

Communication and Outreach Strategy, and the need to raise awareness

We are all familiar with much misunderstanding of basic forestry concepts by non-foresters, concepts that all of us here take for granted. We know that more and more city people are less and less in touch with forested landscapes, have fewer and fewer opportunities to see and understand sfm work methods, and are more and more suspicious about the sustainability of our practices.

One critical example is the role of forests in combating climate change. The suspicion and lack of basic understanding is especially clear in reactions to our claim that increased use of timber from sustainably managed forests is a very powerful tool of strategic importance.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the future of the planet will depend in part on our ability to raise awareness and overcome misunderstanding.

Smallholder family forest owners, together with community and indigenous foresters can give a human face to sfm.

In many countries, our forests are the ones closest to the cities, the forests city people are most likely to see. We can demonstrate how deeply we care for our forests and how hard we work to look after them. We can explain in simple terms how our forests grow and how careful management can do more than just maintain carbon storage, biodiversity and water conservation: it can increase all of these. And, at the same time it can provide income from the sale of timber. We can show countless individual and landscape level examples which demonstrate how Sustainable forest management is not just compatible but in fact interdependent with increased timber production. Our methods of management are small scale, and our definition of sustainable forest management places central importance on social and cultural benefits of sustainable forest management. Also, some family forest owners live in cities; most of us have relatives and friends who live in cities.

For all of these reasons, family forest owners, with community and indigenous foresters can be a bridge between people of the cities and people of countrysides with forests. We can play a useful role in raising awareness and reducing suspicion of people in the cities.

We are committed to contribute to the development and implementation of national and international communication strategies. We invite member states, the Forum and the CPF to take advantage of this asset and seek the engagement of family, community and indigenous peoples' organizations when you design and carry out communication strategies in your countries and internationally.