**‘Resilient Ghana’: advancing climate action for prosperity**

**COP28 Declaration for Ghana’s Country Package for Forests, Nature and Climate**

1. The Government of Ghana proudly announces its ambitious vision for ‘Resilient Ghana’ where development and nature-positive action thrive in tandem, realised through a Country Package that mobilises support from international public and private partners. The future ‘Resilient Ghana’ is underpinned by action towards three key pillars: (i) advancing nature-based industrialisation and sustainable rural development; (ii) building an inclusive green economy with future-fit green jobs and nature-based alternative livelihoods; and (iii) scaling climate ambition.
2. Ghana is recognised as a world leader for its bold ambition on forests, climate, and nature as well as the unique and precious biodiversity it contains. Ghana has a trailblazing track record on REDD+ and carbon markets, including being among the first countries to apply for jurisdictional ART-TREES certification and a carbon credit transaction under the LEAF partnership. Ghana has also made ambitious commitments to halt deforestation and restore 2 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 as an endorser of the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use and under the Bonn Challenge and the African Forest Landscape Initiative. Existing interventions need to be scaled up and transformation is needed in some key areas to address ongoing challenges and maximise climate impact while securing co-benefits for people and their communities.

**Partnership for ‘Resilient Ghana’**

1. To deliver coordinated and strengthened action towards ‘Resilient Ghana’, the Government of Ghana and initial interested partners **the Governments of Canada, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America and non-state actors the Country package Seed fund, Degas Ltd, the Forest Data Partnership, FSD Africa, GenZero, LEAF Coalition, The Omanhene Bean Company, SouthBridge Investments (SBI), and World Resources Institute (WRI)** are announcing a Country Package of initial programmes, partnerships, and investments across the following key action areas aligned with partners’ priorities: (a) Scaling carbon and nature markets; (b) Sustainable agriculture and mining; (c) Sustainable timber, conservation, restoration & ecosystem services; (d) Cross-cutting priorities and enabling conditions to help ensure a just transition and strengthen governance, integrated spatial planning programme, and MRV systems. SouthBridge Investments (SBI) and World Resources Institute (WRI) specifically announce their support for ‘Resilient Ghana’ via the blended finance vehicle ‘Vumbuzi’, which will provide investment capital as well as grants and technical assistance. Vumbuzi seeks to leverage US $150 million in philanthropic capital to mobilise close to 10x in private capital, a portion of it to be deployed into opportunities across all action areas within ‘Resilient Ghana’.

**Scaling Carbon and Nature Markets**

1. *Ghana will work towards* key priorities such as: (a) Improving digital infrastructure to establish a strong pipeline of credit-generating opportunities; (b) Capacity building at the institutional and personnel level to ensure integrity and quality of credits; (c) Negotiating deals with buyers (state and non-state actors) to secure sale and purchase agreements for both vintage and advance carbon credit purchases of up to 30 million tonnes CO2e.
2. **Interested partners announce initial contributions towards scaling carbon and nature markets:** (a) Ghana has signed an agreement with the LEAF Coalition for the sale of up to 5 million tonnes of high integrity forest carbon credits for US $50 million to public and private sector buyers. This landmark agreement, the first of its kind to combine finance from multiple private buyers and the public sector, covers over 16% of Ghana’s target of securing sales of 30 million tonnes CO2e by 2030. Ghana will continue to work with LEAF to bring in higher volumes of public and private finance over the coming years to support the growth of a sustainable economy; (b)Leveraging the carbon markets framework of Ghana which includes Ghana's jurisdictional-scale REDD+ framework, interested partners, which includes US, Singapore, GenZero and others, intend to work closely with Ghana to mobilise resources and demand from public and private sectors for high-integrity forest carbon credits, including those authorised under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, to deliver at least 5 million tonnes CO2e, and up to 17 million tonnes CO2e of additional emissions reductions and removals by 2030. These carbon credits will be generated using a credible carbon crediting standard and will be independently verified; (c) Interested partners intend to support the strengthening of agencies and enable capacity building, such as through grant funding and/or technical assistance.

**Sustainable Agriculture and Mining**

1. *Ghana will work towards* key priorities such as: (a) Facilitating the adoption of climate-smart practices within commodity farming in Ghana, with a focus on cocoa, oil palm and rubber; (b) Investing in the shea landscape to support conservation and additional livelihoods; and (c) Financing urgent investments in increasing productivity and local value addition in the cocoa sector in Ghana.
2. **Interested partners announce initial contributions towards transitioning to sustainable agriculture and mining:** (a) Convening working groups for priority commodities comprised of key players across value chains to develop a strategy and implementation plan for sustainable transitions and onshoring downstream activities; and (b) Financing for agricultural commodity producers to adopt climate-smart practices and invest in rehabilitation and replanting, including through risk-based loans, guarantees or other de-risking instruments, as well as grants.

**Sustainable Timber, Conservation, Restoration & Ecosystem Services**

1. *Ghana will work towards* key priorities such as: (a) Forest restoration and reforestation of degraded reserve areas to protect biodiversity, create jobs and drive climate action; (b) Scaling nature-positive timber including climate-smart practices and scaling new local market players to retain value in Ghana; and (c) Enhancing the eco-tourism sector to secure additional livelihoods for local communities.
2. **Interested partners announce initial contributions towards advancing sustainable timber, conservation and restoration:** (a)Convening a sustainable timber working group comprised of key players across value chains to develop a strategy and implementation plan for sustainable transitions and onshoring downstream activities; (b) Supporting new or existing restoration projects in Ghana, including through concessional financing or de-risking of new companies or projects involved in landscape restoration; and (c) Supporting new ecotourism ventures, including through de-risking instruments, grants, equity and loans.

**Cross-cutting priorities and enabling conditions to help ensure a just transition and strengthen governance, land use planning, and MRV systems**

1. *Ghana will work towards* key priorities such as: (a) Developing a spatial plan and complementary initiatives, embedding integrated nature and climate policies in whole-of-government approaches; (b) Engaging civil society, academia, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities to identify key initiatives and build the public support necessary; (c) Developing a roadmap for mobilising domestic and international finance to channel investment to these initiatives and identify partners who can work with the government and civil society to help ensure successful implementation; and (d) Advancing structures for better monitoring, reporting, and verification systems.
2. **Interested partners announce initial contributions towards strengthening spatial planning, and MRV systems.** The Country package Seed Fund intends to focus its initial support on strengthening the national land use planning process to further align the 30x30 commitment with accelerating nature-positive models for agriculture and other activities.

*Please see supporting Annex for more details.*

**Annex**

The Government of Ghana announces its ambitious vision for ‘Resilient Ghana’ where development and nature-positive action thrive together through mobilising funding and technical support from international public and private partners across key action areas. Ghana is recognised as a world leader for its bold ambition on forests, climate, and nature as well as the unique and precious biodiversity it contains, as championed through the green on its flag. The ‘Resilient Ghana’ vision demonstrates Ghana’s clear commitment to continue pioneering efforts towards a climate and nature-positive development model.

Ghana has a trailblazing track record, as one of the first countries globally to develop a REDD+ Strategy and receive payments under the Carbon Fund, the first country in Africa to establish a carbon markets regulatory framework and the first country globally to authorise Article 6-compatible credits in November 2022. It has also made ambitious commitments to halt deforestation and restore 2 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 as an endorser of the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use and under the Bonn Challenge and the African Forest Landscape Initiative. Ghana is among the first countries to apply for jurisdictional ART-TREES certification and a carbon credit transaction under the LEAF partnership. Through its vision, the Government of Ghana will showcase its pioneering efforts on carbon markets, staying true to the Black Star.

Forests are at the heart of socioeconomic development in the country, covering around 30% of total land cover and contributing as a source of income and livelihood to nearly 1 in 10 Ghanaians. The cocoa sector contributes $1 billion to the Ghanaian economy annually (1.3% of GDP). However, unsustainable farming methods, small-scale mining, and increasing demand for food and forest products continue to cause forest loss, degradation, and threaten sustainable sources of income. As one example, cocoa farming areas are coming under pressure from new viruses, falling soil fertility, ageing trees, and climate change. Investments are urgently needed to regenerate the sector and to avoid deforestation.

‘Resilient Ghana’ seeks to reverse this trend and accelerate Ghana towards a future where development and nature-positive action work together. The vision cohesively advances climate action for prosperity, conserving, protecting, and restoring forests while also securing additional livelihoods for rural communities. It focuses on immediate concentrated intervention in priority areas, the High Forest Zone (HFZ) and parts of the Transition Zone (TZ) (forests and savanna zones), to ensure high impact. Ghana’s leadership towards ‘Resilient Ghana’ will serve as a template for Global South countries pursuing nature-based economic development, poverty reduction, and carbon markets.

To support and enable the actions that will deliver this vision, the Government of Ghana and initial interested partners **the Governments of Canada, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America and non-state actors the Country package Seed fund, Degas Ltd, the Forest Data Partnership, FSD Africa, GenZero, LEAF Coalition, The Omanhene Bean Company, SouthBridge Investments (SBI), and World Resources Institute (WRI)** have come together to supportelements of ‘Resilient Ghana’ aligned to their priorities over the coming months and years. Interested partners are announcing initial programmes, partnerships and investments in support of the ‘Resilient Ghana’ vision.

**Partnership for ‘Resilient Ghana’**

* ***Guided*** by Ghana’s bold vision for nature-based industrialisation and rural development as well as future-fit green jobs and secure livelihoods;
* ***Recognising*** Ghana’s trailblazing efforts on high integrity ART-TREES-aligned, Article 6-compatible carbon markets;
* ***Building on and delivering progress*** towards Ghana’s commitments under the Glasgow Leaders Declaration, the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the UNCBD’s 30x30 goal and specifically to end deforestation by 2030 and restore 2million hectares of land by 2030 (African Forest Landscape Initiative);
* ***Recognising*** the importance of forests and forest-related sectors to Ghana’s economy and population as well as the urgent need to progress on inclusive growth and secure livelihoods; and
* ***Leveraging*** the strength of long-term cooperation and the value of cross-government partnership.

The Government of Ghana and initial interested partners **the Governments of Canada, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America and non-state actors the Country package Seed fund, Degas Ltd, the Forest Data Partnership, FSD Africa, GenZero, LEAF Coalition, The Omanhene Bean Company, SouthBridge Investments (SBI), and World Resources Institute (WRI)** have come togetherunder the auspices of the Forests and Climate Leaders’ Partnership (FCLP) to help achieve the ‘Resilient Ghana’ vision and cooperate on elements based on each partners’ priorities, capacities, circumstances, and contributions. Partners resolve to, as relevant:

* ***Establish*** an inclusive coordinated framework comprised of members of the partnership under the leadership of the Government of Ghana, who will meet regularly to review progress on implementation and impact;
* ***Work collaboratively*** towards common objectives and goals within ‘Resilient Ghana’, on a foundation of mutual trust and respect;
* ***Act in a coordinated manner*** to ensure efficiency and effectiveness across initiatives and deliverables;
* ***Invite*** additional partners to co-design opportunities and mobilise capital;
* ***Deploy*** initial programmes, partnerships, and investments comprising vintage and advance carbon credits agreements, concessional funding and grants for technical assistance;
* ***Expand*** the scope of the Partnership over time to address the most critical sectors and achieve systems-wide transformation, consistent with evolving priorities and opportunities;
* ***Report*** at COP29 on achievements, challenges, updated investment plans, additional funds and financing mobilised, as well as additional partners; and
* ***Report*** at COP30 and annually thereafter on achievements and impact.

Interested partners intend to explore the above activities to support Ghana's climate and nature efforts.

**Priorities and deliverables of ‘Resilient Ghana’**

Achieving ‘Resilient Ghana’ will be a multi-year, multi-faceted effort. To launch this transition to a resilient, prosperous, nature-positive and inclusive economy, a first set of priorities and initial partner contributions have been identified:

***Scaling carbon and nature markets***

Ghana has emerged as a frontrunner in carbon markets globally. It is developing its first ART-TREES certification for jurisdictional REDD+ programmes, a high integrity standard for jurisdictional scale carbon credits. Ghana announces its intention to scale its strong foundation in carbon markets and lead Africa in generating high quality and high integrity carbon credits. Capitalising on carbon revenues will be essential for sustainable economic growth and improve livelihoods in Ghana.

To deliver on this goal, the following priority actions are announced by Ghana:

1. **Strengthen governmental agencies, civil society, private sector and local communities** through improved digital infrastructure to establish a strong pipeline of credit-generating opportunities;
2. **Capacity building** at the institutional and personnel level to ensure integrity and quality of credits, including but not limited to ensuring an understanding of crediting methodologies and Article 6 guidance. Capacity building is also needed to facilitate negotiations of ERPAs, including on price; and
3. **Negotiating deals** with buyers (state and non-state actors) to secure sale and purchase agreements for both vintage and advance carbon credit purchases of up to 30 million tonnes CO2e. This will include working with the LEAF Coalition to supply credits to its public and private sector buyers.

In support of these priorities, interested partners have announced initial contributions to ‘Resilient Ghana’, including:

* Support the strengthening of agencies and enabling capacity building, such as through grant funding and/or technical assistance, including via the SHUFFLE programme of the United States government;
* An agreement has been secured for up to 5 million tonnes of high integrity forest carbon credits for UD $50 million with LEAF Coalition buyers. This landmark agreement, the first of its kind to combine finance from multiple private buyers and the public sector, covers over 16% of Ghana’s target of securing sales of 30 million tonnes CO2e by 2030. Ghana will continue to work with LEAF to bring in higher volumes of public and private finance over the coming years to support the growth of a sustainable economy;
* Leveraging the carbon markets framework of Ghana which includes Ghana's jurisdictional-scale REDD+ framework, interested partners, which includes the United States, Singapore, GenZero and others, intend to work closely with Ghana to mobilise resources and demand from public and private sectors for high-integrity forest carbon credits, including those authorised under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, to deliver at least 5 million tonnes CO2e, and up to 17 million tonnes CO2e of additional emissions reductions and removals by 2030. These carbon credits will be generated using a credible carbon crediting standard and will be independently verified;
* The United States intends to provide technical support on enhancing the policy framework for carbon markets and results-based payments in Ghana, and to build the capacity of community organisations receiving carbon market and results-based payments;
* The U.S. Forest Service announces the intention to align its programming for Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) establishment, support and expansion in the Eastern and Western Regions of Ghana with the priorities emerging from ‘Resilient Ghana’ discussions, to the extent possible; and
* A portion of capital from the SouthBridge Investments (SBI) and World Resources Institute (WRI) Vumbuzi fund will be invested in opportunities under this action area.

Interested partners intend to work with Ghana in advance of COP29 to:

* Build an expanding pipeline of high buyer integrity offtake agreements with corporates; and
* Explore further instruments to support pipeline development linked to reducing deforestation and forest degradation.

***Sustainable agriculture and mining***

Ghana is highly reliant on both its agriculture and mining sectors, but activity in both sectors can come at great cost to the health and intactness of its forests and natural resources. Agriculture is the leading employer in Ghana and a major contributor to the economy. It is also the leading driver of forest loss and forest degradation, with over 80% of deforestation in Ghana attributed to agricultural expansion. Ghana is the 2nd largest cocoa producer in the world, for example, but faces environmental challenges from cocoa production as cocoa also accounts for over 27% of its agriculture conversion, making it the single most important commodity driver of deforestation. Further, the cocoa sector in Ghana is currently strained due to new viruses, falling soil fertility, ageing trees, and climate change among other factors. As a result, the cocoa sector is poised to continue expanding into forested lands should productivity and income levels of underperforming smallholder farms, by whom cocoa production is almost exclusively undertaken, not improve.

The contemporary problem of illegal small-scale mining is an example of how the influence and impact of drivers can change in a short period. Though illegal mining has always occurred in Ghana, its escalation in recent years has brought it to the forefront as a clear driver of land-use change, degradation, and pollution in Ghana. The increase in illegal gold mining in Ghana may have resulted from a global jump in the price of gold, and the increasing availability of machines and foreign expertise.

Ongoing commodity-specific programmes exist to address some of these challenges and ‘Resilient Ghana’ seeks to replicate successful elements and strengthen areas where more innovative interventions are needed. Transitioning to climate smart agricultural practices and responsible mining is therefore fundamental towards developing Resilient Ghana. Investments in the correct planting stock, agricultural inputs and climate smart practices can multiply the yields of commodities without having to expand into forested areas. It can also improve incomes of smallholder farmers, securing sustainable livelihoods that thrive in tandem with the conservation, protection, and restoration of forests.

To accelerate these transitions, the following priority actions are announced by Ghana:

1. **Adoption of climate-smart practices** within commodity farming in Ghana with a focus on cocoa, but also oil palm and rubber;
2. **Investing in the shea landscape** to support conservation and additional livelihoods; and
3. **Developing a working capital and loan facility for the cocoa sector value chain** to finance urgent investments in increasing productivity and local value addition in Ghana. This facility will invest in private companies across the full cocoa value chain, including to onshore processing of key commodities. It will require concessional loans and can leverage private sector financing.

In support of these priorities, interested partners have announced initial contributions to ‘Resilient Ghana’, including:

* Extend the U.S.-supported “Reducing mercury use in Ghana” to reflect where possible Resilient Ghana’s priorities related to formalising artisanal and small-scale mining communities, reducing or eliminating the use of mercury in gold mining, and implementing the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Ghana’s National Action Plan;
* Align the work of a new US-supported, FAO SoilFER soil mapping fertility project with the priorities emerging under ‘Resilient Ghana’, including by strengthening smallholder agriculture production by enhancing soil fertility, strengthening agency capacity through technical assistance, and supporting climate-smart agricultural practices including increased fertiliser use efficiency, soil health, and use of resilient crops; and
* A portion of capital from the SouthBridge Investments (SBI) and World Resources Institute (WRI) Vumbuzi fund will be invested in opportunities under this action area.

Interested partners intend to work with Ghana in advance of COP29 to:

* Convene a working group for cocoa as well as other priority commodities by comprised of key players across value chains to develop a strategy and implementation plan for sustainable transitions and onshoring downstream activities, including exploring how to scale up successful models piloted by civil society or the private sector;
* Help establish a working capital / loan facility for the cocoa sector to facilitate direct financing to players as well as a blended vehicle which will invest in the industrialisation of agricultural value chains locally to support nature-based industrialisation and rural development;
* Draw on the Forest Data Partnership partners, including the United States, to help unite organisations, governments and private sector partners around geospatial data solutions that can contribute to Ghana’s efforts to expand credible monitoring, verification and disclosure of progress in reducing deforestation and restoring degraded lands in Ghana; and
* Provide grant funding to support farmers in the cocoa value chain, especially women smallholder farmers, to sustainably intensify production and support integrated landscape management to reduce deforestation risks.

***Sustainable timber, conservation, restoration & ecosystem services***

Forests are at the heart of socioeconomic development in Ghana. Forests cover around 30% of total land cover in Ghana and the forestry sector is the third largest contributor in foreign exchange earnings of the country. Advancing efforts to help Ghana uphold its commitments through expansive restoration, reforestation, and a transformation to sustainable timber will achieve environmental and economic co-benefits, proving that economic development and action on nature can occur together in Ghana.

To deliver on these objectives, the following priority actions are announced by Ghana:

1. **Forest restoration** and reforestation of degraded reserve areas to protect biodiversity, create jobs and drive climate action. This would include a combination of forest restoration programmes in those forest reserves that have undergone some degradation and are considered ‘convalescent’, as well as investments in reforestation in those areas marked for plantation establishment to help meet the demand for wood products. Both will be done in line with good practice and aim to achieve forest certification;
2. **Scale nature-positive timber,** including through climate-smart practices and scaling new local market players to retain value in Ghana; and
3. **Enhance the eco-tourism** sector to secure additional livelihoods for local communities, building on successful models piloted by the private sector and civil society.

In support of these priorities, interested partners intend to work with Ghana in advance of COP29 to:

* Convene a sustainable timber working group comprised of key players across value chains to develop a strategy and implementation plan for sustainable transitions and onshoring downstream activities;
* Provide concessional financing for a new or existing blended vehicle targeting restoration projects in Ghana, including in degraded reserve areas to protect biodiversity, create jobs and drive climate action;
* Invest patient capital into a blended vehicle to crowd in private capital which will invest in the industrialisation of timber value chains locally to support nature-based industrialisation and rural development;
* Provide first loss capital or other risk mitigation instruments to de-risk new eco-tourism ventures; and
* A portion of capital from the SouthBridge Investments (SBI) and World Resources Institute (WRI) Vumbuzi fund will be invested in opportunities under this action area.

***Cross-cutting priorities to strengthen governance, help ensure a just transition and accelerate deforestation-free energy***

Nature and climate agendas come together through land-use decisions – crucial decisions on where and how to farm, but also on infrastructure, mining, urban development, and other forms of land conversion. Ghana needs spatial intelligence (i.e. access to, and capacity to use, spatial data on nature, carbon, infrastructure, etc.) to inform high impact decision-making, chart long-term strategies towards sustainable land use systems, and strengthen monitoring, reporting and verification systems that can credibly track impact and mobilise finance. Strengthening an inclusive national land-use plan in Ghana can help optimise for conservation, nature, livelihoods and economic outcomes at the same time.

To create these enabling conditions and deliver on cross-cutting priorities, the following priority actions are announced by Ghana:

1. **Develop a spatial plan and complementary initiatives**, including supportive legislation and policies, analytics, and trainings, to achieve national contributions to 30x30 and other related area-based targets, embedding integrated nature and climate policies in whole-of-government approaches, including through NBSAPs and NDCs;
2. **Engage civil society, academia and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities** as an important way to enhance inclusive climate action, identify key initiatives and build the public support necessary for land-use initiatives;
3. **Develop a roadmap for mobilising domestic and international finance** to channel investment to these initiatives and identify partners who can work with the government and civil society to help ensure successful implementation; and
4. **Advance spatial intelligence and enforcement structures** to create an enabling environment for better monitoring, reporting and verification systems to provide trust and transparency throughout value chains and carbon markets.

In support of these priorities, interested partners including the Country package Seed Fund intend to work with Ghana in advance of COP29 to:

* Strengthen land use planning, bolstering an inclusive planning process that builds on existing efforts and aligns economic outcomes with Ghana’s 30x30 and zero deforestation commitments at federal and sub-national scales, and enhancing investments in world-class spatial intelligence data layers and tools to allow for informed, high impact decision-making, including through grant funding and/or technical assistance; and
* Enhance MRV systems, such as investment into satellite-based forest monitoring and other digital technologies to improve the availability of high-integrity data for monitoring and reporting and streamline data collection, processing and quality control in MRV processes, including through grant funding and/or technical assistance.