

Ghana Environment Manifesto

Towards a green and low emissions development pathway, creating prosperity for all Ghanaians while securing intergenerational equity

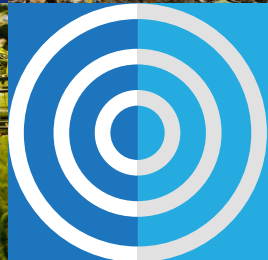
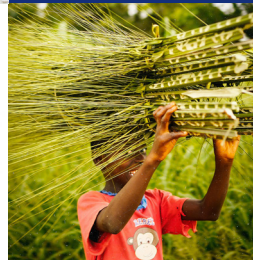
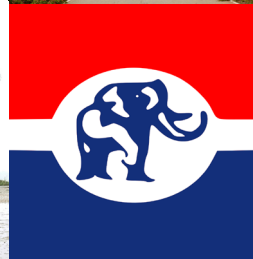




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Introduction



Ghana's once vibrant socio-ecological landscapes, characterized by pristine river basins, expansive forest cover in both reserved and non-reserved areas, flourishing marine ecosystems, and thriving wetlands, peatlands, and mangroves, are currently facing an unprecedented level of depletion. A critical state previously unforeseen in Ghana's history poses significant threat to the nation's socio-economic development, which is heavily reliant on its natural resources.

The World Bank's 2020 Country Environment Analysis report has underscored the pivotal role natural resources play in Ghana's economic growth.

However, the report also emphasizes that unchecked environmental unsustainability could impede this growth.

The evidence of such unsustainability is glaringly manifesting in the destruction of forests, land, and water. The destructions are due to unregulated mining practices, disregarding existing safeguards for community needs and lacking effective enforcement and compliance measures. This has resulted in a substantial loss of water provisioning services, giving rise to health issues in mining communities, negatively impacting downstream water users, and exposing people to contaminated foods and lands.

“Addressing these challenges is crucial to protect Ghana’s rich natural heritage, ensure a sustainable economic future, and prioritize the well-being of its citizens.”

The unfolding developments pose severe implications, not only for our commitments in policies and legislation related to climate action, biodiversity preservation, and environmental pollution on the national level but represent an existential threat to the well-being of future generations, for whom we bear the responsibility of safeguarding our homeland.



The GreenShift

It is imperative to shift from the status quo towards restoring and safeguarding our significantly depleted forest reserves and river bodies. This entails the creation of sustainable rural enterprises for community employment, and green cities that foster a thriving economy, grounded in nature-positive economic practices and value chains. A circular economy driven economy, pursuing a low-emission development trajectory. This transformative approach is essential to honor our responsibility to the land and ensure intergenerational equity.

Considering the critical role party politics play in shaping the national development agenda, encompassing prioritization, investment, and effective implementation, it becomes imperative for aspiring political parties and public servants participating in the upcoming 2024 Presidential and Parliamentary elections to demonstrate active prioritization and commitment to a green and thriving development paradigm for the citizens of Ghana today and those unborn.

Civil Mobilization

This document was developed over several months through broad engagements of Non Profit Organisations (NPOs) within the natural resources, oil and gas, energy, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and climate change sectors, sharing inputs from their respective constituents across the country.

The Environment Manifesto is informed by the felt needs and aspirations of Ghanaians across the 16 regions over the increasing impunity and detrimental activities of government, corporations and individuals, that sometimes have fatal and irreparable impacts on food, clean water, natural ecosystems, health and environment.



Political commitment and implementation of this Environment Manifesto will galvanize broad citizen support as well as engender global investment and intervention in key sectors of the economy in line with the global urgency to address vulnerabilities associated with climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution. This will contribute significantly to improving Ghana's economic outcomes, within the agriculture, agro-based industries, forestry, and fisheries sectors, while improving the quality of the environment for all citizens. It will also build resilience for climate change, address the depletion of Ghana's natural heritage, and secure the provisioning and support services it continues to deliver to us all.

This environment manifesto highlights and solicits political action on the following key sectors and thematic areas:



LAND SECTOR



OIL, GAS AND ENERGY SECTOR



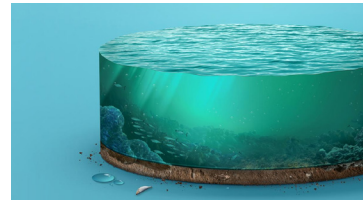
WASH SECTOR



FORESTRY SECTOR



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE SECTOR



MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND FISHERIES SECTOR



FOREST, BIODIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR



MINING SECTOR

Urgency of Action Needed

Ghana's remarkable economic growth is accompanied by a cautionary note stressing the necessity to safeguard and sustainably manage the natural resources responsibly for this success (World Bank 2020). The warning underscores the importance of balancing economic development with environmental conservation to ensure long-term prosperity.



Over the past decade, significant environmental challenges have emerged in Ghana, characterized by poorly regulated mining activities polluting major river basins, encroachment into forest reserves through government-granted mining concessions, and active state policies leading to the conversion of key ecological sites such as Achimota Forest, and Muni-Pomadze and Sakumo Ramsar Sites. Community rights have come under serious

attack from state-backed business interests, with a seemingly or deliberate weakening of enforcement and compliance measures like never before. The current situation envisions a bleak future, indicating a failure in both policy and political agendas to effectively address these pressing environmental issues. We cannot sustain a prosperous future if these developments are not addressed with the urgency they deserve.

To ensure a prosperous and healthy future for all Ghanaians, leadership needs to prioritize environmental well-being in policy and development planning urgently. This should then inform an investment drive with a focus on environmental concerns, supported by altruistic incentives and legislative frameworks that hold polluters accountable. Finally, this must be done within an environment of well informed and empowered community, strong and independent institutions devoid of political elite capture and strong administrative accountability.

Air Pollution

Cost: **\$2 billion** per year
Annual Deaths: **Nearly 16,000**
Most affected: **Elderly**
(majority of deaths)
Child pneumonia deaths: **Over half** linked to air pollution



E-waste (Agbogbloshie dumpsite):

Main Air Pollution Source in Accra
Health Costs: **\$440 million** per year (lead and mercury exposure)



Coastal Erosion:

Shore Loss: **2.7 million m2** per year
Erosion Intensity Increase: **80%** of shoreline actively eroding
Risk: **Greater Accra** facing increased erosion and flooding



Climate Change

Impact: **Affects** agriculture, forestry, and energy
Environmental Disasters: **Floods** affecting millions, 2015 flash flood in Accra causing **\$55 million** in damages



Water Pollution

Economic Damage: **Equivalent to 3%** of GDP

Causes: **Inadequate water supply, poor sanitation, industrial and toxic waste discharge**

Plastics Pollution: **Daily Plastic Waste: Over 3,000 metric tons**

Impact: **Clogging drainage systems, ocean pollution**



Poor Land Management:

Land Degradation Cost: **Over US\$500 million** per year

Deforestation Cost: **US\$400 million** per year (5 million hectares lost from 2001-2015)

Artisanal Gold Mining Impact: **Degradation, toxic mercury exposure** (health costs: **\$240 million**)



Overfishing

Cost: **\$233 million**

Potential Consequences: **Collapse of small pelagic fisheries, loss of half a million jobs**



Source: World Bank 2020. Country Environment Assessment.



LAND SECTOR COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- Need for women's equitable access to land rights. Affirmative action in the land sector for equitable land ownership.
- Efficiently enforce land laws and policies. Need for capacity building and workshops on Land Act. Produce simplified information, education and communication materials on Land Act for people to understand. Need for CSOs engagement and participation in land policy dialogues.
- Strengthen land administration for proper land use planning and zoning.
- Ensure the establishment of National and District Level Land Secretariats to regulate Land rights from the bottom up.
- There should be more efficient ways of adjudicating land related issues to ensure investor confidence and reduction in conflict.
- Training for MMDAs (Agric departments) and Agriculture Extension Services/Agents in the expected impacts of climate change impacts on farming and in skills to support farmers to build climate resilience and mitigation capacities (especially agroforestry, conservation agriculture, and agroecology techniques).
- Financial allocation and technical assistance for Customary Land Secretariat operations.
- Disbursements of Stool land revenue must include Queen Mothers.
- Support for the establishment of The National Chamber of Queen Mothers.
- Allocate resources for review and update of the national land policy to reflect contemporary trends.
- Stronger linkages between the state land administration system and the customary system.
- Structured mechanisms for documenting customary land rights.
- Adjusted standard for surveying to make surveying cheaper for agricultural land users
- Enforcement of the Land Use and Spatial Planning Act.



OIL, GAS & ENERGY SECTOR COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- Reprioritization of the distribution of petroleum revenue via the Annual Budget Fund Allocation (ABFA) to favor green economy.
- Need for Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) to re-orient, rebrand and diversify their investment portfolio towards renewable energy in a progressive shift from fossil fuels dependence.
- An urgent need for diversifying Ghana's energy sources with focus on increasing renewable energy mix and efficiency by 50% to drive access to affordable clean energy for industry expansion and job creation, while prioritizing renewable energy access for poor communities in Ghana.
- Provision of Enablers to drive the green energy transition in Ghana.
 - Tax holidays for solar energy companies and youth-led renewable energy-focused startups/businesses.
 - Investment in a well-structured Technical Education System to produce renewable energy experts to drive the transition, and to provide the particular skill sets needed for building, maintaining and servicing electric vehicles (EVs).
 - Investment in functional green energy powered public transport systems as well as a **'just-transition focused'** transportation system that promotes the use of bicycles, scooters and other low-energy demanding forms of transport.



WASH SECTOR COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- Ensure full implementation of the buffer zone policy **through an effectively enforced legal framework**, will ultimately improve water resource management and thereby its contribution to ensuring access to clean quality water for all Ghanaians.
- Presidential Compact for WASH: Successive governments failed to implement the national compact for WASH mainly due to the lack of government's will and commitment. We believe that anchoring the WASH compact at the Presidential level rather than at the ministerial level will increase government commitment in implementing the national compact for WASH to address WASH inequalities. Universalized Institutional WASH: WASH actions should not only focus on community access but also address institutional WASH needs to create holistic impact.
- Move national focus from 'Basic Services' to 'Safely Managed': Ghana has signed on to achieve the SDGs. Despite this, all Ghana's efforts have focused on achieving Basic Services regarding WASH. It is our view that until strategic and integrated policies are implemented to support improvement of WASH in a 'safely-managed' way, Ghana will not be able to achieve SDG6.
- Legitimizing informal sector waste workers and integrating them into the formal waste management architecture.
- Prioritize and invest in green jobs through a dedicated MMDA focused recovery of all forms of waste (solid, and liquid) within an open private sector driven environment and incentive driven instruments and programs.
- Phasing out single-use plastic packaging and incentivizing green packaging initiatives, which can also create jobs through innovative sustainable use of natural resources, while also pushing for stronger private sector commitments and actions.
- Investing in reuse and refill-systems e.g.; water fountains across major cities in Ghana.
- Investing in green-jobs along the waste management value chain e.g. segregation, recycling, etc).
- Ban the dumping of raw sewage into water bodies.
- Setting up a state prioritized protection regime for all watersheds and wetlands to guarantee upstream supply and water quality.



ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE SECTOR COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- Climate proof all development activities and projects to ensure that climate change will not negatively affect them or undermine their sustainability. Institutionalize this through the setting up of **Intergenerational Directorate within the National Development Planning Commission** to.
- Review Emissions Levy, adopt a national Cap and Trade levy system, with responsibility on the high-end polluters. Revenue from Emissions Levy fund should be directed towards climate mitigation and adaptation interventions with clear transparent and accountable measures in the legislative provisions.
- Provide gender-inclusive climate resilient programmes in agriculture.
- Facilitate climate-focused, cost-benefit analysis of mining against destruction of the environment.
- Commit to implementation of climate insurance (taking advantage of Loss and Damage Facilities).
- Develop indigenous climate learning programmes and translate science into practice;
- Sustain existing climate learning curricula in schools of lower and higher learning.
- Facilitate expedited passage of the Climate Action Bill into Law.
- Set-up and operationalize environmental courts with legal aid support system to address the increasing environmental crimes in Ghana.
- Establish a comprehensive legislative framework that precisely defines environmental crimes and their corresponding fines and fees. This framework will complement existing environmental regulations, serving as a protective measure to ensure intergenerational equity.
- The state should prioritize the welfare of citizens by institutionalizing a preventive and compliance approach to noise pollution, which has become a societal menace. This should be done with the mandatory enactment of specific citizen and state enforceable legal frameworks by the various MMDAs in Ghana.
- Restore the Odaw Estuary (Odawna) so it becomes possible to hold regattas once again generating revenue through Tourism.
- Restore Accra including the Green & Open Spaces that have been encroached.
- Restore Kumasi to be the Garden City in fact as well as name.
- Invest in other towns & cities so they become Green & sustainable.
- Review the building and infrastructure development code to exclude all developments on flood plains, stop concreting and tarmacking everywhere.



MARINE AND FISHERIES SECTOR COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- Review existing legislation and ensure stringent regulations, promote advanced technology, ensure transparent supply chains, and impose severe penalties to combat IUU fishing, illegal transshipments, and overfishing by foreign vessels, with a focus on sustainability, community involvement, and consumer awareness.
- Political commitment including adequate resources to end illegal fishing, no interferences, in sector law enforcement and prosecution-related matters.
- Effective, transparent, and timely implementation of fisheries management plan, with technical advice from the Scientific and Technical Committee and the Fisheries Management Operational Committee.
- Provide incentives for aquaculture and diversified livelihood for fishers targeting actual fishers with premix savings.
- Improve landing beach infrastructure with proper sanitation systems to ensure the protection of fishing gear and hygienic fish.
- Prioritize the establishment, development, and management of Marine Protected Areas in Ghana.
- Institute a National Mangrove Restoration and coastal community resilience program critical for protecting coastal communities and sustainable mangrove utilization.
- Ensure 100% commitment to international best practices in fisheries transparency, i.e. global charter for fisheries transparency.



FOREST, BIODIVERSITY & AGRICULTURE SECTOR COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

Agriculture

- Secure the food sovereignty of farmers and citizens by protecting farmers and seed developers' rights and repeal any plant breeders act provisions that put the power for seed control in the hands of corporate agencies.
- Address the lasting problem of post-harvest losses in Ghana: Invest in well-engineered storage facilities and processing plants within Ghana's major food basket zones. Replicate the Akumfi Juice Project across all major production areas.
- Invest in large-scale organic fertilizer production in Ghana through the extensive research by young people to enhance the efficiency of these fertilizers. These would imply the establishment of a youth think tank for climate-smart agriculture in Ghana, and support youth start-ups for organic fertilizers.
- Raise awareness at national and local level policy and planning (agriculture, land use) to promote integration of diversification into green development activities (sustainable production and marketing, e.g., NTFP collection and marketing, non-wood charcoal briquette production, compost making, natural pesticide production) that support climate resilience, mitigation, biodiversity etc.
- Support local rural communities with access to climate and weather information (e.g., between GMet local communities/community radio).
- Access to farm insurance so they do not lose everything when a damaging climate event occurs and they are able to start over again. Access to insurance also encourages farmers to take risks, e.g., by diversifying into a different crop or testing out new techniques they have learned).

Biodiversity

- Empower local communities to tackle issues of illegal mining, focusing on the driving force of the youth. This can be in the form of using community-led task forces to fight the galamsey menace.
- Invest in ecological-play spaces for children and the youth as well as community green spaces. Using the One District One Astroturf method for such campaigns across all districts in Ghana, focusing on urban areas to enhance adaptation to excessive heat.
- Protect Ghana's forest reserves, GSBA's and National Parks from mining as they provide critical habitats for biodiversity.
- Protect urban parks, green spaces, trees along roads and other natural spaces as havens and corridors for wildlife and biodiversity.
- Prioritize making Atewa Range Forest Reserve a National Park, to boost nature tourism in the Eastern Region of Ghana and catalyse investments for green developments pathways in this forest rich socio-ecological productive landscape in Ghana.
- Prioritize biodiversity and critical ecosystem conservation in Ghana through the setting up of new protected areas systems for both marine and terrestrial ecosystems.
- Enhance flora and fauna conservation regimes in existing network of state and community managed protected areas.

Forestry Sector

- Government should amend the Concessions Act of 1962 to divest the owners of trees on farms from the President to the farmer.
- Need for Government to assent of the Wildlife Resources Management Bill, which has been passed by Parliament.
- Reinstate the full extent of Achimota Forest by abolishing EI 144 and take steps to develop the Achimota Forest into a thriving urban forest for the benefit of all Ghanaians.
- Repeal LI 2462 (Environmental Protection (Mining in Forest Reserves) Regulations) and enact relevant legislation to exclude mining from all forest reserves and river basins in Ghana.
- **Restore about 40,000 hectares of degraded forests with indigenous species as against exotic species to promote biodiversity.**





MINING SECTOR COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

- Review the Minerals and Mining Act to institutionalize a Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) for Mineral Governance just as there is PIAC for the petroleum industry. This will cure the failing in Parliamentary Oversight role in respect of rights allocation, performance and safeguards and mineral funds management.
- Ensure passage of the Minerals Revenue Management Law (MRMA) that regulates how all mineral revenues should be utilized.
- Policies that ensure equitable access to minerals-rich land especially by women and People Living with Disabilities (PLWDs) should be made.
- Effective enforcement of Local Content Regulations.
- Advocacy for human rights protection and safeguard, sensitization of host mining communities on rights and legal representation for poor mining communities whose environmental and human rights are abused by mining companies.
- Institute the polluter-pay principle and ensure full compliance with FPIC, devoid of elite and state capture in the allocation of community, small-scale and large-scale mining concessions in Ghana.
- Formulation of appropriate laws, policies and regulations that make illegal mining an unprofitable venture and institute traceability within the gold mining sector from the mine to the consumer.
- Ensure strict adherence and compliance to Ghana's protected forests and sensitive areas regime and adopt as 'NO Go' zones for mining to ensure food and water security and protection of people's environmental rights.
- Develop strategies to add value to the minerals such as lithium and other transition minerals and use them in our energy transition efforts which will in turn create jobs.



NPOs Signing the Environment Manifesto

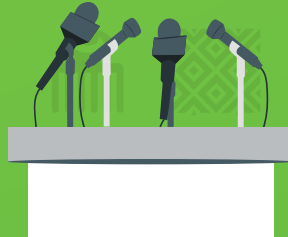
1. Forest Watch Ghana
2. Coalition of NGOs in Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS)
3. Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas (CSPOG)
4. A Rocha Ghana
5. Ghana Youth Environmental Movement (GYEM)
6. Youth Alliance for Green Ghana (YAGG)
7. Civic Response
8. Accelerated Rural Development Organization (ARDO)
9. Conservation Foundation
10. Agove Youth for Sustainable Development (AYSD)
11. Climate Change and Environment Coalition
12. Advocates for Biodiversity Conservation
13. Rights and Advocacy Initiatives Network (RAIN)
14. Concern Health Ghana
15. Foundation for Environment Watch Ghana
16. Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND)
17. Defense Against Aids Poverty and Underdevelopment (DAPUU)
18. Community, Land and Development Foundation (COLANDEF)
19. Civil Society Coalition on Land (CICOL)
20. Social Support Foundation
21. EcoConscious Citizens
22. Centre for Social Impact Studies (CenSIS)
23. Wacam
24. Centre for Public Interest Law (CEPIL)
25. CSOs Mining Coalition
26. Centre for Environmental Impact Analysis
27. West Africa Sustainable Environment and Economic Solutions (WASEEDS)
28. Training Research and Network for Development (TREND)
29. Conservation Alliance (CA)
30. Oil Watch Ghana
31. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN Ghana)
32. Fisheries Alliance of Ghana
33. HELP Foundation Africa
34. Canoe Owners and Fishmongers Association of Ghana (CaOFAG)
35. Environmental Partners Association of Ghana (EPAG)

36. Domestic Lumber and Trading Association (DOLTA)
37. Katchito Community Development Association (KCODEC)
38. Juxtapose Integrated Development Association (JIDA)
39. PROMAG Network
40. Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD)
41. Rural Development and Youth Association (RUDEYA)
42. Rural Environmental Care (RECA)
43. The Development Institute
44. Nature Development Ghana (NGC)
45. Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA-GH)
46. Green Earth Organization (GEO)
47. Friends of the Earth – Ghana (FOE-GH)
48. Youth Climate Council (YCC)
49. Green African Youth Organization (GAYO)
50. All African Student Union (AASU)
51. Youth Bridge foundation
52. Love Aid Foundation
53. Conservation Foundation
54. Green Globe Ghana
55. Devascom Foundation
56. Network Health and Relief Foundation (NHRF)
57. Talent Search International (TSI)
58. Tropenbos Ghana
59. Eco Care Ghana
60. Pals of the Earth
61. Youth and Nature Development Organisation (YNDO)
62. Love Tree Foundation
63. Muthashie Foundation
64. National Tree Growers' Association of Ghana (NTGA)
65. 350 GROC
66. Ako Foundation
67. Foundation for Future Christian Workers International (FFCWI)
68. Institute of Sustainable Energy and Environmental Solutions (ISEES)
69. Steminist Foundation
70. Abibi Nsroma
71. Solutions Youth Africa (SOY AFRICA)
72. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)
73. Renel Ghana Foundation
74. United Force for Development
75. Agro Introductions Ghana
76. Alliance for Environmental Interventions
77. Environmental Justice Foundation
78. Concerned Citizens of Atewa Landscape
79. Facilitating Learning of Women in Emerging Regions (FLOWER)
80. GHANA ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY GROUP
81. NORTHCODE-Ghana
82. Social Initiative for Literacy and Development Program

**PROTECT OUR
FORESTS AND
WATER, FOR
THE FUTURE.**



NPOs in Ghana



Environment Manifesto

**2024
Election
Year**

This publication
is made possible by:

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&
The Green Livelihood Alliance

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