



1 October 2012

**Lunch Hosted By H.E. Zhao Shucong, State Forestry
Administration, China**

Your Excellency Mr. Zhao Shucong, Administrator of the State Forestry Administration

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to be here on my first official visit to the People's Republic of China, and especially considering it is the National Day of China.

Excellency, I wish to thank you and the State Forestry Administration for welcoming me here.

Just last week in Rome, FAO hosted World Forest Week and the 21st Session of the Committee of Forestry.

This is a much-needed forum to discuss forestry-related matters at the highest level.

The sustainable management of natural resources, including the forests which cover at least 31 percent of our planet, is essential to guarantee food security in the world.



In this effort, we must combine national and international efforts.

China, which is one of the 12 mega-biodiversity countries in the world and has 22% of its area covered by forests, is setting an example.

Since 2000, the forest area in China has increased by an average of 3 million hectares per year thanks to afforestation efforts in the country.

This has helped revert the deforestation trend in the Asia and the Pacific.

The region was losing an average of 700 thousand hectares a year during the Nineties, but forests areas grew 1.4 million hectares per year in the following decade.

FAO has been working with China on forest policy, forest management and livelihoods activities.

For example, FAO assisted China with policy and legislation recommendations on Forest Farmer Cooperatives and on forest tenure, which were adopted by the State Forestry Administration and reflected in the Amendment of the Forest Law of China.

This issue is also of interest at the global scale, as shown by the recent endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests by the Committee of World Food Security.

FAO and China have also collaborated on regional and international efforts to promote the sustainable use of forests.



The Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation, whose Secretariat is based in China, recently helped to implement a project to adapt forestry policies to poverty reduction strategies in the region.

And, in the context of South-South Co-operation, China has shown willingness to share its technical expertise in forest rehabilitation, combating desertification, watershed management, community forestry and other areas with tree-based and woodlots activities.

On behalf of FAO, I congratulate China for its efforts to support the sustainable use and preservation of forests, both at home and abroad.

China is a crucial partner in our efforts to improve lives, and we look forward to continuing our work together in this regard.

Thank you.