

Dear audience, my name is Joris Van Acker, professor at the Ghent University in Belgium.

I am speaking in my capacity as Chair of the International Commission on Poplars and Other Fast-Growing Trees Sustaining People and the Environment — the IPC.

We welcome the State of the World's Forests 2026 and its focus on forest restoration. We particularly value its contribution to sharing good practices and showcasing the diversity of approaches that can support successful restoration across different environmental and socioeconomic contexts.

Fast-growing trees can play a key role in supporting and accelerating forest and land restoration.

The IPC promotes the sustainable use of fast-growing trees in production systems, as well as their role in enhancing ecosystem services and supporting the restoration of degraded landscapes.

The IPC was pleased to contribute to SOFO 2026 with a case study on phytoremediation, illustrating one of the practical solutions the Commission can offer to countries, landowners and farmers. We also welcome the case study on the use of poplars in Chile, an IPC Member.

Looking ahead, the IPC stands ready to continue collaborating with all FAO Members, through its expanded mandate to cover all fast-growing trees, building on the experience accumulated with poplars, to advance science, policy and practical experience on fast-growing trees cultivation, supporting countries in restoring ecosystems, sustaining livelihoods, and building more resilient and sustainable rural and urban environments.