



## **27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations together with the Government of Sri Lanka organized the 27th Session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission (APFC), 23-27 October 2017, at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The APFC is one of six regional forestry commissions established by FAO to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis. The Commission meets every two years, and this year's session was attended by around 250 participants, including delegates from 22 member countries, forestry experts, and decision-makers.

The President of Sri Lanka, Hon. Maithripala Sirisena, who also serves as the Minister of Mahaweli Development and Environment, graced the event by sharing forests and rural development initiatives of Sri Lanka for poverty reduction and biodiversity conservation. "In the current post-conflict era, Sri Lanka is striving to optimize the economy through a comprehensive development process to ensure the better living conditions for our people and in this process, we all have the responsibility of protecting the natural resources and environment of our country, which is rich in biodiversity", he added.

The theme of the Session was "Forestry in a new landscape". The keynote address from Dr. Tony Simons, Director General of the World Agroforestry Center, elaborated the importance of the role of forests in evolving landscape approaches and management.

Mr. Hiroto Mitsugi, the Assistant Director-General of the FAO Forestry Department, highlighted the broad contribution that forestry can make to achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in his opening address. "There are major changes in many of the dimensions in which the forest sector operates – socio-economic, technological, cultural, environmental, and political landscapes and many more", he reminded the Commission.

Moreover, the Commission welcomed its new Secretary, Dr. Thomas Hofer. As the Senior Forestry Officer in FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Dr. Hofer was excited to take up his new role as the Secretary.

Lively and rich discussions filled the hall as the government delegates and observers talked about the diverse and challenging agenda items. The Commission highlighted the importance of forest restoration to countries in the region including the use of landscape approaches and mobilization of both community and private sector resources. It has identified key regional priorities for the forestry sector as recommendations, including: landscape approach to forest management and

restoration; incorporating the forest sector into National Adaptation Planning (NAP) processes; capacity building on REDD+; assistance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to balance competing economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives for forestry; development of tools and best practices for urban forestry; and capacity building for forest genetic resources conservation (see [www.fao.org/3/a-mp816e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-mp816e.pdf) for the full list of agenda).

A range of informative partner events ran alongside the session. Various organizations hosted events to discuss forest monitoring, forestry research, Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), REDD+, youth involvement in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and many more. For the list of partners and events, please go to [www.fao.org/3/a-bt658e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/3/a-bt658e.pdf).

The full report will be uploaded soon and will be available at this link: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/82939/en/>