



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP

EMG

Mid-Term Technical Segment of the 25th Senior Officials Meeting

20th May 2019

By video-audio conference (connection details in logistics note)
from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Geneva time

EMG SOM25/mid-term/04a

Distribution: EMG members

Briefing note on the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021 -2030

1) Introduction

The UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) as resolution [A/RES/73/284](#) on 1st March 2019, following the invitation to the General Assembly by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fourteenth meeting, in its decisions 14/30.

The UNGA invited *the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 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, including by identifying and developing possible activities and programmes, within their mandates and existing resources, and through voluntary contributions, as appropriate.*

The Environment Management Group as a system wide coordination mechanism on the environment is therefore invited to consider this topic as an issue for a UN wide collaboration and joint action. Through the EMG the UN system can prepare a joint agenda and plan of action to implement the Decade. UN agencies will be invited to share their views, expectations, advice, and guidance on how to make the Decade impactful, and how to link with other existing and forthcoming International Decades, and with relevant International Days.

This note provides a short picture on the importance of the Decade and potentials for collaboration and partnership.

2) Why is ecosystem restoration needed?

Land degradation is negatively impacting at least 3.2 billion people and costing over 10 per cent of the annual global gross product in loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Between 2000 and 2009 it was responsible for global emissions of 3.6–4.4 Gt of CO₂ per year (IPBES, 2018).

Reversing degradation of land and marine ecosystems can provide more than one-third of the mitigation required by 2030 to remain below a 2°C increase in average global temperatures and at the same time conserve biodiversity, increase food and water security, augment the overall well-being of human societies and help achieve the sustainable development goals.

3) Which ecosystems are covered by the UN Decade?

All ecosystems are covered, though at present there is generally more experience and ongoing activities on restoration of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, rather than of marine and coastal ecosystems.

4) What could the UN Decade achieve?

One main objective of this UN Decade is to accelerate existing global restoration goals, for example the goal of bringing at least 350 million hectares of degraded forests and landscapes under restoration by 2030 – an area approximately the size of India. The 350-million-hectare goal builds on the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and has a solid baseline established by the ['Bonn Challenge'](#) process since 2011, under which already 57 countries, subnational governments and private organizations have committed to bring over 170 million hectares under active restoration. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is developing a tracking tool called the 'Bonn Challenge Barometer' which UN Environment Programme and FAO would use, among other tools, to report to the General Assembly. Work on marine and coastal ecosystems is not yet included in this initial baseline and goal, and UN Environment and FAO would in particular be interested to discuss with other UN entities how to incorporate marine and coastal restoration aspects into the Decade.

5) Potential partnerships for the UN Decade

UN Environment and FAO aim to offer regular consultative sessions and keep Members States and UN entities updated on progress made in the preparations towards the UN Decade, and lead the implementation of the Decade in a way that enables other UN entities to make best use of the Decade as an awareness raising, capacity building and action platform. An initial basic website for the Decade will be launched in coming weeks and will be further built up as ideas and proposed structures emerge from consultations.

During the preparatory phase until 2021, the UN Environment Programme and FAO plan to engage first and foremost the existing formal and informal partnerships in this field, including the [Global Partnership on Forest and Landscape Restoration](#), [UN Water](#), the [Global Peatlands Initiative](#), the [Mountain Partnership](#), the [Collaborative Partnership on Forests](#), the [Global Landscapes Forum](#), the [Great Green Wall Initiative](#), the [Global Soil Partnership](#), the [Global Mangrove Alliance](#) and others. Particular attention would be paid to involving and informing the Rio Conventions and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and other relevant multi-lateral environmental agreements. A close collaboration will also be sought with IUCN, and their network of over 1000 member organizations, in particular, building on the experience of IUCN in supporting the Bonn Challenge.

6) How does this Decade relate to the new CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Strategic Framework, expected to be adopted in 2020?

A new Strategic Biodiversity Framework is still under discussion. However, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, at their 14th meeting in Sharm-el Sheik in Egypt in 2018, has adopted decision 14/30 which *'Invited the United Nations General Assembly to designate the decade 2021 to 2030 the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration'*. A close dialogue with the CBD Secretariat will be sought over coming months and years, for close alignment of CBD deliberations and decisions with the opportunities offered by the UN Decade.

7) Initial steps towards the implementation of the Decade

A first consultation and brainstorming workshop on the Decade was held on 28th and 29th March 2019 in Bonn. Colleagues from FAO, UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF, hosted by the Centre of International Forestry Research), and UN Environment convened to draft an initial outline for collaboration and consultations with UN Member States, and the Rio Conventions and other UN agencies. Initial consultations were also held with two Rio Conventions Secretariats based in Bonn (UNCCD and UNFCCC); consultations with the CBD Secretariat will follow shortly. A wide range of consultations will take place between now and January 2021 to maximize partnership opportunities, and to inform the emerging implementation strategy for the UN Decade. UN Environment and FAO also aim to draw lessons from past UN Decades, and seek collaboration with ongoing Decades, and would highly welcome views and comments from other UN entities.

Further information on restoration is available in these reports:

[Restoring Forests and Landscapes: The Key to a Sustainable Future.](#)

IPBES Land Degradation Report 2018;

https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/2018_ldr_full_report_book_v4_pages.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=29395

IPBES Global Assessment May 2019;

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

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