



# Political Manifestos:

## They have missed the Green Link

### Background

**T**he alarm bells keep sounding about the climate, biodiversity, and environmental crises. Urgent action to reverse them is needed now to secure real poverty reduction and a future for Ghana's youth. A government that is forward thinking by applying sustainable solutions and green innovations to the many challenges facing Ghana is one that commits to poverty reduction not only for today but for tomorrow too. As Professor Kwabena Frimpong-Boateng, Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI), recently pointed out, "We are completely dependent on a healthy and vibrant ecosystem for our health, water, food, medicines, clothes, fuel, shelter and energy. It, therefore, becomes a crucial responsibility not to damage it with activities including land degradation, pollution and deforestation". The recently held 75th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations has reiterated the urgency to demonstrate leadership and commitment to improve our relationship with nature, addressing the causes of change, and ensuring that biodiversity and the contributions it provides to all people are at the heart of sustainable development and the fight against climate change.

Ghana has, over the years, made many policies and strate-

gies on forests, agriculture, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity, and sustainable development, as well as the more regular short-term development agendas. These should inform political manifestos on key topics alongside the parties' innovative new ideas for solving Ghana's challenges.

This document presents an assessment of the manifesto pledges of the two leading political parties – the New Patri-



otic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) – for their commitments to a green and sustainable Ghana that promotes local poverty reduction alongside protecting biodiversity and contributes towards fulfilling the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).. We have assessed them under the topics of forests and wildlife, mining and the environment, climate change, ecological agriculture, green development and circular economy, Nature-Based Solutions, and COVID-19 and nature, to assess the parties' commitments towards them.

Ghana has a wealth of opportunities for innovative green development coupled with a growing sector of youth committed to securing a green future for Ghana. They have the vision, talents, and innovations together with the burning desire to accomplish it. They are worried about their future, and it is understandable. The U.N. just announced the world has missed every single biodiversity target it set for itself 10 years ago. Besides the biodiversity crisis, real action on climate change is limited, threatening the Paris Agreement and the targets each nation set for themselves. Plastic waste piles up relentlessly, with only small actions to address it. Food production still relies on outdated inputs and technologies that damage natural resources and people's health, even though a diversity of beneficial alternatives exist. As the majority of Ghana's poor people live in rural agricultural and forest landscapes, ensuring that the resources they depend on are nurtured and not damaged is also critical to their poverty reduction. As the Prof rightly points out, we are completely dependent on a healthy ecosystem and we should not do anything to damage it.

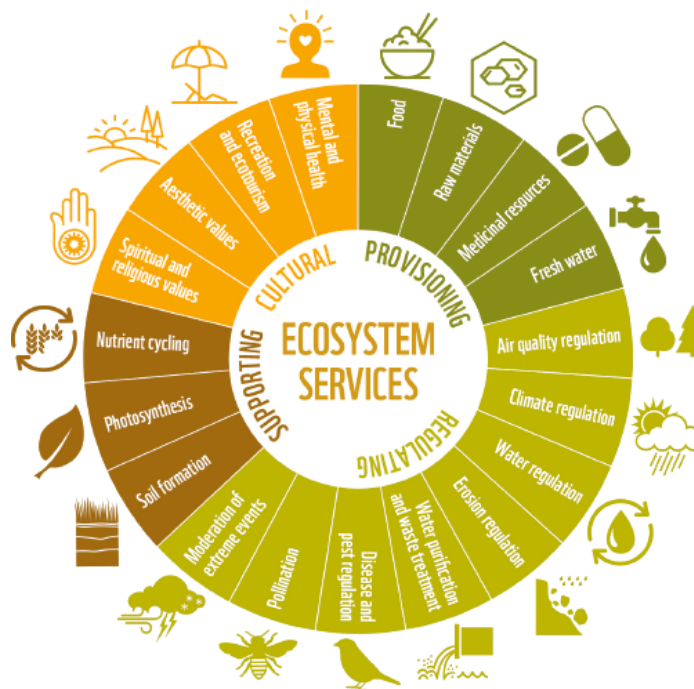
## Overall Assessment

Overall, the assessment showed little attention has been paid by either party to securing forest and nature protection, green development options, circular economy, or Nature-based Solutions as answers to Ghana's challenges. It is generally the same exploitative and extractive systems that have caused the existing environmental and natural resource problems.

Assessment of the NPP manifesto has been a challenge due to its lack of detail on what it intends to do over the next four years if chosen to lead Ghana again. Part 1, which is almost two-thirds of the entire manifesto, focuses on the government's 2016 promises and the achievements made since then, and it is not clear which of these activities and programmes would be continued. Parts 2 and 3 are on COVID, with some activities for post-COVID recovery. Part 4 (p.151) 'Beyond 2020' and Part 5 (p.169) 'Accelerating Growth and Transformation', which together make up 34 pages, are the only sections to detail government's plans for the next 4 years. Key natural resource sectors are either not included, such as forests, or given scant attention, such as agriculture. Assessment of the NDC manifesto has been more straight forward because it focuses entirely on the future so there are no assumptions as to what may or may not be done.

To underscore the urgency with which Ghana must change track and follow the green pathway in future development activities, the World Bank recently published its "Ghana Country Environmental Analysis" that estimated the huge cost of environmental degradation to Ghanaian society to be 10% of Ghana's GDP in 2017, or US\$ 6.3 billion. Continu-

ing to promote development that causes such a huge burden to ordinary Ghanaians is inimical to socially responsible and sustainable development.



## Assessment by Sector

### Protecting Forests, Wildlife and Biodiversity

The NDC manifesto and the NPP's 2016 manifesto promises include the usual commitments of forest restoration, enrichment planting, afforestation by the youth, buffer zone planting around water bodies, and plantation development. To be clear and as we have stated before many times, plantations are not natural forests. They are usually one species and are also short term as they are grown solely for harvest.

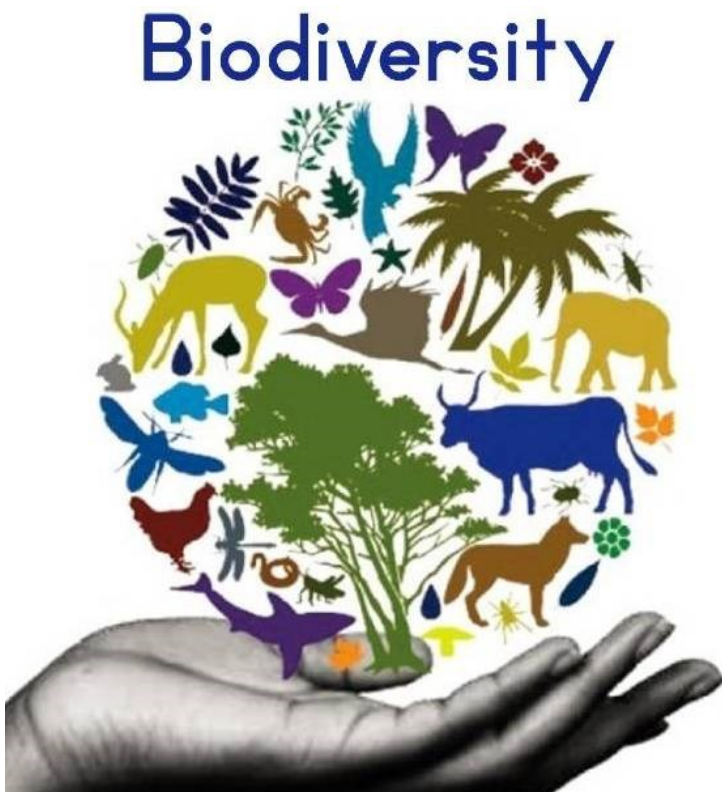
To maximise potential benefits, these projects should ensure they move away from mono-culture plantations and focus on restorations actions that integrate a diversity of indigenous tree species to support biodiversity and wildlife habitats. Tree plantations can help take pressure off Ghana's remaining natural forests, and support climate change adaptation and mitigation, but they can never replace natural forests, which must be protected from further exploitation.

The NDC manifesto also commits to reducing deforestation and degradation, but no targets for how much, and also to the maintenance of healthy and resilient forests for wildlife habitats (the only mention of wildlife), carbon sequestration, and recreation. It is good to see its promise to increase patrolling and law enforcement in critical forest areas supported by improved staffing and logistics. This is critical to help control the increasing threat of illegal logging and other wildlife crimes.

The NPP manifesto does not mention forests in the post-2020 promises, and wildlife is not mentioned anywhere in the manifesto. Biodiversity is mentioned once as a 2016 promise with its achievement being a World Bank-funded forest improvement project. It is also unclear which forest activities from the 'highlights' section might be continued. Several Community Resource Management Areas (CREMA) have been created and sacred groves brought under forest management plans but, as there were no targets. These activities go some way towards government's 2016 promise to extend forest conservation areas, but there is no mention of protecting existing forest reserves, or setting aside refuge areas for threatened, endemic, and rare species, activities that are both identified under 'protected areas' in the government's Agenda for Jobs (2017-2024).

For the government's Clean Rivers Programme, the manifesto states 9 million trees have been planted along rivers, which is good progress since the 2020 budget statement that reported only 65,100 trees had been planted for water course buffers.

Ghana's next government must commit to protecting the



country's remaining natural forests. More than 2 million people rely on them for subsistence and livelihoods, but successive governments seem only to value the forests for resource extraction and short-term gain. Because of this, the World Bank is concerned that Ghana's macroeconomic

volatility associated with the country's increasing natural resource dependency is taking a toll on growth. This dependence on sustained and destructive natural resource exploitation will also increase the poverty of Ghana's poorest by taking away their means of subsistence and livelihoods.

Tree planting or even better landscape restoration provides a simple Nature based Solution for many of Ghana's challenges and the country can do so much more. Ethiopia has shown strong leadership by planting 5.5 billion trees since the start of the Great Green Wall initiative 10 years ago that aims to stop the southward spread of desertification. Ghana can also benefit from its own green wall of indigenous and crop trees to stop her own advancing desertification. With the many diverse benefits tree planting has for communities, wildlife, biodiversity and local and national economies, there should be much greater emphasis on it and much larger targets.

#### **Other critical issues overlooked by the manifestos:**

- Illegal hardwood (Including rosewood and shea trees) felling and trade is not mentioned by either party, nor illegal trapping and trade of other wildlife species. The NDC says it will establish a National Mining and Forestry Initiative to help tackle illegal logging and illegal mining, but the NPP manifesto makes no mention of illegal logging or illegal wildlife trade anywhere in the manifesto.
- Neither parties mention commitment to pass the Wildlife Resources Management Bill that will empower communi-

ties to support forest and wildlife protection for all the benefits they bring including ecotourism, and promote CREMA creation for communities.

- No targets on area of natural forest to be protected.
- No commitments for wildlife (mentioned once by NDC) or biodiversity (mentioned once by NPP in its 2016 promises)
- Limited commitment to deal with illegal logging and mining
- Lack of any mention of forests, wildlife and biodiversity in the NPP 'Beyond-2020' manifesto promises making it unclear if there are any plans for the sector.

Both manifestos have inconsistencies with Ghana's existing strategies and plans. The Ghana REDD+ Strategy (2016-2035), for instance, has plans to address unsustainable timber harvesting and to enforce timber compliance, but the manifestos do not mention controls on logging of any type. The manifestos commit to address existing forest damage, but with limited action to address on-going damage. So there is a vicious circle. There is consistency with REDD+ on plantation development in degraded forests, but while the REDD+ encourages use of indigenous species, the manifestos are silent on the intended tree species. Again we reiterate that monoculture tree plantations are not forests, and mixed indigenous species must be planted if they are to benefit beyond being a source of timber. Strengthening local management of natural resources is also a strategy for REDD+, and the NPP mentions CREMA as an ongoing program by the Forestry Commission



for more than 20 years now. The critical legal framework required to empower CREMAs to work effectively but none of the parties mentioned any commitment to pass the Wildlife Resource Management Bill, that has been in and out of Parliament for more than a decade now.

Consistency with Ghana's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) that guides Ghana's implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is also lacking. The mission of the NBSAP is "To take effective and urgent actions to minimize the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2030 ecosystems in Ghana are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing the country's variety of life, and contribute to human wellbeing, and poverty eradication". The mission fully recognizes the critical importance of ecosystem services that human and all other life on earth depend. However, we see no "urgent actions" in either manifesto to secure biodiversity, it is rather the opposite, yet by the end of the next government's term (2024) we will be almost half way to 2030.

## Mining and the Environment

For the mining sector, the NDC commits to support small mining operators and communities in various ways, for example to promote equipment sharing, to establish mini-processing plants, and to look at the potential for making abandoned large-scale mining concessions available for smaller scale operators. It would also support environmentally friendly mining activities at small, medium and community scales, and commits to ensure it is legal and properly regulated. It would also restore water bodies and reclaim

mining degraded lands. If small and medium scale miners can really be supported to use environmentally friendly mining practices and for this to be enforced, and for the landscape to be restored and made safe after mining, then it can benefit communities and Ghana. But we remain sceptical; successive governments including the present one have tried, but enforcement is always lacking so any progress is always reversed. Small scale mining is not mentioned in the NPP's 2020 commitments, so it is not clear what they would do. Its 2016 promises and achievements include GALAMSTOP, regularising and training galamsey operators in sustainable mining, and providing community min-



ing concessions under its apparently 'tightly regulated' Community Mining Programme. But evidence from communities living in and around the forests and alongside water bodies where galamsey is rife shows any progress made has already been reversed, and that community mining is far from being 'tightly regulated'. The forests are still being



destroyed and water bodies are still heavily polluted. The current government has also amended the Mining Act to increase penalties on illegal activities, but enforcement in Ghana remains a huge problem, especially when corruption in the sector is so rife.

For largescale mining, the NPP commits to complete fiscal reforms of the sector by enacting the Minerals Revenue Management Act, while the NDC manifesto promises to ensure mining communities receive the benefits they are due from mining companies including royalty payments, and will also review the Mineral Development Fund to ensure communities benefit fully from social responsibility agreements. Where they diverge noticeably is in the NPP's promise to "exempt prospecting and reconnaissance by mining firms from VAT and other taxes, to incentivise investment in exploration activities to delineate ore bodies as a means to ensure a pipeline of mining projects". This encouragement for environmentally damaging activities is inimical to Ghana's sustainable development, and suggests mining in Ghana would be locked into our development trajectory for the very long term, effectively spelling the end of Ghana's natural forests. Are these same tax breaks

given to green development initiatives? This is where Ghana should be focusing its support, towards innovations that use natural resources in a sustainable way while reducing poverty and contributing to the economy.

The NDC manifesto makes a welcomed promise by stating it will “ensure the sustainability of water sources by halting reckless projects like the proposed mining of the Atiwa Forest”. This has been a campaign demand of communities and civil society organisations for the past four years, and it will be a huge relief and benefit to millions of Ghanaians if the current threat to Atewa Forest from bauxite mining is removed.

### Climate Change

The lack of mainstreaming by either party of one of the world’s most urgent challenges – that of climate change and how Ghana, especially farmers can adapt to it – is very alarming. The NPP manifesto does not mention climate change adaptation or resilience even once, and only mentions climate change in terms of its 2016 promise to work with international partners to access part of the global fund for ‘climate change management’. The NDC manifesto does better: it recognises global warming and mentions climate change in terms of renewable climate-friendly energy, coastal protection against climate change impacts, building national resilience to climate change in the water and sanitation sector, supporting the Ghana Meteorological Agency to contribute to climate change adaptation, and also establish the Youth in Climate Change and Afforestation Programme. But this is still far from mainstreaming climate change throughout every sector that is

required to ensure Ghana is resilient to the impacts, and also fulfils Paris Agreement commitments. Action is need-



ed now; without it, the future for young Ghanaians is increasingly bleak. Ghana’s farmers are already experiencing climate change impacts. As the NPP manifesto admits, agriculture is a source of livelihood for around 60% of Ghana’s population – a very significant proportion – and they also ensure the nation’s food security and contribute to Ghana’s GDP, so why is climate change given so little attention?

Neither manifesto proposes any intervention aimed at con-

trolling and reducing vehicle-related air pollution, which has reached dangerously high levels in urban centres, contributing to climate change and damaging people’s health. The NPP has committed to relaunch the metro mass transport system throughout regional capitals, which will help, and is consistent with Ghana’s 2015 Intended Nationally Determined Contributions on mitigation, but much more must be done. Ghana needs properly planned and very efficient public transport systems that offer real and viable alternatives to private cars for people to use in their daily commutes and other activities. Ghana also needs frequent vehicle emissions testing and enforcement of laws to ensure emissions from cars, lorries, trotros and buses are properly controlled.

The very recent announcement by the NDC flagbearer John Dramani Mahama to build a 2000 megawatt coal power plant at Ekumfi Otum in the Central Region is completely contrary to Ghana’s commitments on the Paris Agreement. The previously planned coal power station for the Central Region had been dropped for precisely this reason. Besides its very damaging climate impacts, coal power is an outdated form of energy production and one that countries around the world are rapidly turning against in the bid to control global warming and climate change. It will be a big step backwards. Ghana has free energy from the sun and this must be the focus of Ghana’s future energy production.

The Ghana National Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2020 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy clearly recognise the huge challenge that climate change poses to Ghana and set out various strategies to-

wards mitigation and resilience building. But the manifestos do not even acknowledge how climate change is and will continue to undermine Ghana's poverty reduction,



food security and future sustainable development. Failure to climate proof all Ghana's development programmes will result in climate change reversing any gains made, as is already happening in some parts of the world. Whichever government is in power after 2020, should support ongoing National Adaptation Planning and the Nationally Determined Contributions being led by the EPA, not only in words, but also in progressive actions towards ensuring climate resilience for all Ghanaians not just an elite few.

### Ecological Agriculture

The NPP's beyond-2020 commitments pay very little attention to agriculture. The government's flagship programmes 'Planting for Food and Jobs' and 'Planting for Export and Rural Development' get small mentions as

does improved access to finance for farmers. There is focus on large-scale agriculture and private-sector investment, with limited attention to smallholder farmers who are the majority poor. The Greenhouse Villages would also be continued post-2020 but, due to the high production costs, these will be producing for top-end restaurants, supermarkets, and export rather than for local domestic markets. The NDC makes a wide variety of commitments to food security and export sectors, including improved infrastructure to access markets, restructuring of rural credit, a diversity of programmes focused on different crops (new crops, dairy, vegetables, poultry, cassava, grains/legumes, and tree crops) and sectors (land banks, youth in agriculture, and aquaculture) and cocoa sector strategic policies and interventions including social welfare and production interventions. Both parties commit to promote local rice and poultry for local consumption and to reduce imports of these products, which are positive from many reasons: they support smallholder farmers, they strengthen local and national economies, and they contribute to food security.

Neither manifesto shows any innovations that would support the transformative agriculture Ghana so urgently needs. Both promote the same outdated and resource-damaging strategies with a complete lack of recognition or support for sustainable systems such as agroecology, agroforestry, and conservation agriculture. These systems build farmers' self-reliance, and so reduce their dependence on external inputs. They offer the best available technologies to strengthen farm resilience to climate change and increase farm productivity by restoring and working with

nature and ecosystem services instead of damaging them. The FAO, IPBES, IUCN, CGIAR, HLPE on Food Security and Nutrition, UN, World Bank, and Ghana's own Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFA) and Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD) and others all promote agro-ecological techniques and Nature based Solutions for food security, poverty reduction and climate change resilience, as well as economic development. These systems also bring new opportunities for export, as consumers the world over are increasingly demanding food produced without chemicals out of their concerns for their health and for biodiversity. Despite their promotion by all these knowledgeable institutions, these solutions are completely ignored in the manifestos, favouring instead the old resource-destructive sys-



tems that give short term gain instead of long-term sustainability.

Government support for these systems would also ensure



consistency with the Ghana National Climate Change Master Plan Action Programmes for Implementation 2015-2020, which promotes sustainable land management including enhanced adoption of conservation agriculture and agroforestry, as one of the three activities under Programme 1.2 – Development and Promotion of Climate-resilient Cropping Systems. Yet neither the NPP nor NDC manifesto mentions these.

Both parties promote increased access to fertilisers and agrochemicals for farmers, even though these are damaging the natural resources they depend on for farm productivity. Excessive use of agrochemicals, for example, kills beneficial insects that prey on crop pests, and applications of chemicals spiral upwards as pests build up their resistance. In cocoa farming, excessive use of chemicals has killed the midges that pollinate cocoa, so now they are promoting hand pollination. A better solution would be to restore the ecosystems and conditions that will bring back the midges. Instead, the NDC promises free agrochemicals and other artificial agro-inputs to cocoa farmers, while the NPP gave increased subsidies for fertilisers and agrochemicals, and has promised increased supply of inputs for Beyond 2020. These will not solve the farmers' problems, they will rather exacerbate them by destroying nature and natural services while farmers' dependence on chemicals increases and their self-reliance declines. Agroecology and Nature-based Solutions instead put the skills, capacities, and technologies into the hands of the smallholder farmers, reducing their dependence on outside support. They empower farmers with the confidence and abilities to experiment with different ways of overcoming challenges

using techniques that nurture and restore ecosystem services and the natural resources that farmers rely on. But it seems for many, this is difficult to grasp.

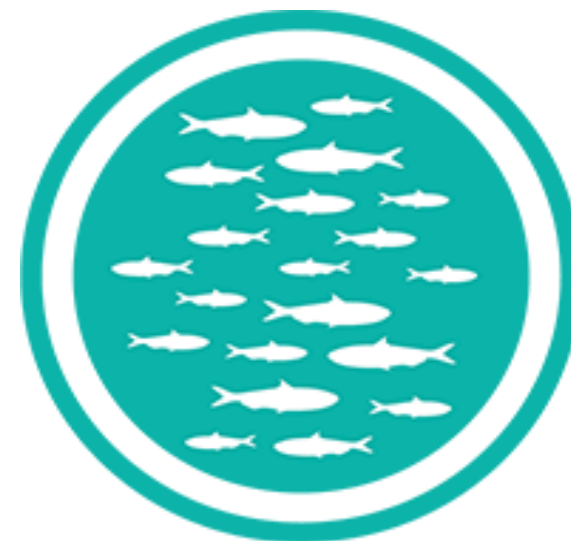
Both manifestos commit to increased access to 'improved' seeds. For seed development, working with farmers to improve their own seeds, selected and developed over the years to suit the local ecology, climate, and societies, is critical in supporting uptake of new varieties. Farmer seed systems are an essential component of agroecology, which relies on diversity at all levels (including crop genetic diversity), but there is no commitment for this. Instead support in the NPP 2016-2020 actions has been directed at private seed producers, which are unlikely to work with farmers to improve farmer-preferred seeds. Private companies also often patent their seeds and so do not support farmers' traditional seed saving systems. Privatisation of seed production in Ghana should be avoided at all cost, as it is an affront on food sovereignty.

## Fisheries

Ghana's fisheries sector continues to be exploited unsustainably, with the worst damage from large fishing trawlers, mostly Chinese, practicing pair trawling and transshipment that are both illegal. Fish catches by Ghana's own fishermen have been declining for years, and their livelihoods, incomes and food security are being negatively impacted because of that. The Ghana government and its agencies must properly enforce the laws to end these illegal activities. At the moment, Ghana is contributing to the world's failure to achieve target 4 of SDG 14 (Life below water) that intended to end overfishing, illegal, unreported

and unregulated fishing (IUU) and destructive fishing practices by 2020.

The NPP manifesto notes the government's achievement in supplying six patrol boats to enhance security along Ghana's territorial waters, and also achievements in observer missions and patrols as part of its promise to



“Enforce the fisheries management policies in the Fisheries Act of 2002 (Act 625) to stop pair trawling and other illegal fishing methods”. The NDC says it will “scientifically enhance the observer programme to properly administer the law on pair trawling and the Vessel Monitoring System”. But we expected much tougher commitments and actions from both parties towards dealing with the IUU fishing, especially by foreign boats because of the huge impact their illegal activities are having on the welfare, livelihoods, incomes, and food security of Ghana's

Circular Economy initiatives are also green development initiatives so we include them here. Although the term ‘circular economy’ is not mentioned in either manifesto, both have a few circular economy activities. The NDC focuses on the plastic waste problem by committing to establish plastic recycling factories that will also create jobs for youth, and a Plastic Waste Recycling Fund to support the initiatives. The NPP manifesto has nothing new for circular economy in its ‘Beyond 2020’ commitments, but previous manifesto promises were to establish recycling plants for industrial waste under its One District One Factory, and operationalising the E-Waste Program, which has so far designated the External Service Provider that would manage the Advance Recycle Eco Fee on all e-waste and would construct the state-of-the-art Recycling Facility at Agbogbloshie. The government also promised to build power plants that use combustible domestic and industrial waste to generate electricity, and for this it has signed a partnership with Germany for a solar and biomass plant at Atwiman. There are no further details but any burning of domestic and industrial waste should be with great caution as it causes very dangerous and toxic air pollution that can be carcinogenic and also cause lung and respiratory damage. The NDC manifesto makes a similar commitment to “transform waste into value to ensure a clean Ghana and create jobs by converting waste to energy”. The same caution should be taken.

## Nature-based Solutions

Nature-based Solutions, noted earlier as a key strategy being promoted by many national, international and global agricultural and development institutions for their contributions to building climate change resilience and mitigation, food security, disaster risk reduction, water security, reversing environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, as well as promoting economic and social development and job creation, are not mentioned in either manifesto. There are a few activities that are Nature-based Solutions, such as tree planting promised by both parties, and the NDC’s commitments to rainwater harvesting and to protecting Atewa Forest from bauxite mining to secure it clean water service provision. In these present times when solutions provided by ecosystems and nature are well recognised and widely promoted, we would have expected there to be far more emphasis on them.

## COVID-19 and Nature

There were already ample reasons why we should protect forests, biodiversity and nature. And now we have another reason: COVID-19. Its connections with environmental exploitation are strong. Deforestation forces wild animals out of their natural habitats and closer to people, creating greater opportunities for animal diseases to spread to hu-

mans. The same happens when wild animals are trapped, killed and consumed. Microbial pathogens such as HIV, Ebola, Zika, and many of the corona viruses have come

from wild animals. Research has linked 31% of outbreaks of new and emerging diseases such as Nipah virus, Zika, Ebola and Lyme Disease to deforestation. Biodiversity loss also has another role in the emergence of new diseases: when biodiversity declines, especially as a result of habitat loss, certain kinds of species



are more likely to disappear while other kinds of species thrive. The ones likely to thrive are the ones most likely to give us diseases. And when we need cures for new and existing diseases, biodiversity plays as essential role. Researchers are increasingly looking to nature for new medicines and treatments. An estimated 75,000 to 70,000 plant species are harvested for traditional or modern medicine and around 50% of modern drugs have been developed from natural products that are threatened by biodiversity loss. Not only are we creating perfect situations for viruses to jump species to humans and thrive, we are also destroying the forests and nature that are increasingly providing the cures.

The NDC manifesto acknowledges that the threat of virus-



own fisherfolks, and also on Ghana's GDP and national food security. The NDC manifesto also says the party will streamline fisheries policies and incentivize fishers for increased productivity, but the latter will be difficult if the fish are not there to be caught. To increase fish stocks, the NDC plans to support the creation of Marine Protected Areas as fish spawning and breeding areas, which will be a very positive initiative.

## Clean Water

Access to clean water is still a huge daily challenge for many Ghanaians, and the parties need to realise that the solution is not only in establishing new water supply systems but must also extend to protecting the water bodies that feed those water systems. If the water bodies are not secured, the water supply systems will soon run dry. The NDC intends to implement several interventions to protect water bodies including: planting trees to protect them and enhance water quality as part of its forest interventions; ensure restoration of water bodies as part of its mining interventions; and enforce the Water Buffer Policy to reduce pollution of water bodies, and halt the planned baux-



ite mining in Atewa Forest to protect its watershed services, both as part of its water and sanitation interventions. The NPP manifesto mentions only one intervention, which is a 2016 promise of a Clean Rivers Programme to plant trees along major water bodies. However, to protect water bodies with tree planting in one area while cutting the trees that protect another major water body serving 5 million people completely undermines the benefits of the first. Protecting water bodies from all destructive activities is critical if Ghana is to increase access to clean water for those who do not yet have it, and to maintain access to those who already enjoy it.

## Green Development and Circular Economy

Promoting and supporting innovative green businesses and products should be an exciting prospect for political parties when preparing their manifesto commitments but, surprisingly, there is no mention in the NPP's manifesto and only one mention in the NDC's to "support research Institutions and Universities to promote the development



of the blue and green economy". The NDC manifesto also commits to establish a Waste Management Fund "to address waste management and create green jobs as part of our response to the global climate change Agenda". Both manifestos commit to solar energy and other renewables. The NPP focuses on solar energy for all government and public buildings (2016 promise) as well as increasing the proportion of renewable energy in the national generation mix (2016). For Beyond-2020, it also commits to renewable energy under sections on 'energy and petroleum' and 'the cost of power' but no further details or targets are given. The NDC has a specific section on promoting renewable energy, including solar, wind and biomass, as 'a clean, climate-friendly electricity solution for households, remote communities and light industries' and promises to



surpass the 10% from renewable energy specified in the Renewable Energy Act. It sets out a list of actions it will undertake to achieve this, including incentivising solar panel manufacture in Ghana.

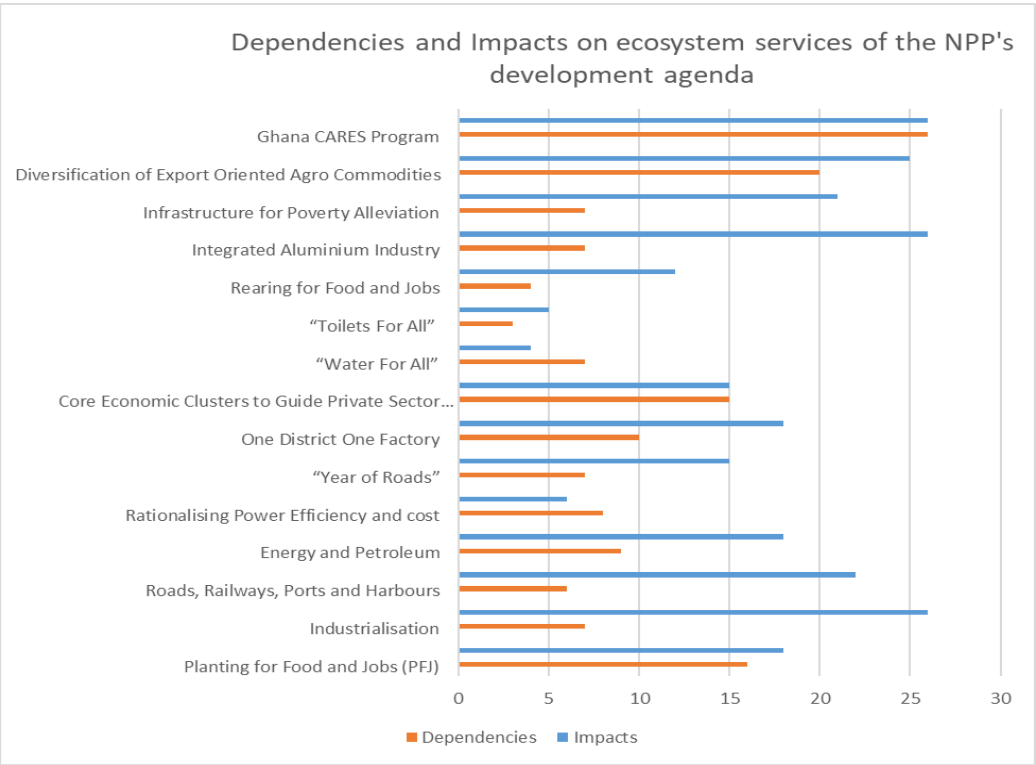
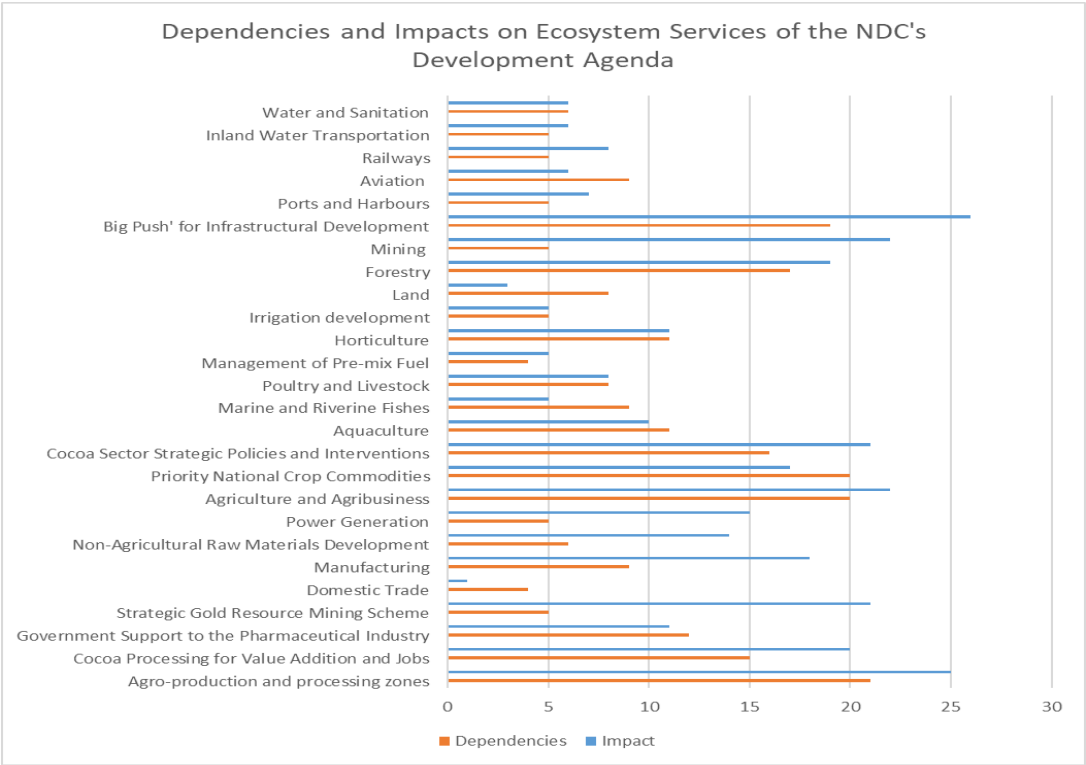
es has increased because of our development activities: “development has exposed us to more and more viruses as we, directly and indirectly, interfere with natural virus reservoirs ... We are destroying forests ... We are consuming animal and plant species that have adapted to living with dangerous viruses that can jump species ... [and] we have massively increased the opportunities for viruses to spread within our species”. This is acknowledgement that the way we exploit and damage nature has contributed to an increased virus threat. The NPP does not draw this link with nature, but sets out the impacts as well as what the government has already done and would do to mitigate the threat.

### Dependencies and Impact of Development

### Agenda on Ecosystem Services

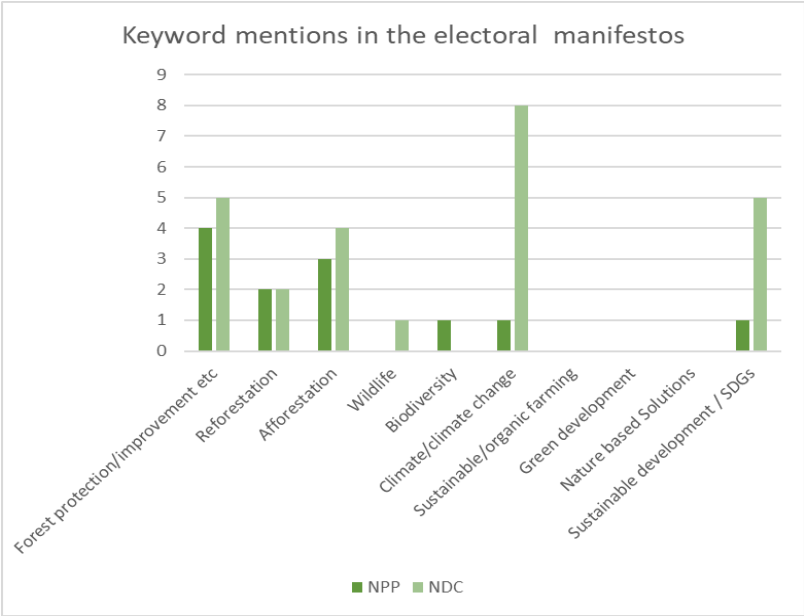
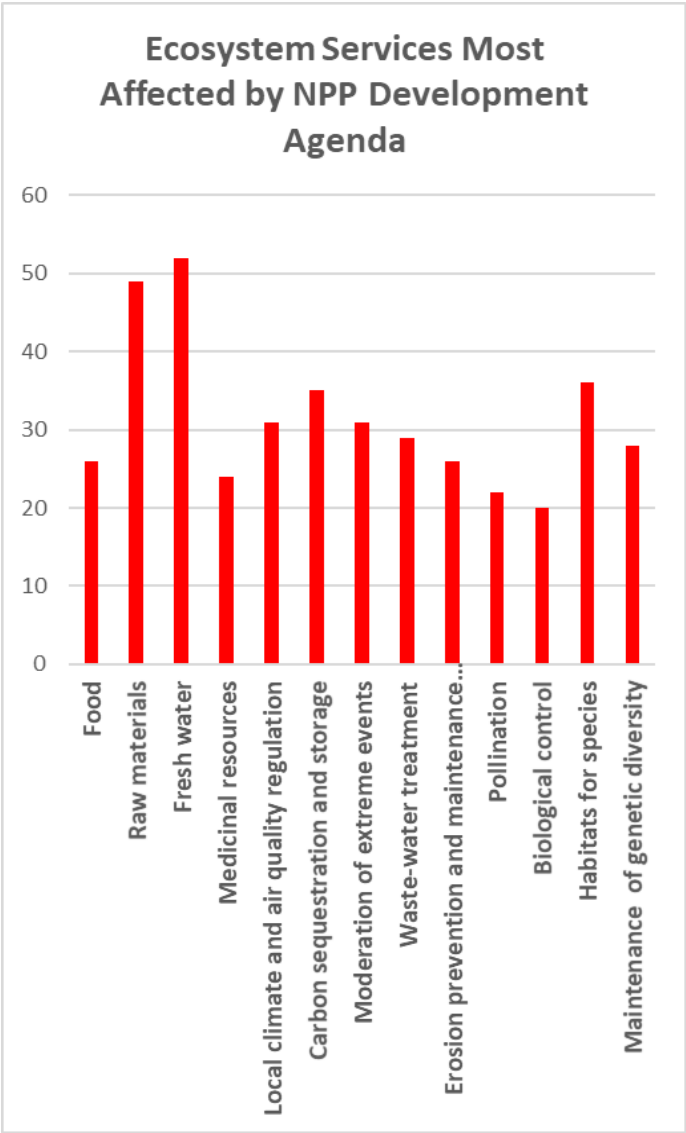
The graph of keywords (which includes the complete manifestos of both parties including NPP’s 2016 promises) illustrates the limited concern shown by either party towards securing the protection and sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services. Words related to forest protection, improvement, conservation and/or reduced deforestation were mentioned only four times in the NPP manifesto and five times by the NDC. This is surprising given the contribution that Ghana’s forests make to rural communities’ welfare, to ecosystem services, and to Ghana’s economic development. Reforestation and afforestation get only a few mentions, yet they are both important for reduc-

ing the pressures on Ghana’s remaining natural forests. Climate change is one of the world’s greatest challenges, yet the NPP manifesto mentions it only once while the NDC has eight mentions, but it needs to be mainstreamed throughout all interventions to ensure it does not undermine the sustainability of Ghana’s development projects. Techniques for sustainable farming (e.g. organic, agroecology) are not mentioned, neither are green development nor nature based solutions, even though opportunities they offer for job creation, waste minimization, innovation, and sustainable production are endless. Sustainable development and/or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are mentioned only once in the NPP manifesto and five times by the NDC, but again sustainability must be mainstreamed into all develop-



ment interventions to ensure they will last.

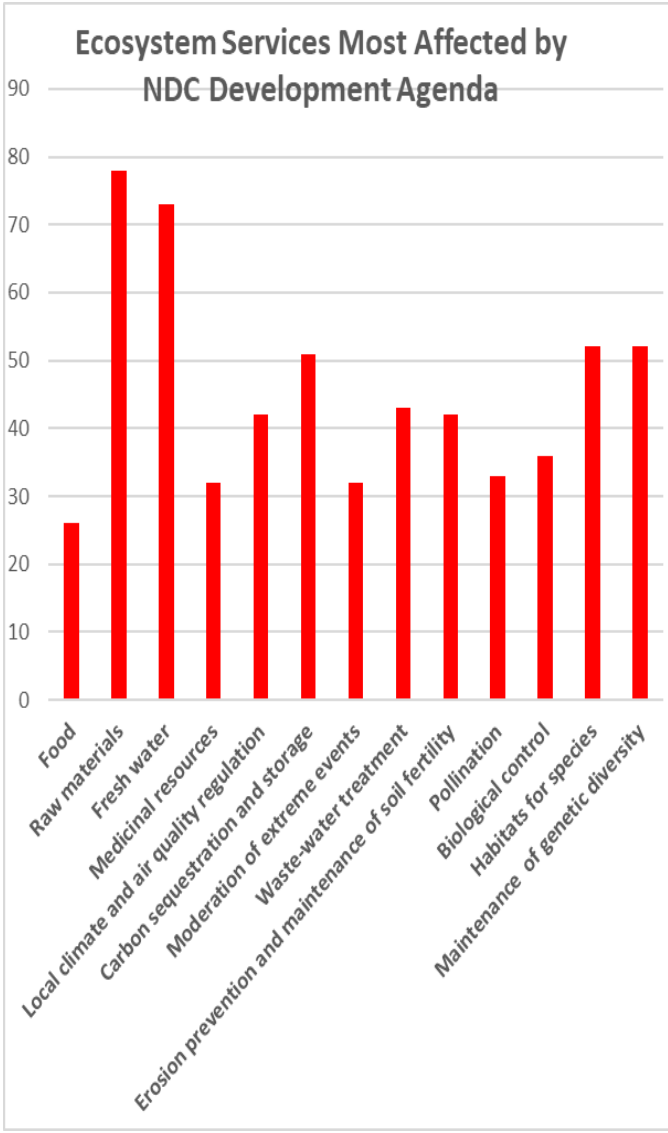
The graphs displaying the dependencies and impacts of the parties’ development agendas show that agricultural sector and related programmes are amongst the highest for both dependencies and impacts on natural resources and ecosystem services. This highlights the urgent need – as well as



the opportunities – for replacing conventional agriculture with ecological agriculture as this will ensure the resources and services it depends on are sustained and enhanced, while the high negative impacts are replaced with positive ones. The other sector that has very high damaging impacts is the extractives, including the integrated aluminum industry and gold mining. Ghana must stop mining and unsustainable timber extracting in existing natural forests, and accelerate investment and partnerships for off-reserve plantations development and landscape restoration initiatives. It is time for the country to move on from her excessive reliance on outdated resource extraction, and to look instead at promoting green development options that rely on sustainable use of renewable resources. This should also be the focus of Ghana’s industrialization sector, which is currently the other area with high negative impacts on natural resources and ecosystem services. Global diversification away from destructive ventures is increasing and Green financing instruments, such as Green

Bonds sustainable and supporting and people focused. Promoting green jobs through green growth will ensure Ghana’s development does not undermine the opportunities for her children, grandchildren and beyond to also fulfil their own needs and aspirations.

The two graphs illustrating the ecosystem services most



affected by the parties' development agendas show that raw materials and fresh water are the top two for both parties (NDC totals are higher because there were many more interventions in their manifesto). This is due to the heavy reliance on raw materials for interventions such as timber production and extractive industries that remain unsustainable, while activities that use existing products such as circular economy interventions are overlooked. Due to this high dependence on raw materials, it is critical the processes using them are either made sustainable or dropped, otherwise the interventions cannot last. Dependence and impacts on water are also very high, highlighting the urgent need for Ghana to protect her water bodies from pollution and other sources of damage. Habitats for species is the third most affected ecosystem service for both, largely due to the damaging impacts of development interventions on Ghana's remaining natural areas, and the continued emphasis on conventional agriculture instead of ecological agriculture that contributes to ecosystem services instead of damaging them. For the very same reasons, the ecosystem services of 'maintenance of genetic diversity', 'pollination', and

'biological control' are also highly affected. Carbon sequestration and storage also scores high for both parties, mainly due to over-dependence on Ghana's forests by several of their development interventions, most especially mining and timber production, but also largescale agriculture and cocoa production due to likely deforestation. These same interventions also affect ecosystem services of 'local climate and air quality regulation' and 'moderation of extreme events', as both are also tied to the capacity of forests to contribute to them.

### Conclusion

The assessment of the manifestos has shown the trajectory of the two leading parties remains the same, despite global calls to 'build back better' in the post-COVID era to come, and despite the many international frameworks signed and commitments made towards securing and sustaining natural resources and ecosystem services. The expectations were that the manifestos would promote inspirational plans that civil society, unemployed youth, rural communities and others so often excluded from any grassroots development benefits could really rally

behind. But once again, such inspiration is nowhere to be seen.

Regardless of which party leads Ghana from 2021, we urge you to look deeply at the impacts of your development agenda and to turn towards green sustainable activities that secure and use natural resources and ecosystems services in sustainable ways. Most especially we urge you to stop mining in the forests and instead to seek green development options that create rewarding sustainable jobs. These could be in sectors such as ecotourism and green enterprises that use the forests' natural resources for innovative sustainable products to replace polluting or damaging ones. Also a focus on circular economy activities that address the huge waste and pollution problems in Ghana is a critical need, alongside the roll-out of ecological agriculture to support rural communities in sustaining the resources they depend on whilst building climate resilience and fulfilling their crucial role in maintaining Ghana's food security.



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