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منظمة
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COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

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FOREST AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION MECHANISM

I.   BACKGROUND

1.   Continued deforestation and land degradation pose serious obstacles to eliminating poverty, hunger and biodiversity loss in many parts of the world today and to reducing the impacts of climate change. Forest and land degradation also affect negatively soil protection and the water cycle, undermining agriculture and productive ecosystems and threatening the livelihoods of millions of people. In many parts of the world, however, people have started to restore their degraded forests and landscapes, creating many new opportunities. The scale of this opportunity is immense: according to the Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration (GPFLR), more than 2 billion hectares of the world's deforested and degraded landscapes have potential for restoration, a process that could help reduce poverty, improve food security, reduce climate change, conserve biodiversity, improve soil and water protection and would increase the forest area from 31 percent to 47 percent.

2.   There is a growing awareness of the importance of forest and landscape restoration thanks to several international processes. The Bonn Challenge is the result of a ministerial conference held in Bonn, Germany in September 2011, which set a target of restoring at least 150 million hectares of degraded land by 2020. Additionally, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have adopted the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in 2010 – Target 15 calls for countries to restore at least 15 percent of their degraded ecosystems by 2020. At the 21st session of COFO in September 2012, member states recommended that FAO *"identify its role in achieving the Bonn Challenge and strengthen its capacity in rural land-use planning in an interdisciplinary way through both normative work and project support to countries"*. Member states also recommended that FAO seek support for its field programme to increase assistance to member countries' capacity development in intersectoral planning, institutional development and the application of integrated approaches, and to continue engagement with the GPFLR.

3.   Responding to these challenges and recommendations, FAO has proposed the establishment of the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism (FLR Mechanism), which will help countries to achieve their commitments towards the Bonn Challenge and the Aichi Targets, catalyzing the work of the Organization in close collaboration with key partners in the context of the GPFLR.

II.   ROLE OF THE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION MECHANISM - SUPPORT TO ACTION ON THE GROUND

4.   The FLR Mechanism will support the implementation as well as monitoring and reporting of FLR at the country level. It will operate globally and its initial phase will span a seven-year period from 2014 to 2020 and will focus mainly at country level on:

- Facilitating a multi-stakeholder process in selected countries, mobilizing key actors from government, civil society, private sector and the international community, to define needs and opportunities for FLR and carry out institutional mapping of key FLR players. The process is expected to lead to a national FLR plan that includes areas targeted for restoration; the potential roles and responsibilities of all actors; capacity development needs; financial resources and technical support required and an indication of how to mobilize such support. Full consideration will be given to ongoing and planned FLR efforts occurring in a variety of sectors (forestry, agriculture, environment, etc.) and in the context of different processes (e.g. UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC) and incorporate them to avoid overlap and duplication.
- Developing, compiling and disseminating tools and best practices related to FLR, taking into account existing related efforts (e.g. on land use planning, participation, genetic resources, biodiversity, protection from pests and disease, fire management, water and soil conservation, landscape values, etc.).
- Supporting the establishment of pilot projects and helping broker new large-scale projects and programmes with national, bilateral and multilateral donors and the private sector.
- Supporting adequate quality control of well-established FLR efforts, to ensure compliance with accepted guidelines, norms and standards.

5.   The FLR Mechanism will also provide support at the global level in:

- Developing guidelines and standards for the establishment of baselines and the monitoring, measurement, reporting and verification of successful restoration efforts in full collaboration with GPFLR and interested countries, contributing to national and international reporting obligations.
- Providing a financial intelligence function, identifying and making available to countries and implementing agencies information about sources of funding for FLR, as well as informing financial and donor institutions about the needs and opportunities for funding FLR. A crucial function will be to ensure that FLR becomes a more integral part of budget allocations of key international financial institutions (IFI) through closer partnership and collaboration.
- Contributing to the more effective embedding and reporting on FLR actions in global and regional commitments and processes – especially those related to (i) the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, (ii) the CBD with special reference to the Aichi Targets 5, 11 and 15, (iii) the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, helping countries address enhancement of forest carbon stocks under the REDD+ initiative; (iv) the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative, (v) the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization, (vi) the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, (vii) the Central Africa Forests Commission, (viii) the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, and (ix) the Association of South East Asian Nations.
- Helping to build and support operational partnerships on FLR, striving for increased intersectoral collaboration.

6.   The FLR Mechanism will work closely and in full complementarity with other FAO-hosted arrangements and programmes that have been set up to support related objectives, such as the UN-REDD programme, the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) initiative, the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) programme, the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and others.

7.   The work of the FLR Mechanism is already embedded in the new Strategic Framework, in particular the Strategic Objectives focusing on "increasing and improving the provision of goods and

services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner" (SO2), "reducing rural poverty" (SO3), "enabling more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems at local, national and international levels" (SO4) and "increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises" (SO5). Under Strategic Objective 2, work of the FLR Mechanism will be linked in particular to Output 20103, "Organizational and institutional capacities strengthened to support innovation and the transition toward more sustainable production systems". It will contribute to the delivery of the Major Area of Work on Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity, as well as to the Regional Water Scarcity Initiative in the RNE region.

III.   FUNDING/SUPPORT

8.   The FLR Mechanism will be funded through extra-budgetary resources and/or seconded professional staff from external donors/partners, including the Republic of Korea, building on the current cooperation with the FAO Forestry Department. It will be established as an umbrella programme under which a variety of bilateral, multilateral and other types of support could be accommodated, mainly to support action at country level.

9.   The relationship of the FLR Mechanism with GPFLR partners, including the International Model Forest Network, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Tropenbos International, the World Resources Institute, the World Bank and others, will be defined and detailed in the framework of the GPFLR Steering Committee to ensure that the FLR Mechanism is fully supportive of and synergistic with all efforts towards the achievement of the Bonn Challenge.

IV.   POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Committee may wish to invite countries to:

- consider the added value of addressing agriculture, forestry, fisheries and livestock management through a more integrated landscape approach and by strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation amongst various land management agencies;
- support actions towards the achievement of the Bonn Challenge, targeting the restoration of at least 150 million hectares of degraded forest lands by 2020, as well as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to ecosystem restoration;
- consider strengthening the mobilization of innovative and enhanced levels of financing for the restoration of degraded lands, including through the GEF STAR allocations they will have available under GEF6 related to land degradation, biodiversity and climate change;
- provide financial and/or in-kind contributions to support the umbrella programme of the FLR Mechanism.

The Committee may wish to recommend FAO to:

- support country efforts to plan and implement activities related to the restoration of forests and other degraded lands, in particular through activities of the FLR Mechanism;
- seek further cooperation with partners to promote the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded lands, in particular through direct involvement in global partnerships and initiatives, including the GPFLR, International Model Forest Network, and the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature initiative, as well as with the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests;
- engage in more cross-cutting and inter-departmental work, in particular through the relevant Major Areas of Work and/or Regional Initiatives defined under the new Strategic Framework, to support landscape approaches to achieve greater food security, poverty alleviation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;
- pursue active engagement with multilateral, bilateral and private sector resource partners, including the GEF and multilateral and regional development banks, to enable FAO to increase its support to member countries for capacity development in inter-sectoral planning, institutional development and application of landscape approaches on the ground;

- ensure that the FLR Mechanism is fully operational within 12 months of its establishment.