Foreword

This publication on forest rehabilitation and afforestation in West and Central Asia is the latest one in a series of books published within the framework of the “Keep Asia Green” Initiative. This initiative is a collaborative effort of leading forest research institutions in Asia supported by the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) through its Special Programme for Developing Countries and the ASEAN-Korea Environmental Cooperation Project (AKECOP). Generous financial support for the project has been provided by Yuhan Kimberly Ltd., a leading business concern based in the Republic of Korea involved in the production of high quality paper and hygiene products.

Over the last four years, forest specialists from the various sub-regions in Asia have worked together and compiled topical information on forest rehabilitation in each sub-region. The publications are intended to be a source of sound information for investors, policy-makers and the general public who are interested in the rehabilitation and restoration of forest ecosystems in the region. The work not only addresses major issues such as status of forests in Asia, causes of forest degradation, and past and current rehabilitation efforts and achievements but also critically analyses national capacities in forest rehabilitation, existing research and education programmes on forest rehabilitation, and past and future initiatives to strengthen forest rehabilitation efforts. This information is used to formulate recommendations for future policies and management strategies needed to support forest rehabilitation in the Asian region.

In the fourth and final phase of the Keep Asia Green Publication Project on West and Central Asia, forest rehabilitation issues in five countries of West and Central Asia have been addressed. The countries include Iran and Turkey in West Asia as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in Central Asia. The forests in this region represent a diverse array of forest landscapes ranging from coastal forests, wetlands and lowland forests in temperate zones to arid and semi-arid ecosystems as well as watershed areas in high mountain regions. Forest rehabilitation activities and programmes take place in the context of very different ecological and socio-economic situations and include afforestation on barren land in semi-arid areas, planting of trees and ground vegetation to combat desertification, rehabilitation of forests for flood prevention and protection against avalanches, replanting in burned forests, establishment of fast growing tree plantations, stand management and improvement of fruit tree forests, and the conservation of biological diversity covering a wide spectrum of ecosystems from lowland steppe to high mountain Spruce and Juniper forests.

Considerable experience with forest rehabilitation has been gained in West and Central Asia over the past decades resulting in significant progress in re-greening the environment. However, given the rapid economic development in the region, forests remain under tremendous pressure and require additional resources and expertise for their conservation, further expansion and sustainable management. Thus, this book may assist decision-makers, investors in forest rehabilitation, environmental advocacy groups as well as forestry professionals and educators to learn from available expertise and past experiences and thereby enhance their contribution to forest rehabilitation in the region.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the forest scientists in the different countries in West and Central Asia for sharing their knowledge and experiences, thus providing the foundation for compiling this book; to Yuhan Kimberly Ltd. for substantial financial support to this publication; to the staff of the IUFRO-SPDC Office at IUFRO...
Headquarters in Vienna, Austria (Mag. Margareta Khorchidi, Mag. Renate Prüller, and Mag. Eva Maria Schimpf) for language editing and basic text and cover page lay-out as well as Dr. Yeong Dae Park (Seoul National University) and Ms. Jin A Kim (IUFRO President’s Office) for workshop coordination and final production of the book. The efforts and contributions to this project are much appreciated and will beyond doubt contribute to the important work of keeping Asia green.

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