGE: THERE IS A NEED TO COLLABORATE MORE AND PROMOTE A COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO REGREEN GHANA**

Report drafted by the European Union Delegation to Ghana

*This report reflects the conclusions and recommendations that result from the discussion of the Environment Roundtable, organised on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 2021*