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Global Shea Alliance Commits to Restore 4M Hectares of Shea Parkland with Clinton Global Initiative

Accra, Ghana – September 23, 2024 – The Global Shea Alliance (GSA) announced a significant pioneering effort to restore 4 million hectares of shea parklands across 10 African nations by 2030 at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) 2024 Annual Meeting. This ambitious Commitment to Action with CGI, known as the “Action for Shea Parklands” initiative, addresses urgent environmental and socio-economic challenges impacting millions of people in West, Central and East Africa.”

The “Action for Shea Parklands” commitment addresses pressing environmental and socio economic challenges affecting shea communities across Africa. Spanning nearly 275 million hectares, shea trees are integral to the continent's farming systems, creating an agroforestry landscape that is essential for climate resilience. Shea parklands in West Africa capture more than 1.5 million tons of CO₂ annually, while the trees themselves improve soil structure, making farms more resistant to droughts and floods. However, despite their importance, shea tree population is in steep decline, with an estimated 8 million trees lost each year due to various factors such as agricultural expansion, reduced farm-fallow cycles, and the removal of trees for fuelwood.

This decline not only threatens the environment but also jeopardizes the livelihoods of 16 million women who rely on the shea industry. Shea represents up to 32% of cash income for households during the lean season, impacting nutrition, education and health in some of the poorest communities. Recent climate events have exacerbated these challenges, with temperatures in the Sahel rising 1.5 times faster than the global average, leading to decreased agricultural yields and further stressing these vulnerable regions.

To counter this decline, the GSA has committed to a multi-faceted strategy that focuses on growing, protecting and promoting shea parklands. The initiative will see the planting of 10 million new shea and native trees, supported by the creation of community-based nurseries and training programs in sustainable agroforestry practices. The GSA will also implement parkland management training and establish community by-laws that facilitate collaboration among local stakeholders to safeguard the long-term health of the shea ecosystem. Additionally, the initiative will advocate for policy changes at both the local and national levels, while engaging communities through outreach programs and advocacy efforts aimed at fostering a deeper commitment to environmental stewardship.

“Taking action with the Clinton Global Initiative is a significant milestone for the Global Shea Alliance,” said Aaron Adu, Managing Director of the GSA. “The restoration of shea parklands is not only crucial for protecting biodiversity and strengthening climate resilience in some of Africa’s most vulnerable regions but also for empowering millions of women who rely on the shea industry. Our partnership with CGI will help us mobilize the resources and support needed to achieve these ambitious goals.”

The “Action for Shea Parklands” initiative is expected to have a far-reaching impact, directly benefiting 10 million people and indirectly improving the lives of an additional 50 million. By aligning with global

efforts to combat climate change and promote sustainable development, the GSA is ensuring that this project delivers both environmental and economic benefits at the grassroots level.

As a CGI Commitment Maker, the GSA will utilize this platform to raise awareness, attract additional funding, and build new partnerships, ensuring the successful implementation of the “Action for Shea Parklands” initiative.

For more information, please visit www.actionforshea.com

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About the Global Shea Alliance: The Global Shea Alliance is a non-profit industry association with more than 849 members from 36 countries, including women’s groups, brands and retailers, suppliers, and NGOs. Through public-private partnerships, the GSA promotes industry sustainability, quality practices and standards, and demand for shea in food and cosmetics. For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.globalshea.com/>

About the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI): *Founded by President Bill Clinton in 2005, the Clinton Global Initiative is a community of doers representing a broad cross section of society and dedicated to the idea that we can accomplish more together than we can apart. Through CGI’s unique model, more than 10,000 organizations have launched more than 4,000 Commitments to Action — new, specific, and measurable projects and programs – that are making a difference in the lives of more than 500 million people in 180 countries.* For more information, visit www.clintonfoundation.org/clinton-global-initiative