



## **PRESS STATEMENT READ AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF A BAN ON ROSEWOOD HELD IN TAMALE ON 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2019.**

Good morning friends from the media. On behalf of **THE BAOBAB MARKET**, I thank you for honouring this invitation at a very short notice. I welcome all of you to this brief but very important interaction on the depletion of rosewood in the northern part of this country. I believe most of you, if not all of you, are aware of the arrest of the Chinese woman, one Helen Huang who was arrested by the police yesterday May 7, 2019, with two truckloads of rosewood. It will be recalled that the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources announced a Government total ban on the felling and exportation of Rosewood in Ghana in March 2019.

The Baobab Market wishes to commend the Ghana Police Service for their great effort in enforcing the ban on rosewood. **The Baobab Market** also commend the media for showing keen interest in the issue and giving it the necessary attention, it deserves on your various electronic and print platforms. We strongly believe that the actions of the police and the media, as we witnessed yesterday, give us some respite that the fight against illegal felling of rosewood in northern Ghana is not completely lost.

**The Baobab Market**, which consists of a number of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Northern Region, has since its formation in 2017 followed the issues of rosewood depletion in the country. We find it very worrying that despite the ban on the cutting, harvesting, transportation and export of rosewood, some unscrupulous people and companies are still bent on further endangering the tree with impunity.

**The Baobab Market** has taken note that the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources in March 2019 placed a total ban on the harvest and export of Rosewood. Rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) is one of the tree species found in the middle belt and Northern parts of the country. It should be noted that rosewood is listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) as endangered species. The rosewood species takes 50-100 years to mature. Harvesting of rosewood under the disguise of 'salvage permits' is greatly destroying the already fragile savannah ecological zone.

We, the members of **The Baobab Market**, are calling on:

1. The Government of Ghana through Ministry of Land and Natural Resources and the Forestry Commission, the Ghana Police Service and other law enforcement agencies to step up efforts towards enforcing the ban on harvesting and export of rosewood
2. The Government of Ghana to ensure that this ban is not lifted again as we have seen in the past. The harvesting and export of rosewood has been banned

severally in the past by the Government of Ghana, for instance in 2012 and 2014 but the ban on each occasion was lifted few months afterwards.

3. The Government **MUST** swiftly prosecute Helena Huang, the Chinese National arrested yesterday under the right laws of Ghana to the logical conclusion to serve as a strong deterrent to others engaged or planning to engage in the same business.
4. The Media and other CSOs to actively join the campaign against the depletion of rosewood in the country.
5. The Government must investigate and identify her collaborators and bring all of them to justice to deter others from doing same in the future.
6. We call on traditional authorities to support the ban on the felling and exportation of rosewood from their communities.
7. We also call on community members and other concerned citizens to join the fight against the illegal felling and exportation of rosewood and indeed, any other protected tree species in their communities.

We wish to state that The Baobab Market will closely monitor developments of Ms Helen Haung's issue as they unfold within the legal confines of the country. Once again, we say thank you to the police for enforcing the ban and to the media for demonstrating great support for the fight against the depletion of rosewood in northern Ghana.

Thank you.

Signed:

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