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## Forest Landscape Restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality in Asia

Report by Ho Sang Kang, Deputy Coordinator, IUFRO Working Party 1.01.13, from a session on 26 February 2016 in Clark, Philippines, in the course of the FAO Asia Pacific Forestry Week (APFW)  
(<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-1/10000/10100/10113/>)

Deforestation, forest degradation and land degradation manifest themselves in many different forms across the vast region of Asia. Out of a total land area of 4.3 billion ha, Asia contains some 1.7 billion ha of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid land including deforested land areas. There are expanding deserts in China and Mongolia, and severe land degradation in the DPR of Korea, in particular. Deforestation, forest degradation and land degradation have also negatively affected human livelihoods. The forest landscape restoration (FLR) approach pursues both ecological integrity in forest/land restoration and enhancement of human well-being at the same time. It includes not only tree planting, managing natural regeneration and improving land management, but also encourages active stakeholder engagement in sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, protecting wildlife reserves, watershed protection etc., which is a more holistic approach towards restoring environment and human livelihoods.



Against this background, the session during APFW, which attracted 50 participants, focused on this holistic approach to both ecological restoration and socioeconomic improvement and underlined the importance of cooperation among various stakeholders to cope with the social challenges in implementing forest landscape restoration. For this purpose, adequate capacity building for each level of stakeholders (government officials, research, technician, local community etc.) as well as knowledge sharing and technical cooperation for effective plantation, agroforestry and sloping land management are key. Central and local governments should make forest and landscape restoration one of the national priorities.

At the meeting participants shared information on the achievements and challenges of the forest and landscape restoration approach in Central Asia, Northeast Asia (Mongolia and DPR of Korea) and Southeast Asia (Myanmar and Vietnam). In cooperation with domestic and international level of stakeholders, the presenting countries have achieved ecological restoration in degraded forest/land areas, diversification of income sources for local community and improvement in the capability of responding and adapting the climate change. Nevertheless, there still exist challenges in social (encroachment, land tenure, inadequate legal framework on forest/

land management, income generation, communication among various stakeholders), technical (nursery, species selection, silvicultural treatment, soil improvement) and physical (poor soil property, severe climatic condition, unpredictability of environment, lack of energy/financial sources) aspects.

At the IUFRO Regional Congress for Asia and Oceania (<http://www.iufro-ao2016.org>) to be held on 24-27 October 2016 in Beijing, China, a session on "Forest and Landscape Restoration in Central Asia" will be co-organized by IUFRO Working Parties 1.06.00 and 1.01.13, and the National Institute of Forest Science (NIFoS). Another session on "Forest Landscape Restoration and Sustainable Development in Northeast Asia" will be organized by IUFRO Working Party 1.01.13 there.

Proceedings:  
<http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-1/10000/10100/10113/publications/>

Group photo after the session.  
Photo provided by Miin Bang