

**IUFRO Spotlight** is an initiative of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. Its aim is to introduce, in a timely fashion, significant findings in forest research from IUFRO officeholders and member organizations to a worldwide network of decision makers, policy makers and researchers.

IUFRO will encapsulate, and distribute in plain language, brief, topical and policy-relevant highlights of those findings, along with information on where/how to access the full documents. The **IUFRO Spotlight** findings will be distributed in a periodic series of emails as well as blog postings.

## Planted Forests' Roles: Different Strokes for Different Oaks

*IUFRO Spotlight #15 / September 2013*



*Maritime pine in its early stages of plantation (photo by Stephanie Hayes, EFIATLANTIC)*

Planted forests are vital but vulnerable resources that can contribute in a sustainable fashion to some of humanity's most pressing needs – poverty alleviation, food security, renewable energy, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and biodiversity conservation – as well as the preservation of natural forests.

These are among the findings in the recently published Summary Report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Planted Forests. It is based on outcomes from three scientific workshops and a plenary meeting that took place earlier this year.

Thirty-three countries have greater than 1 million hectares of planted forest area. Together these countries comprise 90% of the world's 264 million hectares of planted forest which, in turn, equals almost 7% of the total global forest area. The report takes into account key research findings from Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, Latin America and North America related to vulnerability, viability and governance of planted forests.

It notes the increasing and vital role of planted forests and trees as supporters of those key needs mentioned above; the planted forests' role in providing industrial wood at a global level; and also stresses the increasing vulnerability of this strategic resource in changing climates.

For policy makers and forest managers, the report is significant for its emphasis on the need for good governance in rural areas. In fact, the report suggests that the phrase "good forest governance" should be replaced, with "good governance of rural areas" since good governance is expected to be comprehensive and inclusive, integrating the demands and priorities of all types of land-users at a landscape level.

The report was undertaken in recognition of the need to secure forest ecosystem services and to adapt forest productions systems – such as planted forests – in the face of worldwide changes, including climate change.

Among its highlights, the report notes that, in terms of poverty alleviation and food security, in many developing countries smallholders and farmers own planted forests and depend on them for their livelihoods. In addition, it says, a large number of people – especially women – gain employment and income from nursery operations, land preparation, plantation establishment, stand management and maintenance and from wood-based industries.

It also points out that wood fuels are the most important energy source and the most important forest product for many developing countries, while in industrialized countries using wood and woody biomass as a renewable energy resource is becoming increasingly popular and is likely to continue its upward trend as a result of high prices for fossil fuel alternatives.

The Congress report strongly emphasized that planted forests should not supplant natural forests, nor should they adversely affect the livelihoods of forest-dependent or indigenous peoples, but should rather complement the roles of natural forests while minimizing competitive effects.

Increased efforts to strengthen commitments to research and development – seen as critical to the sustainable management of planted forests – were called for in the congress report.

The research needs identified came from fields as various as:

- governance, economics, trade and markets;
- vulnerability and risk management;
- ecosystem services and landscape restoration; and
- from cross-sectorial areas that ranged from poverty alleviation and rural development to climate change and monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions.

The full report is available at: [http://www.iufro.org/download/file/9880/1816/icpf13-summary-report\\_pdf/](http://www.iufro.org/download/file/9880/1816/icpf13-summary-report_pdf/) and [http://www.efiatlantic.efi.int/portal/events/past\\_events/2013/icpf/](http://www.efiatlantic.efi.int/portal/events/past_events/2013/icpf/)

The findings reported in *IUFRO Spotlight* are submitted by IUFRO officeholders and member organizations. IUFRO is pleased to highlight and circulate these findings to a broad audience but, in doing so, acts only as a conduit. The quality and accuracy of the reports are the responsibility of the member organization and the authors.

Suggestions for reports and findings that could be promoted through *IUFRO Spotlight* are encouraged. To be considered, reports should be fresh, have policy implications and be applicable to more than one country. If you would like to have a publication highlighted by *Spotlight*, contact: Gerda Wolfrum, IUFRO Communications Coordinator, wolfrum(at)iufro.org

The International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) is the only worldwide organization devoted to forest research and related sciences. Its members are research institutions, universities, and individual scientists as well as decision-making authorities and other stakeholders with a focus on forests and trees. Visit: <http://www.iufro.org/>