



The Zhuhai Declaration

8 April 2016

We,

Representatives of national and local governments, research and academic institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international national and development cooperation organizations, professors, researchers, urban planners, urban foresters, arborists, landscape designers, urban forest and tree specialists, government officials, private sector professionals from the Asia-Pacific region and all over the world assembled in Zhuhai, Guangdong, P.R.China, on 6-8 April 2016, at the occasion of the 1st Asia-Pacific Urban Forestry Meeting (APUFM), co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Urban Forest Research Center of the State Forestry Administration of P.R.China, and the City of Zhuhai, Guangdong, P.R.China,

wish to send to

national and local governments, international organizations, funding agencies, universities and research institutions, NGOs, civil society, urban forestry specialists and practitioners, urban planners, private sector and local communities who have the opportunity to shape the future of cities in the Asia-Pacific region

a message expressing our concerns, calling for action, proposing solutions and reaffirming our belief that forests and trees in and around cities are the key element to make cities in the Asia-Pacific region greener, healthier and happier and more resilient to climate change.





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Given that:

- globally, 54% of the world's population was residing in urban areas in 2014 and the global urban population will increase to 66% by 2050;
- Asia, the home to 53% of the world's urban population, is projected to be one of the largest urban growth regions in the next two decades;
- rapid urbanization is posing pressure on fresh water supplies, sewage, the living environment, and public health;
- the major environmental issues that policymakers across the Asia-Pacific region will need to address towards 2030 are: water management, deforestation and land degradation, air pollution, and climate change;
- strategies and solutions are urgently needed to help cities achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially the one on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG11).

considering that:

- urban and peri-urban forests and trees and green infrastructure play an important role in achieving sustainable urban development goals and contributing directly to human health and well-being of residents;
- urban and peri-urban forests and trees can provide a wide range of goods, socioeconomic benefits, and ecosystems services, in particular by improving environmental quality, enhancing food security, mitigating climate change, stimulating green economy, preserving natural and cultural heritage, strengthening social cohesion and providing environmental education opportunities.

and having agreed that:

- the main benefits of urban forests and trees to cities and residents in the Asia-Pacific region are beautification, air noise pollution removal, and opportunities for recreation;





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- the main challenges of urban forestry development in the Asia-Pacific region are conflicts of land use, weak governance, and limited technical skills and knowledge;
- the main priorities of urban forestry development in the Asia-Pacific region are good governance, sufficient investments/funding, and urban forestry expertise;
- during the development of urban forestry in the Asia Pacific Region, the Chinese Forest City experience could be used as an important reference model.

We submit the following recommendations for consideration, awareness raising, and expressing our willingness to work together with policy- and decision makers, practitioners, and other stakeholders:

Recommendation 1

Raise awareness of the functions and benefits of urban forests and trees by enhancing advocacy, communication, and public education, which in turn may increase urban forestry investment by diversifying funding resources.

Recommendation 2

Improve the legal environment for urban forestry by enhancing policy support at international, regional, national, and local levels, in particular, reduce land use conflicts between urban green and gray infrastructures by integrating urban forestry planning into urban planning.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen urban forestry education and research in the region by increasing funding support, facilitating knowledge and information exchange, and prioritizing the needs.

Recommendation 4

To ensure sustainability, increase public participation and community





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involvement by making urban forests more accessible and creating diverse interactive programmes and activities.

Recommendation 5

Improve environmental quality in the Asia-Pacific region in the next two decades by creating new urban greening spaces and optimizing the functions and benefits of existing urban green spaces.

Recommendation 6

Protect and restore forests between cities, enhance rural-urban linkage through landscape planning and design, build interconnected regional eco-corridors, protect forests for urban water supply, limit unplanned urban expansion, and promote integrated ecological planning of neighboring cities.

Recommendation 7

Strengthen urban forestry regional networking on information sharing, knowledge exchange, and resource mobilization and further develop regional cooperation through periodical meetings such as the the APUFM and other joint activities.

Recommendation 8

Develop common tools (including methods, models and indicators) to address research questions, fulfill education needs and develop urban forestry solutions adapted to the needs of individual cities and countries.

We firmly believe that the Zhuhai Statement on Urban Forestry in the Asia-Pacific Region, adopted in Zhuhai at the 1st Asia-Pacific Urban Forestry Meeting, will promote sustainable urban development aiming at a greener, healthier and happier future.

