SWITCH Africa Green is bringing together about 80 stakeholders from six African countries for a Regional Policy Dialogue meeting in Accra, Ghana on 23-24 March 2017. The objective of the dialogue is to create a common understanding of policy landscape to enable countries strengthen their institutions with appropriate tools and legal instruments for green business development in the four priority sectors of SWITCH Africa Green– agriculture, integrated waste management, manufacturing and tourism.

The opening session, moderated by Mr. Frank Turyatunga, Deputy Regional Director UN Environment Africa Office, was officiated by Hon. Prof. Kwabena Frimpong Boateng (Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation – MESTI, Ghana) and was attended by Mr. Appah Sampong (Ag. Deputy Executive Director General, Environmental Protection Agency Ghana), Ms. Christine Evans-Klock (UN Resident Coordinator, Ghana), Mr. Paolo Salvia (Ag. Head of Delegation, European Union in Ghana) and Ghana) who also gave the keynote address.

Left to Right: Paulo Dalla Stella (Programme Specialist, UNDP), Ebenezer Appah-Sampong (Deputy Executive Director - Technical, EPA), Frank Turyatunga (Deputy Regional Director, Africa Office, UN Environment), Ms Christine Evans-Klock (United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ghana), Hon. Prof. Kwabena Frimpong Boateng, Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Ghana), Mr. Paolo Salvia (Ag Head of Delegation, European Union, Ghana), Victor Manavhela (Regional Manager Gauteng, National Cleaner Production Centre, South Africa) taking a group photo after the inaugural session.

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In his opening remarks, Mr. Frank Turyatunga thanked Ghana for hosting the regional policy dialogue and appreciated the presence of the Minister that demonstrated the highest level of political will and support for the SWITCH Africa Green project. He gave a brief on the project and thanked EU for the funding, UNRC for the continued support and collaboration with the sister agencies (UN Environment and UNOPS) that are involved in implementation of the project.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Appah affirmed Ghana’s stance in promoting green business and sustainable consumption and production practices by the inauguration of the Ghana National Cleaner Production Centre (GNCPC), noting that the policy dialogue was an ideal event for stakeholders and policy makers to share best practices and discuss on policy priorities.

The UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Christine Evans-Klock, appreciated the need for agricultural transformation in the West African regional block to ensure inclusive growth thereby creating an enabling environment for sustainable growth. She noted that this was an important forum in bringing in stakeholders from government, civil society and private sector in sharing ideas, stressing on the importance of the policy dialogue being in line with the SDGs in expanding energy to all and attaining sustainable economic growth, agriculture and development. She appreciated SWITCH Africa Green’s role in advancing this agenda.

On behalf of the European Union (EU), Mr. Paolo Salvia reiterated the EU’s support to the SWITCH Africa Green programme, noting that UN Environment conducted a green economy assessment and green business development was identified as a key priority. He noted that the EU is committed to support middle-income countries in Africa. He reassured the stakeholders of the support on the regional priorities that shall be agreed on during this policy dialogue.
On behalf of the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI), Hon. Prof. Kwabena Frimpong Boateng thanked the UN Environment for implementing the programme noting that promotion of biogas technology has always been his passion. He noted that most of SWITCH Africa Green’s projects were simple allowing for easy uptake, helping in the creation of an enabling environment for transition towards green business. He confirmed the government of Ghana’s commitment in assisting the project since it will not only help Ghana in alleviating poverty but also promote environmental preservation. Importantly, he mentioned that special funds shall be allocated to finance green environment projects.

The opening session was followed by a press conference where both local and international media fielded questions to the minister, UN Environment, EU and EPA.

The second session, facilitated by Mr. Silver Ssebagala (Director, Uganda Cleaner Production Centre - UGCPC) was on Thematic Sector priorities and Policy Development for Green Business where there was a presentation of general thematic and cross-cutting policy interventions allowing discussions on policy discussions among the countries. The stakeholders deliberated on the four key thematic areas on Agriculture, Manufacturing, Tourism and Integrated Waste Management.
The third session, moderated by Mr. Robert Wabuhona (UN Environment) enabled the countries to deliberate, review and compare from a menu of policy options to facilitate transition to green business development. Each of the countries, in a break out session, elaborated on selected policy interventions to support sectoral development.

The last day of the Regional Policy Dialogue on 24 March 2017 shall focus on policy action plans where each country will present a roadmap which shall be adopted and serve as a guidance for the implementation process. There shall also be a high-level session on regional priorities with panelists from UN Environment, ECOWAS and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). The last session shall be on Financing Green Business Development.

The overall objective of SWITCH Africa Green is to support 6 countries in Africa to achieve sustainable development by engaging in transition towards an inclusive green economy, based on sustainable consumption and production patterns, while generating growth, creating decent jobs and reducing poverty. SWITCH Africa Green is developed and funded by the European Commission and implemented by UN Environment in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

For more information, please visit www.switchafricagreen.org or email info@switchafricagreen.org