

*For Immediate Release*

## **Business of the Environment Must be Everybody's Business**



*A participant making a contribution at the forum*

**Accra, 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2017** – Businesses should aim at reducing the negative impact of their activities on the environment. This was one of the key messages that emerged from a Green Business Forum organised by the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA) and SNV Ghana. The forum, held within the context of the Ghana Climate Innovation Centre (GCIC) project, aimed to discuss the potential for green businesses in Ghana; determine the challenges they face; and explore the required interventions to address the challenges.

The discussions at the forum focused on the importance for businesses to adopt principles and practices that protect the environment and lives. The forum discussions strongly emphasized the need for businesses to reduce resource inputs and increase efficiency in their production processes, minimize waste and strengthen their infrastructure to reduce environmental impacts while providing environmental goods and services. Doing business in an environmentally friendly manner, will help “promote responsible production, address climate change effects and generate wealth for inclusive growth”, remarked Dr Eric Twum, Policy Fellow for Climate Change and Sustainable Development at UNU-INRA. Dr Twum added that such practices are essential for enterprises to be considered green businesses.

Speaking at the panel discussion on ‘*Green Business Opportunities: Challenges and Policy Interventions*’, Mrs Levina Owusu, the Director of Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation at the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) urged industries and the public to help protect the environment from degradation and deforestation. She admonished individuals that cut down trees to do well to replant for restoration. She stated that “issues of the environment should be everyone’s business because these issues affect us all. If our environment is impoverished, we will all be impoverished”.

The panellists at the forum acknowledged the contributions of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) towards economic growth and recognised the need for comprehensive policies to help mainstream the activities of these enterprises in Ghana. One of the panellists, Mr Papa Bartels, Team Leader of Industrial Sub-Contract and Partnership Exchange at the Ministry of Trade and Industry indicated that about 90% of businesses in

Ghana are small to medium size enterprises and policies targeting SMEs will help build their capacities and minimize environmental challenges that confront the sector. He added that the Government of Ghana is in the process of developing a policy on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to regulate and sanitise the sector.

Similarly, in addressing a question on the challenges that small businesses face in getting financial assistance for their activities, Mr Ebenezer Arthur, the Chief Executive Officer of Wangara Capital stressed on the need for SMEs to ensure that they have competitive and go-to-market services / products, competent teams and should operate in a more transparent and accountable manner, so as to attract funding. He observed that “money goes to where there are opportunities and there is the need for agro-businesses and other small green enterprises to present their businesses in ways that attract investors”.

The importance of collaboration and partnership among green businesses also emerged strongly at a second panel discussion dubbed ‘*Time with Successful Entrepreneurs*’. Sharing his business experience in the waste management sector, Mr Immanuel B. Nartey-Tokoli, the Managing Director of Jekora Ventures encouraged the participants to have the courage and trust to form partnerships to promote the growth of their businesses. He noted that “trust is key to business partnership and we need to collaborate to ensure the sustainability of our business activities”.

An interesting session of the forum involved selected participants of a pre-advertised competition, pitching their green business concepts to a panel. Synergy Recycle and Waste Management company emerged as the overall winner, and will get the opportunity to enter the concept presentation stage for the upcoming GCIC selection process for the third cohort of businesses. Synergy Recycle and Waste Management uses saw dust and wood shaving to produce wood pellets for cooking in special cook stoves; helping to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emission from the use of fire wood and other unsafe cooking methods, and deforestation, especially by rural communities.

The Green Business Forum also included an exhibition, where some entrepreneurs showcased their businesses in various areas including energy efficiency, waste management, water purification, and agricultural machineries. The event brought together 200 participants including policy makers, development partners, business and financial experts, and entrepreneurs. It was held as part of UNU-INRA and SNV’s contributions to the GCIC project to help address the policy and regulatory challenges of the clean technology sector in Ghana. The GCIC project is providing business advisory services, business mentoring, capacity building services and financial grants to qualifying SMEs in Ghana. It is being implemented by Ashesi University, SNV, Ernst & Young, and the United Nations University (UNU-INRA).

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## **EDITOR’S NOTE**

### ***About UNU-INRA***

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### ***About GCIC***

The Ghana Climate Innovation Center (GCIC) is an incubation hub that is providing financing, mentoring, training and business advisory services to support emerging entrepreneurs and new ventures involved in developing locally appropriate solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation in Ghana. Supported by the governments of Denmark and the Netherlands, the Centre is being managed by a consortium led by the Ashesi University College and including Ernst & Young, SNV Ghana, and the United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA). For further information, kindly visit: [www.ghanacic.org](http://www.ghanacic.org)