



WFC2015
XIV World Forestry Congress

Forests and People: Investing in a Sustainable Future

7-11 SEPTEMBER 2015 Durban | South Africa

Message from XIV World Forestry Congress to the United Nations General Assembly Summit for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Nearly 4000 participants from 138 countries met at the XIV World Forestry Congress, held in Durban, South Africa, on 7–11 September 2015. The Congress offers the following message to the Summit on the role of forests in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Forests cover one-third of the earth's land surface and their conservation and sustainable management are essential for the achievement of the SDGs. They can provide a wide range of products and services that contribute to social and economic development while enhancing the environment. Forests are particularly important for the hundreds of millions of people in rural areas, including many of the world's poorest people, who depend on them for food, wood energy, shelter, fibre and livelihoods. They also help mitigate climate change, protect soils and water and harbour more than 75 percent of the world's biodiversity.

The need to sustainably manage forests is clearly stated in SDG 15, and in the SDG 6 target on protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems. Moreover, due to their multi-functionality, forests have a role to play in achieving several of the other SDGs, including especially those related to ending poverty, achieving food security, promoting sustainable agriculture, ensuring access to sustainable energy for all, and combating climate change.

The many challenges facing humankind must be addressed in an integrated way. This requires inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration. **To successfully implement the SDGs, forests and forestry need to be mainstreamed into strategies for sustainable development at both the international and national levels.** Implementation will require enabling, cross-cutting policies and improved governance across sectors, including gender equality and adequate tenure arrangements, as well as a favourable investment climate.

Forestry leaders and practitioners around the world are prepared to step up their efforts to manage forests sustainably so that they can provide the full range of goods and services that contribute to sustainable development.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant international organizations stand ready to strengthen the contributions of forests to the SDGs by making available data and information, providing technical support and promoting best practices and dialogue.
