



## FAO FORESTRY

### Alfred John Leslie (1921–2009)

Alfred (Alf) John Leslie, former Director of the FAO Forest Industries Division, passed away peacefully in Te Awamutu, New Zealand on Saturday, 24 January 2009, approaching his eighty-eighth birthday. He will be greatly missed.

Alf Leslie was a dynamic, inspirational forestry icon with boundless energy and wise and considered counsel. He demanded robust debate and influenced decisions and outcomes in forestry for many decades, not only in Oceania, but around the globe. He set high standards for himself and encouraged others to do the same – to apply knowledge, challenge norms, inspire others, and above all, be accountable for one's own decisions and actions.

Alf was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1921. After high school, he accepted a Victoria Forests Commission cadetship to the School of Forestry, Creswick, Victoria (1938–1940). He saw active service with the Royal Australian Navy in the Second World War. After recuperating from wounds received during the war, Alf was posted to Taggerty with the Victoria Forests Commission before graduating from Melbourne University with a Bachelor of Forestry Science degree in 1949. Jean and Alf were married in 1948.

Alf worked as a forester for the Victoria Forests Commission (1949–1951), then as Wood Superintendent and Chief Forester with Australian Paper Mills (1951–1958) in Victoria, Australia, which gave him a sound field perspective, particularly in plantation forestry.

Alf Leslie's international career started when he was recruited by FAO to serve as Senior Lecturer at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria (1964–1966). After a brief stint back in Australia at the Forest Research Institute, Canberra (1966–1968), Alf pursued further international challenges as Forest Economist at FAO headquarters in Rome (1968–1974), and later returned to Rome as Director of FAO's Forest Industries Division (1977–1981), serving with distinction before retiring initially to Australia and ultimately to New Zealand. With his relentless energy he continued to write and to consult for FAO and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) until 2008.

Alf was a prolific writer and had an uncanny ability to communicate what he knew; many of his works have become classics in their field. He enjoyed challenging and inspiring young minds. He taught at the University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (1958–1964) while completing a master's degree in Forestry Science. He was reader at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand from 1974 to 1976, and was guest lecturer at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom and at Australian National University. He supervised many Ph.D. theses



over the years. In recognition of his services to international forestry, Alf was awarded an honorary doctorate in Forestry Science from the University of Melbourne in 1994.

In 2001, he was awarded the Commonwealth Forestry Association Regional Medal for his contributions to forestry worldwide. Additionally, in 2007, he received the International Forest Engineering Achievement Award from the Council of Forest Engineering. Alf also served as President of the International Union of Societies of Foresters.

Alf challenged conventional views; at a time when most foresters were concerned with how to do things in forestry, he was concerned with the why. But he also deeply

respected the work of his predecessors; he felt that foresters would be better equipped to deal with the future if they had a better understanding of the past. A man of broad interests, he lamented the increasing specialization of modern society.

As a young forester, I was privileged to witness Alf's keynote address at the 1980 Australia–New Zealand Institute of Foresters Conference, where he spoke after the Prime Minister of New Zealand. The theme was the future of plantation forestry in New Zealand. Alf commenced his speech by asking, "The future according to whom? the government? the Forest Service? the private sector? environmentalists? or the public?" His address stimulated debate not only at the time but through the following decades, through the reform of the forest sector in New Zealand, the sale of State assets to the private sector and the segregation of protection and production forest estates.

Alf Leslie planted rich and challenging ideas in the minds of young foresters. It is thus a fitting tribute that his family and colleagues from around the globe are contributing to the Alf Leslie Memorial Fund to establish a grove of trees at the School of Forestry, Creswick, Victoria, Australia, which will continue to serve young foresters in their learning. Those wishing to contribute can do so to the following account:

Account Name: LJ Leslie, Alf Leslie Memorial Fund  
 Account Number: 03-0442-0231527-001  
 SWIFT Code: WPACNZ2W  
 Bank Name: Westpac Bank  
 Bank Address: 98 Alexandra Street, Te Awamutu, 3800,  
 New Zealand

*Jim Carle*  
 Chief, FAO Forest Resources Development Service



### Biennial gathering of Latin American and Caribbean foresters

The Latin American and Caribbean Forestry Commission (LACFC) held its twenty-fifth session from 29 September to 3 October 2008 in Quito, Ecuador.

A main theme of the meeting was forests and climate change. The commission recognized that climate change provides an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of forests to society, but underlined the need for the forest sector to provide reliable information to contribute effectively to discussion of the issue – noting that with most information on climate change sourced from outside the forest sector, confusion and myths are often generated on the response of forests to climate change. Many delegates agreed that there was a need to step up scientific and technological research in areas relating to forests, with a focus on how climate change affects forest health, vitality and distribution.

Some delegates expressed their concern that eventual mechanisms for support to countries in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) might be difficult to access and thus cause frustration, as for forest projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The commission emphasized the need to open simple routes to such mechanisms and to facilitate the access of countries to new resources made available by donor countries to finance REDD. In addition, several countries of the region that have extensive forest cover and no major problems of deforestation requested support in encouraging that forms of compensation for the maintenance of their forests be given consideration in deliberations on the second commitment period under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

A session on forest institutions and legislation included presentations from the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO). The commission noted that decentralization of responsibilities for forest activity is important but needs to be gradual, transparent and responsible; participants underscored the need to prepare local authorities for the functions that they are to assume, by providing them with appropriate capacity, equipment and support.

A session on sustainable forest management highlighted the persistently worrying level of deforestation and forest degradation and evidence of an increase in pests and diseases affecting the region's forests. It drew attention to the region's significant expansion of protected areas, amounting to almost 400 million hectares, and the need for funding for the administration and sustainable management of these areas. A study on exemplary cases of sustainable forest management in Latin America and the Caribbean is currently under way as requested by the previous session of the commission.

Areas in which the commission seeks further support from FAO include identification of new mechanisms for the valuation of forest

environmental goods and services in national accounts and new sources of funding for the forest sector, including payment for environmental services and market mechanisms. The Commission also recommended that closer links be established between LACFC and the Latin American Forestry Congress (CONFLAT), held every three years.

The commission expressed its deep concern about the devastating impact of recent hurricanes on Cuba and Haiti and emphasized the need to provide maximum support to those countries to mitigate the negative effects, help restore forest cover and rebuild appropriate living conditions for the affected communities.

Two workshops were held prior to the meeting, on support facilities for national forest programmes and on the outlook for Latin America regarding REDD.

Guatemala will host the twenty-sixth session of LACFC in 2010.

For the full report of the twenty-fifth session, see: [www.rlc.fao.org/es/comisiones/coflac/2008/](http://www.rlc.fao.org/es/comisiones/coflac/2008/)

### First European Forest Week

The first European Forest Week was observed 20–24 October 2008, in conjunction with the joint meeting of the thirty-fourth session of the FAO European Forestry Commission and the sixty-sixth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Timber Committee.

Organized jointly by FAO, UNECE, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and the French Presidency of the European Union, European Forest Week represented an effort to expand forest sector collaboration in the region. Main events were conducted both at FAO headquarters in Rome and by the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, Belgium. Concurrently, over 150 affiliated events took place at the national and local levels in 30 countries across Europe (see Box).





## Hundreds of national and local activities organized for European Forest Week

From Iceland to Turkey and from Portugal to the Russian Federation, over 150 organizations in 32 countries held national and local forest-related events during European Forest Week.

Activities ranged from scientific panel discussions on forests and climate change to outings for children. Activities included cultural events, pedagogic activities, policy meetings, nature excursions, press events and tree planting. An interactive function on the European Forest Week Web site allowed organizers to share information about their events throughout the region. The result was a striking array of activities celebrating the contributions of forests to people's daily lives.

An association in Latvia, for example, organized an information campaign on the role of wood in climate change mitigation, targeting private citizens building or renovating homes as well as decision-makers and the media. The goal was to enhance knowledge of the role of forests and wood products in sequestering carbon dioxide and the importance of wood as a natural and renewable resource for sustainable construction and the creation of a healthy living space. The Finnish Timber Council hosted a seminar entitled "Made of Wood Day" for builders and architects, treating current issues in wood architecture, wood construction and wood research. The Private Forest Centre in Estonia held courses for private forest owners. In Belgium, the Dendronautes offered a tour to the heart of the Ardennes led by sprites, elves, druids, gnomes and troubadours. In Germany, offers included tree climbing lessons and a chance for children to make "land art" in the forest. The Iceland Forest Service launched a search for the country's biggest tree, and an association in Belarus hosted a conference on forests and foresters in literature.

To view all postings, see the European Forest Week Web site in-Country Activities page at: [www.europeanforestweek.org/50790](http://www.europeanforestweek.org/50790)

At FAO headquarters in Rome, representatives of government, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental and research organizations as well as private forest owners shared perspectives and solutions to global challenges, with emphases on forests and climate change, bioenergy and water. Approximately 400 participants from 45 countries attended.

Complementing the plenary sessions were policy dialogues and partner events on subjects such as improving forest law enforcement and governance in the European Neighborhood Policy, the new forest policy of the Russian Federation, gender and forestry, the role of wood products in climate change mitigation and adaptation of forest trees to climate change. A special workshop was held on the role of wood in green building.

In Brussels, a day-long conference was held on the role of forests and the forest-based sector in meeting the European Union's climate commitments.

### New programme supports forest law enforcement, governance and trade in ACP countries

In November 2008, FAO launched a four-year programme, funded by the European Commission, to support forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT) in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (a group of almost 80 countries involved in cooperation with the European Union under the Lomé Convention).

Illegal logging and associated timber trade result in political, socio-economic and environmental problems in many countries in these regions. In addition to undermining the rule of law, principles of democratic governance and respect for human rights, these practices weaken the competitiveness of legitimate forestry

operations and limit their ability to contribute to sustainable forest management. They impair livelihood opportunities for local people and lead to loss of biodiversity and damage to watersheds and other forested ecosystems.

The new programme will support:

- collection, analysis and sharing of FLEGT-related information and knowledge;
- strengthening of legal frameworks;
- strengthening of FLEGT-related institutions;
- pilot projects that create added value and bridge critical gaps in FLEGT processes.

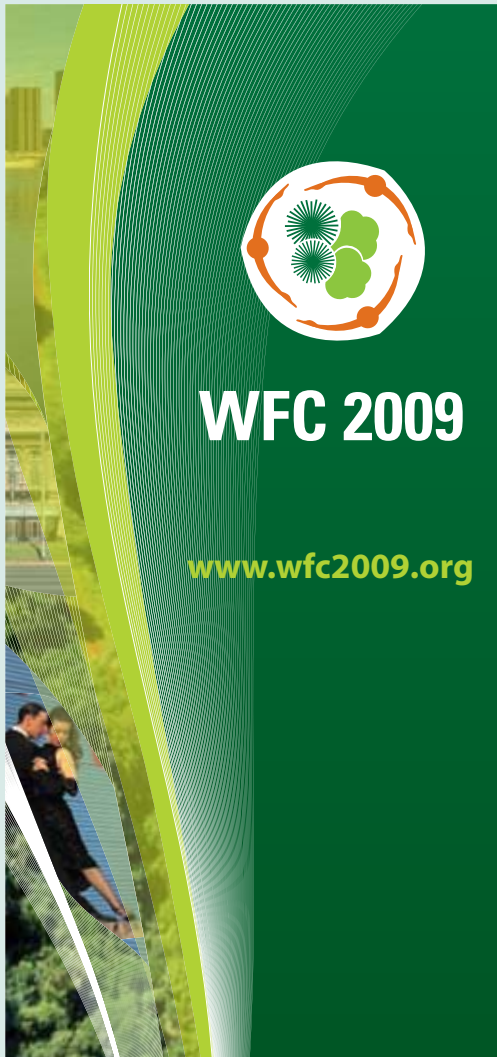
The programme will operate on demand from countries. Targeted calls for proposals will be issued twice a year. The programme is open to all ACP countries, but priority will be given to proposals from countries with significant domestic, regional or foreign trade in forest products. In principle, the programme will not finance 100 percent of the costs of activities; recipient organizations are expected to provide financial or in-kind contributions. The programme will emphasize information and knowledge management and sharing of lessons learned to ensure broad impact and sustainability.

All relevant forestry organizations in ACP countries – government institutions, civil society organizations and private sector organizations – will be eligible for support. Proposals from the latter two must be supported by official requests from the governments concerned. Proposals will be appraised by an expert panel and selected by an Executive Committee, and the selection will be validated by a Steering Committee including representatives of the ACP Secretariat, the European Commission, FAO and any other donors.



## Registration opens for XIII World Forestry Congress

The XIII World Forestry Congress will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 18 to 25 October 2009 under the theme "Forests in development: a vital balance". The congress will include presentations, discussions, business meetings and exhibits, as well as two high-level round-tables dealing with climate change and bioenergy. More than 2 500 abstracts have been received from all regions of the world.



### Registration

Online registration opened on 1 February 2009. Special prices are available for participants from low- and middle-income countries and for those who register before 30 June. Discounts are available for groups, students and retirees.

In addition, the organizers of the congress are making efforts to guarantee balanced attendance from all regions of the world by offering scholarships to participants from developing countries. Priority will be given to those who have submitted an abstract. Instructions for scholarship application can be found on the congress Web site.

### International forestry exhibition

An international forestry exhibition will provide a meeting place for promoting knowledge and awareness for sustainable forest management. The exhibition should be of special interest to producers, wholesalers and retailers of wood and non-wood forest product; suppliers of tools and other inputs; logistics and distribution firms; governmental and international organizations and cooperation agencies; and non-governmental organizations, associations and institutions.

Online booking for stands at the exhibition opened on 1 February 2009.

### Side events

Specialized agencies, countries and institutions are welcomed to organize side events related to the seven thematic sessions of the World Forestry Congress. These events will offer participants opportunities for wider discussion and reflection, networking and dissemination of key messages.

The deadline for the reception of applications for side events is 31 March 2009. Side events can be scheduled for a maximum of two hours. Only one application per organization will be considered. Simultaneous interpretation and catering services are available. Terms, conditions and rates are available on the congress Web site.

### Business meetings

Space will be made available for organizing business meetings. These will offer opportunities to forest and wood processing industries to establish new business networks or strengthen existing contacts. For more information please contact the Secretariat at: [info@cfm2009.org](mailto:info@cfm2009.org)

A small Project Management Unit based at FAO headquarters will be in charge of the day-to-day management of the programme and coordination with the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission.

For further information, contact: [Eva.Muller@fao.org](mailto:Eva.Muller@fao.org)

### International conference on forests and water

What is the relationship between forests and water, life's most precious resource? This was the subject of the international

scientific conference *Water and Forests: A Convenient Truth?*, held in Barcelona, Spain on 30 and 31 October 2008. Experts from research, policy and academic institutions discussed the interrelation between the two sectors in the context of global change, with increased temperature, uncertain rainfall, changes in land use, increasing populations and a growing demand for water.

Themes examined by the conference included:

- the influence of forest management practices on water yield, for example through the use of a mix of different tree species





of varying ages or the design of forest structure and open areas;

- the capacity of trees planted in agricultural and urban areas, on runoff pathways or in riparian zones to reduce the biochemical impact of pollutants on the environment;
- the extent to which forest canopies and roots protect soil and reduce erosion rates and sediment delivery to rivers.

Policy recommendations focused on the need to develop synergies in forests and water administrations at the policy and planning level. The conference emphasized a more holistic consideration of the interactions between water, forest and other land uses and of socio-economic factors. It stressed the importance of integrated territorial development at the national and regional levels, linking upstream and downstream processes and benefits.

As the most important areas for further study, participants identified the biophysical interactions between forests and water in different situations and contexts, and the development of effective and efficient models for managing forests and water resources with an integrated approach. Equally important is the need to provide more comprehensive knowledge on the forest/water interface to policy-makers.

The conference was organized by the European Forest Institute, the Centre de Recerca Ecològica i Aplicacions Forestals (CREAF), the Centre Tecnològic Forestal de Catalunya (CTFC), FAO, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), the University of Barcelona, the University of Lleida and Obra Social Caixa Catalunya, with funding from the government of Catalonia, Spain.

For further reading on forests and water see *Unasyiva* No. 229 (2007) which was wholly devoted to this theme ([www.fao.org/forestry/unasyiva](http://www.fao.org/forestry/unasyiva)).

### Support to forest management in Afghanistan

In mountainous and mostly arid Afghanistan, long civil war has compounded the environmental challenges caused by water shortage, soil degradation and overgrazing. Forests, which cover about 1.3 percent of the country, have been damaged extensively by clearing for military purposes, illegal harvesting of timber and unsustainable woodfuel collection. Excessive hunting and habitat degradation have decimated the indigenous fauna. The collapse of the government structure limited control of illegal timber exploitation and trade, and an exodus of trained forest officers left the Directorate of Forests and Rangelands with little capacity for planning, policy development and communication.

Wood, fuelwood and non-wood forest products (NWFPs), especially nuts, herbs and fruits, have traditionally played a vital role in the livelihoods of rural Afghan people. In the eastern provinces, cedar (*Cedrus deodora*) grows above 1 800 m and is

harvested for export. The reconstruction of Kabul and other cities damaged during the war will increase the demand for wood for construction.

FAO has been assisting the forest sector in Afghanistan through a series of projects. In 2003, Afghan authorities requested FAO assistance to rebuild the sector in a sustainable way. Following limited emergency support to the forestry sector through tree planting, a technical cooperation project, "Support to the Rehabilitation of the Forestry Sector", was formulated in 2005 to help develop a broad-based national forest programme. This project helped prepare a forest policy and strategy and formulate a new forest law through a participatory process involving all stakeholders. The forest policy and strategy is fully integrated into the Agriculture Master Plan, which provides the framework for agriculture sector development. Capacity building for the forest administration, the private sector and non-governmental organizations is an important component of the strategy.

Since that project concluded in 2007, FAO has continued to provide assistance for the implementation of the forest policy and strategy and field testing of the new forest law. A new project, "Improving Sustainable Livelihoods and Food Security in Afghanistan", includes a component on participatory forestry to support sustainable livelihoods. The activities will focus on strengthening institutional capacities, improving technical capacities for managing forests and planting trees, and collecting information on NWFPs and fuelwood supply and consumption.

Although substantial time is needed to change customs and habits, it is expected that when the project ends in 2010, forest institutions will be able to advise communities to manage and use their forests sustainably.