

Forestry Leaders' Summit

Vancouver, Canada/April 2011

In celebration of the 2011 International Year of Forests, and in recognition of concerns about forestry education and research worldwide, senior representatives of education and research institutions, international organizations and students convened at the University of British Columbia for the Forestry Leaders Summit. IPFE was one of the organizers of the Summit. The meeting focused on concerns about the need to improve the skill sets of forestry graduates in order for them to be able to effect forest policy decisions and the need for forestry research to be responsive to global forest policies. In particular, the meeting examined how better and more collaborative partnerships among education and dedicated research institutions could advance effective and more relevant forestry education and research for the benefit of society and attract even more students to international forestry.

Recommendations

1. Engagement of forest researchers, educators and students is essential for improved forest policies, timely forestry research and relevant forestry education.
2. Scientists and policy makers should fully connect and collaborate in recognition of the different skill sets held by each group.
3. Forestry education and research needs to go beyond the 'forest sector' to include other disciplines and cover all related activities in the landscape. A solid component of forestry education should include the cultural and social aspects internationally.
4. Additional joint training and research partnerships are required between developing and developed countries. Existing and new partnerships should be encouraged in order to support greater interactions in this arena.
5. A 360° approach to sustainable forest management that emphasizes the power of cross-sectoral and cross-institutional perspectives should be emphasized.
6. There should be an expansion of the international "Community of Practice" of educators and practitioners who are using experiential approaches to connect the younger generation to agriculture, forests and nature.
7. There is a need to recognize, conceive and nurture new business models that will highlight the role of forests, forestry and forest products in sustainable development.
8. A global forum of forest deans and directors of forest research institutions should be created.
9. A special program for international forest internships (through for example, the UN system) should be developed.
10. In view of the shortage of skilled foresters worldwide, and the need to strengthen partnerships in forestry education and research, a strong statement of these concerns should be made at the Rio +20 Conference in 2012.
11. Forest education and research should be included in the forest finance discussions at the 2013 UNFF session. One percent of finances should be allocated to forestry education and research in order to help support global partnerships in forestry education and research. Furthermore, REDD + initiatives and programs should allocate 2 % to a capacity building fund dedicated to forestry education and research.

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