

Opening Address
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IUFRO President
Opening Ceremony
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Dear honorary guests,
Dear IUFRO colleagues and friends,

Welcome to the 24th IUFRO World Congress.

Welcome to about 2,500 scientists from over 80 countries.

Included in this number are about 400 students, who we are especially pleased to welcome, since they will be the future of IUFRO.

Moreover, from Thursday to Saturday about 1,200 professional foresters from the Society of American Foresters and the Canadian Institute of Forestry will join us.

You have all done wise in coming, since great efforts have been undertaken to make this the best IUFRO World Congress ever in the 122 years' history of IUFRO.

When I was 25 years old, I participated in my first IUFRO World Congress.

It took place in Oslo, the capital of Norway, in 1976.

That changed the rest of my life – to the better.

IUFRO provided me with a global network of the best researchers in the area I studied, and whatever I have achieved in forest science since, I owe it to IUFRO that it became much better than I could have done it without my global network.

I also met colleagues some of whom have indeed become my best friends forever.

In addition, through IUFRO I have got a much better understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

I became a “Forest Scientist Sans Frontières”/a Forest researcher without any borders, and in this way, I also believe that IUFRO does contribute to making this World a better, and more peaceful place.

Since my first Congress I have participated in all but one IUFRO World Congresses, in total eight, and I shall continue to do so as long as I can “chew butter” – as we say in Denmark. In more than 23 years, as Head of Forest & Landscape Research in my country I have also encouraged especially young researchers to participate in the IUFRO World Congresses and have set aside the necessary resources for this purpose.

I have three wishes for you – for all participants in this Congress:

1. I wish that you may make the same experiences and get the same excellent opportunities that I have got through IUFRO.
2. Use the Congress to share knowledge, because when two people share knowledge they both get out more.
3. Be committed to and get involved in IUFRO, because the great strength of IUFRO is that it builds on people who are committed and get involved.

Since our previous IUFRO World Congress in Seoul in 2010, the IUFRO Strategy 2010-2014 has guided our collaboration. This Strategy for the first time in the history of IUFRO has set out a list of thematic areas to stimulate more collaboration in the IUFRO network.

These thematic areas are:

- Forests for people,
- Climate change and forestry,
- Forest biodiversity,
- Forest bio-energy,
- Forest and water interactions, and
- Resources for the future.

It worked:

Task Forces were established for each theme in order to promote cross-disciplinary activities, and the six themes of the IUFRO Strategy have been effective in guiding meetings and activities of Divisions, many of which addressed one or more of the six themes. And here at this IUFRO World Congress the state-of-knowledge on key topics and issues within each theme will be presented in sub-plenary sessions.

The numerous meetings and conferences constitute the main mechanism for science collaboration within IUFRO's global network of about 650 member organizations in more than 120 countries uniting about 15,000 scientists.

The number of these meetings can be read as the "*pulse*" of IUFRO.

The high number of IUFRO meetings shows that the pulse of IUFRO is beating healthily and loudly.

In the year 2012 IUFRO organized 97 meetings, which constitutes the largest number of meetings in any year in the history of IUFRO.

IUFRO's vision is - as the global network for forest-related research to serve the needs of all forest researchers and decision makers.

In this context, IUFRO organized two Regional Congresses during the past term:

The first-ever IUFRO Regional Congress for Africa in June 2012 in Kenya, and the 3rd IUFRO Latin American Regional Congress in June 2013 in Costa Rica. Participation in both regional congresses by far exceeded the expectations of the organizers and demonstrated the importance of networking platforms in these regions.

It is also part of IUFRO's vision to serve the needs of decision makers.

In the past four years, IUFRO has further increased its visibility in the international policy arena and established itself as an important source of high quality scientific information on issues of global concern.

In this context, I would like to point out the excellent collaboration with FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the other members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, especially CIFOR, the Center for International Forestry Research and ICRAF, the World Agroforestry Center.

In the past four years, IUFRO has also further strengthened its collaboration with the International Forestry Students' Association, IFSA, and as IUFRO President, I participated every year in the annual IFSA symposia in different places around the World.

With the creation of a joint IFSA/IUFRO position at IUFRO Headquarters, the collaboration between IFSA and IUFRO has been taken to the next level.

The only difference between IFSA and IUFRO is that IFSA is for younger students of forest science, while IUFRO is for the somewhat older students of forest science.

Dear IUFRO colleagues and friends,

Never before in the history of humanity have so many people demanded so many different products, goods and services from the forests.

Therefore, you need strong national forest research institutions with a stable core funding. And you need an excellent international cooperation in forest research on the global level through IUFRO.

Dear Congress participants,

The IUFRO World Congress provides an excellent global platform to present and discuss research results and to stimulate further research.

The Congress Scientific Committee chaired by Dr. John Parrotta has developed an attractive scientific program based on 3,900 received abstracts – the highest number ever received to an IUFRO World Congress.

The program comprises 5 plenary sessions, 19 sub-plenary sessions and about 170 technical sessions with a total of about 1,200 oral presentations and 1,200 posters on display.

Also the Congress Organizing Committee led by Dr. Richard Guldin has spared no effort to ensure a smooth and successful conduct of the Congress.

It is now up to you to make the most out of the Congress, and I do hope that this Congress will be the best Congress you have ever participated in.

And with these words I declare the 24th IUFRO World Congress open!