

The Congress Daily



Delegates stream into Seoul

An impressive 1,168 participants from 100 countries streamed in to Seoul through Incheon International Airport on Sunday en route to attending the XXIII IUFRO World Congress - only the third to be held in Asia in its 117-year history. Meanwhile, the nearly 600 Korean participants turned to trains, buses, cars, and subways for their shorter journeys.

Participants poured in from six continents. By far the most (57%) hailed from Asia, followed by Europe (20%) and North America (11%). From South America (sending 2.5% of attendees), four Uruguayans flew a record 19,594 km from Carrasco International Airport to notch the farthest distance traveled. After tiring flights, they were greeted at the airport by smiling Congress staffers, who whisked them onto limousine buses for the ride to Seoul.

Later in the day, another treat was in store for first-time participants. At an introductory session, leaders from IUFRO and the Congress Organizing Committee and Congress Scientific Committee shared insiders' tips on making the most of every minute, raising anticipation a



Sundays registration process went smoothly thanks to hard-working staffers operating the computerized sign-up system.

few notches. They shared "best practices" for exchanging information, making contacts with fellow researchers, and building partnerships on research projects through involvement in IUFRO activities.

Welcome to IUFRO 2010!



Greetings, IUFRO delegates!

On behalf of the XXIII IUFRO World Congress Organizing Committee, and as director general of the Korea Forest Research Institute, the host organization, it is a sincere privilege and a pleasure to extend my gratitude toward all participants of this IUFRO World Congress.

The title of this Congress is "Forests for the Future: Sustaining Society and the Environment." As a key forum for international cooperation on forest science, this Congress will present a crucial opportunity to promote understanding of the contribution of forests and forest science to the Earth's sustainability.

This Congress will include a number of social events to ensure that you also experience the culture and traditions of Korea and Seoul. In addition, the In-Congress Tours will allow you to see firsthand as much of Korea's landscapes, culture, forests, and forestry as time allows.

The Congress Organizing Committee will do everything within its capacity to ensure that you not only experience an outstanding Congress, but also that you experience a Korean adventure that will last a lifetime!

Forests are life; forests are hope; forests are the future. It is our sincere hope that all participants in the XXIII IUFRO World Congress will find new hope for a greener future in Seoul, Korea.

Choi Wan-Yong

Director General, Korea Forest Research Institute



Spotlight: Korea's forests



With 65% of its land area under forest cover, Korea boasts a long history of its people living in close harmony with forests.

Forests have always been at the heart of Koreans' traditions, culture, and environment. However, during the turbulent parts of the 20th century and the Korean War, forests across the nation were denuded by illegal cutting and overcutting. In the 1950s, the growing stock volume per hectare was 5.7 m³, only 5.5% of today's figure.

To re-green the country, the country initiated the Rehabilitation Project with the launch of the First National Forest Plan of 1973-78. During these years, more than one million hectares of denuded lands were restored.

Since the late 1960s, over one billion trees have been planted, backed by strong public involvement. Recently, as Korea emerged as a leading world economy, one of the key growth engines driving the breathless pace of economic growth has been reforestation and sustainable forest management.

Lester Brown, author of the bestsellers *Plan B 2.0* and *Plan B 3.0*, applauded Korea's successful achievement in reforestation, saying, "South Korea is a reforestation model for the world. We can reforest the Earth!"

Cultural tip: Name cards

If you forgot to bring a couple of boxes of business cards to Seoul, don't fret: it's not too late to track down a printing house and order some up!

Koreans are fond of exchanging cards when they meet somebody new, so it always pays to keep a handful (or better yet, a couple of dozen) at your fingertips when you're moving about Korea in business, professional, and social circles.

The custom here is to present your card using two hands and inspect any card you receive. Try and present your card before asking for one.

When receiving a card, you may nod your head as a gesture of respect (especially toward people who are your senior) and thank the person for the opportunity to meet with them. Finally, never write on someone's card in their presence!

Keynote presentation

Presenter: Ko Un **Country:** Republic of Korea

Title: An Act of Grace from the Forest:
How Is Absolution Possible?

Time & Place: 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Hall D1, third floor



A renowned Korean poet, Ko Un is the author of more than 150 books of poems, novels, and literary criticism, at least 60 of which have been translated into 25 languages. His best-known works include *Mount Baekdu*, an epic poem; *Maninbo* (Ten Thousand Lives); and *Collected Literary Works of Ko Un*.

Ko Un lectured as a visiting professor at Seoul National University from 2007, and since 2009 he has served as chair professor at Dankook University in Seoul.

Previously, Ko Un gave a series of lectures on modern Korean poetry at the University of California at Berkeley, in 1998, and was a Visiting Research Scholar at the Yenching Institute of Harvard University. The same year, he was invited to the World Academy of Poetry in Verona, Italy, representing Korea.

What's going on . . .

- There's no cooler way to start things off today than attending the Opening Ceremony, held in Hall D2 on the third floor from 9:30 a.m. sharp. Arrive as early as possible to find a good seat! You'll be welcomed by IUFRO President Don Koo Lee and other invited Korean dignitaries, and feted with a colorful Korean performance. The 11 winners of Scientific Achievement Awards and one Host Scientific Award will also be announced.
- The Trade Exhibition revs into action today in Halls C3 and C4. Check out the latest products and technologies that companies and research bodies have been developing in and for the forestry sector.
- IUFRO Business Sessions for Research Groups, Working Parties, and Task Forces begin today. Today's meetings run from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., sandwiched between the Sub-plenary and Technical sessions. These sessions are meant to address the administrative and business issues of respective IUFRO units.
- Are you wiped out after long first day? Shake off your jet lag for this not-to-miss event. The Welcome Reception runs from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Hall D1. Come and join this entertaining "ice-breaker" to catch up with old forestry pals and make new friends while enjoying some delicious foods and refreshing beverages.



The transcript

182 participants from developing countries are benefiting from IUFRO's Scientist Assistance Program (SAP), which supports their attendance at the Congress and Pre-Congress Training Workshops. We spoke with SAP recipient Floribel Paras, a lecturer at the University of the Philippines with research interests in community forestry and development communications.

Did you find the Forests and Human Health workshop useful?

I found it extremely helpful. We did not only talk about human health. We also had other aspects not only useful for research but communication of research. We had sessions with GFIS, and science-policy interface, so all in all the collaborative teaching style was very good. What I appreciate most is the intercultural perspective I have gained from my workshop mates and other participants.

What are you looking forward to the most this week?

I am very interested in the themes related to impacts of climate change. And I want to go to sessions regarding forestry education, because I'm a teacher and I want to know about new techniques. Certainly it's going to be interesting, that I know.

What are you doing research on these days?

I did a study on attitudes and perceptions of selected publics toward the forestry profession. I used the Implicit Association Test, which has a social psychological background.

You've been in Korea about a week already. How are you adapting to Korean food?

"It's very similar to our food [in the Philippines]. It's not so much a departure from where I come from. I love it."

Korea Post issues stamp



Korea's postal agency issues a new commemorative stamp today to celebrate Korea's historic hosting of the XXIII IUFRO World Congress.

The seven-color octagonal stamp shows people and animals set among trees of varying shades of green to illustrate the stamp's theme, "Trees and Life."

The Korean War and other hardships of the 20th century left Korea's landscape stripped bare. This stamp celebrates the successful reforestation efforts since those times, during which time more than 10 billion trees were planted.

A full 16-stamp sheet of these lovely stamps has been included in every delegate's registration packet!

Tree planting ceremony



Seoul Forest just became a little greener after eight indigenous pines were planted.

Observing a long-held International Union of Forest Research Organizations tradition, a tree-planting ceremony launched the XXIII Congress yesterday at Seoul Forest, just ahead of this morning's Opening Ceremony.

A high point was the planting of an offspring of one of Korea's most beloved pine trees, the 15-meter-tall, 600-year-old "Jeongipum" red pine located at Songnisan National Park.

This achievement is the product of hard-won efforts by Korean forestry scientists to breed the revered Jeongipum pine - a registered National Monument - with a mother tree to propagate it.

In his remarks, Choi Wan-Young, KFRI's director general, explained the origin of the tree's name. "According to legend, King Sejo was on a road, and a sonamu [pine tree] bowed in courtesy. The king praised it and granted the tree the high-ranking position of 'Jeongipum.'

IUFRO President Don Koo Lee and Seoul Vice Mayor Kwon Young-Kyu also addressed the crowd of 100, which sat sheltered from the sun beneath a white tent.

Participants also planted eight Geumgang pine saplings in Seoul Forest, a grand new urban park fronting the Han River. The city opened the park in 2005 on land that once hosted a water treatment facility, a golf course, and a horse race track.

The group was regaled with music by the Rainbow Children's Choir, who were joined by delegates in digging up soil and planting the trees.

Pre-Congress workshops



Forestry scientists from 28 countries including Brazil, Ghana, Thailand, and the Philippines converged on the campus of the Forest Human Resources Development Institute east of Seoul last week for a training program aimed at boosting research capacity in developing countries.

During the five-day pre-Congress workshops, 21 trainers led sessions in four areas that IUFRO has worked on intensively: forests and climate change, forest-water interactions, traditional forest knowledge, and forests and human health. Participants also learned or reinforced skills in information management and science-policy interfacing.



Congress footprints



Park Jung-Hwan, the chair of the Congress Organizing Committee, welcomes first-timers at Sunday's Introductory Session.



The Rainbow Children's Choir added music and color to the Tree Planting Ceremony.

Buckling down for studies in the traditional forest knowledge section of the Pre-Congress Training Workshops held last week in Namyangju.



It's all smiles for Malaysian participants in the Pre-Congress workshops. (clockwise from top, l-r) Nazratul Raudzah Abd Rahman, Nor Azni Jafar, Syuquiyah Abdul Hamid, and staffers Megan Park and Leah Shim.



Congress staffers stayed busy on Sunday as participants lined up in Hall C1 to register and pick up a Congress kit.



Korea Forest Research Institute Director General Choi Wan-Yong greets participants at the Tree Planting Ceremony.

IUFRO Board shapes future direction



IUFRO Board members had touched down and were hard at work in Seoul for close to a week before most delegates had arrived.

Members charted out the strategies that will guide IUFRO in the near and long term over three days of Board and Management Council meetings last week.

"The five-year strategy we discussed will cover six focal areas, which are forests for people, biodiversity, forests and water, forests and climate change, bio-energy, and

resources for the future," said Peter Mayer, IUFRO's executive director.

They also discussed support for conventions and institutions related to forestry, including the UN CBDO and the UNFCCC in December; strategy for IUFRO's eight divisions; progress made over the past five years; and the organization's scientific priorities.

At a Friday dinner of Korean cuisine attended by Minister Chung Kwang-Soo of the Korea Forest Service and Choi Wan-Yong, the director general of the Korea Forest Research Institute, Board members thanked KFRI and the Korea Forest Service for their excellent support to IUFRO over the past five years. "The Board also thanked Professor Don Koo Lee for his leadership of IUFRO over the last five years," noted Mayer.

Did you know?

Within the modest area of 99,000 sq. km, Korea boasts a rich diversity of animal and plant life. Some 33,253 species have been identified to date, divided among 21,168 animals, 4,130 plants, 2,078 fungi, 4,657 protists, and 1,219 prokaryotes.

Several factors have contributed to Korea's diversity, beginning with the peninsula's geographical position, stretching from Northeast Asia out toward Japan, and the fact that mountains and hills occupy fully 70% of its land area.

The presence of a major north-south mountain range (the Baekdu-daegan), and several sub-ranges branching off them, and the existence of 3,400 islands, provide a range of habitats for varied flora. Different climatic zones, ranging from warm temperate to boreal climate, also provide conditions for diverse plants to grow. Another contributing factor is the low frequency of earthquakes and volcanic activity.