COORDINATORS’ REPORT

S P D C - IUFRO’s Special Programme for Developing Countries

Mission

IUFRO’s Special Programme for Developing Countries was initiated in 1983 to enhance research capacity in developing countries. The Programme continues to receive strong support from IUFRO’s Executive Board (EB) and from donor agencies. IUFRO-SPDC extends to all regions of the world to develop a better understanding of research priorities and to foster partnerships with many research institutions and organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to conduct its mission “to expand and foster forestry research capacity in developing and economically disadvantaged countries”.

Programme

This past year has proven to be extremely productive, with IUFRO’s SPDC being re-examined and restructured. The current programme builds on some of the strengths from former programmes but adds a number of new elements and approaches to the delivery of IUFRO-SPDC activities and products. The new programme (1997 - 2000) was recently approved at the EB meeting in Rome and will be outlined in detail in the next issue of IUFRO News.

One of the first and most visible changes is the inclusion of a IUFRO-SPDC insert in this and future issues of IUFRO News. Because of the low response rate from our questionnaire to subscribers, the high costs of printing and mailing, uncertainties over the future of FAO’s International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology (AGRIS) and the increasing availability of the abstracts electronically or in CD-ROM formats from FAO, it was decided that the publication of the Information Bulletin for Developing Countries should be terminated following the mailing of this year’s summer issue. In addition to current programme information provided in the SPDC insert of IUFRO News, IUFRO-SPDC will produce an annual Occasional Paper that includes summary papers and targeted bibliographies on selected themes of particular interest to developing-country scientists. The funds saved by discontinuing the Bulletin will be reallocated to increase funding available for scientist assistance.

SPDC has increasingly regionalized its focus with activities in IUFRO’s Regions Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Herein we focus on our activities in sub-Saharan Africa but also summarize other key activities that occurred during the last year. Some of these will be reported on in greater detail in future issues of this insert. We also intend to include reports and perspectives from those scientists and about those workshops that were supported by IUFRO-SPDC funds.

Activities

**Strengthening national capacities in forestry research in sub-Saharan Africa** - In summer 1996, a draft Project Formulation Framework (PFF) and project document were prepared by FAO and IUFRO-SPDC and sent for comments to concerned countries and organizations and potential donors. The project document incorporates comments received on the PFF and was prepared in mid-July 1997 at FAO (Rome) by Bob Szaro, Pape Sall and Oudara Souvannavong. Partners and potential donors were invited to participate in a regional consultation on forestry research at the FAO Regional Office, Accra, Ghana, from 30 September to 2 October 1997 (see Summary Report from Expert Consultation on pp. 4-5). Many of the issues and needs identified at that Expert Consultation are common to all regions, while others are specific to sub-Saharan Africa. Through the consultation process, the final project document as well as parallel proposals by IUFRO-SPDC will be further developed and sponsorship sought. The willingness of all those involved to cooperate in the future and their frankness in discussing problems and possible solutions have been encouraging. We look forward to working closely with the African Academy of Sciences and the existing sub-regional networks in our common goal of building forestry research capacity and networking.

**Search for Deputy Coordinator for Africa (DCA)** - This past summer we intensified the search process for candidates and re-issued our advertisement in both English and French. Numerous notices were sent throughout Africa, especially to IUFRO member institutes in the Region. The FAO Forestry Department was instrumental in helping us distribute this information. We received many highly qualified applicants and the top two, Drs. Atse Yapi and Lambert Kang, were invited for interviews at the EB meeting in Rome. At that meeting, Dr. Yapi from Côte d’Ivoire was offered the DCA position. He will be co-located with FAO at their regional office in Accra, Ghana, beginning at the end of 1997.

**BIO-REFOR workshops**

IUFRO-SPDC will sponsor its 6th annual BIO-REFOR workshop organized with the support of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ Official Development Assistance Program. This workshop, entitled “Overcoming Impediments to Reforestation: International Workshop on Tropical Forest Rehabilitation in the Asia-Pacific Region”, is scheduled for the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia, 2-9 December 1997. IUFRO-SPDC also requested...
and received additional funding support for eight participants from AusAID for the workshop.

**Forest health and biodiversity - Carpathian Mountains Project**
Coordinator Szaro travelled to Washington, D.C. to develop a proposal to enhance research capacity in Eastern Europe. He was successful in securing a commitment from the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service for a three-year period. Under the terms of this grant, a cooperative research programme has been initiated to address the effects of air pollutants on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem management and sustainability criteria in the management of the Carpathian Mountain forests. The main outputs of the project will be stronger scientific expertise and capability in the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the Ukraine and a network of scientists in Eastern Europe. A planning workshop was held 3-7 November 1997 in Smolenice, Slovakia.

**Coordinated research project on agroforestry - IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) / FAO / IUFRO-SPDC**
Following planning meetings in January and May 1997, IUFRO-SPDC contributed to the development of an IAEA Agroforestry Cooperative Research Programme (CRP). IUFRO’s Agroforestry Coordinator Dr. Fergus Sinclair (1.15.00) was invited and agreed to participate in the project workshop held 8-10 September 1997 in Vienna, Austria. IUFRO-SPDC will have the opportunity to recommend scientists from IUFRO member institutes for the FAO / IAEA training courses on $^{15}$N techniques for studying nutrient cycling and the use of neutron probes for determining water flows. IUFRO-SPDC will involve IUFRO agroforestry experts in the development of the coordinated research project and recommend developing-country institutions that may wish to participate in the five-year project.

**Research capacity building in Latin America** - IUFRO-SPDC continued its efforts to enhance research capacity in Latin America by providing scientist assistance, promoting existing research networks, and contributing to project formulation. Discussions were held with BOLFOR (Bolivia), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Agency - National Program for Forestry Research (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária, EMBRAPA), the University of Viçosa (Universidade Federal de Viçosa, UFV), Instituto de Pesquisas Tecnológicas (IPT), and Instituto Florestal (Brazil) to enhance networking and to foster development of projects that IUFRO-SPDC can take to potential donors. With some or all of these partners, IUFRO-SPDC proposes to act as a catalyst to foster several joint-venture initiatives including those on sustainable forest harvesting, pest management - decision support systems, and agroforestry in Latin America and the Caribbean described in further detail in the following three sections.

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**TRAVEL GRANTS AVAILABLE**

The Trustees of the IUFRO Development Fund and the SPDC announce the 5th annual opportunity to apply for travel grants from the Development Fund.

Proposals will be accepted for partial support of travel and subsistence expenses for participation in scientific meetings which are in whole or in part sponsored by IUFRO. Applicants must be employees of IUFRO member institutions in developing or economically disadvantaged countries.

Your application, on institute letterhead, should include the title, date, and location of the meeting you plan to attend, a brief statement of how you will benefit, and the amount requested. Also include a statement of approval from your institute director or other responsible official, which indicates those costs (salary, travel, other) that your institute will cover. Finally, include a copy of your invitation or a letter from the IUFRO-affiliated organizer of the meeting endorsing your participation.

The deadline for receipt of requests is May 1, 1998 for meetings to be held during the year beginning June 1, 1998. Because funds are limited, the maximum award may not exceed US$ 1,000, to cover the cost of round-trip economy-fare travel plus daily subsistence for the duration of the meeting; requests for smaller amounts and those with significant cost-sharing will be favoured.

Successful applicants will be notified by May 15, 1998 and, in return for support, will be asked to provide a brief report of the attended event, which might be included in the SPDC insert of *IUFRO News*.

Send your letter of application (in English, French, Spanish, or German) to:

Dr. Robert C. Szaro, Coordinator  
c/o IUFRO Development Fund  
Seckendorff-Gudent-Weg 8  
A - 1131 Vienna, Austria
Sustainable forest harvesting

SPDC has started a cooperative initiative with FAO and BOLFOR addressing forest harvesting at varying intensities in Bolivia. IUFRO-SPDC drafted a framework document, is assisting with project formulation, and will present the proposal to potential donors. FAO has agreed to participate by funding a forest harvesting case study. This project provides an opportunity to enhance networking and research capacity in the Region and offers a vehicle for training.

Agroforestry in Latin America and the Caribbean

IUFRO-SPDC has initiated a cooperative agroforestry project in Brazil lead by EMBRAPA and UFV. The project is coordinated locally by the Latin American Information Network (Red de Información Forestal para América Latina y Caribe). Interface with the Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on Agroforestry sponsored by the FAO Regional Office has occurred and cooperation from this regional network will be further developed. In July 1997, a working group was established to begin project formulation and IUFRO-SPDC is currently promoting a detailed formulation of this interdisciplinary proposal. A background paper to review the role of Eucalyptus spp. in Brazilian agroforestry was initiated by Dr. Laércio Couto et al. (UFV) and is near completion. The proposal will encompass strong socioeconomic and training components, including a possible link to IAEA’s Agroforestry CRP (Vienna).

Decision support systems: a primer for Latin America

IUFRO-SPDC is assisting in the development of a pest management course designed for forest managers in Latin America. The course will be designed and lead by Dr. Rene I. Alfaro, Natural Resources Canada - Canadian Forestry Service, in close collaboration with partners from Latin America. The thrust of the proposal is to address regional needs and foster twinning, capacity-building, inter-institute collaboration and networking among organizations and between North-South countries. The objectives of the proposed course are (i) to provide practicing foresters and resource managers with knowledge to make informed decisions on how to manage forests affected by insects, diseases and pollutants; (ii) to provide new tools and training to scientists in developing countries. Subject to funding, a range of generic modules (chapters) will be proposed for the course and IUFRO-SPDC intends to begin with a workshop (field course) in Chile followed with courses in collaboration with other interested partners in Mexico and the Caribbean. The course content will be placed on the IUFRO web site and will be considered as a pre-Congress workshop for IUFRO’s Congress 2000 in Malaysia. Additional details describing the content and venue for the field course will appear in future issues of IUFRO NEWS.

Personnel - News

Dr. Wade Bowers from the Canadian Forest Service started as Deputy Coordinator for Programme on 1 April 1997.

Martina Melville, Administrative Assistant, departed IUFRO-SPDC to pursue new career challenges. We thank Martina for her long and outstanding contribution to SPDC and we are sorry to see her go. Currently, we are working with the Secretariat to re-evaluate staffing needs and methods of operation in Vienna.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr. Oscar Fugalli, former IUFRO-SPDC Coordinator, and Drs. Helga Schmidt and Christine Krieger of FAO’s AGRIS Processing Unit in Vienna for all their help in selecting and printing the abstracts we used over the years in the publication of the Bulletin. Without their assistance the Information Bulletin for Developing Countries would not have been possible.

Robert C. Szaro, Coordinator
Wade W. Bowers, Deputy Coordinator

New African Microscopy Network Created

Ms. B. Kadidia Sanon from the Institut de Recherche en Biologie et Ecologie Tropicale (IRBET) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, one of this year’s Development Fund winners and participant of the two-week First International Theoretical and Practical Course on Microscopy in Francophone Africa held in April/May 1997 at Dakar, Senegal, informed us that a meeting was organized after the said course to establish the African Microscopy Network. Statutes were elaborated and adopted and a five-member staff was elected as follows:

President: Dr. Omar Thion THIAW, Faculty of Sciences, University Cheickh Anta Diop of Dakar (UCAD), Senegal;

Vice-President: Prof. Ali AYADI, Faculty of Medicine, Sfax, Tunisia;

General Secretary: Dr. Zenebou M. SIDOUMOU, Faculty of Sciences, University of Nouatchott, Mauritania;

Assistant General Secretary: Dr. Lamine TOURE, Faculty of Sciences, University Cheickh Anta Diop of Dakar (UCAD), Senegal;

Treasurer: Dr. Papa Demba NDIAYE, Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy, UCAD, Senegal.

Three countries were appointed consulting members: Burkina Faso, Mali, and Cameroon.

The headquarters of the Network will be at Dakar, Senegal. The admission fee is 100 FF; the annual membership fee was fixed at 50 FF.

We thank Ms. Sanon for this valuable information.
SUMMARY REPORT FROM THE EXPERT CONSULTATION ON FORESTRY RESEARCH IN AFRICA

Accra, Ghana, 30 September - 2 October 1997

Organizers

The Forestry Department and Regional Office for Africa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with the Special Programme for Developing Countries of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO-SPDC).

Participants

Twelve forestry experts from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Resource persons from the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN), the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), IUFRO-SPDC, OAU (Organisation de l'unité africaine), the Southern African Development Community, coordinated and serviced by the Forestry Sector Technical Coordination Unit (SADC/FSTCU), with last-minute apologies from CORAF (Conférence des responsables de recherche agronomique en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre).

Objectives

The primary objectives of the Accra Consultation were:

- To review the status of forestry research in sub-Saharan Africa.
- To discuss and provide recommendations concerning priorities in strengthening forestry research at national, regional and global levels, and regional research projects and priority areas for cooperation.
- To discuss and solicit technical input for the finalization of a project document for strengthening national capacities and regional cooperation in forestry research in sub-Saharan Africa.

Reporting

The meeting was opened by Mr. N. Biljo, Deputy Minister of Lands and Forests of Ghana, and Mr. B. Dada, FAO Regional Representative for Africa. The participants elected Dr. A. Ofosu-Asiedu from Ghana Chairman, Dr. P. K. Konuche (Kenya) Vice Chairman, Dr. M. Nsangou (Cameroon) Rapporteur, and Mr. L. A. Situbi (SADC/FSTCU) Deputy Rapporteur.

Representatives reported on the status of forestry research in their respective countries, focusing on institutional aspects, recent trends in this field, and their impact on the capacity of national forestry research systems to respond to the growing and changing needs of the forestry sector at national and regional levels. Representatives of regional and international institutions reported on activities of their organizations in support of forestry research in the Region.

Results and discussions

Forestry research is expected to address cross-sectoral issues and to satisfy the needs of a larger array of users. To date low priority has been given to areas such as non-timber forest products despite the enormous contribution they make to the livelihood of rural communities. Most representatives concurred that forestry research has not given adequate attention to environmental issues. Moreover, it was recognized that not all stakeholders including local communities are always fully involved in the identification of research priorities.

There was general concern expressed that the staffing of national forestry research is inadequate, both in quality and in quantity, notably because:

- The critical mass of scientists necessary to adequately address research and development problems in both traditional and emerging areas is currently unavailable.
- Forest scientists are not adequately motivated and compensated to permanently remain and conduct research in their institutions.
- Forestry scientists from universities and forestry research institutes are not adequately mobilized, integrated or organized to implement prioritized and coordinated research.
- There is a paucity of well-trained researchers and research managers and, consequently, lack of effective planning and multi-disciplinary approaches in addressing research problems.

Forestry research is in principle part of the African sub-regional agricultural research networks ASARECA (Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa), CORAF and SACCAR (Southern African Centre for Cooperation in Agricultural Research), which were recently federated in a regional Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, FARA. However, forestry research is presently not given high priority by these networks which are traditionally focused on agriculture in the narrow sense. As a result, there is poor dissemination of research results and little cooperation in forestry research at the regional level.

Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa are in the process of restructuring their National Agricultural Research Systems of which forestry research is a component. The prevailing trend is a regionalization of agricultural research within countries, with regional programmes undertaken by multidisciplinary research teams. In principle, this approach appears justified and positive; however, such restructuring may sometimes weaken national capacity in forestry research by further diluting an expertise which is already below critical mass and negatively impacting on the coordination of forestry research at national and regional levels. In extreme cases, forestry research is being marginalized.
Forests - Valuation

Government and donor funding have been declining considerably over the past decade. Due to lack of socioeconomic evaluation of benefits accrued from forestry research, the latter has not generally been attractive to the private sector, the decision- and policy-makers. In countries endowed with large forest resources a number of macroeconomic and sector policies contribute to the undervaluation of forest products resulting in the forest sector being undervalued and therefore failing to adequately finance sustainable forestry programmes. Moreover, there is often no effective legislation for levies and royalties that could support forestry research. The ongoing restructuring and economic liberalization programmes implemented by many African countries have a negative impact on the funding of forestry programmes and, in particular, forest research activities. In general, funding conditions of donors influence policy procedures and research priorities.

Conclusions

The Expert Panel thoroughly reviewed a project proposal on strengthening National Forestry Research Systems and regional cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa (FORNESSA) prepared by FAO and IUFRO-SPDC and made numerous suggestions that will improve the final project document. Following the review, the Panel fully and strongly supported the initiative which aims to help alleviate many of the problems at the national and regional levels, identified during the Expert Consultation of Accra.

To improve the efficiency of National Forestry Research Systems and to link them effectively to both the research community and users the Panel made several specific recommendations that impinge on decisions and issues raised at the Accra meeting:

- National Forestry Research Systems, including institutions from both the public and the private sectors, should be strengthened and improved to efficiently play their essential roles in satisfying specific needs of the countries and in effectively transferring new knowledge and technology. In proposals for action, due attention should be given to the national level, to strengthen forestry research by the international community, in order to have a balanced development, which is necessary for efficient global research systems.
- Forestry scientists should sensitize stakeholders, including local communities, private sector, policy- and decision-makers, with respect to the valuable potential contribution of forestry research to various sectors of the economy by placing relevant and convincing information at their disposal.
- Forest research programmes should be problem-oriented to address the needs of Government, private sector and local communities. With globalization and increasing flow of private sector resources to the forestry sector, forest research institutions stand to gain provided they re-orient their programmes to incorporate private sector needs.
- Formal linkages should be established between forestry research institutes and users in order to improve contract research funding and technology transfer.
- Scientists from universities and forestry research institutes should organize themselves into relevant multidisciplinary research teams.
- Forestry research institutes should develop and implement a training plan, evaluation and motivation policies for scientists.
- Scientific information and documentation should be shared and updated regularly.
- National Forestry Research Institutes should develop appropriate mechanisms for information exchange at the national and regional levels.
- Packaging of research results should be appropriate to target stakeholders.
- Research projects should be combined to include research areas which are important, but not attractive for funding.
- Efforts should be made to mobilize funding for regional programmes and to improve cooperation in forestry research.
- Policy reforms are needed that will promote forestry as an option to land use rather than as a competitor to agriculture. Macroeconomic policies should promote sustainable forest management rather than the mining of forest resources.
- National Governments should be encouraged to enact legislation for levies and royalties for forestry research.
- The Panel requested FAO and partners such as IUFRO-SPDC to finalize the project document on strengthening national capacities and regional cooperation in forestry research in sub-Saharan Africa, so it can be submitted to donors as soon as possible. It resolved to advertise and promote the proposal wherever and whenever appropriate.

Information Bulletin to be replaced by IUFRO-SPDC Occasional Paper: Call for papers

The great majority of respondents to our questionnaire informed us they would welcome more topical papers on forestry. SPDC has therefore decided to change its strategy with respect to publications and to compile annual 100–200 page occasional papers on current forest-related topics instead of the quarterly Information Bulletin. The first issue is planned for 1998 and will cover various aspects of agroforestry. Future issues will focus on biodiversity, sustainable forest management, and forest pest management.

Scientists from developing and economically disadvantaged countries who are working in this field are thus invited to submit research papers and reports on their relevant experiences (in English, French, or Spanish). Please note that scientific papers will be peer-reviewed and that there is no legal claim for publication. To be considered, your contribution should be sent to IUFRO’s Special Programme for Developing Countries (SPDC), Seckendorff-Gudent-Weg 8, A-1131 Vienna, Austria, by the end of March 1998, at the latest.
PERSPECTIVE

OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNITY FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

by Krishna H. Gautam

The author has been involved in community forestry development since its initiation in Nepal. He worked as Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) in various forest divisions and districts of the country and was active in community forestry projects supported by international organizations such as the World Bank, FAO, UNDP, SDC, EEC, and AusAID. In the present article, he highlights his experiences with community forestry development and management in the Nepalese district of Sindhupalchok.

Background - Nepal's National Forestry Plan 1976 emphasized the need for people's involvement in forestry development; accordingly, forest legislation was subsequently amended to provide for wider participation. Community forestry programmes were then designed and implemented throughout the country, with support from various bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Community forestry programmes have seen important changes in the course of time. Initially, programmes focused on plantations, while later natural forest management gained importance. Administratively, most of the early programmes emphasized implementation through village panchayat, the smallest political/administrative unit during partyless political system; however, after some time forest user groups (FUGs) were considered more effective. Community forestry is developing very fast, in some cases driving beyond the subsistence horizon.

At present, the forestry staff is under tremendous and increasing pressure from the FUGs to speed up the handover, and other support, for managing community forests. Programmes under the government's annual community forestry plan include mainly preparation and handover of forests, operation of departmental and users’ nurseries, distribution of seedlings, afforestation, demarcation, training, etc. However, as a result of field experiences during implementation, new programmes are emerging which should be considered in the process.

In addition to the above key targets strong efforts have been made in recent years (1993-96) to institutionalize community forestry in Sindhupalchok. Some of the key steps in this process are outlined below.

Handover of community forests - Up to and including 1993 not a single forest was legally handed over to the FUGs of the Nepalese district. Although 100 operational plans were approved by the DFO, historically they were not submitted to the regional director for approval and made available to subsequent users. However, as a result of recent progress, some 225 FUGs are now implementing operational plans as legal documents, encompassing key activities such as plantations, demarcation, protection, weeding, harvesting, and distribution. Initially, implementation was limited to plantation and protection activities; as a result, users were initially uncertain about the full usefulness and potential of their forests. Consequently, efforts were made to focus more on the utilization aspect of forest resources while implementing operational plans.

Generation of resources - With the effective implementation of operational plans, FUGs generated substantial resources (more than 1.2 million rupees in 1994/95), which they mobilized for local development such as improvement of water supply, irrigation, building of schools, temples, bridges, etc. Some of the FUGs also established scholarships for school-age girls to increase the number of girls attending school in the community.

Monitoring and evaluation are integral parts of community forestry both at the project and at the sectoral level. Initial efforts did not emphasize monitoring and evaluating operational plans at the user group level. Accordingly, a monitoring and evaluation system was developed with the participation of forest users and field staff. The system became very effective as is evident from the increased participation of users in monitoring.

Activities to strengthen FUGs - It was recognized that, to effectively implement programmes, FUGs required support in institutional development, e.g., in maintaining office records, in accounting and technical issues. Basic training was conducted to strengthen the FUGs in these fields and a simple accounting system was developed and adapted by all FUGs of the district. Publication of a newsletter was initiated, covering news about FUGs and their activities in the district.

Improving seedling distribution - With the initiation of the community forestry programme in the district, seedlings were freely distributed for private planting. Although several studies indicated wastage, no efforts were made to improve distribution and the programme also lacked adequate evaluation on planting success and effects. As a result of discussions with users, attempts were made in 1994 to terminate free distribution of seedlings. This resulted in improved quality and also indicated the potential for a sustainable private planting programme. Eventually, FUGs were able to manage nurseries with little input from outside.

Conflict resolution - Effective strategies were developed to resolve conflicts within and among user groups, thereby improving the management of community forestry.

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