



Presentation of the International Forestry Students' Association – IFSA

Introduction:

The International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) is the only global network for forestry students. It unites approximately 3000 students in 61 member associations (called local committees) from 42 countries.

The mission of IFSA is to be a platform for forestry students to enrich their formal education and to promote cultural understanding by encouraging collaboration with international partners' organizations, practical experiences and a wider, more global perspective. Through its network, IFSA promotes student meetings, enables participation in scientific debates and supports the involvement of youth in international forest and environmental policy, as well as in decision making processes.

A word about global representation:

60% of the IFSA Local committees are European but each year IFSA is becoming increasingly active in countries outside Europe and strives to develop more activities outside this continent. The recent involvement of Latin Americans is a great example. IFSA is always trying to improve its communication and invites students from all parts of the world to join the network and thus enrich its activities by multicultural participation.

History of IFSA and Forestry Education:

One of the goals of IFSA is to "Encourage improvements in Higher Education internationally to the benefit of all students". The involvement of the association in this topic dates back to November 1995 when IFSA in collaboration with the International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences (IAAS) made a questionnaire on Higher Education. Then for the period 1996 - 2001 IFSA acquired the status of Collective Consultation member for the debates on Higher Education organized by UNESCO. Each year from 1998 to 2000 IFSA also participated actively to the IUFRO group 6.15.00 discussions about forestry education.

In 2004-2005 IFSA was involved in the project initiated by IPFE called "International Education for Foresters in Non-Timber Forest Products" by encouraging students to participate in this course.

In 2007, a representative of IFSA was present during the 1st IPFE Workshop in Nairobi and contributed to involve more and more the association in the partnership. IFSA is now member of IPFE; a representative was also present during the sessions about Forestry Education of the CONFLAT (Latin American Forestry Congress) in Venezuela in April 2008.

IFSA is currently making a global survey via a questionnaire on Forestry education. The main objective of this action is to make a worldwide database available online. The document is downloadable on the [IFSA website](#) and all answers are still welcome.

Perspectives for the future are quite promising. In collaboration with the Latin American Forestry Students' Association (ALECIF), IFSA would like to organize a session on Forestry Education during the World Forestry Congress 2009 where all people interested on the subject will be invited.

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