



Forests key pillars of the architecture of sustainable development

Opening of discussions at the XIII World Forestry Congress



From left to right: Julián Domínguez, Leopoldo Montes, Homero Bibiloni, Jan Heino

Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Opening Ceremony of the XIII World Forestry Congress (WFC) was kicked off by a record amount of 5,200 participants in Buenos Aires on Sunday 18 October. **Julián Domínguez, the newly appointed Argentine Minister of Agriculture**, declared the XIII WFC officially open reinforcing FAO's role as technical advisor to governments. Speakers at the Opening Ceremony used their opportunity to voice the most pressing concerns of the global forestry community.

"Forests and trees contribute to food security, to national and rural development and to poverty reduction. As economic recovery takes hold, forestry will have a positive role to play, particularly in creating employment and in rebuilding the natural resource base", remarked **FAO's Director-General Jacques Diouf**.

At the Opening Session on Monday 19 October, a number of government representatives encouraged participants from all over the world to strengthen the voice of the forestry community especially in the international climate change debate. Additional topics receiving strong attention in the Congress are biodiversity, bioenergy and food security.

"Let us all rise to the challenge to reverse the deforestation trend" said **FAO Assistant Director-General Jan Heino**, addressing the plenary session. In this respect, Mr Heino emphasized the need

to stimulate national development by reducing poverty, by improving governance and by making forestry part of wider strategies for economic and social policies.

Thomas Tidwell, Chief of the United States Forest Service remarked: "Our understanding has grown through our partnerships. We now understand all the benefits that people get from the forests".

Also attuned to the importance of strengthening cooperation was the speech delivered by **Don Koo Lee, President of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO)**: "Over the past 60 years, forests and forestry have greatly contributed to people and society due to the strong partnerships such as the one between IUFRO and FAO".

Victor Maslyakov, Deputy Chief of the Russian Federation, commented: "Nowadays, Russian forestry has a strong desire to participate in international cooperation, over a broader area and as a sign of this we are here at the XIII World Forestry Congress".

Issueing a call for collaboration and harmony with nature, **indigenous leader Euclides Macuxi Pereira** said: "Native peoples have shown that it is possible to coexist with nature without having to destroy it".

The Opening Ceremony held on Monday also featured a video-message from **His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales**, who set up his Prince's Rainforests Project in 2007 in order to help find a solution to the problem of tropical deforestation.

"There is no economic resilience unless underpinned by ecosystem resilience" said **Tim Rollinson, Director General of the UK Forestry Commission** who on behalf of **Justin Mundy the Director of the Prince's Rainforests Project**, described the opportunity presented by the Informal Working Group for Interim Finance for REDD. "Forestry provides a bridge between mitigation and adaptation and deserves to be considered as one of the key pillars of the architecture of sustainable development", he said.