

Biodiversity and Populations in the Context of Climate Change

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The meeting on “Biodiversity and Populations in the Context of Climate Change” held on 10 and 11 December 2013 at the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar, was co-sponsored by IUFRO Working Party [9.05.01](#) and drew 120 participants from 11 countries. IUFRO 9.05.01 Coordinator Gérard Buttoud from the University of Tuscia delivered a keynote address. (<http://colloque2013.essa-forets.org>)

Presentations were arranged around three major themes, namely Biodiversity and Sustainable Development in the Context of Climate Change; Technological/ Technical/ Methodological Development in Response to Climate Change; and Population and collective actions.

Several presentations dealt with diverse aspects of the relationship between biodiversity and population in the context of climate disturbance highlighting the major importance of non-timber forest products and services for livelihoods. Other presentations highlighted, for example, the role of institutions, community integration and usefulness of alignment of national policies on biodiversity.

The event also allowed the audience to understand that the irrational use of the ecosystem, species and genetic biodiversity affects food security and undermines the promotion of renewable energy. The results of current research show the effectiveness of information and communications technology as a tool for reducing vulnerability to climate change.

The theme of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change was also comprehensively addressed and case studies involving local production systems were presented. Adaptation to climate change was highlighted and existing farming strategies that are central to adaptation were studied. Approaches to building adaptive capacity were also tested and presented with Malagasy and international examples, including examples from Africa.

Since Madagascar is part of the international convention on climate change, considerable room was given to political and strategic deliberations also in the international context.



Post symposium tour at Mandraka forest (central highland forest). Photo by Bruno Ramamonjisoa.

The objective of the symposium was to answer a series of questions related to issues on biodiversity valorization for the benefit of the Malagasy people in the context of climate change, based mostly on practical experiences in Madagascar and around the world. This objective has been achieved although some questions remained unanswered.

Sharing experiences helped to better understand that climate change poses a major problem for the management of biodiversity especially in the southern countries. The need to act quickly requires the use of adequate tools that can help accelerate actions, but the tools developed are not always adapted to the socio-economic context of their use. More than ten presentations dealt with slash and burn issues but no effective solution has been proposed yet.

Nevertheless, the symposium was a great opportunity for Malagasy scientists to attend an international conference and to share their experiences. Unfortunately some colleagues from African countries didn't have the opportunity to have support for attending this event. A publication of proceedings as well as of individual papers in special issues of two journals (Akon'ny Ala: the journal of the Forest Department and, MCD: Madagascar Conservation and Development) are planned.