



#### IN MEMORIAM

**Matti Palo**, founder of the research project World Forests, Society and Environment, died in a car accident in February 2014. He was the professor of forest economics and an active researcher in the Finnish Forest Research Institute (METLA), where he worked for about four decades, until his retirement in 2003. He is renowned for his work in the field of forest economics and international forest policy. He founded the World Forests, Society and Environment (WFSE) project in 1996 as a joint initiative with METLA, the European Forest Institute (EFI), and the United Nations University (UNU). Palo was the director of WFSE until 2001, when WFSE became a special project of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

Under his leadership, WFSE produced five books and achieved wide international recognition. The current IUFRO-WFSE builds on the foundation he laid. Palo emphasised the need to develop innovative research, and to focus particular attention on the intricate relations between forests, society, and the environment. He also saw the need to address these issues from a broad, interdisciplinary perspective. Palo participated actively in international scientific and policy fora and discussions and was among the pioneers in modelling the issues related to deforestation in the tropics. Always full of energy and innovative ideas, he was passionate about his work. Palo had a strong international orientation throughout his career. He served as a professor of forest economics at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University KVL, Copenhagen, Denmark, and lectured about forest economics, international forest development, and environmental politics at the University of Helsinki and the University of Eastern Finland, where he was an adjunct professor. In Costa Rica, he taught at CATIE (Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center) and the United Nations University for Peace. During his long career, he also worked as a consultant for FAO in Asia and Africa and as a visiting professor at Seoul National University in South Korea. Palo continued to work actively in international forest policy research after retirement, until the last day.

As WFSE colleagues of Matti Palo, we express our profound sense of loss at his passing and our recognition of and lasting gratitude for his invaluable contributions to forest research, and to our project.

*Gerardo Mery, Pia Katila, and Sinikka Västilä*