

Kigali Declaration on Forest Landscape Restoration in Africa

We, Ministers of African countries and representatives gathered in Kigali on July 26th and 27th, 2016 for the Africa High Level Bonn Challenge Roundtable, hosted by the Government of Rwanda, in collaboration with the East Africa Community and the International Union for Conservation of Nature

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT AFRICAN COUNTRIES ARE AMONG THE MOST AFFECTED REGIONS IN THE WORLD BY EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE even though the continent bears a minimal responsibility with regards to the causes of this global phenomenon;

RECOGNISING THAT FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PURSUIT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES, by maintaining and rebuilding countries' natural capital in order to deliver essential societal and economic benefits to rural and urban communities alike;

RECOGNISING THAT FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION IS AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM TO OPERATIONALIZE KEY ELEMENTS OF GLOBAL PROCESSES, notably the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Aichi Targets, and the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification;

AWARE THAT FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION OFFERS MULTIPLE BENEFITS THAT ALIGN DIRECTLY WITH AFRICAN NATIONS ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY REDUCTION PLANS. These include the aspiration of the African's Union Agenda 2063 and its first ten-year implementation plan, bolstering economic growth and diversifying livelihoods, creating green jobs, improving agriculture practices, enhancing food security, improving the availability and quality of water resources, increasing the capacity for climate change resilience and adaptation, contributing to climate change mitigation, combating desertification, protecting biodiversity, and reducing the impact of natural disasters;

AWARE THAT FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION CAN REACH MILLIONS OF AFRICAN CITIZENS INVOLVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES, which includes women and other key stakeholders in decision-making processes on inclusive and sustainable land use, as well as identification and implementation of specific objectives for restoration;

RECOGNIZING THAT AFRICAN NATIONS FACE SIMILAR CHALLENGES AND COMMON PROBLEMS RELATED TO LAND DEGRADATION and subsequent planning and implementation of forest landscape restoration, and that countries have an opportunity to engage and deepen regional collaboration, as well as to strengthen partnerships in order to identify the best solutions to materialize successful action in favor of forests, ecosystems, and people.

CONVINCED THAT IN ORDER TO TACKLE THESE CHALLENGES IT IS NECESSARY THAT AFRICAN COUNTRIES BUILD A STRONG MOVEMENT WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTIONS to take bolder steps across sectors towards sustainable use of forests, protection of their forest reserves, promoting agroforestry among other climate-responsible practices, and restoration of degraded and deforested lands;

HIGHLIGHTING THAT COORDINATION INITIATIVES AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES ON RESTORATION BETWEEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND THROUGH SOUTH-SOUTH EXCHANGES is critical to optimize African restoration efforts;

RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR SUSTAINED MOBILISATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION IN AFRICA, to incentivize all stakeholders including and especially strengthen the communities and households that live in landscapes to continue as major investors in their own landscapes;

RE-AFFIRMING THE BONN CHALLENGE'S ROLE as a global platform for action and mobilization of policy, financial and technical support in favor of the implementation for nationally defined targets that address resilience and adaptation to climate change, land degradation, food and water security, biodiversity conservation;

RECOGNIZING that achieving the Bonn Challenge's 350 million-hectare restoration goal could generate US\$ 170 billion per year in net benefits from watershed protection, improved crop yields and forest products, and could sequester up to 1.7 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent annually;

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

1. **REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE BONN CHALLENGE** target to restore 150 million hectares of deforested and degraded lands by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030;
2. **ENCOURAGE FELLOW AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO MAINSTREAM RESTORATION INTO THEIR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES;**
3. **DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN CONTINENTAL CAPACITY FOR RESTORATION** by developing technical expertise and developing environmental and social standards for the implementation of Forest Landscape Restoration to help tackle climate change effects, improve human well-being, ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation across Africa;
4. **MAINTAIN THIS COMMITMENT IN SUPPORT OF COLLECTIVE CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION** that will mitigate the emissions of greenhouse gases and support our communities to adapt and build resilience to climate impacts, as well as use ecosystem-based approaches to reduce risk to extreme weather and disasters;
5. **REINFORCE THE COLLABORATION ON FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION ACROSS THE REGION AND SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATION**, through the "Forest Landscape Restoration regional policy and technical hubs" located in Kigali and Yaoundé, as well as the promotion of restoration through regional intergovernmental bodies, mechanisms, and economic commissions, as well as regional platforms such as AFR100 and other associated initiatives;
6. **UNDERTAKE NATIONAL ACTION TO CHAMPION INNOVATIVE FINANCIAL SCHEMES THAT ENABLE DOMESTIC INVESTMENTS IN FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION**, for example through the strengthening and development of national climate and land management fund mechanisms, tax incentives and other fiscal policies to encourage all stakeholders to participate and invest in the implementation of restoration at scale;

7. **IMPROVE COORDINATION OF EFFORTS ON FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION** by local communities, civil society organizations, private sector, research institutions, investors and development partners;
8. **CALL ON DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, INTERNATIONAL FINANCE INSTITUTIONS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SUPPORT DOMESTIC INVESTMENT AND FACILITATE ACCESS TO EXTERNAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION**, including among others international funds such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility that are currently supporting regional programmatic initiatives on FLR.

The Kigali Declaration on Forest Landscape Restoration in Africa remains open for further signatures through September 1st, 2016 when the Declaration will be celebrated at the World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i.

Signed:

Hon. Vincent Biruta
Minister of Natural Resources
Rwanda

Hon Christine Sagnon
Minister of Environment, Water and Forests
Guinea Conakry

Hon. Nii Osah Mills
Minister of Lands and Natural Resources
Ghana

Sir. Harrison Karnwea
Managing Director, Forestry Development Authority
Liberia

Hon Jesca Eriyo

Deputy Secretary General
East African Community
Arusha, Tanzania

Mr. Vincent Kongo

Director of Cabinet
Republic of Central Africa

Mr. Joseph Africano

Undersecretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry
South Sudan

Mr. Paul Mafabi

Director for Environment Affairs
Uganda

Sebastien Malele

Director General of Forest Department
Democratic Republic of Congo

Dr. Clement Chilima

Director, Forest Department
Malawi

Mr. Momedo Nemane

Climate Fund Manager
Mozambique

July 27th, 2016

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Mr. Ouattara Zana Inzan
Assistant Technique REDD+
Ivory Coast

Mr. Imbalo Lambert
Director of National Reforestation Programme
Congo Brazzaville