

PRESS RELEASE

MARCH 21, 2020, IS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS

March 21 of every year has been declared as the International Day of Forests. It is a day set aside by the United Nations (UN) to raise awareness on the importance of all types of forests and trees outside forests.

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in collaboration with the Forestry Commission and other stakeholders will observe the **International Day of Forests on March 21, 2020**. The global theme for the celebration of the International Day of Forests 2020 is “**Forests and Biodiversity**”.

The UN however, allows member states to adapt the date of the celebration of the International Day of Forests to suit their peculiar circumstances. Ghana therefore, has settled on the month of May every year, for the celebration of the Day to coincide with the major rainy and planting season. This year’s celebration, the eighth since its inception, will be observed from **May 10 - 14, 2020**. Ghana has however, carved a theme out of the global one, to suit its peculiar circumstances, which is “**Protect Forests and Biodiversity for Human Survival**”

The theme for the celebration of the 2020 International Day of Forests in Ghana, “**Protect Forests and Biodiversity for Human Survival**”, was chosen because our forests are under various forms of threats, such as illegal farming, logging, lumbering, wildfires, overgrazing, fuelwood extraction, illegal mining despite the numerous benefits that are obtained from the forests. Forest is the repository of biodiversity, so any threat to the forest is a threat to biodiversity. Thus, a threat to the plethora of life forms found in forests – micro-organisms, animals, plants, food and shelter to animals and insects that constitute the biodiversity. There is therefore, the urgent need for all to get involved in protecting the forest and their biodiversity components.

Forest biological diversity is a broad term that refers to all life forms found within forested areas and the ecological roles they perform. As such, forest biological diversity encompasses not just trees, but the multitude of plants, animals and micro-organisms that inhabit forest areas and their associated genetic diversity.

Forest biological diversity can be considered at different levels, including the ecosystem, landscapes, species, populations and genetics. Complex interactions can occur within and amongst these levels. In biologically diverse forests, this complexity allows organisms to adapt to continually changing environmental conditions and to maintain ecosystem functions.

The choice of the theme for the celebration is meant to provide the opportunity to educate the general public on the tremendous potentials of biodiversity in forests toward the sustainability of our lives and the economy in general.

Educating the general populace is one of the ways through which we can restore the nation's depleted forests. This involves awareness creation, sensitisation and behavioural change approaches to forest protection, development and participatory planning and management.

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in collaboration with Forestry Commission and other stakeholders will engage in massive education programmes targeting especially, the youth of the country, who are the future leaders and policy makers on the need to protect and conserve forests.

This collaboration will be extended to schools, communities, farmers groups, youth organisations, CSOs / NGOs and others to educate the public on the need to protect biodiversity, using the various media platforms.

Massive tree planting exercises will go on in all regions and districts throughout the country to commemorate the event, all aimed at drawing the attention of the public to the indispensable role forests and their inherent biodiversity play in human lives.

The general public is kindly invited to join in the celebration of this important event as it is our collective responsibility to create awareness on the need to conserve and grow our forests, as well as protect biodiversity for the present and future generations.

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Forestry Commission

Accra

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For further information, contact:

The Corporate Affairs & Media Relations Unit

Forestry Commission

Tel: 0302-401210/401216

Email: info.hq@fcghana.org

Website: www.fcghana.org