

REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY

28-29 October 2019, Seoul

1. The Third Session of the Assembly of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) was held from 28 to 29 October 2019 in Seoul, the Republic of Korea. The Assembly was attended by 12 Parties, 2 Observers and the AFoCO Secretariat. The Session was presided over by Dr. Pham Van Dien, the President of the Assembly as per Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.

2. The President welcomed new members of the AFoCO, applauded AFoCO for its significant achievements, including the Science and Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) Program, launching of new projects with funds pledged by the Republic of Korea, and revamping of the websites.

3. The Assembly adopted twelve decisions as listed in the Annex-1.

Agenda 1: Organizational Matters

Agenda 1.1 Adoption of the Agenda

4. The Assembly deliberated on the agenda and agreed to include agenda on the proposal of Kazakhstan, as per the Rules of Procedure 5.4. The Assembly adopted the proposed agenda as attached as document **A3-01**.

Agenda 1.2 Membership

5. The Assembly took note of the list of Parties and Observers as contained in document **A3-02** and welcome the four new Parties to AFoCO, Lao PDR, Thailand, Indonesia, and Kazakhstan. The Assembly encouraged the observers to be a Party and further encouraged invitation of members from other Asian countries in accordance with Article 5 of the Agreement.

Agenda 2. Implementation of Strategic Plan 2019-2023

Agenda 2.1 Plan of Action

6. See **Decision 22-III-19R**

Agenda 2.2 Status of Projects Approved by the Assembly

7. The Assembly acknowledged the contribution of the Republic of Korea in funding the new six (6) projects, as contained in document **A3-04**. The Assembly was further informed that funds

to Bhutan and Timor-Leste projects shall be confirmed through the donors meeting to be held following the budget endorsement of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea in December 2019.

Agenda 2.3 Project Development and Project Proposals

8. See **Decision 23-III-19R**.

Agenda 2.4 Partnership arrangements with potential partner organizations

9. The Assembly appreciated the Secretariat's effort in increasing its network as contained in document **A3-06** and further encouraged the Secretariat to strengthen cooperation with other international organizations within common interests, for expanding joint activities and diversifying sources of funding.

Agenda 2.5 Institutional Review of AFoCO and Secretariat

10. The Assembly appreciated the recommendations of the Institutional Review endorsed by the Advisory Roundtable.

11. Having reviewed the report, as summarized in document **A3-07**, many Parties are not in a position to consider some of the recommendation of the institutional review that requires the amendment to the Agreement text.

12. The Assembly tasked the Secretariat to identify and prepare, in consultation with the Parties, the action plan on those strategic recommendations not regarded under paragraph 11.

Agenda 2.6 Update on the progress of Program and Projects

13. The Assembly took note of the on-going programs and projects, including some highlights of activities under the respective projects, and encourages the high-level visits to the project sites, as contained in document **A3-08**.

14. The Secretariat proposed the need of evaluation of the project for sustainability and future planning, as desired by the donor. The Secretariat, in consultation with the Parties, will identify the projects for the evaluation.

15. Noting on the success of mangrove rehabilitation project in Viet Nam, the Assembly task the Secretariat to consider developing promotional materials on best practices.

Agenda 3. Effective operation of the Secretariat

3.1 Establishment of Policies

16. The Assembly adopted the following decisions:

- **Decision 24-III-19R** Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Executive Director of the AFoCO Secretariat
- **Decision 25-III-19R** Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for the Assembly of AFoCO
- **Decision 26-III-19R** Policy on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism
- **Decision 27-III-19R** Policy on Information Disclosure
- **Decision 28-III-19R** Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy
- **Decision 29-III-19R** Gender Policy

3.2 AFoCO Project Manual

17. See **Decision 30-III-19R**

3.3 Plan on arrangements on the Executive Director

18. See **Decision 31-III-19R**

Agenda 3.4 Update on the Proposal of the Special Self-Governing City Sejong (SSCS) on Relocation of the Secretariat

19. The update on the proposal of the Special Self-Governing City Sejong (SSCS) on the relocation of the Secretariat was presented as advised by the 2nd Session of the Assembly as contained in document **A3-18**. Recognizing the long-term value of the strategic location of the Secretariat, many Parties are of the view that it is too early to make a decision on the relocation.

Agenda 3.5 Operation of the Secretariat

20. The Assembly considered the information on the operation of the Secretariat including the annual and financial report 2018 as contained in document **A3-19**. The Assembly adopted **Decision 32-III-19R** regarding the budget re-allocation in FY 2019.

Agenda 4. Work plan and budget 2020

21. See **Decision 33-III-19R**

Agenda 5. Preparation of the AFoCO Ministerial Meeting

22. The Assembly noted on the objectives, agenda, and business arrangement of the AFoCO Ministerial Meeting to be conducted on 30 October 2019 as contained in document **A3-21**.

Agenda 6. Proposal of Kazakhstan

23. Kazakhstan requested for consideration of the Assembly on its proposals, particularly on the establishment of a regional office in Kazakhstan, establishment of a training center for Central Asia, and consideration on qualifications on English language proficiency for the staff recruitment and scholarship programs. The Assembly has taken note of the proposal.

Agenda 7. Procedural Matters

Agenda 7.1 Date and venue of the Session of the Assembly

24. In accordance with Decision 16-I-18R, the Assembly decided to hold the 4th Session of the Assembly as a regular session on the last week of October 2020. The Assembly welcomed the proposal of Kazakhstan to host the next session of the Assembly.

Agenda 7.2 Election of the President and Vice President of the Assembly

25. The Republic Democratic of Timor-Leste and the Kingdom of Bhutan were elected as the President and Vice President in accordance with Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.

Agenda 8. Report of the Session

26. The Assembly adopted the report the Session.

Annex-1 (III-19R)

List of Decisions Adopted at the 3rd Session

[Decision-22- III-19R] Strategic Plan (2019-2023) and the revised Plan of Actions

[Decision-23- III-19R] Approval of Projects

[Decision-24- III-19R] Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for Executive Director of the AFoCO Secretariat

[Decision-25- III-19R] Policy on Ethics and Conflicts of Interest for the Assembly of AFoCO

[Decision-26- III-19R] Policy on Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism

[Decision-27- III-19R] Policy on Information Disclosure

[Decision-28- III-19R] Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy

[Decision-29- III-19R] Gender Policy

[Decision-30-III-19R] Project Appraisal Committee

[Decision-31- III-19R] Arrangements on the Executive Director

[Decision-32- III-19R] Budget Reallocation for Operational Expenditures in FY 2019

[Decision-33- III-19R] Work Plan and Budget for 2020