

COFO 23

World Forest Week

18th - 22nd of July 2016, Rome, Italy

IFSA Delegation Report

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Background of conference

The Committee on Forestry (COFO) meeting is held biennially at the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy with the explicit goal of engaging senior government officials and other relevant stakeholders in dialogue to identify the emerging policy and technical issues in forestry. Following 2015, a globally significant year in forestry and climate change talks with the official agreement and adoption of 17 new Sustainable development Goals, COFO 23 aimed to uncover how the themes of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) can meaningfully contribute to the achievement of these goals.

The outcomes of the discussions directly inform the action to be taken by the FAO and participating government bodies. Between July 18- 22nd 2016 the 23rd iteration of the COFO was held under the theme

“Shaping a new agenda for Forests “

IFSA participated in the 23rd session of FAO's Committee on Forestry (COFO 23) event in its capacity as the focal point for global forestry students, and as an observing member of FAO. This year COFO was jointly held with the 5th world forest week.

IFSA sent a strong delegation of 12 participants from 7 different countries to attend COFO.

For more information visit: www.fao.org/about/meetings/cofo/en/



IFSA participation



- 12 delegates from 7 nationalities (Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Perú, Serbia, South Africa)
- IFSA was the only participating youth delegation
- IFSA member , **Christian Perez Curi** participated in a video interview



Core and daily agendas

Beside the main plenary discussions, where the new agenda of FAO was being shaped, diverse side events were organized. The organizing institutions invited various important speakers, to present up-to-date research results or discuss varying political processes within different countries.

Overall goals of those events are learning from different regions, organisations, institutions, and social networks experiences. The side events presented key output on forest development issues.

List of World Forest Week Side Events

18. July 2016 - Day 1

- FAO-Korea Joint Side Event on Integrated Policy for Forests, Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods
- Land Use Dialogue (LUD)
- The Great Green Wall: Africa's Response to Climate Change and Zero Hunger

19. July 2016 - Day 2

- Developments of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as a forest certification scheme
- Forests and Climate Change Adaptation: Putting Plans into Action
- Strengthening the Knowledge to Support National Forest Assessments: Introducing two new FAO publications
- The First Global Drylands Assessment Preliminary Findings & Way Forward
- Forests and development: Adding value to forests as an economic and social development tool - Italian experiences
- Forest Europe - A new Work Programme, looking ahead
- Forests and Wood fuel in Emergency Situations
- Implementing Tenure Reforms in Forestry: Progress and Prospects
- Towards REDD+ Implementation
- Criteria and indicators: mobilizing action for sustainable forest management and the SDGs
- COFO23 Reception

20. July 2016 - Day 3

- Forest and Landscape Restoration regional initiatives: Toward the regionalization of the Bonn Challenge
- Urban Forests for Sustainable Cities
- Unfinished agendas for forests and climate change: Local communities and smallholders and their organizations as the enabling actors to address climate change
- Challenges and opportunities for small scale forest enterprise development in Africa



- Integrating forests and wood products in climate change strategies
- Marginal and peripheral forests – A key genetic resource for enhancing the resilience of European forests to global change
- REDD+ and FLEGT: Working together to strengthen forest governance and climate change mitigation
- Strengthening the contribution of temperate and boreal forests to stable climate and food security
- The 2030 Agenda: a unique opportunity for engaging forestry in constructive dialogue with agriculture?
- Korean Night
- The resilience of Mediterranean forests to climate change

21. July 2016 - Day 4

- GFS: Toward the World Forest Open Data Partnership
- Gender and Forestry: Bridging research and practice
- Greening the Charcoal Value Chain
- Slovakia Film Event
- The innovative multi-stakeholder approach for low-carbon economic development in Brazil – The case of the Brazilian Coalition on Climate, Forests and Agriculture
- Roundtable on "Why bioeconomy matters to FAO? Examples of FAO cross-sectoral support to bioeconomy"
- Launch of a new book entitled "La gestion inclusive des forêts d'Afrique centrale. Passer de la participation au partage des pouvoirs"

22. July 2016 - Day 5

- Strategy and an Action Plan on Forest and Landscape Restoration for the Asia-Pacific region
- Sustainable Financing for Forest & Landscape Restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality
- Social protection for building resilience of forest dependent people

Plenary

The COFO meeting started on the 18th of July 2016. The first plenary session was chaired by the conference chairperson; Mr Bharrat Jagdeo. The plenary session started with a general appreciation of the specific mentioning and recognition of the forest sector in the SDGs and Paris climate agreement. These two international agreements were recognised as key to shaping future forest developmental agendas. This was followed by the afternoon session on high level dialogue on forest and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The key output from this session was on the need for a co-ordinated and improved country-led lobby to increase the share of funds to be allocated to the forest sector from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Given the fact the Paris agreement will enter its operationalisation phase in 2016; national high level delegate present were encouraged to lobby their government so as to use the forthcoming cop 22 in Morocco to ensure substantial allocation fund to the forest sector.





Side events highlights

The 2030 Agenda: a unique opportunity for engaging Forestry in constructive dialogue with agriculture?

Date: Wednesday 20, July 2016 in the Ethiopian Room
Delegate: Khalil Walji

An emerging theme throughout COFO 23 was discussion around the historical idea of competition and trade-offs existing between forestry and agriculture. This notion was somewhat dispelled in the 2016 State of World's Forestry Report (SOFO) <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofo/2016/en/>, which highlighted countries who successfully improved food security and increased agricultural productivity while also halting or reversing deforestation rates. Under the traditional paradigm agriculture and forestry are seen as opposing forces, competing for land, resources and ultimately for space at the international table. But do they have to be? In order to make any meaningful progress in achieving the SDG's these two traditionally opposing themes need to begin finding common ground and exploring opportunities for synergies as well as trade-offs.

This session aimed to open up the dialogue between forestry and agriculture by featuring reflections from 3 countries; Kenya, India and Honduras who shared their countries various successes and failures in agroforestry and smallholder agriculture. This session highlighted where we can be finding win- win solutions.

India spoke to theme of land tenure rights for their Indigenous communities, calling for the need for rights move beyond de facto land rights to verbal and written land tenure in order to improve the responsibility and ultimately land stewardship of India's forests.



Honduras highlighted various agroforestry systems which aim to capitalize on nature's natural order by planting shade tolerant crop species under tree cover. Trees provide shade but are also pruned and mulched over the soil increasing the system's resilience to drought and stabilizing the steep slopes common to smallholder agricultural plots in the region.

To conclude a call for the inclusion of more stakeholders in the process besides forestry and agriculture was made, including private organizations and banks for increasing funding opportunities. There was also a call for the inclusion of more scientists and educators.

As we move into these more integrated systems of agriculture and forestry there is a need for clearly known and quantified numbers of these ecosystem benefits especially when looking for green funding and when looking to incentivize other services besides crop production. Really quantifying these benefits will increase trust and ultimately will improve adoption of these new integrated systems.

International Film Festival AGROFILM at COFO

Date: Thursday 21, July 2016 - Austrian Room

Delegate: Marko Kelemer, Simon Abele

Slovakia as the current Presidency of the Council of the European Union has organized a side event where they promoted an International Film Festival AGROFILM. The motto "Bread and Peace to the People" has objective to inform professionals as well as the nonprofessional public by audio-visual medium about the latest findings of science, and nutrition in rural areas, to rural people, about conservation of natural resources and the improvement of quality of life. The side event commenced with an introductory speech of MS. Marieta Okenkova, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to FAO and former president of AGROFILM followed by projection of the Slovak documentary "DRAININGS OF SOILS = CLIMATE CHANGE". This documentary was focused on soil degradation.

The video highlighted the long history of forestry and agricultures impact on soil degradation. The use of heavy machinery to cultivate fields has lead to compaction and the loss of organic matter. This continuous cropping system leads a vicious cycle of soil loss and degradation through various abiotic and biotic channels.

As the upper layers of soil lose their capacity to infiltrate water they become an impermeable surface likely becoming a key element for developing floods and landslides. The film also highlighted the increased eutrophication of water ways caused through the runoff of agricultural fertilizer. This is further exacerbated by soil losing its capacity to retain nutrients in its pores and aggregates. The film concluded by highlighting easy way to maintain healthy soils.



Integrating forests and wood products in climate change strategies

Date: Wednesday 20, July 2016 - Sheik Zayed Centre

Delegate: Martin Schlaffer

The potential contribution of forests and wood products becomes very relevant in light of the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other global commitments. At this side event participants got deeper insights about the potential contributions from the forest sector to mitigation and transition to a low carbon economy. Very interesting and detailed technical presentations from Jenny Wong (IPCC) or Sebastian Rüter highlighted the forest sector mitigation options under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Finally the emerging opportunities for enhancing the forest sector contributions to mitigation after COP 21 and policy approaches and instruments for optimizing forest sector mitigation potential in climate change strategies were discussed by presenters and participants.

Moreover, the Forestry Paper 'Forestry for a Low-Carbon Future: Integrating Forests and Wood Products in Climate Change Strategies' was launched at this side event as well by Rene Castro-Salazar and Thelma Krug.

Speakers of the event include Rene Castro-Salazar, Thelma Krug, Thais Linhares-Juvenal, Jenny Wong, Maria Sanz-Sanchez, Sebastian Rüter and Suzana Kahn-Ribeiro.

<http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/45619457-bbf1-4fda-964b-d24dcdefbadf/>

<http://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/4172/icode/>

REDD + and FLEGT: Working together to strengthen forest governance and climate change mitigation

Delegate: Joe Hall

The United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries supports the nationally led REDD+ processes to promote the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities, in national and international REDD+ implementation. The Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) is the EU's Action Plan to reduce illegal logging by strengthening sustainable and legal forest management, improving governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber. There are similar objectives in the two processes in fostering sustainable forest management and improving forest governance whilst contributing to climate change mitigation. Regionally however, the social,



environmental and economic context shapes the implementation of these two frameworks.

Forestry Representatives from Honduras, Vietnam and the Ivory Coast as well as private sector stakeholders comprised the panel for discussion on the collaborative efforts of both programmes. Commonalities in these discussions included a call for; improved forest governance and FAO assistance in developing this, greater incorporation of the needs of indigenous people in forest governance and recognition of the importance of their traditional forest management on custodial lands and; improved training and compliance strategies for the certification of timber products. The discussion however highlighted a lack of broader understanding of the two programs definitions and objectives at the level of the developing countries in which they've been implemented. Chip Barber of the World Resources Institute attributed much of this confusion to continual 'layering' of further considerations to the two already complex programmes.



Delegate feedback

Martin: "Most negotiations and presentations at COFO were held in a personal, inviting and open atmosphere. Nevertheless, to find the locations of some side events, the building appeared quite confusing and the provided map sometimes a bit unclear. Luckily some of our helpful IFSA delegation knew the place already very well. However great opportunity to get more insights in the FAO and to experience - apart from the elongation but thrilling



negotiations - a load of stunning forest related presentations, discussions and even recently launched publications, projects and movies.”

Eva: “COFO is one of the seldom conferences that allow IFSA delegates to attend every session and have the chance to comment on statements and raise questions to the panel. The IFSA delegation became a team soon after meeting the first time and in the end we all became friends. This made the organisation really easy as one could rely on each other and we could benefit the most from personal strength each delegate brought.”

Chidiebere: “This COFO has been a worthwhile enriching experience for me. I am thrilled to experience the art and practice of international negotiation in forest policy issues. The knowledge and experience gained will be vital for my work in regional forest development issues in Africa.”

Lena: “COFO is a great opportunity to learn more about FAO and current forest policy processes. As IFSA student you have the chance to participate in plenary sessions, listen to stakeholder dialogues and discuss with professions. Being part of an IFSA delegation will furthermore strengthen your team spirit and you will get to know to many inspiring IFSA students.”

Marko: COFO is one of the most special events where students of IFSA can see how discussion was held on professional level. This is great opportunity to learn and to have first-hand information from member countries of UN and organizations that has observer status. You can see how negotiations are done in person which is really exciting. At this event you can make lot of contacts and you can meet members of delegations from another Countries and organizations. One of the important things is that you have the



Opportunity to develop your own opinions about Forests and Forestry in the World, and also to spread in your local level opinions of the other parties that they have on current topics.

Outcomes, and recommendations for future IFSA delegations and involvement

IFSA participation in high level events and conferences is strengthened by the diversity of our delegates who come from various disciplines and backgrounds. This allows us various lenses by which to experience and contribute to events such as COFO. Our diversity and our distance also increase the complexity of organizing pre conference meetings and organisations to give us a clear strategy and plan. Moving forward we recommend delegations meet virtually within a reasonable time frame to outline interests and organize which specific side events to attend. This will allow for good planning and distribution of our members during the event and allow for more succinct and specific feedback to IFSA World members through our reports.

IFSA Closing Statement:

“Society prospers when old men and women plant trees under whose shade they may never sit”, says an ancient Greek proverb. We desire to be the young men and women who share this foresight. IFSA was represented by 12 students from all over the world and thus represented youth as well. Unfortunately, IFSA was the only youth organization present at COFO23 although youth forms about one third of the world’s population.

In the Durban Declaration of the World Forestry Congress 2015, all participants agreed together to increase youth involvement at international processes and on more opportunities for youth employment. Together, the goals of the ambitious 2030 agenda are attainable. But for that youth needs to be meaningfully consulted in respect to our future, needs greater participation in meetings such as COFO, needs support for training and experiential opportunities and needs increase investment in forestry education. It is the time for action now and a last quote from the Durban Declaration should summarize all these needs: “The enthusiasm of youth for creating a better world should become a



constant source of inspiration and stimulus for innovation, their call for action should be supported through multi stakeholder participation, engaging youth and attracting ever larger numbers to the forest sector.”

Appendix 1: List of Delegates

List of delegates

1. Simon Abele, Technische Universität München, Germany
2. Isabel Engel, Technische Universität München, Germany
3. Joe Hall, University of Melbourne , Australia
4. Marko Kelember, University of Belgrade Faculty of Forestry, Serbia
5. Magdalena (Lena) Lackner, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Austria
6. Chidiebere Ofoegbu, United Nations University, Germany
7. Eva von Schönebeck, Technische Universität München, Germany
8. Martin Schlaffer, BOKU, Austria
9. Melanie Schulte, Technische Universität München, Germany
10. Valeria Fernanda Orsi Rojas, Colegio Santa Rosa, Peru
11. Christian Perez Curi, Universidad Nacional Amazonica de Madre de Dios, Peru
12. Khalil Walji, University of British Columbia, Canada