



NEWS LETTER JAN-APR 2026

Building Resilient Communities

TABLE OF CONTENT

**Executive Director's
Message**

**Our Collective
Ambition**

**1st Quarter
Activities**

**Moving
Forward**

Executive Director's Message

Desmond Kofi Foe Sena



Dear partners, Stakeholders, and members of the AERC community,

I welcome you to the first quarter edition of the AERC Ghana Newsletter. This edition highlights our continued work in empowering rural and vulnerable communities across Ghana through climate action, environmental sustainability, youth leadership, renewable energy access, community safety, and inclusive local development.

At AERC Ghana, we believe that real development begins with people. Our work is driven by the active participation of communities, young people, partners, volunteers, and local stakeholders who share our commitment to practical and lasting change. This quarter, we have continued to strengthen partnerships, promote community-led solutions, and contribute to dialogue and action that supports cleaner, safer, and more resilient communities.

I sincerely thank our team, volunteers, partners, supporters, and the communities we serve for their trust, commitment, and leadership. Your support makes our progress possible. As we look ahead, AERC Ghana remains committed to expanding our impact, strengthening our systems, and building partnerships that create meaningful change.

Thank you for journeying with us.

Our Collective Ambition

Our collective ambition is to build stronger, cleaner, safer, and more resilient communities where rural and vulnerable people have the knowledge, voice, and opportunity to thrive. At AERC Ghana, we believe this ambition is best achieved through shared action among communities, young people, local leaders, partners, and citizens.

Together, we are committed to advancing practical, community-led solutions in climate action, environmental sustainability, youth leadership, renewable energy access, research, advocacy, and inclusive local development. Our goal is to turn ideas into measurable impact while strengthening dignity, opportunity, and lasting change for the communities we serve.

AERC QUARTER 1 AT A GLANCE

In Numbers



8
Activities



1
Documentary



2
Articles



3000+
Reach

1

NATIONAL RENEWABLE
ENERGY FINANCE DIALOGUE



1
Dialogue

2

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
FORESTS DOCUMENTARY



1
Documentary

3

EARTH DAY ENERGY
ACCESS SURVEY



1
Survey

4

COMPOST PRODUCTION
TRAINING



3
Partners

5

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PARTNERSHIP



1
Assembly

6

MIRROR NEWSPAPER
FEATURE



1
Feature

7

WASTE PICKERS'
RIGHTS ARTICLE



1
Article

8

WASTE PICKERS
CAMPAIGN POST



3000+
People Reached



Energy



Forests



Survey



Compost



Local Gov



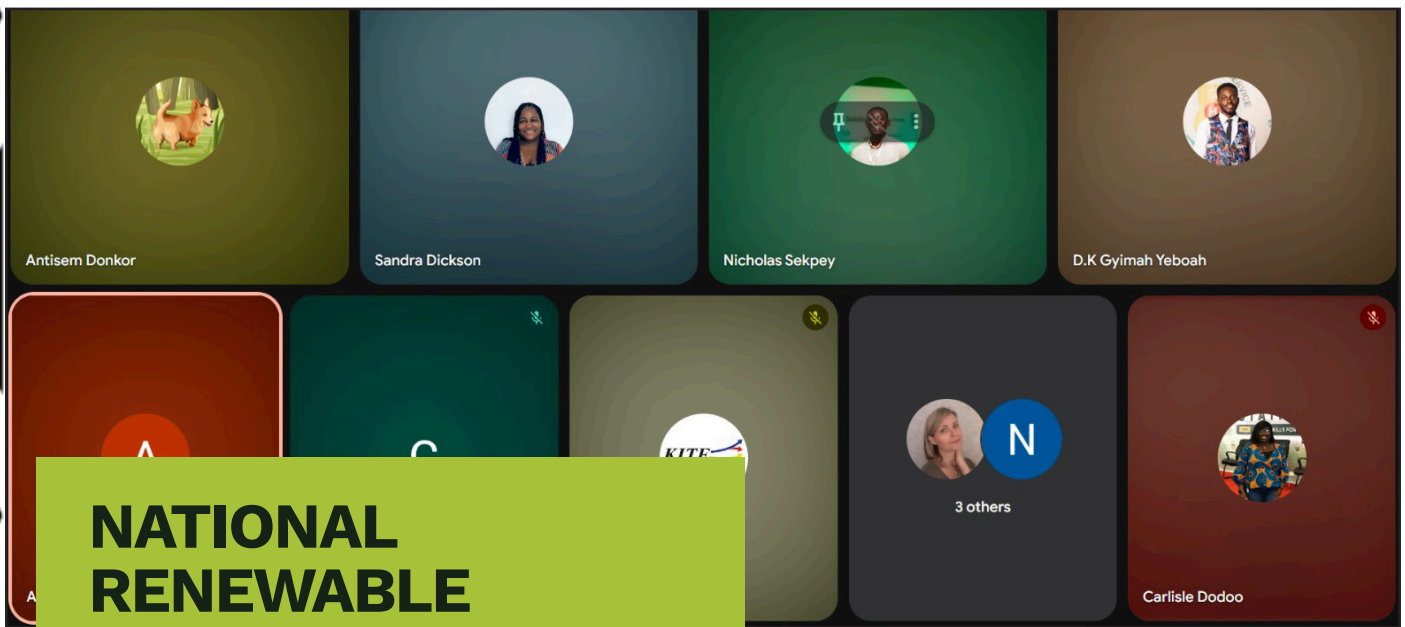
Media



Advocacy



Campaign



NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY FINANCE DIALOGUE

The National Renewable Energy Finance Dialogue brought together stakeholders from policy, finance, the private sector, and development organisations to address the financing barriers affecting decentralized renewable energy systems in Ghana, particularly in rural communities. The discussion focused on moving beyond general conversations on energy access toward practical ways of financing energy systems that are affordable, reliable, and capable of improving livelihoods.

Participants noted that although Ghana has achieved over 90% electricity access, many rural communities still face challenges related to affordability, reliability, and meaningful use of energy. High costs, weak rural demand data, limited credit histories, currency volatility, and low investor confidence continue to constrain the growth of renewable energy projects. Existing financing models, including pay-as-you-go, mini-grid financing, and blended finance, have supported some progress but remain insufficient to scale solutions widely.

The dialogue highlighted several opportunities for progress. These include linking energy access to productive uses such as agriculture and small enterprises, expanding blended finance, leveraging carbon finance, and adopting results-based financing. Participants also stressed the urgent need to operationalize a well-capitalized renewable energy financing facility in Ghana. The session concluded with a shared commitment to stronger collaboration, improved project design, and practical action to expand clean, reliable, and inclusive energy access across rural Ghana.



COMMEMORATED THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS WITH A VIDEO DOCUMENTARY.

In commemoration of the International Day of Forests, the Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC) organized a field visit and documentary initiative at the Chenku Waterfalls and its surrounding forest landscape. The activity formed part of AERC's broader commitment to environmental education, biodiversity conservation, and community-centered climate action. The visit provided an opportunity for the team to explore the ecological significance of the forest ecosystem, observe the relationship between the natural environment and local livelihoods, and document the importance of preserving Ghana's remaining forest resources.

Through this initiative, AERC sought to raise awareness on the critical role forests play in sustaining water bodies, regulating climate, conserving biodiversity, and supporting community wellbeing. As part of the engagement, AERC interacted with several local residents and community members living around the Tsenku forest area.

Discussions focused on traditional and community-based approaches to forest preservation, the environmental and cultural value of the forest, and the responsibility of current generations to protect these natural resources for the future. Community members shared insights on how the forest contributes to rainfall patterns, fresh air, medicinal plants, tourism opportunities, and local economic activities.

The conversations also highlighted growing concerns about environmental degradation, unsustainable human activities, and the need for stronger awareness and collective action to safeguard forest ecosystems. These interactions created a platform for knowledge exchange between the community and the AERC team while amplifying local voices on environmental stewardship.



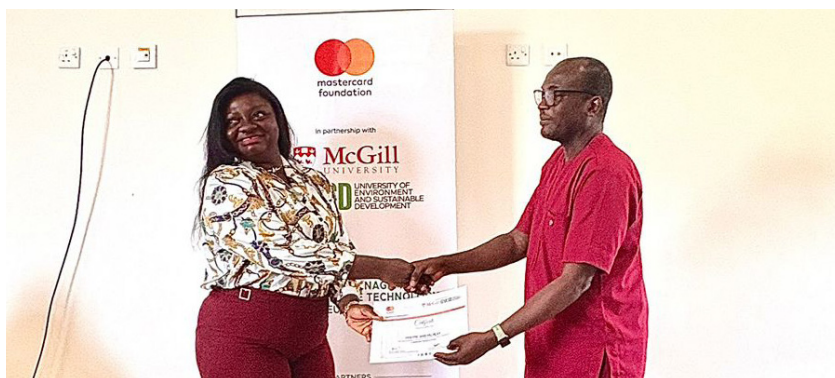
Documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8BHVJlYTI>





COMPOST PRODUCTION TRAINING ORGANISED BY THE MASTERCARD FOUNDATION.

We had a team member partake in a compost training production training organised by the Mastercard Foundation, in partnership with McGill University and the University of Environment and Sustainable Development. This training offered a practical and insightful introduction to sustainable waste management and its role in building resilient communities. The training provided a hands-on walkthrough of the composting process, from waste segregation to layering organic materials, moisture regulation, and aeration techniques. Beyond the technical skills, the programme highlighted the broader community impact of composting. It positioned composting as a tool for driving behavioural change, reducing landfill pressure, and creating green livelihood opportunities, especially for young people and women.



ARTICLE FEATURED

THE MIRROR NOW
Online
Visit www.greppr.com.gh

The Mirror
Saturday, April 18, 2026

11

Nature is Africa's most powerful climate solution

By Sandra Dickson

CLIMATE change is no longer a distant problem for Africa. It is a daily reality. Across the continent, communities are already experiencing its effects, from prolonged and extreme droughts affecting farmers, to floods displacing families, to rising temperatures making cities hotter and more difficult to live in.

In Ghana, coastal communities are losing land to erosion, floods continue to affect parts of Accra every year, and illegal mining is destroying forests and polluting rivers that communities depend on for their livelihoods.

These environmental disruptions are not just ecological problems. They are economic, social, and development challenges that affect livelihoods, food security, water availability, health, jobs and overall living standards.

For many years, climate solutions have focused mainly on technology, energy transition, and large infrastructure. While these are important, one of the most powerful and cost-effective solutions have been in front of us all along. Nature itself. Forests, wetlands, mangroves, grasslands, and farmlands are not just landscapes. They are natural systems that can absorb carbon, reduce flooding, protect coastlines, improve food production, and support livelihoods. To wit, nature is its own 'shock absorber'.

This is where Nature-based solutions (NbS) come in. Nature-based solutions are actions that protect, restore, and sustainably manage ecosystems in ways that address environmental, social, and economic challenges simultaneously.

In simple terms, nature-based solutions use nature to solve societal problems. They include restoring mangroves to protect coastal communities, planting trees and practicing agroforestry to improve soil and increase farmer incomes, restoring wetlands to prevent floods, and creating urban green spaces to reduce heat in cities.

The growing interest in NbS is backed by science and global interest and resolve to deal with climate and its related issues. Research over the past decade shows that protecting and restoring ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, mangroves, and grasslands can play a major role in addressing climate change while also supporting livelihoods and biodiversity. Studies show that NbS could provide about thirty to forty percent of the climate mitigation needed by 2030. This means that nature can remove and store a significant amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere if ecosystems are properly protected and restored.

Different ecosystems store different amounts of carbon. Forests are among the most important carbon sinks, especially tropical forests across Africa. Wetlands and peatlands store even more carbon, particularly in their soils. Mangroves are also among the most carbon-rich ecosystems in the world and are especially important for coastal countries, as they both store carbon and protect shorelines from erosion and storm surges.

Beyond climate mitigation, NbS also play a major role in climate adaptation. Restoring wetlands can reduce flooding by absorbing excess water during heavy rains. Planting trees and increasing urban green spaces can reduce temperatures in cities and improve air quality. Agroforestry improves soil fertility, increases crop yields, and helps farmers cope with drought and changing rainfall patterns. In many African countries, farmers who practice agroforestry benefit not only from crops but also from fruits, fodder, and firewood, which improves household income and resilience during difficult seasons.

Across Africa, nature-based solutions are already being implemented, often driven by communities, governments, and development organisations. These approaches are restoring degraded land, improving food security, creating jobs, and building resilience to climate change. The continent holds enormous potential for scaling NbS, given its vast landscapes, rich biodiversity, and dependence on natural resources. Agroforestry, land restoration, mangrove restoration, and sustainable agriculture remain a few among the many viable methodologies and practices which are already transforming communities across the continent.

These solutions not only address climate change, but also poverty, unemployment, and food security. Restoration projects create jobs in tree planting, nursery development, mangrove restoration, and land management. At a time when many African countries are facing youth unemployment challenges, NbS offer a pathway to green jobs and inclusive economic growth.

For Ghana, NbS are not just environmental projects. They are practical solutions to some of the country's most pressing development challenges. Coastal erosion is already affecting communities such as Keta, Ada, and parts of the Western Region, where the sea continues to destroy homes, roads, and livelihoods. While sea defense walls are important, they are often very expensive and not always sustainable on their own. Restoring mangroves and coastal vegetation, as well as stabilising sand dunes, often comes as a more nature-friendly techniques that can help reduce wave energy, stabilise the shoreline, and protect coastal communities.

Flooding is another major challenge, especially in Accra and other rapidly growing urban areas. Many wetlands that previously absorbed excess rainwater have been destroyed due to construction and urban expansion. Restoring wetlands and protecting urban green spaces can help absorb floodwaters, reduce runoff, and lower the risk of flooding. Urban trees and green spaces can also help reduce temperatures in cities, making urban areas more livable as temperatures continue to rise.

Deforestation and land degradation remain serious concerns in Ghana, driven by logging, agricultural expansion, and illegal mining activities.

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Nature-based solutions such as reforestation, landscape restoration, and agroforestry can help restore degraded lands, improve soil fertility, and support livelihoods. Illegal mining has destroyed large areas of forest and polluted many rivers in Ghana. Restoration efforts, including tree planting and wetland rehabilitation, are essential to recovering ecosystems and livelihoods.

Nature-based solutions also present an opportunity for job creation in Ghana. Restoration efforts require labour for seedling production, tree planting, mangrove restoration, ecosystem monitoring, and land management.

However, it is important to be clear that nature-based solutions are not a magical solution to the climate crisis. It is a deliberate decision that follows standard evidence that is beneficial to both man and the earth we inhabit. These standards provide clarity, precision and greater confidence in these nature contracts without which NbS may remain a general concept with marginal impact. Nature-based solutions must be implemented together with other climate actions such as reducing fossil fuel use, investing in renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency. The most effective climate strategy is one that combines clean energy with ecosystem protection and restoration.

As Africa and Ghana continue to experience the impacts of climate change, the need for practical, affordable, scalable and effective solutions becomes more urgent. Nature-based solutions offer an opportunity to address climate change while also tackling some of the continent's most pressing socioeconomic challenges.

The climate conversation in Africa must shift from seeing nature as something to exploit to recognizing it as essential infrastructure. Natural systems that protect communities, support economies, and build resilience to climate change. Just as countries invest in roads, bridges, and buildings, there is a need to invest in forests, wetlands, mangroves, and sustainable landscapes.

Nature-based solutions will not solve the climate crisis alone, but without them, it will be impossible to solve it. Investing in nature is not a luxury. It is a necessity for building a climate-resilient future for Ghana and the African continent.

References:
African Development Bank, 2022. *Africa Climate Change and Green Growth Framework*.
Environmental Protection Agency Ghana, 2021. *Ghana National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan*.



AERC Ghana's Nature-Based Solutions Lead was featured in The Mirror Newspaper with an article highlighting nature-based solutions as one of Africa's strongest responses to climate change. The article emphasised the importance of protecting forests, wetlands, and mangroves, while promoting agroforestry as a practical pathway to reduce floods, heat, erosion, and pollution. It further noted that investing in ecosystem restoration can help store carbon, improve livelihoods, create green jobs, and strengthen community resilience. For Ghana and Africa, the message is clear: nature-based solutions must be prioritised alongside clean energy and sustainable development.



ARTICLE: WASTE PICKERS

Link: <https://aercghana.org/blog-grid-2/>



● March 17, 2026

As Ghana and other African countries pursue cleaner cities, circular economies, and more sustainable urban development, one truth must remain central: waste pickers are not peripheral actors in the waste sector; they are essential to it. Across cities and metropolitan areas, waste pickers recover recyclable materials, reduce the volume of waste sent to dumpsites and landfills, support local economies, and provide an environmental service that is too often overlooked. Long before recycling, climate action, and resource recovery became dominant policy conversations, waste pickers were already doing this work under difficult and often dangerous conditions.

As part of AERC Ghana's Waste Pickers' Rights campaign, we published an article calling for the recognition, inclusion, and protection of informal waste pickers, whose work helps keep communities clean, recover recyclable materials, reduce pressure on waste systems, and support climate action through circular waste practices. The article highlights the need to value waste pickers as essential environmental workers and include them in Ghana's efforts toward cleaner, fairer, and more sustainable communities.

Evidence from global and developing-country contexts makes their importance impossible to ignore. Waste pickers represent about 1 per cent of the urban workforce globally, amounting to between 15 and 20 million people worldwide. In low-income countries, they commonly collect between 50 and 100 per cent of city waste at no direct cost to municipalities. Their contribution goes far beyond collection alone. Waste pickers help reduce pressure on overstretched public waste systems, recover valuable materials for recycling, cut transport and landfill burdens, support livelihoods for poor households, and contribute directly to climate change mitigation by diverting waste from disposal and keeping materials in circulation.

Yet despite these contributions, waste pickers remain among the most vulnerable and excluded workers in the urban economy. Many operate without protective equipment, stable income, legal recognition, or access to social protection. They are often exposed to contaminated waste, hazardous working environments, disease, exploitation by middlemen, and public stigma. **Women waste pickers face ev**

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

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Did You KNOW ?



Dignity, recognition, and fair pay are basic rights for **waste pickers.**

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Did You KNOW ?



Without **waste pickers**, recycling systems across Africa would collapse.

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Did You KNOW ?



Globally, about **20 million people** depend on **waste picking** for their livelihoods, and a large share live in developing regions including Africa.



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Did You KNOW ?



Waste pickers are environmental workers. They recover recyclable materials that would otherwise end up in **landfills or oceans.**

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As part of our Waste Pickers' Rights social media campaign, AERC Ghana used digital platforms to raise awareness about the vital role informal waste pickers play in building cleaner and more sustainable communities. The campaign highlighted their contribution to waste recovery, recycling, climate action, and public health, while calling for greater recognition, dignity, protection, and inclusion in waste management planning. Through this campaign, we aimed to shift public perception and remind communities and decision-makers that waste pickers are not invisible workers, but essential partners in Ghana's journey toward a fairer and more circular waste economy.

MOVING FORWARD

AERC remains committed to advancing climate resilience through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and community-centered action. As we move into the next quarter, we continue to build partnerships that transform environmental challenges into opportunities for sustainable development.



*Alliance for Empowering
Rural Communities*

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