Beat: News

GECCI Leads Youth Delegation at 10th Anniversary of the Great Green Wall

50 Million Date Palm Programme

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USPA NEWS - GECCI Leads Youth Delegation at 10th Anniversary of the Great Green Wall and Flag-Off of 50 Million Date Palm Programme

On July 31, 2025, the Federal Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with the National Agency for the Great Green Wall (NAGGW), commemorated Great Green Wall (GGW) Day and the 10th Anniversary of NAGGW** at the Government House Banquet Hall in Dutse, Jigawa State. The event marked a major milestone in Nigeria's efforts to combat desertification, land degradation, and drought across the Sahel.

Themed Sustaining the Momentum: Ten Years of NAGGW's Contributions to Environmental Sustainability"and sub-themed Planting Hope, Growing Impact,"the celebration also witnessed the official Flag-Off of the 50 Million Date Palm Programme.

In a powerful demonstration of youth leadership and civic participation, the **Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative (GECCI)** and the **GGW Youth Advisory Board**, led by **Abdulhamid Tahir Hamid**, mobilized a dynamic delegation of youth, women, and civil society leaders from Jigawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, and Katsina States.

The Director General and CEO of NAGGW, **Alhaji Saleh Abubakar, MFR**, was widely applauded for his unwavering leadership, along with the Local Organizing Committee and dedicated agency staff.

Representing the Hon. Minister of Environment, **Balarabe Abbas Lawal**, the **Permanent Secretary**, **Dr. Mahmoud Adam Kambari**, delivered a keynote address that reflected on NAGGW's decade-long achievements—especially in afforestation and reforestation, which have restored degraded lands, revitalized ecosystems, and enhanced community resilience.

He emphasized that the initiative has contributed significantly to **sustainable rural development**, with long-term environmental and economic benefits. Central to its success has been the **inclusive participation of local communities**, traditional institutions, and diverse stakeholders—fostering collective ownership and long-term commitment to environmental stewardship.

However, Minister Lawal acknowledged pressing challenges, including a significant drop in funding—from 15% to 5% of Ecological Fund allocations—alongside worsening insecurity and climate-related impacts. These issues, he stressed, demand innovative and sustained responses from all actors.

The event also welcomed key dignitaries, including **Dr. Dahir M. Hashim**, Kano State Commissioner for Environment and Climate Change, and **Amb. Usman Aliyu**, Director General of the Borno State GGW Project.

Special commendation was given to **Khadeejah Muhammad**, NAGGW Field Officer in Bauchi, for her exceptional support in driving youth-led environmental interventions.

Reaffirming its unwavering dedication to "planting hope and growing impact," GECCI pledged to intensify efforts in ecosystem restoration, climate advocacy, and sustainable development across the Sahel and beyond.

A highlight of the event was the unveiling of **NAGGW's new five-year strategic plan (2025–2029)**, which includes planting **50 million Date Palm (Phoenix dactylifera)** seedlings across **11 frontline states**. The first phase, beginning in 2025, involves acquiring and distributing **5 million seedlings**—a project that aligns with President **Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda** to foster sustainable livelihoods and economic empowerment.

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