



News Release
Kumasi, Ghana
21st March 2024

International Day of Forests: Urgent Action Needed on Key Forest Sector Issues to Drive Innovation.

For most developing countries in the tropics, forests and associated resources are deemed the single most important resource base that propels sustainable development, and general wellbeing of the masses. This can be realized when right measures (policies, regulations, practices, etc.) are initiated, instituted, and effectively enforced.

This is strongly aligned with the theme of this year's International Day of Forests; thus **"Forests and innovation: New Solutions for a Better World"**. In essence, this is a call on Governments, Forest Resource Managers, and other Stakeholders (state and non-state actors) to initiate, and ensure effective implementation of innovative actions in order to optimally realize our forests' potentials and associated benefits in a sustainable manner.

As we mark this day, Tropenbos Ghana draws the attention and demands immediate action from responsible entities on major forest sector developments that are detrimental to our collective actions on innovative solutions to sustainable forest management in Ghana.

- 1.** Government should as a matter of urgency listen and adhere to calls for the repeal of the Environmental Protection Regulation, LI 2462. The L.I in its current form, and intent means no forest reserve in Ghana is exempted from mining if deemed to be in the interest of the state as determined by President. This implies that, even Ghana's most sensitive forest areas protected by Acts of parliament and international conventions that Ghana has signed on to, can no longer be deemed secured; as such, counter-productive to innovative solutions to manage such areas.
- 2.** We also demand the immediate reversal of the directive from the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Samuel Abu Jinapor to the Forestry Commission to grant permit to timber harvesting companies to log in Globally Significant Biodiversity Areas (GSBAs). These forests reserves host endangered species and as such, must be protected.
- 3.** The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources should be transparent, and accountable to Ghanaians on degazetted portions of Achimota forest reserve. Since the degazetting, there has been limited public engagement on actions that are being taken to ensure the sustainable management of the forest. Amidst reported instance of illegal entry, it is our strong conviction that, the MLNR should make public the procedure for degazetting



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portions of the forest, allocations that are being or will be made, beneficiaries, management, and investment practices particularly in relation to surrounding ecosystem.

4. The president upon receipt, should as a matter of urgency give assent to the Wildlife Resources Management Bill which among other things consolidates laws related to wildlife and protected areas. Passed by Parliament on July 28, 2023, the bill is yet to have Presidential assent; delaying its enforcement. This holds the potential to cause no action on key regulatory propositions and interventions that are outlined in the bill. It is therefore important for parliament to expedite action on all processes that are needed to be undertaken prior to submission to the office of the president for his assent.
5. The MLNR and the Forestry Commission should improve adoption of technology and internet-based solutions into forest management. This can be done by strong collaboration between the Forestry Commission and other service providers e.g., Center for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information System (CERGIS), Ghana Natural Resource Monitoring Platform, etc. to deploy secured platforms for effective monitoring and management of forests and tree resources across scales.
6. The MLNR should undertake a comprehensive assessment of tree performance under the Green Ghana Day initiative. This can be done by engaging an independent entity to undertake the assessment and proffer solutions for not only improving the initiative but also sustaining same to increase tree cover across the county.

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