

Trees Planted To Overturn Biodiversity Degradation

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Bamenda (Mezam) - Some 250 trees of different species have been planted to preserve watershed within the Bamenda Central Prison, replenish depleted species and beautify the urban space with ornamental trees. The various species are both water-friendly, ornamental and medicinal including Prunus africans, royal palm, voaganca, calistemon, shell butter and fruit trees. The exercise by the Regional Delegation of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development North West on the occasion of the International Biodiversity Day on May 22, 2021, was carried out within government efforts to green urban space, preserve watersheds and restore lost species, vital in fighting off biodiversity loss and degradation.

Despite the fact that the Bamenda highlands contain the largest remaining patches of Afromontane forest in Central Africa, consisting of a mosaic of mixed gallery forest, raphia forests, and savannah grasslands with some of the highest levels of endemism, their existence like all other biodiversity hotspots in the region is challenged by encroachment from farmers for agricultural activities, crop production and cattle rearing, over exploitation by humans, timber and medicinal plants harvesting, fishing, poaching and hunting of animals, dumping of waste in water bodies and forested land, air pollution, urbanisation and infrastructural development, as well as introduction of invasive species.

"As we encroach on nature and deplete vital habitats, increasing numbers of species are at risks. That includes humanity and the future we want," UN



Environment officials setting the pace for more tree planting in the NW region.

Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, said in his message on the occasion. Also, "We still depend on a healthy and vibrant ecosystem for water, food, medicines, clothes, fuel, shelter, energy..." the Regional Delegate of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development, Mue Denise said. The slogan "We're Part of the Solution" was chosen to be a continuation of the momentum generated last year un-

der the over-arching theme, "Our Solutions Are in Nature" which serve as a reminder that biodiversity remains the answer to several sustainable development challenges. Biodiversity hotspots in the region include Kikum-Ljim Mountain Forest in Oku, Kagwene Gorilla Sanctuary in Njikwa, Kimbi-Fungom National Park in Fungom, Ako Mbembe Forest Reserve in Ako, Mbi Crater Game Reserve in Belo and Ndop flood plains. ■