



IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress
Hawai'i 2016



Forest Journey Reflections

IUCN World Conservation Congress Forest Journey is complete.
What did we learn?



Hundreds embarked on the **Forest Journey** at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, Hawai'i.

For some it was an opportunity to network with colleagues and friends. For others, the Forest Journey embodied aspects of their work or reinforced commitments they have to forests and those people and species that live in them or depend on them.

Still others chose to follow sections of the journey, attending specific forest sessions and events amidst the heavy pull of other interesting subjects on offer at IUCN Congress.

No matter which category you find yourself in, you will certainly be interested in reconnecting with some of the prominent takeaways from the Forest Journey to help you continue the momentum of what transpired.

Although the nearly 50 topics covered on the Forest Journey were robust and varied, only reflections and core takeaways from **selected parts** of the journey are captured here. They are presented according to the theme under which they were offered.

Please take the time to complete your Forest Journey by reflecting with us on all the positive work and forest dialogues from this IUCN Congress.



Science & evidence to enhance forest knowledge

Exploring learning tools that support evidence-based forest activities and projects, featuring hands-on training and practical approaches.

Delivering multiple benefits from managed forests – the role of forest certification (#10271) featured case studies from different locations around the world, exploring how sustainable forest management and forest certification are supporting the delivery of multiple benefits from managed production forests. Robust discussions resulted from this workshop stemming from the basic question of ‘why to certify’ to the acknowledgment that certification remains difficult for many to engage with due to its complexity, expense and cultural implications, among others barriers. The event also spurred calls for more metrics, based in sound science for forest management and certification, and the need for a comprehensive landscape certification system.

In **Natural capital in practice: How can an ecosystem services approach build support for forest landscape restoration and lead to more strategic investments (#12295)**, the Natural Capital Project Team and colleagues presented new tools such as “The Forest Community Fingerprint methodology” and the [Restoration Opportunity Optimization Tool](#). Dr. Bonnie Keeler of the Natural Capital Project Team indicated that they will be following up with interested attendees that want to use the tools and approaches presented at the session, and anticipate new applications and use cases to share following the event.



Restoring forests & building communities

Highlighting innovative and exceptional stories of forest landscape restoration implementation and achievements from partners and leaders around the world.

Restoring resilient ecosystems and communities: Bonn Challenge implementation in the United States (#12294) concentrated on the US Forest Service and US pledges to the Bonn challenge. The US Forest Service shared its experiences with restoration, including a suite of tools to accelerate the pace of ecosystem restoration and lessons learned over the last five years of implementing their Bonn Challenge commitment. During the session, key themes emerged such as: the difficulty of engaging urban populations; climate change and its impact on meeting restoration targets; engaging stakeholders; raising funds to support restoration; making necessary changes to organisational cultures to better engage communities and indigenous groups; and job creation. It was also acknowledged that inter-agency collaboration across landscapes is a challenge, but offers wide benefits as does the role NGOs can play in moving governments to support restoration action. In addition, the need to create and expand markets for wood and other forest products and the importance of raising awareness about the Bonn Challenge and the potential benefits of forest landscape restoration (FLR) was also discussed.



Restoration of landscapes with forests and trees: Highlights from China's forest restoration programs and the USDA Environmental Quality Improvement Program (#12301) yielded some interesting comparisons between FLR in China and the US. Over the past 15 years, China has implemented large-scale FLR programmes covering 29 million hectares. The US also recently committed to restore 15 million hectares in response to the Bonn Challenge. One thing these two large countries have in common is they both have public incentive programs targeting farmers, whose economic, subsistence, land and cultural concerns are central to successful restoration of landscapes in which farming is currently prevalent. Some of the interesting questions following the presentations related to how FLR extension services make appropriate tree species available to local farmers to plant, and how these national (China and US) programmes incorporate natural regeneration as a mechanism for restoration. The role of tree planting versus natural regeneration in restoration is a point of debate in the field, although the choice of one over the other depends on local ecological conditions, availability of funds and labour to replant, and the outcomes desired from the future forests (economic benefits, biodiversity, climate change mitigation, scenic value, water ecosystem services, etc.).



Experiences in forest landscape restoration: From the forests of Central America to the world (#12303) offered views on experiences and solutions in forest landscape management designed and implemented in, and later transferred from Central America. An issue that came to the forefront in this session is that public/private

partnerships are key to the success of restoration initiatives and that incentives are essential. In addition, it was clear that governments need to prioritise and provide funds because international cooperation funds are marginal. The potential to partner with Coca-cola or GIZ also came up in discussions.



In **Governance and forest landscape restoration (#12304)** participants were exposed to the concept of governance as it relates to large scale forest restoration. In the context of securing large-scale forest restoration and FLR, governance can be (and is being) understood in many different ways as illustrated by the four case studies in this session. Given growing calls and mobilisation for more restoration, governance challenges need to be better understood and addressed if FLR is to be successful and sustainable. The session presented opportunities to integrate governance work to facilitate implementation of the Bonn Challenge and may lead to a scientific paper.

The Bonn Challenge and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: State of progress of countries in Central and West Africa (#9795), discussions amongst the seven regional countries with pledges to the Bonn Challenge began with the need for a common understanding of the concept of FLR by participants. Key messages arose such as:

1. FLR needs integrated programmes and the active participation of local communities;
2. a call for clear messaging to governments before they commit to Bonn Challenge;
3. FLR practices vary according to a country's social and environmental characteristics;
4. FLR must adequately integrate international, regional and national policies and strategies pertaining to biodiversity, climate change, desertification, poverty alleviation, food security, land use planning and development of local communities;
5. FLR is an important tool for the establishment of intersectoral and partner collaboration;
6. IUCN must increase its efforts to promote FLR;
7. local NGOs are key partners for implementation of FLR at local levels; and
8. land tenure security is key for the success of FLR.

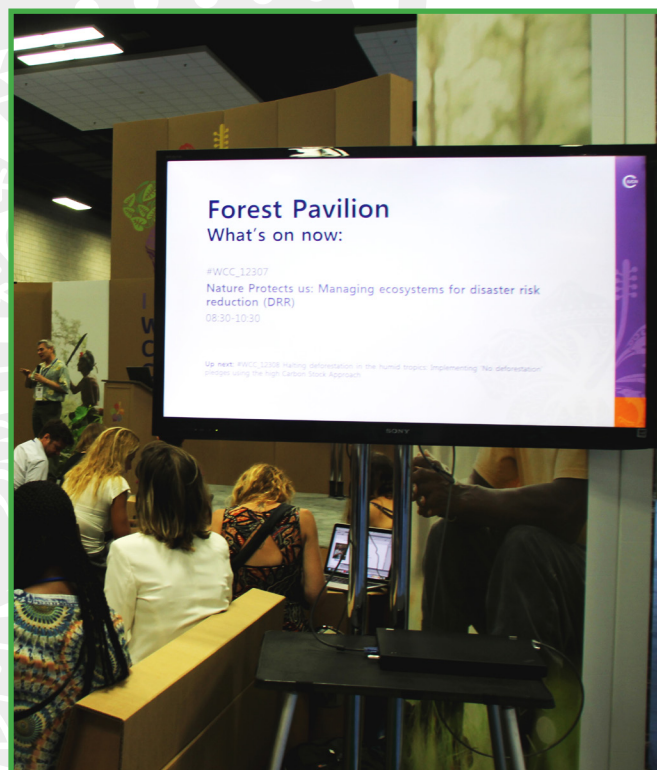
Participants also openly acknowledged the important socio-economic and environmental benefits of FLR and acknowledged the link between FLR and global and national initiatives. Participants called on IUCN to hold more informational sessions on FLR, and also committed to share the information about FLR with their colleagues.



Sustainable land use for a changing planet

Building knowledge and discussions on land degradation, ecosystems and landscapes – and finding shared solutions for the future.

In a session aimed at raising awareness and building new ideas about how to implement Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction called **Nature protects us: Managing ecosystems for disaster risk reduction (DRR) (#12307)**, five case studies across six countries – Chile, Thailand, China, Senegal & Burkina Faso, and Nepal were examined. In all projects, collaboration with local communities is seen as critical in terms of ensuring physical capacity, local expertise and a sense of ownership for long-term success. Governments recognised the issue of DRR and the need to work with communities. Priorities include: the understanding and mapping of risk; the strengthening of disaster risk governance, enforcement of current regulations; improving access to funding for disaster risk preparedness; and generally improving disaster risk preparedness. In addition, transboundary collaboration in river basins is key and governments have called for its inclusion in the [Sendai Framework](#). A starting point emphasised in the session is through identifying where we already have existing capacities and partners that will help with the work, leveraging their expertise to collectively address common challenges. A need to see more of the ecosystems based approaches integrated in national and local policies was also discussed. Catalysing investment for nature-based infrastructure was mentioned as important as well as tracking progress in terms of accountability and to be able to communicate the value of this type of work. Insurance is seen as playing a key role in terms of setting the right incentives – investing in resilience building efforts. Conversation remains a need between the regulators, insurance companies and communities. Insurance companies have a lot of risk information – we need to evaluate how can this be used for public good. Linking financial and natural risks together helps strengthen the business case for investing in natural infrastructure.



The Land Use Dialogues: A multi-country platform to gather knowledge and enable responsible business, improved governance and inclusive development in landscapes at risk (#12310) included a range of inspiring case studies. Discussions covered the role of multi-stakeholder input in relation to government processes, and was inclusive and constructive around the role of business. During the session it became evident that land-use level solutions can be applicable at a number of scales and contexts.



Homing in on the range: Reviving rangeland landscapes to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (#12311) recognised the value of rangeland ecosystems and their services and promoted ensuring that landscape restoration approaches are applied to the ecological, social and economic conditions of rangelands. In addition, the session marked the launch of the FAO Technical Guide on [Pastoral Lands: implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure](#), and acknowledged the announcement of the UNEA resolution on pastoralism and rangelands. Princess Sharifa Zein added that, "Reviving Hima [community institutions for rangeland governance in Jordan] cost a million cups of coffee and a million cups of tea, as well as a lot of respect, dignity and trust." Questions were raised over the feasibility of Payments for Ecosystem Services, particularly bundling services and establishing appropriate payment mechanisms. So far it has not progressed much beyond a theory. There is growing global consensus that: (a) rangelands are important, and (b) urgent action is needed, particularly to ensure that the rangelands are not neglected as a result of global targets (e.g. SDGs) or major global movements (e.g. FLR and related initiatives). The session asked actors like IUCN, UNEP and FAO to do more to demonstrate success and to establish conditions that enable the scaling-up of success.



Partnerships to protect & maintain healthy forests

Focusing on collaborative stakeholder engagement and dialogues that look to the public and private sector mechanisms needed for action locally, nationally and internationally.

In **The role of nature conservation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** ([#10239](#)) the following points were discussed:

1. How forest landscape restoration plays an important role in contributing to the SDGs;
2. forests play a major role in contributing to the GDP of the poor and are important in all aspects of their lives;
3. UNDP needs to help countries and communities find a new way to make forests an efficient and effective investment vehicle for SDGs;
4. there is a need to strengthen and legitimise the rights of indigenous people and women throughout SDGs,
5. we need good indicators to show nature's role in attaining the SDGs; and
6. there is a need to de-link deforestation from food production.



In general, the audience shared their stories with the SDGs as an outlet to express themselves and showcase their work, to collectively think about the SDGs and nature's impact, and to discuss how they can collaborate and push the agenda forward.

Zero Deforestation Supply Chains: Opportunities, Challenges, and Lessons Learned ([#10263](#)) yielded important notions such as the need to clearly define zero deforestation, and the need to engage young people around the world and connect them to forests and farms. The workshop went on to reason that leadership is needed from the private sector as well as government, all sectors need to work together and that we need to frame things positively to be more motivating. A discussion occurred around Europe's role in pushing a deforestation free agenda, but also that big consumer countries like China and India need to get on board for deforestation-free palm oil to become a reality. There were differing views on whether the global commu-

nity is set to meet targets of the [New York Declaration on Forests](#), however all were in agreement that ambitious goals are necessary to push businesses and governments forward. Participants also agreed on the need to de-link agriculture from deforestation and that supply chains are not really chains, but networks.

In **Harnessing local governance structures for collaborative natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods: A case of Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs)** ([#12320](#)), it was conveyed that the [CREMA](#) concept is gaining interest not only locally but internationally, given its prospects as an effective tool for collaborative natural resources management at the local level. Participants were intrigued by the concept, its tenets and what it seeks to achieve in terms of conservation and community livelihoods. It was further related that external supporters such as NGOs are playing a key role in the advancement of the concept by collaborating with the government to provide support to CREMAs. While this has been a huge boost to both the establishment and maintenance of CREMAs, it has become clear that more long-term technical and financial support is needed to achieve sustainability. Hence, the recommendation is for supporters who provide short-term external donor funding to ensure that clear exit strategies are developed to help lead CREMAs toward financial independence. Gender and cultural considerations as well as the different livelihood interests of target groups must be well understood in order to integrate them into the design of actions and ensure sustainability by harnessing community ownership, commitment and equity. A major takeaway from the session was to continue to collaborate (government, civil society and local communities) to enhance the effectiveness of CREMAs through continuous capacity building and support towards implementation of the action and management plans, which are providing useful exit strategies for the interventions.



In **A Partnership for Real Change: Two “landscape approaches” from APRIL Group and the Zoological Society of London in Indonesia (#12163)**, the notion was put forth that landscape approaches are of great interest and may be the way forward for global conservation. Acknowledging that few landscapes/seascapes are pristine, but managing for sustainable use from a holistic perspective with the support of the local government is positive. In discussing landscape approaches the session determined that they: (1) have to have rigorous and credible ways of engaging with stakeholders; (2) need to have a process in place so that stakeholders can provide their views, and guarantees that companies will listen to their views; and (3) need metrics for these. Landscape approaches require investment, and people have the right to know how their money is being used. However, landscape approaches are difficult to measure and require skills that some companies don't have, so a need for a scientifically credible way of measuring impacts and approaches is needed. A study will be measuring the performance of different landscape approaches in Indonesia on its impacts on economic activities in terms of job creation, tax revenues, etc. There was a call for the metrics from studies like this to be public domain. A takeaway from this session is that it would be positive to monitor landscape approach projects like [RER](#) and [KELOLA Sendang](#), and share lessons learned so progress can be tracked in real-time.

Restoring Pacific Islands forests for a new future (#12322) highlighted efforts underway in Oceania including:

1. The development of a regional forest management framework to guide forest work in the region;
2. the partnerships being developed with countries and the opportunities for countries in the region to make pledges towards the Bonn Challenge; and
3. the call for contributions and partnerships from forest stakeholders and donors to assist with the implementation of a regional FLR project to reforest approximately 400,000 hectares of degraded forest in four countries.



This effort is being driven by countries in the region, so they have ownership of the FLR plan, but session participants indicated that if we can move quickly enough, funding for this seven-year project may be attainable by mid-2017. Conservation International supports the initiative. The Oceania forest team will work with partners in the region to finalise the regional forest management plan and work with countries to try to secure an FLR project for four countries covering almost 400,000 hectares, with potential donors such as the Green Climate Fund.





The Forest Journey brought people and organisations together to discuss and share ideas, envision a future for our forests and commune in constructive ways. Although the journey took us beyond the Forest Pavilion, the pavilion provided a valuable meeting point, where we discussed forest landscape restoration, indigenous peoples' rights, new landscape assessment tools, commitments toward mutual goals, cooperation between NGOs and knowledge sharing among governments. It was there that we rallied around forests as East met West and North met South. We are only as strong and as knowledgeable as our collective union and desire for a better planet. By taking this journey together, we are one step closer to reaching our goals.



A sincere **mahalo** to all those who contributed to making the Forest Journey a success.



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If Not Us Then Who?
Joel's photos were on display at the Forest Pavilion.
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