

Asia-Pacific Forestry Week

CLOSING ADDRESS

By
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Delivered at the

Closing of Asia-Pacific Forestry Week

25 April 2008
Hanoi, Viet Nam

His Excellency Hua Duc Nhi- Vice Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and rural Development

His Excellency Jan Heino - Assistant Director-General for Forestry for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Distinguished guests,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The end of Asia-Pacific Forestry Week is upon us and it is my honour and pleasure to address you all and make some final observations and comments after a week of intensive and stimulating discussions.

This week's presentations, meetings, and other forestry related events have been organized in response to heightened awareness of the importance of trees and forests in sustaining the region's economic, environmental and social systems.

Global and local changes are taking place at faster and faster rates and the new century is presenting some of the greatest challenges mankind has ever faced. In this changing world, the values of trees and forests are changing too and we must strive to ensure that these values are preserved, and invested in.

As you will recall, the week's sessions focussed on the overarching theme of "*Forestry in a changing world*" which was addressed in three plenary sessions:

- People and forests
- Climate change, and
- Forest law compliance and governance.

The importance and gravity of each of these issues has been central in expanding forestry related dialogue in the region and, in relation, this is the first time

that the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission meeting has been expanded into Asia-Pacific Forestry Week.

The government and people of Viet Nam are honoured to have hosted this auspicious event and I would like personally to thank Mr Jan Heino, FAO's Assistant Director General of Forestry as well as Patrick Durst and the FAO secretariat for their support in organising the meeting. I would also like to thank all of the collaborating organisations – almost 50 of them – for their support in running such a large number of events covering a broad range of topical themes. There are many others to thank including the distinguished delegates from the nations of the Asia-Pacific region and the knowledgeable resource persons who have informed us of new developments in forest and forestry related matters.

I do hope that you all enjoyed the week's activities and that you will take back with you renewed vigour to tackle the challenges that face us. I make all necessary apologies for any difficulties that you may have suffered with the logistic arrangements while here in Hanoi. Let me say that it was our first time to organise a meeting of this size and we understood at first that there would be 200 participants... but then there were 300! and 400! and finally 700!

Some people thought we couldn't do it but with support from the organising partners and from my highly competent staff here in Viet Nam I think we can justifiably claim success and I thank you all for your enthusiastic participation.

The aim of Asia-Pacific Forestry Week has been to expand knowledge of *"Forestry in a changing world"* and by doing so to help define a sustainable future for forestry in the years to come. We hope that this informal gathering will strengthen the bonds that link us to trees and forests - and to each other - as stakeholders in Asia-Pacific forestry.

I declare Asia-Pacific Forestry Week closed and wish you all a pleasant evening and a safe journey home.

Thank you