

Thirteenth Session of the Assembly
29-30 October 2025, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Draft

Summary Record of the Thirteenth Session of the Assembly

Introduction

1. The Thirteenth Session of the Assembly of the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) was held at the DMC Hall, KBiz DMC Tower, Seoul, Republic of Korea on 29–30 October 2025. The Assembly was attended by Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea (RoK), Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam as Parties, and Singapore as an Observer, and the Secretariat. The representatives from partners and potential collaborating entities, including France, Artha Networks, Inc. (ANI), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and Mutual Value Labs (MVL) were invited to the opening and discussion of relevant agenda items.
2. The 2025 AFoCO Week was organized at the occasion of this regular session of the Assembly. The Third Friends of Asia and Asian Forest (FAAF) Forum was held under the theme of *“From Carbon to Co-Benefits: Rethinking Forest Investment in Asia”* and the 2025 Partners Dialogue under the theme of *“Healthy Forests for Foods: Nourishing People, Sustaining the Planet”* were also held during the 2025 AFoCO Week. The Secretariat, in efforts to reduce overall negative impact on climate, will implement activities including tree planting to offset carbon footprints during the event.

Item 1. Opening of the Session

3. The Session was in quorum with fifteen (15) Parties and one (1) Observer in accordance with Rule 10.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.
4. In accordance with Rule 7.2 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, the President officially opened and presided over the session of the Assembly. The incumbent President is the Philippines represented by Mr. Ray Thomas F. Kabigting, the Acting Director of the Forest Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines, and the Vice President is Lao PDR represented by Dr. Oupakone Alounsavath, Deputy Director General, Department of Forestry of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Lao PDR.

Launching Ceremony for the Forest Fire Management in Asia (FFMA) Initiative

5. During the opening of the Thirteenth Session of the Assembly, the Assembly witnessed the official launch of the Forest Fire Management in Asia (FFMA) Initiative. This milestone marks the transition of FFMA from its pilot phase (2023–2025) to a full-scale implementation (2026–2030). The

initiative reflects the joint commitment of AFoCO, France and Republic of Korea to strengthen regional capacities for forest fire prevention, suppression, and management while advancing sustainable forest management and climate resilience across Asia.

6. Dr. In-ho Kim, Minister of Korea Forest Service, during his congratulatory remarks, reaffirmed Korea's commitment to working with AFoCO and France to strengthen regional collaboration. He noted that Korea's ICT-based forest-fire management systems and France's long-standing operational expertise would create strong synergy through the FFMA Initiative.

7. Mr. Bertrand JADOT, Deputy Ambassador of French Embassy in the Republic of Korea, emphasized that FFMA represents a tangible result of the strong partnership between France, Korea, and AFoCO under France's Indo-Pacific Strategy. He highlighted the initiative as a model of practical cooperation that fosters shared expertise and joint capacity building across Asia.

8. The Assembly, particularly, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand, extended appreciation and expectations for the success of the FFMA Initiative.

Formal Proceedings of the Assembly

9. The President, in his opening remarks, expressed his gratitude for the commitment, support and efforts of all Parties and Observers, and partners. He also expressed his special thanks to the Executive Director, Dr. Park Chongho and the Secretariat for the excellent arrangements and preparations for the 2025 AFoCO Week. He looked forward to constructive discussions with a good spirit of cooperation and requested support from all Member Countries. He wished all delegates good health and enjoyable stay in the beautiful city of Seoul. Finally, he looked forward to the continued growth of AFoCO and its activities.

10. The Vice President also expressed his deepest gratitude for everyone and wished for a fruitful and successful discussion of the Thirteenth Session of the Assembly.

11. The Executive Director thanked the Philippines for the commitment as the President for this session of the Assembly. He also highlighted notable progress in the Secretariat's activities internally and externally such as the signing of MOU with the Yeongdeungpo-gu District Office and expansion of regular projects which have been funded by Korea Forest Service. Advancements in GCF accreditation will make the major milestone in expanding AFoCO's access to international climate finance. He also mentioned other successful initiatives of AFoCO such as the Forest Fire Management in Asia (FFMA), Friends of Asia and Asia Forest (FAAF), as well as projects with private sector partners such as KT&G, Rabo Bank, and Woori Bank with the multilateral development bank including EBRD, ADB, and World Bank, and other possible private collaborators and partners. He also acknowledged the participation of EBRD, Artha, MVL, and EoM in the Assembly. Finally, he extended his sincere appreciation for the continued trust and collective efforts of the Parties in achieving greener milestones and solidifying its crucial regional and global forestry initiative.

12. Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, RoK, Thailand, and Singapore congratulated the Philippines and the Lao PDR for serving as the President and Vice President respectively. The Parties expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its hard work and utmost assistance to all the delegates. Mongolia invited active participation from all Parties and Observers to the upcoming UNCCD COP 17 to be hosted in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on 17-28 August 2026. Myanmar reiterated that all must work together to achieve sustainable forest management and a greener Asia. RoK highlighted that AFoCO activities are one of the best practice models to attract financial support from diverse sources. Singapore looked forward to its continuous involvement in AFoCO and to explore potential

collaborations.

13. The Assembly took a few moments and extended condolences for the passing of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit the Queen Mother of Thailand.

14. The President appointed Dr. Kim Tongil of the Secretariat as the rapporteur for the session in accordance with the Rule 7.5 of the Procedures of the Assembly.

Item 2. Adoption of the Agenda

15. The Assembly considered and adopted the agenda as contained in document **A-25-13-1**.

A. Organizational Matters

Item 3. Information on the List of Parties and Observers (Promotion of Membership Relations)

16. In accordance with Article 5 of the Agreement and Decision 3-I-18R, the Secretariat informed the Assembly on the status of the Parties and Observers which remains the same with fifteen (15) Parties and two (2) Observers as contained in document **A-25-13-2**.

17. The Parties provided updates relevant to AFoCO and the forest sector of their respective countries.

18. Bhutan's amendment to the Forest and Nature Conservation Rules and Regulations in 2025 revises the 2023 version to strengthen forest protection, resource management, and enforcement. *The National Forest Fire Prevention and Response Strategy (2024)* is developed to detail prevention, response and post-fire rehabilitation interventions addressing the priorities identified in forest fire. *The National Agroforestry Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035)* is awaiting formal approval. This positions agroforestry as a transformative solution for sustainable land management, food security, and climate resilience.

19. Brunei Darussalam provided an update on their *National Biodiversity Policy and Strategic Plan of Action (NBPSPA) (2024-2030)* as the country's principal guideline for biodiversity management and conservation. The NBPSPA is aligned with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework serving as a comprehensive framework to strengthen the conservation and sustainable use of forest and biodiversity resources. It was submitted to CBD and this milestone reflects Brunei Darussalam's continued commitment to sustainable forest management and contributing to regional and global efforts towards climate resilient and sustainable forests.

20. Cambodia is undergoing institutional reform. The new amended Forestry Law will prioritize promoting regional forestry information exchange, sharing best practices in regional forestry development, forestry and climate change and serve the realization of the *United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the *Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use*. The Royal Government of Cambodia submitted its *Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality (LTS4CN)* to the UNFCCC in December 2021. The LTS4CN provides the long-term vision that guides Cambodia's NDC 3.0 (2025–2035), ensuring consistency between medium-term actions and long-term decarbonisation goals.

21. Indonesia reiterated the separation between the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Environment, noting that forestry-related matters, including AFoCO, will return under the authority of the Ministry of Forestry. Indonesia also mentioned that Presidential Decree 110, which broadens stakeholder and investor participation in Indonesia's carbon markets, is now in effect.
22. Kazakhstan highlighted their partnership and collaboration with AFoCO which demonstrated practical outcomes and the high level of trust and readiness to move toward more large-scale forms of cooperation. The recent milestone in partnership with AFoCO is the proposed establishment of AFoCO Training Center in Kazakhstan which will complement with the existing AFoCO training system by ensuring broader coverage and access for countries in Central and Northeast Asia.
23. Lao PDR completed government organizational restructuring in 2025. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forest and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment have been merged as the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment. Local governance reform is endorsed by the National Assembly reintroducing Tasaeng (sub-district) in local administration. In terms of relevant laws and policies, *National Policy and Action Plan for Recognition of Land Use Rights in Forestland (2025-2030)* is under development. *The Decision on Forest Carbon Management* is now in place since late 2024. The pilot PFES is approved under the Prime Minister's Notification. Lao PDR looks forward to support its PFES technical formulation, institutional setup and initial piloting through AFoCO activities.
24. Myanmar updated the Assembly on the policies, laws, strategies and action plans under the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. Based on the laws and policies in place, the government is updating and developing the thirty (30)-year *Forest Management Master Plan*, *District Forest Management Plan*, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2020)*, *National REDD+ Strategy*, *Myanmar Reforestation and Rehabilitation Programme (2026-27)*, *Re-establishing Natural Habitats Programme (2028-29)*, *Inlay Lake Sustainable Development and Environmental Conservation Action Plan (2015-20)*, and *National Wetland Policy and Strategic Actions*.
25. The Republic of Korea informed the Assembly that the third (3rd) statement from the ASEAN–Republic of Korea Summit included the support for promoting sustainable forest management through existing mechanisms such as AFoCO. Likewise, RoK also requested the Parties and Observers to actively express interest and support for AFoCO's initiatives such as climate action and forest strategic management.
26. Timor-Leste, after fifteen years of application, is now an official member of ASEAN. This milestone will promote greater cooperation in forestry and environmental sectors to collectively address regional challenges such as climate change. Regarding the update on the organizational structure, there was a newly appointed National Focal Point and new two (2) project managers which strengthened the effective coordination and implementation of the ongoing projects in Timor-Leste.
27. The structural changes in Viet Nam include the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) and the Viet Nam Forestry Administration (VNFOREST). In addition, since July 2025, Viet Nam has also undergone administrative reorganization at the provincial level: the former 63 provinces and cities have been consolidated into 34 provinces and cities. The local government system has also been adjusted from a three level structure (provincial, district and commune levels) to a two level structure (provincial and commune levels). In relation to AFoCO's implementation, the AFoCO representative and national focal point also remains and the said restructuring does not affect the cooperation under the AFoCO framework.

28. The detailed written update provided by Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar is contained in annexes of document **A-25-13-2**. The Assembly took note of the information provided by the Parties' National Focal Points and/or Assembly Representatives.

Item 4. Information on the Engagement of Partner Organizations and Cooperating Agencies

29. The Secretariat presented updates on the engagement of partner organizations and cooperating agencies as in **A-25-13-3**, in line with the *Strategic Plan (2024–2030)* and the *Climate Action Plan (2025–2034)*. It reported ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration with international and regional partners, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). With ADB, the Secretariat is implementing projects in Lao PDR and the Kyrgyz Republic and expects to sign a Letter of Intent by the end of 2025 to enhance access to blended financing. The Secretariat also informed that an MoU was signed with EBRD in April 2025 to expand forestry and agroforestry cooperation in Central Asia. In light of AFoCO's evolving initiatives under the FAAF and *Climate Action Plan*, the Secretariat plans to review and restructure the partnership framework to better reflect diverse collaboration schemes.

30. Indonesia congratulated the Secretariat for the active cooperation with private sectors and signing the MoU with the Billion Tree Fund, suggesting the establishment of a formal Expert Group under FAAF. RoK commended the Secretariat's progress and proposed strengthening communication and promotional efforts to enhance donor engagement and visibility.

31. The Assembly took note of the information presented and requested the Secretariat to proceed with the review of the partnership framework and to consider forming a dedicated Expert Group under FAAF to enhance coordination and outreach.

Item 5. Updates on Private Sector Engagement

Item 5.1. Friends of Asia and Asian Forests (FAAF)

32. The Secretariat reported on the progress of the Friends of Asia and Asian Forests (FAAF) platform as in **A-25-13-4**. Since its launch, FAAF has served as a key mechanism for mobilizing public–private partnerships and diverse funding sources. In 2025, activities included the publication of the FAAF Newsletter, the Climate Leaders Breakfast, and the Third FAAF Forum attended by over a hundred and thirty (130) participants. The Forum highlighted two major initiatives: (i) the FAAF Fund being designed by an Expert Group for launch in 2026 and (ii) the Climate Action Matchmaking Platform (CAMP), which was upgraded to enable global donations and expanded project sites.

33. Parties commended the growing role of FAAF in bridging forestry, finance, and climate action. Indonesia encouraged closer engagement with private investors to align the FAAF Fund with national climate and forestry priorities. RoK emphasized the importance of youth involvement and visibility through collaboration with networks such as IFSA-Korea and global events.

34. The Assembly took note of the updates and endorsed the continued development of the FAAF Fund and CAMP. Parties and Observers were invited to submit potential project sites for inclusion in CAMP, and the Secretariat was tasked to further enhance promotion, partnership coordination, and knowledge-sharing under the FAAF framework.

Item 5.2. Projects Supported by the Private Sector

35. The Secretariat reported on projects supported by private-sector partnerships as in **A-25-13-5**. In 2025, twelve (12) activities were implemented across nine (9) countries, valued at approximately USD 1.29 million. These projects include CSR-driven tree planting, REDD+, and landscape restoration initiatives. Highlights include the KT&G Mangrove Project in Indonesia and volunteer-based planting by the Industrial Bank of Korea (IBK) in Batam, Indonesia.

36. Indonesia expressed appreciation for AFoCO's collaboration with private companies in national reforestation efforts, while requesting that such activities be formally coordinated with and reported to the Government of Indonesia, particularly the volunteer program in Batam. RoK recognized the Secretariat's successful outreach and encouraged replication of private-sector engagement in other Parties and Observers.

37. The Assembly took note of the report and requested the Secretariat to ensure timely communication with relevant national authorities when implementing private-sector projects, in accordance with national coordination procedures.

B. Matters on the Strategic Plan

Item 6. Updates on the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2024–2030)

Item 6.1. Resource Mobilization Outlook and Implementation Plan

38. The Secretariat presented the *AFoCO Resource Mobilization Outlook and Implementation Plan*, as contained in **A-25-13-6**. Developed with the support of external experts, the Outlook outlines strategies to diversify funding sources, strengthen partnerships, and ensure long-term financial sustainability. AFoCO's financial base has broadened from exclusive reliance on the Korea Forest Service (KFS) to a mix of bilateral, multilateral, and private partners such as AKCF, MKCF, AFD (France), the World Bank, ADB, Rabobank, and FAAF. The Plan projects an eightfold increase in funding by 2050, with a balance of 62% private and 38% public sources.

39. Parties welcomed the diversification of funding and underlined the importance of private sector participation through blended finance and further emphasized maintaining fiscal prudence and clarity in defining funding scale and allocations.

40. The Assembly took note of the report and endorsed the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Outlook. The Secretariat was requested to monitor and evaluate progress and present periodic updates to the Assembly.

Item 6.2. Assessment of the AFoCO Strategic Plan (2024–2030)

41. The Secretariat presented updates on the assessment framework of the *Strategic Plan (2024–2030)* as in **A-25-13-7**. The framework includes key performance indicators (KPIs), activities, and targets for each Program Priority Area. A draft assessment methodology, prepared in consultation with external experts, was reviewed during the *Annual Technical Workshop on Project Management and Performance (ATW)* in September 2025 and will be refined further. A review

committee composed of the Secretariat and international experts will be established by mid-2026 to evaluate implementation progress.

42. Parties expressed support for the establishment of the review mechanism and committed to cooperate by nominating national or international experts for the assessment process.

43. The Assembly took note of the report and supported the creation of the Review Committee. The Secretariat was tasked to refine the methodology and present a comprehensive progress report at the next regular session of the Assembly.

Item 7. Updates on the implementation of Projects

Item 7.1. Regular Projects

44. The Secretariat provided updates on the status and progress of ongoing regular projects fully funded by Korea Forest Service (KFS), along with the challenges faced during project implementation and its management, and summary of the 2025 ATW, as contained in the document **A-25-13-8**. The Assembly took note of the information.

Item 7.2. Special Projects

45. The Secretariat provided updates on the status and progress of ongoing special projects financed by both private sectors, through Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)/Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects and carbon projects, and the public sector, including multilateral development banks, the European Union, and other international cooperation funds, as contained in document **A-25-13-9**. The Assembly took note of the information.

46. Myanmar conveyed sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for its continuous support through projects that have strengthened sustainable forest management and improved local livelihoods. With one project recently completed (AFoCO/015/2020) and another nearing completion (AFoCO/014/2020), Myanmar expressed keen interest in participating in upcoming special project initiatives, including project extensions, educational programs, and human resource development, despite existing challenges. To this end, Myanmar requested consideration for inclusion in future regional and special project opportunities.

47. The Executive Director thanked Myanmar for their valuable suggestions and comments on the special project. He shared, based on his experience in diversifying funding sources, that when engaging with both private and public sectors, many partners often have specific interests — whether in certain countries, provinces, or project types. Therefore, it is important to respect their preferences. He emphasized his commitment to upholding a balanced and equitable allocation of project opportunities across all Parties, while acknowledging that potential funding sources may have their own priorities. He further assured that the Secretariat will continue to advocate for fairness in resource distribution, even when external partners express specific areas of preference.

Item 8. Development and Approval of Projects

Item 8.1. Regular Projects (for Decision)

48. The Secretariat presented progress on the *2025 Call for Project Concept Notes (PCNs)* for new regular ODA Project development under the second long-term *Strategic Plan (2024-2030)*. The appraisal results for the full project proposals derived from the selected PCNs, together with key project details, were reported to the Assembly for its consideration and approval as in **A-25-13-10**.

49. Upon the Assembly's approval of the projects, the Secretariat will further coordinate with the respective proponents to ensure compliance with any remaining comments from the appraisal process and take the necessary follow-up actions for project inception in accordance with the *Project Manual* of AFoCO in due course, including fund mobilization.

50. The Republic of Korea expressed appreciation, noting that the proposed projects are well aligned with AFoCO's strategic priorities outlined in its medium- and long-term plans. AFoCO's three (3) key priority areas were highlighted: (i) forest land restoration and conservation, (ii) local community income generation, and (iii) forest disaster management. ROK encouraged Parties to ensure that their regular projects are consistent with these strategic priorities and requested the Secretariat to ensure balanced operations and guidance across these key areas.

51. Cambodia inquired about the Secretariat's efforts to secure funding for the new projects and asked whether there has been any confirmation from potential donors.

52. In response, the Secretariat informed that a five (5)-year funding proposal has already been submitted to the Korea Forest Service, which is currently under deliberation by the National Assembly. Once approved, the secured funds will be prioritized to finance the new project proposals.

53. Bhutan expressed its sincere gratitude to the Assembly, for endorsing the new regular project. For Bhutan, this project will mark a significant milestone as it aims to address forest fire management through innovative approaches, including the introduction of fire-resistant species and the enhancement of community preparedness in forest fire prevention and response. The pilot initiative goes beyond restoration—it focuses on building resilience and fostering actions guided by transparency, precision, and accountability. It is envisioned to transform vulnerabilities into strengths, ensuring the protection of our forests and the well-being of future generations. On behalf of the Royal Government of Bhutan, heartfelt appreciation was conveyed to the Government of the RoK, particularly the Korea Forest Service, and the Secretariat for their continued support and commitment.

54. Cambodia acknowledged the continued financial support from the Korea Forest Service of RoK for both the Secretariat's operations and project implementation. They noted that Phase I funding has been completed and that Korea Forest Service is now working to secure Phase II funding. Cambodia expressed sincere appreciation to Korea Forest Service and the Government of RoK for their continued commitment, generous financial contributions, and efforts to secure funding for upcoming projects.

55. Myanmar also expressed their sincere appreciation and heartfelt thanks to the Korea Forest Service and the Government of the Republic of Korea for their substantial and continued contributions to the Parties as well as to the Secretariat. Myanmar further acknowledged that the Korea Forest Service, has been a strong supporter since the very establishment of AFoCO. In fact, even under the ASEAN–Korea Forest Cooperation framework before AFoCO's inauguration, the

Korea Forest Service had already been extending significant support to both the Secretariat and the Parties.

56. Viet Nam expressed its sincere thanks and deep appreciation to Korea Forest Service, the Government of RoK, and the Secretariat for their continued support to the forestry sector in Asia, particularly to Viet Nam. Viet Nam also expressed appreciation for the approval of regular projects for the nine (9) Parties during this session. The delegation conveyed its hope that the Korea Forest Service and the Secretariat will continue to support the Parties in ensuring the timely and effective implementation of these projects in the coming years.

57. The Assembly, after consideration, endorsed and approved the proposed final list of the new regular projects and adopted **Decision 61-XIII-25R**. The President requested the Secretariat to facilitate all the necessary follow-up actions from project inception to fund mobilization.

Item 8.2. Special Projects

58. The Secretariat presented an update on the current status and future plans for the development of Special Projects as in **A-25-13-11**. It included Acorn Rabobank Agroforestry Carbon Project, Climate Asset Management (CAM) Afforestation and Reforestation (AR) Projects, KT&G Mangrove Project in Indonesia and BIMP-EAGA Mangrove Projects in line with the *AFoCO Project Manual*.

59. The Executive Director emphasized the importance of engaging political leaders to secure budgets for forestry programs, noting that climate change has become a competitive agenda among ministries. Citing the Kyrgyz Republic as an example, he shared that AFoCO's afforestation efforts had gained strong political interest and encouraged Member Countries to align forestry initiatives with national priorities to ensure sustainability. The Assembly took note of the information.

60. Indonesia thanked the Secretariat for its continued support in the BIMP-EAGA project and expressed appreciation for the KT&G Mangrove Project in Indonesia, hoping it would benefit local communities. Indonesia also welcomed AFoCO's active cooperation among Member Countries and reaffirmed its support for the Organization's initiatives.

61. The Republic of Korea commended the Secretariat for the significant progress achieved in implementing carbon-related projects and emphasized the importance of utilizing regular projects as seed fund to expand special projects with private sector participation. RoK also encouraged the Secretariat to further strengthen its role as a regional platform for carbon forestry and to continue supporting Member Countries in achieving their 2030 climate goals.

62. The Assembly took note of the information and provided further guidance and recommendations, as appropriate.

Item 9. Evaluation of AFoCO Projects and Updates on the Evaluation Scheme

63. The Secretariat reported on three project evaluations conducted in 2025—two in Myanmar and one in Bhutan. In Myanmar, the evaluations of *Integrated Pest and Disease Management (IPDM) in Teak Plantations* (AFoCO/014/2020) and *Model Forest for Livelihood Improvement of Forest Dependent Communities through Development of Community-based Enterprise and Forest*

Conservation (AFoCO/015/2020) confirmed strong outcomes, demonstrating replicable models for sustainable forest management and community enterprise development. The Bhutan project, *Sustainable Community-Based Enterprise Development for Improved Livelihood* (AFoCO/017/2020), presented a practical case for linking conservation with market-based livelihood models, with potential integration into AFoCO's Living Lab Initiative. The Secretariat also updated on the Evaluation Scheme, highlighting efforts to mainstream gender and environmental-social safeguards into all projects starting in 2026 through targeted training and the enhanced Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS). The Assembly took note of the information as in **A-25-13-12**.

64. Bhutan highlighted the catalytic potential of livelihood-centered initiatives in empowering rural communities and emphasized aligning project outcomes with national priorities under the *21st Century Economic Roadmap*, where the forest sector is a key driver for economic growth and manufacturing. It underscored the importance of harmonizing AFoCO initiatives with government programs and partner institutions to maximize national benefits.

65. Myanmar recognized the importance of policy-level support and long-term forest management through the teak plantation model. The country emphasized strengthening capacity from township to national levels and encouraged continued exchange of best practices and policy reviews to enhance sustainability.

66. The Republic of Korea expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's evaluation efforts and stressed that project evaluations should remain aligned with community benefits and national mechanisms for fair benefit-sharing. Korea further noted the importance of adhering to OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and ensuring that lessons learned from impactful projects are systematically reflected in future programming.

Item 10. Updates on the Progress of Activities under the AFoCO Climate Action Plan: Framework Development for Climate Action Plan Implementation

67. The Secretariat reported on the progress in developing the *Climate Forest Cooperation Framework*, and shared plans for its further development and consultation with Member Countries as in **A-25-13-13**. The Assembly took note of the information and encouraged respective Parties in proposing concepts and actively participating in piloting activities under the *Framework*.

68. Cambodia expressed appreciation for the proposed *Climate Forest Cooperation Framework* and its selection as a pilot country. Cambodia highlighted its ongoing carbon investment programs and readiness to share expertise, noting the recent MoU between the Forestry Administration and the Secretariat to develop a national forest cover program.

69. Myanmar expressed its appreciation for the Secretariat's continued efforts in advancing the *AFoCO Climate Action Plan*. It informed that a pilot Concept Note had been prepared and submitted, and reaffirmed its commitment to actively engage in pilot activities and future project proposals under the *Framework*.

Item 11. Initiatives under the Climate Action Plan

Item 11.1. Asian Forest Living Lab Initiative

70. The Secretariat presented progress on the Asian Forest Living Lab Initiative, a ten-year flagship program under the *AFoCO Climate Action Plan (2025–2034)* as in **A-25-13-14**. The Initiative transforms AFoCO project sites into field-based “living laboratories” that demonstrate and scale science-driven, climate-resilient forestry solutions. In 2025, three key programs advanced: (i) the AFoCO–ASEAN Forest Living Lab, with a proposal in preparation for the ASEAN–Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF); (ii) the AFoCO–National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS) Living Lab, which formed working groups on Mangrove Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Change Adaptation; and (iii) the AFoCO–Korea Arborea and Gardens Institute (KOAGI) Living Lab, focusing on seed conservation and the Baekdudaegan Global Seed Vault. For 2026, the Secretariat aims to mobilize further resources, expand coverage, and strengthen the Initiative’s profile as a regional platform for innovation in sustainable forestry. The Assembly took note of the information and reaffirmed to nominate members of the working groups to ensure timely establishment and effective operation of the Living Lab programs.

71. Cambodia expressed appreciation and confirmed that it had already nominated its representative for the working group.

72. Myanmar conveyed strong support for all three Living Lab programs and confirmed its participation through the Forest Department.

73. The Philippines emphasized the critical role of seed deposits in conserving Asia’s biodiversity, underscoring the need for sustained cooperation among Member Countries to advance the initiative’s regional conservation objectives.

74. The Secretariat thanked Members for their support and highlighted that the Initiative will be primarily supported through the ASEAN–Korea Cooperation Fund, which provides approximately USD 30 million annually through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. It requested Member Countries to finalize the nomination of working group members to ensure the timely launch and effective coordination of Living Lab programs in 2026 and encouraged continued collaboration to strengthen regional innovation and climate-resilient forestry across Asia.

Item 11.2. Forest Fire Management in Asia (FFMA) Initiative

75. The Secretariat presented progress on the Forest Fire Management in Asia (FFMA) Initiative, a regionally coordinated effort to strengthen the capacity of Member Countries in forest fire prevention, response, and recovery as in **A-25-13-15**. In 2025, the Initiative advanced its pilot phase, institutional governance, and finalized a five (5)-year *Consolidated Work Plan and Budget (2026–2030)*, jointly supported by the Governments of the Republic of Korea and the French Republic. At the 1st Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting held on 22 September 2025, both governments committed a total of EUR 3.5 million for the implementation of the five-year program. The Secretariat informed that the official launch of the FFMA main phase was celebrated during this Assembly Session. Beginning in 2026, activities will be operationalized under three key components—training of trainers, advanced education, and research & governance—to enhance regional expertise and collaboration in forest fire management.

76. The Assembly took note of the substantive progress achieved during the pilot phase, including the implementation of training programs, institutionalization of advanced education, preparation of research activities, and the outcomes of the First PSC Meeting. The Assembly further encouraged Member Countries to nominate qualified trainees and experts aligned with the program's thematic areas to ensure meaningful contributions to the Initiative and national capacity-building efforts. The Assembly endorsed the official launch of the FFMA main phase in 2026 under the *Consolidated Work Plan and Budget (2026–2030)*.

Item 11.3. Landscape Partnership Asia (LPA)

77. The Secretariat reported progress on Landscape Partnership Asia (LPA) as in **A-25-13-16**. Established in 2022 with AFoCO serving as the Secretariat, LPA engages partners including CIFOR-ICRAF, IUCN, and GEA to advance regional landscape restoration. The Secretariat highlighted key activities since the last Assembly, including an outreach event at UNCCD COP16 and project development efforts under the EU-funded agroforestry project in Timor-Leste. LPA also contributed to proposals under UK and GCF programs. Plans are underway to revise the LPA Concept Note in 2026 to integrate blended-finance mechanisms and outline a structured outreach roadmap.

78. Parties appreciated the Secretariat's efforts and recognized LPA as an important mechanism for leveraging partnerships and investments in large-scale restoration.

79. The Assembly took note of the information and encouraged the Secretariat to finalize the revised Concept Note, emphasizing the integration of financial instruments and engagement with new partners.

Item 11.4. AFoCO Mangrove Initiative

80. The Secretariat introduced the AFoCO Mangrove Initiative, designed to promote cooperation, policy engagement, and investment in mangrove restoration as in **A-25-13-17**. The Initiative aims to consolidate best practices, facilitate community participation, strengthen private-sector partnerships, and establish a regional MRV system. In 2026, the Secretariat will finalize the Concept Note and Work Plan, form a Working Group of representatives from the Parties and experts, and organize knowledge-sharing events. The Assembly took note of the update and endorsed the establishment of the Working Group.

81. The Assembly further welcomed the Initiative and highlighted its alignment with national blue-carbon and coastal ecosystem strategies. The Secretariat was requested to showcase the Initiative's progress at global platforms such as UNFCCC COP31.

82. The Assembly took note of the update and endorsed the establishment of the Working Group.

Item 11.5. REDD+ Readiness Initiative

83. The Secretariat updated (i) the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) analysis focused on the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector with a view to preparing cooperation with Parties; and (ii) participation in the research project commissioned by the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS) to support the establishment of an Article 6.2 REDD+ cooperation framework

between the Republic of Korea and the Lao PDR as in **A-25-13-18**.

84. The President thanked the Secretariat for the update on the REDD+ Readiness Initiative, noting its role in enhancing Parties' capacity for REDD+ implementation and carbon market readiness.

85. The Assembly took note of the progress made under REDD+ Readiness Initiative; and shared common views to promote other Parties' participation and collaboration.

Item 12. Updates on the Blended Financing Mechanism (for Decision)

86. The Secretariat reported on progress in developing AFoCO's blended finance roadmap as in **A-25-13-19**, following **Decision 58-XI-24R** of the Eleventh (11th) Session of the Assembly. In 2025, the Secretariat deepened partnerships with (i) Artha Networks Inc. (ANI) to design an investment pipeline and matchmaking mechanism for nature- and market-based solutions (NbS/MbS); (ii) Mutual Value Labs (MVL) under the Economics of Mutuality (EoM) Alliance to develop a systems-thinking diagnostic framework for sustainable value chains; and (iii) Merry Year Social Company (MYSC) to co-develop an impact-oriented NbS fund supporting blended-finance initiatives and start-ups in Member Countries. The Secretariat also highlighted investor consultations held in Seoul and London, a feasibility study for the *Tonle Sap Project* in Cambodia, and promotional engagement at the *Annual Thematic Dialogue 2025* and *AVPN Conference* in Hong Kong. For 2026, the Secretariat will operationalize blended-finance modalities through the Project Preparation Facility (PPF), develop three (3) to five (5) pilot projects, and pursue the establishment of a legal vehicle to institutionalize blended-finance implementation.

87. Parties expressed overall support for establishing a legal vehicle for blended finance, while calling for more clarity on the procedural direction and legal framework.

88. Bhutan emphasized that timely action is crucial to avoid missing emerging funding opportunities and recommended developing a flexible legal framework adaptable to the diverse regulatory environments of all Parties.

89. Indonesia welcomed the Secretariat's blended-finance efforts and emphasized the importance of ensuring its ongoing initiatives are reflected within the broader framework. Indonesia further requested that the pilot collaboration between AFoCO, MVL, and Mars in Sulawesi—focused on improving the cocoa supply chain—be formally included in AFoCO's documentation and planning. The Secretariat expressed appreciation for Indonesia's proactive engagement and confirmed the inclusion of the AFoCO–MVL–Mars pilot project in the official records, by recognizing the initiative as a meaningful example of linking corporate sustainability with AFoCO's blended-finance and market-based approaches and reaffirmed its commitment to continue supporting and scaling such pilot activities within the integrated work plan.

90. The Philippines proposed forming a legal working group in 2026 and adopting a phased approach with clear milestones and periodic reviews.

91. The Republic of Korea reiterated strong support, noting that private-sector participation is vital to achieving long-term sustainability and mobilizing additional capital for Member Countries.

92. The Secretariat thanked the Assembly for their guidance and reaffirmed that the legal vehicle will be developed through a phased, consultative process. It emphasized that the final structure

remains open and will be refined with advice from international legal and financial experts to ensure transparency, accountability, and alignment with AFoCO's institutional framework. The Secretariat requested the Assembly's endorsement to proceed with the legal and institutional groundwork in 2026 and to prepare a detailed implementation plan—including structure, jurisdiction, and governance arrangements—for presentation at the next Assembly Session.

93. The Assembly took note of the interventions, inquiries and information, and provided further guidance and recommendations as appropriate. The Assembly, through **Decision 62-XIII-25R**, approved the establishment of a legal vehicle for blended finance and tasked the Secretariat to proceed with the necessary legal and institutional groundwork taking into consideration the comments from the Assembly, particularly, Indonesia, Bhutan, and the President.

Item 13. Updates on the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Accreditation and the Adaptation Fund (AF) Accreditation

94. The Secretariat updated the Assembly on its progress towards accreditation with international climate financing mechanisms, as contained in **A-25-13-20**. AFoCO successfully completed Stage I of the GCF accreditation and is undergoing Stage II review covering fiduciary standards, environmental and social safeguards, and gender policy, with results expected at the 44th GCF Board Meeting in early 2026. To strengthen institutional capacity, the Secretariat developed five new governance policies; Internal Control, Risk Management, Policy on Prohibited Acts, Comprehensive Procurement, and Gender Guidelines of which were presented for the Assembly's approval. Regarding the Adaptation Fund, AFoCO remains ineligible for Regional Implementing Entity (RIE) status due to its pan-Asian membership but continues exploring engagement options with the AF Secretariat.

95. Parties congratulated the Secretariat for significant progress toward accreditation and recognized the institutional reforms undertaken. They expressed willingness to support future GCF project preparations through coordination with their respective National Designated Authorities (NDAs).

96. The Assembly took note of the update and encouraged the Secretariat to continue coordination with NDAs and proceed with the project development.

Item 14. Updates on Capacity Development Activities and Future Plan

97. The Secretariat presented updates on AFoCO's education, training, and fellowship programs. The Assembly took note of the information as in **A-25-13-21**. In 2025, two regional training programs—the Science and Technology Exchange Partnership (STEP) and Keep Eternally Your Seeds for Future (KEYS) Programs—were jointly organized by the Regional Education and Training Center (RETC) and the Korea Arboreta and Gardens Institute (KOAGI), engaging eight (8) Parties. The Secretariat also launched the inaugural Young Forest Scientists Awards with the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS), recognizing ten young professionals from five (5) Parties. Six (6) Fellowship Officials from Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand served at the Secretariat in 2025, and seven (7) Officials are expected for the 2026 cohort. The Secretariat further noted ongoing efforts to reform the AFoCO Scholarship Program to expand its regional scope and strengthen academic exchange under the *Capacity Building Roadmap 2030*.

Regarding the RETC, the Secretariat reported its continued operation under the support of Myanmar's Forest Department, with an extended MoU until July 2029. In 2026, the RETC will implement twenty-two (22) programs across eight (8) categories, maintaining its role as a regional hub for forestry education and training.

98. Myanmar expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its sustained support in capacity development, particularly through the Fellowship and training programs. It acknowledged the RETC's contributions to local community education and the establishment of the AFoCO Study Forest, while reaffirming its commitment to further cooperate in fully operationalizing the RETC. Myanmar requested continued assistance in training and resource mobilization to enhance the Center's activities in 2026.

C. Administrative, Financial, and Institutional Matters

Item 15. Approval of Policies and Regulations

Item 15.1. Amendment of the Staff Regulations (for Decision)

99. The Secretariat introduced the proposed amendments to the *Staff Regulations* as in **A-25-13-22**, primarily to reflect adjustments in compensation, policy alignment, and editorial updates. First, it was explained that the salary table would be removed from the *Staff Regulations* and developed as a separate guideline to allow regular review and adjustment based on the United Nations Common System (UNCS), inflation in Korea, and budget availability. Second, amendments were also proposed to align the leave and holiday policies with the Korean Labor Standards Act and practices of other international organizations. Lastly, editorial revisions were made to accommodate the increase in the number of Parties and the reclassification of annexes.

100. The Philippines asked whether the Secretariat intends to fully adopt the UNCS salary scale or use it only as a reference. The Party also inquired if a financial and administrative sub-committee would be established to review the market studies related to the salary adjustments.

101. The Secretariat clarified that the salary scales of the UNCS will be used as a reference, while adjustments will also take into account AFoCO's budget availability and other relevant factors. Regarding the sub-committee, the Secretariat noted that the establishment of sub-committees has not yet been raised by the Assembly. In light of the organization's expanding activities, the Secretariat took note of the need to consider the appropriate timing for reviewing AFoCO's governance structure.

102. The Assembly approved the proposed amendments to the *Staff Regulations* as adopted in **Decision 63-XIII-25R** with a slight revision, and expressed appreciation to the Secretariat staff for their work.

Item 15.2. Amendment of the Financial Regulations (for Decision)

103. The Secretariat presented the proposed amendments to the *Financial Regulations* as in **A-25-13-23**, emphasizing three key considerations: funding stability, partner alignment, and policy compliance. First, to secure a stable funding base, the amendment proposes changing the program support fee. Second, to strengthen partner alignment, the Secretariat proposed establishing a donor-

driven fund mechanism to accommodate the specific requirements of various funding partners. Lastly, to ensure policy compliance, the Secretariat proposed adding a clause on the oversight and monitoring of procurement activities to align with the newly developed Comprehensive Procurement Policy.

104. The Secretariat further explained the distinction between a trust fund and a donor-driven fund. A trust fund is managed under the special account and is subject to Assembly approval, whereas a donor-driven fund involves different layers of donors with varying requirements and procedures that may not be subject to Assembly approval. The donor-driven fund is to be managed separately under an independent account.

105. In response to the Philippines' question regarding the linkage with Agenda Item 12, the Secretariat clarified that the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to be established under Agenda Item 12 would not be affected by the donor-driven fund proposed in this Agenda Item 15.2. It explained that the SPV and the donor-driven fund would be managed under separate accounts.

106. The Assembly, with revision, approved the amendments to the *Financial Regulations* and adopted **Decision 64-XIII-25R**.

Item 15.3. Internal Control Policy (for Decision)

107. the Secretariat explained that the Internal Control Policy as in **A-25-13-24** was developed in line with AFoCO's existing *Staff* and *Financial Regulations* and relevant policies, and that it establishes a structured internal control framework defining the objectives, principles, and rules and responsibilities of each body of AFoCO. An organizational chart detailing AFoCO's governance and internal oversight structure was attached to the policy for reference

108. Indonesia sought clarification on the procedures to address fraudulent practices and suggested the Internal Control Policy to cross-reference the related policies to clearly indicate their interlinkages. The Secretariat clarified that the Internal Control Policy establishes a structured internal control framework defining the objectives, principles, and rules and responsibilities of each body of AFoCO. The procedures on specific prohibited acts are defined in the Policy on Prohibited Acts.

109. The Assembly, with revision, approved the Internal Control Policy and adopted **Decision 65-XIII-25R**.

Item 15.4. Policy on Prohibited Acts (for Decision)

110. The Secretariat presented the Policy on Prohibited Acts as in **A-25-13-25**, which establishes clear principles and guidelines for preventing, identifying, reporting, investigating, and resolving prohibited acts regarding AFoCO. The policy aims to ensure the responsible use of resources and uphold the highest standards of integrity across the organization's operations. The Secretariat outlined the policy's key components.

101. Upon clarification sought from the Assembly, the Secretariat clarified on the scope of the Policy on Prohibited Acts which applies not only to Secretariat staff but to all individuals and entities engaged with AFoCO. The Secretariat further clarified on the formal resolution process for handling reported prohibited acts, including fraudulent practices.

102. The Philippines sought clarification on the role of the Ombudsperson. The Party also sought clarification on investigating cases involving non-Staff members.

103. The Secretariat clarified that Ombudsperson is not the sole channel for receiving reports on prohibited acts, noting that there are multiple reporting mechanisms available. Regarding non-Staff, the Secretariat clarified that such cases would be handled by an independent investigation function of the Risk Management and Audit Committee, comprised of both internal Secretariat Staff and external experts which reports to the Assembly.

104. The Assembly, with revision, approved the Policy on Prohibited Acts and adopted **Decision 66-XIII-25R**.

Item 15.5. Comprehensive Procurement Policy (for Decision)

105. The Secretariat presented that the Comprehensive Procurement Policy, as in **A-25-13-26**, aims to ensure the best interest of AFoCO, value for money, fair and transparent competition, and prudent procurement practices. It also reinforces AFoCO's credibility as a trusted institution for international partners by ensuring independent oversight and audit mechanisms. The policy covers the entire procurement management cycle.

106. Bhutan raised a question about how AFoCO's Procurement Policy would align with the domestic procurement rules of implementing countries, noting that different countries have varying procedures and thresholds.

107. Cambodia, Indonesia, and Mongolia expressed their agreement. Cambodia added that flexibility should be maintained within AFoCO's policy to ensure alignment with each country's legal and institutional frameworks, emphasizing that overly strict rules could hinder project implementation.

108. Procurements executed by Implementing Agencies, particularly of the government entities of the Parties, in connection with approved projects and activities may follow their respective rules and procedures, provided these are consistent with, or exceed, the standards set forth under this Policy, particularly regarding transparency, value for money, fairness and accountability.

109. The Secretariat further clarified that AFoCO is currently undergoing Stage II of the GCF accreditation process. The Secretariat emphasized the importance of aligning AFoCO's Regulations and Policies with the frameworks of international fund and multilateral banks, including the overarching principles applied and/or usage of terms such as comprehensive procurement.

110. The Assembly, with revision, approved the Comprehensive Procurement Policy and adopted **Decision 67-XIII-25R**.

Item 15.6. Risk Management Policy (for Decision)

111. The Secretariat introduced the Risk Management Policy as in **A-25-13-27**, explaining that it is designed to align with internationally recognized standards applied by other intergovernmental and international organizations. The policy aims to ensure that the Secretariat effectively identifies and addresses risks. It outlines the purpose and scope, general principles as well as procedures.

112. Cambodia asked for clarification on whether the newly proposed Risk Management Policy and related frameworks were developed as part of AFoCO's own institutional policy development. Cambodia also sought clarification whether the newly developed documents align with the Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) standards other intergovernmental organizations and international funds.

113. AFoCO already has several core policies established in 2019 — including those on ethics and conflicts of interest for the Executive Director, ethics and conflicts of interest for the Assembly, anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, information disclosure, environmental and social safeguards, and gender. The Risk Management Policy and other new policies were developed to complement these existing policies in place, as well as to fulfill additional requirements by accreditation to international funds, specifically using GCF guidelines and standards as references.

114. The Philippines advised the Secretariat not to confine AFoCO's policies too narrowly to GCF standards, emphasizing the need for flexibility so that AFoCO could cooperate with other international funding mechanisms in the future. Supporting the overall policy principles, the Assembly viewed that Policies may be updated to accommodate needed complementation or flexibilities.

115. The Assembly, with revision, approved the Risk Management Policy and adopted **Decision 68-XIII-25R**.

Item 16. Updates on the Operationalization of the Regional Office

116. The Secretariat highlighted three key points from **A-25-13-28**, Regarding the Regional Office for the Mekong (ROM). First, regarding the current status in the host country (Viet Nam), it reported that the main remaining task is to finalize the office's local legal status. Second, on the roles and functions, the Regional Office's core mandate is to support project development, resource mobilization, and program implementation, with feedback received from Lao PDR, Thailand, and Cambodia. Lastly, under suggestions for moving forward, the Secretariat proposed focusing on transboundary cooperation and climate change–livelihood linkages and suggested establishing an annual AFoCO Mekong Forest Forum to enhance regional collaboration.

117. Indonesia emphasized the suitability of establishing a new Regional Office in the country, presenting the following three key points. First, geographical and regional balance: Since the existing Regional Office is located in the Mekong region, Indonesia proposed establishing a counterpart office in the BIMP-EAGA area, noting that its central position in Southeast Asia enables close cooperation with neighboring countries such as Timor-Leste, Singapore, and Malaysia. Second, political and administrative readiness: The Indonesian government expressed its willingness to provide office space and administrative support, with the proposal potentially endorsed at the ministerial level through existing governmental networks. Lastly, institutional foundation: Indonesia highlighted the presence of the Korea-Indonesia Forest Cooperation Center (KIFCC), an overseas office of the Korea Forest Service, as a solid institutional base that could facilitate AFoCO's establishment and operations in the country.

118. Timor-Leste expressed its support for the establishment of a Regional Office in Indonesia.

119. Kazakhstan reiterated its proposal to establish a joint task force to set up AFoCO Regional Education and Training Center for Central Asia in the country, recalling the Memorandum of Cooperation with AFoCO as the basis for the proposal and emphasized that the initiative had been

endorsed at a high level, including by the President of Kazakhstan. The Assembly supported the proposal by Kazakhstan to establish a joint task force and tasked the Secretariat to facilitate formation and operation of the task force in due course.

120. The Assembly supported the proposal for the establishment of the AFoCO Mekong Forest Forum; and considered operational enhancement measures to strengthen the ROM's capacity and effectiveness in serving Parties in the Mekong Region.

Item 17. Work Plan of the Executive Director Selection Committee in 2026

121. The Secretariat presented the Work Plan of the Executive Director Selection Committee for 2026 as in [A-25-13-29](#). Recalling that the previous Committee had completed its work in 2022, the Committee would be reconstituted to carry out the next Executive Director selection process.

122. The Secretariat clarified that the final decision on the Executive Director's appointment will be made at the Regular Session of the Assembly, typically held in late October each year.

123. The Assembly tasked the Committee to resume its work; review its rules of procedure; undertake the process needed; and report its final recommendations to the Assembly for consideration and decision.

Item 18. Work Plan and Budget for 2026 (for Decision)

124. The Secretariat presented the proposed Work Plan and Budget for 2026 as in [A-25-13-30](#), which serves as the main planning and budgeting framework for the Secretariat's operations. The document outlines the activities to be implemented in 2026, their estimated expenditures, mandatory contributions from the Parties, the organizational structure and staffing table, and an indicative budget for 2027.

125. [Cambodia](#) and [Indonesia](#) sought clarification on financial and budgetary matters under regarding application of the 12% program support and the change in the specific collaboration (NIFOS Collaboration) listed under the operational cost. The program support charged to the collaboration with other partners and private sector is incorporated into the operational cost budget. Activities removed from the operational cost in accounted as project-based special accounts starting 2026.

126. The Secretariat clarified that AFoCO has two separate financial accounts — one for operational costs and another for programs and projects. The operational account, which covers administrative and institutional expenditures, is funded through mandatory contributions from all Parties and approved annually by the Assembly. The program and project account is financed through voluntary contributions, which are currently almost entirely covered by the Republic of Korea.

127. The President raised that the Assembly may consider to assess mandatory contribution especially with expected introduction of blended financing model. This may also be an opportunity to bear costs in equitable manner. The Executive Director acknowledged the financial difficulties faced by some Parties in meeting their mandatory contributions but emphasized that the Secretariat is also experiencing fiscal challenges due to inflation and rising operational costs.

128. The Executive Director expressed appreciation to the Korea Forest Service for its efforts in securing the budget proposal for AFoCO and for submitting it for approval by the National Assembly

of the Republic of Korea.

129. The Assembly approved the proposed Work Plan and Budget for 2026 and adopted **Decision 69-XIII-25R**.

D. Procedural Matters of the Assembly

Item 19. Election of Succeeding Officers

130. The Assembly elected the incumbent Vice President, the Lao PDR, as the President, and Thailand as the Vice President to serve until the election of successors at the end of next regular session of the Assembly as in **A-25-13-31**.

Item 20. Dates and Venues of the Next Sessions of the Assembly

131. Two sessions of the Assembly are proposed to be held in 2026 – one as a regular session and the other one as a special session, subject to the decision of the Assembly.

132. Bhutan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan proposed to host the next Special Session of the Assembly in their respective countries, tentatively in May 2026.

133. The Assembly tasked the Secretariat to coordinate with Bhutan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan to finalize the arrangements for the hosting of the next Special Session and notify the Assembly accordingly. The regular session of the Assembly in October 2026 will be organized in the Republic of Korea unless otherwise decided.

E. Other Matters

134. Mongolia expressed its intention to invite AFoCO to organize a side event and host a Pavilion during the Seventeenth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 17) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), scheduled for 17–28 August 2026. COP 17 will focus on land restoration, drought resilience, and sustainable land management, particularly emphasizing rangelands and pastoral systems in recognition of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. The expected outcomes included: (i) Sharing success stories and best practices on land and forest restoration; (ii) Strengthening partnerships among AFoCO Member Countries and UNCCD stakeholders; and (iii) Enhancing the visibility and recognition of AFoCO's contributions to the UNCCD's activities.

Item 21. Closing of the Session

135. Bhutan expressed appreciation for the efficient moderation by the President and Vice President, and for the Secretariat's professional coordination under the Executive Director's leadership. Bhutan conveyed gratitude to Korea for its continued hospitality and wished everyone safe travels, expressing hope to meet again — whether in Bhutan, Kazakhstan, or Tajikistan.

136. Cambodia expressed sincere appreciation to the President, Vice President, and the Secretariat for their effective chairing and excellent logistical arrangements — including

accommodation, transport, and hospitality. Cambodia also thanked the host country RoK for providing the venue and support, and hoped to meet again at the next Special Session.

137. Indonesia congratulated all participants on the successful conclusion of the Assembly and thanked the President, Vice President, Secretariat, and Korea Forest Service for their efforts. Indonesia emphasized the importance of following up on Assembly decisions for the sake of greener and more sustainable forests in Asia.

138. Kyrgyzstan thanked the Assembly for approving its project proposal, calling it an important step for sustainable forest management and climate resilience in the country. Kyrgyzstan valued AFoCO's spirit of cooperation and solidarity, and expressed appreciation to the Secretariat and all delegates for their shared commitment.

139. Myanmar congratulated AFoCO and its Secretariat for a productive and successful Assembly, and thanked the Executive Director, the Korea Forest Service, and the Government of Korea for their support. Myanmar reflected on regional and global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and natural disasters, emphasizing that unity and cooperation are essential. Myanmar expressed pride in being an AFoCO Party and reaffirmed its commitment to continued collaboration.

140. The Republic of Korea expressed gratitude that participants enjoyed the meeting and reaffirmed Korea's commitment to supporting AFoCO and its Member Countries under the principle of "leaving no one behind." Korea also commended Executive Director Park Chongho for his leadership and achievements over the past three years, as well as the President for outstanding facilitation.

141. Viet Nam thanked RoK for hosting and the Secretariat for organizing a well-managed and successful meeting. Viet Nam congratulated the incoming President (Lao PDR) and Vice President (Thailand) and highlighted AFoCO's growing potential as an important forestry cooperation organization on the global stage.

142. Singapore expressed appreciation to the Secretariat, the President and the Korea Forest Service for hosting, and said it was inspired by the shared commitment of AFoCO Parties to forest conservation. Singapore expressed hope to continue forward together.

143. The Executive Director, in his closing remarks, announced a big progress regarding potential headquarters of AFoCO. The Metropolitan City of Seoul passed the approval of fund for a new building in Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul. He recalled his earlier commitment, made during his appointment as Executive Director, to secure a dedicated Secretariat building and expressed gratitude to the Korea Forest Service for its strong support throughout the process. Construction is expected to start within two years, with completion anticipated by 2029. The Executive Director expressed his sincere gratitude to the President and Vice President for their leadership and support. He noted that since the Secretariat's relocation to its new office in 2023, the Assembly had grown so much in scale and participation that a larger venue was now required — a clear reflection of AFoCO's expanding membership, influence, and momentum for collaboration. He expressed deep gratitude to all Parties and Observers for their active engagement and reiterated his honor in serving the organization.

144. The President delivered closing remarks by expressing heartfelt gratitude to all Parties, particularly the Republic of Korea, and the Secretariat for their support and cooperation throughout the Thirteenth Session of the Assembly. He shared a personal anecdote from the Philippines,

recalling his visits to two forest-dependent communities that had benefited from AFoCO projects. He noted the profound appreciation expressed by local people toward the faceless, nameless organization that had provided them with the resources to sustain their livelihoods. Although these communities may not see the extensive coordination and policy work that takes place behind the scenes, the President emphasized that AFoCO's initiatives translate directly into tangible improvements on the ground—putting food on the table and supporting families. He concluded by reaffirming the shared commitment to continue AFoCO's mission of building a greener and better world together.

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