



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

Subject:

Circular letter by the IUFRO President

Dear IUFRO International Council Members and Friends

Perhaps it is a bit overused, but the statement "Time flies" (I believe that this is a shortened version of "time flies when you are having fun") is relevant when I recall that more than six months have passed since I last made contact to share with you some of IUFRO's key activities and accomplishments. And it is relevant that I am writing this note on New Year's Eve, a time when one typically takes time to reflect on the year gone by and look forward to the new year. IUFRO is a remarkable organisation with a vast "web" of interconnections and I can do no more than simply summarise some of the highlights of the past six months post my last communication with you. At every level of our organisation - IUFRO Headquarters, the Management Committee, the IUFRO Board and our many units - there is on-going and impressive activity. To illustrate this please also see my most recent brief report to the IUFRO Board attached. In this letter, let me briefly summarise some of the issues that I capture the most important issues of the past six months and that I believe should be of interest to you.

- **IUFRO Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania (IUFRO-AO 2016)**

The first IUFRO-AO 2016 in Beijing, China was a superb and hugely successful event with more than 800 participants from approximately 60 countries in the world. In 4 plenary sessions and 90 sessions participants were able to attend 476 oral presentations and view more than 200 scientific posters. There have been numerous reports and "stories" relating to this milestone event and these can be viewed on the website: <http://www.iufro.org/events/congresses-regional/#c25751> and IUFRO blog <http://blog.iufro.org/category/iufroao2016/>

- **Management Committee and Board meetings**

The IUFRO Board and Management Committee held their meetings in Beijing prior to the IUFRO-AO 2016. For your information please find attached the minutes of the Beijing-Board meeting 2016. Some of the more important issues discussed during the meetings are summarized in the paragraphs below:

- **Preparations for the IUFRO Strategy 2019-2024**

The IUFRO Board has agreed on a roadmap and timeline to prepare the IUFRO Strategy 2019-2024. As a first step, a questionnaire has been sent to the members of the International Council, the heads and directors of our member organizations, and the coordinators and deputy coordinators of IUFRO's scientific units. Based on responses arising from this questionnaire, we hope to obtain your input regarding your general knowledge and perception of IUFRO, to seek your guidance on IUFRO's institutional and thematic goals, and to obtain your feedback on the communication services offered by IUFRO. I hope that many of you have already completed the questionnaire, and I thank you for your support. In the event that you have not done so, please submit your inputs at your earliest convenience.

- **IUFRO Statutes and Internal Regulations**

During the course of the past year, the Management Committee has carefully read and reviewed the IUFRO Statutes and Internal Regulations. The suggested revisions were then approved by the IUFRO legal counsel. The Board has approved the recommended changes after suggesting a few changes. As IUFRO's highest legislative body, you as the International Council will now be invited to vote on the revisions made in the IUFRO Statutes and Internal Regulations as recommended by the IUFRO Board. This will be done in a separate and detailed mail that will be sent to you to by the IUFRO HQ.

- **Preparations for the 125th Anniversary Congress (September 2017)**

I am delighted to inform you that preparations for the 125th Anniversary Congress and celebrations to be held from the 19-22 September 2017 in Freiburg, Germany are well advanced. The programme will offer many opportunities to celebrate past achievements, to highlight the role of science in provisioning solutions to current and future challenges, to strengthen collaboration with stakeholders and build bridges to other sectors and to future activities. In addition to these issues, five of IUFRO's nine Divisions will hold "All Division" meetings and these will provide a very high level of scientific content to the Congress, emphasising IUFRO's crucial role in providing

research support for forests and forestry. Additional information is available on the website <http://iufro2017.com/>.

For the first time in IUFRO's history, the 125th Anniversary Congress will include a special feature for fundraising that I hope will provide financial support to promote IUFRO's strategic goals including for example education and mentorship. This fund raising initiative will be known as the "**Eberswalde Circle**", which has been conceived as a unique leadership challenge program that seeks to raise 125 donations (reflecting our 125 years of existence) of Euro 1,892 (founding year of IUFRO) by the time of the Congress. I have already agreed to make a personal donation to the **Eberswalde Circle** as have Dr. Richard W. Guldin (and his wife Linda) and several members of the IUFRO Board, and we hope that you will consider joining us in this initiative. For this purpose, you will soon receive a personal appeal letter signed by IUFRO Eberswalde Circle Lead Donor Dr. Guldin. We hope that you might also approach your colleagues and friends that are passionate about the future of Forests and Forestry to contribute. More information will soon be available also on the IUFRO Website at <http://www.iufro.org/donate/>.

- **Bidding process for IUFRO World Congress 2024**

As I am sure you will appreciate, an important responsibility of the IUFRO Board and International Council is to ensure that an appropriate host institution is chosen to offer the next IUFRO World Congress that will be held in 2024. As part of this process, a call for bids has been distributed and this will close at the end of May 2017. Bidding rules are available from the IUFRO website <http://www.iufro.org/events/congresses/> (pdf document on the right side).

- **Involvement of Youth in IUFRO**

As a university academic, I am passionate about education and in the upliftment of the youth. You will recall from my various previous correspondence that promoting this area is one of the major goals of my IUFRO Presidency. I am consequently delighted to inform you that IUFRO has entered into some excellent bases of cooperation with young forest scientists globally. For example, this last summer, I was able to attend the 2016 International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) International Forestry Students' Symposium (IFSS) held in Austria. This provided me with the opportunity to engage with a highly motivated community of students from around the globe to (for example) consider the changing nature of forests and forestry. More specifically, to arrange a "workshop" on the "future of forestry and forestry education". This was run by Dylan Goff (at the time IFSA Liaison Officer) and Janice Burns who holds the

IFSA/IUFRO joint position at the IUFRO HQ. The outcomes were most interesting and fed into a Panel Discussion on the same topic held a few days later. Issues and ideas from these events should now feed into activities of the Joint IUFRO/IFSA Task Force on Forest Education.

- **Global Forest Expert Panels (GFEP)**

Last month, IUFRO launched a new scientific assessment report on "Illegal Logging and Related Timber Trade – Dimensions, Drivers, Impacts and Responses" on the occasion of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 13) High-Level Segment in Cancun, Mexico. This was chaired by Daniela Kleinschmit, Professor of Forest and Environmental Policy at the University of Freiburg and Coordinator of IUFRO Division 9 who is also a member of the IUFRO Management Committee. The new assessment is the most comprehensive scientific analysis to date on illegal logging, related timber trade. More than 40 renowned scientists from around the world collaborated in the study, which was coordinated by IUFRO on behalf of the Collaborative Partnership of Forests (CPF). The launch of the report included UNEP Executive Director Erik Solheim, CBD Executive Secretary Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias and other high-level speakers. For your information, the report and the policy brief can be downloaded at <http://www.iufro.org/publications/series/world-series/article/2016/12/03/world-series-vol-35-illegal-logging-and-related-timber-trade-dimensions-drivers-impacts-and/>.

- **IUFRO communication**

Communication amongst researchers and particularly with our stakeholders in Governments and other bodies influencing policy matters has never been so important. Many of you might already have noticed the increasing efforts that IUFRO has been making in this domain. In this regard, we utilise many different "instruments" and "vehicles" to distribute the research and other results of IUFRO's Divisions, Research Groups and Working Parties to the global forest science community and stakeholders. Among the most powerful of these tools are the IUFRO website and IUFRO in social media, e.g. Twitter and Facebook. Please do take the opportunity to become familiar with some of these activities on our web site www.iufro.org

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the IUFRO International Council for the exceptional efforts that you make to promote our remarkable Union. I realize that this is done voluntarily and in addition to your many other formal responsibilities. I believe that it is this voluntary effort that unites IUFRO and demonstrates an incredibly

strong commitment of a large community of people committed to the future of forests and forestry globally. It is undoubtedly this strong commitment and a deep belief in the importance of Forestry Research that was the foundation of IUFRO and has led to the growth of our organization during the past almost 125 years.

As mentioned earlier, this year (2017) will be a very special one for IUFRO as we celebrate our 125th Anniversary. I am very much looking forward to meeting you all in Freiburg at the Congress and Anniversary Gala event!

Wishing you all a very happy 2017 and again thank you for your support and commitment to IUFRO.

Best regards

Mike Wingfield
IUFRO President