



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## **Recreate, Re-imagine, Restore! UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration kicks off.**

**4 June 2021, Nairobi/Rome** – Leaders in global politics, science, communities, religion, and culture joined hands today to officially kick off the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration - a rallying call for the protection and revival of millions of hectares of ecosystems all around the world for the benefit of people and nature.

Led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the Decade on Restoration – which runs from 2021 to 2030 – was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in a [2019 resolution](#).

The launch took the form of a high-level virtual gala with the participation, alongside the heads of UNEP and FAO and UN Secretary-General António Guterres, of Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, which hosts [World Environment Day](#) on 5 June this year; Pope Francis; Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chair of the African Union; German Chancellor Angela Merkel; and Prime Minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley. Among the global figures who spoke were UN Messenger of Peace Jane Goodall and other goodwill ambassadors, advocates, youth representatives, scientists, and CEOs.

“By restoring ecosystems, we can drive a transformation that will contribute to the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals. The task is

monumental. We need to replant and protect our forests. We need to clean up our rivers and seas. And we need to green our cities,” the UN Secretary-General said in his message. “Accomplishing these things will not only safeguard the planet’s resources. It will create millions of new jobs by 2030, generate returns of over \$7 trillion dollars every year and help eliminate poverty and hunger.”

The FAO Director-General QU Dongyu, noting that the increasing pressure on the world’s natural resources is affecting the well-being of 40 percent of the global population, called for a change of mindset.

“Business as usual is not an option!” he underscored. “We need to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide, including our farmlands and forests, our rivers and oceans. More efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agri-food systems can help restore ecosystems and safeguard sustainable food production, leaving no one behind,” he added.

“We must use this moment in history to launch a massive global movement to save our terrestrial and marine ecosystems even as we continue to decarbonize. Everyone has a ‘to-do’ here,” said UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen. “Governments must ensure COVID-19 stimulus packages contribute to a sustainable and equitable recovery from the pandemic. Businesses and the financial sector must reform operations and financial flows so that they restore the natural world. And as individuals and consumers, it is time rethink choices, demand deforestation-free products and vote for sustainability in the polling booths.”

“Restoring the nature we have damaged means, in the first place, restoring ourselves,” said Pope Francis in a video message relayed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State. “We welcome this United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, let us be compassionate, creative and courageous. May we take our proper place as a ‘Restoration Generation.’”

The Decade aims to inspire and support governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, private sector companies, youth, women’s groups, indigenous peoples, farmers, local communities, and individuals globally, to collaborate, develop and catalyze restoration initiatives across the world. The effort will involve a raft of activities. They range from redirecting fiscal incentives and

financial flows to promote restoration to undertaking research on restoration in terrestrial and marine environments, building the technical capacity of restoration practitioners globally and monitoring global progress on restoration.

The Decade aims to mobilize hundreds of millions of people to restore nature and foster a global restoration culture in which restoration initiatives are scaled up across the planet.

“The world has no choice but to go on a nature positive pathway which will not only boost the economy but also protect the environment,” said Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, whose country in 2019 embarked on an ambitious plan to plant [10 billion trees](#).

Welcoming the launch of the UN Decade, Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chair of the African Union, noted that the African continent had made multiple commitments through several regional Declarations, pledges, Calls to Action and pilot activities, but there was a need to mobilize the necessary resources and expertise to lead large-scale implementation.

“The restoration of terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems should be undertaken in such a way as to avoid creating land conflicts or conflicts of use,” he added. “It must therefore be part of visionary spatial planning processes that take into account inter-sectoral trade-offs, respecting land and resource tenure rights of local communities and other vulnerable social groups.”

In her message, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said: “We have to do more to protect and restore natural habitats – and we have to do it now, not some time in the future.”

“We have to ensure now that forests, which we need not least to regulate our climate, are protected and replenished,” she added.

The Chancellor also announced that Germany would be the first country to provide funding – 14 million Euro – to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund for the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The launch of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration today leads into World Environment Day on 5 June, the United Nations' flagship day for promoting worldwide awareness and action for the environment. Held under the theme of ecosystem restoration, this year's World Environment Day is hosted by Pakistan, which will mark the day and the start of the UN Decade with [an event](#) taking place in Islamabad and officiated by Prime Minister Imran Khan with the participation from a host of dignitaries from around the world including UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen and senior officials from FAO, UN-Habitat and UNDP, as well as senior officials from countries including Germany and Saudi Arabia.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**

[The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030](#) is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals. The United Nations General Assembly has [proclaimed](#) the UN Decade and it is led by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The UN Decade is building a strong, broad-based global movement to ramp up restoration and put the world on track for a sustainable future. That will include building political momentum for restoration as well as thousands of initiatives on the ground.

### **About the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**

UNEP is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

### **About the UN Food and Agriculture Organization**

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and transform

agri-food systems, making them more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive. FAO's goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.

### **About World Environment Day**

Celebrated every year on June 5, World Environment Day is the United Nations' biggest annual event for positive environmental action to encourage worldwide awareness of the need to protect our planet.

The 2021 World Environment Day is hosted by Pakistan on the theme of "Ecosystem Restoration" under the campaign "Reimagine. Recreate. Restore." This year, the Day will also serve as the formal launch of [the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030](#). The official hashtags for the Day are #GenerationRestoration and #WorldEnvironmentDay. Celebrations around the world take place with a hybrid of digital and in-person events.

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