

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR LANDS AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES, HON. SAMUEL A. JINAPOR, MP, AT THE  
LAUNCH OF THE 2023 EDITION OF THE GREEN GHANA  
DAY, HELD AT THE GREAT HALL, KWAME NKURUMAH  
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (KNUST),  
ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2023**

Your Royal Majesty, and Chancellor of the Great Kwame Nkrumah  
University of Science and Technology;

Ashanti Regional Minister;

Deputy Ministers for Lands and Natural Resources,

Vice Chancellor of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and  
Technology;

Chief Executive Officer of the Forestry Commission;

Heads of Security Agencies,

Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives,

Nananom;

Students;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the President of the Republic, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, I express our utmost gratitude and salutation, most sincerely, to His Royal Majesty, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, who is a leading forester with large hectares of forest to his credit, for his continuous support to Government, the Ministry, and to me personally, his subject, in the discharge of our mandate.

As you will recall, two years ago, specifically on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, His Royal Majesty opened the first Regional Consultative Dialogue on Small Scale Mining, here at the Great Hall, following the National Dialogue which was held in Accra. Again, since the Green Ghana Project begun, some two years ago, His Majesty has religiously participated, each year, leading the entire Asanteman to plant millions of trees across the Kingdom. And today, he has, graciously, accepted our invitation to launch the 2023 edition of the Green Ghana Day, here in Kumasi. Otumfuo Nana Asantehene, we appreciate your outstanding leadership and inspiration.

I am, also, grateful to the Vice Chancellor of this University, Professor (Mrs.) Rita Akosua Dickson, who doubles as a member of the Ministerial Advisory Board of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, for always hosting us in this serene environment.

I am informed that the University, under her leadership, has, also, taken keen interest in the Green Ghana Project, leading secondary schools around the University's enclave to plant trees each year.

Your Royalty Majesty, earlier this morning, in Sunyani, in the Bono Region, I had the privilege of opening a two-day Transformational Dialogue on Small Scale Mining, organised by the University of Energy and Natural Resources. It is, perhaps, not a mere coincidence that this afternoon we are launching the 2023 edition of the Green Ghana Day, for the nexus between mining and forest is obvious. That is why I said to the Conference ***"the exploitation of our mineral resources and the protection of our natural environment, as well as the protection of human rights, are not mutually exclusive, but can peaceably co-exist."***

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Green Ghana Project was instituted by Government, as part of measures to curb the incessant degradation of our forests, which has been going on for years without any conscious effort to replace them. For example, between 2010 and 2015 alone, a total of one hundred and sixty thousand, two hundred and ten hectares (160,210 ha) of forest was lost.

Yet, between 1963 and 2016, a period of fifty-three (53) years, only one hundred and fifty-seven thousand, three hundred hectares (157,300 ha) of forest was cultivated, less than the amount of forest lost in just five (5) years.

Your Royal Majesty, it, therefore, became necessary to adopt aggressive measures to restore our lost forest cover. In 2017, Government began the implementation of the Ghana Forest Plantation Strategy, and as at the end of last year, over six hundred and ninety thousand hectares (690,000 ha) of forest had been cultivated, through initiatives such as, forest plantation, enrichment planting and trees-on-farm.

There was, however, the need to create an enhanced national awareness of the necessity for collective action towards restoration of degraded landscapes in the country, inculcate values of planting and nurturing of trees in our citizens, particularly among the younger generation, mitigate climate change and beautify our communities and environment. That is why the Green Ghana Project was launched, with a day, each year, set aside for the entire country, led by the President of the Republic, to go planting.

The first two editions were very successful, having exceeded our targets on both occasions. Let me use this opportunity to, on behalf of the President of the Republic, thank all Ghanaians and all residents of Ghana who have supported this Project in the last two years, which has resulted in the planting of some thirty-one million (31,000,000) trees.

Over twenty-three million (23,000,000) of these trees have survived and are doing very well. To be able to devote attention and resources to these trees, we have revised our target for this year downwards, to ten million (10,000,000) trees. And we have chosen as a theme "**Our Forests, Our Health,**" to signify the importance of forests to our health and our survival.

To achieve our target, we will rely on all of you, our revered chiefs and queen-mothers, religious and faith-based organisations, Ministers, Parliamentarians, Judges, public servants, civil servants, Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers, Nurses, Security Personnel, Artisans, private sector organisations, Civil Society Organisations, students, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Development Partners, and all persons living in Ghana.

As is always the case, we have designated for this year's Green Ghana Day, degraded forest lands, both on and off reserves, watersheds, boundaries, office compounds, and sites within communities, including, parks, roadsides, homes, farmsteads, churches, mosques and schools, as significant areas of planting on the Green Ghana Day. The Forestry Commission will, in due course, provide a detailed schedule of seedlings distribution and pick-up points across the country to ensure easy access to seedlings for planting.

There are also opportunities for corporate institutions to adopt compartments, which will be branded in their corporate names after planting.

Your Royal Majesty, Hon. Ministers, Nananom, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, the importance of trees to our survival and the survival of planet earth cannot be overemphasised. The adage "***when the last tree dies, the last man dies***" was true when it was said many years ago, and it remains so today. It is therefore important for us to come together to save Planet Earth for both current and future generations. If we were able to plant over twenty-six million trees last year, we can, definitely, do more than ten million trees this year. All we require is your support and commitment.

Let us, therefore, Ghana and Asanteman, come together on the Green Ghana Day, and plant trees to save our forests and our health.

I thank you for your attention.