



Halting deforestation Youth takes the stage!



Introduction

The [Collaborative Partnership on Forests](#) organised a week-long conference on *Working across Sectors to Halt Deforestation and Increase Forest Area*.

32 Students and 35 young professionals joined the youth delegation at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome. They had an action packed week, creating a short course, conducting interviews and ensuring key messages were heard outside of the plenary halls.

The youth delegation was organised by members of the [International Forestry Students' Association \(IFSA\)](#), to facilitate live interaction of young people with professionals across sectors to join hands in the fight against deforestation.

Plenary sessions and side events

The plenaries featured some gripping speeches from a diverse set of speakers representing agroforestry, climate change and youth. Sectors that need to be at the fore front if we have any realistic shot at halting deforestation.

Strong messages highlighting urgency and calls to action were common. One message from the floor stated **'I don't want to**

come back here in 10 years, I want this to be the last conference on halting deforestation!'

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Youth Capacity Development

A one-day **capacity development workshop** was held by the youth delegation, where breakout groups facilitated brainstorming and ideas on how to target innovative solutions on the wicked problem of deforestation.

Different techniques were employed to unleash the creativity from this group of **diverse and talented young people**. With the help of young-minded professionals such as Alexander Buck (IUFRO), Jeffrey Campbell (FAO) and Cora van Oosten (Wageningen University), the delegation debated the importance of an integrated landscape approach and its utility in combatting deforestation and forest degradation.

In a follow up session, Taylor Tondelli (FAO) and Cecile Njebet (Major Group Women) facilitated a workshop on mainstreaming gender in resource management.

A third and final session of the workshop used design thinking to come up with projects that will feed directly into the work plan 2018-2020 of the [United Nations Forum on Forests \(UNFF\)](#).

Youth training "Shaking coconut tree course"

Throughout the duration of the conference, teams of young delegates made a **day-by-day overview** of the concepts that were discussed and the most important outcomes in an online short course.

IFSA members designed and implemented this new way of creating exposure for a global problem. The course creates a **tangible link** between the experts at **the conference and the everyday people** that live with the consequences of the disappearing forests all over the world.

Such an innovative method opens up the conversation to a broader audience, and to people who wish to **learn about deforestation**. It also increases the accountability to the decision makers at the conference while building the capacity of people that have a stake in the problem and the solutions.

The [short course](#) is available on the IFSA website.

"Listen to the trees, to the forest, to the people in the forest: they are dancing" (J. Campbell)

"We need to move from the global need to the personal motivation" (C. Figures)