



**STATEMENT BY
MR. PEKKA PATOSAARI
DIRECTOR OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS SECRETARIAT
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

to the International Symposium Commemorating the 100th anniversary of
Korean Forestry Education and Research

Seoul, 18 May 2006

*Forestry Education and Research
Policy issues in the UN Forum on Forests context
“Past, Present and Future”*

Excellencies,
Professor Don Koo LEE,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning, in the historic city of Seoul, to address the International Symposium Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Korean Forestry Education and Research.

Allow me to extend my thanks, on behalf of the United Nations Secretariat, and particularly the United Nations Forum on Forests, to the Korean Government and the Seoul National University for inviting me to this important Symposium. It is indeed a pleasure for me to attend the session and to have the opportunity to openly discuss the important issues related to forest education and research, as well as the recent landmark development in the international forest policy process, aimed at strengthening the International Arrangement on Forests, and as such, to offer a better understanding of the issues at hand.

I wish to draw your attention to the more than 270 intergovernmental recommendations, known as the IPF/IFF proposals for action, which already provide Governments, international organizations, private sector entities and Civil Society guidance on how to further develop, implement and coordinate national and international policies on sustainable forest management. 24 of these recommendations specifically pertain to scientific forest-related knowledge. These relevant proposals fit into five clearly defined areas of action:

- 1) Interaction between science and policy;
- 2) Knowledge gaps and research priorities;
- 3) Efficient sharing of information and networks;

- 4) Research capacity and funding for forest research; and
- 5) Participatory mechanisms to integrate research into planning processes.

As a natural partner to us for the implementation and coordination of science policy, the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) has been an important movement and an institution which had already been active long before the start of the international forest policy process in the early 90s. The relationship between the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, as the leading voice behind the global forest policy dialogue, and IUFRO has been mutually supportive and very stimulating, with an active aim toward achieving the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, also within the common framework for implementation of the UN Forum on Forests and IPF/IFF decisions.

IUFRO's work, particularly in creating the science/policy interface, has been producing guidelines for research organizations and research scientists, thus providing best practices for the interaction between the science community and policy makers. IUFRO's Special Programme for Developing Countries, having initiated a training module for forest scientists, has been highly appreciated internationally, as well.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the recent landmark development in the international forest policy process. Three months ago, the sixth session of the UN Forum on Forests successfully completed the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, and adopted a draft ECOSOC resolution. The draft resolution contains a package of measures to greatly strengthen the international arrangement on forests, providing clear guidance on how to continue the work for the advancement of sustainable forest management worldwide, and setting up a new timeframe until the year 2015. This draft resolution reaffirms ECOSOC Resolution 2000/35, which established the UN Forum on Forests as a high-level UN body focusing on the issues of international forest policy.

In order to advance sustainable forest management, curb deforestation and enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of international development goals, the UN Forum on Forests agreed on four shared Global Objectives on Forests. The member States of the UN Forum on Forests also agreed to develop and adopt a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests at the seventh session of the Forum in April next year. This decision is regarded as one of the biggest leaps forward in the international forest community since the "Forest Principles" were adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. Such an instrument is expected to mobilize more political commitment; generate more actions at global, regional and national levels; and enhance cooperation and coordination from all sides.

To support a stronger international forest regime, the member States of the UN Forum on Forests also reaffirmed their strong commitment to forest law enforcement and governance. At the sixth session of the Forum, countries were urged to develop and implement plans to address illegal practices and illegal international trade in forest products, through the promotion of forest law enforcement and governance. Issues of land tenure schemes and their relationship to sustainable forest management, as well as forest governance at the local level, will be important aspects to

help achieve this goal. At the same time, building closer partnerships between regional processes, among others, will be critical to ensuring a complete and coherent international approach to the issue. The mandate provided by the sixth session will undoubtedly make illegal practices and illegal international trade in forest products an important topic in the future deliberations of the Forum, featuring prominently within its new Multi-Year Program of Work to be adopted at its next session in 2007.

The UN Forum on Forests also continues to provide guidance to the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. It calls for improving enhanced collaboration and policy and programme coordination and to further developing partnerships with the multi-lateral environmental agreements, instruments and United Nations bodies. The CPF members should work actively to harmonize processes for voluntary monitoring, assessment and reporting, taking into account the seven thematic elements for sustainable forest management, and in this way, to reduce the reporting burden on countries. This a great challenge to IUFRO, to all national forest research institutions, and the international community, as a whole.

We all know that now, more than ever, there is a need for the continuation and strengthening of the high-level forest policy dialogue and development mechanism within the United Nations system. We should always keep in mind the plight of more than 1.6 billion people around the world, who depend, to varying degrees, on forests, for their livelihoods and their subsistence. They should be the main focus of our high-level forest policy mechanism and they are the people affected by it. I'm sure you would agree with me that concrete actions are needed right away to improve the quality of life of those forest-dependent people and communities. On the other hand, millions of hectares of forests are being lost every year due to deforestation and forest degradation, affecting everybody who lives both near and far from forests. There is an urgent need to decide on policies, such as maintaining forest cover, the introduction and establishment of sustainable forest management, as well as on the combined operations of low-impact harvesting, restoration at the landscape level and conservation efforts.

I cannot stress enough the urgent need for action and the fact that Sustainable Forest Management is the best approach to successfully tackle our current challenges. We need to continue to develop international policies, backed by appropriate programmes and adequate means of implementation, to ensure a sustainable future for our children and grandchildren. Future generations have the same rights that we do for access to forests and the benefits derived from them. Moreover, management and conservation policies and programmes on forests should be clearly linked and aligned with poverty-reduction strategies and integrated national development plans.

On this note, I would like to wish you a very productive and fruitful Symposium.

Thank you for your attention.