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AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

Forests and Wildlife: Africa's diversity for shared prosperity and security

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AFRICAN FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION ACTION PROGRAMME

I. Background

1. At its 21st Session held in June 2018, Dakar, Senegal, the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission (AFWC) requested FAO's support to the AFWC Executive Committee - hereafter referred to as "Bureau" - in developing a Multi-year programme of work for AFWC. To guide the Secretariat, the Bureau members discussed this request at its second meeting held on 14-15 February 2019, at the FAO Regional Office for Africa, in Accra, Ghana. The meeting involved AFWC bureau members and benefited from the participation and contributions of regional partner organizations active in the forestry and wildlife sectors including the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Forest Forum (AFF) and the Network for Natural Gums and Resins in Africa (NGARA). The meeting reviewed the global and regional policy processes, frameworks and programmes, which influence sustainable forest and wildlife governance in Africa and defined key priorities for focus by AFWC.

2. Furthermore, the Secretariat used the electronic survey launched in September 2019 to facilitate countries' reporting on measures taken in response to the 21st AFWC recommendations, to capture respondents' views on country forestry and wildlife related priorities and challenges, and to identify those that are common to the region and that feed into the preparation of the AFWC action programme.

3. The Secretariat made a further mapping of regional priorities including those reflected in the AU's Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa (2020-2030)¹. The framework was

¹ The AU's Sustainable Forest Management Framework for Africa is available as Miscellaneous document at www.fao.org/forestry/afwc

developed with the technical and financial support of FAO in close collaboration with the AFF, member states, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other regional organizations and partners. The Framework was endorsed by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment, at its meeting held on 21-23 October 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and further launched in February 2020 at the margins of the AU Summit.

4. Building on the priorities identified during the 2nd meeting of the Bureau, the outcomes of the electronic survey and the mapping exercise, this document presents a draft proposal of the AFWC action programme, for further review, contributions and validation by the Commission.

II. Priorities for the AFWC Action Programme

5. The AFWC action programme is meant to guide the work of the Commission for the 5 to 6 years to come. It does not substitute, but rather, contributes to the implementation of existing forestry and wildlife regional and subregional related strategies, frameworks, and plans including the AU's Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Framework for Africa (2020-2030) and the African Strategy on combatting illegal exploitation and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa.

6. The identified priorities are categorized in five (5) major clusters as described below. These priorities are of transboundary nature and/or considered to be of common interest as reflected by the outcomes of the Bureau meeting, countries' electronic survey and the SFM Framework for Africa (2020-2030):

- **Advocating for, and profiling Africa's forests and wildlife in Africa.** Efforts of the Commission need to be geared towards the profiling of the forestry and wildlife sectors and their contributions to the SDGs and relevant sectors in Africa. In collaboration with key partners such as AUC, RECs, AFF, UN agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations, Academia, Research networks and other partners in the region, the Commission could facilitate through a collaborative working group of experts the development of regular publications, reports or regional thematic outlook studies to:
 - i) assess and highlight benefits and evidence-based contributions provided by forests and wildlife to the economy in the region;
 - ii) underline strength of and opportunities to the sector and progress made in addressing the challenges and threats towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063; and
 - iii) develop key messages and define required action to address challenges.

These publications, reports or thematic outlook studies could be accompanied by communication materials adapted to relevant audience for dissemination, raising awareness and advocacy.

- **Sustainable financing for forestry and wildlife programmes in Africa:** This work stream will explore ongoing status of financing devoted to Africa's forests and wildlife sectors, current and future opportunities, and identify barriers/ challenges to access large investments in these sectors in countries. The Commission role would be to identify and disseminate good approaches to address the issues of sustainable financing, share experiences and improve engagement of resource partners through regional platforms and fora. This stream of work can be directly developed in collaboration with UNFF in support of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 and their planned capacity building activities, as well as with AUC, FAO and other potential partners.
- **Climate Change: Restoration for Resilience:** This stream of work will focus on capturing, analysing, and disseminating lessons learnt, good approaches and information on ongoing programmes in the region that support sustainable management and restoration of forest, trees

and wildlife resources. It will also consider nature-based solutions in response to climate change impacts on African communities, food security and production systems. In addition, it will showcase forestry and wildlife sectors' key role in accelerating the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions and building resilience of food systems, landscapes and livelihoods in Africa. The Commission could build this work stream along other ongoing initiatives such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) and fora such as the Africa Climate Week, the Africa NDC Hub hosted by AfDB, AFR100, The Great Green Wall, among other initiatives.

- **Enhancing Action against Deforestation for Sustainable Development in Africa:** This stream of work will support countries to achieve significant reduction in deforestation rates, while enhancing agricultural productivity, biodiversity conservation, sustainable management of natural resources and income of small-scale food and forest producers. This work will support actions aiming at enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration between different sectors including private and public in the fields of forestry, wildlife, agriculture, livestock, water, energy, tourism, etc. and addressing issues related to Human-wildlife-livestock-ecosystem interface and sustainable value chain development. This will be undertaken particularly by stocktaking, building on and up-scaling successful projects and initiatives such as those related to mainstreaming biodiversity in agricultural sectors, the One Health Approach, Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), The West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change Program (WABiCC), development of sustainable value chains for forest products and ecosystem services, among others. It will take advantage and build synergies with ongoing work under both UN Decades on Ecosystem Restoration and Family Farming, as well as, the Land Degradation Neutrality targets of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and Aichi targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Drivers of deforestation will be analysed and lessons learnt on how to address the challenges posed by competing sectors will be captured and shared for scaling up. It will also look at enabling policies, and develop mechanism(s) for supporting cross-sectoral dialogues and partnerships in countries.
- **Promoting Forest and Wildlife education and profession:** This work stream will aim to enhance interest of the youth and young professionals in forestry and wildlife professions and education. It will build capacities to tap opportunities from these sectors, as well as to adapt to the new and emerging challenges in the sectors such as biodiversity, climate change, information technologies, digitalization, etc. Particular attention will be given to gender equality, women and youth empowerment in forestry and wildlife sectors.

III. Implementation mechanisms of the AFWC Action Programme

7. The bureau members have proposed to set up working groups, referred to as work streams to work under the commission on the above priority areas. These working groups could include volunteered members of the Commission, national and regional nominated experts from member countries and regional partners and institutions. Each working group, depending on partners' technical expertise and financial resources availability would produce and implement a detailed work plan and regularly report on their activities to the Commission.

8. The Secretariat may support the development and maintenance of an interactive knowledge sharing platform to ensure networking and communication within and between working groups and the Commission at large. The Commission through the Secretariat could use existing tools and/or further design or revamp a digital platform to compile and disseminate the knowledge and information produced by the AFWC and the five proposed working groups. Existing tools can be used as a basis for further development to fit the evolving purposes, for example: The Nature & Faune Journal, the AFWC website, hosted by FAO and others.

9. In addition the AFWC Bureau may identify and invite potential partners to participate in the activities of the working groups. In doing so, the Secretariat may facilitate a community of learning and practice by inviting stakeholders in the region to provide their contributions and feedback on the five proposed work streams.

IV. Points for consideration

10. The Commission may wish to invite its members to:

- Review the proposed five priorities and related working groups, provide further contributions and proceed with their validation;
- Express their interest and willingness in leading, co-leading or participating actively in one or more working groups;
- Review the proposed implementation mechanisms, assessing the potential financial implications in operationalizing them, and contributing with budget and/or experts' time allocation to the activities of the working group(s);
- Request the Bureau to review and report on progress made in the operationalization and implementation of the AFWC action programme at the next AFWC session.

11. The Commission may wish to request FAO to:

- Facilitate the exchange of information and the networking within and between the working groups and the Bureau;
- Support the Bureau and the working groups in preparing their work plans and in the mapping of potential partners to be involved in working groups activities;
- Support the design of a digital platform to serve as a knowledge sharing hub for the Commission and its working group activities, building on existing tools such as the AFWC Website and Nature & Faune Journal;
- Support the working groups in preparing flagship publications (e.g. thematic studies/outlooks) and communication materials to share and disseminate their activities.