In Nairobi, hundreds of people responded to the government’s call to plant 100 million trees across the country on Monday.

Following a 40-year drought in the Horn of Africa region, Kenya’s President William Ruto has pledged to plant 15 billion trees by 2032.

Civil servants, students, and families gathered at various locations in the capital Nairobi on Monday to plant trees despite torrential rain.

“I planted about 50 trees today. I think this is a powerful and necessary initiative for the planet, especially after experiencing a dramatic drought for several consecutive seasons,” one government official Joan Kirika told AFP.

William Ruto claims to care about climate change but drew the ire of environmental groups after announcing in July that logging would resume after a five-year ban.

At the time, he claimed that the resumption of logging was aimed at creating jobs and developing sectors of the economy dependent on forest products and that it only concerned mature trees in forests planted and managed by the state.

Last month, a Kenyan court suspended this decision to lift the logging ban but authorized the falling of 5,000 hectares of mature trees.

The forestry industry contributed 1.6 percent to Kenya’s GDP last year, according to official statistics, which also indicate that forests currently cover 8.8 percent of the country.

The timber industry employs around 50,000 people directly and 300,000 indirectly, according to government figures, in this East African country hit by unemployment and inflation.