

Communiqué regarding the IUFRO World Congress 2019 in Brazil

Forest Scientists Addressing Critical Issues Where They Occur

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) will hold its 25th World Congress from 29 September to 5 October 2019 in Curitiba, Brazil. It will be the first IUFRO Congress to be convened in Latin America. This is considered as a great opportunity not only for the forest science community of Latin America to become much more visible globally but also for taking a closer look at forest-related topics on the continent. It will also be an important milestone in the already established and long-term cooperation of IUFRO with scientists and research institutions in the region.

Curitiba was selected as the Congress venue by the IUFRO Board in 2013 as a result of a robust international bidding process. The scientific programme is being developed by an international scientific committee based on over 4,000 abstracts submitted for the Congress. The organization of the Congress is jointly undertaken by two local hosts - the Brazilian Forest Service and Embrapa Florestas, both important IUFRO member organizations.

Against the background of recent political changes in Brazil and growing international concerns regarding increasing deforestation, forest degradation and land-related conflicts, some scientists have voiced their reservations about holding the IUFRO World Congress in Brazil. As a strictly non-political organization, IUFRO as a matter of principle refrains from commenting on national politics. Rather, IUFRO seeks to provide platforms for critical discussion regarding problems of global concern affecting forests and people, and to deliver robust scientific evidence that can help to resolve these problems. IUFRO also aims to support and strengthen forest research skills within Brazil and Latin America, and this will help to provide the evidence that will inform policy decisions in the longer term.

The IUFRO World Congress will address the problems of deforestation, forest degradation and land-related conflicts as part of the scientific programme. Related Congress outcomes will be disseminated broadly to stakeholders and the international media. In this way, IUFRO seeks to make a substantial contribution to raising public awareness regarding these and other important issues. As a scientific organization, IUFRO offers platforms such as its World Congress for in-depth scientific discussion and interdisciplinary research to provide the material for evidence-based decisions to be made.

“Evidence shows that IUFRO can achieve the greatest positive impact on management and policy decisions affecting forests and people by scientifically addressing critical problems where they occur, in collaboration with the scientists and research institutions in affected countries and regions, and broadly communicating their findings. It is my sincere hope that the members of our scientific community and our stakeholders share this view and will use the Congress as a platform for open discussions on critical issues and for voicing their concerns”, said IUFRO President Mike Wingfield.

IUFRO is a strictly scientific, independent, non-profit, non-governmental and non-discriminatory organization, which is dedicated to international science cooperation embracing all fields of research related to forests and trees. The Union aims to advance research excellence and knowledge sharing, and to foster the development of science-based solutions to forest-related challenges for the benefit of forests and people worldwide. IUFRO pursues this aim by connecting scientists and research organizations throughout the world, and by promoting the dissemination and application of research results to potential users, including policy and decision makers. As a member of the International Science Council, IUFRO promotes the free and responsible practice of science, underpinned by international human rights instruments relevant to science and scientists, as well as inclusive and collaborative structures and processes. Held every four to five years, the IUFRO World Congresses constitute one of IUFRO’s premier mechanisms to advance its objectives.

Michael J. Wingfield
IUFRO President

Jerry Vanclay
Congress Scientific Committee

Alexander Buck
Executive Director

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