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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ITTO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME (FREEZAILAH FELLOWSHIP FUND) (Item 10(d)(1) 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 Fifty-fourth Session of the ITTC and outlines measures to be considered at the Fifty-fourth 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/>.

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 900 fellows have already registered by the end of September 2018, and have been actively exchanging knowledge and experiences. More fellows are expected to join the network.
5. Status of Fellowship Awards

The Fellowship Programme, which began in 1989, has enabled 1371 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. Thirty percent of the fellowships have been awarded to people from Asia-Pacific, 32% to people from Africa, 25% to people from Latin America/Caribbean, 10% to people from developing consumer countries and 3% to people from consumer countries, who carried out their activities in producer member countries. Seventy two percent of the fellowships awarded were in the field of Reforestation and Forest Management, 20% in Forest Industry and 8% in Economics, Statistics and Markets.

The Programme mainly supports short-term activities, such as short training courses and internships (31%), participation in international conferences and workshops (17%), and study and demonstration tours (8%). In addition, it also helps people to prepare manuals and monographs (7%), and provides small grants for post-graduate study (38%). The Programme encourages capacity development of women foresters, and has supported 418 women to undertake fellowship activities, accounting for 30% of the total number of fellowships. Eighty-seven percent of the fellowships have already been completed, while 8% are still operational and 5% terminated for unavoidable reasons.

Funding

6. The total funds for the Fellowship Programme to date amount to approximately US\$10 million. Funding has been provided through the generous voluntary contributions from Japan (70%), U.S.A. (17%), the Netherlands (8%), Australia (3%) and others (6%) including Sweden, Finland, U.K., Bali Partnership Fund Sub-Account (b) and the private sector.
7. 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 2018. 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 2018.

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