

XIII World Forestry Congress

The World Forestry Congress is the world's largest gathering focused on forests and forestry, and the thirteenth congress was the largest ever, with more than 7 000 attending. Held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 18 to 23 October 2009, the congress offered stimulating presentations, discussions, meetings and exhibits for forest watchers and workers of every kind.

This issue of *Unasylva* summarizes the event and provides a taste of the impressive variety of knowledge and information presented there. It begins with an overview by O. Serrano describing the congress and summarizing a number of special events, as well as the strategic actions recommended by the congress in its final declaration.

The bulk of the issue is developed from papers presented in Buenos Aires. The content is organized around the seven main thematic areas of the congress. We have selected material with potential appeal for a broad audience, representing a wide geographic range and presenting topics not recently covered in *Unasylva*.

Theme 1, "Forests and biodiversity" covered, among others, issues related to the state of the forest and deforestation, including many technical contributions on forest inventory and assessment. We present a study by R.S. Purnamasari examining the role of poverty and regional socio-economic development in the dynamics of small-scale deforestation in Indonesia. The results show that regions with the highest percentage of poor people actually have less deforestation, probably because people with some means to invest in agricultural production are more likely to deforest. Deforestation at first increases with wealth, but decreases after a certain wealth level is reached. Also under Theme 1, a shorter piece (by E. Durán, J.J. Figel and D.B. Bray) reports the results of a study of the potential for community conservation of jaguars in four communities in the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca, Mexico.

Theme 2, "Producing for development", included all aspects of forest production. One of its subthemes, forests and energy, was also discussed in a special half-day forum. M. Jack and P. Hall examine the potential of developing large-scale forests for bioenergy in New Zealand, and the implications for land-use, the economy and the environment.

Under Theme 3, "Forests in the service of people", an important subtheme was valuation of environmental services. S. Wu, Y. Hou and G. Yuan describe an attempt to estimate the complete market and non-market values of the forests of

Beijing municipality, China. The study also examined the sectoral and spatial distribution of the forest benefits. The authors acknowledge that efforts to assign an economic value to all forest benefits – and the methods for doing so – may be open to debate, but they are useful to raise awareness of the multifunctional roles of forest ecosystems and can ultimately help contribute to forest conservation.

Theme 4, "Caring for our forests", is represented by a study of the impact of fire in seasonal semideciduous forest fragments in São Paulo State, Brazil. A.C.G. Melo and G. Durigan find that tree recovery at the forest edges is slower than in the interior, suggest why, and draw conclusions for fire management and prevention in forest fragments.

Under Theme 5, "Development opportunities", J. Kamugisha-Ruhombe examines planning, budgeting and fiscal resource allocation for forestry in Uganda, illustrating the gap between the global discussion on forest finance and national realities in heavily indebted poor countries. He finds that budget ceilings established by Uganda in order to qualify for debt relief are the main reason for the country's low financial allocations to forestry. A shorter piece (by E. Atmiş, H.B. Günşen and S. Özden) examines forest cooperatives in Turkey and the constraints that prevent them from contributing to poverty reduction as well as intended.

Theme 6, "Organizing forest development", included a wide range of macroeconomic, institutional and governance issues. A. Ramadhani describes a project to promote good forest governance for sustainable livelihood improvement in four forest-adjacent villages in the United Republic of Tanzania. He summarizes the outcomes two years after the project, and recommends measures for promoting good governance that may also be applicable elsewhere.

For Theme 7, "People and forests in harmony", we include the introductory paper for the subtheme "Work in the forestry sector". C. Ackerknecht reviews topics such as labour unions, occupational health and safety, training and changes in the workforce. The article is global in scope, but makes particular reference to Chile.

The issue concludes with a provocative essay in which H. Savenije and K. van Dijk surmise forest sector trends since the previous World Forestry Congress in 2003 based on their observations in Buenos Aires. Although an earlier version of this article has already been circulated widely through the Internet, it is included here to stimulate readers to consider the wider implications of the XIII World Forestry Congress for the future of forestry. We hope this whole issue of *Unasylva* will serve the same purpose.