**IUFRO Meeting Report**

**5th International Congress on Planted Forests, Nairobi, Kenya, 7-10 November**

With a world population projected to reach 9.8 billion in 2050 – an increase of nearly 30 percent from today’s 7.6 billion – needs for food, fuel, fiber and other bio-based products and services will rise sharply. Demand for forest-based biomass will increase, driven by construction and packaging, and wood fuel will remain the main energy source for many households in emerging economies.

At the same time, climate change, ecosystem degradation and their impacts call for deep changes in our global production and consumption patterns. Societies are engaging in the decarbonization of their economies and the restoration of their environment – with a prominent role for nature-based solutions.

**Planted forests are an essential nature-based solution to meet growing needs in wood products, restore forest ecosystems, and mitigate climate change.**

Under this title, 130 participants from 35 countries came together in Nairobi for the [**5th International Congress on Planted Forests (ICPF)**](https://www.plantedforests.org/icpf-2023/)**,** discussing global challenges and opportunities of planted forests. The ICPF is a global forum focused on planted forests held under the auspices of the IUFRO task force on *resilient planted forests serving society and the bioeconomy*, an inclusive expert group bringing together leading global scientists, private sector organizations, NGOs and IGOs. The 5th ICPF was the first to be held in Africa and was co-organized by the Institut Européen de la Forêt Cultivée (IEFC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), the TreeDivNet network, the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), and the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry of Kenya.

The 5th ICPF emphasized the global significance of planted forests. The presentations and discussions covered various topics, including business models, governance, and innovative practices for sustainable forest management. Key takeaways include the importance of knowledge exchange, challenges related to value chain improvement and financing, and the positive perception of planted forests as tools for ecosystem restoration. The livestreamed concluding session summarized the congress outcomes and is [available on Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkC6NvJIVd8&ab_channel=CIFOR-ICRAF). During this session, FAO’s Unasylva #254 [“Towards more resilient and diverse planted forests’’](https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=cc8584en) was launched.

In the closing, high-level speeches from the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Kenya, the CEO of CIFOR-ICRAF and the FAO Kenya Representative highlighted commitment to support initiatives like Kenya's 15 billion tree campaign and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.

The congress was enriched by two FAO-led events. During the pre-event on ‘[’Unlocking finance for sustainable and inclusive wood value chains](https://www.fao.org/forest-farm-facility/news-and-events/news-detail/en/c/1661552/)’’, presentations and discussions covered three key segments of wood value chains: (1) Developing end-markets for sustainable wood – the market for timber in the construction sector; (2) Processing wood for value addition, efficiency, and as an incentive to expand forest areas; and (3) Producing wood in a sustainable, responsible and inclusive way, with a special focus on the role of smallholder forest and farm producers. The event was attended by around 80 participants and was co-organized by FAO, ICRAF, the Swedish Embassy, Gatsby Africa, KFS and KEFRI.

In addition, the [Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa](https://www.fao.org/forestry/fisna/en/) (FISNA), held a side event titled “**Enhancing forest resilience to invasive species and climate change impacts - *tools for early warning***”, bringing together 15 focal points and members from 12 countries in the region to discuss the status of the health of forests in sub-Saharan Africa and share knowledge on the challenges and benefits associated with utilizing surveillance systems for forest health.

**Further information:**

**ICPF website**: https://www.plantedforests.org/icpf-2023/

**ICPF concluding session recording:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkC6NvJIVd8&ab\_channel=CIFOR-ICRAF

**Unasylva #254 ‘’Towards more diverse and resilient planted forests’’**: https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=cc8584en

**FISNA:** https://www.fao.org/forestry/fisna/en/

**Unlocking finance for sustainable and inclusive wood value chains:** https://www.fao.org/forest-farm-facility/news-and-events/news-detail/en/c/1661552/