



Interview with Prof. Michael Wingfield, IUFRO President

1. Prof. Michael Wingfield, as IUFRO President, what expectations had you have towards the IUFRO Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania 2016 (IUFRO-AO 2016) which was held from October 24 - 27 in Beijing as the first IUFRO Regional Congress in this region? Do you think these expectations have been satisfied and to what extent they have been fulfilled? What are your impression and reflections of the Congress?

Now that the IUFRO Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania 2016 has passed, we can say with absolute confidence that it was a great success. The core aims to unite more closely the IUFRO community of this important region were achieved. And I believe this was even better than we expected. Also many important scientific issues relevant to forestry were discussed and I know that many new collaborations have emerged from this meeting. Here I must also compliment our colleagues in China and especially the Chinese Academy of Forestry for outstanding organization and planning.

2. What role will IUFRO-AO 2016 play in the regional and global collaboration in forest science? What will be its implications for IUFRO's facilitation of scientific cooperation in Asia and Oceania?



As I am sure you know, IUFRO has a long and impressive history of activity in Asia, having held numerous IUFRO World Congresses and other major events in the region. But this first Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania has significantly promoted new collaborations and associations. During the congress, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with APF Net which will have important future connections, an impressive training session of the IUFRO Special Programme for Development of Capacities (SPDC) was held and this too will have positive ramifications going forward. In all, I am sure that IUFRO Activities will be significantly more visible in coming years.

3. In addition to being the first IUFRO Regional Congress in Asia and Oceania, IUFRO-AO 2016 is also the ever largest international forest academic event held in China. Personally for years you have much experience in cooperating with Chinese forest research institutes and you are also an

honorary professor of the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF), the organizer of the event. What do you think about the forest research progresses achieved by China in recent years? Do you think these research progresses and achievements have made any scientific contribution to the Congress and to what extent? In return, what effects do you think will be brought on China's forestry development and CAF's development in the future through organizing the Congress?

Forests and Forestry are becoming increasingly more important globally. And we face many complex challenges including climate change, deforestation, desertification and increasing numbers of biological invasions- to mention only a few. Research provides us with knowledge that will empower us to resolve these problems. And here, IUFRO plays a hugely important role. As you say, I have conducted forestry research work and been involved in forestry education in China for many years and it is a huge privilege to have been appointed as an Honorary Professor in CAF linked to these activities. What I can say with certainty is that there has been very significant growth in both forestry and forestry research in China and CAF can be very proud of its many achievements. The quality of scientific work by CAF researchers is increasing in quality and impact and I know that this will continue to be the case in the future. And it will impact on the future sustainability of forestry in the country and globally. With IUFRO, I feel fortunate to be part of this journey.

4. What are your expectations towards the future collaboration between IUFRO and Chinese forest science community, specifically the Chinese Academy of Forestry as a national forest research institution in China?

Short of repeating what I have said already - I am confident that the relationship between IUFRO and its members in China will grow continuously in the future. More specifically, the friendship and collaboration with CAF is deeply entrenched and we will continue to work together to promote forestry research and forestry education actively and with enthusiasm.

5. Can you share some information about the following important platforms for research collaboration provided by IUFRO in 2017, which will benefit forest research institutes in this region?

As we come to the end of 2016 and looking back on the great IUFRO-AO 2016 conference, it is exciting to consider the year ahead, which in many ways has also been influenced by our meeting in Beijing. IUFRO holds many specific research meetings every year – at least 70 of these in different countries. And in 2017 we will celebrate our 125th Anniversary in a major congress to be held in Freiburg (Germany) and close to the areas where IUFRO was first established. The outcomes of our meeting in Beijing are already closely linked to the events that will be held in the coming year – in fact in the coming three years. Research is driven by collaboration and networking. These are not 'one off' initiatives but are more processes of growth over time. Thus, the meetings and events that IUFRO initiates become intertwined and linked in a 'chain' of growth and progress. I can already see that IUFRO A-O 2016 in Beijing has contributed significantly to this process.

Thank you very much!