



Opening Address

Prof. Don Koo Lee

IUFRO President

Opening Ceremony

09:30-11:00, 23 August 2010, COEX Hall D1, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Your Excellency, Mr. President Lee Myung-bak ; Dr. Eduardo Rojas-Briales, Assistant Director-General of Forestry Department, FAO; IUFRO Honorary Members; IUFRO International Council and Enlarged Board members; Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Buenos dias! Bonjour! Guten morgen! Good morning, Anyeonghasipnikka!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 23rd IUFRO World Congress. For 118 years, since 1892, this is the first time IUFRO World Congress is held in the Republic of Korea.

IUFRO is a unique non-profit, non-governmental and non-discriminatory organization with a time-honored tradition. One of its most important characteristics is the independent and recognized networking for global science cooperation for the benefit of forests and people.

IUFRO unites 15,000 scientists from almost 700 member organizations in over 110 countries in a culture that involves dedicated voluntary work for Green Life. With this huge network, it pools forest-related scientific knowledge generated by its distinctive membership. It is an unbiased referral point for the provision, assessment and application of forest science advice to international processes. We are all about Green Science, indeed.

Ladies and gentlemen, IUFRO family

Since the 22nd IUFRO World Congress in Brisbane in 2005, we are



gathered once again, this time under the Congress theme “Forests for the Future: Sustaining Society and the Environment.”

Serving IUFRO as President for the past 5 years was such a great learning experience and at the same time challenging with present issues on deforestation and climate change.

*Climate change is challenging the roles of forests and forestry sectors in various ways. In lieu of this, it is vital for us to move towards a **green growth** with emerging **low carbon** technologies as declared by Mr. President Lee Myung-bak. Climate change is also one of the highest priorities of the United Nations as mentioned by Mr. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. In response to this, the IUFRO-led initiative on Global Forest Expert Panels has successfully completed its first thematic report on forest adaptation.*

The continuous declines of forest areas are also a major concern and thus became a driving force behind global forest policy debates, including Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). Desertification, biodiversity decrease and among others also remain a global challenge.

The fight against poverty and the increase of possibilities for global education are issues that I personally attach great importance to. Here I would like to make reference to the Millennium Development Goals. Forestry, in particular, can contribute to the eradication of poverty and hunger (Goal 1) and ensure environmental sustainability (Goal 7).

This list of issues that affects our decisions as forest researchers is certainly very long, and reminds us that our forests are dynamic and commands both regional and global attention. Therefore, I hope all these issues can be tackled in the 2011 International Year of Forests.

‘Globalization’ nowadays is used in many contexts and refers to the increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence. Striking a balance among all these is difficult because of the complexity of its interdependence, but not impossible by foresters with



a long standing experience.

Strong partnership and collaboration are needed to promote economic growth alongside environmental protection. On the contrary, a wider gap across gender, age, generation and economic classes exists which lead to the deterioration of both environmental and social structures. It is only through sustainability that we can achieve equity and through thorough understanding of the underlying environmental issues that we can find ways to address them using realistic approach.

Dear IUFRO colleagues,

Yesterday, we had our tree planting ceremony in Seoul Forest, a model forest located in the metropolitan city of Seoul which was established when Mr. President was the Mayor of Seoul. Tree planting activity should not remain only as a ceremony but as a practice to green the earth. We should thus be proactive in tackling all forestry issues and work together to overcome any challenges.

*In conclusion, allow me to stress the importance of sustainability, equity, growth and development in the realization that **Forest is our life, our hope, and our future.** I therefore look forward to your continuous support to IUFRO.*

Before I end, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the IUFRO Management Committee, Enlarged Board, and Headquarters for their trust and support. I highly commend them for a job well done. My special thanks are given to Dr. Jung-Hwan Park, the Congress Organizing Committee Chair, Dr. John Parrotta, the Congress Scientific Committee Chair, the Korea Forest Research Institute, and the Korea Forest Service for their concerted and dedicated effort in organizing this Congress in the Republic of Korea.

I now formally declare the 23rd IUFRO World Congress open.

Thank you for your attention. God bless you all!