



Forests and Youth - Investing in a Sustainable Future

Asking for your support!

To whom it may Concern,

How can we provide food, energy and water for all? How can we avoid climate change? How can we cope with increasing resource scarcity? How can forests and the forest sector contribute to overcoming these challenges? These are some of our major concerns and we believe yours as well!

This year we have a unique opportunity to address the questions above. The XIV World Forestry Congress, taking place in Durban, South Africa, from 7-11 September 2015, provides a unique platform to engage in discussion and to define solutions for the future of forests and young generations.

The central theme of the Congress is Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future. Discussions will also highlight the contributions of the world's forests to the implementation of the new post-2015 development agenda. We are eager to contribute to the discussion. We want to learn, share our concerns and take responsibility. But we need your support.

Who we are? We are speaking on behalf of youth, with a wide diversity of geographical, cultural and educational backgrounds. We also represent a number of youth organisations including the International Forestry Student Association (IFSA), International Association of Students in Agriculture and Related Sciences (IAAS), and Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) among others.

We are asking you for your support to achieve three concrete goals:

1. Enable the physical presence of at least 50 young people at the Congress to contribute to the debate.
2. Set up and run special youth communication channels, as well as training and learning opportunities, including an interactive webpage and attendance at a communication and social media boot-camp.
3. Establish an online Global Mentoring Programme as a legacy project of the Congress.

Moreover, your support will contribute to the success of the special event: 'Forests for the Future', which is organized by young people at the Congress to voice and demonstrate how youth and young generations help and engage in protecting and sustainably managing the forests of the world. This special event will take place on 8 September 2015.

Please find more information on our goals, activities, expected costs and what we can offer you in return attached to this letter.

Your generous donation is an investment in the education and experience of tomorrow's natural resource managers. This will enable us to engage in the discussions and to enrich the Congress outcomes by offering perspectives on cross-sectorial and integrated approaches to addressing the land-use and resource management of the future, as well as advancing the causes of sustainable development. We promise to bring with us all our creativity and passion!

Finally, if you or your organisation is planning to participate at the Congress, please consider including young people in your delegation or as speakers at your sessions.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

Thank you for your generosity,



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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUR SUPPORT

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS? HOW YOUR DONATION WILL BE USED?

1. Enable participation of young people at the congress	3000 \$ p.p
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This will cover travel, accommodation and registration fee. We are aiming for sponsorship of at least 50 young people with a diverse geographical, cultural and educational background and gender balance. Depending on funding availability, preference will be given to young people from least developed countries.

With your support, we can realize our plan to be fully engaged in the various sub-theme dialogues and sessions in the Congress, including a broad representation of forestry students presenting research.

Our plans for engagement are to:

- Converge for a pre-congress meeting during which we discuss our goals for the congress and how we plan to achieve them. Additionally, we will have an inter-generational discussion on how we can make the best of our presence at the Congress.
- Give a speech at the opening plenary to announce our presence at the Congress and our plans to actively follow the sub-theme dialogues as well as to invite Congress participants to all our events for the Congress week.
- Facilitate inter-generational discussions and debates through the youth special events and workshop on issues that cut across sectorial boundaries on how to adapt education and research to the millennium's realities, investing in institutional capacities of youth, roles youth play and their key role in implementing and achieving the post-2015 sustainable development goals.
- Allow students who have had their abstracts for papers, posters, and videos accepted to attend the conference and showcase their innovative work.
- Provide our feedback, recommendations and our plans for the future to all the Congress participants during the closing plenary.

Furthermore, if we receive adequate support, we are planning to;

2. Set up and run a youth communication platform	30,000 \$
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This covers the installation and maintenance of a youth active/interactive web platform. This will enable other interested young people, more specifically those who are not attending, to actively follow the Congress. On this platform, we would share our daily newsletter that captures sum-ups of proceedings and a summary of our daily engagements. This platform will be developed in a way that we can share and learn about forest-related interests, concerns and ideas which go beyond the Congress focus.

Your generous donation will also contribute to youth capacity through the participation of selected young people at the communication and social media 'boot camp' which is taking place from 4-6 September, before the commencement of the Congress in Durban. This training will focus on social media reporting for the Congress, and young people will in turn be assigned to manage this interactive platform during the Congress.

Depending on our level of funding, we plan on having the communication platform working beyond the Congress, as one of the legacies of youth engagement at the Congress. This would mean a sustainable investment in youth which reaches far beyond the Congress itself!

3. Global Mentoring Program

30,000 \$

This program (working title: “adopt a student”) is another legacy of the Congress that, if funding is received, we intend to host on the youth communication platform. The objectives of the program are:

- to promote skills and talent acquisition of young people
- to nurture the interest of youth in the sector
- to provide opportunities for organisations, companies, governments and individuals to actively search for talented young people (e.g. HR departments)
- to support the personal and professional development of talent via attachment to personal mentors

Your support will help us to set up and maintain this capacity building platform.

WHAT YOU WILL GET IN RETURN?

1. Official thank you letter signed by young people / individual thank you messages from participants
2. A photobook from the Congress and a summary of activities
3. Visibility on the youth webpage which is hosted on the Congress websites as well as on the youth communication platforms (if we get funding to implement the project)
4. Depending on donations, verbal recognition at youth sessions or speaking slot at one of the Congress/youth events or the opening statement in the plenary, as appropriate.
5. Advertising in the official programme of the Congress
6. Names and logos of sponsors on display at potential media events

HOW CAN YOU CONCRETELY SUPPORT US?

FAO has agreed to support us with the administration of funds received. Kindly indicate your interest in supporting youth engagement at the Congress by contacting the XIV World Forestry Congress Secretariat: WFC-XIV-Info@fao.org