

The Congress Daily



A truly presidential welcome

Five onstage drummers boomed the message out clearly yesterday: It's time to savor the fruits of five years of hard work!

Thousands of participants who filled a colossal hall to witness the XXIII IUFRO World Congress Opening Ceremony heard that message. None other than Korean President Lee Myung-Bak also turned out to mark the occasion.

First, welcoming the crowd in several languages, IUFRO President Don Koo Lee urged on green-growth practices to address climate change and a decline in forest cover worldwide.

President Lee, who in 2008 established "low-carbon green growth" as a national vision, then took to the stage. Noting that in only two generations his country's once-barren landscape had been reforested, he called Korea "one example of how we can attain economic growth and protect the environment at the same time."

Eduardo Rojas-Briales, an assistant director-general at the Food and Agriculture Organization, called forests a "major variable in managing climate change" while also cautioning that forestry was at a crossroads amid declining revenue and increasing demands.

Although invited, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon could not attend. His message was conveyed through Jan McAlpine, the director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat. The UN has declared 2011 the International Year of Forests, and Ban encouraged all IUFRO members to help observe it.

No party is ever complete without prizes and entertainment. Fitted into the morning lineup were an awards ceremony, a traditional Korean dance, and a touching children's rendition of the Congress title.



Top, above: Korean President Lee Myung-Bak addressing delegates, and a children's perspective on the Congress title.

Forestry leaders lay out an ambitious 'to do' list



Given the thickness of its program book, you'd be hard-pressed to imagine that the Congress's breadth could grow further. Well, guess again! IUFRO officers and Congress organizers intend to push the envelope much, much further.

Their shortlist of "things to do," as outlined

to the press yesterday, calls for expanding the global public's perception of forestry, getting foresters interfacing with more professions, and sharing Korea's successful reforestation efforts with other countries.

In the past, the IUFRO Congress was a forum mostly for foresters, said KRFI Director General Choi Wan-Yong. "But now, the discussion includes not only foresters but other scientists, economists, and environmental researchers."

And given the growing focus on quality of life and recreation, he continued, the Seoul Congress will work to move forestry's identity beyond that of a primary industry to highlight its role as an "environmental service

industry" while also tackling urgent issues like deforestation and illegal logging.

Peter Mayer, IUFRO's executive director, asserted that the organization's "three key goals" will all be advanced in Seoul. High-quality research will be promoted through nearly 3,000 scientists, partnerships forged with regional and global organizations, and scientific findings communicated to global decision makers.

Some 70 press agencies from six countries have registered their credentials at the Congress so far. That's one indication that the messages delivered here will be spread well beyond COEX's walls.



Keynote presentation

Presenter: Frances Seymour **Country:** Indonesia

Title: Forests, Climate Change, and Communities:

Making progress up the learning curve

Time & Place: 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Hall D2, third floor



As director general of the Center for International Forestry Research, based in Indonesia, Frances Seymour has laid out the plans for and established a new organizational strategy focused on six priority research areas. She is a co-author of the CIFOR report, *Do Trees Grow on Money?*, and a contributor to *Moving Ahead with REDD* and *Realising REDD+*.

Before taking the helm at CIFOR, Ms. Seymour directed the Institutions and Governance Program at the World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C., where she guided the launch of a global coalition promoting citizen participation in environment-related decisions. She also critically examined the role of public and private international financial institutions in promoting sustainable development. Earlier, she spent five years in Indonesia with the Ford Foundation focusing on community forestry and human rights. She has written or contributed to numerous publications on forestry, environmental, and development issues in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

What's going on . . .

- The first International Council Meeting will run from 4:30-6:30 p.m. today in the Grand Ballroom (103), in parallel with the Technical Sessions. Attendance is by invitation.
- The Trade Exhibition continues today in Halls C3 and C4 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. While there, it's hard to miss the "Big Korean Trees" photo exhibit and an 80-photo display of fantastic Korean landscapes entitled "Colors of Korea."
- Poster viewing officially kicks off at noon today in Hall C2, part of C1, and between Rooms 307 and 308 for In-Session Poster Presentations. Learn about your colleagues' research while viewing some of the 1,148 mounted posters. What's more, a free lunch is on offer! Sandwiches and drinks (2,000 per day) along with desserts will be provided on a first-come basis.
- Business Sessions will be held today from 3:30-4 p.m. immediately after the Sub-Plenary Sessions. These sessions are intended for administrative and business issues of the respective IUFRO units.

The transcript

As chair of the Congress Scientific Committee, John Parrotta can be compared to a ship's captain charting a course for the Plenary, Sub-Plenary, and Technical sessions. Despite his work demands, Parrotta spared a few minutes to speak with us.



What principles guided the selection of this Congress's theme?

Forest scientists as a community are always looking forward; it's the nature of our work. We do it to enhance sustainability, and we're also working for the people, whose lives, economy, and daily needs depend on the forests. There's been more balance over time between the biophysical and the social sciences as relates to forests. So this [theme] is kind of a philosophical statement about our profession as forest scientists.

How is the scientific program here different from the one five years ago in Brisbane?

There are many similarities, but I'd say two themes very strongly emphasized compared with the previous Congress are climate change, a very fast-developing area of forest science, and biodiversity. This is the International Year of Biodiversity, and we want to highlight that at this Congress. The number and variety of sessions that deal with biodiversity, both conservation and sustainable utilization, show its importance.

Did the Congress's location in Asia influence the scientific program?

We selected Asia as one of nine main themes for the Congress. Since we're in Korea, there's tremendous involvement of scientists from Korea. The three big countries represented on the program are Korea, China, and Japan. The involvement of obviously Korea and also China is much greater. That's great news.

A lot of excellent proposals had an Asian focus and that's great. You'll see Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Malay scientists giving presentations in all the themes. The location of the Congress influences people's ability to attend. Among the presenters, by my count we have participants from 20 countries in Asia and 1,200 presentations. That's more than half the total. There are Asian scientists involved in all the sessions.

What has it been like putting this together?

It required a lot of organization to handle all the details and variables. But it's been a good experience that required a lot of coordination with people here in Korea. It was a huge amount of work since the beginning of January. I learned a lot about fields I haven't been involved in before.



Hats off to the winners!

Eleven forestry scientists enjoyed a special moment in the spotlight on Monday as they walked onstage to accept a Scientific Achievement Award at the Opening Ceremony. IUFRO's Honours and Awards Committee selected them from a large pool of excellent candidates for their distinguished research in fields covered by IUFRO. The single Host Scientific Award went to Korean tree physiologist Hong Sung-Gak, a member of Korea's National Academy of Sciences since 1995.



Top, above: HSA winner Hong Sung-Gak and the 11 SPA winners.

The inside scoop

If you missed a Technical Session you were hoping to attend, all hope isn't lost. To the rescue comes the International Institute of Sustainable Development Reporting Services, whose Web site supplies reports and summaries of each day's scientific program in real time. Visit <http://www.iisd.ca/yimb/forest/iufro/iufroxiii>.

As the sun sets, a full lineup of 21 side events begins. Most of the 6:30-8:30 p.m. events are open to all, including tonight's IFSA students' charity event in Room 307BC. Refer to your program book for rooms, times, and contact details.

IUFRO has new members! The Board accepted 10 new organizational and seven new associate members at its annual meeting last week, including the South Africa-based Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute. With its latest additions, IUFRO boasts 641 organizational and 149 associate members.

The Tour Desk is proving to be very popular. But it should cool down today, as the deadline for changes and reservations has passed. Those who've secured a seat should gather in front of the Tour Desk in Hall C1 at the time listed in the program book. For anyone with special dietary requirements, vegetarian and glucose-free lunch boxes are available.

Is jet lag plaguing you? While no foolproof cure exists, experts say that getting outdoor exercise and eating protein- and carbohydrate-rich foods can speed up recovery. Avoid coffee and alcohol. Vitamin supplements are said to help, along with one local remedy: Korean red ginseng.

Do you want to go wireless? Head to the SK Broadband booth in 1F, where you can purchase vouchers for four-hour or daylong wireless Internet service throughout the COEX complex.

Trade Exhibition launched

Those itching to learn about the latest products and innovations in the forestry sector need venture no farther than our own convention halls!

A weeklong Trade Exhibition opened yesterday in Halls C3 and C4, where 82 Korean and overseas companies and organizations are displaying their products and technologies in 242 booths.

Korea Forest Service Minister Chung Kwang-Soo led a get-acquainted tour for 13 delegates including Minister for Food,

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Chang Tae-Pyong.

"This exhibition, linked with the XXIII IUFRO Congress, will be a great opportunity to show the know-how and technologies our country has implemented," said Kim Myung-Kil of KFRI. "It will also be a great opportunity to understand valuable information and recent trends of forests in their role in dealing with climate change and achieving low-carbon, green growth."

Interactive booths let visitors take a virtual "forest tour." Woodsy paths scented with phytoncide add to the forest ambience. And if that's not enough, have a peek at the Photo Gallery's "Colors of Korea" exhibit by acclaimed Korean photographer Lee Tae-Hoon.





Congress footprints



IUFRO President Don Koo Lee shows his appreciation to Korean poet Ko Un at Monday's Plenary Session.

Students rest weary legs at the International Forestry Students' Association booth in the Trade Exhibition. Seated (3rd, 4th from l): IFSA President Catherine Pater and former President Florent Kaiser.



Korea's Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Chang Tae-Pyong (right) and Korea Forest Service Minister Chung Kwang-Soo (left) inspect a wooden bed with charcoal inside at the Trade Exhibition.



At yesterday's Plenary Session led by Korean poet Ko Un.

Documents laid out by the Food and Agriculture Organization at the Trade Exhibition provided much food for thought among passing delegates.



It's standing room only at Monday's Silviculture and global change Technical Session organized by Kevin O'Hara of the United States and Jürgen Bausch of Germany.

A lovely Korean traditional dance troupe capped off the Opening Ceremony.



Venue going green



Within the vast COEX complex serving as Congress venue you'll find over 100 restaurants, two deluxe hotels, an aquarium, and even a kimchi museum!

Behind the scenes, the management is working hard to paint COEX "green."

Special software analyzes gas, electrical, and water use to calculate the most efficient ways to maintain the facilities. Gray water is recycled for re-use in toilets, cutting carbon emissions by 83 tons a year. Alternative energy experiments are also under way, including the use of solar energy generators, solar-powered streetlamps, and a wind turbine.

In addition, more than 1,490 fluorescent and incandescent lights have been replaced with LED lighting, cutting CO² emissions by 52 tons a year.

Three green spaces have also been carved out: the ASEM garden, the Piano Fountain garden, and the Exhibition Hall roof garden. To find one, refer to a COEX map or consult with a green-shirted helper.

Be sure and check out one of the gardens in your spare time!

GFIS quiz

Enter the GFIS Quiz for a chance to win up to US\$600 in future business trip expenses! Just swing by the GFIS booth in Hall C1 and complete the 10-question survey.

The Global Forest Information Service is a IUFRO-led partnership of 14 major forest-related organizations serving as a one-stop Web gateway linking users to forestry-related news and resources from around the world.

Friday is the entry deadline. Winners of the three prizes – \$600, \$300, and \$100 – will be announced on August 31 at www.GFIS.net.