



Statement on World Environment Day, 2026

For Immediate Release

On **June 5, 2026**, ABANTU for Development joins the global community to mark **World Environment Day**, hosted in Baku, Azerbaijan this year under the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) theme: *"Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future"*.

This year's campaign calls for urgent climate action, a rapid transition to renewable energy, and nature-based solutions to strengthen resilience for generations to come. We believe the theme resonates deeply with our work across Ghana and the West African Subregion, where for the past **27 years** we have advanced advocacy at the intersection of **Gender and the Environment**. We recognise that natural ecosystems such as forests, oceans, and rivers are humanity's strongest defence against rising global temperatures and extreme weather conditions, and we affirm UNEP's call for communities, governments, and institutions to respond with rapid, positive solutions.

Across Ghana, the signals of climate change are becoming increasingly difficult to ignore. Communities continue to grapple with recurrent flooding, rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged dry spells, coastal erosion, and environmental degradation linked to unsustainable natural resource extraction. The continuing impact of illegal mining activities on water bodies and farmlands, alongside the growing vulnerability of food systems, livelihoods, and public health, demonstrates that climate change is no longer a future threat but a present reality requiring urgent action. Women, particularly those engaged in agriculture, fisheries, informal trade, and natural resource-dependent livelihoods, continue to bear a disproportionate share of these impacts.

This year's commemoration comes against the backdrop of devastating fires and floods that struck Accra's Central Business District on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, coinciding with the 11th anniversary of the Circle disaster. The blaze at Makola Market and Tudu destroyed merchandise and livelihoods, while heavy downpours and flooding disrupted communities across Kaneshie, Ashaiman, Pantang, and the Nkrumah Circle enclave. These disasters underscore the urgent need for climate resilient infrastructure, improved urban planning, sustainable waste management systems, and stringer disaster preparedness mechanisms. They also highlight the gendered dimension of climate vulnerability, as women traders, market women, small-scale food processors, and caregivers often suffer the greatest economic and social consequences when environmental shocks disrupt livelihoods and household wellbeing.

ABANTU stands firmly with women and communities and reiterates the need for recovery and adaptation measures that place women at the centre of decision-making and resource allocation.



At ABANTU, our commitment to gender-responsive climate action is reflected in our programming scope: **Training and Capacity Building; Advocacy, Public Awareness and Networking; Research, Publication and Information; and Institutional Development.** Through these functional areas, we have convened stakeholder engagements to integrate gender dimensions into Ghana’s Nationally Determined Contributions (GH-NDCs 3.0), reviewed gaps in the GH-NDCs 2.0, and strengthened national climate policy frameworks. We continue to host the Gender Action on Climate Change for Equality and Sustainability (GACCES) platform, which brings together diverse individuals, institutions, the media and academia to advance inclusive climate governance.

Our knowledge products, including fact sheets, scorecards, policy briefs, and research reports have amplified the multifaceted gender issues around climate change, while our contribution to the third edition of the Women’s Manifesto for Ghana ensures that women’s voices are firmly embedded in national discourse on the environment, climate change, and extractives industry. Building on this, ABANTU partnered on the *Nature-Based Climate Adaptation in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Project*, implemented in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, and Guinea with funding support from Global Affairs Canada through the WUSC-CECI consortium. With decades of experience in women’s rights advocacy in climate change, ABANTU supported local women’s groups in Ghana through training and advocacy, while also providing coaching and technical support to two women’s rights organisations—RIDDEF in Côte d’Ivoire and CONAG-DCF in Guinea. These organisations have since cascaded learning, coaching and mentoring to local women’s groups, expanding training and advocacy on women’s rights in climate change across their countries. These efforts are underpinned by ABANTU’s strengths in areas such as strong executive leadership, a committed and dynamic team, feminist transformative principles, accountable structures, and regional recognition of expertise on gender and climate issues.

ABANTU recognises that achieving climate justice requires more than environmental protection alone. It demands inclusive governance, equitable access to climate finance, meaningful participation of women and young people in environmental decision-making, and accountability mechanisms that ensure climate policies respond to the realities of those most affected. As Ghana advances implementation of its Nationally Determined Contributions (GH-NDCs), climate adaptation strategies, and commitments under the Paris Agreement, it is imperative that gender equality remains central to all climate actions.

Looking ahead, we embrace opportunities presented by Ghana’s vibrant democratic environment, supportive legal frameworks, and regional and global agreements on climate change. Through strengthened partnerships, the energy of younger team members, and innovative technologies, ABANTU is poised to bridge policy frameworks with community-oriented realities, transforming these opportunities into tangible benefits for women and communities most vulnerable to environmental shocks.

As the world marks World Environmental Day 2026, ABANTU reaffirms that **nature is our ally, climate justice is our collective responsibility, and gender equality is our pathway to a**



sustainable future. We remain committed to ensuring that women’s voices, experiences, and leadership shape the solutions that secure our collective future. We call on government institutions, development partners, civil society organisations, the private sector, traditional and religious leaders, academia, and communities to work together to address the climate crisis through inclusive, equitable, and transformative action.

We invite you to engage with ABANTU’s platforms, join our advocacy networks, and collaborate in advancing gender-responsive climate action. Together, we can build resilient communities, protect our natural environment, and secure a sustainable and just future for present and future generations.

Happy World Environment Day!

#WorldEnvironmentDay2026 #InspiredByNature #ForClimateForOurFuture
#ABANTUClimateAction