

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 5 March 2020
9:00 am - 12:00 and 13:30 – 16:30 pm
United Nations Office of Nairobi
Conference Room 4

**Background Document for Agenda Item 3:
Update on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)**

This note serves as a background document for consideration under Agenda Item 3: Update on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.

The note provides an update on the progress made on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, as declared on 1 March 2019 by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 73/284, including with regard to the launch of a second phase of consultation on a draft strategy for the Decade. The primary aims of the Decade are to support and scale up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration.

Member States are invited to provide further guidance on the strategy and activities planned by the Secretariat.

Briefing note

Update on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)

Subcommittee - 5 March 2020

Background

On 1 March 2019, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, 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 decision 14/30.

The Decade's vision is to prevent, halt and reverse ecosystem degradation – for all terrestrial and marine ecosystems. The UNGA invited the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to lead the implementation of the Decade, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Rio conventions and other relevant entities.

Purpose

Following the UNGA resolution, UNEP and FAO, along with partners, have developed a draft strategy for the Decade's implementation built upon a series of consultations with Governments, practitioners, civil society, youth, and private sector. The strategy, centered on three pathways to be carried out concurrently, is currently being posted on the UN Decade website <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org> publicly for comments. This is a short digest of the strategy.

Pathway I: Building a global movement

The Decade will facilitate a global movement of individuals and organizations through the following means.

- Facilitating collaboration through a digital hub that provides webinars, rapid dissemination of information through social media and web apps, exemplary local initiatives, technical support to volunteers, a dedicated section for youth, and support for coordinating and expanding local activities. The dedicated youth section will have youth-specific learning materials, showcase youth champions leading successful initiatives, and help attract support through funding and Decade partners.
- Developing an ethical imperative for ecosystem restoration that frames it as a fundamental principle (e.g. democratic governance and human rights), through the engagement of artists, philosophers, thought leaders and faith-based organizations.
- Engaging individuals, from school children to the elderly, to take part in the Decade through a broad range of activities. Youth will help drive this through social media, running campaigns, online training courses and implementing local restoration initiatives. Already, hundreds of youth have partaken in 25 consultations on the Decade which took place in 19 countries.
- Working with educators to include ecosystem restoration in school and university curricula, connecting students to the global movement with the #restorationgeneration hashtag.
- Showcasing restoration flagship initiatives through studies and promotion on social media and through investments.
- Laying post-2030 foundations to maintain specific initiatives beyond 2030 and continue nurturing the relationship between humans and ecosystems.

Pathway II: Generating political support

- Engaging heads of state and ministers from across government departments as well as businesses to champion ecosystem restoration through national accounting systems and other specific issues, such as for tenure and fisheries.

- Convening cross-sectoral dialogues approximately through existing platforms such as the Restoration Initiative, AFR100, the Global Landscapes Forum, and others.
- Unlocking finance to attract the USD 1 trillion needed to restore global ecosystems at scale, through changes in subsidy and taxation regimes, improved regulations, public-private partnerships and increased private and public sector engagement and investment.

Pathway III: Building technical capacity

- Deploying science and technology in ecosystem restoration through the Decade's stakeholders providing scientific guidance, undertaking research, deploying technology, and taking indigenous knowledge and traditional practices into account. Organizations, networks and individual experts will further provide technical support, and lessons learned will be synthesized and disseminated through existing networks and databases.

Management arrangements

Along with implementing on-the-ground ecosystem restoration initiatives and establishing a small team focused solely on the Decade, the two lead agencies UNEP and FAO are aiming to:

- Coordinate and promote the Decade
- Empower others to plan, implement and monitor ecosystem restoration
- Share knowledge, tools and lessons learned
- Report on the success of the Decade to the United Nations. General Assembly as well as donors
 - Inform the United Nations Environment Management Group (EMG) of the Decade's progress and plans
 - Establish an informal coordination mechanism with the Secretariats of the three Rio Conventions
 - Report regularly on the Decade's progress to Member States
 - Report to the U.N. Secretary-General on the Decade's contribution to the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development at the 81st session of the U.N. General Assembly (2026)
 - Produce an annual update report to the High-Level Political Forum of the United Nations

The Decade will be further designed, overseen and carried out by a Strategy Group, Advisory Boards for technical guidance and Working groups on specific themes.

A Multi-Partner Trust Fund will be established to provide funding to the Decade's core team and core partners, and for activities in pilot countries. All Member States and other interested partners are invited to contribute to the Trust Fund. The Fund can accept contributions from non-state actors as well, in line with United Nations rules, but it will not accept contributions from the fossil fuel industry. The Decade will work closely with existing public funds such as the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and other funds and initiatives.

Monitoring progress will build on existing reporting systems (e.g. the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030) as well as the new post-2020 biodiversity framework, collating data from these systems that relate back to ecosystem restoration. A joint evaluation of the Decade's progress will be undertaken in 2025 and 2028 by the UNEP and FAO Evaluation Offices.

To provide feedback on the draft strategy, please visit the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration website, at the following link: <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/get-involved/strategy>