



Daily Round Up

Thank you for joining us for the first day of the Asia-Pacific Forest Governance Forum.

We hope you enjoyed the sessions and found them as informative as we did. Please find below a summary of some of the key points made. All presentations and recordings will become available [on the CIDT website](#).

Highlights, 27 September 2021

The First Asia-Pacific Forest Governance Forum (FGF) opened Monday, 27th September with more than 160 participants. The four-day forum is part of the [Strengthening non-state actor involvement in forest governance project](#) in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Papua New Guinea. The presentations began with a high-level panel on the **Role of inclusive and effective forest governance in achieving an equitable, carbon-neutral, and nature-positive future**.

Daniel Hachez, Minister Counsellor, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand, welcomed participants, and underscored that for the EU investing to support partner countries globally is crucial to preserve forests and support sustainable economies and societies; between 2014-2020 the EU has backed its words by investing more than €650 million for this purpose. At the heart of delivering global goals, the EU has placed efforts to open space for dialogue, to ensure that the voices of local nonstate actors are included in decision-making.

The high-level panel was facilitated CIDT's Professor Phillip Dearden who opened by saying that whilst agreement is not always possible, the great success of FGFs has been to bring people together, despite the divergent views they might hold.

The high-level panel offered views from civil society, international organisations and the private sector:

- **Patricia Zurita, CEO, BirdLife International, UK**, pointed out that Birds are the 'ambassadors for nature' and that protecting key habitats serves many goals simultaneously. Climate and biodiversity are two sides of the same coin, and protection of forests moves us closer to resolving both issues. One-fifth of key biodiversity areas fall within Indigenous Peoples lands, so recognising their role and commitments serves biodiversity and climate, as well as people.
- In many countries the legal framework to address underlying causes of deforestation is too complicated to be effectively implemented, said **Dr Robert Nasi, Director General, Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)**. Top-down approaches alienate communities that must be part of the solution; and fragmentation of forest issues across ministries undermines political coherence, leaving loopholes for powerful actors.
- **Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, former UN Special Rapporteur for Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Philippines**, has seen first-hand that where definitions of legality fail to recognise IP rights, deforestation is much higher as are the dangers of people being displaced from or being criminalised for attempting to protect their customary forests and lands. Local peoples must have access to real monitoring and complaints mechanisms, and affordable access to justice – something that usually is out of reach.
- Noting that although the private sector can be "seen as the enemy," **David Hopkins, Managing Director, Timber Trade Federation, UK**, stressed that a multistakeholder approach to forest governance is essential; without it, a cycle of fighting and blaming is born that ultimately ruins the forests that we all rely on. For its part, the private sector has a great deal of power, and should push for better regulation where they see that this is lacking.

The technical session, **"Global and regional to local approaches and challenges in improving forest governance, biodiversity conservation and climate change"** was expertly chaired by Vinayagan Dharmarajah, Regional Director, BirdLife International - Asia, based in Singapore, and featured six presentations, on more over-arching themes:

- David Hopkins, the UK Timber Trade Federation, kicked off with the announcement that, **at COP26, the Federation will launch a call to create a new global governance and trade initiative** to promote forest governance within an international framework. A new Tropical Timber Accord, accompanied by an International Secretariat, should rationalise and simplify timber standards. Illegal logging undermines the most conscientious timber producers, and programmes such as FLEGT concern only EU markets, leaving other lucrative markets (e.g., China, USA) outside its scope.
- Siobhan Pearce, of the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), UK, explored the EU Commission's recent **EU Timber Regulation/FLEGT Fitness review process**, which has generated uncertainty regarding the future of FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs), and on how these will fit with upcoming due diligence legislation of forest-risk products. Improvement on FLEGT is always possible, she said, but the reforms FLEGT VPAs initiated in areas such as transparency and participation must be preserved. The EU should maintain the 'carrot' of FLEGT licences and strengthening EUTR enforcement and try a fresh approach to tackling corruption.

Next, highlights from specific, local projects demonstrated what strides can be made by empowerment at the local level.

- The Executive Director of Trillion Trees, John Lotspeich, Executive Director, discussed a tree-planting project that focuses on forests as a focal point of biodiversity, and aims to deliver forests for people first, as buy-in from forest-dependent peoples puts innovation on more solid footing; climate and biodiversity benefits follow naturally, 59 million ha. of forest are being restored using local resources, ecosystem-appropriate planting and maintaining trees once planted; and monitoring must serve not just enforcement, but also to adapt as the programme advances.
- Working in the Mekong region, Robin Aus Der Beek, Manager of Voice for Mekong project, discussed **RECOFTC's role as 'trusted broker', bridging the gap between local populations and government** to promote community forestry, climate objectives and nature across several Southeast Asian nations. Open dialogue and training in conflict and tenure resolution are key elements of more equitable power relations. At grassroots level, particular care is given to bringing in women and marginalised households, as well as other stakeholders such as journalists to help tell the story, and youth to build a new generation of forest caretakers.
- Tiburtius Hani, Flores Programme Manager, Burung Indonesia, highlighted **sustainable community timber business in the Mbelling landscape, Indonesia**. Workshops and increased training to local farmers have resulted in more diverse and skilled production with quality/legality assured by the recently obtained TLAS certificate, as well as maximised farmer benefits, less timber waste and more diversified agroforestry as monocultures are replaced with e.g., fruit trees. More broadly, key biodiversity areas are buffered, watersheds are protected and soil erosion has decreased.
- Dr Gae Gowae, University of Papua New Guinea, explored how **REDD+ and forest governance goals are being operationalised at local level in Papua New Guinea**, through emphasis on strengthening land use and development plans, better environmental management, and enhancing livelihoods of the 80 per cent of the population that rely on forest resources. Among their successes, the Provincial Forest Plan – the starting point for forest management at sub-national level – was revised, and community members armed with GPS walked out the boundaries of their lands, clearly demarcating their lands for the first time.

Join the conversation on Twitter using [#fgfasiapacific](#)

Coming up tomorrow - Tuesday 28th September

Monitoring forest change at the global and local levels: How scientific tools and datasets, together with monitoring on the ground, can improve transparency and accountability and drive effective forest governance?

08.00-10.00 UK • 14.00-16.00 THAI, WIB • 15.00-17.00 MLY, PHI • 17.00-19.00 PNG

Speakers include:

 Mike Crosby, Asia Science Coordinator, BirdLife International	 Josiah David Quimpo, Haribon Foundation	 Boonthida Ketsomboon, Raks Thai Foundation
 Muhammad Ichwan, JPIK Indonesia	 Dr. Achille Djeagou, World Resources Institute	 Gabrielle Nussbaum, World Resources Institute

[VIEW FULL AGENDA](#)



Proud to be part of



[UNSUBSCRIBE](#)