



International Union of Forest Research Organizations

Union Internationale des
Instituts de Recherches
Forestières

Unión Internacional
de Organizaciones de
Investigación Forestal

Internationaler
Verband Forstlicher
Forschungsanstalten

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL OF CHAIRS OF GOVERNING BODIES OF MEMBERS OF THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP ON FORESTS

Statement by Professor Risto Seppälä

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Mr./Ms. Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Hans Hoogeveen, Chair of the Bureau of the seventh UNFF Session, for his kind invitation to take part in this Panel.

I am pleased to speak at this important event also on behalf of the current IUFRO President, Professor Don Koo Lee, who unfortunately cannot participate in our discussion today due to the meeting of Directors of the IUFRO Member Organizations taking place in Washington D.C. at this very moment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IUFRO is the only global network of forest science collaboration, uniting more than 15,000 scientists in 700 Member Organizations in over 110 countries. IUFRO's current strategy contains three major goals: first, to strengthen research for the benefit of forests and people; second, to expand strategic partnerships and cooperation; and third, to strengthen communication and links with policy makers and society at large.

These goals clearly reflect the commitment of IUFRO to work with policy and decision makers, stakeholders and its partners in international organizations and agencies in addressing the challenges of our times for forests and people.

IUFRO became a member of the CPF in 2003 and has since then been playing a very active role in it by collaborating with other members of the Partnership in a number of joint initiatives and activities.

For example, IUFRO leads and coordinates the Joint CPF Initiative “Global Forest Information Service” or GFIS. This Internet-based service provides direct access to forest-related information supplied by information providers from around the world through one single entry point at www.gfis.net. Through the GFIS Internet gateway users can easily locate information about forest-related news, events, recent publications and job vacancies.

Within the Partnership, IUFRO serves as a focal agency for forest-related scientific knowledge together with CIFOR and ICRAF. In pursuing this role, IUFRO has been organizing numerous scientific meetings and conferences that support the activities of other CPF members, governments and stakeholders. For instance, next month IUFRO will organize an international conference in Seoul, Republic of Korea, as a major scientific contribution to the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration.

Both through collaborative activities like these within the CPF, and through the science collaboration within its own global network, IUFRO has supported the work and deliberations of the UNFF already in the past. Yet, this seventh UNFF session is of particular importance to IUFRO for a number of reasons:

Firstly, with the negotiation of a Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all types of forests, there is a unique opportunity to establish an internationally agreed basis for reaching a new quality of collaboration between policy and science at all levels. At a time when policy issues become more complex than ever before, political decisions strongly, and to a growing extent, depend on the insights derived from science. This notion is underpinned, for example, by the recent public emphasis on climate change and the potential risks which this global phenomenon poses to people, the global economy and also our forests. Therefore, I would like to invite all of you to place strong emphasis on science and research in the new Instrument.

Secondly, if the UNFF aims to serve as a dynamic global policy body which stays on the cutting edge on all relevant matters, as suggested in the Report of the Secretary-General on the new multi-year programme of work of the UNFF, also the Forum itself will require in-depth scientific and technical support in specific topics.

In this context, it gives me a great pleasure to inform you that a new Joint CFP Initiative on Science and Technology was successfully launched at a special side event on Monday this week. This new Joint Initiative of the CPF aims to support the UNFF and other forest-related intergovernmental processes by providing them with state-of-the-art scientific knowledge on issues of high concern to policy and decision makers. With the new Initiative on Science and Technology IUFRO assumes the task of leading and coordinating yet another Joint Initiative of the CPF.

The effectiveness of this new Initiative will invariably depend on its ability to respond efficiently to the information needs of governments and the UNFF. In this context, I would like to invite you all to provide clear guidance to the Initiative on issues of high concern to the Forum, and support to its activities.

Mr./Ms. Chair,

In concluding, let me reiterate the full commitment of IUFRO to continue its very active involvement in the CPF also in the future.

Thank you very much for your attention.