

From:

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

To:

International Council Representatives 2015-2019

Subject:

Circular letter by the IUFRO President

Dear Members of the IUFRO International Council,

Your role as a MEMBER OF IUFRO's INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL is extremely important. We rely on you to engage and communicate with forest research organisations; current members of IUFRO and potential new members in the countries that you represent. And importantly, to seize the many opportunities that IUFRO offers to promote forest research globally.

I believe that IUFRO needs a much closer engagement with our International Council members. In many cases, the only time we have contact with you is at our World Congresses. To address this concern, the IUFRO Management Committee and the IUFRO Board have recently met in Austria and Germany and discussed ways to more deeply and strongly involve the International Council in the IUFRO network. In order to improve our understanding of your ideas, considerations and needs, we have tasked Dr. Richard Guldin, former IUFRO Board member and 2014 Chair of the Congress Organizing Committee of the IUFRO World Congress in Salt Lake City to assist us. Rich has kindly agreed to facilitate communication with you as members of our International Council. Rich will soon make contact with you, and I hope that you will work with him in order to advance the interests of our important and impressive Union.

One specific activity that requires your guidance and input relates to the next IUFRO Strategy post-2019: Following recommendations of the independent 2017 Review Panel, the Management Committee and IUFRO HQ are currently working on a first draft of the new strategy. This strategy will build on our current one and again include sections outlining thematic priorities and institutional goals. The first draft of the new strategy will be discussed by the IUFRO Board at its next meeting in Corvallis, Oregon in September. Thereafter, we will invite you to provide feedback and comments and I hope that we can rely on you to assist us in this important task. This should also then give us sufficient time to finalize the new strategy that must be formally adopted by you at the IUFRO World Congress 2019 in Curitiba, Brazil.

As you are aware, I have established a norm to provide you with regular updates regarding recent activities of the IUFRO Board and Management Committee. Following this trend, I would like to use this opportunity specifically to inform you of various issues that arose from our most recent Management Committee meeting. In an effort to keep this note brief, I will highlight only a few of the most relevant matters. If you would like to have more detailed information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In April 2018, the IUFRO Management Committee met in Rust, Austria. This came some months after our very successful IUFRO 125th Anniversary Congress where I was happy to meet many of you. This period was characterized by the normal high level of activity within the Divisions and by our current Task Forces. I am happy to report that more than 50 meetings are planned for the rest of this year. We have also been able to increase the number of IUFRO officeholders to 800, here with a special focus on improving our gender balance and geographical distribution.

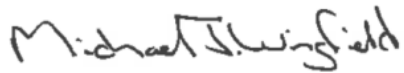
While we have made good progress on this matter, the Management Committee has emphasized the need to take even stronger action towards achieving gender equality and improving the geographical and cultural diversity in IUFRO in the future. Currently, only 26 percent of IUFRO officeholders are female. The larger percentage (84%) of our officeholders come from Europe, North America and Asia-Oceania. This clearly reflects a lack of officeholders from Africa and Latin America. The challenge of increasing diversity in IUFRO can be met only with a collective effort by the whole Union and across different levels, including the Divisions, Research Groups and Working Parties. Here I must strongly emphasise the important role that you as representatives and alternate representatives of the IC must have in identifying suitable officeholders for the various IUFRO Units, from the institutions in your countries.

The IUFRO World Congress 2019 will provide an important opportunity to involve new officeholders, especially from the Latin American Region. There is little more than a year left before we meet in Curitiba, Brazil. This will be the first time that a IUFRO World Congress is held in a Latin American country, and this provides us with many important opportunities. Apart from a rich scientific program, the World Congress will also offer the opportunity to honour special scientific performances and achievements with selected IUFRO Awards. Please help us by nominating candidates for the Scientific Achievement Award (SAA), Outstanding Doctoral Research Award (ODRA) and the IUFRO Student Award (ISA). The deadline for submission of nominations is 31 August 2018. Find more information and the nomination forms on our website <https://www.iufro.org/discover/awards/>.

It is important for me to emphasise that we count on your attendance at the World Congress in Brazil. As in the past, there will be two official meetings of the IUFRO International Council. At these meetings, you will be asked to vote on the recommendations on the new set of Board members, including the President, and on the venue of the IUFRO World Congress 2024 among other important decisions to be made. Please, therefore save the date of this meeting 29 September – 5 October 2019 and plan to participate in the Congress, the IC meetings and the scientific sessions. Please see the Curitiba Congress website <http://www.iufro2019.com/> for more information.

I do not need to remind you that we are all part of an amazing and extensive network of forest researchers globally. In my welcome remarks at our 125th Anniversary Congress, I asked the question "what would the world of forests and forestry be without IUFRO?" The answer is simply very frightening. We have a huge responsibility to support IUFRO and build its future. And I hope that you will take every opportunity to help us do so. Again, and as mentioned earlier in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly if I can assist you in building the interests of IUFRO.

With best wishes for a relaxing holiday period (assuming that you live in the Northern Hemisphere!), and thank you for the service that you provide to IUFRO.



Mike Wingfield
IUFRO President