



## MESSAGE FROM THE XIII WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS TO THE COP 15 OF THE UNFCCC

The organizers of the 13<sup>th</sup> World Forestry Congress, convened in Argentina in October 2009, have prepared this message on climate change and forests in a broad participatory process before and during the Congress. Firstly, the 13<sup>th</sup> World Forestry Congress notes with concern the impacts of climate change on forests and strongly emphasizes the important role forests play in climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as the need for forest-dependent people and forest ecosystems to adapt to this challenge.

Forests are more than carbon. They harbor two thirds of all land-based biodiversity, and generate critical ecosystem goods and services such as water, food, and income from over 5000 commercial forest products. Forests sustain the cultural and spiritual identity of billions of people, foremost among them the indigenous peoples and local communities.

The 13<sup>th</sup> WFC calls for urgent action and endorses the main messages of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests' Strategic Framework for Forests and Climate Change<sup>1</sup>, of its Expert Panel on Adaptation of Forests to Climate Change<sup>2</sup>, and of The Forests Dialogue's Statement on Forests and Climate Change<sup>3</sup>, in particular the following:

- Forests contribute positively to the global carbon balance. Maintaining high carbon stocks by reducing deforestation and forest degradation and promoting the sustainable management of all types of forests, including the conservation of biodiversity, forest protection and restoration, should be amongst the world's highest priorities for the forestry sector;
- Sustainable forest management<sup>4</sup> provides an effective framework for forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- For forests to fully achieve their potential in addressing the challenges of climate change, forest governance should be improved, financing and capacity building should be enhanced, and processes to empower disenfranchised people, including indigenous peoples and other forest dependent communities, be strengthened;
- Sustainably harvested forest products and wood fuels can reduce greenhouse gas emissions if they substitute neutral or low emission, renewable materials for high-emission materials;
- Even if adaptation measures are fully implemented, climate change would in the long run exceed the adaptive capacity of many forests and therefore forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation measures should proceed concurrently;
- Inter-sectoral collaboration, strengthening forest governance, establishing positive economic incentives, and improving sustainable livelihoods of the poor are essential for reducing deforestation and forest degradation;
- Accurate forest monitoring and assessment help inform decision-making and should be strengthened in a coordinated and transparent manner; and
- Actions on climate change mitigation and adaptation in forestry would benefit from a more active engagement of forestry professionals.

The 13<sup>th</sup> WFC stresses the need to reduce poverty as a driver of deforestation and to safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples and forest-dependent communities, and recognizes the important roles that the private sector and civil society play in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Framework for forests and climate change: A proposal by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests for a coordinated forest sector response to climate change; FAO, Rome, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Adaptation of Forests and People to Climate Change – A Global Assessment Report. IUFRO World Series 22, Vienna, 2009. [www.iufro.org/science/gfep/](http://www.iufro.org/science/gfep/)

<sup>3</sup> The Forests Dialogue, Statement on forests and climate change, New Haven, 2008. [www.theforestdialogue.org/climate.html](http://www.theforestdialogue.org/climate.html)

<sup>4</sup> As recognized by the United Nations Forum on Forests and other major international fora, SFM aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental value of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations.



XIII Congreso Forestal Mundial  
XIII World Forestry Congress  
XIII Congrès forestier mondial  
**Buenos Aires | Argentina**  
18-23 de octubre de 2009

The 13<sup>th</sup> WFC supports the inclusion of REDD+ in the agreement on long-term cooperative action under UNFCCC, including enhanced incentives for conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries; and calls for further support for adaptation in the forest sector.

Buenos Aires, 23.10.2009