

Roving correspondent Sabato Kasika spotted this curiously loaded motorcycle along the road at Mago-
meni Mapipa in Dar es Salaam city at the weekend.

UN envoy marks birthday with 10,000-tree distribution drive to combat climate change

By Correspondent Mary Mosha,

Moshi

IN a unique departure from traditional birthday celebrations, Reverend Prof Aidan Msafiri, the United Nations (UN) Goodwill Ambassador for the Environment in Tanzania, has marked his latest milestone by distributing over 10,000 trees to public and private institutions across the Kilimanjaro region.

The initiative, now in its second year, targeted a diverse range of recipients including churches, mosques, schools, and individual citizens, as part of a broader mission to restore the local ecosystem.

Prof. Msafiri—who is also a Catholic priest and the founder of the Kilimanjaro Consortium for Development and Environment (KCDE)—emphasized that environmental stewardship is a spiritual duty.

“It is not right to celebrate by lighting candles, as it contributes

to carbon emissions,” Prof. Msafiri said. “Instead, it is our duty to thank God through actions that protect the environment. Trees are life; they are the economy and even the final part of the human journey.”

The distribution reached key religious and educational landmarks, including Moshi Catholic Cathedral, where 600 confirmation students received seedlings, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania-Northern Diocese (ELCT-ND), Kibosho Girls Secondary School and the TPC Mennonite Church.

The tree-planting drive has gained significant structural support from religious leaders. Reverend Andrew Munisi, Secretary of Stewardship and Projects for the ELCT-ND, revealed that the church has now made environmental care a prerequisite for religious graduation.

“The ELCT has introduced a procedure where every confirmation student must not only pass a written exam but also

prove they have planted and cared for 10 trees,” Rev. Munisi explained.

This sentiment was echoed by Samwel Gadiel, Director of Chui Investment, who urged the government to formalize this model in the national curriculum. “We need a special procedure ensuring each student plants and supervises at least 10 trees to build sustainable environmental awareness from a young age,” Gadiel noted.

The initiative comes at a critical time for the Kilimanjaro Region. Regional Commissioner Nurdin Babu issued a stern warning to citizens who allow livestock to roam freely, noting that roaming animals are a primary threat to young saplings.

“Village and sub-district leaders have a responsibility to ensure these trees grow,” Commissioner Babu stated. He further called on local councillors to enact by-laws that provide a legal framework for protecting new forests against destruction.