

Eleventh Session of the Assembly
30-31 October 2024, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Agenda Item 12

Item 12. Update on Operationalization of the Regional Office

I. Background

1. The ninth session of the Assembly endorsed the selection result of the Host Country for the AFoCO Regional Office for the Mekong with the indicative annual budget plan for its operation.
2. The Executive Director appointed Dr. LEE Yeong-Joo as the Head of the Regional Office, and the Secretariat requested the Viet Nam Government through the AFoCO Representative for the follow-up actions required including issuance of VISA for the Head of the Regional Office with a set of required documents in March 2024.
3. Viet Nam Government has reviewed the submitted documents by relevant ministries and informed the Secretariat through the National Focal Point that under the guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is finalizing the required procedures regarding the matter because the nature of the office is a subsidiary organ of the treaty-based intergovernmental organization for forest cooperation and the agenda is given to MARD appropriately.
4. The Secretariat is informed that MARD is processing the required procedure according to the domestic rules and regulations, and it is expected to conclude sooner or later, possibly within this year.

II. Actions taken by the Secretariat

5. The Secretariat was requested to submit the application for a certificate of registration to establish a Representative Office to the Committee for Foreign Non-governmental Organization Affairs (COMINGO) of Viet Nam in March 2024.
6. The Secretariat was informed and requested to submit the application for a certificate of registration to establish a Representative Office of AFoCO in Viet Nam after internal review on the matter, and the Secretariat resubmitted the application to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on 23 April 2024 (OR-160).
7. The Secretariat is having close communication regarding the matter through the NFP of Viet Nam and waiting for the conclusion from the Viet Nam Government so far.
8. The ED tasked the Head of ROM to be stationed at the Headquarters temporarily and follow-up the matter until receiving the official response from the Host Country, i.e., Viet Nam.

9. In accordance with the guidance of the 9th Assembly, the Secretariat will formulate operational guidelines for the Regional Office once the Host Country, via the NFP, has granted official legal approval. These guidelines will then be circulated to the Assembly for endorsement prior to the Regional Office's commencement of operations.

III. Points for Consideration

10. The Assembly may wish to:
- a. Take note of the information; and
 - b. Task the Secretariat to expedite the operationalization of the Regional Office for the Mekong in close cooperation and facilitation with the Viet Nam Government, the Host Country.

Queries on the content of the document may be addressed to:

LEE Yeong-Joo, Head, Regional Office for the Mekong
(T: +82 2 785 8993; E: yeongjoo@afocosec.org)
