

SHEA NETWORK GHANA CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF SHEA TREES

The National Coordinator of Shea Network Ghana (SNG), Mr. Zakaria Iddi has called for the establishment of a regulatory body and for the management and protection of Shea trees and other non-forest economic trees in the North. According to Mr. Iddi, thousands of residents within the three Northern Regions, and parts of the Brong Ahafo and Volta regions depend on the shea sector as their main source of livelihood. Mr. Iddi stated that the destruction of these non-timber forest resources such as shea, dawadawa and baobab threatens the livelihood of many and has a negative impact on the climate. He made the call in a press release copied to Citi News to commemorate this year's World Environment Day. Mr. Iddi stated that the unavailability of harmonized and precise regulations to protect shea parklands is threatening the survival of trees. He disclosed that Shea Network Ghana (SNG) with funding from the Business Advocacy Challenge (BUSAC) Fund commissioned a study to assess the effectiveness of the Forestry Commission Act of Ghana and identify its weakness. He also noted that the study revealed that non



-inclusion of non-timber forest resources in the Act for effective management, development and protection of forest reserves accounted for the indiscriminate felling of these trees. The National Coordinator said the study also revealed that even though several operational manuals and Acts have been developed for tree protection; they were uncoordinated, requiring a well-established law for shea protection. He therefore appealed to Districts Assembly and traditional authorities to ensure the enforcement of bye laws, taboos and conventions for the protection of shea and other economic trees. According to

, the high demand for charcoal, high use of fuel wood and the limited livelihood alternatives among rural women in the North during the dry season contributes to its destruction and therefore called on stakeholders to intensify education on the dangers that such destruction will have on communities. Mr. Iddi recommended that efforts should be made to assist District Assemblies to develop and gazette their respective by-laws as well as carry out community level sensitization to ensure protection of the shea tree. Shea Network Ghana (SNG) a Local Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with funding from the Business Advocacy Challenge (BUSAC) Fund has its head office in Wa in the Upper West Region of Ghana operating with three focal organizations in the three Northern Regions and value chain actors as well as stakeholders engaged in the shea business.

DISTRICTS HAVE NO BY-LAWS TO PROTECT THE SHEA TREE-STUDY SHOWS

A study by the Shea Network Ghana has discovered that most districts in northern Ghana where shea trees grow, do not have bye-laws to protect and conserve that resource. The study has also found that there is no conserved area for undisturbed harvesting of sheanuts in northern Ghana. It was conducted early this year following concerns of drastic reduction in the population of shea trees in northern Ghana. Mr Francis Chimsah, the Board member of Shea Network Ghana, who presented the findings of the study at a stakeholders' forum in Tamale, said financial constraints and the lack of legal experts at the district assemblies were among the reasons for not putting in place the right legal framework to protect and conserve shea trees. Stakeholders who attended the forum included members of the Shea Network Ghana and representatives of some of the district assemblies in the three northern

regions where shea trees are located. Shea trees are a source of livelihood for most rural women in northern Ghana, who rely on shea nut processing to take care of their families. Mr Chimsah said the study also identified the lack of political will on the part of the relevant authorities to pass bye-laws to protect and conserve shea trees. The recommendations of the study included the need for district assemblies and local authorities in northern Ghana to work together to conserve shea trees. The study also recommended the need for district assemblies to work to protect other economic trees since they were important to the livelihood of rural dwellers. Mr Chimsah said there was also the need for community education on the existing legal framework in some of the district assemblies to protect and conserve economic trees. Mr Iddi Zakaria, Coordinator of Shea Network Ghana said the Network would use the study to engage district assemblies and other stakeholders to work together to protect and conserve the shea tree.

LET'S PROTECT SHEA TREES FOR ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE—IDDI ZAKARIA TOLD GHANAIS

The persistent cutting down of shea trees for charcoal is putting the livelihoods of many in peril, especially women who make up the bulk of the labour force in the northern regions, the National Coordinator for Shea Network Ghana, Iddi Zakaria, has noted. He is therefore calling for a law banning the felling or burning of shea trees to make way for other tree crops, such as mangoes and cashew, saying the practice will soon lead to the extinction of shea trees. Additionally, it is also depriving processors of the nuts as raw material for production, hence resulting in job losses and loss of income to both individuals and even the government - in the form of tax revenue. Shea Network Ghana is therefore calling for an immediate amendment of the Economic Plants' Protection Act to include shea, so that shea trees destroyed by the government to make room for developmental projects and other infrastructure will be paid for, and compensation made to women of the affected communities. Hajia Alima Sagito Saeed, Chief Executive Officer for the Savannah, Women Integrated Development Agency (SWIDA) who for years has been championing the fight against the destruction of shea trees, is calling for shea conservation parks to ensure some lands are reserved for the projects to sustain the rural women farmers' livelihoods.



Finance has been a major constraint to expanding shea butter exports from West Africa - hence the call to financial institutions, particularly rural banks, to come to the aid of those engaged in the shea valuechain. The economic importance of the shea tree cannot be overemphasised, particularly with the unstable world market price for cocoa and the need to find suitable substitutes for cocoa in the confectionery and cocoa butter industry. Additionally, the shea tree has environmental significance for the country, particularly in the fight against desertification. In recent years, the shea tree has gained importance as an economic crop because of the heavy demand for its butter, both locally and internationally. In recognition of the need to find substitutes for the rather expensive cocoa products, and to maximise economic exploitation of the vast shea resource in Ghana, the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) initiated scientific research into the cultivation and processing of shea nuts

OVER 40 WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS ACQUIRE FINANCIAL LITERACY TRAINING IN MION DISTRICT

More than forty women entrepreneurs in the Mion District of the Northern Region, have received financial literacy training to help them manage and grow their income-generating businesses and maximize their profits. The one-day workshop was held at the Mion District Assembly on Tuesday, August 22, 2022, and was attended by women from Salankpang and Kpulgine all in the district with aim to offer the women skills and broaden their understanding on financial management.

It was organized by the Shea Network Ghana (SNG) an organization of shea sector businesses, stakeholders, and actors, in partnership with OXFAM. The training formed part of the implementation of the Women's Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation (WEACT) Project which seeks to uplift women beneficiaries through education and economic opportunities, and was implemented by the SNG, with supervision from OXFAM Ghana.

A cross-section of research suggests that women who possess better financial knowledge are more likely to make sound financial choices, create sustainable savings, and invest wisely. This, in turn, can lead to improved economic independence and long-term financial stability.

The Training was therefore organized to arm the women with the needed knowledge and skills to manage their finances and businesses for a secured financial future.

The women were taken through many practical topics such as Financial Planning and Money Management, Savings, Responsible Borrowing, Tracking business records, Budgeting, and Digital Finance. Speaking at the workshop, the WEACT Project Manager at Shea Network Ghana Mrs. Ubaidatu Iddrisu, explained that the workshop formed part of a larger training program that seeks to train 360 women who have already undergone a gender responsive skills development and entrepreneurial and business negotiation skills training

SNG HOLDS GENDER MODEL FAMILY SUMMIT IN MION

Shea Network Ghana (SNG), a leading nongovernmental organization in the promotion of the shea business in Ghana, has held a Gender Model Family (GMF) summit in the Mion District of the Northern Region to encourage men to be supportive of their spouses in domestic chores and other economic activities. The one-day summit held on Monday, November 7, 2022, at the Mion District Assembly was organized by the Shea Network Ghana in partnership with OXFAM and SEND GHANA, funded by Global Affairs Canada. It was attended by traditional and religious leaders, governmental agencies, Teachers, students, GMF ambassadors, and GMF families, among others. GMF is part of a five-year Women's Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation (WEACT) project implemented by 7 consortiums of organizations: OXFAM, norsaac, SEND GHANA, Friends of Nation (FoN), Shea Network Ghana, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) and the Tung Teiya Women's Association. The project seeks to improve the ability of women to individually and collectively overcome the legal and social barriers to their participation in agriculture and economic activities and improve the capability of household members to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid work freeing time for women to actively participate in economic activities among others. A project Officer in charge of the GMF at the Shea Network Ghana, Saani Sharifdeen addressing the summit said the Gender Model Family was a transformative approach to community mobilization that seeks to address the unequal power relations between women and men and also promote a longer-term transformation of harmful gender norms. He also said the GMF was initiated to create an environment of fair division of labor, strong family bonds between a wife, husband and children, better access to family resources by women and children, and more consultative and joint decision-making for families. Mr Sharifdeen indicated that the GMF has a target of seven hundred and twenty (720) beneficiaries out of which the SNG was working with 120 families. He was optimistic that the GMF would enable husbands and wives to live in an equitable and just manner for enhanced economic growth and development for women, children and the youth in society. The Chief of Salankpang, Naa Issah Alhassan, in his comments, expressed gratitude to the SNG and its partners for choosing the community to implement the project



. In her submissions, a representative of the Social Welfare and Community Development office at the Mion District Assembly, Madam Angelica Gyogluu, urged men to be supportive of their spouses, children and families She also called on parents to live responsible lives worthy of emulation by children so that they can grow up and become better future leaders. The Women In Agriculture Development Officer (WIAD) for the Mion District Madam Bashiru Halimatu Sadia, on her part, appealed to fathers not to leave the care of the girl child in the hands of only mothers. On his part, the Head Teacher of the Salankpang Primary School, Mr Alidu Bukari Zakaria in remarks, lauded the GMF project and called for its expansion beyond the families to school to help change the perception of gender at the schools. GMF uses several strategies including drama, community sensitization, radio discussions stakeholders' engagement to change the thinking of society on the role of women in domestic chores and economic activities. The program is implemented in 8 communities from 4 Districts in four regions: Northern, Savannah, Upper East and Upper West. Shea Network Ghana (SNG) is a multi-stakeholder non-profit organization with members at all levels of the shea value chain in Ghana. SNG seeks to influence policy and provide solutions to industry-wide challenges for a growing and coordinated shea sector.

SHEA NETWORK GHANA ATTENDS WEACT PMT MEETING



Our staff members who are part of the Women's Economic Advancement for Collective Transformation (WEACT) Project, attended a 4-day Project Management Team (PMT) Meeting in Accra. The week-long meeting created the opportunity for the PMT to strategies and plan for towards this year's project implementation. The meeting was also to allow the time for the PMT to assess the implementation strategies, achievements, challenges and the way forward. It was organized by OXFAM Ghana, the lead implementer of the WEACT Project. WAECT is a 5-year project implemented by OXFAM in partnership with Shea Network Ghana and several other organizations

STAKEHOLDERS URGED TO MODERNIZE SHEA INDUSTRY



He said government in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the Rural Enterprise Programme, would be establishing four new, modern processing facilities under the One District One Factory initiative in the northern part of Ghana. Mr Kyerematen said the Ministry in collaboration with participating financial institutions, was in the process of supporting the private sector to establish manufacturing plants including medium to large scale agro-processing factories, to boost value addition. He said five semi-industrial processing facilities are coming up in northern part of the sheanut belt of Ghana, all by private sector investors. Madam Stephanie S. Sullivan, the United States Ambassador to Ghana said the Shea industry had been one of the promising industries to be explored by stakeholders. She said the United States strongly supports President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's vision of promoting a Ghana beyond Aid by making US and Ghanaian businesses a long term, sustainable as well as mutual relationship. She said the US believed in investing in women, who play critical role in the shea industry because it was essential to the success of Ghana. Madam Sullivan said her country remained committed to the success of the shea industry because American consumers were creating market demands.

The 12th International Shea Conference was on Monday opened in Accra with a call on stakeholders to work towards transforming the shea industry into a modern, resilient, lucrative, socially equitable and sustainable commodity industry. Mr Alan Kyerematen, the Minister for Trade and Industry who made the call said there was the need for industry players like financiers, processors, logistics providers, exporters, and development partners to work individually and collectively to transform the industry. He said the Government of Ghana has embarked on a comprehensive programme to support the promotion of made-in-Ghana shea products and brands including the provision of incentive packages as well as the participation of local companies in international trade shows. The three-day Shea International Conference, is being attended by key players of the global shea family within the West Africa Region to review progress and chart new pathways to promote sustainability, quality, practices and standards. The Conference is jointly organized by the Global Shea Alliance (GSA) and Shea Network Ghana (SNG) with support from the EXIM Bank Ghana and would end on March 13, 2019. The sector minister commended the women collectors whose toils have carried the industry very far and called for their full inclusion and participation in the shea value chain. Mr Kyerematen said Ghana currently has five processing factories with more than 150,000 metric tons installed capacity, adding that, there are also three fractionation plants and the "only shea butter refinery plant in Africa".

