



## WORLD OF FORESTRY

### XXIII IUFRO World Congress

The twenty-third IUFRO World Congress, organized by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), took place from 23 to 28 August 2010 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. With the theme “Forests for the future: sustaining society and the environment”, the congress drew over 2 700 participants from 92 countries, the largest attendance in the gathering’s history. Lee Myung-bak, President of the Republic of Korea, inaugurated the six-day event, which included daily keynote speeches from prominent figures in forestry. Outgoing IUFRO President Don Koo Lee led a special discussion on the future challenges of forest education. There were 150 technical sessions with over 2 000 presentations, 1 027 posters and a trade and exhibition area.

The congress and its technical and poster sessions focused specifically on: forests and climate change; biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of forest resources; forest environmental services; Asia’s forests for the future; forest products and production processes for a greener future; emerging technologies in the forest sector; frontiers in forest and tree health; forests, communities and cultures; and forests, human health and environmental security.

In addition, there was significant discussion on a number of recurring themes during the week. These included narrowing knowledge gaps between science and policy; the need for the discipline of forestry and forestry education to evolve with changing demands on forests; the need for greater interdisciplinary work which recognizes the social perspective of efforts to protect and improve forest ecosystems; and the role of forestry in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Beyond these emerging concerns, participants also took time to discuss and review advances in areas of long-standing concern for forest research, including forest health and statistical modelling of forest growth.

During the closing ceremony, the Seoul Resolution was published, committing IUFRO to focus more on scientific research and international collaboration in the following six thematic areas: forests for people; climate change and forestry; bioenergy; forest biodiversity conservation; forest and water interactions; and forest resources for the future. Furthermore, the resolution commits IUFRO to the following goals:

- improving communication with scientists, students, forest professionals and the public, and increasing the visibility and accessibility of research findings;
- expanding and deepening IUFRO’s work at the science-policy interface by enhancing scientific contributions to international processes, conventions and organizations, by responding rapidly to new policy issues and by expanding partnerships;
- urging member institutions and external stakeholders to renew and strengthen forest monitoring activities and support global monitoring efforts;

- improving IUFRO’s capacity to expand its membership and funding base to provide fuller support to its member organizations;
- promoting high-quality forest-related research, encouraging interdisciplinary cooperation, strengthening scientific capacity and identifying emerging issues.

Further information is available at: [www.iufro2010.com](http://www.iufro2010.com)

### Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity

Following intense negotiations, the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted a new Strategic Plan and a new international protocol for governing access to and equitable sharing of the world’s genetic resources. COP 10, a central event of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010, was held from 18 to 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan. It drew over 7 000 delegates, and the total participation was recorded to be as high as 18 000. A high-level segment was also held with the participation of 122 ministers and five Heads of State or Government.

The ten-year Strategic Plan or the “Aichi Target” adopted by the meeting includes 20 headline targets, organized under five strategic goals: addressing the underlying causes of biodiversity loss; reducing the pressures on biodiversity; safeguarding biodiversity at all levels; enhancing the benefits provided by biodiversity; and promoting capacity-building. Among the targets, Parties agreed to at least halve, and where feasible bring close to zero, the rate of loss of natural habitats, including forests; and to restore at least 15 percent of degraded areas. A new resource mobilization strategy was also announced in support of the Strategic Plan.

The new Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization provides a framework for balancing access and benefit sharing based on prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms, while taking into account the important role of traditional knowledge. The protocol also proposes the creation of a global multilateral mechanism for situations in transboundary areas or where prior informed consent cannot be obtained. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the landmark agreement was a positive step in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and demonstrated that countries are committed to pragmatic cooperation in meeting the challenges of sustainable development.

A decision was adopted on forest biodiversity; it calls for implementation of joint activities with the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and an expanded programme of work in developing countries on forest biological diversity and the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Forest Types, through capacity building, collaboration with the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration and streamlining of forest-



related reporting, working with FAO and other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The COP also requested the CBD Secretariat to enhance coordination of capacity-building efforts on issues related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, ecosystem-based carbon sequestration and the conservation of forest carbon stocks, in collaboration with the UNFF Secretariat and other UN agencies. Also of relevance to the forest sector were, among others, decisions on biodiversity and climate change, mountain biological diversity, and biofuels and biodiversity.

In total, COP 10 adopted some 47 decisions, including a de facto moratorium on climate-related geo-engineering; adoption of the Tkarikwaí:ri Code of Ethical Conduct on the Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity; and the establishment of clear steps to increase cooperation with the other international environmental conventions leading up to the Rio+20 Summit in 2012.

Further information on the outcomes is available at: [www.cbd.int/nagoya/outcomes](http://www.cbd.int/nagoya/outcomes)

### Good news from Cancún

Most countries hailed the agreements reached at the climate change talks held in Cancún, Mexico from 29 November to 10 December 2010 – including the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – as a balanced outcome that represents an important stepping stone towards a final agreement. There is cautious optimism that this could be reached at COP 17 in Durban, South Africa in December 2011.

For the past three years, two ad hoc working groups have been engaged in parallel-track negotiations – one addressing actions of all Parties under the Convention, including on climate change mitigation, adaptation, financing, capacity building and technology transfer; and the other focusing on further emission reduction commitments of developed countries (Annex I countries) under the Kyoto Protocol. The goals are to advance collective efforts to limit global warming to within 2°C above pre-industrial levels to avoid severe consequences of climate change and to promote adaptation to the inevitable consequences of climate change.

Perhaps the most significant development at Cancún was a change in atmosphere, marked by the restoration of confidence in the UNFCCC process, a willingness to compromise and heightened commitment of Parties to move forward together in seeking mutually acceptable and more ambitious climate change responses.

The main outcome was the validation of the elements of the Copenhagen Accord, which was drafted at COP 15 in December 2009. The Cancún Agreement launches the Green Climate Fund

and outlines a process for setting it up; creates a framework for providing incentives for forest-based climate change mitigation actions in developing countries (i.e. REDD+); establishes a Technology Mechanism, including a technology centre and network; and adopts the Cancún Adaptation Framework to promote international cooperation and action on adaptation.

The long-awaited decision on REDD+, under discussion for the past five years, confirms the scope of REDD+: reducing emissions from deforestation; reducing emissions from forest degradation; conservation of forest carbon stocks; sustainable management of forest; and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. It outlines principles as well as safeguards against negative social and environmental impacts of REDD+ actions. Countries are requested to develop national strategies and action plans for REDD+, a national (or as an interim measure, subnational) forest (emission) reference level, a national system for monitoring and reporting on REDD+ activities and a system for providing information on how environmental and social safeguards are being addressed and respected. Parties are expected to take a phased approach – from strategy development to pilot activities and finally to results-based actions. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) is requested to work on methodological issues in REDD+, including methods to estimate emissions and removals from REDD+ activities and modalities for developing forest reference (emission) levels and national forest monitoring systems. The issue of the REDD+ financing modality (e.g. fund-based, market-based or a mix) remains unresolved and will remain under discussion by the ad hoc working group.

The future of the Kyoto Protocol – whether it will be extended beyond 2012, in a second commitment period – is not clear. The ad hoc working group addressing this issue continues to struggle with numbers – i.e. developed countries' voluntary emission reduction pledges, which, in aggregate, so far are considered insufficient to limit the temperature rise to within 2°C. The question is how to reach the level of emission reductions needed – whether Annex I countries will make more ambitious cuts, how developing countries will contribute and whether action will be legally binding or voluntary. The Cancún Agreement indicates that for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, emission trading and project-based mechanisms (Joint Implementation, the Clean Development Mechanism), as well as offsets from carbon sinks in the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sectors, would continue to be available to Annex I Parties to meet their emission reduction commitments.

Agreement on revised LULUCF accounting rules for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol could influence the level of emission reduction commitments that Annex I Parties are willing to make. Reporting on forest management, which was optional under the first commitment period, is the key issue; agreement on this remains elusive. The areas of debate include whether a cap should be applied to emissions and removals from



## Forest Day 4

Forest Day 4 was held in parallel to COP 16 on Sunday 5 December 2010 in Cancún, Mexico, co-hosted by the Mexican National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). It brought together more than 1 500 leaders, experts, practitioners and policy-makers, advocates and investors, indigenous people, community representatives and journalists to discuss and debate how to accelerate the integration of forests into climate change mitigation and adaptation from local to global levels. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, President of Mexico, opened the event with a plea to for all to push hard for the full incorporation of REDD+ into a long-term international climate change agreement.

Forest Day participants shared experiences on a number of existing and promising approaches for integrating forests into strategies to address climate change. These include aligning REDD+ with national development objectives and poverty reduction strategies; ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation; restoring degraded lands; empowering communities to manage forests; addressing agricultural drivers of deforestation; increasing mitigation through forest management in developed countries; and mobilizing additional finance.

A summary statement was provided to UNFCCC to help it move forward in forest-related negotiations. It included recommendations on the following:

- harnessing REDD+ to manage forests sustainably and to reduce poverty;
- REDD+ as a key and cost-effective opportunity to mitigate climate change;
- the need to protect the rights of indigenous people and forest-dependent communities;
- the need for additional financing to implement REDD+ at scale;
- biodiversity conservation as a prerequisite for the success of REDD+;
- options for addressing agricultural drivers of deforestation (including increasing production efficiencies, promoting multifunctional landscapes, directing REDD+ financing to increase efficiencies in agronomic practices, and shifting extensive production systems to low-carbon landscapes);
- promoting synergies between climate change mitigation and adaptation across landscapes;
- strengthening linkages between national and subnational monitoring, reporting and verification systems for REDD+;
- improving greenhouse gas accounting rules for forest management in developed countries.

The statement cautioned that the success of REDD+ strategies and projects will depend on whether they influence governance reforms or are shaped by existing governance failures.

forest management, if and how emissions from extraordinary occurrences (*force majeure*) would be accounted, how to set a baseline or forest reference (emission) level and how to factor out changes in forest carbon stocks not caused by human intervention. Work on this issue will continue over the coming year.

Forests figured prominently in the negotiations and in events on the sidelines. Political support for a REDD+ decision was strong. REDD+ is already going ahead on the ground, as evidenced by the many side events on REDD+ pilot activities supported by NGOs, bilateral agencies and multilateral partnerships (including the

UN-REDD Programme and the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility). The discussions in the Kyoto Protocol related negotiations on carbon accounting rules for forest management – a complex and controversial issue – have also stimulated debates on what constitutes good forest management and how to provide incentives for it. The importance of forests to climate change mitigation has clearly raised the political profile of forests. The crucial role that forests play in climate change adaptation and in rural livelihoods has not yet received the same level of attention, but this can be expected to come.