



International Union of Forest Research Organizations

Union Internationale des
Instituts de Recherches
Forestières

Unión Internacional
de Organizaciones de
Investigación Forestal

Internationaler
Verband Forstlicher
Forschungsanstalten

From:

Professor Dr. Mike Wingfield, IUFRO President
IUFRO Headquarters – Secretariat

To:

International Council Representatives 2015-2019
IUFRO Members and IUFRO Officeholders

Subject:

Circular letter by the IUFRO President

Dear IUFRO International Council Members and Friends

At the onset of my Presidency in October 2014, I suggested that I would communicate with you from time to time, thus keeping you updated regarding important activities and achievements of our remarkable global forest research network. We have just come to the end of a meeting of the IUFRO Management Committee held in Lahti (Finland) and I thought that this would be an apt time to make contact with you. As a member of the IUFRO International Council, you have the important role of representing IUFRO Members in your home country - we now have 124 IUFRO Member Countries - and you also represent the highest decision making body of IUFRO. Being well-informed as to IUFRO activities at the higher level is obviously important and I hope that this letter will be helpful to you.

At the outset, I must share sad news with you. Just a few weeks ago, we heard that **IUFRO Past President Dr. Robert Buckman** passed away on the 2nd April. Bob served as IUFRO President from 1986-1990 and he is fondly remembered for many important contributions made to IUFRO, and particularly for extending the reach and effectiveness of the Union worldwide, to give particular emphasis to the development of research programs in developing countries. An obituary will be published in IUFRO news soon.

Our recent **Management Committee meeting was held in Lahti** such that it would be co-incident with a Symposium on Wood Products Industries in Future Bio-energy Business organized by the Natural Resources Institute (Luke). This was an excellent symposium and a comprehensive summary has just been published at: <http://www.metla.fi/tapahtumat/2016/rdisymposium/Verkasalo-summary.pdf>. Luke (previously Metla) is a long-term member organization and important supporter of various IUFRO activities. Thus holding our meeting in Lahti gave us an opportunity to meet with senior Luke leadership. I am happy to report that this was a very useful and constructive meeting and I believe that we can look forward to continuing a close working relationship with Luke.

IUFRO MC meetings review the activities of our Divisions and Task Forces as well as Special Programmes, Projects and IUFRO-led Initiatives. Overall, I am happy to report that all of the IUFRO Units are active and progressing well towards achieving our strategic goals for the 2014-2019 Board

Term. Many meetings of IUFRO Units (Divisions, Research Groups and Working Parties) have been held in the last six months and I believe that we will come close to achieving **our average of about 80 research meetings globally** this year.

On the matter of the **Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania known now as IUFRO-AO 2016**, you will be happy to know that we have an extensive and excellent suite of offered symposia. These cover a broad range of topics relating to forests and forestry and the meeting (**October 24-27, 2016 Beijing, China**) will surely be a very significant milestone in forest research globally. You might have seen the recent call for abstracts. Your help in promoting the meeting amongst your colleagues and the IUFRO members that you represent would be appreciated. The deadline for submission of abstracts is May 15, 2016 and further details can be found at <http://www.iufro-ao2016.org/en/>.

The **Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP)** represent an important activity of IUFRO at the science-policy interface. IUFRO has led the way in preparing a number of important global assessment reports via GFEP. We have now embarked on a new format, the GFEP Rapid Response (RR). This will focus on Illegal Timber Trade and the scoping meeting that will lead to the report will be held in May in connection with the United Nations Environmental Assembly in Nairobi. The report will be completed by the end of this year and I am sure it will be another major achievement on the part of IUFRO and our collaborators.

An important responsibility of the IUFRO Board is to ensure that an appropriate host institution is chosen to offer the next IUFRO World Congress. As part of this process, we have revised the **Bidding Rules for hosting the IUFRO World Congress 2024**. While this might seem far in the future, time passes rapidly and we need to finalise bids in time for short listing and presentation in mid 2018. Consequently, a call for bids will soon be circulated among the IUFRO member Organizations and via various other IUFRO channels. Please be on the look-out for this call especially if an organisation in your country is planning a bid to host our World Congress in 2024.

Another important event that will occur during the current Board Term is our **125th Anniversary**. This will be celebrated in a high profile congress to be held **in Freiburg in September 2017**. IUFRO will celebrate past achievements, but also look into the future and provide a platform for our network, partners and stakeholders to discuss IUFRO's vital role in addressing global challenges for people and nature. Please consider proposing a session for this meeting - details can be found at <http://iufro2017.com/>. As part of the celebrations, we will be launching a book on the history of IUFRO. I happened to see a draft of the book during a visit to Vienna recently and I am already excited to have a copy in hand. I am sure that you will feel the same way when you have the opportunity to review the remarkable history of IUFRO. We are also very keen to have photographs that mark historical high points in IUFRO's long and prestigious history. If you happen to have photographs, please consider sharing them with us.

As mentioned at the outset of this letter, as an IUFRO International Council member you are an important ambassador of IUFRO. We rely heavily on our IC members to be active in their roles as Ambassadors and we rely on you to distribute IUFRO News and other relevant information to IUFRO Members in your country. In this regard, please assist us in our role of promoting global forest research by communicating with scientists in your country and encourage them to become involved in IUFRO activities. There are great benefits to being involved in IUFRO and this is especially true for young scientists who are provided with superb networking opportunities. Please also don't hesitate to contact me directly or via our Headquarters Office in Vienna if you have suggestions on how IUFRO can serve you more effectively.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the IUFRO-AO 2016 in Beijing in fall.

Best regards as always

Mike Wingfield
IUFRO President