



## 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 Friends, Dear members of the IUFRO International Council**

My last letter to you was written shortly after the first Board Meeting of the 2015-2019 IUFRO Board Term. This enabled me to share with you key outcomes of a very successful Board Meeting and I also promised to keep you regularly updated regarding IUFRO activities including those of Board members engaged in major forest-related events. Some six months have now past and I am sure that you will already know that IUFRO has been very active in numerous global activities, most recently including substantial contributions to the FAO Forestry World Congress 2015 (WFC 2015) held in my home country South Africa during September. I am delighted to share with you the following short summary of some of our key activities:

**Management Committee (MC) meeting**

The IUFRO MC met in Durban before the WFC 2015. Among the many issues that the MC needs to deal with in its role as the executive committee of IUFRO, we considered ways of documenting the implementation of the [Action Plan related to the IUFRO Strategy 2015-2019](#). In this regard, the MC concluded that it would be useful to present the activities and trends of the IUFRO network in a more illustrative fashion than in the past, e.g. by presenting quantitative data regarding our many meetings including trends regarding gender equity and geographical balance. These data will be produced in coming months and we look forward to sharing them with the IUFRO community. With a view to developing a new strategy post-2019, the MC emphasized the need to "scan" future trends regarding forest research and to directly involve members of the International Council, officeholders and member organizations in the process. I look forward to having your contributions as we proceed along this strategically important path.

**Two new Task Forces**

Recently, the IUFRO Board approved the establishment of two new [IUFRO Task Forces](#). These include a Task Force on Foresight for Forest Sector Planning and a joint IFSA-IUFRO Task Force on Forest Education. These are particularly exciting new areas in which IUFRO will become more involved and the Coordinators, Jerry Vanclay (Foresight) and Sandra Rodriguez-Pineros and Lena Lackner (Forest Education) are highly motivated to translate their ambitious goals into action. I

am also particularly grateful to John Parrotta as our Vice-President responsible for the IUFRO Task Forces for his sterling efforts that have led to the establishment of these and our other new Task Forces.

### **World Forestry Congress WFC 2015**

Durban, in my home country South Africa, was host to the largest recent gathering of the world forestry community. The congress provided the "stage" for discussions relating to the state of the world's forests and key issues relating to our sector. Importantly in terms of global inclusiveness, this meeting was held on the African continent for the first time. The "Durban Declaration", <http://webapps.daff.gov.za/wfc2015/English/HOME.html>, offers a 2050 vision for forests and forestry. It highlights the need for integrated approaches to land use in order to capitalize on the full range of economic, social and environmental benefits provided by forests and trees, in a landscape context. The declaration also recognizes the important role of the youth in this area and it calls for further investment in forest education, capacity building and research. In terms of education, I was personally delighted to be able to facilitate and engage in numerous fora organized by IUFRO and IFSA (International Forestry Students' Association), particularly focused on forestry education in Africa.

IUFRO Divisions, Task Forces, Special Programmes and Projects, and the IUFRO Headquarters team organized or co-organized a wide range of activities contributing to the program of the Congress. These included 11 Side Events featuring the impressive diversity of IUFRO's scientific activities. Furthermore, IUFRO collaborated with FAO, ICRAF and INBAR in organizing a two-day International Forests and Water Dialogue, which culminated in the launch of a joint Five Year Forests and Water Action Plan.

Prior to the Congress, IUFRO co-hosted the Pre-Congress Research Symposium "Underpinning Sustainable Tree Plantations in Southern Africa" in collaboration with the Institute for Commercial Forestry Research (ICFR) based in South Africa. IUFRO's Special Programme for Development of Capacities (SPDC) organized a Pre-Congress Training Workshop on Science Policy Interactions "Making Science Work for Forest and Landscape Restoration" with around 20 participants. Together with a number of IUFRO officeholders I had the privilege of participating in various plenary events (i.e. High Level Dialogue of Heads of Member Organizations of the CPF) and sub-theme sessions including a key note address on building resilience in forests. I am grateful to my colleagues for their substantial contributions to these events and for assisting me in highlighting the important role that IUFRO is playing in research underpinning key issues concerning global forest and forestry issues.

For more information on IUFRO's contributions at the WFC 2015 please see: <http://www.iufro.org/events/other-major-events/wfc-2015/>.

### **Major forthcoming IUFRO events**

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the preparations that we are making for two major forthcoming IUFRO events. More importantly, I cordially invite you to attend these

events and would be obliged if you would also share this information with your colleagues and constituencies.

A IUFRO Asia and Oceania Regional Congress will be held in Beijing, China, on 24-27 October 2016. Our aim will be to address global research issues of particular relevance to the scientific community in Asia and Oceania. While the focus of this meeting might be Asia, we live in a global village and there will be substantial opportunities for interactions across the global divide. Please be on the watch for the soon to be released call for session proposals. Your proposals for Sessions at this important meeting in Beijing will be welcome.

I am sure that you are already aware that IUFRO will celebrate a very important Anniversary in 2017. This will be our 125 Anniversary Year and it is an occasion that we very much look forward to celebrating against a background of outstanding research, collaboration and collegiality. The [IUFRO 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Congress 2017](#) will be held on 19-22 September 2017 in Freiburg, Germany. This will be a major scientific event bringing together IUFRO officeholders, scientists, research managers and stakeholders from around the globe. The congress will address key forest-related research issues from an interdisciplinary perspective and discuss future trends and challenges.

I apologize for this letter being somewhat lengthy but I think it is clear that there is a great deal of ongoing activity across IUFRO's very broad research landscape and membership. Thank you for your contributions to IUFRO and for participating in our many annual meetings and other activities. As I have said on various previous occasions, it is IUFRO's people that make our organization so exceptional. Research underpins the solutions to the many challenges facing global forests and forestry and here, IUFRO plays a hugely important role. Your contributions to forestry research are both important and appreciated and I will always be happy to hear from you directly where you have suggestions or see opportunities to promote IUFRO.

With best regards



Mike Wingfield  
IUFRO President