

Dear colleagues and friends,



The 22nd Session of the Committee on Forestry and 4th World Forest Week are now over and the official report has been adopted. On behalf of FAO, I would like to thank all participants for their support and contributions, observations and guidance, which we accept in a spirit of constructive engagement with you, FAO's global forestry constituency. We now have a

clear understanding of where you would like FAO to direct its technical expertise and resources in the coming years, particularly in the next biennium.

I believe we can take pride in what we have achieved, under the expert and focused guidance of our new Chair, H.E. Bharrat Jagdeo, and we look forward to continuing our collaboration and dialogue with him over the course of the next two years.

To name just a few of the many issues addressed, we had important discussions on the *State of the World's Forests 2014* and the socioeconomic contributions of forests – a major theme of this session; the International Year of Family Farming and the International Day of Forests – high-profile and effective outreach tools; and the Forest and Farm Facility, which is evolving into a champion of forest and farm producer organizations. The two global challenges: Zero Hunger and Zero Illegal Deforestation, were reviewed, and we welcomed the launch of *The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources* and the *Global Plan of Action*. The Sustainable Forest Management Toolbox, a key resource to support countries' implementation of SFM, was introduced. A major new initiative, the Forest and Land Restoration Mechanism, will begin operations, thanks to the generous contribution of the Republic of Korea. Last but not least, the forest communicators networks, which are **ensuring that forest-related issues are brought to the fore in a strong and consistent way around the world.**

By the time we next meet, the global forestry landscape will have changed significantly. The outcomes of key initiatives and events – new Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Climate Change summit and the World Forestry Congress – will provide us with new frameworks in which to operate and deliver what forest communities and foresters around the world expect of us. These will bring new challenges, but I am confident that the COFO membership and our technical and resource partner networks, as well as the FAO Secretariat, have the competence and will to deal with them.

I would like to leave you with the words of one of our opening keynote speakers, who addressed us on the environmental, economic, and social value of forests and the experience of his country, **H.E. Shin Won-Sop, Minister, Korea Forest Service, Republic of Korea:**

Just half a century ago, “the impact of degradation was catastrophic. Each year, repeated floods and shortage of fuelwood sank the nation deeper into poverty”. But “under the strong leadership and the government’s dedication towards pursuing forest rehabilitation, it was the top priority of the government to repair the damage from the degradation. As our bare mountains quickly transformed to green forests, the number of natural disasters significantly decreased, and agricultural productivity steadily increased.

“What we can take away from Korea’s experience is clear: without forests, we cannot fight hunger.”

My thanks again to you all: to those of you who have returned home or remain in Rome, including the staff of FAO and FAO Forestry, I wish you continued good work, and to those who followed us remotely via our COFO webpage, thank you very much for your keen support.

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