

Dear Colleagues,

As it is known, the "High Level Segment " will be held on Friday, March 24, 2017 as part of "*the fifth Mediterranean Forest Week held in Agadir, Morocco on the 24th of March 2017*". It is expected that "Agadir Commitment towards a Mediterranean Regional Initiative on Forest and Landscape Restoration" will be accepted here.

With this Commitment/ Declaration, "*the establishment of a Regional Mediterranean Initiative on FLR*" is basically initiated. This initiative is expected to be coordinated by the FAO Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions- *Silva Mediterranea*.

And within the scope of the Silva Mediterranea WG8 on "Desertification and Restoration of Mediterranean dryland" <http://www.fao.org/forestry/silva-mediterranea/90989/en/> , a number of areas are being cooperated, including expertise and experience exchange.

The Regional Mediterranean Initiative will aim at reaching the designated objectives by 2030.

As it is known, Turkey places great importance on national and international level in terms of forest and landscape restoration. Within this context:

- In 2012, Turkey proposed the establishment Silva Mediterranea WG8 on "Desertification and Restoration of Mediterranean dryland " Mrs. Özlem Yavuz- Coordinator)
- In 2015, he hosted the UNCCD COP12 and then started "Ankara Initiative". The Agadir Declaration and the Ankara Initiative have similar objectives. Again in this context UNCCD North Mediterranean Regional Coordination Center was opened in Istanbul.
- Together with TIKA, the Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs supported to the preparation *FAO's "Global guidelines for the restoration of degraded forests and landscapes in drylands - Building resilience and benefitting livelihoods"*
- Turkey also supported COFO's activities on this issue.
 - o Mr. İsmail Belen attended to the "Forest and Landscape Restoration regional initiatives" on behalf of Turkey at 20 July 2016. <Http://www.carfu.org/?p=787>
 - o He also attended "The Great Green Wall : Africa's Response to Climate Change and Zero Hunger-Monday, 18 July 2016" <Http://www.carfu.org/?p=890>
 - o Our views were shared by participating in the COFO Forests and Sustainable Development Goals High Level Panel on 18 July 2016. <Http://www.carfu.org/?p=885>.
 - o In addition, interviews were conducted with relevant units of FAO. Https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdPzT00_GEs

It is my pleasure to explain that Turkey supports the "the *establishment of a Regional Mediterranean Initiative on FLR*" which is aimed to be established with the Agadir Declaration.

Turkey also will contribute with a total of 500.000 numerical targets by 2021. We also support that the initiative is coordinated by Silva Mediterranea and its Working Group 8 Desertification and Restoration of Mediterranean dryland .

In this regard, it is my pleasure to attach the Letter written and signed by the **Minister, HE Prof. Dr. Veysel Eroğlu** about Turkey's support for this initiative. The letter has been sent to **HE Aldulahim Lhafi, the High Commissioner Water Forest and Fight against Desertification of the Kingdom** of Morocco dated 16 March 2017.

On the other hand, I have the opinion that, the Agadir Declaration should be implement together with all relevant parties, including civil society organizations and the private sector, especially the trade unions working on the field. It should support the establishment of national, regional and sub-regional networks. The Ankara Initiative and the UNCCD Northern Mediterranean Regional Coordination Office could be considered a "Useful and necessary" partners to work.

With my kind regards.