

## Forests, Bioenergy and Climate Change

By Mohammed Ellatifi, IUFRO General Board Member

An international conference on “Forests, Bioenergy and Climate Change” was held from 25-26 March 2008 in Casablanca, Morocco. The following issues were on the agenda: Forests and Development; Bioenergy; Climate Change; and Adaptation to Climate Change.

The Conference focused on the current state of knowledge of climate change conditions in different regions of the world, and the impacts of these conditions on forest management and conservation. It also discussed the topics of energy and bioenergy consumption, as well as the role of forests in the mitigation of global warming, through carbon sequestration.

In his keynote speech, Mohammed Ellatifi, Senior Forester, and Chair of the international NGO “Sylva-World for Development and the Protection of Forests and the Environment”, Morocco, gave an overview of deforestation in the world and its consequences on climate change. He noted that deforestation and forest degradation accounted for around 20% of global greenhouse emissions, having direct impact on the earth’s biodiversity and the millions of rural communities who live in, and around forests, and depend on them for their livelihood. He underlined that the most efficient and less costly way to curb climate change trends was to halt deforestation in developing countries, and added that, until there was a political will to preserve the forests and their destruction, deforestation would continue.

Keynote speaker Bernard Mallet from the French Institute of Agronomical Research for Development (CIRAD) centred his speech on the wood energy channels in the tropics, within the framework of climate change, putting emphasis on the role and prospects of carbon economy in resource sustainable management.



Photo (Fettah): Conference Opening Ceremony  
From left to right: Dr. Mohammed Ellatifi, Conference Chair; Mr. Adil Said, Forest Department; Mr. Mzabi, representative of the Wali of the Great Casablanca; Pr. Barkaoui, Chair of the University Hassan II – Ain Shock, Casablanca; Ms. Amal Haddouche, Director General of the Renewable Energies Centre, Marrakesh.

The conference received a [message](#) from Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In this message, Dr. Djoghlaif welcomed the Casablanca conference on “Forests, Bioenergy and Climate Change” and gave an overall description of the world situation of biodiversity and forests, within the framework of the actual situation of the climate change threat.

The programme with details of the speakers and the titles of the presentations can be found at the conference website <http://www.sylvaworld.fr.fm>. Selected conference papers will be published in specialized reviews.

The “Forests, Bioenergy and Climate Change” conference in Casablanca attracted 143 registrants from 25 countries from the five continents. Its organization was financially assisted by the University Hassan II - Ain Shock, of Casablanca, and CIRAD, France. The conference was co-sponsored by IUFRO Units [4.02.01](#), [7.01.00](#), [8.00.00](#), and the IUFRO [Task Force](#) on Forests and Carbon Sequestration.

The conference encompassed 8 sessions in which a total of 22 verbal presentations were delivered on a variety of topics, such as: Forests and carbon dioxide; bioenergy and food supply; contribution of forest management to the anticipation of climate change; strategy adaptation to climate change; disaster risk reduction; governance adaptation and policy to cope with climate change.