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Item 4.8 of the Provisional Agenda

AFWC/EFC/NEFC COMMITTEE ON MEDITERRANEAN FORESTRY QUESTIONS - *SILVA MEDITERRANEA*

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

AGADIR, MOROCCO, 22 MARCH 2012

THE AGADIR COMMITMENT TOWARDS A MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL INITIATIVE ON FOREST AND LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

I. Context

1. At its 21st Session in February 2012 in Antalya, Turkey, the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* decided to establish a new working group on “Desertification and restoration of forest ecosystems in arid zones” led by Turkey with the support of FAO. The necessity to address forest and landscape restoration (FLR) was confirmed as a priority during the 3rd Mediterranean Forest Week held in Tlemcen, Algeria, on 17-21 March 2013 with the strategic lines of the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests (SFMF). Strategic line 6 of the SFMF specifically calls to “restore degraded Mediterranean forest landscapes” with a set of eleven recommendations that highlight restoration as an opportunity to enhance the resilience to climate change, to enhance food security and livelihoods, to regain environmental and cultural services while managing, monitoring and evaluating restored forests.

2. The strategic lines of the SFMF were endorsed under the Tlemcen Declaration by the high level segment of the 3rd Mediterranean Forest Week representing the state members of *Silva Mediterranea*. The Tlemcen Declaration called for an effective implementation on a voluntary basis of the SFMF. It specifically mentioned “combating (...) desertification” as “a priority in (...) forest and environmental policies” and called to “restore degraded Mediterranean forest landscapes” to “promote resilience of forest ecosystems and other wooded lands in the Mediterranean to face global changed”.



3. The 2013 evaluation of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* confirmed the importance of restoration as a priority topic to be addressed by the working groups of the Committee. Based on the recommendation of the 2013 evaluation, the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* at its extraordinary session on 18 March 2015 during the 4th Mediterranean Forest Week in Barcelona, Spain, decided “to promote targeted themes for which FAO Forestry Department has experts and at the very least to continue its work around (...) the fight against desertification/restoration of degraded lands and forests.”

4. The workshop on “Desertification and restoration in Mediterranean drylands” that was organized with the support from the FAO Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism in Ankara, Turkey, on 16 October 2015 during the UNCCD COP 12 set a road map for the working group on desertification and restoration of forest ecosystems in arid zones of *Silva Mediterranea*. In particular, this workshop recommended to focus the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week (MFW) on forest and landscape restoration.

5. The vision of FLR for the 5th MFW is an approach to restoration which requires coordination between sectors intended to promote productive multifunctional territories characterized by an optimal balance negotiated with local actors in terms of supply of economic, social and environmental benefits. This internationally-recognized vision for FLR allows the promotion of synergies between the three Rio conventions and can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The main question to be discussed during the 5th MFW is therefore the following: How can efforts on restoration of forests and Mediterranean landscapes help reaching the global targets related to these issues? (such as the Bonn challenge, the 15th Aichi Target of the CBD, the UNCCD target on land degradation neutrality, the Paris Agreement on climate, and SDG 15).

6. The 5th MFW will support the creation of a regional initiative on the Restoration of Forests and Landscapes in the Mediterranean area by following the example of current commitments taken on a global or regional level through various current initiatives (Bonn Challenge, the 20 × 20 Initiative in South America, the AFR100 “African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative” in Sub-Saharan Africa) and by confirming the political declaration adopted by regional countries in Tlemcen regarding the implementation of priorities set in the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests, especially of the 6th strategic line on the restoration of degraded Mediterranean forest landscapes. This Mediterranean initiative could combine: (i) a commitment by Mediterranean countries to a quantitative objective of restoration of degraded lands in the Mediterranean area based on their national efforts already set in their respective national policies and/or in their precedent international commitments (NDCs, SDGs, Aichi targets, Bonn Challenge), (ii) a commitment by the main technical partners active in the Mediterranean area to act together and in a coordinated manner to support restoration efforts in countries in the region and the implementation of an alliance between financial partners (both bilateral and multilateral) ready to contribute, in principle, to those efforts of restorations in degraded Mediterranean territories.



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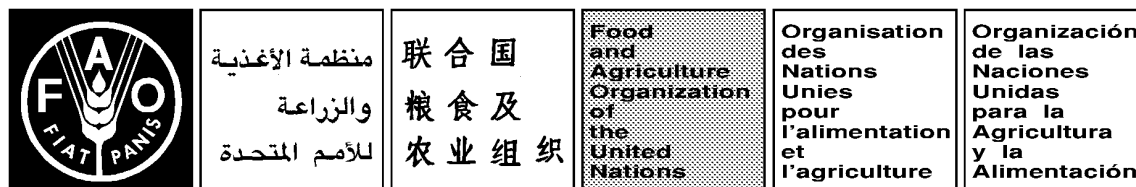
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II. Draft Agadir Commitment

“We, the participants to the high level segment of the fifth Mediterranean Forest Week held in Agadir, Morocco on the 24th of March 2017, have taken note of the strategic orientations arising out of the 5th Mediterranean Forest Week regarding major issues concerning Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR), Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and biodiversity conservation.

Noting the major contribution of Forest and Landscape Restoration to the effective implementation of actions towards achieving global commitments made by Mediterranean countries within the framework of the Rio Conventions, namely:

- The achievement of the objectives set by the Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that clearly states, noticeably in Article 5 of the Agreement and in paragraph 55 of Decision 1/CP.21 of COP 21, the need to promote actions: (i) contributing simultaneously to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation and (ii) favoring the provision of multiple benefits, including non-carbon benefits, supporting a deeper integration of our FLR efforts with our respective Nationally Determined Contributions as an operational option for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Moreover, the Marrakech Action Proclamation for our climate and sustainable development adopted at the COP 22 emphasized climate change adaptation efforts and reaffirmed the commitment for a complete implementation of the Paris Agreement,
- The achievement of the objectives on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), set by the United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in the twelfth Conference of the Parties held in Ankara, Turkey in October 2015, that requires, on one hand, efforts to reverse the current trend of Mediterranean land ecosystems degradation and, on the other hand, efforts to invest massively in initiatives aimed at the sustainable restoration of already degraded ecosystems in the Mediterranean region,
- The achievement of the Aichi targets 5, 7, 14 and 15 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, adopted within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), regarding halving the rate of loss of all natural habitats, reducing degradation and fragmentation, the safeguard of ecosystems providing essential services and the restoration of at least 15% of degraded ecosystems in order to improve their contribution to Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, the importance of which was clearly reaffirmed in the Cancun Declaration, approved on December 2016 at the thirteenth Conference of the Parties held in Mexico,



Noting the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests launched in 2010 to foster the implementation of sustainable forest management and the conservation of the services provided by these ecosystems in the current context of climate change at the Mediterranean level,

Noting the operational dimension of FLR actions for the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and, in particular, Goal 15 which aims to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”,

Noting that FLR contributes directly to the global goal 1 of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 adopted by the UNFF in January 2017 that aims to reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change, with the objective of increasing the global forested area of 3% by 2030,

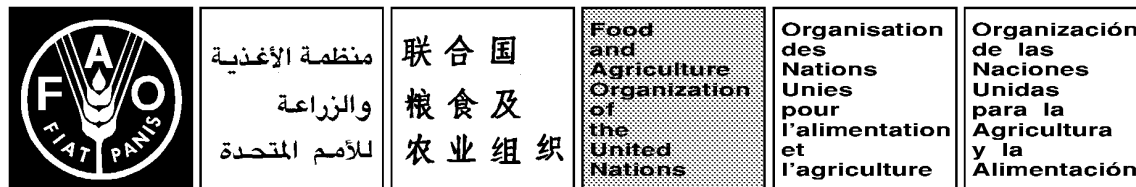
Recognizing the importance of the Bonn Challenge, an international initiative launched in 2011 with the leading support of Germany, intended to promote quantified national commitments on Forest and Landscape Restoration, on the basis of analyses demonstrating the concurrent economic, social and environmental benefits of restoration efforts and likely to facilitate a more coordinated mobilization of the financial resources needed for the achievement of these commitments,

Appreciating the collective mobilization of the members of the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR) in supporting our respective countries in the implementation of our national restoration objectives for degraded ecosystems in the Mediterranean region,

Noting that Forest and Landscape Restoration and the challenge to increase our efforts to Combat Desertification have already been recognized by our respective countries as priorities at the regional level within the framework of the Tlemcen Declaration, endorsed by the high level segment of the third Mediterranean Forest Week in March 2013, and within the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests also adopted in Tlemcen and whose Strategic Line 6 aims to “*restore degraded Mediterranean forest landscapes with the objective of promoting resilience under global changes*”,

Noting the emerging recommendations in the framework of the ministerial declarations of the Union for the Mediterranean, in particular the 2014 Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, as well as the working platforms and related regional activities,

Acknowledging the added value of the various initiatives aimed at implementing the Bonn Challenge at the regional level to address that global aspiration to Forest and Landscape Restoration, such as the 20 × 20 initiative that aims to restore 20 million hectares of degraded land in Latin America and in



the Caribbean by 2020 or the AFR100 initiative aimed at restoring 100 million hectares of degraded land in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030,

Recognizing that Forest and Landscape Restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality in the Mediterranean region are consistent and prone to successful collaboration with regional initiatives encompassing the Sahel, such as the Great Green Wall Initiative for the Sahara and the Sahel that aims to combat desertification and land degradation,

Recognizing the substantial contribution of the initiatives launched during COP 22 regarding Forest and Landscape Restoration, in particular those directed towards Africa and the Mediterranean, namely:

- i) The 3 S Initiative “Sustainability, stability and security in Africa” led by Morocco and Senegal and supported by the UNCCD that aims to promote sustainability, stability and security to face migration due to land degradation and climate change. The 3 S Initiative was adopted at the first Africa Action Summit held on 16 November 2016 in Marrakech by the African heads of state and government who committed to speed up its implementation by mobilizing all state and non-state actors as well as multilateral and bilateral donors,
- ii) The AFMS Initiative “Enhanced action for forests in the Med-Sahel region in the context of climate change” led by Morocco that aims at establishing a regional cooperation and partnership framework enabling the implementation of climate change adaption actions integrated with the sustainable management of all types of forests, in line with ongoing processes and initiatives,

Recognizing the role of soil preservation and the combat against soil degradation as an essential component of ecosystem restoration, and emphasizing the link between Forest and Landscape Restoration and the French initiative 4 per 1000 initiated at the UNFCCC COP 21 within the Lima-Paris Action Agenda,

Convinced that the Mediterranean region possesses its own specific features in terms of ecosystems, species and genetic diversity, use of and dependence on goods and services provided by forests, and its own specific threats on its forest ecosystems such as forest wildfires or desertification, that require specific regional efforts for Forest and Landscape Restoration,

Confident that a regionally coordinated cooperation on Forest and Landscape Restoration is, therefore, an asset in order to face the emergency response to counter Mediterranean forest degradation and fragmentation,

Recognizing the importance already given at the national level to actions promoting Forest and Landscape Restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality within National Forest Programs and/or national strategies being implemented in the different countries of the Mediterranean region,



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We, the participants to the high level segment of the fifth Mediterranean Forest Week held in Agadir, Morocco on the 24th of March 2017, encourage the political and administrative authorities at national level and all other stakeholders involved in the management of forest ecosystems and other wooded areas in the Mediterranean (public and private managers and civil society) to strengthen their respective initiatives on Forest and Landscape Restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality while accounting for their national particularities and needs.

In this spirit, we propose a coordinated implementation, on a voluntary basis, of the Bonn Challenge between Mediterranean countries taking into account their national circumstances, policies, priorities and forest conditions, and we find the establishment of a Regional Mediterranean Initiative on Forest and Landscape Restoration as a way to pool the efforts of the main actors in the Mediterranean region to be particularly relevant. This Regional Mediterranean Initiative on FLR will be driven by the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea*.

The Regional Mediterranean Initiative on FLR will aim at reaching the following objectives by 2030:

1. **To assess the ongoing national efforts on FLR** so that a voluntary regional target to be reached by 2030 can be determined, with the aim to facilitate the mobilization of financial resources to maintain or even increases these national FLR efforts.

This assessment of a common objective will be based on objective criteria:

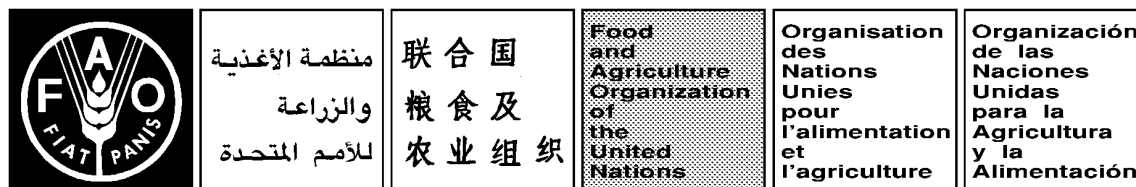
- A better assessment of the current situation of our territories degradation and of FLR opportunities, focusing on options for the sustainable provision of multiple ecosystem goods and services for a growing population in the Mediterranean, and keeping in mind the guidelines for the integration of biodiversity considerations into the restoration of ecosystems contained of the Short-Term Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration adopted by CBD COP 13;
- A precise estimate of the national efforts already planned in the policy documents currently implemented in our respective countries by 2030 and an assessment of additional efforts, potentially achievable by 2030 depending on each country policies and priorities;
- A regular verification of our respective efforts through the implementation of a monitoring and reporting system adapted to the Mediterranean context (as stated during the monitoring session of 23 March 2017) and taking into account the recommendations and technical proposals developed by experts at the global level in agreement with the guidelines and the five priority axes of the roadmap developed with the support of FAO during the Forest and Landscape Restoration Monitoring Week held in Rome in April 2016.



2. **To reinforce regional cooperation on Forest and Landscape Restoration and on Land Degradation Neutrality**, in particular through the mobilization of the experts of the working group on desertification and restoration of Mediterranean drylands of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* as well as through the development of targeted strategic collaborations with regions facing similar challenges in drylands such as the Sahel.

The reinforced regional cooperation will focus in particular on the following objectives:

- Utilize successful FLR experiences in the Mediterranean region and capitalize on the lessons learnt and on the best practices at the regional level, in particular as regards the long term resilience of restored ecosystems, local governance and territorial approaches such as e.g. Model Forests;
- Expand the cooperation on FLR to the Sahel region within the framework of the AFMS Initiative launched by Morocco during the UNFCCC COP 22, in order to reinforce the action in favor of forests in the Mediterranean-Sahel region in the context of climate change;
- Assess and promote the contribution of Mediterranean forests in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;
- Promote the dissemination and the implementation of FAO's "Global guidelines for the restoration of degraded forests and landscapes in drylands - Building resilience and benefitting livelihoods" as well as the Building Blocks formulated by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD for the achievement of LDN objectives;
- Promote the dissemination and the implementation of the Short Term Action Plan for Ecosystem Restoration adopted at the CBD COP 13 as well as its guidelines on the inclusion of biodiversity considerations in the restoration of ecosystems;
- Promote efficient FLR technical recommendations based on diversified and locally adapted forest genetic resources in order to provide to restored forest ecosystems a long term adaptation capacity to climate change, and fostering the dissemination of local species capable of generating income for the Mediterranean populations and multiple ecosystem benefits for our respective countries;
- Take better account of Forest and Landscape Restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality in the next editions of the State of Mediterranean Forests, regularly published by the main regional partners under the aegis of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-*Silva Mediterranea*.



3. **To cooperate among interested partners to develop a common and diversified strategy for the financing of FLR efforts and reinforce national capacities** in order to better mobilize existing financial instruments through actions designed to:
 - Support the access to resources from climate finance instruments and, in particular, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in order to demonstrate the important role of investments in FLR and LDN actions in order to achieve our respective national objectives within the framework of the Paris Agreement and to set up appealing financing restoration projects contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation and fostering the provision of multiple benefits by our ecosystems (including non-carbon benefits) to populations in the Mediterranean.
 - Develop a portfolio of transformational and financially appealing projects, potentially eligible to the new Funds for Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN Funds) that are currently being established under the UNCCD;
 - Promote public-private partnerships, in particular to facilitate the mobilization of private stakeholders in FLR value chains;
 - Support the actors of the Mediterranean region in getting tools for capacity building on issues regarding FLR and LDN financing and, in particular, regional and/or national training sessions focused on the formulation of financially appealing projects.
4. **To verify our respective efforts through the establishment of a voluntary monitoring and notification system for FLR and LDN efforts in the Mediterranean context** consistent with the technical recommendations and proposals developed by experts of GPFLR institutions at the global level within the framework of the roadmap elaborated during the Forest and Landscape Restoration Monitoring Week held in Rome in April 2016.
 - Take part in the process of developing and adapting to the Mediterranean context approaches, methodological tools and sets of indicators proposed by the experts specialized in FLR monitoring in light of national specificities and requirements inherent to international processes such as the Bonn Challenge and the main United Nations Conventions on the Environment (UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD); to ensure, in particular, that the suitability of planted trees to planting sites and the adaptive potential of restored forests can be assessed with those developed standards, indicators and monitoring tools;
 - Implement approaches, methodological tools and set of indicators developed within the framework of the global roadmap for FLR monitoring in coordination with national and international partners involved with Mediterranean countries.



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- Promote the use of information gathered at regional level on forest degradation and fragmentation as well as information on forest restoration objectives.
- Consolidate acquired experiences, share them between peers and contribute to the enrichment of dialogue at all levels (local, regional and at the Mediterranean level) on the best practices of FLR and LDN monitoring.”