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EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE NATURAL RESOURCES

Empowering Communities to Effectively Manage Natural Resources

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Forest Okyeman

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Okyeman Project, with funding from the UN Human Security Trust Fund.

At the heart of the FOREST Okyeman Project is the Atiwa West Community Resource Management Area (CREMA), an arrangement where eight communities are working to co-manage their natural resources, in partnership with the government.

"I've seen the impact of deforestation in our communities. Through the CREMA, we can change this. Our voices matter, and together, we can ensure a better future for our children", noted Narkie Nancy, an elected women representative of Akyem Akropong of the Atiwa West CREMA in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

The landscape has witnessed increased deforestation and land degradation through bad agricultural practices and illegal mining. The Okyeman Environment Foundation (OEF) led by the King, Osagyefo Amoatia Ofori Panin has committed to safeguarding the future of specific forests and addressing the factors contributing to environmental degradation, particularly the overexploitation of natural resources. The Foundation (OEF) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), A Rocha Ghana, and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission in Ghana, are empowering these communities to effectively manage their natural resources through the CREMA arrangement.

The CREMA model is one of the decentralized natural resource management methods developed by the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission of Ghana to empower and give greater opportunities for communities to manage their natural resources. It signals a shift towards including everyone in making decisions that protect natural resources. In this regard, under the Forest Okyeman project, a step was taken to elect leaders within the eight selected CREMA communities in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. This election marked a move towards a structured governance method, with community members choosing representatives to guide the CREMA and uphold sustainable resource management practices.

"Being elected as a youth representative is a responsibility I take seriously. We, the young generation, have a vital role in preserving our forests. Together with others in the committee, we aim to drive positive change and create a sustainable legacy for the Atiwa West CREMA", stated Augustine Yeboah Youth Representative, Banso Atiwa West CREMA, Eastern Region Ghana.

Through a united effort, various stakeholders pledged support to the elected leaders, starting a new era of shared responsibility in resource management. The chosen officials, who will form the CREMA Executive Committee, now have the task of balancing conservation efforts with community growth.



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recognize and foster local community participation and responsibility in the conservation of natural resources.



Augustine Yeboah Youth Representative, Banso Atiwa West
CREMA, Eastern Region Ghana.

@Louisa Antwi/ UNDPGhana



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Narkie Nancy, an elected women representative of Akyem Akropong of the Atiwa West CREMA in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

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