

# The Agadir commitment

## *towards a Mediterranean regional initiative on forest and landscape restoration*

Adopted on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in Agadir, Morocco

“We, the participants to the high level segment of the fifth Mediterranean Forest Week held in Agadir, Morocco, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2017, have taken note of the strategic orientations arising out of the 5<sup>th</sup> 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, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF):

- The achievement of the objectives set by the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as well as the Marrakech Action Proclamation for our climate and sustainable development adopted at the COP 22 that emphasized climate change adaptation efforts and reaffirmed the commitment for a complete implementation of the Paris Agreement,

- The achievement of the objectives on LDN, set by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD),

- 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),

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,

Noting that FLR contributes directly to the global goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017- 2030 adopted by the UNFF in January 2017,

Recognizing the importance of the Bonn Challenge, an international initiative intended to promote quantified national commitments on FLR,

Recognizing the significance of the Ankara Initiative launched by Turkey in April 2016 in compliance with the UNCCD COP12,

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,

Noting the recommendations of the Ministerial Declarations of the Union for the Mediterranean, in particular the 2014 Declaration on Environment and Climate Change, and the suggestions emerging from the related working groups, as well as the relevant regional activities,

Acknowledging the added value of the various regional initiatives aimed at implementing the Bonn Challenge,

Recognizing that FLR and LDN in the Mediterranean region are consistent and amenable 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, in Marrakech, to FLR, namely:

- The 3 S Initiative “Sustainability, stability and security in Africa” led by Morocco and Senegal and supported by the UNCCD,

- 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,

Recognizing the role of soil preservation and the combat against soil degradation as an essential component of ecosystem restoration, and emphasizing the link between FLR and the French initiative 4 per 1000 initiated at the UNFCCC COP 21 within the Global Climate Action Agenda,

Confident that a regionally coordinated cooperation on FLR 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 FLR and LDN within National Forest Programs and/or national strategies being implemented in the different countries of the Mediterranean region,

We, the participants to the high level segment of the fifth Mediterranean Forest Week held in Agadir, Morocco on the 24<sup>th</sup> 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 FLR and LDN while taking into account their national particularities and needs.

In this spirit, we propose a coordinated implementation, on a voluntary basis, 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 FLR 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.

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;

- A quantitative estimate of the national efforts already planned in the policy documents currently implemented in our respective countries by 2030 and additional efforts to restore 8 million hectares of degraded forest landscapes by 2030;

- A regular verification of our respective efforts through the implementation of a monitoring and reporting system adapted to the Mediterranean context.

**2.- To reinforce regional cooperation on Forest and Landscape Restoration and on Land Degradation Neutrality**, in particular through better coordination among organizations and 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:

- Expand the cooperation on FLR to the Sahel region within the framework of the AFMS Initiative launched by Morocco during the UNFCCC COP 22,

- Assess and promote the contribution of Mediterranean forests in the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;

- Promote and support implementation of FLR at multiple scales throughout the region taking full advantage of regional organizations, initiatives and entities;

- Collaborate in the exploration of governance and management approaches supportive of long-term positive FLR outcomes, consistent with community needs and national policy objectives;

- 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;

- 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.

**3.- To cooperate among interested partners to develop a consensual 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;

- Develop a portfolio of projects eligible to the new LDN Funds;

- 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.

**4.- To assess our respective efforts through the establishment of a voluntary monitoring and reporting system for FLR and LDN efforts in the Mediterranean context.**

- Use approaches, methodological tools and indicators proposed by FLR monitoring experts in light of national specificities and requirements inherent to international processes; ensure that the adaptive potential of restored forests can be assessed with those developed standards;

- Use approaches, methodological tools and sets of indicators developed within existing processes;

- 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."