

## **SER2021 Call to Action**

Our world is in turmoil as we continue to face the first global pandemic in a century. Humanity's impacts on the planet have led to biodiversity loss, climate change, and infectious diseases such as COVID-19. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration could not be more timely or important. More than 1,300 delegates from 70 countries assembled virtually at the 9<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Ecological Restoration – SER2021 – to address the urgent need for ecological restoration as a key nature-based solution for addressing multiple ecological, economic, social, and health challenges. Conservation alone is not enough – we must invest in restoration to rebuild degraded ecosystems to enhance biodiversity, improve livelihoods and human wellbeing, create social-economic resiliency, and mitigate climate change. Not only do we need to scale up, we need to step up. We must invest in high quality, effective, socially sound, participatory, ecological restoration to reverse degradation and achieve local, regional, and planetary net ecological and social improvement.

We embrace the collaborative opportunity that the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration presents to secure a healthy, livable, planet for all species for current and future generations. Expanding justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of restoration is imperative for a successful and impactful Decade that truly tackles major planetary challenges including widespread environmental degradation, human health deterioration, and food and water insecurity. This is everyone's decade –individual actions, taken collectively, create global impact to heal the planet. We celebrate the reciprocity between community-based restoration and the restoration of communities.

Today the SER2021 delegates collectively issue this call to action; specifically, we encourage all nations, peoples, and sectors to:

- 1) Implement ecological restoration worldwide to achieve measurable improvements in both social and ecological conditions by 2030.
- 2) Champion the UN Decade Principles for Ecosystem Restoration as the foundation for all restorative activities that are to be implemented in the name of, and measured towards, UN Decade goals to achieve net improvement for both nature and people.
- 3) Where appropriate, prioritize ecological restoration over less impactful interventions in order to generate the greatest potential improvement in both ecological and social conditions.
- 4) Elevate restoration of non-forest ecosystems (e.g. wetlands, marine ecosystems, grasslands, drylands) as equally important to forests, in terms of financial and political investment, media coverage, capacity building, and assessments of the benefits of restoration.
- 5) Equitably finance all aspects of the ecosystem restoration agenda in a sustainable, transparent, and just manner, including distribution of benefits from restoration, that recognizes and supports local knowledge and capacity building.
- 6) Prioritize and resolve key governance challenges that impede restoration, such as ineffective policies, perverse incentives, poor participatory mechanisms, and conflicts over land and resource rights.

The global repair of ecosystems is a powerful and positive approach to addressing many of our most pressing ecological and social challenges. Effective and community-driven restoration is transformative; it is, ultimately, the most hopeful and important investment we can make for the future of both human and non-human life. Ecological restoration, the most aspirational restoration approach is difficult and challenging, but essential to achieving transformative change.