

## Asia and the Pacific Workshop – Multinational and Transboundary Conservation of Valuable and Endangered Forest Tree Species

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In Southeast Asia and South Asia there are many tree species which are very valuable resources for local people as well as international trade. Many of these tree species like *Aquilaria crassna*, *Pterocarpus santalinus*, *Dalbergia cochinchinensis*, *Santalum album* and *Hopea hainanensis* are becoming rare and endangered. Although many efforts have been made to conserve and protect these valuable trees, rapid economic development in most countries has reduced the natural habitats of these species, threatening their existence in these countries.

In addition, there are other multinational transboundary problems such as natural disasters like typhoons and sand storms that sweep across several countries, as well as the spread of pests and diseases across boundaries. As countries in this region are developing very rapidly, such problems will become increasingly serious and will further threaten the very existence of forests and human wellbeing in the region.

A number of countries in the region have initiated some bilateral or multilateral collaboration on various aspects including conservation and efficient utilization of some valuable tree species common to these countries. There are also networks such as the Asia Pacific Forest Genetic Resources Programme (APFORGEN), a network of 14 countries which was launched in 2003 with a primary objective of enhancing the technical and scientific cooperation, training and information exchange in conservation and management of forest genetic resources among countries in the region.

Over 60 forestry researchers and academicians from 12 Asian countries participated in a workshop to share and exchange experiences and information on conservation of several valuable and threatened forest tree species common among countries in the region. The three-day workshop, an initiative of the IUFRO, was organized by the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) in technical collaboration with the Research Institute of Tropical Forestry, Chinese Academy of Forestry (RITF-CAF) of China, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and the Korea Forest Research Institute (KFRI).

At the workshop, an interesting and interactive panel discussion looked at the prospect and challenges of *Strengthening Multinational and Traditional Conservation of Valuable and Endangered Forest Tree Species*.

### Issues discussed:

Multinational collaboration on conservation should not be limited to woody species, but should also include all other plant species, such as ferns, medicinal plants and mycorrhiza.



Participants during visit to an experimental station.  
Photo courtesy of Ma Harbin, RITF

Strengthening and further promoting utilization would be the best way to conserve valuable and endangered forest tree species. Increased utilization would encourage establishing plantations for multiple purposes.

*Ex-situ* conservation should pay more attention to beneficial symbiotic microorganism application, e.g., mycorrhizal fungus, *Frankia rhizobium*, and so on, which would be the precondition of survival for some valuable and endangered tree species, particularly on new planting sites.

Appending resolution of rehabilitation, protection, conservation of forest species and its habitat in a complete programme will gain attention to address the vulnerable and endangered tree species.

Priority to the conservation of the whole habitat, not just the individual endangered species.

Conservation is effective when the biological diversity and important genetic information are addressed; genetic information helps to develop conservation strategies while geographical information addresses the transboundary diversity.

Conservation efforts need good political will and real support from decision makers, scientists therefore should have good communication strategies to ensure that the decision makers have a good understanding of the critical issues and the impacts of their decisions in the conservation efforts.

How to make conservation attractive? Conservation has to be combined with utilization to benefit and be attractive to the communities.

Multinational and transboundary collaboration should include exchange of planting materials which then would save valuable resources for other uses.

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