**A PRESENTATION MADE BY MISS QUEEN EHIRIM,A LEADING AFRICAN YOUTH IN ENVIRONMENT AND RELATED ISSUES DURING THE SIDE EVENT ORGANIZED BY UNITED NATIONS OF YOUTH NETWORK NIGERIA(UNOY)@THE COP 18,DOHA,THE STATE OF QATAR ON 29TH OF NOV.2012.**

Your Excellencies ,

Lord Mayor  Ayodele Adewale,

Hon Commissioner for  Environment Lagos State, Dr. Tunji  Bello,

President of United Nations of Youth,,Prince Good luck Obi

African Youths well represented in this gathering,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

 All protocols observed.

Allow me to thank you very much for the honour and privilege extended to me when I was invited to be a speaker in this side event.                                                                                                                                                         I am very grateful for the warm welcome since we arrived in Doha for the COP 18 Climate Change Conference and I want to use this opportunity to thank every one present at this program and this side event put together by United Nations of Youth Network Nigeria(UNOY)

Without wasting much of our time,I’;d be speaking on the importance of mobilizing African  youths on reason for planting trees.

We all know that The trees around us are extremely important and have always been necessary for improving the human condition and their very existence. It's not too hard to believe that without trees we humans would not exist on this beautiful planet. So, trees are essential to life as we know it and are the ground troops making up our environmental frontline.

The importance of tree can be traced back to the very beginning of our human race, trees were considered sacred and honorable: oaks were worshiped by the European Druids, redwoods a part of American Indian ritual, baobabs a part of African tribal life, to the Chinese the ginkgo link and monkey puzzles . Romans and scholars during the Middle Ages venerated trees in their literature.

But presently, our huge demand for consumption has lead to the decline of tress, which is currently posing more threats to our environment and our ecosystem.

The disappearance of forests poses a serious threat to our survival. Forests play an important role in our planet’s ecosystem. They are homes to millions of species of wild plants and animals and play an important role in absorbing greenhouse gases.

During the last century, the world lost over 80 per cent of its original forests. Every day, approximately 375 square kilometers of forest are lost  and Every year over 30 million trees are cut down. The total forest area lost during the 15 year period was more than 220 million hectares, much larger than the total land area of Mexico.   This is affecting us and it had made a lot of hardship for the animals and wildlife.

This inhumane process which is called  Deforestation is  now widely recognized as one of the most critical environmental problems facing the human society today with serious long term economic, social and ecological consequences with its effect on biodiversity and climate change.

The only way we can stop this is through planting, and it is our responsibility as youths to do so because we might bear the consequences of a devastating ecosystem if we don’t act now.

Tree planting has a lot of benefits to us because

1… Trees Produces  Oxygen  As it has been proven that  mature leafy tree produces as much oxygen in a season as 10 people inhale in a year. What many people don't realize is the forest also acts as a giant filter that cleans the air we breath.

2. Trees Clean the Soil, it absorbs the  dangerous chemicals and other pollutants that have entered the soil. Trees can either store harmful pollutants or actually change the pollutant into less harmful forms. Trees filter sewage and farm chemicals, reduce the effects of animal wastes, clean roadside spills and clean water runoff into streams.

3. Trees Control Noise Pollution, ….Trees, planted at strategic points in a neighborhood or around your house, can abate major noises from freeways and airports.

5. Trees Are Carbon Sinks

To produce its food, a tree absorbs and locks away carbon dioxide in the wood, roots and leaves. Carbon dioxide is a global warming suspect. A forest is a carbon storage area or a "sink" that can lock up as much carbon as it produces. This locking-up process "stores" carbon as wood and not as an available "greenhouse" gas.

6. Trees Clean the Air

Trees help cleanse the air by intercepting airborne particles, reducing heat, and absorbing such pollutants as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. Trees remove this air pollution by lowering air temperature, through respiration.

7. Trees Shade and Cool

Shade resulting in cooling is what a tree is best known for. Shade from trees reduces the need for air conditioning in summer. In winter, trees break the force of winter winds, lowering heating costs. Studies have shown that parts of cities without cooling shade from trees can literally be "heat islands"

8. Trees Act as Windbreaks

9. Trees Fight Soil Erosion

. Tree roots bind the soil and their leaves break the force of wind and rain on soil. Trees fight soil erosion, conserve rainwater and reduce water runoff and sediment deposit after storms.

We have seen the very huge advantage of planting tress, as African youths present,we need to make our little contribution by planting just one tree at a time. **It is estimated that about 65% of the total population of Africa are below the age of 35 years,which is a very good definition of a youth and this will make   Africa the most youth full Continent. By 2020,  projecting  that out of 4 people, 3 will be on average 20 years old. .this should be a very good avenue to inculcate the culture of tree planting in African youths.**

**We have over time seen Africans that are really passionate about their environment by planting tree,**

**We can learn a lesson from**  from Amuwo Oidofin Council in Lagos ,Nigeria where  12,000 trees were planted and nurtured in a year and in Kenya from  [Wangari Maathai](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/wangari-maathai),a passionate environmental crusader who encouraged the women to work together to grow seedlings and planted tens of millions of trees,, that act made her the first African woman to win the [Nobel peace prize](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/nobelpeaceprize).

Lets remember that we have come to cop 18 not to listen, but to listen and act. We must be a part of a solution, we must save our planet and save African because African at a very high risk of a climate disaster.

Before I go,I like to leave a word with us that was said by the late [Wangari Maathai](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/wangari-maathai),

She said and I quote

We cannot tire or give up. We owe it to the present and future generation of all species to rise up and walk, that’s why we have to plant because When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and hope.

Thank you