Farewell to SPDC Coordinator

Dr. Robert Szaro, who has served as SPDC Coordinator since August 1996, will be leaving us in June to return to the United States and the U.S. Forest Service where he has accepted the position of Assistant Director of the Pacific Northwest Research Station in Portland, Oregon.

It is especially difficult to find appropriate words to say upon the departure of a good friend and co-worker. Of course we are happy for Bob, Jane, his wife, and Matte, his son, as they return to their home country and enjoy the close proximity to their family. We also share Bob’s enthusiasm as he prepares to tackle the exciting challenges and opportunities offered by his new position. However, we shall certainly miss Bob’s presence, his dedication and valuable contributions to the SPDC and his enthusiasm and energy.

Bob’s 4-year tenure with the SPDC was one of distinction. Under his leadership the Programme enjoyed great success in pursuing strategic partnerships with donors and collaborators for fostering new projects and continuation of others. Some examples include:

- production of a “Handbook for Preparing and Writing Research Proposals”, in collaboration with Dr. Pat Reid and the Japanese ODA;
- initiation of a project, “Effects of Forest Health on Biodiversity with Emphasis on Air Pollution in the Carpathian Mountains”, which provides training and networking opportunities for scientists in Eastern Europe (funded by U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service);
- four BIO-REFOR Workshops, in collaboration with Dr. Kazuo Suzuki and the Japanese ODA;
- each year, 50-60 scientists from developing countries were provided with travel grants to attend IUFRO-sponsored meetings.
- in Africa, the SPDC markedly increased its support of the forest scientist community during Dr. Szaro’s tenure, culminating in the hiring of an SPDC Deputy Coordinator for Africa (funded by Danida) and the establishment in Africa of 5 nodes for the Global Forest Information Service, in partnership with FAO, SIDA and the EC.

Indeed, we are grateful for these excellent contributions and leadership of our Programme. However, the SPDC will not lose Bob Szaro completely - Bob will maintain some of his interest and involvement in several of these projects for a while longer, and will participate in the IUFRO Congress.

We in the SPDC and Secretariat have been pleased and honored to collaborate with Bob. His cheerful and affable personality has relieved even the most stressful phases of our work. We send him on to his new horizons with our best wishes, eternal gratitude and enduring friendship.

Dr. David Langor, Dr. Atse M. Yapi, Margareta Khorchidi, Eva-Maria Schimpf

---

"Determination, strong character, and professional qualifications are essential for being recognized in one’s field abroad. In his leadership of the SPDC Dr. Robert Szaro has made use of all these characteristics and has successfully initiated new developments, especially in the area of SPDC’s projects. Proudly Bob can reflect on his achievements when embarking on his new career. Success in one’s profession often goes hand in hand with positive developments of human relationships in one’s working environment - Bob has undoubtedly contributed markedly to the integration of SPDC, Secretariat and the Projects. Thank you Bob for your contributions and the best success for your future tasks and career!"

– Heinz Schmutzenhofer, IUFRO Secretary

"Many forest scientists and research institutions throughout Africa will keep wonderful memories of and deep affection for Bob, as a friend and a mentor, who has worked tirelessly toward forestry research capacity building on the continent. The many important training workshops he organized, his efforts for production and dissemination of information, as well as for financial support for forest scientists enabling them to attend international conferences and symposia will be always remembered in Africa!"

– Dr. Atse Yapi, Deputy Coordinator for Africa

---

Please note

With Dr. Szaro’s departure from IUFRO-SPDC the e-mail address szaro@forvie.ac.at will not be functional anymore!

For general inquiries, information requests, publications, please write from now on to: spdc@forvie.ac.at

If you have questions concerning our projects, please contact either the Acting Coordinator, Dr. David Langor, at langor@forvie.ac.at or Deputy Coordinator for Africa, Dr. Atse Yapi, at Atse.Yapi@fao.org.
SPDC News

Reflections from a Coordinator

I find it hard to believe that I have been in Vienna almost four years and my term in office has drawn to a close. Looking back it is hard to believe all that has happened over that four years. When I arrived, IUFRO-SPDC had just finished training manuals on “Planning and Managing Forestry Research.” On my departure we have just taken to press our new manual “Handbook for Preparing and Writing Research Proposals” and will introduce it at the Congress in Kuala Lumpur. So in a sense the Coordinator cycle for IUFRO-SPDC has come full circle.

In another sense IUFRO-SPDC has embarked on several new directions and has left behind many former activities. This has been a result of changing IUFRO priorities, changing funding priorities by our sponsors and technological development. We have recently had to discontinue our scientist assistance programme, not because we wanted to, but because it was no longer possible to attract resources for general purpose meeting support. Yet, we have been very successful in attracting funds for specific high-visibility meetings like the First Latin American IUFRO Congress and the International Conference on Sustainability Indicators.

Information sharing is one of our key activities and we are looking for the best ways to do so. In this era of electronic communications, the resources we used to pull together, publish, and mail the “Information Bulletin” was no longer practical. In its place we have added a six-page IUFRO-SPDC section in every issue of IUFRO News. We have also started a low cost textbook series with the first two volumes published and delivered. We look forward to working on a series of textbooks for Africa over the next few years. Our web site has evolved to include a much greater depth and breadth of content. Our publications are now available to everyone electronically. IUFRO-SPDC’s involvement in information sharing will only continue to grow in the future.

The approval of the GFIS-Africa project by the European Commission’s DG VIII is a great start to allow us to make this happen. Working with the IUFRO GFIS Task Force and its Coordinator Risto Päivinen has led to an expansion of IUFRO-SPDC’s abilities to globally share information. We are also developing a similar proposal for GFIS-Latin America.

IUFRO-SPDC’s record of accomplishments over the past four years is extremely impressive when looked at in total. But like any organization no one can do it alone. I have been privileged to work with extremely dedicated staff and colleagues over the years. I hesitate to mention names because the list is so long. I do wish to express my thanks to Wade Bowers, David Langor, and Atse Yapi who have worked closely with me at IUFRO-SPDC. Thanks to all those on the IUFRO Secretariat and IUFRO-SPDC staffs for their help and support.

IUFRO-SPDC’s approach has always been one of developing partnerships to meet the needs of developing country scientists. We have cooperated with many organizations, but I can not say enough about the close working relationships we have developed with FAO, the African Academy of Sciences, and the International Foundation for Science. I also wish to recognize the help of many colleagues in helping to make our programme a success. Working with leaders and scientists from IUFRO Institutions from all parts of the world has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my job.

Finally, it has been a pleasure working for and with IUFRO. I have greatly enjoyed the opportunity to work with all the members of the Executive Board and the Policy and Planning Committee. Special thanks to Heinrich Schmutzenhofer for sharing his incredible insights on IUFRO, forestry, and the culture of Austria. Like biological systems, our relationship has evolved and grown over the years. I will always value his friendship. I intend to stay involved in IUFRO and hope that all my friends will stay in touch with me while I work as Assistant Director for Program Implementation for the USDA Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Research Station in Portland, Oregon.

Auf Wiedersehen!

Dr. Robert C. Szaro, Coordinator of IUFRO-SPDC

Congress Special!

Buy at a discount the newly published

Handbook for Preparing and Writing Research Proposals

by C.P. Patrick Reid

At the XXI IUFRO World Congress available for only USD 15.-!

The regular price of the Handbook is USD 20.-

Note: The Handbook is free for developing country scientists from IUFRO Member Organizations! - We charge only USD 5.- for postage and handling.
**NEWS FROM LATIN AMERICA**

**Forest Health in Latin America – A Proposal**

In its continuing effort to strengthen forest research capacity in Latin America (LA), IUFRO-SPDC has convened a consortium of partners to pursue funding for the development of a new training course, “Evaluation and Maintenance of Forest Health: a primer for Latin America”. A proposal has been completed and we are currently searching for donors to pursue this work. Herein, we provide a brief rationale and synopsis for this proposed course.

Measure and assessment of forest health and vitality are considered an important criterion of forest sustainability through much of the world. Forest health maintenance requires recognition and accurate and meaningful assessment, including prediction of agents of forest depletion (e.g. insects, diseases, pollutants), development of approaches to minimize depletion and development of objectives and guidelines for sustainable forest management. Accurate and effective assessment and maintenance of forest health, therefore, requires a multidisciplinary approach and a broad range and high level of expertise. Although expertise in the area of forest health protection exists in LA, this knowledge is not consolidated. Benefit could accrue from bringing together the resident expertise throughout LA to develop a regionally-focused course that can provide state-of-the-art information and training concerning evaluation and maintenance of forest health. This technology transfer and training initiative aims to provide LA foresters and resource managers with the basis to assess, measure and manage forest health, by providing a primer of tools and methods to protect forests against insects, diseases and pollution. A team of experienced forest health specialists from LA and other countries will develop and teach a course based on their own work experiences. The concept of ecosystem management will be used as a course framework. The course content will be presented to participants over a five-day workshop. Following the workshop, the course content will be further expanded and published as a training manual. Specifically, this course will:

- focus and consolidate expertise currently dispersed among many LA countries;
- provide practicing foresters and resource managers with knowledge to make informed decisions on how to assess and maintain forest health;
- provide novel tools, training and knowledge to scientists in developing countries.

Dr. Rene Alfaro (Canadian Forest Service), Dr. David Langor (IUFRO-SPDC) and Professor Luis Gonzalez (University of Chile) are coordinating the course development. It is expected that this course will form the basis for development of forest health courses for other developing regions such as Africa and Asia.

---

**Proceedings Announcement**

*Forest Science and Forestry Contributing to Quality of Human Life in Developing Countries*

A IUFRO Seminar in Copenhagen, 3rd September 1999.

The Proceedings from the above Seminar, edited by Jens Nytoft Rasmussen, Niels Elers Koch and Torben Lang, are now available from the Danish Forest and Landscape Research Institute at the price of 150.- DKK (18 USD); Scientists from IUFRO Member Organizations from Developing Countries are charged only the mailing costs: 50 DKK

**Contact person:** Ms. Dorthe Gartmann Christiansen; Tel: +45/4576 3200; fax: +45/4576 3233; e-mail: dgc@fsl.dk.

The Seminar issue includes addresses by Salleh discussing the use of biotechnology in the conservation of tropical forests, and by Khosla reflecting the challenges to community forestry in India. Hong gives a comprehensive insight in forestry development in China and Lee addresses the challenges to forest science in Asia. Poulsen and Skov introduce a Thai-Danish research programme on forest and people in Thailand, while Vancura and Paule focus on the challenges for forestry and forest science in the European countries of economic transition. A summary of a study on the low-input establishment of multipurpose trees is given by Mandal.

Finally, the challenges to forest science in order to improve its contribution to the quality of human life, particularly in developing countries, are wrapped up by Scaro, Yapi, Langor, Schaitza, Awang and Vancura.
The meeting was attended by 20 forestry research scientists from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Malawi, the United Kingdom, and Sweden. The main agenda items included (1) review of progress made by the coordinators of the three eco-regional nodes; and (2) evaluation of research proposals and the announcement of awards to successful proposal writers. Ways and areas for increased collaboration and partnership with FAO, IUFRO-SPDC and other regional and international organizations were discussed as well.

The progress reports indicated that the coordinators of eco-regional nodes have made good progress in ensuring that AFORNET does not lose momentum. Most activities focused on the organization of nodal workshops to consolidate research proposals within each node. A total of 12 research proposals were submitted and evaluated:

- **The West and Central African Eco-regional Node** submitted two proposals: (1) Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests in the Savannah Areas of West Africa, and (2) Development of an Integrated Strategy for Reduction of Shoot Borer Impact on African Mahogany, the Humid Forest of Africa. Both project proposals received a positive evaluation, with a grant awarded straight forward to the latter; while in the former case, a grant will be awarded once the project has been revised and approved by the AFORNET Steering Committee.

- **Eastern and North Eastern Africa Eco-regional Node** submitted five proposals: (1) Development of Efficient Low PH Tolerant Symbiotic Association in Calliandra calothyrsus and Sesbania sesban for Improved Biomass Production in Acid Soils of East Africa, (2) Indigenous Fruit Trees with Potential for Poverty Alleviation and Food Security in East Africa, (3) Genetic Diversity and Regeneration Studies of Milicia excelsa in East Africa, (4) Genetic Diversity Studies Based on Molecular Markers and Provenance Trials of East African Faidherbia albida, and (5) Management of the...
Tree Resources on Farms Adjacent to Natural Forests in East Africa. The last four proposals were deficient in many areas, and were awarded “seed money” to facilitate major reworking for future resubmission. The first proposal will be awarded a grant once revised and approved by the African Steering Committee.

- **The Southern Africa Eco-regional Node** submitted four proposals: (1) Useful Mushrooms of the Miombo Ecozone: Contribution to Rural Economy, Food Security and Global Biodiversity, (2) Economic Impact of Forestry Resource Utilization by Small Entrepreneurs, (3) Pests and Diseases Associated with Three Indigenous Fruit Trees of the Miombo Woodlands, and (4) Breeding Systems and Reproductive Efficiency of the Selected Key Miombo Tree Species. The first of these received a positive evaluation, with a grant to be awarded once the project has been revised and approved by the AFORNET Steering Committee. The remaining 3 proposals received only seed money for reworking the proposals for resubmission.

- A cross-region proposal titled “Changing Roles and Values of Forest and Tree Resources and Their Impacts on Rural Livelihoods in Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe” received a positive evaluation, with the recommendation that a grant be awarded once the project has been revised and approved by the AFORNET Steering Committee.

The meeting also discussed collaboration and partnership with other networks and regional and international organizations, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and IUFRO’s Special Programme for Developing Countries (SPDC). The FAO/EC partnership project, which has a strong forestry research component, presents an excellent opportunity for collaboration for African research scientists participating in AFORNET. The new EC-funded GFIS-Africa project of IUFRO-SPDC also presents an excellent partnership opportunity for AFORNET and its participating scientists. These partnership and collaboration opportunities are to be further developed during the coming organizational workshops in Accra, Ghana, (July 2000 for the FAO/EC partnership project) and Dakar, Senegal (October 2000 for the GFIS-Africa project of IUFRO-SPDC). AFORNET as well as all the other African forestry research-related networks should strive to participate in the forthcoming IUFRO World Congress in August 2000 to gain valuable exposure to the international communities of scientists and donors.

**Dr. Atse M. Yapi**
IUFRO-SPDC Deputy Coordinator for Africa

---

**The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission’s 12th Sessional Meeting**

**Perspectives for Future IUFRO-SPDC/FAO Collaborations**

The African Forestry and Wildlife Commission held its twelfth session in Lusaka, Zambia, from 27 - 30 March 2000, at the kind invitation of the government of the Republic of Zambia. Over 70 delegates from 20 out of the 44 member countries attended this session. All delegations prepared and submitted country reports to the Commission. Many other member countries submitted reports and wanted to participate in the session, but had not been able to finance their participation¹. Furthermore, the meeting was attended by representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as observers from the African Development Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, the African Academy of Sciences, the African Forestry Expert Group, the Association Technique International des Bois Tropicaux/Interafrican Forest Industries Association (ATIBT/IFIA), the Pamaka Human & Wildlife Development Association, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Discussions at the session addressed a wide range of issues of regional importance, some of which are highlighted in this report because of their relevance to the FAO/IUFRO partnership programme in the areas of research capacity building, training, extension and information, and research networks development.

- **Forest and bush fires**
  The majority of countries from all sub-regions indicated that forest fires were a major constraint to the health of Africa’s forest and wildlife resources. As a fighting strategy, countries unanimously stressed the need to share their experiences in fire management and prevention. They also called upon FAO and its partners to facilitate this exchange of experiences and provide technical and policy advice on forest fires.

  *This provides an opportunity for further collaboration between FAO and IUFRO-SPDC to develop technical and policy packages for forest fire management and prevention for Africa.*

- **Wars and civil strifes**
  Participants unanimously underscored the tremendous negative impacts of

¹ In the past, FAO was able to support the participation of quite a large number of AFWC member countries out of funds from its many forestry-related field projects. The situation today has drastically changed, with only very limited funds of such country-level projects available.
war and civil strives on regional economies and natural resources. From Liberia and Sierra Leone to the Congo Basin, wars and civil strives have seriously destroyed not only national parks and reserves, but also the capacities of national forestry institutions and databases. There is now an urgent and compelling need to rebuild and restrengthen them.

IUFRO-SPDC, FAO, AAS and other regional and international organizations must continue to increase individual collaboration efforts to further strengthen institutional forest research capacity building efforts in Africa.

- **A publication on the state of forestry and wildlife in Africa**
  Participants noted that, although much work has been done on forestry and wildlife in Africa, a continent-wide assessment of forestry and wildlife still remains to be made. It was thus proposed that FAO, in cooperation with other agencies, produce a report on the state of Africa’s forestry and wildlife. In order to relieve the lack of basic reference materials in developing countries IUFRO-SPDC has started a series of textbooks targeted at forest scientists and scholars (See IUFRO News Vol. 27, 1998, Issue 3).

- **Increased training for wildlife scientists and managers**
  Countries as well as donor agencies at the session recognized the alarming degradation of Africa’s wildlife and protected areas, and proposed increased training on management of wildlife and protected areas on the continent.

- **Forest information systems**
  The Commission stressed the importance of up-to-date information on all aspects of forestry and wildlife. It therefore called upon FAO to help countries develop their national forest information systems, especially in the areas of criteria & indicators and certification.

  This priority is in line with the main objective of IUFRO-SPDC’s GFIS-Africa project, recently approved by the European Commission for funding. It is also in line with the research component of the on-going FAO/EC partnership project. Clearly, there is room for effective collaboration between FAO, IUFRO-SPDC and many other organizations such as CIFOR and CIRAD-Forêt which are working in this area.

Many other issues of global importance to Africa were discussed during the 12th session of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission. The full report of the session is available at the forestry unit of FAO Regional Office for Africa, in Accra, Ghana.

**Dr. Aise M. Yapi**
IUFRO-SPDC Deputy Coordinator for Africa

**Table 1:** Membership of the African Forestry and Wildlife Commission as of March 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member countries</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Gambia, The</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Tanzania, United</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>Rep. of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Democratic Rep. of</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>