**AFMS Initiative**

Strengthened action in favor of Forests in the Med-Sahel region
in the context of Climate Change

 **T**he High Commission for Water, Forests and Desertification Control of the Kingdom of Morocco has launched the initiative called "Strengthened action in favor of Forests in the Med-Sahel region in the context of climate change" - AFMS, on October 27th, 2016 in Rabat in the presence of several regional and international partners and organizations.

 **T**his initiative comes at a time when the role of forests in climate change adaptation and mitigation is increasingly and explicitly recognized, and when the parties to the UNFCCC are urged to implement the necessary measures to strengthen these roles, through sustainable forest management (Article 5 of the Paris Agreement and decision 55 of COP21).

 **W**hile capitalizing on the achievements, the present initiative seeks the establishment of a framework for regional cooperation and partnership to facilitate the implementation of adaptation actions to climate change, integrated in the sustainable management of all types of forests, through:

* Better understanding of the functioning and the vulnerability of forest ecosystems to climate change;
* Promoting good practices of sustainable forest management in relation to adaptation and mitigation of climate change;
* Capacity building and improved coordination of the forest sector interfaces;
* Mobilizing financial support for projects on climate change adaptation, integrated into the sustainable management of all types of forests for the benefit of local people.

 **T**he choice of the region is justified by the fact that the Mediterranean and Sahelian forest ecosystems are characterized by great diversity in terms of species and bioclimatic zones, reflecting in space and in time, the evolution of the impact of climate change on the natural environment.

**I**ndeed, the Mediterranean region and the Sahel hold 73.3 million ha of forests and 122 Million ha other wooded land for a population of nearly one Billion people.

**A**ctually, climate change would result in a temperature increase between 2 and 6.5 ° C at the end of the century and decreased precipitation between 4 and 30% in the Mediterranean region. The Sahel countries will be also affected by an increase in temperature between 3 and 5 ° C by 2050 and a fall in crop yields of corn (40%), Millet and Sorghum (15-25%).

**T**he consideration of these ecosystems as a whole in the context of climate change represents an opportunity in terms of not only knowledge sharing, exchange of experiences and good practices but also, in terms of framework partnership and cooperation for regional solidarity.

**B**ased on an inclusive, participatory and multidimensional approach, the AFMS Initiative has set the following objectives:

* Highlighting the importance of the contribution of forest ecosystems in the area and repositioning them on the issues of sustainable development;
* Assisting countries in the region to meet multilateral commitments related to forests, notably the Paris Agreement;
* Encourage North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation for sharing experiences and good practices on sustainable forest management;
* Promoting the development of climate change adaptation plans taking into account the diversity and specific characteristics of forest ecosystems in the region;
* Contributing to the upgrade of governance for sustainable forest management and for the implementation of forestry programs and projects;
* Strengthening investments in forestry projects to adapt to climate change including the resilience of local populations.

**T**o achieve these goals, an action plan in three stages was identified (immediately - before 2020 and after 2020).

**A**longside the presentation of this initiative, a committee of representatives of regional organizations operating in the Med-Sahel region that expressed their support for the AFMS Initiative, hold a meeting and agreed on the following steps:

* Post at their respective websites, this note on the objectives of the initiative, in order to mobilize support of member countries and other partners;
* Present the AFMS initiative during the forest action day of the COP22, to be held November 8th, 2016 in Marrakech;
* Undertake the necessary steps to bring the AFMS initiative at the ministerial segment and the meeting of heads of states, to ensure a political support for the initiative;
* Work closely with all regional stakeholders on practical arrangements for the implementation of the Initiative.

**Agency Bearer of the AFMS Initiative**

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| Haut-Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la Lutte Contre la Désertification (HCEFLCD) – Morocco. |

**Focal Point of the AFMS Initiative**

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**The presentation of the AFMS Initiative was co-chaired by:**

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| * HE The High Commissionner of Water, Forests and Desertification Control (Morocco) - Dr. **Abdeladim Lhafi.**
* HE The Ambassador, Chief of the European Union Delegation in Morocco, M. **Ropert Joy.**
* The representative of FAO in Morocco - M. **Michael George Hage.**
* The Coordinator of the UN Agencies and Representative of the UNDP in Morocco - M. **Philippe Poinsot.**
* The Executive Secretary of the Pan African Agency of the Great Green Wall - Professor **Abdoulaye Dia.**
* The Executive Secretary of the Commission of the Lake Chad Basin - M. **Sanusi Imran Abdullahir.**
* The representative of the "Intergovernmental Authority on Development Agriculture & Environment Division" (IGAD) – M. **Fred Mwango.**
* The Secretary of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions - Silva Mediterranea – **M. Nicolas Picard**.
* The representative of the Observatory of Sahara and Sahel – M. **Mourad Briki.**
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