

## **Generation Restoration: Shaping Our Future**

I remember when the sound of birdsong would wake us and not the rooster. Now, all we hear is silence and the distant whining of chainsaws.

The tree beside our house in Lagos used to shield us from the burning sun. I often sat under it, reading quietly, feeling safe and calm. On tough days, it reminded me of my late grandmother—her gentle voice always came to mind when I sat there. But when the land was sold, the tree was the first thing they cut down. Since then, the silence felt different, like something important was missing.

Now, as a medical student deeply involved in environmental and health advocacy, I see clearly how restoration isn't just about planting trees. It's about preserving memory, dignity, and futures. To make restoration sustainable, I propose a reformed adaptation of Nigeria's 1901 Forest Proclamation. Originally requiring one tree to be planted for every one felled, the policy lacks proper enforcement and relevance for today's challenges. My reform would mandate community-backed planting: each local government would host an annual "Regreen Day," where tree planting is paired with public education. Schools and youth groups would lead the events, and verified participation would earn civic recognition or merit-based scholarships, creating a culture where restoration is both a duty and an honor.

Restoration isn't a solo act. It's generational. And every tree planted today tells tomorrow's children, "We tried. For you."