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HELLO,
I’m Pietro Carpena – TREE AID’s new Lead Technical Advisor. I work with our operations teams in the UK and in Africa to ensure the projects you support are helping as many people as possible improve their lives and the environment they live in.

I have just returned from West Africa where I visited some of our projects in Burkina Faso and Ghana. I was particularly excited to visit Yemboama, Burkina Faso, where 39 individual TREE AID enterprise groups recently joined together to form a union.

It was truly heart-warming to see how this community has worked together and the difference this union has made to their lives. The union, of more than 1,000 individuals, is able to pool their resources and skills to be more effective at cultivating, picking, processing and selling tree products such as shea nuts, meaning they have more money to spend on food and education.

Inspirational stories like this wouldn’t happen without the generosity of our donors. I hope you will feel proud to be a part of this as you read through your latest edition of Update magazine. Read more about my recent trip to West Africa on page 6!

Best wishes,
Pietro Carpena

Front cover image: A woman from Mescha village, Ethiopia, on her way to the TREE AID tree nursery.
We’re delighted that TREE AID and RPS Group won a Business Charity Award from Third Sector Magazine for their partnership on the Bongo River Trees project in Ghana. See page 4 for more details on how this project has transformed the riverbank in Bongo, and changed the lives of so many communities who live there.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we have raised over £14,000 for our Ethiopia Drought Appeal. This can equate to planting 1,400 trees which will help families prepare for future droughts and floods – thank you for your support.

The 2015 El Niño caused severe droughts and a subsequent food crisis in Ethiopia, leaving 10 million people without food. Many of the communities we work with have seen their crops wither and die.

Families are now facing a worsening crisis – the delayed rains have arrived but the rain has been so heavy that river levels have risen alarmingly, triggering flooding and landslides in many parts of Ethiopia. Two of our project sites have been affected by flooding and our project teams are helping communities deal with this.

To make a donation to our Ethiopia Appeal today, please call our Supporters Team on 0117 909 6363 or visit www.treeaid.org.uk. Thank you for your support.

The state of emergency in Mali that was issued after the terrorist attack in November 2015 in the capital of Bamako, has been extended until 15 July.

Our colleagues in Mali are safe and our work in the country continues. Our tree-planting projects in Mali were launched as planned at the end of March (see page 8) but safety precautions now have to be taken by TREE AID staff in Mali such as avoiding meeting in large groups and avoiding travel during the late hours.

Our work in this region of the Sahel provides a source of food and income to vulnerable families, and is more critical than ever before.
BONGO RIVER TREES PROJECT, GHANA

Since 2012, TREE AID has been working on a project with corporate supporters RPS in the Bongo district of Ghana.

How the Bongo River Trees project is helping communities

The project aims to:
- improve rainwater capture and storage for villagers
- maintain flood protection and prevent further erosion of the riverbanks in Bongo
- help communities become self-reliant by establishing enterprises selling tree produce
- help communities become more resilient to climate variability and change.

With water in the rivers for longer, the water table and nearby boreholes can be recharged. This means there will be more groundwater to help the trees and crops in the village to grow strong and healthy. This in turn is providing families with food to eat and a means of earning an income from tree produce.

The local office of the Water Resources Commission in Ghana has agreed to continue to monitor and supervise management and maintenance of the weirs when the project ends.

In recognition of this jointly-delivered project, TREE AID and RPS have won a Business Charity Award.

Trees and weirs on the Bongo rivers

High temperatures and low rainfall made it difficult to grow anything along the riverbanks in Bongo. Intense bursts of rains would cause floods, but only a few days later the riverbed would be dry and dusty again. To solve this, we worked with corporate supporters RPS and local villagers to create four small weirs close to nearby communities.

As you can see from the photo on the next page, the rains have arrived in the region and now the weirs are successfully slowing the flow of water.

The presence of water in the rivers has also led to a return of wildlife to the area – frogs, fish and birds can now be found in and around the river.
This photo was taken a day after the final weir was completed - the rains came and the four weirs successfully conserved water. Whilst the weirs slow the flow of water, the plants preserve the riverbank and keep moisture in the soil for longer.

Villagers in Bongo built mud walls around the new tree seedlings in the village to protect them from grazing livestock.

In total, over 60,000 tree and shrub seedlings have been planted through this project. The seedlings are mostly native and are therefore tolerant to the climate and soil conditions. These trees and shrubs are now restoring the land and preventing the banks of the river from eroding. The plants also help to slow and filter river water, improving water quality, resulting in more water for the villagers to use on their crops.

Our central tree nursery provides employment for 3 local people who have been recruited as nursery attendants to look after the seedlings. The saplings grown in the nursery include mahogany, grafted mangoes and cashews which provide edible fruits and nuts for families to eat and sell. 18,000 saplings were grown last year alone. The nursery attendants transport water to the nursery from the river by motorised tricycle.

Ayampoka lives by one of the rivers in the Bongo district and joined the TREE AID project as a tree nursery attendant. Before TREE AID arrived in her village, Ayampoka’s relatives would migrate to nearby cities to look for work whilst she struggled to feed and care for her children at home in the village.

She now earns a small income from her work at the tree nursery, which she uses to buy school books and uniforms for her children. The skills and techniques she has learnt at the nursery have enabled her to improve her crop yield at home and her family now has more to eat.

Ayampoka said, “I thank you very much for your help in Bongo. My community and I appreciate your love and kindness, and we hope you can continue supporting TREE AID’s work.”
In Burkina Faso, I met a great enterprise group in Baribsi village. This group of women are processing shea nuts in a TREE AID project. With support from donors, TREE AID has purchased this small scale machinery to help process shea nuts into improved quality shea butter. This is then sold locally, earning the women additional income. The machinery has been installed within the village, greatly benefitting women who now have a shorter distance to travel to transform the shea nuts.

With support from donors like you, TREE AID has been able to build this warehouse in Ghana, and four others like it. It is used by our enterprise groups to store shea kernels which will eventually be turned into shea butter and sold. It is imperative that the group have somewhere cool, dry and secure to store their produce in order to maintain the quality.
On my visit to Pighyiri village, Burkina Faso, I met Sophie Apiou; she is standing with her tree – the first she ever planted.

Despite using the forest resources all her life, she had never planted a tree until she joined a TREE AID project. Now, thanks to TREE AID donors, Sophie is playing a part in the reforestation of her community’s forest resources and is earning a living from the production of shea butter from shea nuts.

Her brother (pictured above) has been taught beekeeping skills and her sister makes soumbala balls from the seeds of the dawadawa tree which are used in cooking.

The family sells their tree products at market for a small income and are able to use this money to buy additional food.
Tree planting in Bristol, UK

‘One Tree per Child’ is a project started by Olivia Newton-John and backed by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Kevin McCloud, to get millions of children planting millions of trees.

The project was launched in February 2015 in TREE AID’s home city of Bristol. 39,000 trees were planted in the city – one for each of Bristol’s 36,000 school children across 130 primary schools, and a few extra for good measure!

Taking the project to Africa

The next step is to take the project to Africa – and this is where TREE AID gets involved!

Desmond Tutu supports the initiative and has said, “I would encourage village, town and city authorities to adopt the simple but far-reaching One Tree per Child policy in the same way that Bristol has done in the UK. The policy of having every primary school child planting one tree each is one that I fully support.”

With your support, we have set up tree-planting projects in Mali to plant 10,000 trees at 10 schools in the municipalities of Samine and Sakoiba.
Two tree nursery sites will be managed by two women’s enterprise groups, each producing up to 4,000 tree seedlings per year. The first seedlings will be ready for transplanting in July 2016 in time for the rainy season.

These nurseries will supply tree seedlings to the schools for planting. The trees will be indigenous species which are the most useful for communities. They will include trees that provide edible fruit, seeds, nuts and leaves, or trees that can be used to support bee colonies.

Tree planting in Samine and Sakoiba, Mali

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We’ll work with the teachers in schools to incorporate environmental stewardship into lesson plans so that all children:

- know which tree species are under threat in their community;
- know the nutritional value of locally available tree foods;
- have a good understanding of why it’s important to protect the environment;
- and have a positive attitude towards environmental protection and to take an active role in protecting community tree resources.
I’m sure you will remember learning about the water cycle from your school days. Water from the world’s oceans continually evaporates back into the atmosphere (a process called evapotranspiration), forming clouds. The clouds return fresh water to land as rain, which falls to the ground, and then evaporates back into the atmosphere for the cycle to start again.

Many studies show that almost all oceanic moisture falls to the earth as rain within 150 miles from any coast. But this doesn’t explain how rain manages to reach the centre of vast continents such as Africa.

The answer is trees.

A tree can transpire up to around 400 gallons of water per day because of the large surface area of its leaves – they are responsible for the vast majority of inland rain. When there are more trees, there’s more rain. In the future, more and more organisations will plant trees strategically to help communities adapt to climate change and drought by influencing rainfall.

Trees can also help with water conservation in other ways – tree roots maintain riverbanks and prevent them from eroding, meaning water flows in the river for longer and villagers can use it to water crops and for domestic tasks. This is evident in our Bongo River Trees project – see page 4 for details.

Since TREE AID began, we have planted more than 10 million trees across Africa’s drylands. For the people we work with, trees provide an income, but they also bring life-giving water.

Your support helps us plant more trees in the drylands, restoring land across Africa and indirectly helping bring about more inland rain.

Without trees we would all die. I would like the people of the UK to know how grateful we are. You don’t know us so it took courage to donate to us. Thank you.

Memmenatu, Sakai village, Ghana.

Purchase a tree for a friend and change the life of a family in rural Africa. With each purchase you receive a gift card and greetings card to send to your friend to tell them about their life-changing gift.

To order, visit www.treeaid.org.uk/GiftsthatGrow or call 0117 909 6363
**FANTASTIC FUNDRAISERS**

**Forest Research staff donate photography prize to TREE AID**

**Matthew Wilkinson from Forest Research won a photography competition recently and donated the £400 prize money to TREE AID!**

The picture was taken from the top of a 26-metre tower in Alice Holt Research Forest, near Farnham, Surrey, by a ‘phenocam’. It takes pictures looking down on the forest every 30 minutes during daylight hours to record seasonal and cyclical changes in the forest. By studying the photos, scientists at the research station can see how factors such as the changing climate affect key plant and wildlife events such as the timing of bud burst in spring and the onset of autumn colour.

**ROYAL PARKS HALF MARATHON**

Hurry – the last few places for the Royal Parks Half Marathon in October are filling fast! If you would like to run in one of the UK’s top half marathons through London’s Royal Parks and raise money for families in dryland Africa, please contact our Supporters Team on 0117 9096363 or email info@treeaid.org.uk.

**Blue Diamond tree planting partnership**

TREE AID has joined forces with garden centre group, Blue Diamond, to help grow hope in the drylands of Africa. For every tree sold by one of Blue Diamond’s garden centres in England and the Channel Islands, the Group will make a donation to help TREE AID plant another tree in Africa. The families we work with will be taught how to make their trees thrive, giving them a reliable source of food and income.

Alan Roper from Blue Diamond said, “We believe our customers will find it rewarding to watch their own trees bringing flowers, fruit and wildlife to their gardens, and to remember that their decision to plant a new tree has also brought life-changing benefits to a family in Africa.”
The fruit of the shea tree is nutritious with a sweet pear-like taste.

The thick foliage of the shea tree provides reliable shade offering respite from the scorching heat.

The husks make a good mulch and fertiliser.

The flowers can be made into edible fritters.

The shea tree produces the shea nut – highly prized across the drylands for the butter it can be turned into. Known as ‘West Africa’s gold’, shea butter is used in cooking or can be an ingredient in cosmetics such as soap and is sold locally at market.

Shea trees are planted in TREE AID projects across the Sahel. With your support, we are able to work with communities to teach them how to harvest the tree products from them in order to feed their families and earn an income.

To plant a life-changing shea tree visit www.treeaid.org.uk/GiftsThatGrow or call 0117 909 6363