



WFC2015
XIV World Forestry Congress

Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future

7-11 SEPTEMBER 2015 Durban | South Africa

Message on Climate Change from the XIV World Forestry Congress

Nearly 4000 participants from 138 countries met at the XIV World Forestry Congress in Durban, South Africa, on 7–11 September 2015. According to the Durban Declaration, “The 2050 Vision for Forests and Forestry”:

- Forests are more than trees and are fundamental for food security and improved livelihoods. The forests of the future will increase the resilience of communities by providing food, wood energy, shelter, fodder and fibre; generating income and employment to allow communities and societies to prosper; harbouring biodiversity; and supporting sustainable agriculture and human well-being by stabilizing soils and climate and regulating water flows.
- Integrated approaches to land use provide a way forward for improving policies and practices to: address the drivers of deforestation; address conflicts over land use; capitalize on the full range of economic, social and environmental benefits from integrating forests with agriculture; and maintain multiple forest services in the landscape context.
- Forests are an essential solution to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Sustainably managed forests will increase the resilience of ecosystems and societies and optimize the role of forests and trees in absorbing and storing carbon while also providing other environmental services.

Climate change poses a serious threat to the planet and to forests and forest-dependent people, and there is a risk that actions will fall short of what is required. Climate change may also lead to increased threats to tree health and to ecosystem resilience.

Policies and responses to climate change present opportunities for forests, such as new and additional sources of financing and increased political support for forest governance and stakeholder engagement.

Through Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) activities forests contribute to reduce emissions and enhance carbon stocks in forests while contributing to sustainable development. The effectiveness, coordination and mobilization of financial resources for further REDD+ activities is still a challenge and needs more attention.

Acknowledging the urgency of addressing climate change threats, the XIV World Forestry Congress participants recommend the following actions:

- Increase understanding of climate change among governments and other stakeholders, paying particular attention to forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples.
 - Promote partnerships and South–South exchanges to benefit from existing and increasing experience and knowledge on adaptation and mitigation actions on the ground, ensuring that forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples are fully involved.
 - Increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities for governments and other stakeholders in addressing climate change, and encourage them to address these in the wider context of sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - Continue increasing the availability and quality of information to assist policymakers in decision-making and help practitioners meet multiple climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives.
 - Encourage the assessment and communication of progress in climate change mitigation and adaptation, including through more coordinated and effective mobilization of diverse financial resources.
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