



World Forestry Congress Bulletin

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XIII WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2009

The XIII World Forestry Congress, "Forests in Development: A Vital Balance," co-organized by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Government of Argentina, opened on Sunday 18 October in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Over 4500 participants from international organizations, governments, academia, private sector and civil society, representing 160 countries, came together to discuss forest issues in two plenaries, eight thematic sessions, two poster sessions, and numerous side events.



OPENING CEREMONY

Leopoldo Montes, Secretary General of the XIII WFC 2009, welcomed participants to the Congress on Sunday evening at the opening plenary, highlighting the need to develop a forestry sector that can provide solutions for humanity in economic and environmental terms, as well as the potential to address common concerns, including climate change and bioenergy.

Jacques Diouf, Director General of FAO, highlighted the role of forests in providing food and shelter, and supporting livelihoods. He emphasized transectoral forestry issues related to water, agriculture, energy and livestock, and said these issues must be dealt with in an integrated manner to confront problems such as desertification and climate change. He highlighted the work of UN cooperation initiatives and was hopeful that climate change meetings in Copenhagen in December 2009 will provide a pathway for increased forest investments.



Jacques Diouf, Director-General of FAO

Mauricio Macri, Mayor of Buenos Aires, announced the commitment of the City of Buenos Aires to procure wood and paper from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified forests by 2010 to ensure sustainability, formalize labor standards and prevent child labor.

Mario Gibeault, Director General of Forestry and Development Management of Quebec, Canada, discussed the importance of principles of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) to Quebec's current re-drafting of its forestry legislation, and emphasized SFM's importance in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Jia Zhibang, Minister of the Forest Administration, China, said that throughout history, humans have ignored services provided by forests and overindulged in the acquisition of material interests gleaned from them. He praised the adoption of principles of the Non-legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (NLBI) by many UN processes and organizations, and noted China's efforts to improve forest management.



Mauricio Macri, Mayor of Buenos Aires

Julián Domínguez, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, Argentina, said humans are the stewards of the environment and that the state must play a central role in its protection. He emphasized that political and economic decisions must consider not only the interests of people, but those of

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Homero M. Bibiloni, Secretary for the Environment and Sustainable Development, Argentina

Argentina has accepted the challenge of the FAO to put an end to world hunger by creating a comprehensive food security program.

OPENING PLENARY

Homero Bibiloni, Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina, urged participants to reflect critically on how forest-related environmental declarations are implemented by simplifying access to funding and working with those on the ground tasked with resource management. Noting the need to see forests, climate change and biodiversity holistically, he highlighted the roles of forests as carbon sinks and of individuals as forest stewards.



Jan Heino, Assistant Director-General and Head of the Forestry Department of FAO

Jan Heino, Assistant Director-General of the Forestry Department, FAO, reviewed effects of world economic decline on forests, which had led to unemployment but also opportunities for SFM. Referring to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) submission to the UNFCCC, he warned that SFM concepts enunciated by some at the climate meeting in Bonn earlier this year are too narrow.

David Carter, Minister of Agriculture, Biosecurity and Forests of New Zealand, recalled that global forest loss contributed to about 20% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and he stressed the importance of global dialogue and the WFC in moving the forestry sector onto a sustainable path.

Jorge Rodríguez, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Telecommunications of Costa Rica, recalled his country's efforts to increase reforestation, forest protection and payments for environmental services. He called for a new, fair climate change regime, that would benefit countries who had already halted deforestation, such as Costa Rica.

nature as well. He then noted that

Henri Djombo, Minister of Forest Economics of the Republic of Congo, showcased the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, where 10 countries, together with international donors, had joined together to promote SFM. He cautioned that failure to attain sustainable management could lead to catastrophic results, such as the expansion of the Sahara and Kalahari deserts.

Thomas Tidwell, Chief of the United States Forest Service, described ecological services of forests, particularly carbon sequestration, but noted that deforestation is accelerating with real estate development. He cautioned that national plans for restoration would be undermined by stressors such as drought and insects, exacerbated by climate change.

Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), listed current challenges facing the forest sector, including: reversing trends of deforestation and degradation; mitigating climate change; maintaining biodiversity; and reforestation. He urged improved cooperation between the biodiversity and forest sectors in: forest protection and restoration to combat climate change, including through additional resources and REDD; restoration of degraded forests via plantation; and implementation of sustainable forest management, where progress has been insufficient.

Victor Maslyakov, Deputy Chief of Forestry, Russian Federation, said that only 20% of forestry potential is being currently exploited in Russia and priority is being given to investment to intensify forest use, increase processing capacity and construction of forest roads. He emphasized the challenge controlling forest fires and preventing illegal trade of timber.

Jim Farrell, Assistant to the Vice Minister of the Canadian Forest Service, recalled the 2003 WFC's vision of healthy forests incorporating social justice and economic sustainability, supported by good governance and SFM. He said that Canada has developed policies to deal with: climate change; national pest and fire strategies; international model forest networks; and a carbon budget model.

Don Koo Lee, President of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO), recalled his organization's 60-year long collaboration with the FAO and welcomed the opportunity offered by the WFC to share experiences.

Carlos Casamiquela, President of the National Institute of Agricultural and Livestock Technology of Argentina (INTA), highlighted the value of goods and services provided by forests, and noted that the Argentine forestry sector has: improved its market presence; diversified into value-added products; and emphasized that improving technology was necessary to turn comparative advantages in the forestry sector into commercial benefit.

Euclides Pereira, representative of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon Region, highlighted the experience of indigenous peoples in managing forests sustainably, saying that unlike



Henri Djombo, Minister of Forest Economics of the Republic of Congo, and Olman Serrano, FAO



Jochen Flasbarth, Representative of the Prime Minister of Germany and President of the Convention on Biological Diversity COP

conservation perspectives that see nature as ‘untouchable,’ indigenous peoples feel one with nature, and highlighted the need to support land tenure rights of Amazon communities in Brazil currently being subjected to pressure by private interests. He also underscored the need to arrive at an international agreement on genetic resources and retention of rights to traditional knowledge.

Tim Robinson, Director General of the U.K.’s Forestry Commission, spoke on behalf of Justin Mundy, Senior Director of the Rainforest Project of H.R.H. Prince of Wales. Stressing the role of rainforests in regulating the climate, he said the Rainforest Project sought to make the forest be “worth more alive than dead.”

Participants then watched a message from H.R.H. Prince of Wales, who said the battle against climate change would be lost if destruction of old growth tropical forests continued, and the only sustainable way of saving forests was to ensure that those who depended on them benefited from maintaining the forests’ ecosystem services. He urged participants to send a clear message that deforestation could be solved if political will was there.

AFTERNOON PLENARY

William Jackson, Deputy Director-General of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), observed that climate change has catapulted forests, particularly tropical forests, to the international agenda after languishing for years. He discussed forests, biodiversity and climate change mitigation in terms of four cornerstones: management as a matter of social

choice, rights of local communities, making markets work, and resilience and restoration. He concluded that REDD must embrace these four principles to be effective.

Rodney Taylor, Director, Forests, WWF International, said that while climate change is a threat to forest biodiversity, biodiversity and forest conservation are part of the solution to climate change. He urged the WFC to support the goal of zero net deforestation by 2020.

Jane Goodall, The Jane Goodall Institute, presented her “Reasons for Hope,” explaining that the desperate situation presented by decreases in biodiversity and by global warming, could be addressed through the protection of tropical forests. She expressed hopes both for REDD and non-proprietary monitoring technology such as Google maps to improve conservation efforts. She proposed that every participant seek to reduce their carbon footprint by 10% by 2010 for the sake of future generations.



Jane Goodall, The Jane Goodall Institute

Ariel Lugo, International Institute of Tropical Forestry, USDA Forest Service, said more research is needed on the synergetic effects of human and natural disturbances on natural ecosystems. He cautioned against consequences of quick solutions and emphasized that species addition rather than species extinction is the most important conservation issue. He said “novel” forests that occupy abandoned lands are nature’s response to the changing environment and that they have same or higher diversity than the historical ecosystems they are replacing.



Rodney Keenan, University of Melbourne, Jarot Pandu Panji Asmoro, Forestry Research Institute of Manokwari, Indonesia, and Luca Tacconi, Australian National University



Jhony Zapata, FAO

SELECTED PARALLEL SESSIONS

2.4 MAINTENANCE AND INCREASE OF PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY OF FORESTS

Michael Battaglia, Department of Sustainable Ecosystems, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australia, discussed how demands for carbon storage are changing forests and forestry. He indicated that forest productivity will address this demand, and described how plantation productivity involves tradeoffs of biodiversity and production. He detailed some of the drivers of productivity including local factors such as region and soil, and noted that carbon storage can be increased by converting land from agriculture to forests.

María Paulina Fernández, Department of Agronomy Engineering, Catholic University of Chile, outlined concepts of forest productivity. She used a computer model to demonstrate growth patterns of trees, in which they are treated as “factories” of biomass. The field-testable model predicts effects of temperature, water availability and density of forests on their productivity.

Jean-Pierre Saucier, Ministry of Natural Resources and Fauna, Quebec, Canada, outlined a methodology for zoning forests, which are ranked by Quebec for productivity based on temperature, altitude, water supply, nutrients and slope. The more productive zones are then identified for intensified silviculture and harvesting. The project produced maps identifying groups of high productivity and minimum limitations on growth.

Peter Clinton, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, explained the importance of productive capacity for New Zealand’s forestry industry. He identified major dual-sided issues, such as increasing timber exports, environmental services and benefits including carbon storage, and biosecurity aspects of deforestation and degradation. He lamented that trees are often seen in isolation rather than as part of ecosystems, and observed that study of soil carbon storage would improve research on sequestration.

3.2 FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Rodney Keenan, Melbourne University, Australia, said uncertainty remained around the definition of forest degradation and how it could be applied to REDD. He suggested degradation should be defined as human-induced processes leading to long-term reduction of forest carbon stocks. He also stressed the need for balanced accounting and field measurements-based monitoring to adequately assess degradation.

Jarot Pandu Panji Asmoro, Forestry Research Institute of Manokwari, Indonesia, presented a study on the mitigation potential of agroforestry systems in South Sorong District in Papua, Indonesia. The study suggested agroforestry can sequester carbon and benefit local communities. In the ensuing

discussion, it was noted that a mix of species in agroforestry systems could increase resilience and allow communities to better adapt to climate change.

Luca Tacconi, Australian National University, discussed incorporating Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes into REDD, noting that when well-designed, they could support livelihoods of local communities. He called for: payments that adequately reflect opportunity costs of communities versus alternative land uses; considering land tenure issues to enable access to PES by poor households; evaluating PES in state-owned forests, which constitute most of the forestlands in REDD-eligible countries; providing a role for communities in deciding the payment scheme schedule; and compensating local governments for lost timber-related revenues. He also said PES schemes in REDD should involve strong monitoring requirements and address poor performance issues.

3.6 VALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND BENEFIT SHARING

Shuirong Wu, Chinese Academy of Forestry, presented a case study on the valuation of forest ecosystem services and natural capital in Beijing, China. She remarked that: non-marketable values of forest ecosystem services are much higher than marketable forest goods; forest contribution to GDP is higher than currently measured and reported; and the knowledge about who the beneficiaries of forest services are can help in negotiating PES schemes.

Claus Eckelmann and Jhony Zapata, FAO, presented empirical results of 27 case studies of compensatory mechanisms linking forests and water in Central America and the Caribbean, mainly related to water services. The authors identified some key elements for successful PES schemes, such as: effective local participation; facilitative external support; security of land tenure; adequate public policies and legal frameworks; political will; and financial self-sufficiency.

Paula Horne, Pellervo Economic Research Institute, in Finland, presented voluntary and incentive-based instruments for biodiversity conservation in Finland. She reported the results of surveys on the legitimacy of forest policy instruments as perceived by family forest owners. She concluded that: valuation studies need to account for diversity of respondents and cultural and policy contexts; voluntary instruments seem to have potential for cost effective implementation of biodiversity policies; collaboration is needed among forest owners and between them and professionals, as well as among environmental and forestry professionals; and that monitoring and evaluation systems of voluntary mechanisms are needed.

Ismariah Ahmad, Forest Research Institute, Malaysia, presented an ongoing research project measuring tropical forests’ impacts on watershed services. She said preliminary results of hydrological and cost analysis indicate that increases in virgin forest are associated with decreases in stream flow, which is consistent with previous research. She also noted that virgin forests moderately reduce flooding. The opportunity cost to provide watershed services measured by foregone incomes by not harvesting was found to vary amongst different conditions.



María Paulina Fernández, Department of Agronomy Engineering, Catholic University of Chile, Jean-Pierre Saucier, Ministry of Natural Resources and Fauna, Quebec, Canada