

ECA, Government of Ethiopia launch Decade of Action with tree planting, green jobs, livelihoods and health at the center

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Addis Ababa, 13 August 2020 (ECA)
- The Economic Commission for Africa and the Government of Ethiopia signed an MoU, Thursday, to kick off a four-year USD3.6 million project on nature-based solutions for water resources infrastructure and community resilience in Ethiopia. The programme was launched through extensive tree planting efforts carried out in four regions over the last week in Amhara, Oromia and Addis Ababa; and later in Afar, where activities have been postponed due to flooding. According to the MoU, the collaboration is conceived as a tangible step forward towards the Decade of Action, by supporting the Government of Ethiopia to invest in nature-based solutions to tackle climate change and foster a ‘Green Recovery’.



The project takes off against the backdrop of African countries losing 3-5% of their GDP on climate change and access to clean energy challenges that have a tragic gender dimension; the majority of the over 3 million people who die from indoor air pollution due to inefficient cooking practices are women in Africa. The initiative aims to stimulate green jobs, improve community livelihoods, enhance the health of rural women and girls, and build climate resilience through nature-based solutions to deforestation and ecosystem degradation.

Speaking at the kick-off event in Addis Ababa, Economic Commission for Africa’s Executive Secretary, Vera Songwe said, “Nature-based solutions for climate action create jobs and contribute to the achievement of the Decade of Action. Today, we begin a journey of hope, of economic development and of better health for women in Ethiopia.”

Ms. Songwe lauded Ethiopia's Green Legacy initiative, launched last year by Ethiopia's Prime Minister Aby Ahmed, which aims to contribute to job creation and productivity. Through the collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia on the nature-based solutions for water resources infrastructure and community resilience, ECA will add the existing efforts by contributing to the creation of 1500 jobs and improving the livelihoods of about 150,000 households through new streams of employment and wealth creation.

"We are doing more than planting trees. We will support communities to look after the trees to maturity, and to manage them for their own benefit as well as to ensure ecosystem integrity," she said.

For his part, Ethiopia's Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy, Seleshi Bekele thanked the ECA for mobilizing support for the project from Sweden under the SIDA-funded ECA programme, Delivering Climate Resilient Development Policies in Africa. He also updated the event on the country's Green Legacy initiative indicating that it is on course "to plant 20 billion trees in 4 years."

"Last year we targeted 4 billion and achieved 4.7 billion, with a record planting per day of 353 million seedlings, said Minister Seleshi.

The Green Legacy initiative is ambitious, he said stressing that it aims to reduce the impact of climate change, transform Ethiopia's relationship to nature to safeguard the ecosystems and provide job opportunities and diversification of income and increase labour productivity.

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