

## **RECORD OF DISCUSSION**

### **Opening Session**

1. The Second Session of the Assembly of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) was held on 24-25 April 2019 in Gyeongju, Republic of Korea. Dr. Pham Van Dien, the President of the Assembly, welcomed and extended congratulations to the Philippines as the eighth Party to AFoCO. The Meeting was attended by Representatives and delegates from all Parties, namely, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Republic of Korea (ROK), Myanmar, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam. The delegates from the Observers, namely, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Kazakhstan, and Thailand also attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached as **ANNEX-1**.

### **Agenda Item 1. Adoption of Agenda**

2. The Assembly reviewed and adopted the Agenda as attached as **ANNEX-2**.

### **Agenda Item 2. Progress on the Decisions of the Assembly**

#### **Agenda Item 2.1. Outcome of the International Workshop on Achievements and the Way Forward**

3. Prior to the Second Session of the Assembly, the International Workshop on Achievements and the Way Forward was organized on 23 April 2019 in Seoul. The Workshop shared the past experiences and achievements of AFoCO and explored the way forward in line with the Strategic Plan. The Assembly took note of the recommendations proposed from the workshop as **ANNEX-3**. The Assembly further agreed to consider the recommendations in the organization's way forward.

#### **Agenda Item 2.2. Development of internal policies/guidelines**

4. Considering the general practices and standards of other international organizations as well as requirements of potential partner and resources, the Assembly took note of the definition of terms:

- a. A regulation is a rule or directive made and maintained by an authority. Regulations are rules or condition made by the governing authority that governs procedure or behavior.
- b. A policy is a principle of action adopted by an organization. It is a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by a governance body within an organization.
- c. A guideline is a statement by which to determine the course of action. Guidelines are designed to streamline certain processes according to a set routine or sound

practice to satisfy policies or regulations. Guidelines, by nature, should be open to interpretation and do not need to be followed to the letter.

- d. A manual is a book giving instructions or information to give assistance to people using a particular system.

5. The Assembly adopted **Decision 17-II-19S** on the development of regulations, policies, guidelines, and manuals. In the case of regulations and policies, the Assembly further tasked the Secretariat to clearly identify the sections or elements that require technical review from the Parties.

#### Agenda Item 2.3. Follow-up actions on the approved projects

6. Regarding the four projects approved by Decision 10-I-18R, the Assembly took note that the Secretariat has been seeking funds for the approved projects from potential donors.

7. The Assembly tasked the Secretariat to facilitate approval of projects on assured funds and consider reflecting pertinent ideas in the Project Manual.

8. The Assembly directed the Secretariat to provide immediate updates on the funding situation for the approved projects, considering domestic procedures required for matching funds committed from corresponding government.

#### Agenda Item 2.4 Other follow-up actions

9. The Assembly noted on the follow-up actions undertaken by the Secretariat regarding the Decisions of the Assembly, as attached in **ANNEX-4**.

10. Observer countries updated the Assembly on respective signing and ratification progresses of the AFoCO Agreement:

- Thailand: The AFoCO matter has passed the approval of the Cabinet and now under process by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for signing.
- Lao PDR: The internal process has been completed and waiting for the signing of the instrument of ratification by the President.
- Kazakhstan: The AFoCO matter is in final stage of the domestic procedures targeting the signing ceremony in June preferably at the occasion of the 2019 Asia-Pacific Forestry Week.

11. The Republic of Korea requested the Secretariat to support Observers to become a Party to AFoCO and benefit from engaging in implementation process of AFoCO.

12. Myanmar further informed the Assembly that the host country agreement for the RETC between AFoCO and the government of Myanmar is under legal review and will take 3-4 months to complete the review process.

13. Following the confirmation letter from the Secretariat on the membership, the Philippines requested for official notification on the payment of contribution to AFoCO.

14. In reference to the letter on the assessed contribution of the Parties to the operational expenditures for the FY 2019, the Assembly tasked the Secretariat to prepare a separate letter in case requested by the Parties as required by their respective internal process for payment of contribution.

15. With regards to the capacity building programs and courses at the RETC, the Assembly suggested that workshops and meetings would be appropriate for participation of senior or high-level officials while training courses would be appropriate for young or junior officials.

### **Agenda Item 3. Implementation of Strategic Plan 2019-2023**

#### Agenda Item 3.1. Project proposals for consideration

16. The Assembly provisionally approved the four projects as contained in **Decision 18-II-19S**, with condition that the Secretariat report on the process of submission of concept notes, project proposals, and appraisal results of the four projects, and share status of projects approved at the first session and information on project concept notes under consideration and within 2 weeks.

#### Agenda Item 3.2. Partnership arrangements with potential partner organization

17. The Assembly supported the development of partnership arrangements with other organizations in general. The Assembly took note of the work in progress on the Headquarters Agreement between the Republic of Korea and AFoCO, and application for accreditation by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The Assembly was further informed on other partnership arrangements including registration to UN, application to ODA-eligible international organisations, are under consideration.

#### Agenda Item 3.2. AFoCO Advisory Roundtable

18. The Assembly welcomed the formation of AFoCO Advisory Roundtable for continuous and consistent high-level support and recommendations. In case there is any budget implication, the Assembly tasked the Secretariat to report and reflect it in the annual work plan and budget. The Assembly endorsed the Advisory Roundtable as a non-standing advisory body.

### **Agenda Item 4. Effective operation of the Secretariat**

#### Agenda Item 4.1. Amendment to the Staff Regulations

19. The Assembly recognized the needs of the proposed revision to the Staff Regulations. The Assembly adopted the amendment of the Staff Regulations in accordance with **Decision 19-II-19S**.

#### Agenda Item 4.2. Proposal on the Revision of the Project Manual

20. The Assembly took note and recognized the needs to further align the Project Manual with the internal regulation of the implementing countries and the requirements of donors while serving as a practical guide for formulation of projects.

21. The Assembly supported to simplify and make necessary revision to the Project Manual for efficient development and operation of projects in accordance with the **Decision 17-II-19S**.

22. The Assembly tasked the Secretariat to work on the technical level with the Parties on the development of revised Project Manual and update the Assembly on the revision.

#### Agenda Item 4.3. Reallocation of Budget for FY 2019

23. The Assembly welcomed the idea of donating forest fire vehicles for training purposes at the RETC. Considering the budget required for repair and logistics, the Assembly approved the reallocation of the budget for FY 2019 as contained in **Decision 20-II-19S**.

#### Agenda Item 4.4. Status of expert pool for project review

24. The Assembly took note of the status of the expert pool maintained by the Secretariat as attached in **ANNEX-5**.

#### Agenda Item 4.5. Information on Sejong Special Self-Governing City and its proposal on inviting the Headquarters of AFoCO

25. The Assembly noted that the Sejong Special Self-Governing City intends to extend an invitation for hosting of the Headquarters of AFoCO. The Assembly, in view that the location of the Headquarters is important, advised need to consider advantage and disadvantages. The Assembly tasked the Secretariat to review the conditions of the invitation and negotiate with the Sejong City, and report the negotiation results for further consideration by the Assembly.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Plan for AFoCO High-Level (Ministerial) Meeting**

26. The Assembly welcomed and endorsed the plan of organizing the AFoCO High-Level (Ministerial) Meeting as contained in **Decision 21-II-19S**.

#### **Agenda Item 6. Any other business**

27. Korea informed the Assembly on the upcoming 2019 Asia-Pacific Forestry Week to be held on 17-21 June 2019 in Song-do, Korea.

28. The Assembly appreciated the proposal of Korea on the Peace Forest Initiative (PFI), a joint initiative between the UNCCD and the Korea Forest Service, aiming to be launched in September 2019. Korea proposed the Assembly to consider PFI in the scope or areas cooperation in the development of partnership arrangements between AFoCO and UNCCD. Korea further requested the AFoCO members to support the launch of PFI at the UNCCD COP 14.

#### **Agenda Item 7. Date and venue of the Third Session of the Assembly**

29. The Assembly considered and decided to hold the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Assembly in the last week of October in conjunction with the AFoCO High Level (Ministerial) Meeting. The Assembly tasked the Secretariat to notify the date and venue of the Third Session in due course.

30. The Assembly noted that advance information and invitation is required for high-level participation.

#### **Agenda Item 8: Adoption of the Record of Discussion**

31. The Assembly considered and endorsed the Record of Discussion. The list of decisions adopted at the Second Session of the Assembly is attached as **ANNEX-6**.

#### **Closing**

32. In closing, the President expressed appreciation to all Parties and Observers for the support and cooperation, and to the Secretariat for support and logistic arrangements for successful session of the Assembly. He wished all delegates safe trip back home and looked forward to the next session of the Assembly.

Adopted in Gyeongju on 25 April 2019.

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