



联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

Organisation des Nations  
Unies pour l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

E

# COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY

## WORKING GROUP ON DRYLAND FORESTS AND AGROSILVOPASTORAL SYSTEMS

### Inaugural Session

Rome, 16-17 July 2019

## FAO'S PROGRAMME OF WORK IN DRYLAND FORESTS AND AGROSILVOPASTORAL SYSTEMS

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. Drylands cover about 41 percent of the Earth's land surface, and are characterized by a scarcity of water. The United Nations (UNEP, 1992; UN Environment Management Group, 2011) defines drylands as lands where the ratio of annual precipitation and mean annual potential evapotranspiration, also known as the aridity index, is no more than 0.65. An estimated 2 billion people live in drylands, about 90 percent of them in developing countries (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). The majority of these people depend on forests and other wooded lands, grasslands and trees on farms for their livelihoods and to meet basic needs for food, medicines, wood energy; and other non-wood forest products such as gums and resins, and fodder for livestock<sup>1</sup>.

2. Dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems contribute to the food security, livelihoods and resilience of millions of people and to sustainable landscapes. Extensive areas of drylands are already degraded. Drylands are at high risk of further degradation and associated environmental and socio-economic impacts, including desertification, conflict, water and food insecurity, migration, and unemployment, among others. Addressing sustainable management and restoration of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems requires a comprehensive understanding of their complexity, status and roles and context-specific approaches tailored to the unique conditions of drylands. Action and investments in monitoring, sustainable management and restoration of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems and their adaptation to climate change need to be increased.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Preliminary Findings on Trees, forest, and land use in drylands - *The first global assessment*

<sup>2</sup> *Drylands & Forest and Landscape Restoration Monitoring Week* (26-29 April 2016)

*This document is printed in limited numbers to minimize the environmental impact of FAO's processes and contribute to climate neutrality. Delegates and observers are kindly requested to bring their copies to meetings and to avoid asking for additional copies. Most FAO meeting documents are available on the Internet at*

*www.fao.org*

## **II. FAO PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES**

### **A. Action against desertification**

3. Action Against Desertification (AAD) is an initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) implemented by FAO and partners with funding from the European Union and Turkey. In Africa, it specifically supports the implementation of the Great Green Wall (GGW) and the national action plans to combat desertification (under UNCCD) through South-South Cooperation.

4. Drylands are among the ecosystems most affected by environmental degradation. Their restoration has been one of FAO's key priorities for many years. This investment is paying off. Large-scale restoration work on degraded lands in 12 countries, 10 of which are Great Green Wall countries in Africa, in addition to Fiji and Haiti. Through this initiative, FAO has put the latest expertise in plant science at the service of local communities, shows that land degradation is not yet irreversible. In five years, AAD has brought 50 000 hectares of degraded land under restoration, planting 25 million trees combined with diverse herbaceous fodder species and reaching 700 000 people.

5. Solving land degradation hinges on economic development, so AAD also supports five major value chains of non-timber forest products for income generation including fodder, restoration seeds, beekeeping and honey, gums and resins, balanites oil and soap. Its approach places rural communities at the heart of land restoration, delivering multiple ecological and socio-economic benefits and contributing to the UN's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, in particular to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 13 and 15. After nearly a decade of direct involvement in dryland restoration, FAO now disposes of a blueprint for large-scale restoration of drylands in Africa and beyond.

For more Information please visit: <http://www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/>.

### **B. Forest and landscape restoration mechanism**

6. FAO established the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism (FLRM) in 2014, with the aim of helping countries meet their ambitious pledges to restore degraded lands made under the Bonn Challenge and related regional processes such as the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100), and the Initiative 20x20 in Latin America, as well as other global initiatives related to landscape restoration such as the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Altogether, 350 million hectares of degraded land world-wide are targeted to be restored by 2030.

7. The FLRM provides direct support to countries that focuses on developing the enabling conditions needed to take restoration work to scale, including effective institutional mechanisms, cross- sectoral policies that are well aligned, and improved governance; providing innovative landscape-wide technical support and capacity development for largescale forest land restoration (FLR); and supporting work in monitoring of FLR, value chain development and innovative financing.

8. Three main FLRM projects are in dryland areas: "Forest and Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Land Management in the Sahel", funded primarily by the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM) and supporting Burkina Faso and Niger, the "Reversing deforestation and degradation in high conservation value Chilgoza Pine Forests in Pakistan" funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) under the global programme "The Restoration Initiative – TRI", and "The Paris Agreement in action: Upscaling forest and landscape restoration to achieve nationally determined contributions" project, which is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and is active in Ethiopia, Lebanon, Morocco and Niger.

For more information on FLRM: <http://www.fao.org/in-action/forest-landscape-restoration-mechanism/en/>.

### **C. Committee on Mediterranean Forestry - *Silva Mediterranea***

9. The Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea* is a key platform for regional forestry cooperation and dialogue between the research community, policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders. It highlights the specific challenges faced by Mediterranean forests and calls attention to their global importance.

10. Under “The Paris Agreement in action: Upscaling forest and landscape restoration to achieve nationally determined contributions”, which contributes to the Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism, the regional Mediterranean component contributes to the implementation of the Agadir Commitment<sup>3</sup> that was adopted at the high-level segment of the Fifth Mediterranean Forest Week in 2017. The project aims to support the restoration of degraded lands to help countries achieve positive climate mitigation and adaption impacts that will contribute to their National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other commitments such as the Bonn Challenge on the restoration of degraded and deforested lands and Aichi targets on biodiversity. The project will build regional/national capacity as a foundation to implement large-scale FLR programmes in Mediterranean countries.

11. A project entitled “Med For Youth – Empowering young entrepreneurs around the Mediterranean” is being developed under *Silva Mediterranea* to promote the goods and services provided by Mediterranean forests, while favouring rural development. It aims to both develop forestry and support youth initiatives and entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean region. The project is seeking financial support from donors.

For more Information please visit: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/en/>.

### **D. Fire Management**

12. The negative social, and ecological impacts and economic costs of wildfires on landscapes continue to escalate. Wildfires impact on food security, sustainability of agriculture and forestry and increase vulnerability of communities, particularly the poor. Fires have been used by humans for millennia and play a critical role in many ecosystems. Indigenous/traditional knowledge is known to be a rich resource that has been recognised and applied in a number of cases and continues to be explored by FAO and others. The bulk of fire emissions globally are from burning of savannah, so the drylands are a critical landscape for fire management. Wildfires will have implications for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

13. The FAO approach to fire management is simultaneously country-driven and global. Data on fire incidence, land area and biomass burned is weak in many countries and incomplete globally. The combination of existing data sets, remote sensing data, historical information and emerging data sets and methods applied at national level will vastly improve understanding by countries of their wildfires, providing independent and verifiable assessment of where fires occur (fire detection – hotspots) and the landscapes, vegetation and communities impacted (burned area). This step of Research and analysis of fires is essential in planning for Risk reduction, Readiness to fight wildfires, Response to wildfires, and Recovery of the restoration of landscapes, livelihoods and assets impacted by wildfires. Hence, Research, Risk reduction, Readiness, Response, and Recovery are the 5 R's of effective forest fire management.

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fao.org/forestry/45685-0ad87e3a1d4ccc359b37c38ffccb5b1fc.pdf>

### **E. UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**

14. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously passed resolution A/RES/73/284<sup>4</sup>, designating 2021-2030 as the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. This resolution was co-sponsored by 72 Member States. FAO and United Nations Environment Programme were invited to lead the implementation of the Decade in collaboration with the secretariats of the Rio conventions, other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and entities of the United Nations system.

15. In the resolution, the UN General Assembly encourages Member States "to mainstream ecosystem restoration into policies and plans to address current national development priorities and challenges due to the degradation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems, biodiversity loss and climate change vulnerability, thereby creating opportunities for ecosystems to increase their adaptive capacity and opportunities to maintain and improve livelihoods for all".

16. FAO is working closely with UN Environment and other key partners to prepare a series of consultations with Member States and other stakeholders to inform about the purpose of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration - and on initial steps taken to plan for its implementation - and to solicit views on what will be needed to significantly scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://undocs.org/A/RES/73/284>