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## Press Statement

### **EcoCare Ghana Calls on the Government of Ghana to Uphold its Commitment to Wildlife Conservation on World Wildlife Day 2025**

Accra, Ghana – March 3, 2025:

EcoCare Ghana urges the Government and other stakeholders to increase investment in Wildlife conservation and enhance the enforcement of the Wildlife Resources Management Act, 2023 (ACT 1115). As the world faces the 'Triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, it has become crucial for all stakeholders to play a role in conserving wildlife for human wellbeing. The theme for World Wildlife Day 2025: 'Wildlife conservation finance: Investing in people and planet': highlights the crucial role of sustainable investment in wildlife conservation as a means to safeguard the environment, livelihoods, and sustainable development.

Globally, about 1 million species are estimated to be threatened by extinction. Ghana is blessed with diverse landscapes with different flora and fauna, some of which are endemic to the country. These play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance, regulating climate, and supporting communities. However, deforestation and habitat destruction have placed immense pressure on Ghana's rich biodiversity, leading to a decline in species populations, including elephants, pangolins, and various endemic plants and birds. The loss of these species disrupts ecosystems and weakens the natural resilience of forests against climate change. According to Global Forest Watch, Ghana lost **over 1.41 million hectares of tree cover** between 2001 and 2021, with an increasing trend in primary forest degradation. These losses threaten essential ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, water regulation, and soil fertility, impacting both wildlife and local livelihoods.

Internationally, innovative financing measures have been put in place to support countries such as Ghana to address the challenge of biodiversity loss. These funding mechanisms for wildlife conservation include Global Biodiversity Framework fund (GBFF) from the Global Environment Fund (GEF), Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIO-FIN) from UNDP, the Global Wildlife Programme from the World Bank and carbon trading under the Paris Agreement. With these mechanism in place, state and non-state actors can access support to address biodiversity loss in the country.

## **A Call to Action for Wildlife Conservation and Ecotourism Investment**

EcoCare Ghana calls on the Government to:

1. **Strengthen wildlife protection and conservation laws** and enforce existing conservation policies under the Wildlife Resources Management Act, 2023 (ACT 1115)
2. **Fulfill commitments to biodiversity conservation** as outlined in international agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.
3. **Prioritize investment in ecotourism and community-led conservation** as sustainable alternatives to deforestation-driven industries. Ghana can generate revenue while preserving biodiversity by transforming areas such as the Atewa Forest into ecotourism parks.
4. **Encourage private sector participation** in sustainable conservation financing, ensuring businesses contribute to habitat restoration and wildlife protection.

One key overarching step from Government towards demonstrating these commitments will be to immediately suspend and subsequently terminate all logging and mining licenses in Globally Significant Biodiversity Areas (GSBAs) which were opened up for logging in 2024.

### **Call to Stakeholders in Protecting Ghana's Wildlife**

EcoCare Ghana urges civil society organizations, businesses, and international partners to support the government's conservation efforts. Investing in sustainable forestry, reforestation programs, and community-based wildlife conservation will help protect endangered species, secure ecosystem services, and improve the livelihoods of communities dependent on forest resources.

On this World Wildlife Day, we reaffirm our commitment to advocating for policies that protect Ghana's natural heritage. We call on all Ghanaians to support conservation efforts and demand accountability from leaders to ensure the survival of our nation's wildlife for future generations.

For further information please contact:

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