

Eighth Session of the Assembly
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Agenda Item 4.

Update on Partner Countries and Partner Organizations

I. Background

1. In reference to Decision 41-V-21R on Promotion and Enhancement of Partnership, Partner Countries and Partner Organizations provided a new category of participation and engagement for AFoCO. Recalling the ultimate objective of the Partner Policy is mobilizing resources for the Organization, the Sixth Session of the Assembly subsequently endorsed the Rules of Procedures for Partner Countries and Partner Organizations of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization.

2. In accordance with Decision 41-V-21R-ADD-1 Rules of Procedures for Partners Countries and Partner Organizations of AFoCO, potential Partner Organizations have sent letter of intent to be Partner Organizations of AFoCO. Subsequently, the intents received were reported to the 7th Session of the Assembly.

3. The Assembly noted the intentions and strengths of the potential Partners that could contribute to the works of AFoCO and bring good influence and impacts in the forest and forestry sector and biodiversity and climate change in Asia. The Assembly, however, proposed to further review the submitted intentions. The Assembly further tasked the Secretariat to provide additional information including the institutional backgrounds and key areas of work of the respective organization for further consideration by the Assembly.

II. Update on the Intention received from new prospective Partner Organizations

A. Ojeong Resilience Institute

4. The Ojeong Resilience Institute submitted the letter of intent on 21 June 2022. The OJEong Resilience Institute is the center of the Asia resilience research network established at the Korea University. The main objectives of the Ojeong Resilience Institute (ORI) are to promote research and education on disaster resilience and sustainable development, provide policy recommendations, develop educational programs, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and facilitate international cooperation.

5. The potential areas of mutual benefits are:
 - a. Exchanging knowledge and experience in sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem services, as well as reforestation and forest rehabilitation
 - b. Developing new methodologies and approaches for sustainable forest management
 - c. Staff exchanging to ensure efficient communication and collaboration
 - d. Performing seminars, workshops, symposia, and other relevant activities for
 - e. sustainable forest management

B. Chamber of Forest Engineers of Turkiye

6. The Chamber of Forest Engineers submitted the letter of intent on 20 September 2022. The Chamber of Forest Engineers, a non-profit non-governmental organization, was established under and recognized by the Constitution of the Republic of Turkiye. The Chamber of Forest Engineers is a credible organization with expertise in the forest sector with more than 17,000 active members. The Chamber provides valuable advisory, training and awareness creation contribution working closely with the government sector. It has long-standing partner relations UN agencies, particularly UNFF, FAO and UNECE, IUCN, and relevant organizations in Europe.

7. The Chamber of Forest Engineers of Turkiye has the complementary strengths to bridge AFoCO with Europe, Balkans, Africa and Near East, particularly through
 - a. Providing expertise in developing and improving forest-related policies in different geographic regions
 - b. Promoting of multi-stakeholder partnerships including public entities, private sector, and civil society in Europe
 - c. Sharing of professional human resources and knowledge products in relevant events
 - d. Expanding network in the fields of forest engineering

C. Peace Forest Work

8. The Peace Forest Work submitted the letter of intent on 30 September 2022. The Peace Forest Work is a non-profit organization that is focused on promoting sustainable forestry practices and reforestation efforts to combat climate change and restore ecological balance.

9. The partnership between the two organizations will bring synergy in contributing to the achievement of SDG focusing on the mutual areas of interest:
 - a. Climate action: Contribute to climate change responses such as the realization of carbon neutrality and mitigation of global warming through expansion of international forestry cooperation
 - b. Life on land: Contribute to the protection of terrestrial ecosystems through the creation and management of forests; including sustainable management of forests, prevention of desertification, and cessation of land degradation.
 - c. Peace, justice and strong institutions: Contribute to international peace with peace forestry initiative (PFI)

- d. Partnerships for the goals: Contribute to the activation of global partnerships for sustainable development by strengthening implementation capabilities through sharing knowledge and experiences of both organizations.

D. GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)

10. The GIZ submitted the letter of intent on 15 September 2022 which was officially received by the Secretariat on 4 November 2022. The GIZ provides services in the field of international development cooperation. GIZ's main commissioning party is Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Other commissioners include European Union institutions, the United Nations, the private sector, and governments of other countries. In its projects GIZ works with partners in national governments, actors from the private sector, civil society and research institutions.

11. The partnership with GIZ will bring synergy in contributing to the achievement of SDG focusing on the mutual areas of interest:

- a. Initiating customized restoration and reforestation models
- b. Supporting research and development in climate change adaptation approaches
- c. Introducing systematic management on forest-related disasters
- d. Local livelihood improvement and community-based enterprise development
- e. Strengthening institutional capabilities, diversifying resources and promoting regional actions.

III. Update on Promotion of Partner Countries

12. The Secretariat has arranged courtesy calls on the Ambassadors of prospective Partner Countries, including Switzerland (9 February 2023), Norway (21 February 2023), Germany (27 February 2023), and France (30 March 2023).

13. Following the courtesy calls on the Ambassadors, follow-up meetings were advised by the Ambassadors and were arranged with the Country Office of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Cambodia, Norway's Special Envoy on Climate. As a follow-up to working-level meetings, the Secretariat is in communication with Rabobank founded by Dutch farmers for further collaboration. In addition, the Permanent Observer to the United Nations and International Organizations in Vienna has contacted ambassadors of Norway, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, and the Austrian Government to promote and resource mobilization.

14. Further meeting arrangements with EU, UK, Netherlands, USA, Canada, and Australia are under coordination with the respective Embassies in ROK.

15. Based on the developments of substantial communications with the diplomatic missions in Seoul, relevant visits to the prospective Partner Countries and private sector will be arranged when deemed necessary.

IV. Points for Consideration

16. In the review of the intentions submitted, the Secretariat has taken due account of the Roles of Partners as provided in Rule 3 of the Decision 41-V-21R-ADD-1 Rules of Procedures for Partners Countries and Partner Organizations of AFoCO.

17. The Secretariat views that the prospective partner organizations that submitted the intentions have respective complementary strengths to provide contributions or develop collaborative works with AFoCO. The prospective partners are competent and credible organizations to support vision of AFoCO and ensure compliance with the policies and relevant rules of AFoCO.

18. The Assembly may wish to:

- Take note of the information; and
- Consider and endorse prospective partners that have submitted respective letters of intent as Partner Organizations.

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