

BARC 2018 Highlights: 25 June 2018

The Global Bamboo and Rattan Congress (BARC 2018) opened today at the China National Convention Center in Beijing, China, welcoming around 1,200 participants, including 500 visitors from other countries. A ministerial summit took place in the morning, and a plenary dialogue on South-South cooperation in the early afternoon. Later in the day, various parallel sessions convened around the venue, discussing experiences of bamboo and rattan-related cooperation among countries, public and private sectors, and industry and research actors. An exhibition of bamboo-related products and innovations was on display at the venue.

Opening Ceremony

The conference opened with an *a capella* chorus by ethnic minority Miao and She singers from the bamboo forest areas of Yong'an and Yibin, China, and the screening of a promotional video about BARC. Zhang Jianlong, Administrator, National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA), made opening remarks, stating the importance of bamboo and rattan in promoting South-South and South-North cooperation. Zhang then conveyed a welcome message from Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, who highlighted that bamboo is embedded in China's history and culture, and emphasized China's willingness to promote sustainable development.

Conference participants heard video messages from Lenin Moreno, President, Ecuador, and Juan Manuel Santos, President, Colombia. Both spoke of their countries' long-standing history

of using bamboo for rural and sustainable development, and underlined their commitment to the objectives of BARC 2018.

Shitaye Minale, Deputy Speaker of the House, Ethiopia, highlighted ongoing cooperation efforts between China and Ethiopia on bamboo for sustainable development, including the construction of a center on this theme in Addis Ababa.

Hans Friederich, Director-General, International

Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR), welcomed all to BARC 2018, thanking the Government of China for its role in organizing the conference. He announced that the Central African Republic will join INBAR as its 44th member as of 1 July 2018.

Hao Mingjin, Standing Committee, China National People's Congress, highlighted the value of China's bamboo and rattan industry and its readiness to promote and deepen South-South cooperation, support INBAR's work, and cooperate with the international community to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Rubén Flores, Chair, INBAR Board of Trustees, presented Jiang Zehui, Chair, BARC organizing committee, with a lifetime achievement award, highlighting her work in forest science,



Hans Friederich, Director General, INBAR



Melodious *a capella* chorus by Miao and She singers from the cultural heritage bamboo forest areas of Yong'an and Yibin, China.



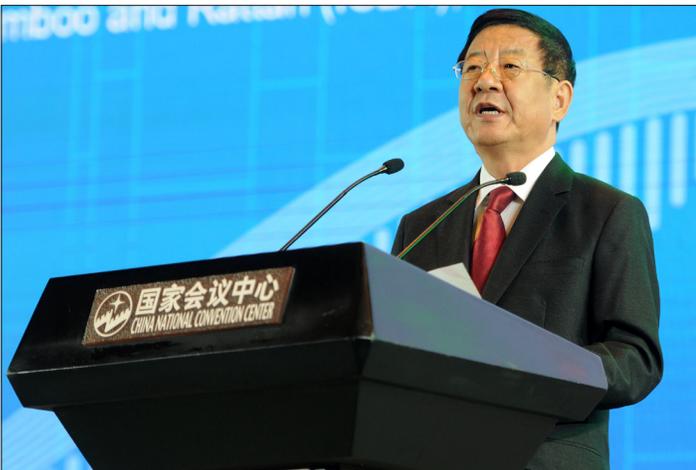
Rubén Flores (right), representing Ecuador, the current Chair for the INBAR Council, presented **Jiang Zehui** (left), Chair, BARC Organizing Committee, with a lifetime achievement award

developing global standards for bamboo engineering, and enabling China's support for INBAR and its establishment as an international organization. Jiang expressed heartfelt thanks, stating that the honor belongs to all who have been involved in innovation and the advancement of the bamboo and rattan industry.

Ministerial Summit

Opening: Flores, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Ecuador, representing the current Chair of the INBAR Council, chaired the opening session, emphasizing the need for better public policies and more investment, research and development of South-South cooperation. He underscored Ecuador's strong support for INBAR.

Zhang emphasized the role of bamboo and rattan in sustainable development, environmental protection and poverty reduction, noting that China had seven million hectares cultivating bamboo in 2017, employing over eight million farmers, and that it plans to employ over 10 million by 2020. He affirmed INBAR's role in facilitating capacity building in member countries, promoting bamboo as a means of carbon sequestration, and acting as a cooperation platform.



Zhang Jianlong, Administrator, NFGA

William J.C. Hutchinson, Minister Without Portfolio, Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Jamaica, gave examples of products made in Jamaica, in recognition of bamboo's market potential, including bamboo charcoal, water filters, herbal soap, and biodegradable packaging. He announced that Jamaica will host an international symposium on the economic value of bamboo for the Latin America and Caribbean region in Kingston from 27-29 November 2018.

Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister of Forestry, Nepal, described China as a global leader in the bamboo industry with whom Nepal wishes to expand cooperation.

Jiang Zehui, Co-Chair, INBAR Board of Trustees, reviewed INBAR's successes since its establishment in 1997, including: integrating bamboo and rattan resources in regional and global development frameworks; promoting bamboo and rattan industries among its members; enhancing capacity building; and encouraging innovation.

Nicolas Rossellini, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in China, said the UN's 2030 Agenda has sustainability at its core and stressed the role of bamboo and rattan in achieving its goals. He then introduced video messages from UNDP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO). Achim Steiner, Administrator, UNDP, stressed the essential role of INBAR in developing the global bamboo and rattan market, valued at US\$ 60 billion a year. Graziano da Silva, Director-General, FAO, drew attention to several FAO partnerships in the area of bamboo and land restoration.

Panel Discussion: Friederich moderated the panel discussion. Benito Owusu-Bio, Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, Ghana, discussed his country's bamboo plantation development programme to restore degraded areas, highlighting its value in reforestation as a faster-growing resource than traditional forest species. Ibrahim Jibril, Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigeria, related how his country is reforesting landscapes and managing watersheds through a bamboo-planting programme. Nonita Caguioa, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines, said bamboo constitutes 20% of her country's national greening program, and described how, with government support, bamboo has been used to build durable disaster shelters. Yamil Sanchez, Ministry of the Environment, Panama, highlighted the use of bamboo to combat the impacts of climate change and hurricanes. Mary Goretti Kitutu Kimono, Minister of State, Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda, said her country is in the process of developing a dedicated program for bamboo to restore degraded areas and combat poverty.

Discussion with participants from the floor highlighted business opportunities, including in marketing bamboo as a food product, using bamboo in arts and crafts, and providing construction materials. Friederich concluded that planting bamboo for environmental purposes provides spillover benefits for trade and industry.



L-R: **Mary Goretti Kitutu Kimono**, Minister of State, Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda; **Yamil Sanchez**, Ministry of the Environment, Panama; **Nonita Caguioa**, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines; **Hans Friederich**, INBAR Director General; **Ibrahim Jibril**, Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Environment, Nigeria; and **Benito Owusu-Bio**, Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, Ghana

Signing Ceremony: The INBAR Secretariat signed several agreements with partners to establish: a joint laboratory; a genome atlas; an Alliance of Innovation-driven Development of Bamboo and Rattan Industries; the Qingdao International Bamboo and Rattan Research Institute of Innovation; and a grant agreement for the Intra-African Bamboo Smallholder Livelihood Development Programme. INBAR also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).

Charlotte Salford, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), highlighted the relevance of INBAR's work in rural poverty reduction through scaling up and diversifying the bamboo value chain, restoring degraded areas, promoting bamboo into country plans to address climate change, and fostering South-South cooperation. Flores announced Cameroon's decision to host INBAR's new regional office in Central Africa.

In closing remarks, Friederich introduced INBAR's 2018 Bamboo and Rattan Yellow Pages of China, affirming its value as a means to contact Chinese bamboo-related companies. He advised that the draft of a proposed conference outcome document, the Beijing Declaration, had been distributed to all participants, and invited comments on the draft.

High-Level Dialogue on South-South Cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative

Opening: Salford presented IFAD's cooperation with China and INBAR to reforest degraded mountain areas, and the inter-Africa project co-financed by IFAD and INBAR, which has provided US\$ 2.5 million over three years for knowledge sharing between Ghana, Cameroon, Madagascar and Ethiopia on 're-greening' initiatives.

Jiang Xiandong, Party Secretary of Yong'an city, China, reported that bamboo-related industries in his city generated over 6.6 billion yuan (US\$ 1.01 billion) in 2017, and that the city has received over 80 government officials from other countries and has dispatched professionals from China to other countries of the Global South for capacity building.

Friederich highlighted emerging areas of work, including: a taskforce report on common terminology for rattan species; recognizing and promoting bamboo and rattan in women's livelihoods and empowerment; and supporting companies to market their products internationally. Noting the importance of

bamboo as a wildlife habitat, he drew attention to discussions that will take place at the Congress between the NGFA, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and other international organizations to create a large nature reserve for China's giant pandas.

Panel: Gunter Pauli, the Club of Rome, called for the creation of mass markets for bamboo, for example, by promoting bamboo fiber in preference to eucalyptus as disposable diaper filling. He called for political leadership by producer countries such as China, India and the Philippines.

Cynthia Villar, Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, the Philippines, highlighted bamboo's suitability for urban environments, citing, as an example, the planting of bamboo along the river in Manila.

Jenny Kim, Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), mentioned a GGGI project that is using bamboo in business models for green, low-cost housing, and called for opportunities to share success stories and hard evidence. Pauli said that antiquated concepts, such as the classification of bamboo as a tree rather than a plant in South America, as well as barriers to the uptake of bamboo created by vested interests, are hurdles to be overcome.

Dessima Williams, former UN Special Advisor for implementation of the SDGs, stressed the role of women and small producers, communities and island states in developing the sector. Paul van de Logt, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,



Dessima Williams, former UN Special Advisor for implementation of the SDGs



Francois Martel, Secretary General of the Pacific Island Development Forum, Fiji, and **Charlotte Salford**, IFAD

Netherlands, proposed connecting growers with knowledge centers and the private sector, and showing the relevance of bamboo and rattan to the SDGs and the circular economy.

On changing existing mindsets, van de Logt emphasized creating the right market conditions, Martel suggested promoting more peer-to-peer learning, and Williams stressed the importance of promoting sustainable lifestyles. Salford highlighted the role IFAD can play in policy dialogue, and urged more public-private partnerships. Villar discussed how her government is establishing ‘farm schools’ in every village that will include classes on bamboo.

Pauli called for international financiers to be included in future Congress meetings. Kim acknowledged the Congress as a successful first step for cooperation, and proposed holding regional conferences to share regional knowledge and experiences.

Parallel Sessions

‘B&R4B&R’: Bamboo and Rattan for Belt and Road: Winston Chow, GGGI China, moderated the session. Keynote speakers from the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED), FAO and the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) discussed the aims of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the possibilities for greening its activities. CICCED anticipated that INBAR could cooperate with the BRI through financing and infrastructure construction. FAO announced the release of its report on good practices in using bamboo for land restoration. WCMC warned that BRI investments could ‘lock in’ infrastructure that increases environmental impacts and have unintended consequences such as wildlife poaching, land degradation, and land grabbing. WCMC reminded participants that President Xi Jinping, China, had announced in May 2017 a coalition that will work on greening the belt and road, coordinated by UNEP and China’s Ministry of Ecology, which will hold a biennial high-level roundtable, provide a platform for green technology exchanges, and develop thematic partnerships in areas such as cities and transportation.

Panelists acknowledged China’s positive achievements in combating climate change, and proposed adopting its experiences in greening the BRI. They encouraged Western countries to adopt similar measures in fulfilling their commitment to the Paris Agreement.

Evaluating Africa’s Natural Capital: Ruud Jansen, Executive Secretary, Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa (GDSA), opened the session. Keynote speeches were delivered by an INBAR representative, ministers from Ghana, Uganda, and Nigeria, and the Deputy Speaker of the House, Ethiopia. Speakers identified several channels to promote the widespread use of bamboo in Africa, including enlisting the support of politicians across the political system; improving research and development; and greatly increasing collaboration with the private sector, particularly in research. Questions from the floor raised, among others, the issue of fast turnover of politicians in the African region, which prevents long-term commitments to bamboo, as well as a lack of training at university level of the importance of bamboo. The session also saw the signing of an INBAR-GDSA MoU.

Exploring Guadua’s Potential in the Andean Region: Pablo Jácome, INBAR, moderated the session. In their keynotes, Friederich and Salford emphasized the great potential of bamboo development in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and revealed that IFAD and INBAR were working on a possible bamboo project together involving those three countries. Flores detailed Ecuador’s National Bamboo Strategy 2018-2022, the need for new legislation and his desire that IFAD and INBAR provide project funding and other forms of support. Gustavo Mostajo, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Peru, outlined his government’s initiatives to promote bamboo, including creating a ‘technology dialogue space,’ an online platform, a national registry of plantations, and the development of a Bamboo Action Plan. Jorge Augusto Montoya, President, Guadua Federation of Colombia, discussed hopes for using *guadua* development to further the implementation of his country’s peace agreement and plans for legislation on *guadua* development.



Hans Friederich, Director General, INBAR, and **Ruud Jansen**, GDSA Executive Secretary, sign the MoU between INBAR and GDSA