

## **EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - GHANA**

### **PROPOSAL FOR A SEVEN – YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN COLLABORATION WITH ALLIANCE FOR RELIGIONS AND CONSERVATION. [2012 – 2018]**

#### **Background**

The issue of climate change has assumed alarming proportions in some parts of the world, especially Africa where studies have shown that it is the most vulnerable continent and yet less resilient to the negative effects of Climate Change. Many organizations have tried to highlight the problems of climate change in order to bring awareness of the effects to the fore with the aim of soliciting world opinion and attention. The UNFCCC is the global agency that is tasked with the gathering of scientific and technical data on all the issues of climate change for global action.

In Ghana, Vulnerability studies have shown that action is needed to combat the effects of climate change and its attendant consequences of desertification, land degradation, water stress, health, crop failures, coastal erosion and pollution concerns. Some of the measures prescribed for government to act on include adaptation and mitigation interventions, awareness creation, capacity development and advocacy skills. Government has responded to some of the issues howbeit in a very slow manner due in part to budgetary constraints and also inadequate technical capacity at all levels.

In Ghana a vibrant **Civil Society Platform** exists with limited capacity but determined effort to assist but also hold government to fulfill their mandate of creating a good socio – economic environment to the citizenry and population at large. On the **Civil Society Platform** is the **Religious Bodies** who are also in the forefront of the fight against the effects of climate change. The **EP CHURCH** hosts the **Religious Bodies Network on Climate Change** in Ghana which is playing a key role in the climate change debate.

The EP CHURCH in 2002 launched an environmental protection project in Northern Ghana where land degradation is severe and desertification is threatening. The EP CHURCH planted trees in the 3 programmes communities in which it operates in and has about a 100 acre reforested woodlots in those local communities. This intervention also brought along alternative livelihood training to the rural farmers as a way of weaning them off the excessive harvesting of trees and shrubs for firewood.

#### **The EP Church has**

- **1 (ONE) University.**
- **Two (2) Colleges of Education.**
- **Five (5) Senior High Schools.**
- **Two (2) Vocational Schools**
- **(373) Primary and Basic Schools.**

The non – tertiary schools are managed by the Education Unit of the Church headed by a General Manager and Regional Managers in different parts of the country. The unit has a total teacher population of 2834 teachers across the country.

In all the schools especially basic schools, Environmental Studies is a key subject that runs through curricula and delivered through the social studies module that also includes geography, civics, and health and sanitation education. Students and pupils are also taught basic environmental sciences and climate related lessons. The geography lessons include types of natural vegetations, land masses, physical and regional geography that highlight topography, contours etc.

## **POLICY**

The EP CHURCH at its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Assembly [**Highest Legislative Body**] in 2011 officially adopted a Policy on Environment and Climate Change. The Policy mandates all the structures of the church to undertake environmental and climate change projects to protect God's Creation as entrenched in the Holy Scriptures. [**GENESIS 2: 15**] The EP CHURCH in Ghana therefore has the requisite mandate, knowledge, experience, infrastructure and capacity to undertake the **Seven Year Plan** Project in collaboration with the ARC and other Development Partners.

**RELBONET** is the major **Faith Based Organization** in Ghana that is devoted to work in the area of Climate Change. It has over 10 (Ten) major mainline Protestant, Pentecostal and Charismatic Religious Bodies in membership including also the 3(Three) Major Muslim Organizations, the Federation of Muslim Women Associations' that are all officially recognized in Ghana. It also has very key Ecumenical (Faith) Bodies and Institutions that serve as affiliates to RELBONET. The numerical strength of RELBONET is conservatively in excess of 3 Million Ghanaians. RELBONET therefore has the ears of over 3 Million Ghanaians every week and is best positioned to carry out effective dissemination of any Climate Change and Environmental messages or actions directly to citizens.

**The EP CHURCH will collaborate with RELBONET in order to generate the needed synergy for the successful implementation of the Seven Year Plan in Ghana.**

### **Seven Year Development Plan.**

**The aim of the Seven Year Development Plan is to Intensify and Expand Awareness Creation, Education, Restoration and Conservation of Degraded and Deforested lands in Ghana. This intervention will also address Climate Change effects related to Mitigation Action and Capacity Development.**

### **Main Commitments**

#### **Awareness Creation**

The EP CHURCH in collaboration with the Religious Bodies Network on Climate Change in Ghana [RELBONET] will carry out awareness creation on Climate Change, Environmental Protection and Conservation issues in over 10,000 congregations through:

- Religious Outreach Activities.
- Radio and other Mass Media Programmes
- Seminars and Workshops

- Church Harvests and Ritualistic Celebrations
- Social Mobilization Networks e.g. Internet Services, SMS, Pager and Blogs.

## **Education**

Under our new **Seven Year Plan** we shall undertake the vigorous formation of **Eco-Clubs and Eco – Congregations** that shall spearhead education on Environmental issues especially Climate Change in schools, communities, churches, mosques and temples.

- Form and inaugurate **1000** Eco Clubs
- Establish **1000** Eco – Congregations
- Train **300** Teacher Supervisors
- Teach lessons on Core Values of Faith, Integrity, Respect and Care for GOD’s Creation as Foundation for Action.
- Develop and Publish School Curricula on Environment and Climate Change.
- Create and Dedicate specific hours on School Time Table to Environment and Climate Change Lessons.
- Preach Environmental Messages from the Pulpit.
- Develop and Publish Teachers’ and Pupils’ Manuals on Environment/ Climate Change.
- Introduce and Teach Environment and Climate Change subjects in Church Seminaries.

These school clubs and congregations will form the core of dedicated young pupils and students in Basic and Junior High Schools that learn and practice good and acceptable norms of environmental protection and conservation, thereby effecting behavioral change in their schools and communities.

## **AGRICULTURE [FOOD & FARMING]**

The EPC Will Undertake the ff:

- Provide Land to Schools and Eco –Clubs to undertake the cultivation of grains, tubers and vegetables in School Gardens and Farms.
- Introduce Conservation Agriculture to 6 [SIX] EPC Rural Farmer Programmes and 4 New Communities.
- Improve Extension Delivery of Sustainable Agriculture.
- Establish Small Ruminants Development [Livestock] Project.
- Promote Cultivation of cereals and vegetables among rural target farmers.
- Undertake Education on Correct Usage of Agro- Chemicals.
- Introduce Improved Cockerel [Poultry]Project in Rural Training Programmes
- Teach and Practice Sustainable Land Management in EPC Schools, Agriculture College & Rural Training Programmes.
- Train 3000 Fire Volunteers.
- Teach and Practice Organic Farming Methods.

## **NUTRITION**

- Grow Moringa Oleifera Trees to provide leaves and seeds that are high in proteins as food fortifiers and Immune System Enhancers.
- Grow Soya Beans for use as protein fortifiers in local dishes.
- Carry out Education on Moringa and Soya Utilisation in Rural Training Programmes and Schools.
- Process Moringa Powder as Protein Fortifiers in Milk Shakes.
- Introduce Moringa and Soya into School Feeding Programmes.

## **WATER AND SANITATION**

Harvest water from Schools and Chapel/Mosque roofs.

Construct large water storage tanks.

Teach Water Harvesting Technology in Religious Schools and Rural communities.

Introduce Solar Water disinfection [SODIS] Technology to rural villages and towns without potable water.

Provide Toilet Facilities in religious and public schools [especially for girls] in selected rural communities

Teach and Enforce Hand Washing after use of toilet facilities.

Form Sanitation Clubs in Basic and Junior High Schools.

Provide Environmentally Friendly Incinerators in Schools, Colleges and Small Communities.

Undertake Watershed Management Activities around local River Sources and Banks.

## **TREE PLANTING & GROWING**

In collaboration with RELBONET and the Forestry Commission plant **Seven (7) Million Trees**.

Mobilize Parishioners in 9 Presbyteries and 10,000 Christian & Moslem Congregations to undertake Tree Planting.

Deploy ECO – CLUB Members [Young Pupils and Students] to Plant trees.

Purchase good quality seeds from the Forest Research Institute Nurseries.

Grow Indigenous and Exotic Tree species for Fuel, Fruits, Fertilizer and Commercial Sale.

## **AGRO FORESTRY**

### **NURSERY ESTABLISHMENT**

1. Establish 10 major nurseries in all 6 programmes and 4 new Communities.
2. Employ 50% of women as nursery attendants and supervisors in all nurseries.
3. Establish School Farms, Gardens and Woodlots to serve as demonstration facilities for pupils , especially girls and students in agriculture and agro- forestry including.

### **TRAINING**

Agro-forestry training recommended for these various categories:

- Programme Officers and Staff of all 6 agricultural stations.
- Pastors, Catechists, Youth Leaders, Women Leaders and Imams in Established Eco – Congregations, Mosques and Temples.
- ECO – CLUB Members
- Community Leaders, Landowners, School Management Committee Members, Teachers and Selected Heads of basic Schools and Colleges.
- Eco - Congregations

### **TRAINING TOPICS**

Training topics include:

- Women Empowerment and Gender Mainstreaming
- Climate Change
- Nursery Management
- Alternative Livelihood Schemes
- Entrepreneurship
- Farm Management
- Health and Safety [Handling and correct application of agro- chemicals]
- Establishment and Management of Forests and Woodlots.
- Seed Management
- Water Harvesting Technology

- Watershed Management
- Fire Prevention and Fighting Techniques

### **ESSENTIAL TOOLS AND MATERIALS**

- Provide Seeds from recommended and approved sources i.e .[Crop Research Institute]
- Safety Wear[ Wellington Boots, Overalls, Gloves , Goggles etc]
- Cutlasses, Hoes, Pick Axes, Horticultural Scissors, Garden forks and spades. Shovels, wheel barrows, watering cans, measuring tapes, garden lines, etc.
- Alternative Livelihood Support Kits i.e. bee- hives and other beekeeping equipment, pens for little ruminants, starter stocks of small ruminants, veterinary equipment and medications.

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Provide Fuel efficient local stoves to Rural Farmers.

Procure and Distribute 5000 Solar Lanterns to Farmers and Fishermen.

Introduce the usage of Solar Dryers in villages and small towns.

### **Conclusion**

The EPC is poised to partner the ARC in its global Environmental Programme that seeks to bring relief and change to the lives of poor and marginalized communities in Africa.