

Chair's Report on IFFA's work in 2016

In past years, areas for improvement in our work have included:

- Make a more focused effort on building our membership
- Increase the number of IFFA representatives who participate in international events
- Find ways to provide more concrete benefits to our members, with particular emphasis on useful sharing of experience
- Strengthen our effort to build partnerships and alliances, especially with the international alliances for indigenous and community foresters

In 2016, Board members, our Secretariat, and representatives from member associations have worked hard to move forward in these areas, and I can report continued progress. Highlights of this work in 2016 include:

- The Asia meeting in Thailand in December; this was our biggest single effort of the past year. We made contact with a number of emerging associations and opportunities were identified to pursue our association building support efforts in several places such as Mongolia. The meeting was a very successful opportunity to strengthen our collaboration with AFFON from Nepal, to strengthen our partnerships with FFF and, RECOFTC, and to develop new connections with the Asian farmers Association, and Tree Bank, the family forestry association in Thailand.
- A new partnership was established with Rights and Resources Initiative, the world's leading agency tracking changes in forest land tenure for community and indigenous forest peoples. RRI is developing a plan to work with us to extend this tracking work to forest small-holders/family forest owners.
- UNFF is in the process of finalizing a new long-term strategy to increase the effectiveness of its work. IFFA representatives participated in five different UNFF workshops and Study groups, promoting our belief that the involvement of civil society in general and family forest owners in particular is vital to progress in sustainable forest management throughout the world.
- IFFA made a modest contribution at Forest Action Day at COP22 in Marrakech on the theme of use of more wood from sustainably managed forests as a key element in the global effort to combat climate change.

The effort just mentioned at COP22 had no discernible impact. In the Work Plan proposed for 2017, we have included an item that is a bit new: a proposal for a set of actions leading to a specific, concrete result. The specific result proposed is significant reference to "use more wood from sustainably managed forests" in the final declaration from COP23. This suggested approach has the obvious benefit of setting a target on which to focus our efforts. It also has the drawback of risking disappointment if the target proves to be unrealistic. Let us see how we do with this. The hope is that we will not only achieve some success in reaching the proposed target, but that the effort to do so will also advance our efforts to build our membership, demonstrate concrete benefits from our work,

involve more representatives in that work, and continue to build partnerships and alliances. We will certainly learn ways to increase the effectiveness of our work from this experience.

On the organizational side a working group has reviewed the IFFA by-laws. Since the Board has decided to keep up the IFFA registration in Washington DC, we have not found it necessary to propose any changes at the moment. The working group will, however, continue the by-laws revision and seek legal advice in Washington CD in order to secure that the by-laws are up to date.

Once again, may I express my gratitude to colleagues for the privilege of sharing in this work. We can be very sure that 2017 will present the world with a growing list of challenges. Let us respond by doing more good work, together!

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