

Forestry sector case studies: Summary report of the ABDC-10 parallel session¹

Two studies were presented; one on the use of tissue culture protocol for the large scale production of elite planting materials of teak in Sabah, Malaysia and the second case study highlighting the use of molecular markers to study the population structure, diversity between and within individual species and to understand the population structure and dynamics of two native species at Gabon, Africa for conservation. Following these two presentations and based on them the participants made the following observations and recommendations:

The participants supported the fact that North-South collaboration is one good approach to take to ensure success of a Project. Under such an approach, appropriate technology transfer is ensured, the manpower gets adequately trained and the projects are adequately funded through such collaborations and they generally are very focused with achievable targets.

The participants also stated that the new tools of biotechnology should be integrated with conventional technologies. They felt that techniques like molecular markers and mass propagation could only be useful when a stable conventional forest breeding programme is already in place.

Participants were also of the opinion that strong public-private partnership should be forged to ensure commercialization of the final products from the collaboration. This was clearly shown in the 1st case study by Dr. Doreen Goh on the commercialization of the elite teak plantlets by the private sector.

Participants also agreed that there has to be a strong support by the Government of each developing country towards including biotechnology in their science policies to encourage such biotechnological development to grow and flourish in their respective countries. It was also emphasized by participants that the gap between scientists and the policy makers should be bridged to ensure integration of new knowledge into policies, regulations and programs.

Lastly, the participants agreed that public access to goods and updated information on forest biotechnologies is very important. Benefits from their use can only be optimized if the end-users know how to utilize them properly. Consolidated information and education mechanisms should be put in place to allow communication between the relevant sectors of society.

¹ This is the summary report of the roundtable organized by FAO on forestry sector case studies on the first day of the FAO international technical conference on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries (ABDC-10) that took place in Guadalajara, Mexico on 1-4 March 2010 (<http://www.fao.org/biotech/abdc/parallel/en>).