



CATIE

Third IUFRO Latin American Congress

This event, held on 12–15 June 2013 in San José, Costa Rica, had 600 participants, comprising scientists, decision-makers, professionals, students, community leaders and forest managers and owners, and featured 300 scientific papers presented in 53 technical sessions. The Congress produced the following key messages:

- Latin America needs a stronger and more permanent discussion about forests, especially with a view to sustainable development and the importance of forests on a global scale.
- In Latin America, forests face major challenges related to deforestation (with record highs in the region), degradation, climate change, poverty and food security. Further challenges are the loss of genetic resources and the loss of irreplaceable social and cultural attributes.
- These problems call for technical, economic, social and political solutions. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the science base for decision-making. This does not mean that there is insufficient science but that its messages are not being transmitted well.
- Statistics (the major reference figures at the global, regional and national levels) that are used in the discourse urgently

Participants listen to an address at the Third IUFRO Latin American Congress

need to be adapted. Year after year, figures are being used for which the origin is often unknown, as is the case with the number of forest-dependent people and the rate of species' extinctions.

- There are clear examples of countries that have managed to achieve substantive objectives by creating a strong base of renewable natural resources, especially forests, which has facilitated development (e.g. Republic of Korea, Finland, Costa Rica and Chile). This is the result of long-term government policies.
- The landscape approach is gaining in importance and coincides with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment concept of the adaptive mosaic and also with another topic of worldwide priority – human security as a basis for building socio-ecological systems.
- Although bidirectional, the landscape approach should be bottom-up rather than top-down, with local governance at the centre of landscape organization.
- The landscape vision has become stronger at both the global and regional levels, as demonstrated by concepts such as adaptive watershed management, biological corridors,

model forests and other actions that add to less-integrated land management methods. They can be summed up in the concept of climate-smart landscapes. This is a way of giving an analytical framework to progress towards the integration of landscapes in an adaptive-mosaic strategy.

- In view of evident climate-change, there are challenges in providing wood and non-wood forest products and meeting growing demands for these products, which are considered carbon-positive, and their consumption will therefore continue to rise, as will the profitability of management actions related to forests and trees.
- Forest management and wood production in natural forests took a prominent position in Congress presentations. This shows that sustainable forest management is being recognized as an excellent way of conservation. In the region, however, there are considerable discrepancies between “rules on paper” and “rules in use”; governance

tends to stick to the philosophy of “command and control”, which implies high transaction costs.

- The Congress demonstrated that the challenges facing forests and landscapes have transboundary effects. It has also become evident that a large quantity of scientific knowledge is available in the region. More than ever, however, scientists need to become involved in networking across disciplines and borders. The Congress therefore highlighted the role of networking organizations such as the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and *Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza* (CATIE).

Congress organizers produced “guidance for action” based on keynote speeches and the 300 presented papers. For the conference summary, including the guidance for action, go to www.iufro.org/download/file/9793/3684/iufrolat3-resolutions_pdf/.