

The Road from Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming – Restoration in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

High-Level Panel Event, The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
Hosted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity,
with the Governments of Egypt and China, and the Korea Forest Service
4 June 2021, 10:00-10:45 a.m. EST

Background and Rationale

Natural ecosystems are exceptionally valuable to people: they provide livelihoods and food for millions of people globally, play essential roles in water and nutrient cycles, prevent erosion, foster soil formation, and support large portions of the world's biodiversity. However, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services through land degradation has reached high levels in many parts of the world. The 2018 Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) identified the dire consequences of the continued degradation of the Earth's ecosystems, as well as the clear economic case for restoration.

Globally, ecosystem degradation affects the livelihoods of 3.2 billion people, and the resulting loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services costs approximately 10 per cent of the world's GDP annually. Extensive ecosystem restoration is increasingly seen as central to conserving biodiversity, re-establishing services that people need and stabilizing the Earth's climate. In addition to food and water security, land restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems provide numerous benefits for increased employment, increased business spending and improved gender equity, all of which are critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and poverty alleviation¹. Ecosystem restoration also provides vast benefits for the global goals of biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation. It is therefore crucial to highlight ecosystem restoration in supporting the achievement of the Convention's 2050 Vision of living in harmony with nature.

The policy momentum for restoration has been growing steadily since the adoption of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including through the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI) supported by the Korea Forest Service and welcomed by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2014, the Short-Term Action Plan on Ecosystem Restoration adopted by the Parties to the CBD in 2016, and the Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme adopted by the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in 2015 and culminating with the adoption of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) by the General Assembly. The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests adopted in 2017 calls for a 3 per cent increase in global forest cover by 2030. Furthermore, 2030 is also the year for the achievement of the Bonn Challenge and the New York Declaration on Forests that have provided a platform for bringing 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030, of which 170 million hectares are pledged by national and local governments.

According to the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* (GBO-5), progress towards the target of restoring 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems by 2020 has been limited, with lack of data and capacity to assess the extent of degraded ecosystems acting as barriers to implementation². Despite the limitations of data availability for the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Targets on restoration, there are encouraging signs that the international community is mobilizing to put an end to the destruction of ecosystems, and countries have increasingly acknowledged the importance of ecosystem restoration and rehabilitation. Furthermore, critical lessons from the implementation of Aichi Biodiversity Target 15, which called for the "restoration of 15 per cent

¹ <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/strategy>

² <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-en.pdf>

of degraded ecosystems” can guide the preparatory processes that will lead to the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Some of these lessons include:

- The importance of mainstreaming ecosystem restoration commitments in cross-sectoral national policies and plans;
- Strengthening capacity for assessing the extent of degraded ecosystems;
- Enhancing coordination between different branches of government responsible for national ecosystem-based commitments; and
- Implementing integrated landscape/seascape approach ranging from natural regeneration to active restoration interventions.

Key Objectives

The objective of the event is to build high-level political momentum and raise ambition for ecosystem restoration in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Furthermore, the event will highlight the importance of initiatives such as the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (FERI), which aims to support developing countries’ capacity for planning and implementing ecosystem restoration as part of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans. FERI has been extended with a renewed agreement between the Korea Forest Service and the CBD Secretariat for 2021 to 2025.

As a main partner in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the CBD Secretariat will use this event to engage key stakeholders for building high-level ambition for restoration and strong commitments under the post-2020 global biodiversity framework that can also align with and support other globally agreed goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals, The Paris Agreement and the Land Degradation Neutrality Targets.

Provisional Agenda

The Road from Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming – Restoration in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework high-level panel event will be held on 4 June 2021, at 10:00-10:45 a.m. EST, in the context of the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and as announced on that platform. The event will be conducted virtually using GoToWebinar. Speakers may attend live or provide a pre-recorded statement, given the diversity of time zones.

Facilitator: Mr. David Ainsworth, Public Information Officer, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Speakers

- H.E. Ms. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment of Egypt, President of CBD COP 14 (5 minutes)
- H.E. Mr. Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People’s Republic of China, Host Government of CBD COP 15 (5 minutes)
- Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (5 minutes)
- H.E. Mr. Choi Byeong-Am, Minister of the Korea Forest Service (3 minutes)
- Expert(s) on ecosystem restoration and the draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (20 minutes)

Questions and discussions from the session will be pending modality of the interventions and time permitting.