



EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA

Introduction

Ghana is a nation on the West Coast of Africa. Like the rest of Africa, Ghana is already experiencing problems associated with the adverse effects of climate change. These are obvious in the following areas:

- Poor and erratic rainfall pattern which is very unpredictable and, as a result, has an impact on good agricultural practices.
- Poor yields of agricultural produce, which leads to greater malnutrition and has serious implications for people's health and ability to learn.
- Mass movement of people from the rural agricultural settlements to the urban centres of the country in search of other job avenues.
- Poor and unacceptable mining practices that are leading to massive land degradation. Former arable lands are gradually being destroyed because of illegal and unacceptable mining methods.
- Deforestation especially through the activities of timber companies and chain saw operators. As a result the forest areas are being turned into savannah regions. Changes in the distribution of tree species are, in turn, having an impact on biodiversity.
- Desertification and pollution of rivers and other water sources are greatly harming humans as well as other ecosystems.
- Excessive pollution of the atmosphere by the excessive fumes from imported second hand vehicles and increase in temperature.
- Increased flooding, sea erosion of the coastal belt, rising sea levels, intrusion of seawater into freshwater areas and loss of wetlands.

Climate change has directly and indirectly exacerbated the incidence of poverty. One notable effect of these occurrences on health is malnutrition caused by crop failure which results in low and poor yields. The economy of the state is therefore greatly affected.

About the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana has more than 150,000 members. It works in 133 districts throughout Ghana with 834 congregations and almost 200 pastors. It runs two teacher training collages, five senior secondary schools, 94 junior secondary schools, 370 primary schools, 197 kindergartens, eight hospitals and clinics, six agricultural stations, four training centres and 23 self help projects.

It also runs the Evangelical Presbyterian University, a Church-based institution with special emphasis on agriculture, business management and agricultural extension Services – giving technical guidance to farmers in rural areas in order to help them increase their productivity.

Agenda 21 is one of the Church's development programmes focussing on sustainable development. It has a poverty reduction project in three districts in Northern Ghana, with an emphasis on nutrition, environment and sanitation, and has established sanitation clubs in secondary and primary schools equipping them with basic hand tools to facilitate cleaning of the environment and to carry out best practice demonstrations.

COMMITMENTS

The Church is committed to help mitigate the effects of climate change:

- It will continue to raise awareness about climate change in its congregations with particular emphasis on the need to conserve forest resources. It will use its schools, radio discussions and public meetings to help achieve this. It will target rural church communities to communicate basic information on climate change.
- It will integrate the theme of climate change into worship, liturgy, preaching and into the curricula of the Church's theological institutions.
- It will establish eco-congregations at all levels.
- It will engage the government of Ghana through the Christian Council of Ghana to advocate policy that mitigates the effects of climate change
- It will continue the work of the Church's Agenda 21 programme to restore degraded land through reforestation in Northern Ghana and through training fire volunteers in collaboration with the Ghana National Fire Service to reduce the incidence of bush fire.
- It will support this work by coming into partnership with the US-based Interfaith Power and Light Campaign and its new eco-twinning project. Here, congregations in America will support faith-based environmental projects in Africa. Agenda 21 will manage the proposed one year project which centres on reforesting degraded lands in four project sites in Northern and Southern Ghana as well as establishing community woodlots. It aims to:
 - a. Hold public meetings to create awareness of the need to manage and use environmental resources on a sustainable basis;

- b. Provide training workshops to provide skills in alternative livelihood programmes such as snail farming and bee keeping;
- c. Establish community woodlots to meet wood fuel demands and provide training in the manufacture of energy efficient stoves;
- d. Train around 200 firefighter volunteers;
- e. Plant 200,000 seedlings in degraded areas and plant 100,000 seedlings in community woodlots;
- f. Encourage co-operation with government, NGO agencies and the Church to work together for the protection of the environment. The Agenda 21 programme will work to implement the above project in collaboration with specialists from the Ghana Wildlife Division, the Environmental Protection Agency as well as the Forest Services Division, the Ghana National Fire Service and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.