

## **Ecosystem Restoration 2030: A Decade of Action for Sustainability and Resilience**

*In collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP)*

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in its 6 March 2019 Resolution declared 2021-2030 the 'Decade on Ecosystem Restoration' with the aim to protect and revive ecosystems around the world for the benefit of people and nature and to achieve global goals (UN 2019). Healthy ecosystems would provide opportunities to expand people's livelihoods, prevent climate change, and halt the collapse of biodiversity. The timeline of the Decade coincides with the deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Scientists believe that this is the last chance to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Restoration is a highly significant task. Over the next ten years, every nation, individual, and organisation has a role to play to contribute in this process. Against a backdrop of environmental crisis, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is an opportunity to revive the natural world that supports us all (UN 2021). A decade may sound like a long time, but scientists believe that it is the most vital one in the fight to avert climate change and the loss of millions of species (Ibid.).

The ten key strategic actions devised by the UN which will help restore the ecosystem include: 1) Empowering a global movement, 2) financing restoration on the ground, 3) setting up the right incentives, 4) celebrating leadership that takes the lead in restoration, 5) shifting behaviors towards ecosystems, 6) investing in research on resilience and sustainability of ecosystems, 7) building the capacity of diverse stakeholders in the ecosystem, 8) celebrating a culture of restoration of ecosystems through art, music and other cultural entities, 9) building up the next generation by giving importance to youth, and 10) listening and learning processes (Ibid.).

Through strategic actions, we need to restore the ecosystem from forests and farmlands to freshwater, oceans and coasts, mountains, grasslands, shrublands, peatlands, and urban lands with a view that the vitality and diversity of Earth's ecosystems are the basis of human prosperity and well-being (SDPI 2021). Unfortunately, we are degrading these precious resources in alarming ways. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is an opportunity to help turn the tide and give people and nature a sustainable future (Ibid.).

The UN Decade commitments can drive a transformation that will contribute to the achievement of all the SDGs. There is a dire need of increasing forest cover, cleaning up rivers, and greening cities. Pakistan, being a party to the international Conventions under the UN, is committed to fulfilling its obligations related to the protection of the natural environment and the components thereof within its territory. Pakistan has started a series of natural resource-based solutions to climate change including a 10-billion tree tsunami program and increasing the share of the renewable energy mix to 60% by 2030 (GoP 2019). These strategies perfectly complement the UN Decade (2021-2030) on ecosystem restoration.

The leadership in Pakistan believes that until the country prioritises ecosystem restoration, we cannot make development sustainable and cannot even strengthen the economy and bring about prosperity. This panel aims to bring together experts to discuss issues around ecosystems, their various dimensions and impacts on people and the planet and address the following questions:

- How are targets under the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration and SDGs interlinked?
- How does ecosystem restoration and principles of sustainable consumption contribute to sustainable development?
- How does terrestrial and marine ecosystem restoration help boost socioeconomic development and resilience of communities?

- Does ecosystem restoration help reduce climatic hazards?

### **References**

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