



First Announcement

International Forest Genetic Resources Symposium

– *Conservation and sustainable utilization towards climate change mitigation and adaptation*

The need to conserve and manage forest genetic resources (FGR) has long been recognised in international dialogue on forests but no global action plan has been developed for this purpose. For agricultural crops, the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Use of Plant Genetic Resources was adopted in 1996 but forest genetic resources issues were explicitly excluded from it. In November 2001, an International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was adopted in Rome but forest genetic resources were not included in this agreement.

Several countries in the Asia Pacific region have taken steps to implement sustainable forest management in practice and many of them are now in the process of developing and testing criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. There is a need to promote conservation and management of forest genetic resources *per se* within this process. Many countries in the Asia Pacific region have signed both CBD and ITTA, improved conservation and management of FGR would help the countries to fulfil their commitments as agreed under these agreements. While these agreements recognize that countries have sovereign rights over their own biological resources, they also assign them the responsibility for conserving their biological diversity and urge them to use the biological resources in a sustainable manner. Countries are also urged to enhance technical and scientific cooperation, training and information exchange on conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Achieving these goals is a challenging but essential task that will not only maintain biological diversity for future generations but also productivity and ecological functions of tropical forests under changing climatic conditions in the future.

The recently intensified debates and discussions on climate change in many international fora have introduced additional challenges in the efficient conservation and sustainable utilization of forest genetic resources. Theories and technologies are being proposed, discussed and implemented to meet these challenges for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

All these, and many other related issues, are the topics of concerns that warrant detailed studies and in-depth discussions.

Objectives

The main objective of the symposium is to review the status of national efforts in conservation and management, as well as the sustainable utilization of FGR, particularly in tropical Asia. It will also serve as platform for the various stakeholders to discuss the strategies related to conservation and management of FGR.

This symposium shall also provide opportunities for sharing and exchanging of information and experiences towards strengthening capacity in FGR conservation, management and sustainable utilization to meet the challenges of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Date and Venue

This symposium will be held in Kuala Lumpur, 5-8 October 2009.

Who should attend?

- Scientists, researchers and academicians with interest on FGR conservation and management
- Foresters and forest department officials involved primarily in forest policy formulation
- Environmental NGOs, civil societies, local communities and all other stakeholders.

* Participants who are nationals of ITTO member states in the Asia Pacific region qualified to be fully sponsored. Priority would be given to participants from developing countries.

Symposium Organizers and Collaborators

The symposium is an initiative under an International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Project on forest genetic resources. It is being organized by the implementing agency of the project, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), and the two collaborating agencies - Asia-Pacific Association of Forest Research Institutions (APAFRI) and Bioversity International.

Other collaborators shall include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Forest Tree Breeding Centre (FTBC) Japan, and the Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC).

Tentative Programme

The symposium/conference will include overarching plenary sessions covering cross-linking issues, followed by several technical sessions for sharing experiences and knowledge.

A one-day field trip would be included to visit forest rehabilitation/restoration sites and/or research facilities.

Day 1	5 October 2009
	<i>Opening</i> <i>Keynote – Why FGR matters?</i> <i>Regional update – Status of Asia-Pacific FGR</i>
Day 2	6 October 2009
	<i>Technical sessions</i> FGR and biodiversity FGR erosion, impacts of climate change, and biotic and abiotic disturbances Community involvement in FGR conservation and management
Day 3	7 October 2009
	<i>Field trip</i>
Day 4	8 October 2009
	<i>Technical sessions</i> FGR conservation and management – national status, policies and strategies FGR conservation and management – databases, information clearing house, fora. FGR conservation and management – state of the art in Asia and the Pacific <i>Closing</i>

Call for Papers

The working language of the workshop will be English.

If you wish to present a paper, or exhibit a poster, send your abstract of 300–500 words to Sim Heok-Choh (simhc@frim.gov.my). Abstracts should include the full names, addresses of authors, and e-mail address for the corresponding author.

Deadlines: Submissions of abstracts – **30 June 2009**
Notification of acceptance – **10 July 2009**
Final Papers/Presentations – **15 September 2009**

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