

Towards a conducive climate

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No fewer than 200 secondary schools pupils in Kwara State converged on the University of Ilorin (UNILORIN) for a training organised by Plant-for-the-Planet on how they can promote a friendly ecosystem through tree planting. WALE AJETUNMOBI reports.

In the past two decades, scientists have been warning of the dire consequences of the rising temperature of the earth, which has led to global warming. The presence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and deforestation have been identified as the salient causes of climate change.

With many countries seemingly unconcerned about arresting the situation, several bodies are rising to the challenge, to raise awareness about the consequences of global warming solution and to seek solution to it. Such is the aim of Plant-for-the-Planet, a children's initiative founded in 2007 in Germany by Felix Finkbeiner. Its objective is to mobilise young volunteers for tree-planting in communities to combat climate crisis.

Last week, a group of young men was at the University of Ilorin (UNILORIN) to sensitise and train secondary school pupils in Kwara State on how they could promote green climate in their communities.

The event held at the basement of the university auditorium was attended by about 200 primary and secondary school pupils.

Facilitators at the training included Dr Raheem Usman of UNILORIN's Department of Geography and Environmental Management, and Dr Fola Babalola, a lecturer at the Department of Forest Resources Management.

During the training, the participants were educated on the causes, effects and solutions to bad climate facing the world. They were also sensitised on the importance of tree planting within their environment.

The earth, Usman told the pupils, consist of the air, water, land and living things, stressing that an injury to any of the components would cause injury to the other constituents. He noted that climate change was caused by the large amount of carbon monoxide emission in the air by vehicles, airplanes, power plants and manufacturing companies.

The lecturer warned that the earth would be unsafe for human beings and animals if adequate measures were not taken to curb the menace of climate change occasioned by the increasing temperature of the earth. The condition, he said, is causing the melting of glaciers (ocean ice) and rising water level.

The environmentalist, however, said massive planting of trees was the easiest and cheapest solution to solve climate crises, noting that trees have the ability to absorb the carbon monoxide being released into the atmosphere through human and industrial activities.

On his part, Babalola said human beings, through their activities over the years, have produced more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, making it thicker and causing earth temperature to rise.

He listed the consequences of climate change to include flooding, wildfire, constant droughts, shortage of food and potable water and extreme weather conditions.



•A pupils demonstrating how to plant a tree to his colleagues during the training

He said: "Rising sea level will force hundreds of thousands of people in coastal zones to migrate to areas with better living conditions, which would eventually lead to overcrowding in these areas."

Babalola disclosed that 175 million children are affected by climate-induced natural disasters yearly, saying: "Many of the deadly diseases, which affect children, such as malaria, diarrhoea and malnutrition are highly sensitive to climatic conditions threatening survival and healthcare."

The Forest Resources Management expert said the best way to curb the effects of climate change was for people to engage in tree planting, noting that trees would convert the oxide of carbon in the atmosphere into less harmful oxygen.

He added: "To reverse the present condition of the climate, people must stop deforestation and embrace sustainable afforestation."

After the seminar, the facilitators engaged the participants in training session, where they were taught how to properly plant trees. The participants were certified as Global Climate Justice Ambassadors.

The programme Co-ordinator, Wale Bakare, said the ambassadors were expected to raise awareness and educate their peers about climate crisis. He said: "They also have a goal of planting one million trees in the country to make it habitable for humanity and other living organism. The Climate Justice Ambassadors are members of a global children's network, who make a real difference by planting trees, talking to their young people and adults about climate change, conserving energy and inspiring people to care and act now for their future."