

**ADVANCING THE
PROMOTION &
PRODUCTION
OF ORGANIC FERTILIZER IN
GHANA TOWARDS ACHIEVING
FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE**

Story by Cynthia Prah

Agbogbloshie is a major market centre in Accra. Noted for its brisk activities with almost everything on sale, Agbogbloshie is a one stop shopping centre and a huge source for crop production for many food vendors and restaurants in and around Accra. There is never a dull moment at Agbogbloshie. However, this vibrant market, like all others, bears the brunt of the rising cost of agricultural input. Keeping markets like Agbogbloshie alive to feed the country will depend on the interventions of agriculture experts to curtail the rising cost of agriculture input, including fertilizers, caused by the ongoing production crunch in Europe, disruptions as a result of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict and trade restrictions in China. For instance, according to sources from the Ministry of Agriculture, the price of inorganic fertilizer has shot up to over 300 per cent making access difficult for many local farmers. This necessitates an alternative and sustainable means for the supply of fertilizer such as the local production of organic fertilizer.

The Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, is thus taking steps to promote organic fertilizer production and uptake among farmers and enhance investment in its production and marketing. To this end, the Ministry with the support of the United Nations Joint SDG Fund Development Emergency Modality (DEM) project being implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme, has produced Organic Fertilizer Guideline, initiated processes to set up organic fertilizer plants in all the 16 regions across the country and increased the quota for organic fertilizer supply in the Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ) Programme. A National Technical Team (NTT) on Organic Fertilizer Promotion has also been set up to provide technical and policy guidance on activities and processes for promoting organic fertilizers in the country.

*Cross section of the participants at the workshop (Below)
© FAO Ghana*



The UN Joint SDG Fund DEM was activated to help countries respond to the unfolding global food, energy, and financing crisis.

“This project is catalytic in that it seeks to strengthen scale up of food security and financial systems resilience in Ghana through short term interventions such as the support to promote organic fertilizer in the country which will eventually respond to the budding food systems crises and towards a long term transformative actions,” says Peter Aidoo, Economic Advisor at the United Nations in Ghana.

With the setting up of the NTT, constituting experts from different Technical Directorates and other institutions/organizations such as the National Fertilizer Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, the work on promoting organic fertilizer intake is expected to hitch within the Ministry and streamlined into the national agriculture extension services. So far, the Ministry has developed extension materials on organic fertilizers, launched an online advocacy campaign, dubbed, ‘Ghana Goes Organic’ for the promotion of organic fertilizers and ran radio programmes, starting with 9 out of the 16 regions, promoting organic fertilizers.

To further advance the promotion of organic fertilizer in the country, the NTT has drafted an organic fertilizer investment repository which encompasses investment opportunities for organic fertilizer production, raw material

“There has never been a time in my years at the Ministry when so much attention is paid to the potential of organic fertilizer.” ~ Mr.

Michael Owusu, Deputy Dir., Crops Services Directorate, MoFA,

base, production levels of fertilizer firms, demand and supply gap, available products and financial resources required.

Mr. Michael Owusu, a Deputy Director of Crops Services Directorate of

the MoFA, said the support by the UN is a major step towards advancing the promotion of organic fertilizer in the country. “There has never been a

time in my years at the Ministry when so much attention is paid to the potential of organic fertilizer”, he noted, and assured of the Ministry’s continuous effort to sustain the gains made.

Recently the FAO led a two-day workshop to review the draft organic fertilizer investment repository document, take stock of the Joint SDG Fund DEM project implementation and outputs achieved and deliberate on how best to sustain the results gained beyond the project, which ended in March 2023.

The repository will provide industry players in the agriculture, compost and fertilizer production value chain as well as investors with information on raw material sources and locations for setting up factories. The repository will open doors for private sector investment and enhance business approaches in the sector. It will enable entrepreneurs like Linda Isaka, who has been in the business for over 10 years, to find better ways of transporting raw materials for her compost business.



Linda Isaka at work in her compost store



Mohammed's vegetable farms (above); Mohammed proudly checking on his beetroot farm (Left) © UNIC Accra

Enthusiased about what she learnt from the workshop, Linda said the government's interest to support the production of organic fertilizer in the country is an indication of the potential of the industry to respond to the global food crisis. "We need to build a strong stakeholder network to support each other" she stated. Linda says she looks forward to more collaboration and support from investors to help her expand her business.

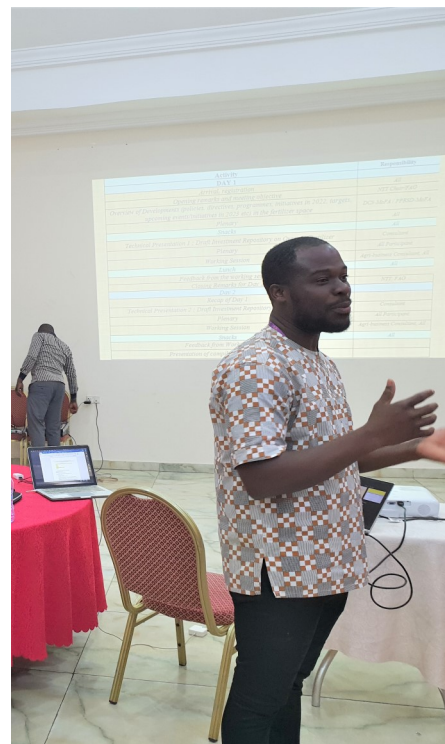
Promoting organic fertilizer in Ghana is key to mitigating the impact of the high cost of agriculture input on food security and strengthening food systems resilience in the country. To date, Ghana has depended largely on inorganic fertilizer for years and information and knowledge on the efficacy of organic fertilizer is limited. The workshop revealed the urgent need for more information and education on the use and viability of organic fertilizer amongst farmers to encourage its uptake.

Mohammed Ibrahim, a vegetable farmer says he has learnt a lot from the workshop and believes farmers' exposure to

information on organic fertilizer will go a long way to boost their yields even in these difficult times. Mohammed belongs to the KorleBu Vegetables Growers and Marketing Society in Accra and supplies the Agbogbloshie market with vegetables like cabbage, lettuce, beetroot, pepper, carrot and cucumber from his half-acre farm. Mohammed says, when produced locally, farmers, especially small-holder farmers like himself will have easy access to organic fertilizer input at a cheaper cost. This, he agreed, will also lead to cheaper farm produce and subsequently cheaper food prices.

Further highlighting the importance of the UN's intervention, Mr. Michael Owusu says promoting organic fertilizer intake will contribute greatly towards achieving food security in Ghana. "We need to identify good organic fertilizers, market them and promote them in a strategic and systematic way to help farmers understand their efficacy and use it."

As part of the continuous support for the economic recovery programme and development priorities, the UN in Ghana will continue to provide the needed technical support to make the organic fertilizer promotion and investment repository achieve the needed impact on Ghana's food systems transformation.



Mathias Edetor, Project Lead at the FAO making a presentation at the workshop
© UNIC Accra



Group picture of participants at the workshop held in Koforidua, Ghana
© UNIC Accra