

People, Forests and the Environment: Coexisting in Harmony

By Mohammed Ellatifi, IUFRO Board Member, and President of Sylva-World for Development and the Protection of Forests and the Environment

The SWC2010 International Conference "People, Forests and the Environment: Coexisting in Harmony" that took place from 25 to 27 May 2010 in Casablanca, Morocco, offered an excellent platform for international debate on the various facets of the interrelations between People, Forest Ecosystems and the Environment, with a focus on the necessity of a sustainable coexistence, in harmony, of all related stakeholders.

Well-being, prosperity, health, drinking water supply, food security, provision of clean energy, social cohesion etc. are all characterized by the interaction of social and environmental dimensions. People, in their numbers, distribution and practices, can have both positive and irreversible negative impacts on the environment and other biodiversity species. Human gains have often been at the cost of environmental degradation (soil erosion, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, loss of fisheries, degradation of ecosystem services, climate change, etc.). Furthermore, all these problems are long-term issues that require decades rather than months or years to be tackled. Therefore, they pose particular challenges to decision-making processes in the political and economic realm.

The SWC2010 Conference focused on the current state of knowledge of people's socioeconomic basic needs, forest goods and environmental services, towards a sustainable existence in harmony, of all concerned stakeholders. The following topics were on the conference agenda:

- (1) Forests for People;
- (2) Forests for Local Development;
- (3) Biodiversity Functions and Use;
- (4) Valuation of Forest Goods and Services;
- (5) Forests and Climate Change;
- (6) Man-made Plantations;
- (7) Governance;
- (8) Education and Knowledge Systems for Sustainability;
- (9) Forecasting of Needs and Resources;
- (10) People and Forests in Harmony.



The event was organized by the Non-Governmental Organization "Sylva-World for Development and the Protection of Forests and the Environment", in Casablanca (Morocco), in close collaboration with IUFRO. It counted on the organizational support of the University Hassan II – Ain Shock, Casablanca; the Urban Community Council of Casablanca city, and the Regional Council of Tourism in Casablanca.

The SWC2010 Conference Programme with details of the speakers and the titles of oral and poster presentations can be found at the conference website:

<http://www.sylvamonde.110mb.com/welcome.htm>

Selected papers will be published in specialized reviews.

The Conference was promoted, among others, by:
IUFRO 4.02.01, 8.00.00, 7.01.00, 1.00.00 and IUFRO Task Force on Forests and Human Health

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*Photo (Fettah): Conference Opening Session
From left to right: The Representative of the Wali of the Big Casablanca; Pr. Mohamed Barkaoui, President of Hassan II University - Ain Shock, Casablanca; Mr. Mostafa Mosleh, representative of the Moroccan Forest Department; Pr. Mohammed Ellatifi, Member, IUFRO Board, President of Sylva-World, and Conference Chair.*