

UK government doubles donations to charity using trees to fight poverty and climate change

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Environmental and international development charity, TREE AID, today launches a three-month appeal with proceeds doubled by the UK government. With the support of the UK public, the She Grows appeal will help people reverse the effects of deforestation and climate change in the drylands of Africa. The UK government will match pound for pound any public donations between 1st April and 30th June through the UK Aid Match scheme.

The charity, set up by foresters in 1987, has planted more than 16 million trees and supported more than 1.2 million people, and is increasingly gaining recognition for its long-term solution to help alleviate poverty and halt deforestation in the poorest and most arid parts of Africa.

Joanna Lumley, TREE AID's patron and supporter of the She Grows appeal, explained: "I have been supporting TREE AID for more than 25 years because it provides such an effective, practical solution to the urgent issues of poverty in Africa and the environmental decline that so often causes it.

"Trees are being wiped from the landscape in the African drylands and the desert is spreading, making it harder for people, especially women, to feed their families and earn an income. I urge local people to please give what they can to the She Grows appeal, knowing their gift will be doubled by our government. If ever there was a time to support a local organisation working on global issues, it is now."

The She Grows appeal will help one thousand women in Mali to set up small businesses that process and sell shea butter and honey, and give them the tools and training they need to save and replant their local forest.

Mali is a country in West Africa that is two-thirds desert and where more than 50% of people live below the poverty line. The burden of poverty falls hardest on women who have limited access to land and few opportunities to earn an income. They are expected to feed their children and families but their land is some of the driest in the world and, as climate change effects deepen, the situation is getting worse. Trees are a lifeline, surviving drought, improving the soil and providing fruits, nuts and seeds for food and income.

The She Grows project comes at an important time, with the UN naming 2019 as a "critical year" for climate action and with scientists around the world calling for reforestation to slow down climate change.

Setou Traoré is one of the thousand women in Mali who will benefit from the TREE AID project. Due to frequent droughts and deforestation, Setou is finding it harder to find food for her family and she can't afford to send her children to school: "Trees are vital, especially for us women. Without trees, we wouldn't eat. The produce from the fields has reduced. Farming doesn't feed us anymore, the sources of income are weak. There aren't many trees anymore. I am worried for my children."

TREE AID is urging people to donate as much as they can to the She Grows appeal before 30th June 2019 and the UK government will double all donations. Match funding from the UK government will help 1,000 women in Mali to grow their way out of poverty using the power of trees. Donations from the UK public will mean TREE AID can help even more communities across the drylands of Africa to transform their environment and

their lives.

To donate and find out more, visit the TREE AID website: www.treeaid.org.uk/shegrows.

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