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AFWC/EFC/NEFRC COMMITTEE ON MEDITERRANEAN FORESTRY QUESTIONS – *SILVA MEDITERRANEA*

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

Antalya, Turkey, 21 – 25 March 2022

SECRETARIAT NOTE ITEM 5 ALIGNMENT OF *SILVA MEDITERRANEA* WITH THE UN DECADE ON ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND SUBMISSION OF A FLAGSHIP ON THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 (UN Decade) is designed to inspire a global movement in support of preventing, halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations were given the responsibility to lead the implementation of the UN Decade in close coordination with their partners.

2. Underpinning this vision are three main goals that are at the core of the strategy of the UN Decade:

- enhancing global, regional, national and local commitments and actions to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems;
- increasing our understanding of the multiple benefits of successful ecosystem restoration; and

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- applying this knowledge in our education systems and within all public and private sector decision-making.

3. The Multi-Partner Trust Fund for the UN Decade is the financial engine behind the implementation of its strategy. The primary aims of the Fund are to combat declining biodiversity, support livelihoods and green jobs, enhance natural resource bases, and help societies adapt to and mitigate climate change through the global restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. In so doing, the Fund will be an important mechanism for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the objectives of the Rio Conventions.

The Fund aims to mobilise USD 100 million for the duration of the UN Decade, noting that the target will be reviewed with the evolution of needs as climate change agreements are forged between nations and as pathways for economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic become clearer.

The Fund is designed to encourage and support strategic interventions, which contribute to an informed and coordinated movement for turning the tide of ecosystem degradation. It will seek to provide constructive avenues for actions, and routes to overcome current barriers.

4. As outlined in the UN Decade strategy, Restoration Flagship Initiatives will be identified as the best or most promising examples of successful ecosystem restoration that a country or region would like to obtain global recognition for, embodying the ten Restoration Principles of the UN Decade. The main role of Flagships is to provide inspiration to other countries and regions to scale up successful restoration efforts, and to attract global attention and investments. Selected Flagships will act as a basis for joint learning across the world. Up to ten Flagships selected in the first round will be launched in 2022, likely in conjunction with the UN General Assembly in September.

II. FLAGSHIP ON THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

5. The Mediterranean region could apply to become a Flagship Initiative and possibly receive funds to undertake some specific activities. The Mediterranean Flagship proposal is targeting countries selected upon their (i) level of political will and tangible commitments at the national level, (ii) learning, replicability, and scalability potential, and (iii) global and regional outreach potential.

6. The Mediterranean Flagship consists of scaling-up functional landscape restoration in selected territories of the Mediterranean region, and contributing to the implementation of the UN Decade according to regional and national commitments. Successful case studies from different Mediterranean countries could be showcased in order to restoration processes to be replicated in other Mediterranean environments. Beyond the Mediterranean region, lessons-learned could be transferred to non-Mediterranean countries where forests and other wooded lands make vital contributions to rural development, poverty alleviation, and food security, as well as to the agriculture, water, tourism, and energy sectors, as Mediterranean forests do. Tourism, for example, under conditions of sustainable management, is a key pillar of Mediterranean economies, functioning as a constant source of employment and economic growth.

7. The Mediterranean Flagship aims to ensure fair geographical representativeness by having at least one country from each border of the Mediterranean (Eastern Mediterranean and Southern Mediterranean) region. This will allow for the strategic expansion of Mediterranean Flagship outreach potential.

8. *Silva Mediterranea* developed a concept note, to present what the Mediterranean region can bring to the UN Decade, and how it may use its support in the ongoing restoration activities and the ones that could be further developed. The concept note will be finalized during the Seventh Mediterranean Forest Week and submitted by Committee members on the UN Decade website by

the end of March 2022. If approved as a Flagship receiving financial support from the Multi Partner-Trust-Fund, a full project document will have to be developed by December 2022.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMITTEE

- The Committee endorses the proposal to submit a Mediterranean Flagship in the context of the ongoing UN Decade call for “World Restoration Flagships” launched in January 2022.
- The Committee gives the mandate to the Secretariat to finalize the official submission form by 25th March 2022 and to submit it on time by 31st March 2022 with all required endorsement letters (Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia).
- The Committee recommends to the Secretariat to prepare a concept note by October 2022 for discussion at the next extraordinary session of *Silva Mediterranea* to be held in Rome back to back the 26th session of the Committee on Forestry (3 – 7 October 2022). This will allow the Committee to be ready to submit a well structure proposal if the Mediterranean flagship is selected for receiving financial / targeted support from the Multi Partner-Trust-Fund during summer 2022.