

Dear (honoured guests, chair, delegates, etc.?)

1. Thanks for this occasion to update you on the [WG Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems](#). Firstly I take the opportunity to say a hearty thank you to our donors and country members, without whom we would not be able to undertake the work that we do.
2. Drylands contain 1.1 billion hectares of forest, corresponding to 27% of the world's forest area as reported by FAO's quite recently initiated "[integrated assessments of Trees, Forests and Land Use in Drylands](#)". Moreover, one third of the drylands contain close to 14 billion trees outside forests.
3. These trees are present in pastures, cultivated land and homesteads. Indeed, the dryland landscape is a continuum of mosaics of forests and trees mixed in pastoral and agricultural land-use, sustaining the lives of 2 billion people and 60 % of global food production.
4. Ongoing, and climate change impending, dryland degradation needs accelerated attention for livelihoods, food production, biodiversity and carbon retention. The forest, trees and woody plants have a key role in integrated silvopastoral land-use transformations needed. This is the background for our engagement in this WG. Now, onto our report.
5. Firstly, we have produced two working papers as part of our first work plan 2019-2022, and an agreed Work Plan for 2022-2024. Our Work Plan, endorsed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Working Group last November, will address the transformation of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral production systems; promote innovative ways to monitor and restore drylands; improve dryland forest-based livelihoods and human wellbeing in post COVID recovery; and boost knowledge documentation and sharing.
6. This is in an effort to scale up collaboration and experiences on sustainable management and restoration practices across dryland regions. The work plan aims to be a successful and integral component of our working group in the upcoming years and emphasize the important role and partnership with other FAO statutory bodies such as COAG sub-committee on Livestock and the Secretariat for the International Year of Rangeland. This is in line with the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#), co-initiated by FAO.
7. Secondly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the WG was hosted by Tanzania in November. We worked hard over the preceding 2 years to raise our presence and saw an increase in participants. We also strive for gender and regional representation in committees and meeting programs and presentations. At our inaugural session (2016?), 20 member countries, 2 intergovernmental organizations and 2 NGOs attended. In November 2021, a total of 104 were present with 46 nominated experts representing 29 member states and 4 observer countries.
8. So, what progress has been made and how can we continue with your spirit and support? Well, we have contributed to various restoration initiatives, programmes and projects. We have committed to recognizing the role of women in fighting the effects of droughts and climate change and including women in the higher decision-process, and we have launched FAO's South-South platform on [WeCaN Nurturing Community of Knowledge Practice for Women in Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems](#).
9. In addition, with the support and big thanks to the Forest Rangelands & Watershed Organization of the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Iran, we are in the process of launching the [first e-learning program](#), with the FAO e-learning academy, on how to transform dryland production systems under climate change. We have engaged 14 interested partners to support this initiative.

10. We are also partnering with four universities including (University of Jordan, WOCAT, Swedish University for Agricultural Science, University of Richmond, Agricultural Research Council of South Africa, Sokoiaie University of Agriculture) to conduct a [summer school programme in 2023](#) during the 3rd session of the WG which will be conducted in parallel with the Near East Forest and Rangeland Commission held in Jordan.
11. Last but not least, we launched the [Grazing with Trees Assessment](#) on September 29 at the GLF COFO. In this assessment, the WG served as an advisory committee and provided 17 case studies showing how silvopastoralism can work to support the restoration of dryland forests and agrosilvopastoral systems, where the role of animals and trees can be seen as allies not as enemies.
12. Before closing, I would like to reiterate our partnership with the COAG sub-committee on Livestock as well as the Secretariat International Year of Rangeland. And again warm thanks to all of contributors, donors and supporters.
13. We hope that COFO members will take note of the progress, encourage countries to support our resource mobilization efforts by mobilizing and deploying cross-regional expertise and promoting innovative and inter-connected sustainable agrosilvopastoral systems. Many thanks for your time.