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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ITTO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME (FREEZAILAH FELLOWSHIP FUND)

(Item 18 of the Provisional Agenda)

Introduction

1. This document is prepared pursuant to Decision 4(XXVII), which requested the Executive Director to prepare progress reports on the implementation of the ITTO Fellowship Programme for Council's review during its regular Sessions.
2. In keeping with this Decision, this document reports on the work related to the implementation of the ITTO Fellowship Programme since the end of the Forty-ninth Session of the ITTC and outlines measures to be considered at the Forty-ninth Session regarding the operation of the Freezailah Fellowship Fund.

Progress in Implementation

3. Advertisement and Dissemination of the ITTO Fellowship Programme

The Secretariat continues to advertise the ITTO Fellowship Programme in the Tropical Update (TFU), the Tropical Timber Market Information and on the ITTO website <http://www.itto.int/>. TFU Volume 22 Number 4 published excerpts of an ITTO Fellowship report on "Population Dynamics of Commercial Tree Seedlings after Selective Logging Kabaung Reserved Forest of Bago Mountains, Myanmar" and listed the fellows and their activities awarded during the 49th Session of the ITTC.

4. The ITTO Fellowship Network website based on the social network platform was implemented at <http://www.ittofellownet.org/> in June 2014. It aims to: (1) promote the sharing of knowledge and information among ITTO Fellows and alumni on the sustainable management and use of tropical forests and forest resources and other related issues; (2) provide a forum for collaborative work among ITTO Fellows and alumni, and (3) provide a platform for pursuing common interests, such as career development opportunities and networking. The network will serve to provide up-to-date information on alumni activities and events worldwide. More than 250 fellows have already registered by the end of July 2014, and have been actively exchanging knowledge and experiences. More fellows are expected to join the network.
5. The implementation and progress of the Fellowship Network will be presented at the 20th Meeting of the Senior Fellowship Officers of the United Nations system to be held in Turin, Italy, from 30 September to 2 October 2014, to share the ITTO's experience with the Fellowship Programs of UN organizations and exchange views on substantive and administrative aspects of fellowships.
6. In order to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Council and the 25th anniversary of the ITTO Fellowship Programme, the Secretariat planned to prepare a brochure on "Success Stories of ITTO Fellows" and invite three former Fellows, one each from Africa, Asia and Latin America, to the Council to make presentation on their success stories, as recommended by the Fellowship Selection Panel during the 49th Session of the ITTC. The Secretariat sent out survey questionnaires to the former ITTO Fellows requesting the fellows' updates and success stories through the Fellowship Network and other means, to prepare for the events. A Special issue of the ITTO Tropical Forests Update (TFU) which would be dedicated to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Council will also include the success stories of fellows.

7. Status of Fellowship Awards

The Fellowship Programme, which began in 1989, has enabled 1,273 young and mid-career people from 49 countries working for governments, universities, research institutions, NGOs and the private sector to pursue their professional development and improve their career prospects. Forty-one percent of the fellowships have been awarded to people from Asia-Pacific, 32% to people from Africa, 24% to people from Latin America/Caribbean, and 3% to people from developed consumer countries, who carried out their activities in producer member countries. Seventy one percent of the fellowships awarded were in the field of Reforestation and Forest Management, 21% in Forest Industry and 8% in Economics, Statistics and Markets.

The Programme mainly supports short-term activities, such as short training courses and internships (30%), participation in international conferences and workshops (18%), and study and demonstration tours (9%). In addition, it also helps people to prepare manuals and monographs (14%) and provides small grants for post-graduate study (29%). The Programme encourages capacity development of women foresters, and has supported 374 women to undertake fellowship activities, accounting for 30% of the total number of fellowships. In fact, more than half of the fellowships were awarded to women at the 2014 Spring Cycle of the Fellowship Selection Panel. Eighty-four percent of the fellowships have already been completed, while 10% are still operational and 6% terminated for unavoidable reasons.

Funding

8. The total funds for the Fellowship Programme to date amount to approximately US\$9.5 million. Funding has been provided through the generous voluntary contributions from Japan (73%), U.S.A. (16%), the Netherlands (7%), Australia (3%) and others (1%) including Sweden, U.K., Bali Partnership Fund Sub-Account (b) and the private sector.
9. Recalling Decision 4(XXVII) which sets a maximum amount of US\$300,000 per year for fellowship awards, until such time that appreciable increases in funding become available, Council may wish to approve additional funds to cover awards, programme support, and other costs including Fellowship Network for 2014. The Secretariat estimates that to maintain the Programme at the current level of 50-60 awards per year, an amount of US\$400,000 would be needed in 2015.

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